

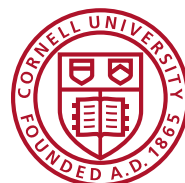
Cornell Cooperative Extension

HARVEST NEW YORK

2022 Year in REVIEW

Linking Consumers and Agriculture Producers

Harvest NY is an innovative Cornell Cooperative Extension team that focuses on growing New York's Farm and Food Economy. Harvest NY seeks to link consumers and producers in four major areas: Food Systems, Urban Agriculture, Emerging Crops, and Climate Resiliency.



On the cover...
Harvest NY Specialist Mallory Hohl
(on the right) with participants of the
Massachusetts Avenue Project Job
Leadership Training Youth Program in
Buffalo, NY. See page 5 for details.



Letter from the Team Leader

2022 was another exciting year for Harvest NY! We developed a new partnership with Scenic Hudson to expand our Climate Resilient Agriculture program, deployed our Farm to School Coordinators statewide, and rolled out programming on Cannabis, strawberries and more. Our major partner in this work is NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, whom we thank. Together we achieved the following:

- Initiated the first ever Bronx strawberry variety trial engaging over 1,000 people through 3 community gardens.
- Landed a \$4,000 seed grant to start a brand new community garden at a transitional housing site in Brooklyn.
- Collaborated on urban garden workshops in Buffalo that led to a 20% increase in high school graduation.
- Built out a Learning Laboratory Urban Farm in Rochester that employed at-risk youth who donated 500 lbs of fresh produce to local pantries.
- Developed pest management plans that led to increased harvest of collard greens by over 23,000 lbs per acre.
- Worked with Northern New York schools to implement a geographic preference bid resulting in a 161% increase of local foods going into cafeterias.
- Connected NYC schools with New York apple growers, resulting in over \$1 million of fresh fruit reaching NYC school children.

Harvest NY prioritizes results for our audiences: those who grow and consume food in New York State. Read on for more info!

Judson Reid
Team Leader and Extension Vegetable Specialist

Harvest NY Educator Kwesi Joseph (back left) and members of the Salvation Army Garden and Nutrition Project stand on the grounds where a new garden will be built.



Harvest NY Expands Garden and Nutrition Education Opportunities for Families in Transitional Housing

Harvest NY Community Gardens Specialist Kwesi Joseph developed a working relationship with Salvation Army Springfield Family Residence, a transitional housing facility in Springfield Gardens, NY (Brooklyn). The Education Coordinator, Bilqis Benu, wanted to start a garden for the children residing at the facility, but did not have the finances to do so.

In the spring of 2022, Kwesi conferred with Dr. Tashara Leak of the Cornell College of Human Ecology (CHE) about the financial limitations facing the Salvation Army Springfield Family Residence. Dr. Leak and Kwesi developed an Engaged Research Seed Grant—a \$4,000 award intended to support CHE faculty and academic staff's scholarship and scientific research collaborations with community partners. The Salvation Army, the Expanded Food and Nutrition Program (EFNEP), and the team at the Action Research Collaborative (ARC) worked together on the proposal. In August 2022, the Seed Grant was awarded!

Natasha Ashley, the EFNEP Coordinator for Brooklyn and Queens, was brought aboard the project along with Monica Gopaul, the Community Nutrition Educator who will be administering nutrition classes at the site. Zeynab Jouzi, a Postdoctoral Associate for Dr. Leak and a member of ARC, is the lead on the project. Ultimately, the goal is to expand the program throughout NYC and the rest of the country, with the project results published in a peer reviewed journal.

Kwesi will design and build the garden, opening it to the residents in the spring of 2023. Nutritional education will also begin in the spring of 2023. The families will learn how to grow food in the garden but will also be given a self-watering pot to grow herbs in their apartment windows. This collaboration among multiple Cornell units and the Salvation Army will create a therapeutic, educational greenspace for families that are in need of housing.

Urban Berry Opportunities Take Root in The Bronx

There are 1.4 million New Yorkers residing in The Bronx, with 26.4% of them living below the poverty line, and 1-in-4 residents reporting to be food insecure. In The Bronx, community gardens fill several needs for their members including access to local, fresh, and nutritious produce, access to green spaces, and activities that encourage healthy lifestyles.



Strawberries are sweet, nutritious, and well-loved by many but varieties widely grown in New York State are difficult to grow in urban areas due to their year-long establishment period before fruiting. Novel varieties of “day-neutral” strawberries require a shorter establishment period and begin producing fruit within a month of planting, but these have not been evaluated for production in New York City in community gardens which often face soil contamination and limited growing space issues.

