

Cornell University
Cooperative Extension

2014 YEAR IN REVIEW



Harvest New York

HARVEST
NEW YORK!

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



Good agricultural practices (GAPs) are specific methods which, when applied to agriculture, create food for consumers or further processing that is safe and wholesome. Read about the results of a recent GAPs survey on page 6.

IN THIS ISSUE

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New Dairy Farm Strategic Planning Specialist Hits the Ground Running• Western NY Food Hub Project Moves into Business Planning Mode	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Harvest NY Partners with Institutional Markets to Increase Procurement of Local Foods• Harvest NY Collaborates Across Disciplines to Explore Greek Yogurt Whey Options	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Harvest NY Trains over 700 in Food Safety & Dairy Foods Processing• Results from Double Up Food Bucks: Increasing Access to Fresh NYS Grown Produce	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Harvest NY Teams up with NYATEP To Host First Food & Beverage Workforce Development Summit• Harvest NY helps demystify the FAQ "What is a Produce Auction and How Do They Work?"	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Harvest NY Investigates the Impact of Good Agricultural Practices Certification on NYS Farms• Harvest NY Specialist joins Farm to Institute New York State Leadership Team	6

New Dairy Farm Strategic Planning Specialist Hits the Ground Running



In addition to providing and gathering information during the snow storm of November 2014, follow-up efforts uncovered difficulties and frustrations in obtaining low cost funding to subsidize needed repairs. These frustrations were then conveyed directly to Senator Patrick Gallivan who felt that a State funded program may be offered in the near future that would dovetail into exiting Federal efforts.

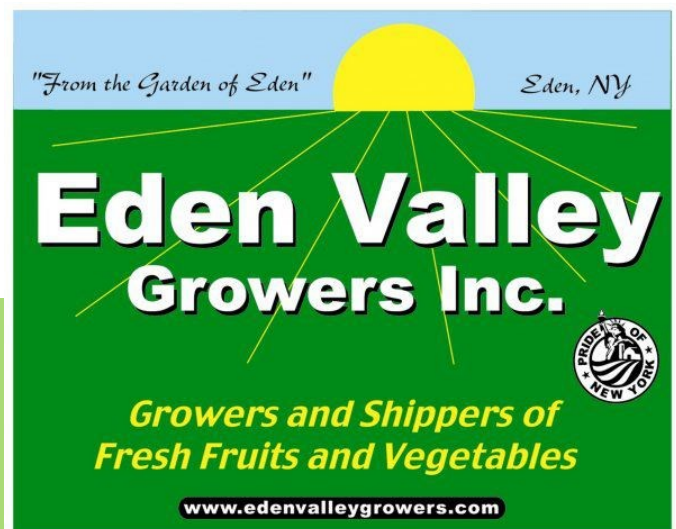
Additionally, a large greenhouse concern was facing a multi-million dollar rebuild and upgrade following the storm. The farm management team had already begun the arduous task of researching various options but had become inundated with marketing materials and sales pitches. They needed an outside consultant without a product line to sell who could provide an objective evaluation of the options based on their business goals. Through contacts at Cornell University we were able to put the managers in touch with a retired greenhouse engineer from the University of Connecticut. Discussions are on-going.

Progress continues to be made as a network is being built through contacts with other agricultural agencies – Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD's), NRCS, WNY Crop Management, etc. Several referrals have been received from these agencies which have led to one-on-one, on-farm consultations. Typical scenarios have dealt with the planning and placement of an ag waste storage to satisfy the farm's Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) and facilitate growth of the herd from 40 to 60 milking cows, as well as, the solving of an existing stray voltage problem and the prevention of further issues in a new facility to be constructed this spring. With the resolution of the stray voltage the farm reported a 10% - 12% increase in milk production within the first 48 hours.

The Western NY Food Hub Project Moves into Business Planning Mode

Following the completion of the Ready to Grow Food Hub Feasibility Study, which wrapped up in early fall of 2014; the project team, which is comprised of Field and Fork Network, New Venture Advisors and Harvest NY, issued a public Request of Interest for potential owner/operators of the food hub. Through a rigorous

interview process, the Selection Committee chose Eden Valley Growers as the potential owner/operator of the food hub in Western NY. Eden Valley Growers is a vegetable farm cooperative, consisting of 10 member farms, many of whom are third and fourth generation family farmers, collectively working over 1000 acres of land. This thriving business, with sales in the past three years exceeding \$4 million, is moving into business planning mode with the project team. A shared vision of providing technical assistance and infrastructure support to small and mid-size farmers that are interested in selling through wholesale market channels will guide this business diversification process. Led by highly skilled farmers and businessmen, Eden Valley Grower's knowledge of best growing practices and their expertise in product aggregation, sales and marketing positioned them to be the optimal potential owner/operator of a successful food hub in Western NY.



