



CORNELL VEGETABLE PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2014

Cooperative Extension Teams Provide Assistance in the Aftermath of November 2014 Snowstorm

The historic snowstorm the week of November 17, 2014 had a significant impact on farms in western New York. And a number of vegetable producers were hit the hardest as 7 feet of snow accumulated. A total of 80 greenhouses, 53 barns and seven grain bins were damaged. The loss estimate including crop and animal loss, milk dumped and other damage topped \$18 million to agriculture. The Cornell Vegetable Program (Darcy Telenko and Elizabeth Buck), worked together alongside Cornell Cooperative Extension of Erie County, Harvest NY and NWN Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops, the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (NYSDAM), Farm Bureau, Farm Service Agency and NY Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN) to get information to farms in need and to connect them to NYSDAM who mobilized the National Guard and the Mennonite Disaster Service.

These entities helped shovel off snow covered roofs or dug ditches/trenches for water to escape away from buildings in anticipation of rain and snow melt.

Some of the activities that Cornell Vegetable Program personnel supported included:

- Darcy and Elizabeth assisted in calling 150 farms to locate those that needed help. Our calls were able to connect aid coordinated by NYSDAM to those that needed it the most. One grower stated, *"I was about to give up as I calculated it would take me over 10 hours to shovel off my barn roof [after he had already lost two greenhouses] and then 5 Humvees pulled up with a team of National Guardsmen to help. They saved my barn! I appreciate Cooperative Extension for connecting me with the help I needed."*

- Extension personnel answered an innumerable number of emails.
- Information was pulled together and sent via Facebook, websites and other media.



Clearing heavy snow from a barn roof.
Photo: Paul Hunt, Mennonite Disaster Service



National Guardsmen arrive at an Erie County farm to shovel snow off of barn roof.
Photos: Dan Roelofs



- Extension personnel collected damage estimates from farms and Darcy generated numbers for the state on total damages to agriculture in the region.
- An informational packet titled “Winter Storm Recovery and Preparing for the Next Storm” was prepared by Megan Burley and Darcy Telenko. This packet was mailed to all farms that had reported damage – 65 hard copies mailed and over 400 emails. This packet was further shared with the Extension Disaster Education Network, Erie County public officials, Farm Bureau and affected counties and made available online.

Our assistance in connecting farms with state aid coordinated by NYSDAM impacted many farmers within our region. The collection of information on damage to agriculture resulted in getting a national disaster designation from the USDA for agricultural aid, and from the President to initiate FEMA aid.

We were recently thanked by Commissioner Richard A. Ball in a letter of appreciation stating “...thank you for the role you played in gathering information from the agribusinesses impacted and for assisting the state and county in directing disaster assistance to farmers in need...”

Tomato Diseases Favored by High Tunnel Greenhouses Webcast Published by CVP Specialist

Judson Reid was invited to publish a webcast in the Focus on Tomato section of the Plant Management Network (PMN); an online publishing effort whose mission is to enhance the health, management, and production of agricultural and horticultural crops. PMN is a partnership including universities, private industry, and nonprofit scientific societies.

The presentation represents the synthesis of multiple years of on-farm research under several different grant funded projects. Key points in the presentation:

- High Tunnels offer disease mitigation among other benefits to tomato growers.
- Certain diseases are actually accentuated by high tunnel environments.
- Cornell Vegetable Program research has documented a number of management strategies to reduce disease and maximize tomato yield.

The webcast provides links to the CVP Tomato Grafting YouTube videos, with combined views in excess of 10,000 to date. Check it out! <http://tinyurl.com/pmn-focusontomato>

Cornell Vegetable Program Leads Effort to Make Herbicide Labeling for Management of Perennial Sowthistle in Onions a High Priority

In 2013 and 2014, the Cornell Vegetable Program conducted extensive on-farm research trials to find a management solution to the new devastating weed problem of onions grown on muck soil, Perennial sowthistle. Hoepfing and Buck identified the herbicide with trade name, Stinger as an integral component of managing this weed within an onion crop during the growing season. They figured out effective rates to kill Perennial sowthistle while not injuring the onion crop. The problem lies in that Stinger is not labeled for use on onions, not in New York, and not anywhere. To overcome this, Hoepfing submitted a request to add onions to the Stinger label to IR-4, which is a federally funded resource for supplying pest management tools for specialty crop growers. The IR-4 program will provide funding to develop the research data required to support this new product use in a minor crop, specifically, residue and crop tolerance studies. Such studies will prove that the proposed usage of a pesticide does not result in unacceptable residues in the harvested produce or harm to the crop. Additionally, Hoepfing submitted a Priority Upgrade Proposal (PUP) to IR-4 to make the use of Stinger on onions a high research priority so that work could begin in 2015, instead of having to wait another 1-2 years. In order for IR-4 to accept CVP’s request to get Stinger labeled in onions, the company that produces and sells Stinger, Dow AgroSciences, had to be supportive of the proposed use. Hoepfing worked closely with representatives from Dow to ensure that they were aware of the serious nature of the Perennial sowthistle problem that was threatening the sustainability of onion production in New York, and made extra effort to demonstrate its crop safety on onions. Fortunately, Dow was supportive of the proposed use of Stinger on onions, and it has been accepted into the IR-4 program with work to begin in 2015. In the near future, onion growers will have a legal and viable option to manage Perennial sowthistle, which would not have been possible without the extensive efforts made by the Cornell Vegetable Program.

