As I complete my first year as the Executive Director for Cornell Cooperative Extension of Wyoming County, I have spent some time reflecting on the changes this year has brought us both good and bad. When I accepted this position, my intention was to keep changes to a minimum for my first year while I learned about our Association and our community. Of course, sometimes the best laid plans do not manage to come to fruition.

There are many strengths to our Association and our programs. We have strong community support, talented staff, and dedicated volunteers. Our work is valued in the community and beyond, with one of our Educators, Don Gasiewicz, receiving an award from the National Association of County Agricultural Agents (NACAA) and eight of our youth competing in national events. Wyoming County celebrated the 175th anniversary of our county fair and our 50th 4-H Livestock Auction. The auction has grown to netting just under $300,000 for the youth involved in the program, money that many put towards their education and building their future. This would not be possible without the strong support of local businesses and farmers, teachers and families who value our children and believe in them.

Wyoming County leads the state in agricultural production of overall Agriculture Sales, Corn Silage, Milk Sales, Potatoes, Gallons of Maple Syrup Sold, and Cattle and Calf Sales. To support these needs, our Agriculture Educators continue to expand the programs they offer and work with colleagues across the state to address issues as they emerge. Some of those are issues of production, such as seeking to understand the impact of new invasive species on crops, and some of those issues are social, such as understanding how the labor market is impacting our farmers’ bottom lines.

One of the bigger unanticipated changes this year was the loss of our Agriculture in the Classroom funding. For six years, this program was generously funded by Senator Gallivan as a Special Legislative Project, and has come to be valued by our schools as an introduction to the importance of Agriculture to our community. Through the efforts of school staff and 4-H Educator Stephanie Luders, we are working with four districts to explore ways we can continue this program going into the future.

But with some losses, also come some gains. Looking to the future, we have several exciting things on the horizon. Our Association, in partnership with the Associations of three other counties, received a generous grant from the Ralph C. Wilson Jr Foundation to support out of school STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) work, and the coming year will see us beginning this endeavor. Additionally, we have begun planning for the return of Dairy STEM Camp at Camp Wyomoco next summer. We are having our Agriculture Educators begin to receive training to partner with Ag and Markets for On Farm Readiness Reviews, and we are looking to begin work in the coming year on an updated Farmland Protection Plan for the County.

The work our office does is critical to our community. That becomes even more evident in tough times. And so I invite you to reach out to us if you have questions or ideas so that we may better serve the needs of our constituents going forward.

Yours in Service,
Laura L. Fuller, M.S.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

As I complete my first year, my intention was to bring us both good changes this year has reflected, growing and supporting an active Master Gardener program. Don has achieved these successes during his seven-year Cornell Cooperative Extension career in addition to leadership for a cultural and outdoor log grown, shiitake mushroom viability project focused on establishment of production practices to extension programming. Don created and implemented a Mushroom Viability Project. Gasiewicz turned his passion for niche crops into vibrant Horticulture and natural resource educator Don Gasiewicz Receives the National Achievement Award.

As stated by Ag Commissioner Richard Ball, managed bees are essential to agriculture and the food industry, providing honey and pollination services, and are vital to enhancing the environments natural resources.

AND ASSOCIATION HIGHLIGHTS

Congratulations to Danielle Herrick who competed at the National Dairy Bowl contest in Louisville, Kentucky. The NYS team placed first and Danielle placed third individually!

Congratulations to the NYS Hippology team who competed in Louisville, Kentucky. The NYS Team placed 5th in written test team score, 8th in stations team score, second in team problem score, second in horse judging score, and 5th place overall team. Congratulations Madison Drysdale for representing Wyoming County on the team!

The Good People of Wyoming County – A Beeyard Story
by Debra Welch, Ag & Natural Resources

Back in 2012 a young Payden Buchholz already had his own honeybee colonies. Fascinated with and intent on learning more about these important pollinators, he convinced his parents that having beehives in the backyard would be a good thing. It was. Payden won the ‘Best of Show’ at the Wyoming County Fair with his honey harvest that year.