To see if day-neutral strawberries could fit into these urban growing systems, Harvest NY Specialists Makela Elvy and Anya Osatuke organized an Urban Berry Management workshop, held at Rivers Run in The Bronx, as a needs assessment. Every urban gardener who participated in the workshop left with 25 to 50 day-neutral strawberry plants, varieties ‘Albion’ and ‘Mara Des Bois’, to observe over the summer months between May and September.

To further investigate urban strawberry production, Harvest NY partnered with 3 not-for-profit Bronx community gardens—Community Access, New Settlement, and Rivers Run—for a trial. Makela and Anya assisted in planting and fertilizing the strawberries. Once plants began fruiting, each community garden tracked the number of individuals tasting fruits, and recorded comments about size, shape, health, flavor, and liking. After the fruiting season was over, Anya and Makela held a workshop at Community Access about making low-sugar strawberry jam, to introduce participants to food preservation techniques.

Across all three community gardens, strawberry tastings generated a total of 1,017 direct contacts and new information about successful day-neutral establishment. Participants noticed varietal differences between ‘Albion’ and ‘Mara Des Bois’, with one individual commenting that they prefer ‘Albion’ berries for the larger size and the tasty flavor. Three additional gardening organizations in New York City expressed interest in participating in follow-up studies.

Harvest NY Specialist Makela Elvy (on the right) and an urban gardener inspects bare root strawberry plants.



Urban Ag Specialists Provide Hands-On Learning for Youth at a Buffalo Farm

This summer, three Harvest NY Specialists presented a 3-week workshop series to 25 high school youth in Buffalo, focusing on a range of topics including pest scouting, composting, and land gratitude.

The [Massachusetts Avenue Project](#) (MAP) urban farm on Buffalo's West Side has been employing youth during their Growing Green summer leadership program for almost [two decades](#). During their 8-week paid employment, high school students learn about their local food system, sustainable urban farming practices, how to run a successful Mobile Market, and environmental policy issues. In addition to engaging in applied agriculture training, the students hone valuable skills such as public speaking, journaling, and artistic expression through outlets like poetry and creative writing. Year after year, 100% of the youth graduating from MAP's program go on to college, more than 20 percentage points higher than the City average. Students also learn to become advocates for their local food system, an important need in Buffalo, a city with the 11th highest rate of food insecurity in the state. A productive urban farm can fill the gap in a food system struggling to support a community with low access to grocery stores, fresh fruits and vegetables, and reliable transportation. Education empowering urban growers is a primary cornerstone for both MAP and Harvest NY Specialists.

Harvest NY Urban Garden Specialist Mallory Hohl has been involved with MAP since 2014, from Mobile Market intern to community volunteer to Board of Director's chairperson. She was pleased to host her Harvest NY colleagues Judson Reid and Kwesi Joseph in Buffalo to present on urban growing topics to enrich the youths' farm education experience. The educators' perspectives and hands-on teaching styles brought unique opportunities for the students to experience MAP's urban farm in a new way: scouting for pests and beneficial insects, handling different types of compost, and reflecting on nature in a personal way. When exposure to agriculture and growing one's own food may sometimes be limited for urban audiences, this group was able to engage in a rich experience from experts in their field.

Below left: Urban Garden Specialist Kwesi Joseph encourages a participant to hold compost. Below right: Harvest NY Specialist and Team Leader, Judson Reid, is surrounded by students as he uses a dissecting scope to see pests on a leaf.



Young Adults Gain Relevant and Outstanding Work Skills at the South Lawn Project



Under the direction of Marci Muller and with support from Harvest NY, the lawn area at CCE Monroe's office began a transformation from a half-acre of lawn to an educational farm, named the South Lawn Project (SLP). On May 30, 2022, with the arrival of a Cornell summer intern, Nika Colley, serving as the Farm Manager, sod removal and bed preparation began, followed by the planting of seedlings that were established over the winter in the Monroe County Parks' greenhouse, and then direct sowing of seeds. Nika was joined by the first enrollees in the GROWS (Gaining Relevant and Outstanding Work Skills) program, providing her with a crew throughout the growing season.

