CCE Cortland Behind the Scenes

Spring is here and many of us at preparing for a busy season ahead. In the meantime, CCE Cortland is doing our best to listen to what you need and developing programming to address the needs of our farming community. We have many events, programs, and initiatives scheduled throughout the upcoming year, including a Basic Farm Safety Workshop on Wednesday, March 7th, 6:30 - 8:30 pm (learn more & register here).
We also have an Ag-Coffee Hour: NRCS services for Farmers and Other Landowners scheduled for Thursday, April 29th, 6:30 - 8:00 pm (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

March Highlights from CCE Cortland

- Co-hosted, with CCE Tompkins, Virtual Open Farm Days highlighting Value-added processors including Food & Ferments from Cortland NY (check out the supplemental magazine).
- Organized the annual Ag Literacy reading event with 23 Cortland County 2nd grade classrooms and 8 volunteer readers!
- Working with two SUNY Cortland interns advocating for Cortland Agricultural through the development of a Cortland County Farm History Project (and CNY Living History Museum), and writing articles for local media outlets about agriculture in our community.
- Hosted the 3rd in a series of 4-H beef workshops: Beef Management with Betsy Hicks.
• 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 utility-scale solar issues (please share your thoughts on Ag & Solar in Cortland County [here](#)).
• Leading a statewide team to address animal fiber production and marketing challenges, and introduced the team at the Empire State Sheep Producers Annual Meeting.
• Kicked-off the County-wide 4-H Livestock Club, with 4 passionate volunteer organizers - increasing the county's livestock youth education opportunities!
• 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!

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**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](#)).
Rainbow trout, largemouth bass, channel catfish, sterile grass carp, fathead minnows, and fish food can now be ordered for private pond stocking. Pickup is scheduled for Monday, May 10th, and orders must be received and paid for by Monday, May 3rd, 2021. Please contact Cortland SWCD at 756-5991 if you have any questions and visit the [webpage](#) for an order form.

Their annual spring planting program is here. Order your tree and shrub seedlings today. Visit the [webpage](#) for a downloadable and fillable form, as well as seedling descriptions and information.

**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. Locally, our Board is planning to host a Virtual Ag Trivia event in late February as a one year replacement for our annual Ag Trivia Dinner. Keep an eye out for more details soon. Local Farm Bureau Scholarships are also available to high school seniors. Email Jeff at jap255@cornell.edu for an application. Everyone work at keeping healthy as we approach sapping season and maple syrup as a first step towards spring!

Jeff Perry, President, Cortland Farm Bureau

**USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)**
New York Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announces April 23, 2021, as the application cutoff date for the General signup for the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021.
Through the CSP program, NRCS helps private landowners build their business while implementing conservation practices/enhancements that help ensure the sustainability of their entire operation. NRCS will work with applicants to assess resource concerns on the land included in their operation that they have effective control over to establish a benchmark stewardship condition. They will then use that information to select practices and enhancements that work for their operation so that a higher level of conservation is achieved on at least one land use.

Applications accepted after April 23, 2021 will be considered in the next signup. All applications are competitive and are ranked based on national, state and locally identified resource priorities and the overall benefit to the environment.

Please Contact Justin Olson at justin.olson@usda.gov or 607-218-3504 with any questions.

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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.

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Items of Interest and Other News

USDA Announces Pandemic Assistance for Producers
(from FSA Bulletin)

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that USDA is establishing new programs and efforts to bring financial assistance to farmers, ranchers and producers who felt the impact of COVID-19 market disruptions. The new initiative—USDA Pandemic Assistance for Producers—will reach a broader set of producers than in previous COVID-19 aid programs. USDA is dedicating at least $6 billion toward the new programs. The Department will also develop rules for new programs that will put a greater emphasis on outreach to small and socially disadvantaged producers, specialty crop and organic producers, timber harvesters, as well as provide support for the food supply chain and producers of renewable fuel, among others. Existing programs like the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) will fall within the new initiative and, where statutory authority allows, will be refined to better address the needs of producers.

Looking for Forage - Check out the CCE NYS Forage Exchange
Find & sell corn & hay and other miscellaneous forage.

PPP Loans Extends to Small Farms (deadline extended to May 31st)
(by Mary Kate MacKenzie, SCNY Regional Team & Pro-Dairy)

If your farm business did not apply for an earlier round of the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), you may wish to reconsider. The COVID stimulus package that Congress approved in December 2020 included changes to PPP eligibility for farm businesses. The new eligibility rules took effect in January 2021, and the current PPP
NYCAMH COVID Vaccine Educational Sheets
(reposted from NY Farm 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 its potential side effects. They include pictures and can be printed for both English and Spanish speakers.