He went on to add more hives, mostly by capturing swarms in yards and honeybee colonies from buildings (called a ‘cutout’). Recently I helped Payden with a couple of cutouts, and the care that he displayed in searching for the queen and preserving as much of the brood as possible were commendable. He explained each step of his process, and I was the one who learned.

As time and circumstances changed, Payden suddenly had a critical need to find a new place to keep his honeybees. He wanted to be sure that the new beeyard location would be a good one for the bees. But he was short on resources, and didn’t know where he could take them that would be close by so that he could care for them.

As luck would have it, two of his fellow beekeepers, Alice and Keith Perkins had just such a place. They had lost their own bees, and had not replaced them. Their beeyard is nearly ideal; protected, close to meadows, water, trees, and swamp. The Perkins’ still enjoy honeybees, and are perfect as seasoned keepers for ‘keeping an eye’ on the beeyard populated with Payden’s honeybees. Payden reports that he enjoyed a great harvest this year, measured in the gallons of honey! And is very grateful to the Perkins’ for their kindness. His honeybee colonies are thriving.

As stated by Ag Commissioner Richard Ball, managed bees are essential to agriculture and the food industry, providing honey and pollination services, and are vital to enhancing the environments natural resources.
4-H Dairy

Each year the dairy program strives to deliver hands on learning opportunities to engage youth participants. These opportunities allow youth to acquire new knowledge in the fields of leadership, animal science, decision making, and evaluations. This past year we offered eleven program opportunities for dairy members with 187 member contacts. Some of the events included topics such as dairy bowl, dairy judging, a calf necropsy, animal selection clinic, dairy challenge, and our new dairy parlor promotion group!

4-H Meat Animal Program

This year the 4-H meat animal program celebrated a great milestone with the 50th Annual Wyoming County 4-H Meat Animal Auction. Over the past 50 years, the program has grown from nine initial youth members to more than 200 youth participants annually! While many aspects of the meat animal project have evolved over time, the fundamentals remain the same; allowing youth to learn valuable life skills by raising quality meat animals for consumers. The success of our local program is a combination of dedicated 4-H families, volunteers and community support that will continue to move forward into the next 50 years.

4-H Horse Program

In an effort to create more hands on and applicable educational event programs for youth, the horse program was excited to include some new events for the 4-H year. Highlights include a Farrier Clinic teaching youth about the career and a hoof trimming demonstration, a braiding clinic with hands on tutorials, a health clinic by Perry Vet, and a shornmanship clinic. We offered seven educational experiences for horse project members, totaling 194 member contacts. Members enjoyed learning about new career paths, showing skills and vet science.

4-H Award Trips

4-H award trips are a very important part of the learning process of 4-H as they provide an opportunity for 4-Hers to learn about careers, visit interesting places, and meet fascinating people. In 2018, twenty-seven Wyoming County 4-Hers were selected to participate in award trips offered throughout New York State and the northeast. 4-Hers had the opportunity to participate in the following great trips:

- Dutch Country Exploration (toured businesses and sights in the Lancaster County and Harrisburg, PA areas including Julius Sturgis Pretzel Bakery, Wolf Sanctuary, Indian Echo Cavern, Hershey Chocolate World, etc.);
- Vermont Career Exploration (career exploration and tours of the following New England businesses/colleges: King Arthur Flour, Fat Hat Factory, New England Culinary Institute, Ben & Jerry's, Shelburne Farms, and Teddy Bear Factory);
- 4-H Capital Days in Albany (leadership and government career opportunities);
- 4-H Career Exploration Program at Cornell University (exposure to an array of academic fields and career opportunities);

Award trips are sponsored by the Wyoming County 4-H Leaders’ Association through funds from the annual 4-H Cookie Sale held each spring.
Shooting Sports Members Participate in National 4-H Contest

Members of the Wyoming County 4-H Shooting Sports team traveled to Grand Island, Nebraska during June in order to represent New York State at the 2018 National 4-H Shooting Sports Championship in both air pistol and rifle.