The GROWS program is a transitional jobs program designed for young adults, 18-26 years old, who are unemployed and live in some of Rochester's most challenged neighborhoods. Utilizing the SLP farm as a vehicle, the GROWS participants build structure in their daily life, develop the soft skills needed to be a successful employee, and create a resume with references. In addition to learning how to grow produce, the GROWS participants received daily mentoring, working side-by-side Nika and other CCE Monroe staff. They all received OSHA 10-Hour Safety certification and basic horticulture training too. Participants and CCE Nutrition Educators prepared food together and meals were shared with CCE staff. Participants also developed a 5-Year Plan to establish individual goals; this information was used by SLP staff to assist them in their transition from GROWS to employment or school or training.

In 2022, 10 participants enrolled in the GROWS program. One exited to enroll in Monroe Community College, four are employed, one is in training for forklift operation, three left the program, and one became incarcerated. We include this here to acknowledge the realities of this population. In this our first program year, we achieved a 60% positive outcome for youth that otherwise would not participate in a skills training program.

In addition to the workforce development aspect of the program, **all of the produce harvested from the SLP was donated to local food pantries. We harvested more than 500 pounds of vegetables!** Our harvest weight would have been higher, however late in the season, due to the public access to the property, individuals were harvesting produce when the farm was left unattended. Although we will lock the farm gate to prevent non-GROWS staff from entering in the future, in the spirit of community, we plan to build a produce stand for people to help themselves after we have weighed and recorded the harvest.



Program expansion for 2023 will include 256 sq. ft. of raised-bed gardens for handicap accessibility, a mushroom-growing area under existing shade, and creation of a pollinator-friendly garden in partnership with the Master Gardeners. Initial educational programs will include Growing Mushrooms, IPM Monitoring, and How to Sharpen Your Garden Tools. Additionally, CCE staff is seeking to develop value-added products that can be made from SLP harvests to extend our season.



Saul Shuster and Mike Kincaid from Headwater Food Hub at 490 Farmers. Photo by Marci Muller, Harvest NY.

Rochester Urban Garden Celebrations

The Urban Ag Working Group (UAWG) is a grass-roots collection of individuals and organizations that garden, farm, or operate/grow in community gardens in the City of Rochester or those who support such efforts. Marci Muller has been the Coordinator of the group since September 2020.

From 2015-2019, UAWG held a Spring Conference that focused on educational presentations and workshops for new gardeners and seasoned gardeners to build support for urban agriculture in the city. With the arrival of COVID and the ensuing shutdowns, the conference, like so many other events, was put on hold. In 2022, UAWG decided it was time to bring back an in-person conference.

The Urban Agriculture Working Group's Spring Conference has traditionally leaned on local/regional presenters to maintain the grassroots nature of the organization. With support from Harvest NY, UAWG was able to connect with Chaw Chang, an organic small farmer in Ithaca, who shared the road he traveled to launch and grow his farm. Chaw was able to connect with the attendees in a warm, personal manner and answered many general questions related to farming and urban gardening, as well. Other presentations included:

- an introduction to Black Urban Gardeners (BUGS), a gardening collective in Rochester
- Making Space for Black Youth in Urban Gardening
- Caring for Your Soil
- Adding Livestock to Your Urban Garden
- a panel discussion on Urban Agriculture in the City of Rochester

There were 51 people who attended the conference; all survey results showed that everyone who attended was very pleased with the speakers and the format.

Riding the wave of enthusiasm generated by the Spring Conference, it was decided to plan a day in the fall to highlight urban gardening/farming and community gardens in the city. UAWG reached out to their contact list to encourage participation. Fourteen gardens signed up, with representation in each of the four quadrants of the City of Rochester.

UAWG provided signs for each participating garden, helping visitors to easily identify participating gardens. UAWG distributed press releases to promote the event, garnering a visit on the day of the event by a reporter for the Rochester Democrat & Chronicle, who wrote a story about one of the gardens. Because the effort was well received by the community, we plan to make this an annual event.

Creative Pest Management on Urban Farms

Many of the same integrated pest management (IPM) strategies that Extension associates recommend for rural farms can also work for urban agriculture, even if the farms—and perhaps the crops and the pests themselves—may look quite different. Much of the time, though, accepted IPM practices require some adjustments to suit urban farms’ unique conditions.

Take a “Brassica Break” to Divert Insect Pests

Nearly all of New York City’s outdoor vegetable farms (at least 25 operations) grow brassicas, especially kale, collards, and other leafy greens. In 2020 and 2021, most of these farms lost over 25% of at least one key brassica crop to arthropod pest damage. Many of these pests found sanctuary on brassica crops left standing throughout the winter for year-round harvest, a common practice of urban farms and gardens. Urban Agriculture Specialist Sam Anderson encouraged producers to divert brassica pests by finding a “crop-free period” in which no brassicas are present on the farm, but the concept was not often adopted until 2022, when Sam began an outreach push on the topic and started referring to it as a “Brassica Break,” a term which farmers have since adopted.