Harvest NY Specialist Partners with Institutional Markets to Increase the Procurement of Local Foods



In the spring of 2014, Harvest NY aided in the establishment of a coalition of community organizations charged with developing Farm to School (F2S) efforts in Buffalo Public Schools (BPS). BPS has an annual food budget of over \$21 million and serves over 34,000 students in 56 schools. As such, this project is revered as an excellent opportunity to increase access to healthy foods by its children while simultaneously strengthening the local agricultural sector.

In December of 2014, BPS was awarded a \$45,000 F2S planning grant, which is one of 82 projects spanning 42 states and the Virgin Islands receiving support this year through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's F2S Program, an effort to better connect school cafeterias and students with local farmers and ranchers. Acting alongside Bridget O'Brien Woods, long-time BPS Food Service Director, Thayer will co-lead the F2S planning effort. The grant will be used to identify systems and procedures for procurement of locally grown farm goods while encouraging the consumption of these local foods by BPS students. Youth leaders, students, parents, teachers, food service staff, farmers, and food distributors will have an active role in developing the F2S plan in collaboration with the project partners: the Buffalo City School District, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Erie County, the Massachusetts Avenue Project, and Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities.

"It was a pleasure collaborating with you [HNY Specialist, Cheryl Thayer] on the USDA's Farm to School Planning grant application in the spring of 2014. Your work experience and knowledge of the agricultural community was instrumental in preparing our application, which resulted in a \$45,000 award.

As Co-Project Director, I look forward to working with you to develop a Farm to School Implementation Plan that will improve student health and support farmers and food businesses by expanding market opportunities for local and regional foods in the Buffalo community.

Our partnership will ensure bright, healthy futures for students, farmers and our regional economy."

-Bridget O'Brien Wood, Food Service Director Buffalo Public Schools

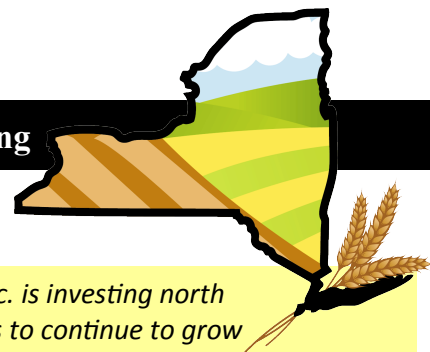
"The Buffalo Public School Farm to School initiative brings healthy, local, and fresh food to schools in Buffalo. The initiative connects schools, farms, and community partners to improve student nutrition through agriculture, health, and nutrition education; and to strengthen our economy by supporting local farmers and food producers."

~Buffalo Public Schools F2S Project Team

Harvest NY Collaborates Across Disciplines to Explore Greek Yogurt Whey Options

The Harvest NY Dairy Specialist is working with the Department of Animal Science, the Pro-Dairy program, and Cornell Waste Management Institute through funds from the Department of Environmental Conservation to explore the uses of Greek Yogurt Acid Whey and optimization of the uses to eliminate fear of any environmental concerns. As part of this project, the Dairy Specialist will be working with the NY dairy foods industry to obtain information on the volume and current uses of whey from Greek Yogurt Manufacturing along with conducting a detailed compositional analysis to determine possible uses for future development.

Harvest NY Trains over 700 in Food Safety & Dairy Foods Processing



In 2014, the Harvest NY Dairy Foods Specialist collaborated with the Cornell Dairy Foods Extension team to train over 700 employees to improve their skills for New York State Dairy Food Processors. These training programs focused on leadership in the food industry, food safety, regulations and dairy process improvement – specifically in advanced technologies, cheese making and yogurt manufacturing. Four training sessions were held off-site in Western New York to benefit the growing dairy processing industry.



