CCE Cortland Behind the Scenes

Winter surely isn’t over yet but CCE Cortland has been busy identifying and addressing the needs of our farming community. We have many events, programs, and initiatives scheduled throughout the upcoming year, including The March Coffee Hour: How Are YOU??? with Kate Downes from NYFarmNet scheduled for Wednesday, March 17th, 6:30 - 8:00 pm (register here).

We also have a Virtual Open Farm Days (together with CCE Tompkins) scheduled for March 3rd from 6 - 7pm with a focus on value-add producers that use locally sourced produce, dairy, and grain - highlighting Cortland’s very-own Food & Ferments (register here).

We’ve recently gotten involved in a statewide effort to address solar-siting in our communities - of course, our interest is centered around how it affects agriculture in Cortland County. In order to address YOUR solar-siting concerns, we’d love to hear from you. Please consider taking a quick 5 minutes to fill out this questionnaire.
Sign-up for our Ag Alert texting system. Emails are often overlooked, and when important information comes around (such as the new labor law or the livestock law that was discussed in the recent past) people need a way to learn about these pertinent items quickly and efficiently. A text alert system has been developed to meet that goal, but you must sign-up to receive them. **To sign up please fill out this questionnaire** (you do not need to fill out everything if you don't want to, but to get the text alerts we at least need your cellphone number and service provider).

Of course one of my (Dana) favorite aspects of my work with CCE Cortland is meeting you - our farmers! I enjoy learning and hearing about what you do, and more importantly what you need. So thank you to everyone who I've had the opportunity to talk with and learn from. If you haven't heard from me please do reach out, I'd love to hear about you and your farm or farm-related business. You can reach Dana at (607)391-2664 or via email at dmh353@cornell.edu

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**February Highlights from CCE Cortland**

- Hosted Lambing & Kidding: Presentation & Q&A with Niko Kochendoerfer Ph.D.
  - watch the workshop and Q&A here
- Organizing the March Coffee Hour: How Are YOU? with Kate Downes from NY FarmNet
- Getting two SUNY Cortland Interns up and running for the Cortland Co Ag-Journalism Project and the Cortland County Farms Oral History Project.
- Working with a statewide team to develop an up-to-date list of slaughter and processing facilities in NYS and related programming to help increase packer capacity in NYS.
- Working with a statewide team to address ag-related solar issues (please share your thoughts on Ag & Solar in Cortland County [here](#))
- Hosted the first of an 8-part series for the Cortland County 4-H feeder calf project, Overview of the Beef Industry with John Kreise, Past President NY Beef Producer Association
- Planning for the 2021 Ag Literacy Program with 23 Cortland County 2nd grade classes signed-up to participate.
- Started to organize this year’s AgStravaganza - Introducing Cortland County 4th graders to agriculture
- Developing a Farm Safety Workshop to be hosted this spring.
- Collected a variety of articles and farmer-funding opportunities listed at the bottom of this email
- ...and much more in the works that we will share as time goes by!
Other Cortland County Ag-related organization news

CCE Cortland is not the only organization in Cortland County that serves the farm community and we want to do our best to keep you up to date on some of the other institutions in our community working for you!

**Cortland County Soil and Water Conservation District** (follow on Facebook). Landowners filing for an agricultural assessment in 2021 must file applications with their local assessor by **March 1st**. To complete an application, landowners must have a Soil Group Worksheet (SGW) prepared by the SWCD for each tax parcel they intend to enroll. Landowners who have previously had a worksheet completed for a tax parcel do not need a new one unless ownership, acreage, or land use has changed.

For new applications, the form RP-305 must also be filled out and given to your local assessor. This form can be found on the internet and is available under “Exemptions” on the Cortland County Real Property Tax Services webpage. To remain eligible, a renewal form RP-305r must be filed annually. Contact your local assessor or the Cortland County Real Property Tax Services office at (607)753-5040 for information about the assessment process, eligibility criteria, or your property information. Contact SWCD to make an appointment for your Soil Group Worksheet at (607) 756-5991.