In 2022, seven urban farms independently reported adopting a dedicated “Brassica Break” for the first time; on all seven farms, appearance of the previous years’ most significant spring brassica pests (cabbage whitefly, flea beetle, and harlequin bug) were delayed by 2 to 7 weeks. This resulted in large increases in marketable product. For example, in 2022 at Pink Houses Farm, 163 lbs of collard greens were harvested before the first appearance of cabbage whitefly nymphs; the prior year, fewer than 35 lbs of collards were harvested before whitefly nymphs began affecting marketability. This increase of 128 lbs amounts to over 23,000 lbs of marketable collard greens per acre.

Predatory Mites Help Protect Tomatoes and Cucumbers from Two Spotted Spider Mites

Releasing beneficial insects is another expanding cultural control among urban farmers. Although biocontrols are available to help control Two Spotted Spider Mite—the most damaging pest of tomatoes and cucumbers across New York City—only one urban farm reported purchasing their own predatory mites before 2022.

After the conclusion of a 3-year project on Two Spotted Spider Mite (TSSM) IPM for urban farmers, Sam created a step-by-step guide for farmers to scout for TSSM on tomatoes and purchase and release *Phytoseiulus persimilis* predatory mites. In 2022, at least five farms purchased their own predatory mites for Two Spotted Spider Mite control for the first time, potentially adding weeks to their tomato harvest. Two urban farms, which lost their entire tomato crops to TSSM by early September in 2020 and 2021, reported that this year, after releasing predatory mites and increasing habitat for other predatory insects, their tomato harvests continued until the end of the season in mid-October. On average, these farms harvested an additional \$12,000 per acre of tomatoes compared to either of the previous two seasons.



Bush beans planted at tomato row ends on an urban farm serve as “sentry plants”, a scouting strategy for two spotted spider mite. Photo: Sam Anderson, Harvest NY

Curricula to Advance Urban Agriculture Planning, Policy, and Production

“[The Promise of Urban Agriculture](#)” (PUA), a recent publication supported through a USDA AMS, draws on case studies of 14 urban farms plus insights from over 150 urban agriculture advocates to uncover the policies, resources, research, and education needed to support the successful development of commercial urban farms.

Harvest NY Urban Agriculture Specialist Yolanda Gonzalez is working with the PUA team to convert the report into practical training and educational resources. The three target audiences will be:

1. **Growers** – Experienced farmers interested in commercial urban farming
2. **Planners** – Policy advocates wanting to improve support for urban agriculture
3. **Educators** – Nonprofit and Extension educators supporting the development of commercial urban farms

The ‘Growers’ curricula have four modules that include siting urban farms, business structures and strategies, farming practices, and nonprofit farm management. The ‘Growers’ course assumes learners have some farming experience in either urban or rural environments.

The ‘Planners’ curricula have six modules that cover topics focused on supporting urban agriculture (UA) development, including definitions of UA, valuing UA, developing UA comprehensive plans, zoning considerations, and effective community engagement strategies. The curricula aim to guide planners and policymakers on viable strategies to improve public support of UA. All curricula include virtual site visits, case studies, worksheets, and supplementary reading materials to guide learners in improving their knowledge and skills in urban agriculture, all of which will be invaluable for growers and UA stakeholders throughout New York City.

The online resources will be piloted in early 2023 and were presented at the Pre-Symposium workshop of the Urban Food Systems Symposium in Kansas City, MO on September 26, 2022. The workshop focused on topics including strategies for urban farmers, federal policy, local policy and planning, urban agriculture programs, and research and Extension communities to support the continued development of commercial urban farming and urban agriculture in general, gathering input from Urban Agriculture experts nationwide.



Harvest NY's Farm to Institution Support Across New York

The Harvest NY Farm to Institution program grew its team this year, thanks to the generous support of a \$500K New York Department of Agriculture and Markets grant. Guided by a singular objective to increase the volume and variety of local foods purchased by School Food Authorities, support is now provided in the following regions: Western NY, Finger Lakes, Central NY, Northern NY, Catskills, Hudson Valley, New York City, and Long Island.