Training on the inoculation of milk with cultures to make yogurt

"Yancey's Fancy, Inc. is investing north of 20 million dollars to continue to grow our business here as we believe that New York is the best place for us to continue to build a future. No one is assured of success and the challenges that we face are many. Help from anywhere is much appreciated and Cornell has been a major asset in our growth and, in particular, the Harvest NY program has been a huge help. The program specialist has helped us with employee training, improving food safety programs and navigating the ever increasing and ever more stringent FDA regulations. The training program, that our specialist helped put together on membrane filtration, was particularly useful as we are about to start-up a new reverse osmosis plant in early 2015. Managers, supervisors and soon-to-be new operators were given a real head start in getting ready for the new operation. The dairy foods extension, along with the Harvest NY program specialist have been great consultants and resources while we've been building and improving our manufacturing practices and processes. They will be even more important to our efforts as we open our new facility in March or April of 2015. "

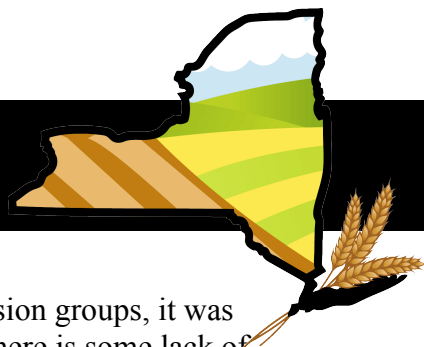
– Brian Bailey, VP of Operations at Yancey's Fancy Inc.

Results from Double Up Food Bucks: Increasing Access to Fresh NYS Grown Produce

Tremendous results were realized through the pilot of Double Up Food Bucks (DUFb) in Western NY farmers markets during the 2014 farmers market season. DUFb encourages market patrons to use their SNAP benefits at farmers markets by offering a dollar-for-dollar SNAP match, up to \$20/market visit/day. The DUFb SNAP match can only be used to purchase NYS grown produce. SNAP sales at participating farmers markets increased 219% over 2013 and total food assistance dollars increased 415%. Over 3,100 transactions were processed and over 1,000 new customers shopped at participating farmers markets. Next steps for the DUFb project team, comprised of Field and Fork Network and Harvest NY, include program continuation and expansion in years to come.



Harvest NY Teams up with NYATEP To Host First Food & Beverage Workforce Development Summit



New York is a great state for not only dairy foods manufacturing, but all food and beverage manufacturing. In 2007, there were over 4,500 food processing establishments in New York State employing over 48,000 people with an annual payroll of \$1.7 Billion. In dairy foods manufacturing, we have seen employment growth of 13.2% from 2008 to 2012. Additionally, according to a 2009 Cornell University study, 37% of food manufacturers that responded plan to grow their workforce.

With this information, Cornell University teamed up with the New York State Training and Employment Professionals to host the first Food & Beverage Workforce Development Summit to bring together over 75 personnel from the food industry, educational institutions, Empire State Development and governmental agencies. Information was presented on the growth of the workforce, the needs of the industry, and how educational institutions are preparing to meet their needs.

Strategizing on business & industry collaborations

Out of the discussion groups, it was determined that there is some lack of information on the availability of workers who may fulfill these roles, the skills required for these positions are highly stratified, employers are struggling continuously on finding qualified individuals and there is a lack of local awareness on careers in food manufacturing. The Harvest NY dairy foods specialist and NYATEP wrote and received a grant from the Workforce Development Institute to further explore data and to evaluate the potential of apprenticeship models for the food and beverage industry. This work will be completed in 2015.



Harvest NY helps demystify the FAQ “What is a Produce Auction and How Do They Work?”



A produce auction is a wholesale market for regionally grown produce. Currently there are six produce auctions in New York State offering a wide variety of produce at competitive prices. The first production auction in the state was founded in 2001. The market is a one-stop source for buyers to purchase either a truckload of produce or several semi loads. The sale provides a unique opportunity for buyers of all kinds to buy the freshest and highest quality produce and flowers at one location at a wholesale price. The Produce Auction prides itself on selling fresh, quality produce, all of which is provided by local growers.

Even though produce auctions have existed in the state since 2001, many people, when asked, do not understand how produce auctions work and do not feel like it is a market where they can buy their produce. Harvest NY partnered with the Cornell Vegetable Program to create a video that explores how produce auctions operate. Through interviews with growers who sell their produce at the auction, customers who buy their produce at the auction, and Cornell Cooperative Extension staff, the video unravels the selling and purchasing of local produce through the produce auction, making it an approachable experience for everyone.

