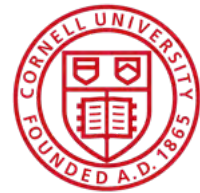


# Cornell Cooperative Extension Harvest New York



*An innovative Cornell Cooperative Extension team that focuses on development projects in the Farm and Food Industries of rural and urban New York.*

## Quarterly Highlights Q1 2023



Hydroponically-grown basil at the Brooklyn Grange Sunset Park Farm location.

- **2023 Hudson Valley Farming Webinar and Field Day Series: Farming in a Changing Climate**
- **Cut Flower Production Risks, Markets, and Pricing**
- **NY Food Database of Small Businesses and Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Producers**
- **Agricultural Producer Training Provides an Introduction to Selling Products to Schools**
- **CCE Harvest NY Partners with Brooklyn Queens Land Trust to Host a Seed Sowing Workshop at Brooklyn Grange**
- **Harvest NY Berry Production Workshops Attract Growers from Across the State**
- **Community Garden Collective Blooms in Rochester City Neighborhood**
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- **Educational Events Guide the New York Cannabis Industry**

# 2023 Hudson Valley Farming Webinar and Field Day Series: Farming in a Changing Climate

This past quarter, the CCE Harvest NY Ag Climate Resiliency Specialists partnered with several organizations to develop a webinar and field day series focused on agricultural climate change topics in the Hudson Valley. The series included six webinars with speakers presenting on carbon and nitrogen cycling in agriculture, financial and technical assistance for ag climate projects, biochar and soil amendments, rotational grazing, practical climate risk management, and climate battery greenhouses. Partner organizations included Glynwood Center for Regional Food and Farming, Ulster County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD), Orange County SWCD, the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, the NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee, NY Soil Health, CCE Ulster County, CCE Orange County, and CCE Columbia-Greene Counties. [Recordings of the webinar series](#) are available on [Harvest NY's YouTube channel](#).

The 2023 Hudson Valley Farming in a Changing Climate Series included a March Field Day in Ulster County. Harvest NY worked with Ulster County SWCD to coordinate a series of site visits to see a biochar operation, a manure storage system, and a rotational grazing system. Farmers and Ulster County SWCD staff spoke to participants about the process of completing Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) tier work and applying for cost share funding.

Harvest NY's Ag Climate Resiliency Specialists are helping coordinate two additional Field Days this spring. Orange County SWCD and CCE Orange County will host a site visit of a restored floodplain along the Wallkill River. Restored floodplains limit the amount of flooding after extreme storms. CCE Columbia and Greene Counties will highlight the resilience benefits of incorporating diversified agroforestry systems on-farm.



Ulster County field day participants learning how slab wood and logs are turned into biochar using a Tigercat® 6050 Carbonator at NY Carbon LLC in Saugerties, NY.



Lumber industry waste can be used to make biochar.



Biochar is a stable solid, rich in carbon that is made from organic waste material (or biomass) that is partially combusted in the presence of limited oxygen—a controlled process called pyrolysis. Biochar can be used as a soil amendment improving soil health, raising soil pH, remediating polluted soils, sequestering carbon, lowering greenhouse gas emissions, and improving soil moisture. *Source: USDA*

Jake Wedemeyer of Ulster County SWCD explains the process of completing the Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) tier work and applying for cost-share funding to construct a manure management system at Green Heron Farm in Woodstock, NY.



# Cut Flower Production Risks, Markets, and Pricing

New York cut flower production has expanded over the past couple of years. In 2022, the U.S. cut flower industry value was approximately \$36.4 billion with the majority of flowers being imported from all over the world; imported flowers tend to be treated with chemicals to improve stability. New York flower farmers are looking for ways to grow organically and produce flowers year-round.

In 2022, Lindsey Pashow of Harvest NY joined a group of CCE Educators to focus on cut flower production for New York growers. At the beginning of 2023, Lindsey and Betsy Lamb from IPM created the CCE Cut Flower Program Work Team (PWT) which has 20 CCE Educators. The PWT focuses on providing educational outreach to New York cut flower growers, trainings for educators to be able to support the industry, and partnerships with the cut flower industry. Lindsey's main focus is helping cut flower farmers on marketing, market evaluation, diversification of operation, pricing, and agritourism.