NY Thursdays— a New York State initiative that promotes the procurement of New York State grown and processed items. Every Thursday, school lunch trays include New York farm products, often highlighting newly harvested produce.



Located in the Hudson Valley, Pawling's November **NY Thursday** menu featured:

- a NYS 100% beef hot dog from [Slate Foods](#),
- NYS roasted butternut squash from [Dykeman Farm](#) in Pawling,
- NYS golden delicious apples and fresh vegetables from [Dagele Produce Farms](#),
- NYS apple cider from Eger's, and
- [Hudson Valley Fresh](#) milk.

Western NY and Finger Lakes

Becky O'Connor expanded her reach into areas of the region where she had not previously connected with as many schools and local food producers. Part of this effort was adopting and adapting a produce procurement and processing project previously managed by CCE Allegany's former Farm to School Coordinator. Becky worked with CCE Allegany, the CCE Cornell Vegetable Program, three school districts, and the Allegany County Sheriff's Office to procure \$1,059 worth of fresh produce from the Genesee Valley Produce Auction. This produce was processed, frozen, and stored by the Allegany County Sheriff's Office, where participating school districts can pick it up when they are ready. In preparation for the 2023-2024 school year, Becky met with auction growers to discuss developing an order schedule. This project provides local produce to students in the highly impoverished county throughout the school year, and brings a new, consistent market to the auction.

Central NY

Lizzy Cooper joined Harvest NY as the Central NY Farm to School Coordinator in mid-2022. In the second half of the year, she supported 21 School Food Authorities across 10 counties to develop local procurement plans, work towards the 30% NY Initiative, and apply for funding to spend on local products. Lizzy engaged 18 supply chain partners including producers, food hubs, and distributors to highlight opportunities and work to remove barriers to accessing the school food market.

Northern NY

Meghan Dohman worked with schools in the North Country to pilot a Geographic Preference bid for 6 districts within Champlain Valley Educational Services (CVES) BOCES which resulted in a 161% increase in local purchasing over the previous year. The bid will expand and be open for participation to all districts within CVES BOCES in 2023.

Hudson Valley

In 2022, Onteora, Red Hook, Rhinebeck, Pine Plains, Pawling, Beacon, Middletown, North Rockland, Goshen, and White Plains school districts launched monthly NY Thursdays featuring New York food products (NYFP): lettuce, broccoli, and tomatoes from Dagele Brothers Farm in Goshen, beef burgers from Slate Foods and Reed Brook via Happy Valley Meat Co., pears from Nightingale Farm in Marlboro, corn from Dykeman Farm in Pawling, milk from

continued on next page

Hudson Valley Fresh and Midland Farms, and apples from Porpiglia Farms in Marlboro. Farm to School Coordinators Kristy Apostolides and Katie Sheehan-Lopez help source local foods, coordinate school districts, and promote these special NY Thursdays menus. The districts purchased over 2,000 pounds of NY produced beef and added 10 new NYFP to their menus, including bread made with NYS grown wheat, pears, apple cider, eggs, chicken, grape juice, Concord grapes, hot dogs, hamburgers, and meatballs.

New York City

The NYC Department of Education made significant progress in its Farm to School program in the 2022 fiscal year. Since joining the team in May, SJ Whelan worked closely with the Department's Office of Food and Nutrition Services (OFNS) to increase the volume and variety of local foods in schools citywide. The biggest win to date has been the re-introduction of New York apples in schools. SJ bridged the gap between several local growers and OFNS's contracted distributors to ensure a sustainable supply of NY apples in schools year-round. In just two months of procurement, OFNS has directed over \$1,000,000 into the New York apple market.

Long Island

The Long Island Farm to School program, led by Co-Coordinator Amy Bly and Sandy Menasha, cultivated network connections with school food stakeholders on the Island. Amy and Sandy built a working partnership with Long Island School Nutrition Directors Association (LISNDA), also known as the LI Co-Op. This organization is comprised of 50+ local school districts that collectively bid and purchase food to serve 200,000 students. Amy and Sandy worked strategically with the Co-Op to add multiple NY food products (NYFP) to 2022-23 school year bids, marking the first time the Co-Op intentionally bid NYFP. The NYFP included pasta, beef products, fresh and frozen vegetables, cheese, and yogurt. Schools in the Co-Op served these items throughout the school year, promoting their use of NYFP through school menus, social media, NY Thursdays, and Harvest of the Month.

