



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension  
Fulton and Montgomery Counties



# ANNUAL REPORT 2008~2009

Improving agriculture producers' technical knowledge & skills, ensuring sustainability

Advancing the availability of a safe, local food supply

Increasing consumer and financial knowledge & skills

Creating healthy, strong, active individuals, families & communities

Strengthening the next generation of competent, caring & contributing citizens

Building Strong & Vibrant Communities

## A Message from the Board President

2009 was a year of some wonderful opportunities and some very difficult challenges. Success can be measured in different ways and by varying criteria. I will use only four criteria 1) Did someone learn something new and become better at what they do or be a better person for this knowledge? 2) Was there a clear and positive message that Cornell Cooperative Extension presented to the community? 3) Did everyone do the best that they could do? and 4) Did somebody have some fun along the way? Based on my criteria, I could not call 2009 anything other than a resounding success. By any standards, 2009 had some real bright spots for this organization.



**Consumer Horticulture:** Volunteer master gardeners helping home gardeners diagnose insect damage, blight damage, tree diseases, soil testing and general gardening education.

**Commercial Agriculture:** When almost every tomato plant in the state started turning black and growing hairs, this organization had the educators in place and ready to answer questions

**Consumer & Financial Literacy:** Once again, educators were positioned to offer classes in consumer and financial literacy. Energy, credit and debt management and budgeting classes swelled with participants, topping out at just under 1200 people. The VITA program brought recognition as CCEFM not only completed more tax returns than all other participating agencies combined, but also was honored by the IRS for “outstanding effort, dedication, and contributions in building stronger communities throughout this area.”

**4-H Youth Development:** Connie Cockrell was named “Volunteer of the Year” on both a statewide and regional level. In 4-H Animal Science, the Fulton-Montgomery Junior Dairy Judging Team won first place at the NYS Contest and one senior member went to the National Dairy Judging Contest in Harrisburg, PA, placing 14th. The 4-H countywide dog obedience and agility project continues to grow, this year to the point that a show at Fonda Fair was held.

**Nutrition & Health:** The Dining with Diabetes program provided people with diabetes and their families with practical, readily-applicable information to improve their daily eating habits and diets.

**Central NY Dairy & Field Crops Team:** A Precision Feed Management program was kicked into high gear this year when a two-year grant provided resources for a technician. The program aims to improve dairy farm profitability and sustainability while improving environmental quality.

**Ag Economic Development:** CCEFM advanced two major new opportunities for local ag producers to sell their products: Amish Produce Auction in Fort Plain and Mohawk Harvest Cooperative Market in Gloversville. The Ag Economic Development Project and CCEFM collaborated to sponsor off-season markets and the production of a local farm cookbook, *Taste of the Mohawk Valley* and were recognized with the 2008 Agriculture Award by the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce.

**Regional Vegetable Team:** CCEFM joined the newly formed regional vegetable team, which serves 10 counties in eastern NYS. Bringing the knowledge of three regional county educators to the vegetable growers in Fulton and Montgomery Counties.

**Other Regional Involvement** included participation by many members of your Board of Directors in regional brainstorming meetings to look for ways to find synergies and savings across the region. In fact Marilyn is the regional Executive Director communications chair and Karen is the current regional marketing committee chair.

Did we succeed at EVERYTHING in 2009? No. But let me expand my answer to not just say, “no,” but to say “No, not yet.” Have a wonderful 2010 and continue to do the best that you can do to make your communities and the world a better place through education.

Douglas W. Hill, 2008-09 Board President

# Agriculture

## Commercial Horticulture

Cornell Cooperative Extension educators across the state saved growers thousands of dollars in 2009 by providing timely information about the devastating disease late blight (*Phytophthora infestans*). As a result of newsletters and outreach efforts, many commercial growers were able to protect tomato and potato crops from total failure.

The Cornell Cooperative Extension horticulture and agriculture programs, along with the Montgomery County Agriculture Economic Development Project, provided horticulture information and marketing assistance to help make the new Amish Produce Auction a success. Expertise shared with the growers, the auction board, and at the auction itself helped growers understand what products were in demand. The program also raised consumer awareness about the auction, increasing sales.

## Precision Feed Management Project

Over the past several years the Central New York Dairy and Field Crops Team has played a leadership role in developing a set of Precision Feed Management benchmarks to be used to assess performance of dairy farms, determining if the nutrients are being utilized efficiently for milk production to increase profitability. The team developed a spreadsheet to calculate the benchmarks and other indicators of efficiency and profitability from readily available farm data.