**Seven Valleys Health Coalition** (follow on Facebook)

Seven Valleys Food Rescue is kicking off in Cortland County! We take edible food from farms and businesses that cannot be sold or would otherwise go to waste and distribute it to people who need it. Our goal is to reduce food insecurity in our community, as well as decrease food waste. If you have food you would like to donate, please contact Adrianne Traub at adrianne@sevenvalleyshealth.org or 607-745-0419. This is a project of the City of Cortland and Seven Valleys Health Coalition, a non-profit working to improve the health and well-being of the Cortland County community.

**Cortland County Farm Bureau** (Follow on Facebook)

The Cortland Farm Bureau Board is looking forward to 2021 as our community slowly pushes beyond the 2020 challenges with COVID19. We still need to stay safe and be careful, but there is room for optimism as we look towards spring and another growing season. The State Farm Bureau worked tirelessly to gain a year of study from the State Wage Board before considering moving the overtime threshold from 60 hours per week to 40 hours per week. The issue will be reviewed again in November. That State Annual Meeting was held virtually this year and resolutions from across the state were discussed and voted upon to develop the initiatives the state-level staff will work on this year. Email Jeff at jap255@cornell.edu for an application. Everyone work at keeping healthy as we approach sapping season and maple syrup as the first step towards spring! - Jeff Perry, President, Cortland Farm Bureau

**USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)**

offers voluntary programs to eligible landowners and agricultural producers to provide financial and technical assistance to help manage natural resources in a sustainable manner. Through these programs, the agency approves contracts to provide financial assistance to help plan and implement conservation practices that address natural resource concerns or opportunities to help save energy, improve soil, water, plant, air, animal, and related resources on agricultural lands and non-industrial private forest land.

If you would like more information about opportunities with NRCS, please contact your local Cortland NRCS Service Center at 607-753-0851 ext. 3.

We have a Farm Service Agency office (USDA-FSA) in Cortland County. The mission of FSA is to "serve farmers, ranchers, and agricultural partners through the delivery of federal agricultural programs”. You can find their contact information [here](#).

A quick note - we recognize that you may not want to receive these emails. To opt-out, simply click the unsubscribe button at the bottom of this email newsletter.
Lambing and Kidding Workshop Recap  
- With Cornell Post-Doc Researcher Niko Kochendoerfer -

On the morning of Saturday, February 6th from 10:00 - 12:00, CCE Cortland Niko Koechendoerfer to present and discuss the fundamentals of lambing and kidding (as lambing and kidding season is upon us!). Niko has spent years working with sheep from shepherding in her homeland of Germany to getting her Ph.D. at Cornell University (while having a flock of her own at her home in Cortland Co.). The 2-hour presentation and Q&A were filled with information on how and what to consider when lambing and kidding.

Watch the recording [Lambing and Kidding Workshop](#)

Join CCE Cortland and Cornell Small Ruminant Researcher Dr. Niko Kochendoerfer for

**LAMBING & KIDDING**
**PART 1:**
**ONLINE PRESENTATION & DISCUSSION**

**February 6th**  
**10:00 to 11:30 AM**
**Registration Required**

This 1.5-hour online workshop will cover the following topics:
- Basics of lambing and kidding (birthing supplies, stages of lambing, basic care of dam and offspring, when and how to intervene).
- Methods to manage birthing efficiently without sacrificing animal wellbeing.
- Common ailments of newborns.
- Successful methods to foster kids and lambs.
- Metabolic diseases of late pregnancy, early lactation does and ewes.
- Labor-saving practices for handling lambing and kidding and artificial rearing.

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Items of Interest and Other News

**Looking for Forage - Check out the CCE NYS Forage Exchange**

Find & sell corn & hay and other miscellaneous forage.

**NYCHAM COVID Vaccine Resources**
(reposted NYFam Bureau)

The New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health has created two educational sheets to inform your employees about the safety of the COVID-19 vaccine and potential side effects. They include pictures and can be printed for both English and Spanish speakers.
Identifying and Reporting Canada Thistle
(Written by Andrew Glaspell, Cortland County Soil & Water)

Did you know that Canada thistle (Cirsium arvense) is an invasive species that often targets agricultural habitats? The invasive is also known as “creeping thistle” can be found across New York. Its ability to establish itself in pastures and fields and along fences and stream banks makes it a threat to agricultural productivity. Canada thistle grows up to 5 feet tall in dense stands, allowing it to out-compete native and cultivated plants. Like all invasive species, identifying and managing their spread is critically important. If you have spotted Canada thistle or other invasive species on your property, please send a picture and GPS coordinates to Amanda Barber at Cortland SWCD (amanda.barber@cortlandswcd) in order to improve invasive species tracking in our region. For help identifying this species, please use the following link to view Cornell’s identification guide:
https://blogs.cornell.edu/weedid/canada-thistle/

For more information on invasive species, you can visit the Cortland County Soil and Water Conservation District at www.cortlandswcd.org or the Finger Lakes Prism at http://fingerlakesinvasives.org/
healthy crop environments and contribute to improved productivity on the farm or ranch. 

