Annual Food Fest connects community to producers

The annual Locally Grown Food Fest continues to draw consumers and vendors together for a fun and educational evening. Over 20 farms showed off their locally grown products in March to a crowd of 400. A highlight this year was the announcement of the location of the Corning Meat Locker - Ferris Street in Corning. The Meat Locker is a place for consumers to store frozen meats purchased directly from farms. The Finger Lakes Meat Project’s primary goal is to increase the number of Finger Lakes consumers buying meat from local farms. Visit www.fingerlakesmeatproject.com for details.

Steuben youth learn how to be engaged citizens

Robert Murphy, Wayland (Southern Tier Livestock 4-H Club); Charlie Coley, Wayland (Loon Lake Raiders 4-H Club); and Raven Foote, Cohocton (Willing Workers 4-H Club) recently returned from the state capital for the 80th Annual New York State 4-H Capital Days Program held March 1-3, 2015.

Participants met with Assemblyman Bob Oaks who discussed the legislative process, observed a working session of the state legislature, learned how to make a difference in their communities from Assemblyman Peter Lopez, and visited with Assemblyman Brian M. Kolb, 131st Assembly District, and Senator Michael F. Nozzolio, 54th Senate District. Additionally, Coley and Murphy met with Richard A. Ball, commissioner of NYS Ag and Markets.

Charlie Coley said, “Out of all the 4-H trips and activities that I have taken part in, none of them have come close to exceeding that of the 4-H Capital Days Trip. The trip gave me a much better understanding about what our government does for New York State, but more importantly it taught me that one of the most important things to do as a citizen to get involved in our government. After having the opportunity to speak with many of these people, I now know that it is the people that ultimately decide the fate of our country. Also, the tours of the capital building gave me a higher respect for what our ancestors did to create our state government and what it means to be a citizen of the state of New York.”
New winter Farmer’s Market in Bath offers locally produced food year-round

Although it was cold and very snowy outside on the opening day of Steuben County’s newest farmers’ market, there were six local farms offering a wide variety of local products for sale. The new Bath Winter Farmers’ Market at the VA Medical Center offered honey, maple syrup, micro-greens, meats, cheese and eggs, baked goods, preserves, fruit and leather all made using ingredients produced locally. Two additional farms have since joined, bringing an even wider variety of local meats to the market.

The market was made possible with the support of a Farmers Market Promotion Program Grant and is being coordinated by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Steuben County and the Bath VA Medical Center Wellness Committee. The Bath VA enthusiastically volunteered their leisure room in Building 92 on the campus grounds on the second and fourth Tuesdays of February, March and April. It is open to the general public, VA staff, patients and visitors.

Steuben 4-H’ers learn safe machinery operation

Seven Steuben County 4-H members recently completed at least 24 hours of classroom and hands-on tractor instruction. The 4-H Tractor and Machinery Operation Program training allows youth to operate a tractor over 20 PTO horsepower, or connect or disconnect an implement or any of its parts as well as to operate a variety of equipment. The youth were Joseph Compton, Shelby Hammond, Nathan Payne, Matt Smith, Matt Stewart, Abigail Wright, and John Wright, Jr. from Steuben County and Sam Stewart from Schuyler County.

Abigail Wright said, “I learned how to think before you do, because if you don’t think, then you will regret it. In the tractor course we didn’t just learn tractor safety. They taught us about life and what not to do. If you don’t do the right thing, and you don’t have common sense, you will get hurt. We watched and listened to stories about people that put themselves in a bad position and some never got out.”

Santangelo joins CCE-Steuben Agriculture Team

This spring, Aaron Santangelo is joining the Steuben County Ag Team to work with producers both on-one-one and through educational programs related to field crop production. He will be assisting growers with field crops and general production questions.

Santangelo works for CCE-Allegany where he helps coordinate and facilitate field and forage crop programming, pesticide education, and general producer questions. He will work part time for Steuben County while continuing to provide programs in Allegany County. He has a degree in Agriculture Education and Animal Science from Cornell University.

Any questions that growers or landowners have can be directed to the Aaron at 585-268-7644 ext. 14. He looks forward to meeting and hearing from growers from across the county and is looking for input from producers on what types of field crop events that they would like to see.