Harvest NY Farm to Institution 2022 Highlights

- Directly supported the procurement of \$2.36M of NY food products in service of 29,545 students, and indirectly supported the procurement of an additional 3.56M of NY food products in service of 42,394 students during the 2021-22 school year. The SFAs credited with these purchases have increased their purchasing power by \$965,480 through one quarter of 30% reimbursement alone.
- Launched the NYS School Food Cookbook project which includes an associated toolkit to equip institutions with resources on how to menu NY foods
- Partnered with the NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets and America Farmland Trust to launch Producer Readiness Training, using the nationally-developed *Bringing the Farm to School* curriculum
- Provided 5,305 hours of technical assistance to 4,290 stakeholders and delivered 9 trainings, reaching 515 stakeholders
- Hosted a virtual Vendor Showcase which featured products from 11 food manufacturers, attracting nearly 150 participants over the course of two days
- Brokered a partnership between the Western NY Foundation, Buffalo Public Schools, and [Chef's Brigaid](#), leading to a \$586K investment aimed at transforming the Buffalo Child Nutrition Program into a scratch-cooking operation
- Reintroduced NYC public school students to NY grown apples, resulting in over \$1M of apples procured by the Office of Food & Nutrition Services in just two months.
- Launched NY Thursdays in 10 Hudson Valley Schools
- Worked with SFAs and BOCES to strategically draft bids that include and/or preference NY foods
- Partnered with the NYS Department of Education Child Nutrition Department to serve as Local Foods for School Technical Assistance providers

NY Food Hub Collaborative Given the Green Light

Cornell Cooperative Extension has received a USDA Regional Food Systems Partnership Planning and Development grant for the NY Food Hub Collaborative. This is a 2-year planning project.

The NY Food Hub Collaborative brings together 31 local food system stakeholders representing 23 organizations to realize the long-term goal of improving the economic viability of mid-tier value chain partners targeting local markets by improving efficiencies, maximizing profits, and increasing demand for NY food products. Three objectives guide the team toward that goal:

1. Establish a Collaborative of interdependent food hubs designed to work collaboratively to efficiently, affordably, and effectively market NY food products to institutional markets.
2. Identify the potential for small, mid-size, and socially disadvantaged producers to be competitive in state agency and institutional contracts.
3. Develop strategic business relationships between mid-tier value chain partners including food hubs, producers, processors, distributors, and markets that emphasize organizational interdependence, trust, and transparency and equitably distribute responsibilities and rewards.

Objectives will be met through strategic planning amongst Collaborative partners, virtual field trips to learn best practices from national partners, business-to-business development opportunities, producer and market partner training, and a series of outputs. Outputs include an interactive local food system asset map, a procurement guide on selling NY food products to various institutional markets, an analysis of existing procurement policies across institutions and recommendations for improvement, market analyses of key institutional market partners, a NY Collaborative product guide, and an implementation plan that provides a framework to operationalize the NY Food Hub Collaborative.

Food Systems Specialist Joins the Harvest NY Team

In the fall of 2022, Precious Tshabalala joined the Harvest NY team as a Supply Chain Specialist. Precious is a native of Zimbabwe, with a BSc in Agricultural Economics from the University of Fort Hare (South Africa), an MSc in Agricultural Economics from the University of Pretoria (South Africa), and a PhD in Agricultural Policy from Universiti Putra Malaysia (Malaysia). She has research experience in Malaysia and South Africa investigating how agricultural policy can transform agricultural productivity, and how non-farm enterprises affect household economic well-being.

Precious is working statewide with producers, food processors, distributors, and consumers to strengthen the New York food supply chain. Her focus is on distribution, procurement, diversification, access to new markets, promotion of local foods, and economic analysis, emphasizing increasing New York State produced food into urban markets.

She launched herself enthusiastically into the food systems program by establishing relationships with stakeholders including other CCE specialists involved in the supply chain and food distribution, Cornell faculty, farmers, farmer organizations, distributors, processors, and state executives. Her initial projects involve developing a Community Supported Agriculture guide for farmers, and understanding how to grow the direct-to-consumer market. A needs assessment is being developed to inform the food systems' overall plan and identify strategies and resources to prioritize.

Precious Tshabalala with NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets Commissioner Richard Ball at the New York Farm Bureau Meeting in Buffalo, NY





Overcoming Food Safety Barriers in NY Plain Communities

New York State is home to the fastest growing Plain population in the country. Around the state, Plain populations consist of many different settlements of Amish and Mennonites that differ in their acceptance of technology, customs, and agricultural practices. Due to the implementation of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule, many of these growers need to adopt food safety practices and create Standard Operating Practices. Cornell Cooperative Extension has been providing educational outreach tailored to the culture of these communities but, due to FSMA, additional outreach is now needed.

