



SERVING AN INDUSTRY WITH A FARM GATE VALUE OF \$182 MILLION



195 MEETINGS & TRAININGS



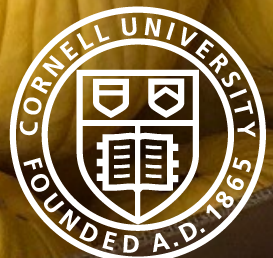
8,684 MEETING/TRAINING ATTENDEES



47K+ NEWSLETTERS & REPORTS

Cornell Cooperative Extension Eastern NY Commercial Horticulture Program 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

Serving the educational and research needs of the commercial small fruit, vegetable, and tree fruit industries in Albany, Clinton, Columbia, Dutchess, Essex, Fulton, Greene, Montgomery, Orange, Putnam, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schoharie, Schenectady, Ulster, Warren, and Washington counties.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Essential Field Trials Continue Despite NY Pause

Many field trials continued this season, despite the NY Pause. These included bitter pit management of apple, orchard weed control, insect exclusion netting, high tunnel vegetable production, and a variety of novel pest and bird management projects. The applied, on-farm research is what makes the ENYCH regional CCE program so valuable to growers—it's real world information that helps inform farms decision-making.

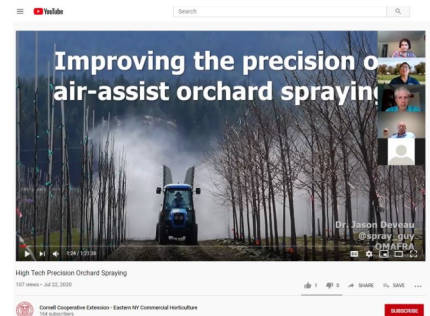
One example of field trials involved bio-fungicides, which are marketed to growers as low-risk, environmentally friendly alternatives that enhance the performance of conventional fungicides; however, the extent of efficacy under typical field conditions and on specific crops has not been thoroughly examined. Brassica crops are important fresh market crops widely grown in the region, but they are susceptible to fungal and bacterial diseases. In response, Teresa Rusinek and Ethan Grundberg conducted the first year of an efficacy trial of commercially available bio-fungicides with a long term goal of developing crop protection programs to help alleviate fungicide resistance.



Variety trials are another example of applied research that is utilized by growers. Leeks, sweet potatoes, and Irish potatoes were some of the crops evaluated this season, and Chuck Bornt and Teresa Rusinek collaborated with Wallkill View Farm on a seedless watermelon variety trial. This evaluation combined traditional fruit evaluation with customer acceptance input that was done at the farm stand. Customers were given a simple questionnaire to help identify the melon, what they thought of it, and if they would purchase it again. This information will be collated by CCE and shared with Eastern NY growers to identify new melon varieties to grow. While customer evaluation is not typically part of our variety trial protocol, the information is critical to the success of markets and we hope we can do more of this type of critique in the future.

Tree Fruit Workshops and Special Permit Training Go Virtual in Response to COVID-19

ENYCHP Tree Fruit Specialists Mike Basedow and Dan Donahue adapted their planned spring and summer workshops for the world of virtual programming. Stone fruit pest management, precision bloom thinning, precision air blast spraying, summer fruit disease management, and harvest and storage management were some of the topics presented to growers using the Cornell Zoom platform. In addition to hosting these meetings live, meetings were recorded and uploaded to the team's YouTube channel. Between live views and YouTube hits, the combined views for recordings is well over 1000. Dan Donahue coordinated an 8-person multi-disciplinary team of CCE regional specialists to revamp the 20-years running CCE/NYSDEC Special Permit pesticide safety training program. CCE staffers and Ms. Julie Suarez of CALS government relations in coordination with NYSDEC staff negotiated, developed, and implemented a virtual Special Permit training program that included 3-hour instructional videos in Spanish and English, packets of instructional and testing material, as well as the required legal permit paperwork customized for each of the 95 participating farms and 540 trainees. In the end, NYSDEC Special Permits were issued in a timely fashion, the safety training needs of non-certified sprayer operators were effectively addressed, and these essential farm employees were able to safely get the job done. While we hope to return to in-person programming in the near future, we plan to continue to offer a wide array of online programming to allow our research-based information and support for education to be accessible to as many growers as possible.