Rebekah Spicer from Pavilion, coached by Brian Spicer competed as a team of one, and was the first pistol competitor to represent New York State in this discipline. The rifle team made up of Nathan Colopy from Castile, Andrew Paddock from Perry, Kyle Perl from Strykersville, and Joseph Fisher from Warsaw, coached by Nathan Paddock competed against 84 competitors from 24 different states. They earned the 4th place team in 3-position, 5th place team in international standing with Nathan Colopy placing 9th as an individual, 3rd place team in silhouettes with Nathan Colopy placing 2nd and Andrew Paddock placing 10th as individuals. Overall they were the 4th place team with Nathan Colopy placing 2nd as an individual.

Cake Decorating Series

This winter the 4-H office hosted a four-part cake decorating series! These workshops were wildly popular – with over 20 participants. The series started with talking about tools to get started in cake decorating, and building on these ideas with how to cut and layer a cake, how to pipe different shapes and flowers on a cake, and how to use fondant. Youth had fun while learning new skills at every class. This summer at the county fair, we held a cake decorating contest which was very popular, and some of the youth that participated in the winter series came back for this event! It was special to see how some of the 4-H’ers really took to the artistry, practiced determination and heightened their skills in just a few months. We were pleased to see so many youth engaged, and are planning winter baking workshops again this fall/winter.

Clothing and Textiles

Participation in the 4-H clothing and textiles project builds self-esteem, develops a sense of accomplishment, and allows youth to express their individuality by tapping into their personal creativity! One of the highlights of the clothing and textiles project area is sewing a garment to be worn at the annual Clothing Revue. This year, fifty-six Wyoming County 4-H members had clothing garments evaluated on all aspects of clothing construction including choice of fabric, sewing and finishing details, as well as fit on April 26th and 28th. 4-H members participated in the revue held Friday evening, May 11th at the Warsaw Central High School. This year’s theme was “Wheel of Fashion”. 4-H’ers modeled an array of garments including aprons, shirts, shorts, pants, pajamas, nightgowns, vests, and suit coat. Participants also showed off handmade blouses, skirts, jumpers, ponchos, jumpsuits, and a variety of dresses on stage. In addition to participating in the county clothing revue, seventeen 4-H’ers represented Wyoming County at the Western District 4-H Clothing Revue held on July 13th at the Glen Iris Inn in Letchworth State Park. Seven Wyoming County 4-H’ers also participated in the State Fair Fashion Revue held in the Youth Building at the New York State Fair in Syracuse.
Master Gardener Outreach

CCE Wyoming hosted a regional Master Gardener (MG) training with forty attendees from WNY. Cornell University staff presentations aimed to train MGs focused on invasive species, insect, disease diagnostics, and integrated pest management. County MG programs presented local outreach efforts and networked.

MGs attended a field day at the Geneva Agricultural Experiment Station learning about vegetable field trials, experimental crops like agricultural hemp, and efforts to control spotted wing drosophila in order to spread this knowledge through community outreach events.

Master Gardeners presented to five garden clubs, two farmers markets, are active at the fair judging flowers and vegetables, staffing the extension booth, and hosting events to promote local businesses.

Three new Master Gardener trainees are currently participating in this year’s training. Current MGs contributed 394 hours of their time in 2018 to CCE Wyoming County.

Beekeeping and Pollinators

A variety of workshops and functions were held with the growing discussion group, the Wyoming County Beekeepers. Included were a Beeyard walk with colony installation (14 attended), where two honeybee nucs (nuclear colonies) were installed in new hives. A group discussion of care and feeding of nucs and packages followed. A Mead-Making with honey class (20 attended) was held at the Ag Center and included small bites of local foods, as instructor Jeremy Baer presented basic protocols and guidelines. A beekeeper fundraiser booth at Garden day sold flower and plant seedlings for folks to plant and grow in support of beneficial pollinators. Many honey and honey products entries were displayed at the County Fair, and a labeling class was held in front of the display case. A beeyard walk for IPM featuring vapor treatment of varroa destructor mites was was demonstrated in September. 43 honeybee enthusiasts attended the annual Taste of Honey fundraiser at the Hole in the Wall Restaurant, to hear from Cornell University Professor Scott McArt speak on honeybee genetics and breeding.