Late in 2022, Lindsey joined Carla Crim from CCE Delaware County on a Northeast Extension Risk Management Education grant, "Mitigating Risk in Cut Flower Production", for \$42,000 which concludes in September 2023. The grant supports an online 6-week production workshop series, a 6-week marketing workshop series via Zoom, and a cut flower track at the Catskills Regional Agriculture Conference.

## Production Risk Workshop Series

- 11/17/22: Integrated Pest Management (151 participants)
- 12/1/22: Crop Planning (192 participants)
- 12/8/22: Fertility and Irrigation (155 participants)
- 12/15/22: Climate Smart (138 participants)
- 12/22/22: Season Extension (152 participants)
- 1/5/23: Wholesaling In's and Out's (202 participants)

## Marketing Risk Workshop Series

- 2/23/23: Finding Your Niche (104 participants)
- 3/1/23: Farmers' Markets (58 participants)
- 3/8/23: Funding Opportunities (108 participants)
- 3/15/23: Storytelling (79 participants)
- 3/23/23: Wedding & DIY Flowers (67 participants)
- 3/30/23: Social Media Marketing and Analytics (115 participants)

Starting in April 2023, Steve Hadcock of CCE Capital District Team and Harvest NY will be working on a Northeast Extension Risk Management Education grant, "How Much is that Bunch of Flowers? -Developing a Cost Calculator for Cut Flower Growers". The \$30,659 grant will support the creation of a cost calculator which will help farmers keep track of expenses, determine the cost of production, and help make decisions on pricing products.

For more information about upcoming cut flower workshops and resources check out <https://blogs.cornell.edu/cutflowers/>.



# NY Food Database of Small Businesses and Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Producers

In 2022, the NY State Department of Education (SED) entered into a cooperative agreement with USDA AMS to administer the Local Food for Schools Cooperative Agreement Program (LFS). SED was allocated \$11,891,161 in funding to subaward to School Food Authorities (SFAs) for the purchase of unprocessed or minimally processed foods from local producers, small businesses, and socially disadvantaged farmers/producers. The emphasis on procuring foods from small business and socially disadvantaged farmers/producers was new for SFAs, and most did not know how to identify if a business was small or if farmers/producers were socially disadvantaged.

**In response, the CCE Harvest NY Farm to School Coordinators developed the [NY Food Database](#)—a list of 168 New York farmers, producers, and vendors. All are small businesses and 84 (50%) identify as socially disadvantaged.**

Creating the NY Food Database began by surveying farmers and producers throughout the state about their businesses, what products they provide, the regions they serve, the size of their business, and whether or not the business owner identified as socially disadvantaged per the USDA definition. Producers were able to indicate if they adhere to additional practices or hold certifications such as USDA Organic, Certified Grassfed by AGW, and/or Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) Certified. In addition to existing CCE HNY Farm to School contacts, the survey was distributed by Cornell Cooperative Extension associations, and to larger groups of producers including those that are NY Grown and Certified and those on the Farm Dealer License and Nourish NY listservs.

The NY Food Database is not only useful for the 170 School Food Authorities receiving Local Food for Schools funds but also for groups and institutions participating in local procurement efforts, including Taste NY and regional food banks.

Harvest NY's Farm to School team will continue to expand the database and work with food system partners to integrate content with other platforms, such as Nourish NY's database of participating producers.



## Agricultural Producer Training Provides an Introduction to Selling Products to Schools

Harvest NY's regional Farm to School team recently partnered with the NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets and American Farmland Trust to offer a training to agricultural producers on selling to school markets, *Bringing the Farm to School: A Training Program for Agricultural Producers*. The school food market is attractive because of its consistency but can be intimidating to access because of its intricacies.

