



**Cornell University**  
**Cooperative Extension**  
**Eastern New York Commercial Horticulture**

**First Quarter Report 2014**

**Winter Statistics**

**38 Visits**

**319 Phone consults & client e-mails**

**17,760 Newsletters/Updates/Alerts received**

**17 Field meetings & trainings/workshops**

**2,256 Producers attended trainings/workshops & field meetings**

**3 /35 Webinars / Attendees of those webinars**

***2014 Eastern NY Tree Fruit Winter Meetings – Laura McDermott***

A streamlined approach to publicity and contacting speakers and trade-show vendors resulted in excellent crowds for both the 1 day Upper Hudson meeting that was held in Lake George on February 10<sup>th</sup>, and the 3-day Hudson Valley meeting that was held in Kingston on February 11-13<sup>th</sup>. The only challenge was a record-setting snowstorm that delayed the afternoon program for the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of the Hudson Valley meeting. The grape and berry sessions that had to be postponed were rescheduled for late May and early April.



In total, over 400 growers and vendors attended these meetings. CCE ENYCHP was able to offer DEC and CCA credits to growers on each of the 4 days of programming. The Cornell University tree fruit faculty and CCE extension specialists presented new information on planting systems, pest management and marketing. Among the presenters was the newly appointed Director of Extension Dr. Christopher Watkins. Growers also featured on the program. NY State Horticulture Society President Will Gunnison of Gunnison Lakeside Orchards in Crown Point gave an annual report at the Lake George Meeting and Mr. Jeff Christ of Christ Orchards, and Peter Jentsch, superintendent of the Hudson Valley Lab laid out the future of the Hudson Valley Lab during each of the four days of programming.



Industry vendors enthusiastically supported trade shows at both the northern and southern sites. The trade shows' offer a great opportunity for growers to make last minute orders and touch base about products before the season gets too busy.

The evaluations from growers and vendors and comments from speakers were very complimentary especially concerning the ease at which registration and overall program communication was handled. We look forward to having the tree fruit positions fully

staffed in 2015 and continuing to meet the needs of tree fruit growers in eastern NY.

## Statistics:

### *Hudson Valley Fruit Production*

New York's tree fruit crops include apples, pears, sweet and tart cherries, peaches, nectarines, apricots, and plums. Apples compose 89% of the acreage and peaches and sour cherries each comprise 3.5%.

New York ranks second in the United States in the production of apples behind Washington State. The 2008 crop in NY produced over 30 million bushels. It is feasible that future years will see production peaks reaching 35 million bushels in good seasons as a result of the establishment of more efficient planting systems.



Most of NY's commercial fruit is grown in 3 production regions: Western New York (71 % of acreage) on the south shore of Lake Ontario; the Hudson Valley (22 % of acreage) in Southeastern NY bordering the Hudson River within 100 miles of New York City; and the Champlain Valley (7% of acreage) bordering Lake Champlain and Vermont in Northeastern NY. Each region has its own strengths and caters to different but overlapping markets.

NY has approximately 30 apple varieties in commercial production as well as a number of new varieties constantly under test. This is a very high number compared to other production regions in the United States. Listed in the latest NY Fruit Tree and Vineyard Survey are 22 varieties. Other varieties of importance that are not listed but increasing in importance include Cameo, Fuji, and Braeburn.

Sources: NASS 2006 NY Fruit Tree and Vineyard Survey & 2002 US Census of Agriculture

Adapted from Hoying, S. M. Fargione and T. Robinson. 2008. Fruit Production in New York. ISHS Symposium, August 4-8, 2008, NYSAES, Geneva, NY

## ***Traveling Vegetable School – Teresa Rusinek***



This year the team put together three consecutive days of educational programs for commercial vegetable growers. Each day was held at a different location in the Lower Hudson Valley, Albany, and in the North Country (Clinton County). Many of the topics and speakers were the same at each location. This made it more efficient to bring in outside speakers and maximized staff time. This was the first time a vegetable school was offered in the North Country where about 50 growers gathered to hear from specialists on vegetable issues and to visit vendors at the trade show.

