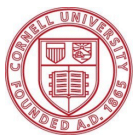


Harvest New York



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension

**HARVEST
NEW YORK!**

HARVEST NEW YORK PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS **Quarterly Report** **April 2013 — June 2013**



June 18th tour of Foodlink, Rochester, NY

Growing New York's Agriculture and Food Economy
www.harvestny.cce.cornell.edu

Cornell Cooperative Extension provides equal program and employment opportunities.

2-Year Food Processing Degree Curriculum Approved and Grant Received to Start-Up Program

As the food and dairy processing industry continues to grow in Western New York, so does the need for a qualified workforce. Cornell Dairy Foods Extension has continued to offer short courses in dairy foods processing and Harvest NY has worked to bring these short courses to the Western New York region for enhanced accessibility.

It has been a goal of Cornell Cooperative Extension to work with Community Colleges to grow the available pool of qualified individuals that will enter the food manufacturing industry. In January, the Harvest New York team sent out a survey to food and dairy processors in the Western New York region. Fourteen food manufacturers responded to the survey all indicating a need for an AAS Degree Program in Food Processing Technology. Results indicated that there is a strong need for qualified individuals entering the food manufacturing work environment due to retirement and growth within their company.

The Harvest New York team began working with Genesee Community College on developing a curriculum for a two-year AAS Degree Program in Food Processing Technology. The 63-credit curriculum includes four new courses that encompass an overview of the food industry, food safety and sanitation, analytical methods, unit operations and will require the completion of an internship. The program will be designed to be flexible for those who are currently working full time and want to further advance their skills. Graduates of the program could enter positions such as production supervisor, laboratory technician, production manager, sales, marketing, or food product development. The Genesee Community College Board of Trustees approved the curriculum and is currently undergoing finalization by SUNY. The program has an anticipated start date of Fall 2014.

Additionally, the Harvest NY team worked with Genesee Community College on applying for High Needs Fund Grant dollars to support the development of this program. As a result, SUNY awarded \$238,719 to GCC, which will be used to support a new faculty position and upgrade laboratory spaces necessary for the new courses.

The Harvest NY team has also been working with Erie Community College on curriculum development of a 10-month certificate program through the Biomanufacturing Certificate Program. This program is expected to start Fall 2013

Harvest NY Hosts Cultured Dairy Products Workshops

In 2012, New York became the largest yogurt producer in the United States, beating out California by 105 million lbs and making a total of 692 million pounds. New York is also number one in cottage cheese, producing about 27% of US production. There has been strong interest in understanding how to create high quality cultured dairy products to continue the uphill climb on per capita consumption. In May, the Harvest NY team, in collaboration with the Cornell Dairy Foods Extension program, put together a Basic and an Advanced Cultured Products workshop for the dairy manufacturing industry. There were 24 participants in the Basic Cultured Course and 18 in the Advanced Cultured Course.

The Basic Cultured Product Course covered traditional aspects of producing a safe, high quality cultured dairy product, such as yogurt and cottage cheese. There was also a hands-on portion for making cultured products and conducting sensory analysis. The Advanced Course covered topics such as product development and new innovations within yogurt and other cultured dairy products. Guest speakers and panelists came in from various regions of the United States to participate in the short course, which was found to provide the participants with a more innovative approach to creating new products for growing the dairy foods industry!



Course participants tasting cultured products from around the world in a product innovation session



Teaching about high quality cultured dairy products



Participants learning about unit operations in creating cultured dairy products.

Harvest NY Assists Western NY Agricultural Businesses Obtain Grant Money

The Harvest NY team has played an instrumental role in assisting organizations with identifying and applying for grant money. If awarded, the grant money will help these organizations expand their business operations, create/retain jobs and generate more income in the NYS agricultural sector. Since April of 2013, the Harvest NY team has assisted multiple agricultural businesses submit a total of \$780,636 in grant money. Described in detail below are a few of the projects the grant money seeks to support.

- **Food Hub Feasibility Study and Business Plan:** Western NY is in the process of developing a regional food hub to assist the many small farmers with their entry into larger and more diversified markets—a critical step in growing the agricultural sector in Western NY. This project will directly benefit Erie, Niagara, Orleans, Wyoming, and Genesee Counties; with secondary benefits to Chautauqua, Cattaraugus and Allegany Counties. Field and Fork Network is the lead agency, with project partners including Harvest NY and New Venture Advisors.

Funding from Farm Credit Northeast has already been awarded to begin work on this project and supplementary money to complete the latter phases of the project is currently being sought.

