Responding in a year with changes and challenges.
Thoughts from the President...

2020 has been a year we’ll not soon forget. Amidst all the challenges and uncertainties, our local Cornell Cooperative Extension team has adapted, improvised and delivered throughout our traditional programs as well as specific responses to this pandemic. Most of our programming took on a new look, transitioning into the virtual environment as face to face engagements were no longer an option. Our team provided the hands-on work needed to distribute face coverings, hand sanitizer and safety education to our agricultural workforce, so essential during these challenging times. We demonstrated remarkable flexibility and responsiveness to changing participant needs driven by this pandemic. Protecting our staff’s health and well-being remain top priorities as we now transition the workplace towards more direct engagements.

Late last year the Department of the Army recognized our unique partnership with Fort Drum where we serve Soldiers and their families. Our programming encompassed a variety of functional areas. This year the Army reorganized some of these service areas, thereby reducing our staffing requirement. Staffing reductions are always very difficult actions to accomplish and these were painful to be sure. However we should take pride in those remaining award winning services that we continue to provide for our Soldiers and their families at Fort Drum.

This year we suffered a tremendous loss as Jefferson County Legislator, Carolyn Fitzpatrick, suddenly passed away. Carolyn was a steadfast advocate while serving on our Board of Directors for the past 20 years! Busy as she was throughout all her community service responsibilities, she and her husband Jim supported our Association in so many ways. We miss them both as Jim has relocated outside the area to be with family.

We welcome Jefferson County Legislator John Peck who has been appointed to fill Carolyn’s seat on our board. John is a local dairy farmer who brings agricultural expertise to our board as well as his representation on the Jefferson County Board of Legislators. John’s willingness to serve on our team is truly appreciated.

We are certainly living in exciting times. Rest assured that our Association leadership and dedicated staff will continue to apply creative approaches to each of our challenges. Throughout our community the programming we provide makes such a positive enhancement to our client’s businesses, lifestyles and future well-being. Being responsive to our membership as well as creative and flexible within our workforce are key elements to ensuring our future viability. I certainly extend my sincere thanks to everyone who supported our efforts through this most difficult year. As we head into 2021 know that we remain strong and our mission is more relevant than ever.

[Signature]

On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff, I am pleased to present our 2020 Annual Report.

Officers:
- James Corriveau, President
- Bruce Armstrong, Vice President
- Hartley Bonisteel-Schweitzer, Secretary
- Todd Hyman, Treasurer

Directors:
- Darrel Aubertine
- Mark Gebo
- Terrence Harris
- Steve Jennings
- Mike Lumbis
- John Peck
- Nathan Pistner
- Julia Robbins
- Steven Todd

Mission Statement
Cornell Cooperative Extension Association of Jefferson County educates youth, families, farmers, and communities using research-based knowledge for practical application and lifelong learning.
Enhancing existing partnerships and forming new ones helped leverage public resources and programs for the benefit of the community.

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Jefferson County was honored to receive the 2019 Army Community Partnership Award. This award was given in recognition of the focus on working together with Fort Drum to enhance soldier and family readiness.

Our funders are some of the most important community partners. Strong community partnerships build strong community programs.

The total budget for Cornell Cooperative Extension Association of Jefferson County for 2020 was $8,722,544.
CCE Jefferson Responds to the Pandemic by Going Virtual

4-H Youth Development: Virtual Academy

• The Jefferson County 4-H Virtual Academy provided 336 youth with four months of continued education. Youth signed up for multiple programs, leading to 545 total registrations. The Academy provided youth with a variety of educational programs and a way to connect to peers during the COVID-19 school closures.

• Programs were designed around widespread youth interests and 4-H curricula. A total of 13 programs were offered through the Jefferson County 4-H Virtual Academy - Animal Science, Book Club, 3D Printing, Environmental Science, Coding, Chess, Nutrition/Mindfulness, Minecraft, DimensionU Education Gaming, Tabletop Character Building, Own the Mic (Public Speaking), American Sign Language, and Spanish.

• The 4-H Digital Ambassador Teen program offered two Virtual Paint and Sip events with 58 youth and 58 adult participants. Early on, as community members transitioned to working from home, the program offered a training to 48 community members about how to use a variety of Google programs.

• Family and Consumer Science Career teachers from several school districts were interested in providing financial education to their students. Four Mad City Money financial simulation programs were offered to a total of 77 individuals, partnering with several school districts and Northern Credit Union.

• Educational programming was provided weekly on WPBS Kids from the first week in May to the end of June – content included coding, healthy living, and a trout release.

• 601 Maker Kits were distributed for youth who could not participate through virtual programming. Maker kits included seed starters/pot makers, build-your-own flashlight kits, laser cut puzzles, pen holder woodworking kits, sewing projects, and more.

• The high demand and interest to reduce energy consumption by North Country residents continues. Six Energy Education workshops were provided, with a total of 27 participants. The energy program partnered with the North Country Library System to offer energy efficiency education through Facebook live reaching 270 community members. Alongside this, 64 individuals received one-on-one energy education sessions with follow-ups each week. A series of eight Facebook posts were launched to provide energy education through the months of April, May, and June, reaching 11,713 people.

