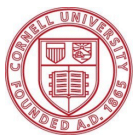


Harvest New York



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension

**HARVEST
NEW YORK!**

HARVEST NEW YORK PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS **Quarterly Report** **July 2013 — September 2013**



Tour of Yancey's Fancy for high school teachers who were learning about careers in the food industry. Tour set up by Harvest NY Specialist

Growing New York's Agriculture and Food Economy
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Western New York Food Hub Feasibility Study to Commence!

Field and Fork Network was awarded a \$175 thousand dollar grant through Farm Credit Northeast and the Western NY Power Proceeds Allocation Fund to commence a food hub feasibility study and business plan of the 5-county region: Erie, Niagara, Orleans, Genesee, and Wyoming. Championed by Field and Fork Network and identified by numerous regional planning efforts, this project is viewed as a critical step in connecting more locally grown produce to the wholesale market in Western NY.

"Production of food and agriculture plays a vital part in Western New York's economy. This economic grant award will plant the seeds for Field and Fork Network to connect our agri-business industries to new market opportunities so that jobs and our economy can flourish," said Senator Michael Ranzenhofer.

The Harvest NY Specialist assisted in identifying and applying for grant money and will also serve as a project collaborator throughout project duration, which is anticipated to take 8-10 months to complete. Also serving as a project collaborator is New Venture Advisors, a Chicago-based consulting firm that has worked on 13 food hub ventures across the United States. The feasibility study will include a thorough market analysis, agricultural production analysis and infrastructure analysis to best determine the feasibility of a food hub. Conditional on a favorable outcome, a full business plan, to include an industry analysis, market analysis, marketing plan, operations plan, development plan, and financial plan will be developed.

Expanded GAP training in WNY



Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certification is increasingly being required by wholesale buyers of fresh produce. Presently there are only 15 USDA GAP certified farms (and an unknown number of privately certified) in the 5 county range of WNY: Erie, Niagara, Chautauqua, Cattaraugus, and Allegany.

In an effort to increase the capacity for locally sourced produce to meet wholesale demand, the Harvest NY team, in partnership with local CCE offices, submitted grant proposals to expand upon Cornell University's current GAP program by offering intensive one-on-one technical assistance to farmers interested in undertaking the certification process within the 5-county region. Through interviews with the region's farmers, both GAP certified and non-GAP certified, the project team learned this would be an invaluable service to aid in a greater number of farms obtaining this important safety certification, ultimately enabling them to maintain current markets and/or reach a broader range of wholesale markets.

Research & Education on Spore-forming Bacteria Grant Proposal

Improving the quality of finished dairy products is a main goal of many NY dairy processors. In most cases, finished product quality is directly related to raw milk quality. One issue facing fluid milk, dairy ingredient and cheese processors are spore-forming bacteria that survive pasteurization and deteriorate the finished product. In fluid milk, these bacteria can lead to lower shelf life; in dry dairy ingredients, the presence of spores potentially limits access to overseas markets; and in cheese, spores can cause “late-blowing”, rendering the product unsellable.

With the growth of both cheese and dairy ingredient processing in New York State, there is greater interest in reducing the level of spores on the raw milk side. Understanding where spore-forming bacteria come from on NYS farms is important to reducing their presence and improving finished product quality. The Harvest NY team submitted a \$148,598 grant proposal to the New York Farm Viability Institute to obtain funding to support research in this area. Once the sources are understood, educational seminars will be given to farmers to allow them to implement strategies to reduce the spore-forming level in raw milk.

Audit Assistance Provided to Western New York Processors

Consumer demand for increased food safety assurance has tremendously increased over the past few years. As a result, credible food safety management systems and internal audit systems are being developed and implemented by many dairy processing companies.

The Harvest NY team has begun to work with Kimberly Bukowski of the Dairy Foods Extension Program, on supporting companies who are working to expand internal audit capabilities or apply for third party audit certificates. In Quarter 3, Harvest NY assisted two dairy processors in Western NY with their internal audit systems to determine if there were any improvements that could be made to enhance food quality and safety programs. Having an “outside eye” is beneficial to these companies for them to continue to improve their capabilities of providing safe and wholesome food to consumers.

Harvest NY Maximizes Resources for Dairies

An objective of the Dairy Modernization Specialist has been to support growth and reinvestment in NY dairy farms by connecting farm operators to available resources. Recent state initiatives are providing exciting opportunities for NYS farmers, and Harvest NY specialists are working to match needs with the funds and expertise to improve immediate and long-term profitability and sustainability. Efforts towards this have proved fruitful, with the Dairy Modernization Specialist facilitating projects using funds through the Dairy Acceleration Program to develop business and environmental plans for growing dairy farms. Harvest NY is working with 5 farms, with estimated 2013 milk sales of \$4.9 million dollars, to plan capital investment projects resulting in higher milk production and proposed growth exceeding 500 cows and \$1.9 million dollars in additional revenue. These early projects are analyzing investments in cattle facilities of two to three million dollars over the next two years, and utilize services from across the western NY dairy industry.

The recent refunding of dairy profit teams by the NY Farm Viability Institute will further aid farms by including their key farm advisors in the development of action plans for better farm profitability and milk production. Harvest NY participates in three such teams, with more to follow given available funding, offering facility consultation and economic analysis on strategic growth plans. Through relationships with state and local resources, Harvest NY is well placed to be supplementing on-farm efforts by facilitating new relationships between farmers and transition specialists from Farm Net, farm business planners from Pro Dairy and NWNYS Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops Team, Solar and Wind providers, facility engineers from Pro Dairy, as well as regional industry service providers.

Harvest NY in the News...

[Fall Rural Futures Newsletter 2013](#)

[Food Hub Press Release](#)

[Auctions: Great source for locally-grown produce](#)

[Culture Product Shift Podcast - WBEN Radio](#)

[Wegmans & Cornell Partner to Put NY on Map for Artisanal & Specialty Cheesemaking](#)

[Local Produce, Ag Jobs Highlight GCC's Second Annual Harvest Festival and Farmer's Market](#)

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