The distinct phases and activities included in this project are:

- ♦ Market analysis—The project team will research the following factors: potential customers, procurement needs and requirements, supply gaps, and other barriers to procuring local product.
 - ♦ Infrastructure analysis—Services to be investigated include: aggregation, processing, wholesale, and distribution.
 - ♦ Production analysis—Factors to consider: supply and capacity assets.
 - ♦ Business plan—Deliverables include: industry analysis, market analysis, marketing plan, operations plan, development plan, and financials.
- **Tri-County Farm to School:** This project proposes to unite Chautauqua, Erie and Niagara Counties in a collaborative partnership that will increase the ability of schools and farms to find mutually beneficial purchasing relationships. Field and Fork Network is the lead agency in this grant, with project partners including: CCE Niagara, CCE Erie, CCE Chautauqua, Williamsville Central School District, Wilson Central School District, Jamestown Central School District, and Chautauqua Health Action Team. By approaching the following activities on a regional scale, the ultimate goal is to build capacity for farm to school across the region at a greater pace.
 1. **Launch farm to school as a regional collaboration.** This activity involves two regional kick-off events. Experts asked to participate in these events may include, but are not limited to, farm to school State specialists, Cornell GAP specialists, anchor schools already implementing successful farm to school programs, and health and community organizations. Another key aspect of this activity is to develop a website that serves as a clearinghouse of farm to school efforts occurring in the three counties.
 2. **Making Connections through Farm to School Networking Events:** This activity will work to bring farms and schools together by holding networking events across the region.

3. **Improving Technical Skills of Schools and Farms:** In order to provide farms and schools with the necessary skills to successfully engage in the institutional marketplace, trainings in each county will be held with speakers from across New York State. Potential topics to be covered include: pricing, grading and packaging; liability insurance; GAP training for farms; food safety training for food service directors on the safe handling, preparation, processing, and freezing of fresh produce; best purchasing practices; and recipe development designed to incorporate fresh produce.
 4. **Facilitating Sales through an Online Ordering Platform:** There are many barriers to achieving a sale/purchase between a farmer and a school district. The three cafeteria managers serving as a part of this project would like to trial an online ordering system to help facilitate purchases. The project team will first research various online ordering systems, utilizing the anchor schools and a volunteer group of at least five farms serving on an advisory committee. Once a likely system has been identified by the advisory group, the farms and schools will pilot the system during the course of a school year. Training and support will be provided during the pilot, and a report will be compiled at the conclusion of the school year identifying successes, challenges and further opportunities.
- **Western NY Agritourism Marketing Initiative:** Western NY is home to a bountiful and diverse agricultural industry. However, knowledge of how consumers can directly engage with the local farming community is fragmented. A single source of information, highlighting the existence of agritourism businesses, as well as their locations and services offered does not exist. This project aims to mitigate that barrier. The main outcome of the proposed project is a website, which offers the following services:
 - ◆ An interactive map of agricultural businesses that enables consumers to calculate proximity from their home, as well as the proximity to other agricultural businesses. Detailed information will be provided on each agricultural business-to include location, hours of operation and services offered. The intention is to replicate the success of wine trail marketing and leverage the proximity of agricultural businesses against one another. This allows for what might have been a single-stop to one business, to turn into a day of consumer supported tourism activities.
 - ◆ Consumer education section highlighting different ways consumers can engage in the community through agricultural events. Such highlights may include: agricultural workshops offered by partner organizations, educational materials on the importance and benefits of supporting local agriculture and profiling different area farmers to drive a “know your farmer” campaign.
 - ◆ An event calendar listing different agritourism events going on and community events by food and agricultural organizations that are open to the public.

Through the use of marketing materials, advertising efforts will also be directed at a number of different tourist and local businesses in the region. Coupled with the website, the main objective of this effort is to create a regional brand that identifies agricultural goods in Western NY. CCE Niagara County is the lead agency, with project partners including CCE Erie and Harvest NY.

Harvest NY Co-Facilitates a Food System Roundtable Discussion

On June 17th, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Madison County, Empire State Development, Foodlink, and Harvest NY hosted a food system roundtable discussion at Empire State Brewery in Syracuse NY. Regions represented included North Country, Central NY and Western NY. The roundtable objectives were to share the resources available to regional food hubs, identify gaps in the current infrastructure and systems and create lasting platforms for collaboration.

Joining the discussion were such distinguished guests as Jim Barham of the USDA, Agriculture and Marketing Services; Jeff Farbman, National Good Food Network (NFGN) Program Associate of the Wallace Center at Winrock International; Steve Warshawer, NFGN Food Safety Coordinator and Group GAP specialist of the Wallace Center at Winrock International; and Malini Ram Moraghan of the Wholesome Wave Healthy Food Commerce Investments Program. Organizations represented included: American Farmland Trust, 5 current and 3 emerging NYS food hubs, Empire State Development, Cornell University, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Senator Gillibrand's office, USDA Rural Development, Central NY Food Bank, Fair Food, various economic development agencies, Farm Credit East, and farmers from across the regions.

On June 18th the roundtable hosts took a handful of guests on a food systems tour, which began at Foodlink of Rochester and proceeded to the NYS Experiment Station in Geneva NY, The Cornell Agriculture and Food Technology Park, and concluded at Regional Access in Ithaca, NY. Our guests were able to better understand the magnitude of successful food system work currently going on in NYS and speak with industry leaders about the various roles they play.



