



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension

*Helping New Yorkers Improve their Lives  
and Communities*



CCE IMPACT: HARVEST NEW YORK

### **Growing New York's Agriculture and Food Economy**

**Issues/Needs:** Agricultural and food industries contribute \$48.60 billion a year to New York State's economy. Improving production efficiency, food processing quality, and safety are fundamental to the industry's continued and expanded economic viability.

Managers of Western New York's 13,702 farms and food processing operations face dynamic and complex production and business environments that demand comprehensive state-of-the-art practices.

**Response:** Opportunities to expand New York's food and agriculture economy often emerge quickly and in different ways across the state. The Western New York pilot has demonstrated that a rapid deployment of highly qualified educators to a region where an opportunity has emerged can make a big difference in a short time.

The combination of Cornell research based initiatives, private industry investment and highly skilled extension staff is working in Western New York and the same approach can be applied to similar opportunities across New York State.

### **Dairy Processing and Food Safety Outcome/Impacts in Western New York:**

- Trained **236 employees** in food processing and food safety jobs. These employees have total wages of **\$12.8 million**, live in **7 Western New York counties**, 27% of employees were able to take on higher level positions, and **58% had zero previous experience** in the dairy food processing industry

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## Growing New York's Agriculture and Food Economy

### Dairy Processing and Food Safety Outcome/Impacts (continued):

- Working with **18 food and dairy processors** on defining learning objectives and curriculum needs for students graduating from a 2-year degree program in food processing technology
- Developing **AAS degree program** in Food Processing Technology with **Genesee Community College**
- Food Processing Certificate Program through the Genesee County Economic Development Center resulted in **78 applicants, 29 were selected and 25 completed; 80% had no previous experience** working in the food industry, **18 have formal interviews**
- Basic & Advanced Cultured Dairy products courses: offered 2 short courses for folks working in cultured dairy products; **24 people attended from 12 NYS processors**
- Working with a well-established **company who would like to come to NYS** to process Acid Whey (Greek Yogurt Manufacturing byproduct)

### Local Food Distribution and Marketing Outcome/Impacts in Western New York:

- Increased income from **3 Western New York produce auctions** by **\$185,612** through linking Cornell Vegetable Team services and facilitating more customers to the market as a source of NY local produce
- Created **2 new** produce auctions in Seneca and Orleans Counties resulting in **5 businesses** increasing wholesale produce sales of fresh fruits and vegetables by **over \$5 million**
- Expanded farm market opportunities through Food Hubs: **Six new farmers** joined the Finger Lakes Fresh Food Hub which purchased **\$92,000 in produce** from them.
- Collaborating with Field and Fork Network on a **\$175,000 grant** from Farm Credit Northeast and Western NY Power Proceeds Allocation Fund to provide a feasibility study and business plan **for a Western NY food hub**; an additional **\$803,000 in grant money is proposed**
- Working with **4 institutions** to implement or expand a local foods program

### Dairy Modernization and Profitability Outcome/Impacts In Western New York:

- **7 dairy farms** planning process for growth-related projects with 10% minimum projected herd growth representing an increase of 2700 cows resulting in **average of \$1.3 million in increased farm gross revenue**
- 2 dairy farms are likely to install **robotic milkers with economic investment of \$30,000-\$1 million** resulting in improved farm management and quality of life