“I cannot thank 4-H enough for these virtual offerings. The variety of offerings produced and offered in an incredibly short turnaround time is very impressive. I loved the combination of academic, fun, and social offerings. Working full time and having other little ones at home, has been very challenging. Having these virtual offerings has been a lifesaver for our family. We truly are immensely grateful.”

- Parent of a 4-H Afterschool Student
Health & Wellness, Parenting, and Consumer Finance
Interactive Classes

• Unique cooking and physical activity classes for all ages: Mix It Up Cooking Club; Eat Smart, Live Strong; Family Healthy Snacking (Includes Parenting Tips!); “What Can I Cook With_____” (suggestions taken from community members); Moms’ Group; Fit Club; Cook the Book were provided.

• Live From Our Kitchen Series – two nutrition educators with special community guests discussed topics ranging from spices to local farmers markets.

• A variety of ways were used to enhance community connections: website, Instagram, Zoom, Facebook Live, YouTube Live, pre-recorded videos, a digital and print newsletter, and a helpline!

• Parents were dealing with unprecedented stress, trying to engage their kids in educational activities and managing their households. We continued to provide support and education through group classes and individual sessions over Zoom.

• Quarantine Quoffee Quorner’s debut featured Fort Drum Family Advocacy educators talking about everything from routines to role modeling.

• With so much financial uncertainty and a continually changing landscape, production of financial education videos met an increasing need on Fort Drum and in the Community.

Online & Remote Support for Ag & Local Foods

• Agriculture staff provided many workshops related to home gardening and small homesteading activities to meet participants’ interests such as raising poultry, swine, and beef.

• 140 people participated in horticulture workshops such as vegetable gardening for beginners, composting, container gardening, and so much more!

• The gardening hotline received 180 calls between April and June - answering a range of questions from “What types of fruit trees can I plant?” to “What do I need to do to my soil to prepare it for growing vegetables?”

• Educational videos on apple trees, stinging nettle, and buckthorn were created, as well as a webinar on how to sell food products through the North Star Food Hub, which significantly assisted growers market their product.

• A simple phone call during the pandemic can make a difference. Our Ag staff made over 173 direct calls to dairy farmers during the month of April to “check-in” at a time when they were experiencing the full effects of the pandemic, low milk prices, and forced to dump precious milk product. Sometimes the best support we can offer is not providing information, it’s being a good listener.

“I feel that I have gained more insight about gardening than from much of the research that I have been doing for the last several weeks. Very easy to understand and concise, especially for a ‘newbie’.”

- Gardening Workshop Participant
CCE Jefferson Provides Assistance to Local Farmers Through the Pandemic

New York Agriculture and Markets, in collaboration with Cornell Cooperative Extension, worked to protect farm families and the agricultural workforce by distributing hand sanitizer and face coverings. These tools are known to be effective in preventing the spread of COVID-19, along with effective strategies such as Farm Safety Plans that include social distancing and personal hygiene practices specific for the farming environment. Through a concerted effort and much online, phone, and virtual education, Cornell Cooperative Extension provided needed education and support to keep our North Country Agricultural Workforce safe.

This outreach focused on the hard hit dairy sector and production agriculture, but also reached all sectors of agriculture including vegetable and fruit producers, the equine industry, and livestock producers. To help reach producers quickly and effectively Gold Star Feeds, Dairy Farms of America (DFA), and Lake Effect Veterinary Service assisted with distribution.

In Jefferson County, we distributed over 3,345 face coverings, 651 gallons of hand sanitizer, and 1,165 personal sized spray bottles of hand sanitizer to over 170 farms reaching an agricultural workforce of over 1,155 employees.

“When COVID hit farmers were already stressed. Having Extension deliver sanitizer and face masks to the farm was a huge help. At the time we couldn’t order either and to have that delivery was big!! It helped alleviate the worries of keeping our farms safer.”

- Chuck Eastman, CTS Dairy
Benefiting our Community with In-Person Programming

Learning about portion sizes and buying local.

66% of regular afterschool attendees improved school attendance behavior and motivation this year compared to 44% last year.

Exploring stream ecosystems and being environmental stewards.

Apple growing in our own backyards.

Showcasing local products.

North Country Regional Ag Team’s Annual Dairy Day included a presentation on milk price and markets.

Demonstrating the fun and importance of family time with the Fort Drum Family Advocacy Program.

4-H Afterschool students touring a farm and learning about agriculture and where our food comes from.
This 2020 Annual Report is dedicated to the memory of our longest serving board member, Carolyn D. Fitzpatrick. She served on our Board of Directors as the County Legislature representative for over 20 years. As a true Friend of Extension, she was a staunch supporter of our mission and a tireless advocate of our programs.

While her passing was a significant loss, she will always be remembered as a mentor to many, a leader to all, and a friend to each of us.