Lindsey Pashow of Harvest NY, Elisabeth Hodgdon of the CCE Eastern New York Commercial Horticulture Program, and Robert Hadad of the CCE Cornell Vegetable Program were awarded \$205,000 from USDA NIFA to support “Overcoming Food Safety Barriers within NY Plain Communities”. The project started in September 2022 and focuses on working with the various communities across the state to establish and implement food safety practices. These programs help farmers prepare Standard Operating Practices that can be used daily to meet FSMA requirements. At the end of 2022, the grant team had already reached over 150 individuals in the communities through food safety presentations. The end goal is the prevention of foodborne illness outbreaks through education for the reduction of microbial risks. This grant will conclude in 2024.

Meetings Encourage Agritourism in New York State

Agritourism in New York

In May 2022, CCE Harvest NY Specialist Lindsey Pashow held a statewide meeting with Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) educators regarding the state of agritourism in New York. Over the course of several months, she led monthly meetings to collaborate with educators on agritourism in different parts of the state, determining future educational opportunities for farmers and CCE educators, and developing a formal work team. The CCE Agritourism Program Work Team now has over 50 educators from across the state working together to provide agritourism programs to our farms. In 2023, the group is working together to host 1-hour monthly workshops for farmers related to starting an agritourism operation, agritourism tax considerations, law and liability, customers service and more. Presenters include CCE educators, established agritourism owners, and specialty professionals (lawyer, accountant, insurance agent, etc.).

International Workshop on Agritourism

The International Workshop on Agritourism, a global event hosted by the University of Vermont, was held in Burlington, Vermont from August 30 - September 1, 2022. The event attracted 505 participants from 57 countries with 352 participants in-person and 153 participants online—a mixture of farmers, researchers, tourism professionals, and more. Cornell Cooperative Extension was a sponsor of the event. Eight Extension professionals, from offices and teams across New York State, participated in conference sessions. Harvest NY's Ag Business Development & Marketing Specialist, Lindsey Pashow, was the Cornell lead for the event, participating in multiple conference planning committees, chaperoning the Shelburne Farms tour, and presenting, “Bring an International Agritourism Experience Home to your Agritourism Community.”

***Cannabis sativa* Progress in New York**

2022 was a great year for the Cannabis industry in New York; outdoor cultivation and processing facilities have grown in numbers throughout the state.

Harvest NY continues to support farmers as they join this very promising industry. Hemp has the potential to be an important commodity in NYS due to its versatility. Many companies are exploring the multiple uses of hemp as a source for construction material, biofuel, grain, and personal hygiene products. Harvest NY has developed strong partnerships with these pioneering companies at the forefront of hemp processing in the state.

To support the industry, Harvest NY has applied for several grants, drawing on the expertise within the team in the areas of soil, composting, and climate resiliency. For 2023, the Harvest NY team plans on establishing statewide education campaigns through in-person lectures, and will conduct field trials for hemp grain and different composting methodologies.

Harvest NY is partnering with the Office for Cannabis Management (OCM) and SUNY Morrisville to offer the first ever NYS Cannabis Compliance Training and Mentorship program. The 10-week program is based on existing farmer apprenticeship and fellowship programs and aimed at growing and diversifying the pipeline of farmers and processors preparing to participate in New York's adult-use Cannabis industry.