Thinking about Becoming Certified Organic?
(reposted from NOFA-NY)

Now is a great time to start planning and applying for certification! NOFA-NY Certified Organic is New York State’s leading organic certifier with expertise in crops, livestock, dairy, hemp, and fruit, and we handle operations of all sizes and complexity!

Call our office today (607.724.9851) or check out our website (www.nofany.org/certification) to learn how we can help you add value to your farm or processed products through organic certification!

Utility-scale Solar - what you should know
(by Tim X Terry, Pro-Dairy)

In March of 2020, Gov. Cuomo announced in his State of the State address an ambitious goal of 70% of the state’s electricity needs would be generated via renewable means by 2030. Under this Green New Deal the mandate increases to 100% by 2040. As a result coal-fired plants will be idled while more wind and solar projects will be initiated. For you, as a holder of large tracts of open land, that may mean that you will be visited by landmen seeking to lease all or a portion of that land to use for constructing a solar array. Understand, this is not a couple dozen panels up on the barn roof generating a few kilowatts, but acres of panels on the ground generating several megawatts of electricity.

NYS Allocates Money to Protect Farmland
(reposted from Morning Ag Clips)

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced a record $52.5 million is now available through the Farmland Protection Implementation Grant program to help farmers across New York protect valuable and at-risk farmland. This is the highest level of funding being offered in the program’s 25-year history. In addition, for the first time, the program will distribute funds to each of the state’s 10 economic development regions, with $5 million being allocated to each region.

USDA Extends Quality Loss Adjustment Program Deadline to 04/09
(reposted from Morning Ag Clips)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is extending the deadline from March 5 to April 9 for agricultural producers to apply for the Quality Loss Adjustment (QLA) Program because of recent winter storms and some clarifications to program rules. This program assists producers, including those here in New York who suffered crop quality losses due to qualifying 2018 and 2019 natural disasters.

Determining the Most Efficient Ewe Size for your Operation
(reposted from Penn State University)

The most efficient sheep or better yet the most efficient flock of sheep is what producers should strive for. But, the most efficient sheep for one flock is not always the most efficient sheep for another producer's flock. So, how do we arrive at first describing an efficient sheep and then go about choosing the size that best fits your operation?
Upcoming Workshops

**Cutting Meat in a Commercial Kitchen: 20-C Licenses and Selling Cuts of Meat from Your Farm**  
(re-posted from CCE Livestock PWT Team)  
March 31st 12:30 - 1:30 pm  
Online

For farmers seeking to regain some control over butchering their animals, there is a middle option between being at the whim of slaughterhouse schedules and opening your own slaughterhouse. That middle ground involves taking control of the cutting and packaging of your meat in a commercial kitchen. If done properly, with access to USDA slaughter and your own state-issued 20-C license, you can still sell your meat directly to consumers by the cut.

But there’s a lot to know to make this work! In this webinar, we’ll cover the regulatory aspects of meat-cutting in a 20-C kitchen, including requirements for building a 20-C kitchen and where you’re allowed to sell meat processed in this way. We’ll also discuss the logistics and economics of the whole endeavor from a farmer perspective: getting slaughter-only dates at a USDA plant, transporting a carcass safely, where to get meat-cutting experience, and other factors that would influence whether this is the right decision for your farm.

**Ag Solutions Fair**  
(re-posted from Institute for Rural Vitality at SUNY)  
April 5th - 16th, 2:00 pm  
Online

The Institute for Rural Vitality at SUNY Cobleskill is excited to be hosting the Ag Solutions Fair once again this year – virtually. After an uncertain year for the agriculture industry, new opportunities are emerging. We have the chance to seize the moment as marketing trends shift, consumer demand for local foods increases, and new resources become available.

In partnership with National Grid and NYSERDA, the Institute for Rural Vitality will be offering a two-week webinar series that provides resources for farm and food businesses to access capital and markets. Now is the time to register for any or all of the six free webinars from April 5 through 16. All webinars and resources discussed will be made available on the Ag Solutions Fair website following the event. There are also still sponsorship opportunities available for agri-businesses to promote products and services across New York State.