Taking inventories of stored forages
(reposted from Morning Ag Clips)

For farmers with cattle, sheep, and goats, the growing season is typically spent grazing their animals and growing fields of grasses (like oats, timothy, or orchard grass) and legumes (like clovers and trefoil) to store for the upcoming winter. Sometimes, farms are not able to put up as much hay and baleage (fermented wet hay) as they would like to. The wet spring and dry summer of 2020 created a poor growing season that led to reduced hay production. Pastures also suffered, and some farms had to supplement livestock with feed during the grazing season that was set aside for winter. In years where stored forage may be lower than usual, it is especially important to check forage inventories thoroughly. If there is not enough stored feed available to make it through the winter and early spring, the information from a forage inventory will help farms make decisions about whether they will need to buy in forage or sell some of their stock to make sure there is enough feed to go around.

Non-operating Landowners Care About Conservation
(reposted from American Farmland Trust)

Around 40% of farmland in the U.S. is rented, in some U.S. counties that number is nearing 80%, and over a third of this land is owned by women. Conservation practices are less likely to be used by farmers on rented land because of perceptions about landowner views, difficulties communicating with landowners who may live some distance away and because most leases are verbal and typically run year to year, making conservation investment risky. Landowners on the other hand, are often not aware of available conservation programs and are unsure about broaching the topic with their farmers, particularly if they lack on-farm knowledge and experience, which we found is more common when the landowner is a woman.

NYS farm outlook: scarce labor, higher wages in ’21
(reposted from Cornell Ag Workforce Development)

New York state farm operators can expect a tight labor market and rising wages in the year ahead, in addition to continued pandemic precautions, debate over immigration reform and potential changes to overtime pay, according to a Cornell agriculture expert.

“Ag labor is going to remain scarce due to … underlying demographics and labor market factors, even if we get immigration reform,” said Richard Stup, agricultural workforce specialist in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and at Cornell Cooperative Extension. “Wages are going to continue to climb from both market and regulatory pressure.”

No-Till Practices in Vulnerable Areas Significantly Reduce Soil Erosion
(reposted from USDA-NIFA)

Soil erosion is a major challenge in agricultural production. It affects soil quality and carries nutrient sediments that pollute waterways. While soil erosion is a naturally occurring process, agricultural activities such as conventional tilling exacerbate it.

Farmers implementing no-till practices can significantly reduce soil erosion rates, a new University of Illinois study shows. Completely shifting to no-till would reduce soil loss and sediment yield by more than 70 percent, says Sanghyun Lee, doctoral student in the University of Illinois’s Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering.
Issues with Farm Labor? Join this CSF Forum
(reposted from Morning Ag Clips)

Do you struggle with getting all the work done on your farm? Do you have challenges attracting and retaining employees? Are you interested in working with other farmers to design solutions to labor challenges?

If so, consider attending one of the Cornell Small Farms Program’s farmer focus groups, “Exploring Novel Approaches to Farm Labor,” to be held via Zoom (online), on February 25 and March 18, 2021. We are seeking small to mid-scale diversified fruit and vegetable farmers in New York State who practice sustainable growing methods and market products directly to consumers or engage in wholesale/institutional markets. We are particularly interested in producers who hire full-time, part-time seasonal workers, and/or family members.

Rachel Armstrong, of Farm Commons, will facilitate engaging conversations for two separate groups – farm employees (2/25) and farm owners (3/18). Groups will discuss and provide feedback on potential farm labor models and the opportunities, challenges, and interests of producers to engage with these models. Be prepared to provide your input and feedback!

Register Now:

- **Farm Employees** Focus Group: Thursday, February 25, 2021, from 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m.
- **Farm Owners** Focus Group: Thursday, March 18, 2021, from 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m.