2015 Ag Literacy Week

During NY Agricultural Literacy Week "Weaving the Rainbow" was read in seven Steuben County schools and one public library consisting of 35 classrooms reaching 624 Pre-K –through third grade students. There were 15 books donated to these locations and others.
Six Steuben 4-H’ers get top 30 and judges’ choice awards

Out of 90 presenters at the Finger Lakes District Public Presentation Program, 15 were Steuben County 4-H members. They were selected from the Steuben County Public Presentations to attend the March regional event. The complete list of names can be found on the CCE-Steuben website. Steuben members selected in the Top 30 presenters were Michal Ekler, Rachel Ekler, Caleb O’Dell-Oriend, Peter Kelly, and Alex Uhl. Those selected for Judges Choice awards were Victoria Kelly and Caleb O’Dell-Oriend.

Donation will bolster potato education and new farm guide

The Agriculture and Natural Resources Program at CCE-Steuben received a $2,500 donation from the Monsanto Fund on behalf of Jane & Dave Mehlenbacher, Mehlenbacher Farm, Wayland. This generous donation will be used to bolster two core agriculture programs. It will help host a workshop on post-harvest handling and storage management of potatoes with keynote speaker Dr. Steve Johnson, University of Maine. He will discuss post-harvest potato management, a growing concern among local potato producers due to extreme weather conditions during the growing season. Storage management has become an important aspect in the potato production system as more processors look to the growers to store more and more of their potatoes.

The funds will also help encourage Steuben County residents to buy local farm products through the printing and distribution of the Steuben County Farm Guide. This popular guide contains over 60 farms, 16 wineries, and four breweries. The farm guide helps connects consumers to producers and encourage local food sales all year long. The newest edition will be available May 1.

Podsiedlik to develop new partnerships for obesity prevention

CCE-Steuben wants to welcome Larkin Podsiedlik as their Finger Lakes Eat Smart New York Senior Nutritionist, supervising eight front line nutrition educators across Steuben, Tompkins, Chemung, Schuyler, Yates and Livingston Counties. She served as Community Programs Manager at Foodlink in Rochester and grew their nutrition education program from a staff of one reaching 100 people to a staff of nine reaching 2,000 people each year. Her concentration on creating partnerships and excellent service made a huge impact.

Growing up in a rural area near Syracuse, she graduated from Geneseo with an Anthropology degree and earned a graduate degree focused on agriculture, food, and the environment from Tufts University. Internships led her to Maine working with Somali refugees in community nutrition and agriculture and to Foodlink.

“I enjoyed interacting with the community and seeing nutrition education happen...I got to see the impact and hear from the people who said ‘This made a difference in my life’ rather than just distributing the food,” she said.

Early in her career CCE-Columbia/Greene told her, “You belong in Extension.” This prediction has finally come true. She wanted to return to a rural area to work in nutrition and community development. Podsiedlik enjoys both baking and running, and has signed up for this year’s Wineglass Marathon in Corning, having run the Boston Marathon a few years ago for charity. She aims for a finish time under four hours. She lives in Newfield with her husband, David.
Get a peek at today’s booming hops and microbrewery industry

The public is invited to Cornell Cooperative Extension of Steuben County’s Annual Gala to be held on Thursday, May 14, 2015 from 5:00-8:00 p.m. at the Steuben Brewing Company, 10286 Judson Road, Hammondsport, NY.

There were only two hops growers in New York State back in 2001, but today there is a vibrant revival in hops cultivation and growth of microbreweries with over 100 growers, 250 acres of hops and 150 breweries across the state. The booming brewing industry has expanded to an increased hops and barley production and a surging interest in education about the process.

Join us at a local farm brewery during Craft Beer Week for a personal behind-the-scenes look at the fermentation process. Learn about the importance of the quality of ingredients – the hops, the malt, the yeast and the water and how these four ingredients can create so many styles and flavors of beer.

Following the tour, get the chance to taste those different styles and flavors in the tasting room in a souvenir beer glass. Wine tastings will also be available. Complete the evening with wiener's from The Wienery and hors d’oeuvres. CCE-Steuben will offer several delightful auction items and announce their volunteers and business partners of the year. This entire fun evening is only $25 per person in advance ($35 at the door). Tickets can be reserved by calling 607-664-2300 or online at http://bit.ly/ccegala. CCE-Steuben offers a tradition of cutting edge research in agriculture to promote a profitable, sustainable food supply that is safe, reliable and healthy. Spend the evening with us celebrating our partners, our achievements, and our staff and volunteers.