**Webinar Schedule:**
4/5 - Access to Capital: Traditional Funding  
4/7 - Controlling Farm Energy Costs with Energy Audits and Utility Incentives  
4/9 - Access to Capital: Alternative Funding  
4/12 - COVID-19 Market Dynamics  
4/14 - Leveraging the Pandemic: Agritourism and E-commerce  
4/16 - Access to Markets: Assistance Programs

**Operating an Agritourism Operation During the COVID-19 pandemic**  
(re-posted from CCE Broome & Madison)  
April 6th 6:30 pm  
Online

Join Agricultural Economic Development Specialists Myron Thurston III and Laura Biasillo for an evening discussion regarding safety precautions that agritourism locations in New York State can implement in 2021 to keep their employees and customers safe while at the same time reducing liabilities for their business.
We will start by reviewing all the regulations that are currently in place that businesses need to follow in 2021, and then discuss real world examples of how those regulations can be followed while at the same time keeping your business running smoothly.

**Farmland Evaluation**  
(re-posted from CCE Saratoga)  
April 7th, 6:30 - 8:00 pm  
Online

Learn how to find the best fit between agricultural land and farm operation. Presented by Dustin Lewis, Saratoga County Soil & Water Conservation District, Jessica Homes, Master Gardener Coordinator, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and Nicolina Foti, Agricultural Coordinator, Cornell Cooperative Extension

To register, contact Nicolina Foti at nvf5@cornell.edu or call 518-885-8995.

**Virtual Hatchery School**  
(re-posted from CCE SWNY Regional Team)  
April 10th, 17th, & 24th 11:00 - 2:00 pm  
Online

- **Saturday, April 10th**  
  Basics of Breeding Flocks  
  Selecting birds for a breeding program, appropriate male: female ratios, biosecurity, NPIP, choosing sound eggs for incubation, egg storage, and culling eggs

- **Saturday, April 17th**  
  Introduction to Incubation  
  Choosing the right incubator, how to set up an incubation room, incubator and egg management, hatching and their management, biosecurity, cleaning, and disinfection, preparing a brooder

- **Saturday, April 24th**  
  Hatch Rates and Chick Quality  
  Differentiate good and poor chick quality and determine how breeder flock and hatchery management affect this. Learn the different reasons for “failure to hatch” and what hatchery residue can tell us about the incubation process.

**Digital Agri-Marketing**  
(re-posted from CCE CNY Regional Team)  
April 12th, 26th, & May 10th 6:30 - 8:00 pm  
Online

- **April 12**  
  Basics of Facebook, QR Codes, Basic Website Platforms (WIX, WEEBLY, etc.), Google AdWords, and Use of Instagram

- **April 26**  
  E-Commerce (Meat Suite, Barn to Door, Shopify), Website payments (stripe, PP, Venmo) FB Marketplace

- **May 10**  
  Content Creation, Importance of good photos, videos, FB Lives, Graphic design, hashtags, incorporating virtual tours
Assessing Farm Capital Investment Decisions
(re-posted from CCE Capital Area Ag & Hort Team)
April 13th 12:30 - 1:30 pm
Online

Farm business owners and managers regularly spend money on capital items - equipment, buildings, and land. How do you know whether these investments are good financial decisions? Join CCE ENYCH Ag Business Educator, Elizabeth Higgins, and CAAHP Ag Business Educator, Dayton Maxwell, to learn methods for evaluating capital investment decisions.

Farm Business Transfer Planning
(re-posted from CCE Capital Area Ag & Hort Team)
April 20th, 12:30 - 1:30 pm
Online

Transferring a farm business to the next generation or to another owner is one of the most challenging and important activities a business owner will ever undertake. Maintaining business viability while meeting the needs of the exiting and entering members is paramount. Join Gabriel Gurley of New York FarmNet, for a one-hour program focused on initiating, planning and directing farm business transfer for your business.

Insurance and Liability Protection
(re-posted from CCE Capital Area Ag & Hort Team)
April 27th, 12:30 - 1:30 pm
Online

These days, the amount of money farm businesses spend on various types of insurance is staggering. At the end of the day, are these insurances and levels of insurance really necessary? Join CCE Central New York Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Ag Business Educator, Nicole Tommell for a one-hour overview of insurance and liability protection with the goal of maximizing insurance effectiveness while balancing insurance costs.

Funding Opportunities

National Grid Agricultural Discount
(re-posted from National Grid)
on-going

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.

NRCS - EQIP On-Farm Energy Initiative
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

NRCS - EQIP High Tunnel System Initiative
(re-posted from NRCS)
on-going

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

National Rollover Protective Structure (rollbar) Rebate Program
(re-posted from ROPS4U)
rolling rebate opportunity

"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"

Farm Storage Facility Loans
(re-posted from USDA-FSA)

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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