Combining all the locations, 225 growers attended. Growers learned which diseases to watch for this upcoming season such as *Phytophthora capsici* in pumpkin and pepper crops, and bacterial canker in tomato. Incidence of these diseases has been increasing in fields leading to significant crop losses. Brown Marmorated Stink Bug, a fairly new invasive pest, was covered by entomologist Peter Jentsch of the Hudson Valley Lab, who has been monitoring and researching control strategies in fruit and more recently in vegetable crops such as peppers and tomato where we are seeing populations and damage increase. Growers received detailed information on best conventional and organic management practices. Bob Weybright who recently joined the team as the business development specialist updated the audience on the current proposed rules of the Food Safety Modernization Act and what growers can expect once the law is enacted. Garlic production is increasing on many of the farms we work with; Crystal Stewart provided insight on best postharvest treatments based on research work she has been conducting over the past 3 years. Chuck Bornt provided yield and quality reports on 26 tomato varieties from trials he's conducted over the past two years. Mike Fargione, who is now with the Cary Institute made a comeback appearance to present information on deer management techniques in the agricultural landscape.

Evaluations from the program indicate that growers found the quality and importance of the content of the presentations very high. When asked what techniques or information they have adopted from previous programs or newsletters some of the responses were: postharvest handling of crops, high tunnel construction tips, and timing of sprays. Some of the comments for future programming were: more variety trials, organic weed control, business management topics and production economics. Many indicated a positive economic impact on their farm as a result of CCE/ENYCH programming such as: higher yields and profitability, growing better varieties and less loss from disease, saving money and good investments, staying in compliance.

## ***Empire State Producers Expo***

All of the ENYCHP Team participated in the 2014 Expo in one way or another. Many of the team members have responsibilities on the Planning Committee. Over 1000 producers participated in the vegetable programs over the 3-day conference and over 300 fruit farmers were in attendance. This program is the culmination of a year's work and a unique opportunity for producers who attend.



## ***Farm to Fork Events – Amy Ivy***



In March 415 people attended our third annual Food from the Farm in Plattsburgh. We had 27 vendors including produce growers, meat producers, wineries, maple and honey. This event energizes local food consumers and helps them connect with local farmers to build support and enthusiasm for our expanding growers and markets.

Later in March our second annual Farm to Chef event connected 16 farms and 14 restaurants. The farmers set up display tables and the chefs rotated through to exchange contact information and learn what each could offer the other. This event was coordinated with CCE's Adirondack Harvest and the North Country Chamber of Commerce.



## ***Garlic Schools Attract Growers from Across the State- Crystal Stewart***

This year garlic schools were held in both Geneva, NY and in Voorheesville. Over 100 growers attended these meetings, which focused on ways that post-harvest handling can improve the storage quality of garlic. Garlic is a \$26 million industry in New York, and growers are eager to learn proven techniques that will help them reduce losses and improve profitability.



Growers in Eastern New York were able to learn about research results which had been developed at farms from within the region during this year's meeting. Often garlic growers have to rely on information from other states and regions, which is not as useful as information generated from our unique climate. Growers indicated that the post-harvest information they received was very useful, and many stated that they would be making changes to how they dry garlic in the future based on this research.

## ***Berry Farm Business Summary Project – Laura McDermott***



The Berry Farm Business Management Summary Project is being spearheaded by Cornell University faculty Marvin Pritts and Brad Rickard with funding from NY Farm Viability Institute. Dan Welch from NY Farm Net and Sandra Buxton from CCE's Capital District Ag program are also involved. Bob Weybright, the newly hired business management and marketing specialist with the ENYCH program will also be working with interested growers in the Hudson Valley. The purpose of this program is to help growers understand business management basics while also gathering baseline data to help inform the NYS berry industry. The data collected from 2013 business summaries (which are built on the same premise as the Dairy Farm and Fruit Farm business summaries) was presented first at the Empire Producers EXPO and then at regional meetings two of which were held in Eastern NY. 14 berry growers attended the late January workshop held at the Saratoga CCE office and 9 people attended the late March meeting at the Hudson Valley lab (re-scheduled due to snow on February 13<sup>th</sup>).

We are still hoping to get berry growers to work with farm business management specialists throughout 2014. This is a wonderful opportunity for growers to analyze their business with the assistance of experts. Please pass the word!

## ***NYSERDA Grant Will Help Growers Develop Germination Chambers- Crystal Stewart***

Crystal and Teresa secured a \$75,000 grant to design and test energy-efficient germination chambers through NYSERDA. The proposal was based on the ideas of growers in the region who felt that being able to open greenhouses later by using small germination chambers for the first week of growing would save them significant energy and money. Over the next two years germination chamber prototypes will be developed with Agricultural Engineers from Cornell and grower cooperators. After the prototypes are designed, growers will build a total of 7 chambers, which will be studied by Teresa and Crystal. When the project is completed, growers from across the state will learn about the costs and benefits of the new chambers at winter meetings.