June 18th panel discussion at Foodlink with Andy Fisher, Jeff Farbman, Steve Warshawer, Jim Barham, Ann Karlen, and Malini Ram Moraghan.

Growth in the Works for Friendly Acres Dairy Farm



Steven and Susan Sondericker milk approximately 500 cows and raise a majority of youngstock just outside Attica, in Wyoming County. With a decades-long history of setting a high standard for milk production, including hosting the 2012 Wyoming County AgriPalooza event, it's not surprising they are looking for the next opportunity to improve operations on their farm. During the initial visit with Steve, we discussed his primary goals of revamping the existing heifer barn (currently housing 80 breeding aged heifers), construction of a new facility to replace their oldest barn (currently home to 124 milking cattle), and redesigning the housing barn to provide better care to special needs cows.

Recognizing the need for professional insight on designing barns and remodeling existing facilities, a barn design planner was called in to assist with the more technical planning. During our second meeting, Dean Weidman of Canandaigua, NY joined Steven and myself for another walk of the farm. From this meeting, we gained better insight into the longer-term goals for the farm, including growth and management preferences. We were also able to prioritize projects, with remodeling or replacing the heifer barn being top priority before the end of this year.

Keeping in mind potential expansion, Steve arranged to have an engineer survey the farm and develop a farm site map, with elevations, current facilities, manure storage, and other information pertinent to planning future barns and milking facilities. Dean also took measurements of the heifer barn to begin drafting options for barn remodeling. Project cost estimates, combined with budgets using Steve's financial goals, will help the Sonderickers select the best option to resolve the bottleneck in heifer housing. Pending the completion of the farm site map, we will begin to address the long-term growth plan for the farm, including building a new barn. Steve's goal is to move milking cows from the oldest barn where cow comfort is limited, into a new facility, which will maximize milk production and allow for an additional 200 milking cows. We are also developing cost estimates for remodeling the existing barn to care for special needs cattle - those closest to or post calving - as well as sick cows. The Sondericker's total business plan will also encompass multi-year constructing plans, addressing the need for additional heifer housing and eventually, a new milking parlor.



View inside barn currently housing milking and special needs cattle, which is cited for major renovation

Knight Dairy Farm Looks to the Future

John and Laura Knight milk 65 registered Holsteins in a tie stall barn in Chautauqua County. The couple brought together a profit team with the help of their daughter, CCE Specialist Ginny Carlberg, and CCE Specialist Lisa Kempestry as the group facilitator. The team included their three daughters, son-in-law, Farm Net consultant, and herd nutritionist. The Harvest NY team joined their team, meeting with the goal of helping John and Laura develop options for growth, ownership transition to the next generation, and to ensure a future of profitable operation of their farm.

Presently, John does a majority of the physical labor, along with two part-time employees. Laura manages the finances, cattle records, and some calf care. The Knights raise high quality Holstein cows with high milk production, as well as managing the production of crops for their herd. In order to maintain this high standard of quality, and to begin reducing their physical workload, John and Laura were considering incorporating their middle daughter into the business, growing their dairy for maximum efficiency, or possibly exiting the dairy industry.

Through our team discussions and using the financial and herd performance data provided by the Knights, the Harvest NY team was able to develop future herd growth models, cost estimates for a new barn, and strategies for multi-phase barn construction. With the goal of lower initial capital investment and creating alternatives for internal growth, we explored buying cattle, milking at a second farm temporarily or investing in a robotic milker.

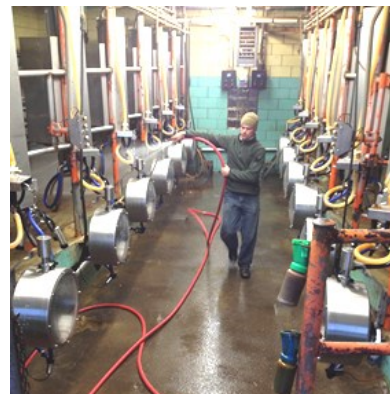
Follow-up conversations helped John and Laura begin to incorporate their values and methods of managing cattle into a longer-term strategy for their farm. They have begun to implement a plan to bring their daughter and son-in-law into the business, while increasing herd size by 10 percent this summer, utilizing minor adjustments to their current barns. The profit team also identified reproductive performance and fresh cow care as being areas of opportunity to help bolster their profitability and improve cash flow ahead of expansion. Harvest NY will continue working with the Knights to aid them in taking the next step toward planning for a new milking parlor to accommodate a larger number of cattle, with their daughter as a partner.



WNY farm with new robotic milking barn and auto alley scrapers.



Learning how a MN dairy utilizes activity monitors to improve cow performance.



WNY dairy planning for expansion and robotic milkers to replace old milking parlor.