Cornell Vegetable Program Assisting in the National Soil Health Initiative

The USDA's recently adopted *Soil Health Initiative* can bring significantly greater financial assistance to growers who adopt certain good soil management practices. For example, increasing cover cropping, or adopting a new cover crop or mixture, could result in a payment of \$60 to \$100/acre/year. Unfortunately, many vegetable growers haven't worked with local Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) or USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offices to apply for this assistance because they perceived little benefit in the past. Cornell Vegetable Program Specialist Carol MacNeil solicited two NRCS/SWCD staff for an October VegEdge article explaining these enhanced state and federal soil health cost-share programs. MacNeil also organized a Soil Health session for the Cornell Ag In-Service on 11/19, reaching 28 CCE vegetable Specialists and technicians, to help spread the word.

The Cornell Vegetable Program, with eleven years of experience in educational programs and applied research with growers on reduced tillage, cover crops and soil health, is bringing the needs of vegetable growers to NRCS and SWCD staff, many of whom have little experience except with field crops and dairy. On 12/2/14, Carol MacNeil presented a talk on *Reduced Tillage for Vegetables* at the Certified Crop Advisors Annual Advanced Training in Syracuse, reaching 44 SWCD and NRCS staff, and private consultants. The attendees learned that vegetable crops don't grow as vigorously as field crops, and uniformity of emergence and maturity are crucial for many vegetables. Some reduced tillage practices and equipment must be modified for use with vegetables.

An NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) award of \$9,238 was received by the Cornell Vegetable Program this quarter for programming through 8/30/16, for work with growers on adopting more/new cover crops, sampling/advising 20 growers on the Cornell Soil Health Test, and organizing soil health field days and a grower-to-grower discussion group. Six growers have agreed to be cooperators so far. CCE field and vegetable staff, NRCS/SWCD staff, and a private consultant, will be collaborating on this kind of work.

CVP Specialist Carol MacNeil serves on the New York State Interagency Soil Health Working Group, and recruited 3 vegetable growers to the group, for a total of 4 CVP grower reps, vastly increasing the "voice" of the vegetable industry.

New Video Helps to Promote the Work of the Cornell Vegetable Program

Many people in our community are not aware of the size or the impact of the Western New York vegetable industry on the state's economy. The Cornell Vegetable Program released a video that highlights vegetable production in our region – from fresh market to processing, from farms that are several thousand acres to just a few, from biodynamic growers to conventional – and provides an introduction to our team of Vegetable Specialists and how we assist growers in this area. We greatly appreciate that several WNY vegetable growers shared their thoughts on what the Cornell Vegetable Program means to them: Paul Fenton, Batavia; Mark Zittel, Eden; and Matt Mortellaro, Elba. The video was produced by videographer, James Monahan, whom we employ part-time together with the Finger Lakes Grape Program.



Find the video on the Cornell Vegetable Program YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/cccevcp or click on the image above.

Cornell Vegetable Program Received the Team Award for Outstanding Accomplishments in Extension/Outreach

The Cornell Vegetable Program has been awarded the 2014 Cornell University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences' Research and Extension Award for Outstanding Accomplishments in Extension/Outreach. This award recognizes individuals/teams who have demonstrated leadership in developing a highly innovative and responsive extension/outreach program that addresses stakeholder needs. The Awards Committee cited the excellent synergy among members of the Cornell Vegetable Program team in



addressing the needs of New York's vegetable production operations and the many activities our team collectively organize to successfully connect Cornell faculty and their research with the real-world needs of vegetable producers. Our team was recognized by Dean Kathryn Boor at an awards ceremony on November 10, 2014 at Cornell University.

Processing Advisory Meetings Set Priorities for Research

Each year, the Cornell Vegetable Program organizes a series of processing advisory meetings focused around crops. On December 8th in Batavia, NY, a group met to discuss the pea crop in the morning and beets and carrots in the afternoon. Similarly, groups met on December 17th in Geneva, NY to discuss sweet corn and then snap and lima beans. All processing vegetable growers are invited to attend meetings of interest. Each meeting consisted of a total of 30-40 growers, processors, crop consultants, and Cornell University researchers and extension educators. All agreed that the 2014 growing season was a tough one, with too much rain affecting planting and growing operations. Other concerns included troublesome weeds, diseases and insects. Priorities were set for upcoming research proposals, which are funded by the growers and processors through the New York State Vegetable Research Association. Attendees could earn DEC pesticide applicator recertification credits or Certified Crop Advisor continuing education credits. There are more than 30,000 acres of processing vegetables grown in New York state each year, with a combined value of \$44.9 million.



Processing snap bean harvest.
Photo: Julie Kikkert, Cornell Vegetable Program

Newly Funded Grants

Each year, the Cornell Vegetable Program is tasked with generating a certain percentage of our operating funds, or Program Generated Income (PGI), through research grants, sponsorships, and meeting registration revenue. This quarter, we are pleased to have received the following grant funds:

- **2015 Grower/Consultant Trainer Training and Support on the Late blight Decision Support System, \$1,500.** (PI: Bill Fry, Plant Pathology, Cornell; MacNeil, CVP)

-
- **Together, over 470 farm visits and phone/email consultations were made by our Vegetable Specialists**
 - **5 educational events were organized by the Cornell Vegetable Program during this quarter**
 - **Over 730 people attended meetings hosted by the Cornell Vegetable Program or where presentations were made by our Vegetable Specialists**
-

For more information about our program, contact Julie Kikkert at jrk2@cornell.edu or 585.394.3977 x404 or visit our website

<http://cvp.cce.cornell.edu>



Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities

Diversity and Inclusion are a part of Cornell University's heritage. We are a recognized employer and educator valuing AA/EEO, Protected Veterans, and Individuals with Disabilities.