In 2009 the team received a \$136,750 grant from the NYFVI to guide the development of feed management plans on 60 farms in Fulton, Herkimer, Montgomery and Schoharie Counties. To date 67 farms' feed management plans are in development. One Montgomery County farm has seen the benefits of this project already. This farm was able to improve its milk income minus feed costs by \$.62 per cow per day or for 100 cows an increased profitability of \$22,329 per year.

## Nitrogen Tests for Corn

The team has been part of local and statewide efforts to introduce two new nitrogen tests that help producers know if they have supplied sufficient nitrogen to grow the maximum economic yield while maintaining environmental quality. During 2008-09, 35 farms evaluated these new tests. The results have been promising.

## Consumer Horticulture

CCE Master Gardeners answered over 1000 homeowner questions on topics ranging from insect control to home late blight problems. Master Gardeners contributed hundreds of volunteer hours to outreach opportunities like the Fonda Fair.



# Consumer & Financial Literacy

The Consumer and Financial Literacy program continues to see increasing numbers of people attend workshops. In 2008-09, 1,156 adults attended one and two hour CCE consumer & financial programs.

New this year, the CFL Program partnered with the Nutrition & Health Program to provide consumer education to social services applicants while energy and financial programs continued to be offered in classrooms and after school settings.

Programs open to the general public, including home energy conservation, budgeting and credit/debt management workshops in 2008-09 increased by 45% compared to 2007-08. That is in addition to increasing 81% in 2006-07.

At the 2009 Fonda Fair, CFL Program featured a working, interactive exhibit





concerning home solar energy systems. Using equipment on loan from Cornell University, attendees learned how solar energy ends up as electricity to operate a light bulb, hairdryer and other small appliances in addition to learning about costs and other alternative energy information.

### Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program

A total of 212 returns were prepared by the CCEFM Vita team: site coordinator Andrea Hauser, and volunteers Chris Blanchard and Mark Bolebruch. The Fulmont Coalition prepared a total of 419 returns with Federal refunds of \$604,195 including CCEFM.

CCEFM VITA Summary:

Federal refunds	\$265,296	PA state refunds	257
EITC (Earned income Tax Credit	\$114,107	CT state refunds	60
State refunds	\$ 68,579	KY state refunds	39

CCEFM VITA also worked with Fulton County Drug and Alcohol Addiction Services and Fulton County Adult & Child Protective Services to provide refund preparation.

The CCEFM site received an award from the IRS SPEC office “in recognition and appreciation of outstanding effort, dedication and contributions in building stronger communities throughout this area”.

## 4-H Youth Development

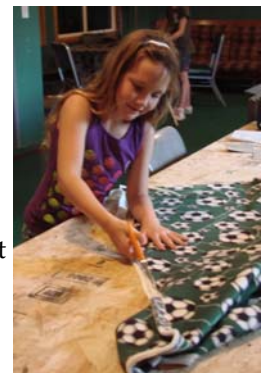
In Fulton and Montgomery Counties, youth participate in a variety of 4-H programming outreach efforts including organized clubs, individual membership, special interest series, school enrichment and after school programming. 4-H offers three primary program areas: science, engineering and technology; healthy living; and citizenship. The fundamental 4-H ideal of practical, “learn-by-doing” experiences encourages youth to experiment, innovate and think independently. 179 club members and 111 independent members participated in the 2008-09 local program. More than 210 adult volunteers contributed more than 42,000 hours in nurturing caring relationships with youth.

Five 4-H members attended 4-H Career Explorations, providing teens with exposure to academic fields, developing leadership skills, providing hands-on experience in a college setting and introducing them to Cornell University

The 4-H program provided learning experiences to 5,799 classroom students and 1,434 after school program and special interest program enrollees. Teachers and after school program leaders received regular newsletters throughout the year.

### 4-H “Youth in Action” Grants Funded by Cumberland Farms

The 4-H program partnered with Nathan Littauer Hospital and Community Hospice of Amsterdam in a project to support local children affected by chronic illness or in the grieving process. Youth and adult volunteers made a total of 106 fleece blankets and donated new toys and sport equipment to Camp SuperStarrs at Nathan Littauer and Hospice’s Camp Erin. 4-H staff also taught healthy snacking lessons at Camp SuperStarrs and provided resources for a pizza supper held for youth campers and their families at Camp Erin.



### New Format Featured at 4-H Horse Camp

Forty 4-H horse project members participated in 4-H Horse Camp '09. This year's format changed to incorporate more team building and community service opportunities. The five-day camp held at the Fonda Fairgrounds included workshops both on and off horses. The program also involved 17 volunteer and guest speakers/instructors.