The [Bringing the Farm to School](#) program provides agricultural producers with training and tools to support their capacity to sell local food products to schools. The first of two New York trainings was held on March 28 at the CCE Agroforestry Center in Greene County. The second will be in Syracuse on April 20. Eleven producers from the 9-county Hudson Valley region attended the March 28<sup>th</sup> training, along with 2 local distributors and 5 food service directors. The products available for use in school meal programs from the producers in attendance included produce, grains, beef, eggs, and beans.



The training provides an overview of how producers can sell their products to schools, including an introduction to school markets, solicitations, and how to determine what products are the best fit for schools. The Food Service Directors, distributors/aggregators, and producers in attendance had an opportunity to begin building the relationships pivotal to getting local foods into schools—and into the bellies of students.

The training corresponded with NYS Education Department's announcement of Local Food for Schools Cooperative Agreement Program (LFS) awards used by schools to purchase local, minimally processed foods with an emphasis on small and socially disadvantaged farmers, growers, and producers. At the Hudson Valley Bringing the Farm to School training, 76% of attending producers self-identified as socially disadvantaged and left with future sales connections and a better understanding of how to access the school food market. The majority of all attendees said they are confident or very confident about their ability to effectively market and sell their products to school. A recording of the training will be available for those that were not able to attend in-person. [Contact Kristy Apostolides](#) for more information.

Anyone interested in finding out more about Farm to School can contact a [regional Farm to School Coordinator](#) to learn more.

Participants at the agricultural producer training in the Hudson Valley interact during the meet and greet portion of the day. From left to right in the foreground: George Sherman from Hudson Harvest, Debbie Donleavy from Middletown School Food Service, and Diane Saleh from Halal Pastures.





## **CCE Harvest NY Partners with Brooklyn Queens Land Trust to Host a Seed Sowing Workshop at Brooklyn Grange**

Many gardeners in NYC do not have the space or resources to start their own seeds and are forced to buy seedlings. On Saturday, March 25, Harvest NY Urban Garden Specialist Kwesi Joseph, together with two board members of Brooklyn Queens Land Trust (BQLT), hosted a seed sowing workshop at Brooklyn Grange Sunset Park. The workshop was sponsored by 1:1 Foods. The gardeners were able to select the varieties of vegetables they wanted to grow, fill their flats with compost, label the flats, then sow and water the seeds. The seedlings will be housed in a commercial greenhouse setting and tended to for 8 weeks by the Brooklyn Grange Farmers. Kwesi also did an overview of seed sowing, explained how to avoid damping off, and provided a handout on ideal plant spacing based upon biointensive farming recommendations.

Participants were encouraged to bring and share their seeds, especially ancestral seeds and culturally important seeds. Brooklyn Grange also supplied seeds. Kwesi has been growing Vates Collards for four generations (eight years). He shared some of his 4th generation Collards seeds and his volunteer sunflower seeds. The BQLT board is planning on doing a fall seed sowing workshop for hardy winter plants since most nurseries don't provide seedlings for the fall.

## Harvest NY Berry Production Workshops Attract Growers from Across the State

This winter, Harvest New York Berry Specialist Anya Osatuke partnered with organizations across the state to deliver workshops about berry production. Topics included disease identification and management in berries, production systems for lesser-grown berry crops, and pruning techniques. Workshops were hosted by CCE Allegany County, CCE Delaware County, CCE Franklin County, CCE Orleans County, as well as the Massachusetts Avenue Project, the Eastern NY Commercial Horticultural Program and Lake Ontario Fruit Team. A total of 290 participants attended these in-person events.



Anya Osatuke, Harvest NY Berry Specialist, discusses strawberry production with workshop attendees. Photo by Elizabeth Buck, CCE Cornell Vegetable Program

## Community Garden Collective Blooms in Rochester City Neighborhood

The City of Rochester is home to hundreds of vacant lots, some of which residents have turned into beautiful, beneficial community gardens that elevate entire neighborhoods. Mallory Hohl, Harvest NY's Urban Garden Specialist working in Erie and Monroe Counties, is the facilitator of a collective of community gardeners in the Lyell Otis neighborhood in the western part of the city. These garden champions have been meeting in-person monthly to learn and collaborate through a shared passion about gardening and their community to support a neighborhood in need of resources and attention. Monroe County Soil and Water Conservation District, Harvest NY, and Cornell Cooperative Extension have been at the table since the inception of the group to learn more about the needs of community urban growers which is quite different than traditional, rural growing.