Vegetable Crops/Season Extension Support

A season extension workshop was conducted for existing and new growers. Discussion included technical aspects of high tunnels while demonstrating growing cold hardy crops in winter. Twenty-seven people attended with three local schools sending superintendents and staff. CCE Wyoming has assisted Attica, Warsaw, and Pavilion schools with their tunnels with the goal of teaching students how to grow and care for crops while understanding where their food comes from. Summer grown produce is picked by volunteers and sent to local food pantries for those without access to fresh produce, benefitting the community. CCE Wyoming is a continued resource for technical assistance on incorporating tunnels into growing operations for new and existing growers alike.
CDL License Instruction

Offered only for Farm Owners and Employees, the CDL License training has proven invaluable for the local agriculture community. 14 students completed the Fall CDL instruction class in November, and over half have obtained their CDL licenses.

39 students completed the Spring CDL Instruction class on March 2, gaining practical road time in the new BOCES road tractors, and over half of the class have received their licensing.

New this year is the testing location at the County buildings in Warsaw, which is very convenient for the area farm operations who are sending employees. NYS has recently changed and expanded the road test, which originally was about 30 minutes, now is about 75 minutes.

Vegetable Gardening for Success Program

Eleven families participated in a vegetable gardening for success program offered in 2018. This three class workshop series started with sitting your vegetable garden, creating healthy soils and led participants through topics like when and what to plant while prioritizing crops for space and time. Designed to help the novice gardener tune the home garden into an abundant source of healthy and disease free crops, CCE Wyoming provided take home resources and hands on activities to help attendees become successful and efficient gardeners.

Pesticide Certification/Recertification Course

The annual CORE pesticides certification/recertification course continues to grow in popularity. Thirty-seven agriculture related professionals took the 3.5 hours pesticide safety instruction, to obtain recertification credits on their pesticide applicators license or prepare for the New York State pesticide certification exam. CCE Wyoming works with the NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation to offer the exam in Wyoming County immediately following the classroom instruction.

Maple

Analyzing Maple Syrup at Merle Maple in Attica. 21 producers attended. This workshop formulated to acquaint WNY maple producers on the newest testing equipment, such as using a Spectrophotometer to determine the correct grade and best use for syrup samples, using a Biochemistry Analyzer to determine the percent alcohol in products such as the Bourbon Barrel Aged Maple Syrup, and how a Digital Benchtop Refractometer will give an accurate range of brix, sugar content, in maple products. Testing the accuracy of refractometers and hydrometers was also included for any maple producer who brought in their instruments.

Maple Tubing Workshop, Alexander, NY, hosted by Sage Family Maple. (located at Randy Sewerniak Maple Sugarbush, Walker Road, Alexander, NY. Instruction about installation and benefits of using 3/16 sap tubing, including main lines, vacuum, and more, with NYS Maple Specialist Steve Childs.

In December 2017, the WNY Maple School enjoyed a new venue at Attica Central School with the assistance of the enthusiastic Attica FFA, and 100 attendees went to classes such as Production for Beginners, Marketing and Using Reverse Osmosis Filtering. Fall maple meetings have set a new slate of classes for the December 2018 WNY Maple School, again at Attica Central School.
Incubation and Embryology

Incubation and Embryology is one of our most requested projects through Ag in the Classroom. Through this exciting 21-day project students learn about incubating chickens and ducks, their life cycles, how to care for these farm animals, and how they are used in agriculture. The project lasts 21 days which includes the hatching of 12 fertile eggs from local sources, an embryology lesson in which the eggs are candled in the classroom, and many other lessons and activities if requested. This past spring more than 50 classrooms participated in the project. One classroom is Warsaw Elementary hatched 6 ducks this past spring. Incubation and Embryology is a very successful project which teaches student’s responsibility, comradery, and the knowledge of yet another aspect of our agricultural community.

Ag Literacy Week

From March 19-23, 2018 to celebrate New York agriculture, volunteers read a book with an agricultural theme to second graders in Wyoming County Schools. Students were read, “Before We Eat: From Farm to Table” by Pat Brisson. Students were taken on the journey from farm to table to understand different aspects of agriculture and the many possible careers involved. This is a captivating glimpse on what it takes to bring the food we eat to us in order to nourish our bodies and spirits. Agriculture contributes over $37 billion to the New York State economy and ranks in the top ten in the nation for yogurt, apples, grapes, calves, and onions, among other products. These products and industries create careers essential to the food system that are not always initially thought of: arborists, soil engineers, animal geneticists, butchers, aqua culturists, truck drivers, grocers, and more.