Cornell Cooperative Extension

Eastern NY Commercial Horticulture Program

Podcasts Provide Rapid Support to Produce Farms Facing COVID-19 Challenges

As the COVID-19 pandemic placed constraints on providing in-person training and growers had pressing questions and concerns that were difficult to address in a timely manner through newsletter articles, vegetable specialist Ethan Grundberg worked to develop a series of audio episodes for the Eastern New York Vegetable News Podcast to discuss impacts of the novel coronavirus on vegetable farms in the region. Grundberg interviewed colleagues Liz Higgins to discuss economic impacts of the pandemic and economic assistance programs; Elisabeth Hodgdon to review food safety and sanitation considerations; agricultural workforce development specialist Rich Stup to discuss employee management; and Erin Enouen, a grower in Kerhonkson, who had pivoted to online sales during the pandemic. As of mid-October, the podcast episodes have been listened to a total of 2,275 times in 2020 alone. <https://soundcloud.com/easternnewyorkvegnews>



Eastern NY Vegetable News Podcast

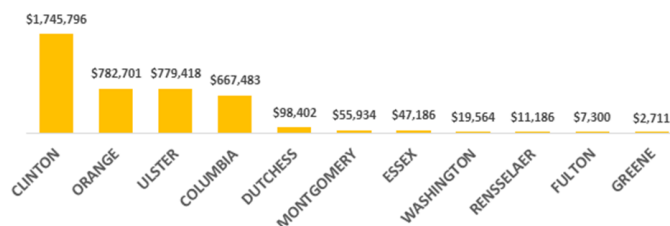
CCE Provides COVID-19 Safety Guidance and BMP's for NY Farms

At the start of the growing season, all farm businesses in New York needed to write and implement "NY Forward" COVID-19 safety plans. The plans cover physical distancing, hygiene, sanitation, health screening, and other important aspects of running businesses to reduce the risk of COVID-19 for farm owners, employees, and customers. In May, a statewide COVID-19 safety plan task force was organized and ENYCHP specialists Liz Higgins and Elisabeth Hodgdon worked on the team to create plan writing guidance documents for farms and retail operations. In June, two webinars were held to introduce growers to safety plans and answer questions relating to COVID-19 safety. More than 300 participants attended the two webinars. Throughout the growing season, ENYCHP specialists continued to provide individualized recommendations and support for farms around the state as plans were implemented. Following a similar collaborative strategy, Laura McDermott worked with Cornell Small Farms and Cornell Dept of Horticulture faculty to develop Best Management Practice (BMP's) protocols for You Pick and Agritourism farms. ENYCHP hosted webinars for several hundred farmers statewide to explain the BMP's and how official NYS Guidance could be adopted to their unique farm situation.

ENYCH Helps Growers Access COVID-19 Funding

CCE ENYCH provided critical support to NY growers by helping them navigate the new and constantly changing landscape of federal disaster funding. Ag Business Educator, Elizabeth Higgins worked with Cornell's Government Affairs Office and NYS Farm Bureau to monitor available programs and advocate for changes in USDA CFAP funding and state programs to better assist specialty crop growers. Liz led efforts to educate farmers and CCE educators about the SBA programs and USDA CFAP 1 and 2 programs for specialty crop growers. The materials she developed, including factsheets, webinars and bi-weekly newsletter articles and podcasts were distributed through ENYCH commodity newsletters reached thousands of growers and technical assistance providers statewide. In addition, the materials were disseminated through the Cornell Ag Workforce site, the Cornell EDEN site, the Cornell Small Farms Program and other CCE Associations. Partly as a result of her efforts, fruit and vegetable farms in the 17 county ENYCH region received \$4.2 million in CFAP 1 payments and specialty crop growers in NYS received \$13.9 million. Apples, onions and squash were the primary crops receiving payments, but a wide variety of crops in our region were covered, including lettuce, potatoes, parsnips, garlic, herbs, greens and carrots.

Figure 3 CFAP1 Payments by ENYCH County (for Specialty Crops)



Third Annual Eastern NY Fruit & Vegetable Conference a Success!

On February 25 & 26, 2020, over 350 growers, 52 companies, 15 CCE ENYCH Program staff and 51 guest speakers attended the third Annual ENYCHP Fruit and Vegetable Conference in Albany. Two days of tree fruit, vegetable, small fruit, grape, hemp and food safety training took place for over 34 hours of educational training. A Farm Beverage tasting was a new addition enjoyed by the attendees. In a post-conference survey, one grower commented, "the program should be an example to other agricultural programs outside of our area" and one vendor commented that this is one of the best shows they attend from around the entire northeast.