Gearing up for this year's growing season, the community gardeners have been sharing and advising on garden plans, talking about possibilities for shared resources, and will be the recipients of donated seedlings from one gardener's nonprofit work through EquiCenter, an organization offering therapeutic horticulture, wellness, and equestrian experiences.



# Revival of Urban Farmer-to-Farmer Network in New York City Through NYC CRAFT

While there is a thriving urban agriculture scene in New York City, with over 60 commercial urban farms throughout the five boroughs, there are limited opportunities for farm workers to learn about other agricultural systems employed around the city. As a response to this need, the Harvest NY Urban Ag team adapted the Hudson-based CRAFT model to fit the needs of the urban ag community in New York City.

Originally formed in 1994, CRAFT (Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training) was formed as ‘a cooperative effort of local organic and biodynamic farms organized to enhance educational opportunities for farm apprentices.’ Today the NYC chapter of CRAFT serves an important space to meet other urban growers, share best practices, and visit other urban ag operations. Through NYC CRAFT, participating urban farms and partners take turns hosting evening events to provide networking and peer-to-peer learning for apprentices and interns on topics such as irrigation systems, mushrooms, rice cultivation, beekeeping, and microgreens production. This year’s revival of the NYC CRAFT group builds off the success from past gatherings, such as The Urban Farmer-to-Farmer Summit (TUFFS) that took place both virtually and in-person over the past three years. As the principal organizers, Urban Agriculture Specialists Yolanda Gonzalez and Sam Anderson organized a planning meeting in February with over 10 urban farm managers and urban ag leaders to schedule this year’s NYC CRAFT calendar. The first NYC CRAFT event of 2023 was held at Square Roots on February 23, 2023 with over 15 participants, followed by a NYC CRAFT visit to Brooklyn Grange’s Sunset Park Farm location that included a discussion of bioaponics and fertilizer fermentation (see cover photo).

In addition to in-person gatherings, the Harvest NY Urban Ag team created a NYC CRAFT list-serve that functions as an important tool for urban growers to stay connected by announcing events and opportunities for bulk ordering of equipment, seedlings, and soil. Through this informal network, both online and in-person, urban farmers are better positioned to obtain the knowledge, materials and support needed to build successful, thriving urban ag operations.



NYC CRAFT Gathering at Brooklyn Grange Sunset Park location, featuring a discussion on bioaponics and fertilizer fermentation.



# Educational Events Guide the New York Cannabis Industry

Harvest NY continues to provide evidence-based education to the cannabis industry throughout the state, forming new collaborations with industry members, strengthening our relationship with state officials, and fortifying interdisciplinary partnerships within the team.



The New York State Office of Cannabis Management provided the Cannabis Compliance Training & Mentorship Program, a multi-week series of structured webinars covering a range cultivation, processing, business management, and regulatory compliance topics. Harvest NY's Emerging Crops Specialist Daniela Vergara, and Judson Reid, Harvest NY Team Leader and Extension Specialist, participated in the webinars that attracted more than 200 attendees.



In-person educational events were held at Tap Root Fields in Skaneateles and at Finger Lakes Community College in Canandaigua.



Rooted NY soil educators at the cannabis event held at Tap Root Fields in Skaneateles, NY.



Finger Lakes Community College faculty and USDA personnel at the in-person cannabis event held in Canandaigua, NY.



The 2023 Sustainability Conference at the Fashion Institute of Technology in NYC featured hemp use in textiles in the panel discussion, “Field to Fashion: How the Hemp Industry in New York State Can Be Part of the Sustainable Fashion Present and Future.” The panel, which included Daniela Vergara from Harvest NY, explored complex issues related to hemp production and the use of the natural fiber in the fashion industry.



Hemp industry panel at the Fashion Institute of Technology's 2023 Sustainability Conference.

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Growing New York's Farm and Food Industries

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