During the 2008-09 year, the 4-H Dog Obedience and Dog Agility programs showed



growth. Eight dedicated 4-H youth spent 16 class hours learning to train their dogs and 5 youth spent 30 hours in class learning techniques in dog agility training. All youth also spent countless hours practicing between class and preparing for participation in the dog show held at the 2009 Fonda Fair.

## Nutrition & Health

### Eat Smart New York!

Eat Smart New York! (ESNY) is a program that reached 687 participants, representing 2,160 family members, with limited resources who learned a variety of skills designed to improve nutrition, reduce the risk of food-borne illness and help stretch food dollars. 71% completed a minimum of six classes. ESNY is an educational component of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) funded through the NYS Office of Temporary Disability and Assistance.

### Home Food Preservation

CCEFM addresses the growing economic and food safety concerns of local residents who want to save money and take control of their food supply. Classes on freezing, water-bath and pressure canning attracted 47 participants, including beginners and intermediates who learned up-to-date practices critical to safe home food preservation. Nutrition Program Educators took the message on the road to an additional 49 individuals at programs throughout the two counties. An interactive food preservation display drew the interest of many at the Fonda Fair this year.



### Targeted Nutrition Classes

Nutrition Program Educators taught several new classes this year at various community sites that included "Eating in the Fast Lane" and "Stress and Emotional Eating", reaching over 112 individuals. Two sessions of "Dining with Diabetes" reached 20 people with diabetes. "Portion Distortion" and diabetes awareness messages reached 274 adults at community events and employee health fairs throughout Fulton and Montgomery Counties.

### Stretching Food Dollars: A Personal Story

*When "Mary" first enrolled in ESNY she reported running out of food at the end of the month and was serving single food group meals to her family (ex. mashed potatoes). She relied on inexpensive processed foods and unhealthy snacks to keep her children satisfied after school. After several lessons, Mary learned to recognize appropriate portion sizes, how to read a food label and use unit pricing. She learned to plan meals and assemble simple recipes. Five weeks after initial enrollment she credited her daughter's weight loss to portion control and more physical activity. At her final lesson, "Mary" proudly shared that she was able to use leftovers to produce a balanced meal even after her SNAP benefits were spent. She also demonstrated having a better understanding of how to stretch food dollars by purchasing store brands, watching unit pricing and avoiding junk food.*

## Pantry Places

The directory of food pantry and meal sites in Fulton and Montgomery Counties was revised, updated and shared with providers and organizations who serve limited resource audiences. The revision came as a result of changes that have taken place in recent months due to shrinking resources and increased demand for accurate information.

# Cornell Cooperative Extension

*provides residents with research-based opportunities to learn for a better tomorrow in Fulton and Montgomery Counties.*

## Board of Directors

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Andrea Hauser

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Roseann Doran, Nutrition & Health

Bonnie Peck, 4-H Animal Science

Crystal Stewart, Agriculture/Horticulture

& Regional Vegetable Team

Linda Wegner, 4-H Program Leader

### Central NY Dairy & Field Crops Team

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David Balbian    Matthew Korona

### Program Educators

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Jean Budlong, Nutrition

Shannon Dygert, 4-H School/After-School Programs

Eileen Lang, Nutrition

Norma Maring, Nutrition

Missy S. Potter, Mont. Co. Ag. Econ. Dev. Project

### Support Staff

Georgia Dutcher, 4-H/Nutrition

Karen Kosinski, Public Affairs Coordinator

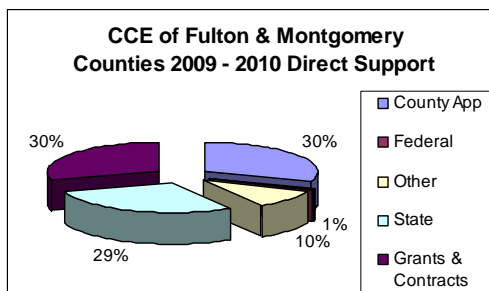
Susan Maloney, Association Secretary

### Technology

Erik Yager, Regional IT Coordinator

## Revenues 2008-2009

2008-2009		
\$	Sources	%
329,019.00	Co. Appropriations	30%
12,000.00	Federal	1%
106,735.00	Other	10%
315,888.00	State	29%
319,938.00	Grants & Contracts	30%
<b>1,083,580.00</b>		<b>100%</b>



Cooperative Extension in Fulton and Montgomery Counties provides equal program and employment opportunities.