A gift card of $50 will be provided for participation.

This project is funded by a Northeast SARE Novel Approaches grant, LNE19-386R. For questions about this project, please contact Nicole Waters (nw42@cornell.edu). As part of this project, the Cornell Small Farms Program is partnering with the New Entry program to discuss labor issues and potential solutions with farmers throughout the Northeastern U.S.

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Upcoming Workshops

**Payment Please: Exploring Alt. Payment Methods**
(re-posted from CCE Jefferson Co.)
Feb 25th, 6 - 7 pm

Interested in reaching a larger customer base? Curious about expanding the payments you accept? Want to know more about supporting your community during food shortages while still making a profit?

**Irrigation Management in Processing Vegetables using the CSF Water Deficit Calculator**
(re-posted from Cornell Climate Smart Farming)
Feb 26th, 12 - 1:30 pm

The Cornell Climate Smart Farming Water Deficit Calculator estimates soil water content within a crop’s effective root zone to inform decision-makers about current and forecasted water deficits. This webinar will provide an in-depth look into how some Extension specialists and farmers are using the tool to make very precise decisions for irrigation management in processing vegetables - including looking at the physiology of drought stress in critical stages, how the tool works in detail, and examples of crops grown with irrigation or rain-fed fields.

**Creating Video Content for Marketing**
(re-posted from CCE St. Lawrence)
March 3rd, 6:00 - 8:00 pm
Video is among the most consumed types of information online (with Youtube, IGTV, Facebook Live, and other platforms coming on the scene in recent years). Most small businesses, however, worry about being camera-ready. This workshop will talk about live streaming (live videos) versus prerecorded, setting up a video channel on social media, and how small farms are using video to grow their businesses.

**USDA Resources for Beginning Farmers in New York State**  
(re-posted from USDA-NRCS)  
March 4th, 12 - 2 pm

USDA offers a variety of farm loan, risk management, disaster assistance, and conservation programs to support farmers, including beginning farmers and ranchers. Additionally, a number of these programs have provisions specifically for beginning farmers, including targeted funding for loans and conservation programs as well as waivers and exemptions. Learn more about USDA's resources for beginning farmers at farmers.gov/newfarmers. Additionally, find information on urban agriculture programs at farmers.gov/urban.

**Organic Management of SWD**  
(re-posted from Oregon State)  
March 9th, 2 pm

This webinar will provide a comprehensive update on the organic management of spotted-wing drosophila. It will summarize findings of the research conducted by our project team on organically approved strategies including behavioral, cultural, biological, and chemical tactics to manage SWD.

**Beginning Hay & Pasture School**  
(re-posted from CCE North Country Reg. Ag Team)  
March 11th, 7 - 9 pm

- Nutritional Forage Quality Goals
- Forage Sampling & Interpreting Forage Analysis
- Basics of Grazing & Hay Making
- Pasture & Hay Field Renovation, Reclaiming Old Fields

**Starting and Improving Farms Conference**  
(re-posted from Penn State)  
March 6th - 10th

Are you a potential or existing farmer who is interested in learning about starting your own farm? Join us to learn more information on how to begin your journey!

**Farm Disaster Preparation Certificate Training**  
(re-posted from CCE Allegany)  
March 16th & 18th

Online The Farm Disaster Preparation program will help farm owners plan for and manage disasters that might occur. This program focuses on practical pre-disaster education and preparedness, regarding farm equipment safety on the road, fire or structure collapse, storm and wind damage, criminal activity, farm chemical risks and biosecurity. Farms that complete the Farm Disaster Preparation training will receive a certificate to provide to their insurer and may be eligible for a credit or discount toward the farm’s annual insurance premium. The value of the credit or discount will vary according to individual policies and policyholder circumstances but can be up to a 10 percent discount.

**So You Want to Be a Farmers Market Vendor?**  
(re-posted from CCE Broome)  
March 16th, 7 pm

Have you been considering becoming a vendor at your local farmers market but aren’t sure the first place to
start? Do you think the rules and regulations are too strict to sell your products? Maybe you aren’t sure if your product would be a good fit. Or perhaps you have been looking for an additional stream of income and believe that farmers markets are the optimal market channel for you! Join Cornell Cooperative Extension of Broome County, in partnership with the Markets of Broome County, for a webinar on Tuesday March 16th at 7pm focused on everything you will need to know in order to sell at a farmers market in Broome County, and the region.