Produce Auction Has Best Year to Date, Brings in New Growers

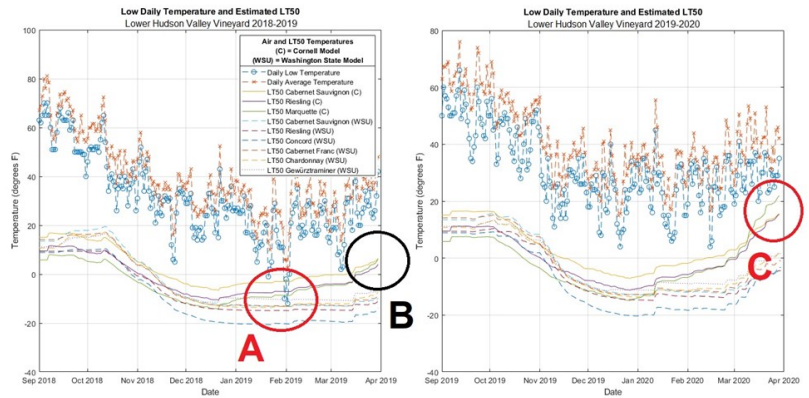
The Mohawk Valley Produce Auction in Montgomery County exceeded one million dollars in annual sales in 2019, and this spring completed a \$250,000 infrastructure expansion to continue the positive trend. The winter grower meeting supported by our vegetable team had record attendance in the winter of 2020, with many new faces looking to start growing produce in the Mohawk Valley. To support the expansion by new produce farms entering the state, Crystal Stewart-Courtens committed to holding in-person office hours at the auction every Tuesday from 10-11 am. This steady presence will provide growers from the plain community with easier access to timely, research based information. The Auction also has a membership in the team, and receives newsletters which are posted on a bulletin board. With significant support from the regional teams, all produce auctions in NYS were able to operate at full capacity despite Covid-19. The teams helped auctions develop safety protocols, post applicable signage, and understand the implications of operating an essential business during the pandemic. The auctioneer at the Mohawk Valley Produce auction reported during a conversation in June, "We would not have been able to open the auction this year without you". Not only did the auction operate, it had its best year to date with the expanded building accommodating tractor trailers from the Hudson Valley and beyond.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS CONT.

New Tools for Better Predicting Bud Cold Hardiness and Budbreak

Researchers in Geneva have recently developed a new grape physiology model for predicting how buds acclimate to winter temperatures and subsequently de-acclimate. These models were added to Jim Meyers ENYCHP daily vineyard reports this winter, giving every grower daily information about potential winter damage, and budbreak estimates to guide pruning practices to compensate for potential losses. This spring, a prediction of early budbreak has been used to inform decisions regarding frost mitigation activities, such as dormant spraying to delay budbreak and sprays that may temporarily increase bud hardiness prior to a predicted cold event. The tools have also been used to improve site selection recommendations.



A demonstration of the bud hardiness model predicting (A) substantial winter injury during January and February in 2019; (B) a fairly typical budbreak date in Spring of 2019; and (C) a budbreak date for Spring 2020 that is well ahead of 2019.

2020 Collaborators

Cornell Farmworker Program
 Cornell Institute on Climate Smart Solutions
 Cornell Small Farms Program
 Garlic Seed Foundation
 Glynwood
 Grow NYC
 Hudson Valley Farm Hub
 Hudson Valley Research Laboratory
 Louisiana State University
 Michigan State University
 National Institute of Food & Agriculture
 NE Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education
 New World Foundation
 New York Apple Association
 New York Farm Viability Institute
 New York State Vegetable Growers Association
 Northeast Organic Farmers Association-NY
 Northeast SARE
 Northern NY Ag Development Program
 NY and NE Integrated Pest Management
 NY Apple Research and Development Program
 NY Center for Agricultural Medicine & Health
 NY Farm Bureau
 NYS Berry Growers Association
 NYS Dept of Agriculture and Markets
 NYS Dept of Environmental Conservation
 NYS Dept of Health
 NYS Dept of Labor
 Onion Research and Development Program
 Orange County Vegetable Growers Association
 Pennsylvania Dept. of Agriculture
 Produce Safety Alliance
 University of Maine
 University of New Hampshire
 University of Rhode Island
 University of Vermont
 US Dept of Agriculture
 US Dept of Labor

STAFF

ENYCHP Specialists

Charles Bornt, Vegetables
 Ethan Grundberg, Vegetables
 Elisabeth Hodgdon, Vegetables
 Teresa Rusinek, Vegetables
 Crystal Stewart-Courtens, Vegetables
 Maire Ullrich, Vegetables/Hemp

Laura McDermott, Small Fruit
 Michael Basedow, Tree Fruit
 Daniel Donahue, Tree Fruit
 James Meyers, Viticulture/Grapes
 Liz Higgins, Business

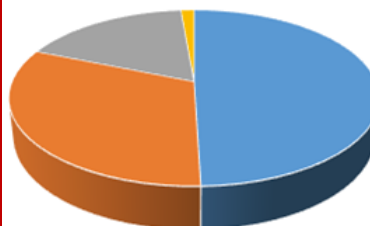
Technicians

Sarah Eve Elone
 Natasha Field
 Andy Galimberti
 Sarah Tobin

Administrative Staff

Chelsea Truehart
 Marcie Vohnoutka

2019 OPERATING BUDGET



- Supporting County Association Shares: \$539,030.00
- ENYCHP Grants & Funds¹: \$344,547.00
- Cornell University Federal Funds²: \$190,000.00
- Harvest New York³: \$15,000.00

1 Includes funds from reserve accounts, grants, donations, program revenue, Ag & Markets, money market investment interest, Cornell Dept.
 2 USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture Smith Lever Funds
 3 New York State Funds

Cornell Cooperative Extension
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