Enviroscape

The Enviroscape is another popular lesson through Ag in the Classroom. The lesson allows students to get dirty while learning about pollution, the water cycle, their local watersheds, and the role of agriculture in environmental stewardship. The project consists of a large model of a watershed which is then “polluted” by the students. The class discovers common pollutants in our environment, where they come from, and how they can harm our planet. At the end, a “rain storm” hits the watersheds and shows how erosion and chemical runoff can affect our waterways. The students then brainstorm ways of preventing this from happening through sustainable farming. The Enviroscape is an interactive way to expose the next generation of possible environmental hazards and shows another side of agriculture.aspect of our agricultural community.

AG IN THE CLASSROOM 2018 IMPACT

19,500
Student Contacts
825
Classes taught
4-H Connecting Youth to Nature

Camp hosted another 75 urban youth from Buffalo and Rochester for a fifth year as a part of the 4-H Connecting Youth to Nature Program. These campers spent a full week at camp participating in a variety of programs and activities including ecology, archery, boating, outdoor skills and swimming. So far, Camp Wyomoco has hosted 350 campers in this program. We continue to build relationships with community partners in both Erie and Monroe Counties to serve youth.

International Camp Staff

In 2018, camp was able to bring seven amazing international staff members from several countries including England, Scotland, Australia and New Zealand. They each brought a variety of skills to their jobs at camp. Some worked as a part of the waterfront team while others taught in the horsemanship program, outdoor skills and sports. The addition of international staff brings new ideas and great cultural exchange to our campers and families. This year our international staff were able to help with Friends and Family camp.

Friends and Family Camp Weekend

Camp Wyomoco hosted several families for our Friends and Family Weekend, which took place in August. Families spend 3 days enjoying all the fun activities that campers get to do during the summer, such as boating, hiking, fishing, sports, archery, campfires, crafts and family game night. We welcomed nine families and a few that had been part of the Wyomoco staff when they were teens. The weather was amazing and everyone had a wonderful time and some awesome camp experiences including a hike to the gorge.

Leadership Week at Camp

2018 was our second year hosting leadership week at camp. Campers ages 14 to 16 who had completed the Counselor-In-Training program over the summer were eligible to return for a week dedicated to learning more about leadership both at camp and in the world. Campers and staff prepared presentations on a variety of leadership topics including communication and teambuilding. In addition, we held an etiquette dinner. Thirty-five returning campers made this week memorable.

Cloverbud Camp

For the first time ever, 4-H Camp Wyomoco hosted campers ages 5, 6 and 7 to our Cloverbud Camp. 25 campers spent 3 days and 2 nights at camp doing crafts, swimming, sports and many more activities. Cloverbuds sang at campfire and spent time with CITs as a part of the Big Brother/Big Sister program.
Animal Care Skills Training

Dairy Herd Manager

Dairy Herd Managers Training engaged 25 farm personnel, including eight Hispanics. These individuals represented some 17,000 lactating cows on their home farms with a range in size from 130 to 2,000. A manager at each host farm explained their practices. The sessions included real-time translation of the talks and on-farm demonstrations. Through interactive presentations, attendees participated in discussions about stress, record keeping, data use, health management, anatomy, physical examination, ideal environmental conditions, antibiotic stewardship, monitoring cow performance and culling practices. Survey results indicated 85% of the topic areas were rated well at 4 or 5 on a 1 to 5 scale. Participants found value in the course because it provided them with new, detailed information on practical topics.

Dairy Feeder

Four Spanish-speakers and sixteen English-speakers participated in classroom lectures and on-farm sessions to improve their skills for feeding dairy cattle. Comments on program evaluations indicated participants planned to go home and make specific improvements to their feeding routines. Correcting an error like overfeeding by 5% a day would result in saving $900 per 100 cows every month! When multiplied by the 22,500 head of cattle represented by the class, the dollars saved quickly add up. One participant commented, “Been feeding cows for 50 years and still learned at this course!”