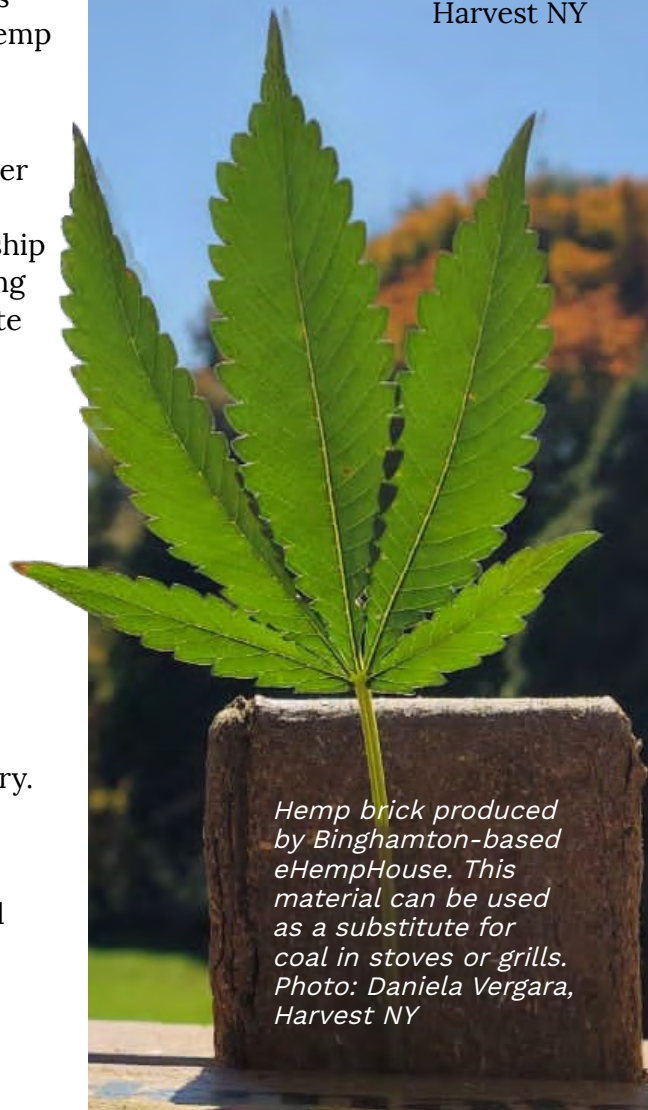
The program will consist of over 40 different virtual webinars and cover a range of topics including Cannabis Business Accounting, Labor Laws, Agricultural Human Resources, Environmental Controls, Plant Genetics and Pathology, Track and Trace, Lab Testing, Recall Plans, and Good Manufacturing Practices.

Over the last 30 years, Latinos were 8 times more likely to be arrested for Cannabis than white New Yorkers. For Black New Yorkers, the rate was 15X! For these reasons, OCM has implemented processes to address social justice in the industry.

“Cannabis education and the advancement of agricultural sciences is crucial for a growing market, for traditional and legacy growers, people of color and minority populations, and those hindered by wars on drugs,” said Dr. Daniela Vergara, Emerging Crops Specialist, Harvest NY. “Cornell is pleased to partner with OCM to support inclusivity and equity in a new industry.”

“Cannabis education and the advancement of agricultural sciences is crucial for a growing market, for traditional and legacy growers, people of color and minority populations, and those hindered by wars on drugs.”

– Dr. Daniela Vergara,
Emerging Crops Specialist,
Harvest NY



Hemp brick produced by Binghamton-based eHempHouse. This material can be used as a substitute for coal in stoves or grills. Photo: Daniela Vergara, Harvest NY



Ag Climate Resiliency Specialists Jenna Walczak and Zach Spangler visited this farm to discuss erosion and flooding concerns.

Harvest NY's Ag Climate Resiliency Specialists Build Statewide Connections to Expand Their Reach

Two Ag Climate Resiliency Specialists joined Harvest NY in January 2022 thanks, in part, to a key partnership with Scenic Hudson. The Ag Climate Resiliency program aims to support the NYS agriculture industry meet climate goals on greenhouse gas emissions, carbon sequestration, and other environmentally sound farming practices.

Throughout this first year, Harvest NY Specialists Jenna Walczak and Zach Spangler worked to define the program's goals and activities, build visibility and connections within the Cornell Cooperative Extension system and among other collaborative organizations, and develop a better understanding of how best to contribute to building resilience into the agricultural system of New York. In addition, Jenna and Zach met directly with producers on their farms to help identify appropriate climate change mitigation and resilience practices, and help farmers navigate the complex web of available financial support.

Harvest NY's Ag Climate Resiliency Specialists gave many presentations on a variety of topics related to agriculture resilience, both virtually and in-person, across the state in 2022. Notably, the team was asked to lead part of the plenary session at the 2022 Agriculture, Food & Environmental Systems In-service for Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE). Over 100 CCE agriculture educators, from across the state and representing a wide variety of program areas, came together to build a common understanding of how CCE can support climate change mitigation work. Attendees also brainstormed how they can address climate change collaboratively through their Extension work in order to reach a larger audience and have the greatest statewide impact. To identify educational opportunities and plan climate change programming throughout the CCE system, Harvest NY is starting a new climate-focused Program Work Team in the coming year to formalize the statewide collaborative effort.

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Growing New York's Farm and Food Industries

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