**Cortland Ag Coffee Hour: How Are YOU? With Kate Downes of NY FarmNet**
March 17th, 6:30 - 8:00 pm

Join us for the March Cortland Ag Coffee Hour "How are YOU?" with Kate Downes from NYFarmNet. The focus of this coffee hour will be conversation and discussion, time to catch up and touch base with other farmers in our community.

**Advanced Hay & Pasture School**
March 18th, 7 - 9

- 2020 Drought- It's still here... How do we manage 2021 and the long term?
- Buying and Selling Hay- Pricing, Types, Methods of Advertising, Forage Analysis
- Pasture/Land Rental/Custom Rates- Where to get some ideas?

**Assess and Prevent Food Safety Risks in Leafy Greens**
March 18th

Join the CCE Cornell Vegetable Program, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Broome County, and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Yates County on Thursday, March 18th, 2021 for a virtual training on how to Assess and Prevent Food Safety Risks in Leafy Greens Production. E. coli outbreaks in lettuce grown in the Southwest have made headlines numerous times over the last several growing seasons. In many instances, these outbreaks have led to recalls from coast to coast. Ultimately, the health and financial impacts of these outbreaks have resulted in more attention being paid by buyers and regulators on the leafy greens industry. What do the problems in the Southwest have to do with growers in NY? As leafy greens are a highly susceptible crop to contamination, precautionary lessons can be learned.

**Understanding Eligibility Requirements for NRCS and FSA Programs**
(re-posted from USDA - NRCS)
March 24th, 12 - 1 pm

An open conversation with USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) staff about how to get started with USDA. Including understanding and navigating the eligibility requirements and paperwork involved in applying for FSA and NRCS programs and loans.

**Funding Opportunities**

**Quality Loss Assistance Now Available for Eligible Producers Affected by 2018, 2019 Natural Disasters**
(re-posted from USDA)
due March 5th

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) today announced that signup for the Quality Loss Adjustment (QLA) Program will begin Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2021. Funded by the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2020, this new program provides assistance to producers who suffered eligible crop quality losses due to natural disasters occurring in 2018 and 2019. The deadline to apply for QLA is Friday, March 5, 2021.
The Residential Agricultural Discount Program is an electricity rate discount applied to the electricity delivery charge, available since September 1, 2014, to eligible National Grid residential agricultural customers, as a result of funding through the New York Power Authority (NYPA) ReCharge New York program.

Financial assistance is available to inventory and analyze farm systems that use energy and identify opportunities to improve efficiency through the development of an Agricultural Energy Management Plan (AgEMP). The AgEMP, or energy audit, is completed by NRCS-certified Technical Service Providers (TSPs) and provides:

- Itemized energy use by individual systems to establish a baseline for electricity and other fuel improvements,
- Recommendations for equipment improvements and upgrades,
- Potential energy reductions and financial savings for each recommendation
- Cost estimates of potential improvements, and
- Length of expected payback for energy efficiency upgrades

A High Tunnel System, commonly called a “hoop house,” is an increasingly popular conservation practice for farmers, and is available with financial assistance through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). With high tunnel systems, no summer is too short or winter too cold because high tunnels:

- Extend the growing season
- Improve plant quality and soil quality
- Reduce nutrient and pesticide transportation
- Improve air quality through reduced transportation inputs
- Reduce energy use by providing consumers with a local source of fresh produce

"The National ROPS Rebate Program (NRRP) is a voluntary program that provides rebates for approximately 70%* of the cost of purchasing and installing a ROPS (Rollover Protective Structure; rollbar) kit. This rebate covers the ROPS kit (rollbar and seatbelt), shipping, and professional installation, if desired"

FSA's Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program provides low-interest financing to producers to build or upgrade storage facilities and to purchase portable (new or used) structures, equipment and storage and handling trucks.

Farm Credit East Grants & Incentives for NE Agriculture Report
(re-posted from Farm Credit East)
This is a comprehensive list of grants and other incentives for agriculture throughout the northeast, including NY State, where you can find funding opportunities by state or by region.

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