Beef Quality Assurance

Two training opportunities allowed 45 producers to become certified or recertified in Beef Quality Assurance. This national voluntary program developed based on scientific research covering: 1. care and husbandry; 2. feedstuffs; 3. feed additives and medications; 4. processing and treatment records; and 5. injectable health products provides classroom and chute-side training and updates on regulations and industry changes regarding antibiotic and other pharmaceutical use.

Harvest NY in Wyoming Co.

Harvest NY (HNY) continues to provide farmstead, facility, and environmental planning assistance to farms in Wyoming County. This year HNY worked on 10 projects on 9 farms, of which three have been completed. These represent a combined estimated total investment of more than $1.2 million.

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In the Weeds

The NWNY Team, working with BASF at the Soybean and Small Grain Congresses, helped over 400 growers and agriculture industry representatives to become certified to use an alternative herbicide dicamba in combination with dicamba resistant soybeans to combat glyphosate resistant broadleaf weeds in soybeans.

Tall Waterhemp, a new weed species to WNY has been identified in nearby counties. At five industry meetings in the winter of 2018, 420 producers learned from NWNY Team Specialists how to identify and manage this prolific weed using a combination of proper crop and herbicide rotations along with cultural methods such as tillage, herbicide resistant varieties, and cover crops to keep Tall Waterhemp in check.

Empowering Family Businesses to Plan for a Successful Transition to the Next Generation

The capital intensive business of farming requires careful planning to effectively transition management and ownership to a new generation. Risks that must be mitigated with a transition plan include: 1) Income and Inheritance taxes when assets ownership changes, 2) costs associated with elder care; and 3) the management capability of successors.

Legal and tax tools exist to address these issues. Implementation of the tools requires careful, customized planning for each farm and family situation. To empower farm managers to develop a succession plan, the NWNY Team and Cornell University’s Pro-DAIRY Program collaborated to offer a one-day seminar and series of discussion focused workshops in three locations.

Forty-seven people from thirty farm businesses attended the one-day seminar. Twenty-eight people from thirteen farms attended the discussion series. Follow-up evaluations completed by 22% of the participating farms indicate 62% took action to either form a transition advisory team or begin work with a professional to craft a business succession plan.

Soil Health

Understanding agronomic, economic, environmental and other resource considerations underlying decisions regarding soil health practices are key to realizing optimal soil health practice adoptions levels.

Team Specialist John Hanchar developed and delivered a one hour webinar for 313 NRCS conservation planners titled, “Cost Effectiveness in Conservation Programs: Return on Investment for Conservation Practices and Systems”. An archive of this presentation has been viewed 131 times. A similar presentation was made to 40 planners at the NYS Soil Health Planners Certification Course. It is estimated planners will apply this knowledge while working with 300 farms.

Specialist Joan Petzen organized learning circles that engaged women, mostly over sixty, non-operating landowners in learning opportunities about soil health, conservation practices and sustainable agriculture leasing. This effort in the Genesee Valley Watershed is part of a multifaceted project with American Farmland Trust funded by the Great Lakes Protection Fund.

A Soil Health TAg Team engaged 20 growers, who will apply their advanced knowledge of soil health practices to 25,000 acres they manage, was organized for the first time by Specialist Jodi Putman.
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Nancy Glazier, Small Farms
John Hanchar, Farm Business
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Kimberly Amey, HR Lead
Harold Coller, Finance Coordinator
Donna James, Finance Lead
Jennifer Matthews, IT Lead
Christi Smith, Regional Systems Support

2019 BUDGET

These charts are a visual representation of the sources from which the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Wyoming County has gained financial support.

COUNTY 20%
$390,000.00

STATE 26%
$639,114.25

FEDERAL 4%
$78,652.95

GRANT/OTHER 50%
$978,215.14

BUDGET TOTAL
$2,085,982.34

“Cornell Cooperative Extension is an employer and educator recognized for valuing AA/EEO, Protected Veterans, and Individuals with Disabilities and provides equal program and employment opportunities”