Please visit the Cornell Vegetable Program YouTube channel to view the produce auction video:
<https://www.youtube.com/user/cccecvp>.

Harvest NY Investigates the Impact of Good Agriculture Practices Certification on NYS Farms



Cornell Cooperative Extension, along with the National GAPs Program and the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, has developed and implemented a nationally-recognized training program in Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) to prepare New York growers for the marketplace's increased vigilance in food safety. A key part to successful understanding and implementation of GAPs is training. New York has had an active GAPs training program for produce farmers since 1999. Harvest NY partnered with the National GAPs Program to conduct a long term evaluation of the training program by surveying past training participants after they had completed the multi-day course to see what progress they had made, costs they had incurred, markets they had maintained, and assess other indicators to determine the long term impact of attending the training.

In the Spring of 2014, 80 past participants, each representing a different farm, were asked to complete a 20 question survey. Preliminary findings from the long-term survey with growers show that the three top reasons growers report implementing GAPs are their personal commitment to food safety (24%), maintaining market access (20%), and reducing liability (17%). 35 (43%) growers reported maintaining sales valued from \$14,000 to \$2,000,000, while 14 (16%) growers reported expanded sales valued at \$15,000 to \$300,000. Though these are very broad values, it indicates that implementing GAPs can help preserve and expand market access.



There are many reasons why produce safety should be important to growers. Based on the evaluations, we feel the multi-day GAPs training programs are helping growers increase their understanding of produce safety issues, develop a written farm food safety plan, and implement practices to reduce microbial risks. In New York State, there are four multi-day GAPs trainings scheduled for this winter if you would like to participate. Please visit www.gaps.cornell.edu to find the dates, locations, and registration information.

Harvest NY Specialist, Cheryl Thayer, joins the Farm to Institute New York State Leadership Team

Farm to Institute New York State (FINYS), an American Farmland Trust initiative, is a statewide partnership of agricultural, public health and economic development leaders who have come together to strengthen New York's regional food economy and improve the health of its citizens. Leadership Team members are actively engaged in strategizing and partnering on the actionable projects identified in the assessment report *Scaling Up – Strategies for Expanding Sales of Local Food to Public and Private Institutions in New York*. The members of the FINYS Leadership Team work closely with American Farmland Trust and FINYS Co-Coordinator to: develop strategies for addressing the barriers identified in the Scaling Up assessment; advise and assist in the implementation of projects; and help facilitate regional networking across sectors and within geographic regions of New York through their organizations' networks and associations.

CONTACT US



ELIZABETH NEWBOLD

Local Food Systems Specialist
CCE Yates
phone 315-536-5123
e-mail ejn22@cornell.edu



CHERYL THAYER

Local Food Systems Specialist
CCE Erie County
phone 607-592-9507
e-mail cbt32@cornell.edu



TIM TERRY

Dairy Farm Strategic Planning Specialist
CCE Wyoming County
phone 585-786-2251
cell 585-689-9163
e-mail txt2@cornell.edu



TRISTAN ZUBER

Dairy Food Processing and Safety Specialist
CCE Genesee County
phone 585-739-9831
e-mail tjz2@cornell.edu

Harvest New York is a program in Western New York designed to expand and enhance existing regional agriculture extension programs with the addition of three new areas of expertise: agriculture economic development, dairy modernization, and dairy food processing.

Maximizing connections to the research and resources of Cornell and Cooperative Extension, responding to emerging issues, and developing new opportunities, CCE's newest regional team members will help increase the profitability of the New York agricultural industry.

The Harvest New York agricultural team specialists, housed at separate locations throughout the region, will work in close consultation with Cornell faculty members, local and regional extension staff and grower groups. They'll bring new information and resources to the table, particularly in areas where there is potential for industry growth and expansion.

GROWING NEW YORK'S AGRICULTURE & FOOD ECONOMY
WWW.HARVESTNY.CCE.CORNELL.EDU

Cornell Cooperative Extension is an employer and educator recognized for valuing AA/EEO, Protected Veterans, and individuals with Disabilities and provides equal program and employment opportunities