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Cornell University
Cornell Cooperative Extension
Eastern New York Commercial Horticulture



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Eastern New York Vegetable School Report

By Ethan Grundberg—ENYCHP

Members of the Eastern New York Commercial Horticulture vegetable team organized five different winter vegetable schools in the first quarter of 2017. These schools provide growers with the opportunity to hear the latest in relevant applied crop production research in addition to receiving recertification credits for pesticide applicator licenses. In total, 287 individuals attended the regional schools and represented the full geographic range of the ENYCHP team.

Teresa Rusinek and Chuck Bornt took the lead on organizing the **Hudson Valley Vegetable School** and **Capital District Vegetable School**, which were held on February 7th and 8th, respectively. Faculty and researchers from Cornell University and the ENYCHP team presented on topics ranging from changes to federal crop insurance programs to optimizing microgreen seeding rates to new and emerging insect and disease pests in the region. Dr. Gordon Johnson, Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist at the University of Delaware, traveled up north to share his expertise in mitigating heat and drought stress in tomatoes and cucurbit crops. The Hudson Valley school attracted 58 growers and 81 were in attendance for the Capital District school.

First Quarter Statistics

144 Farm Visits

481 Client E-mails

286 Phone Consults

14 Newsletters/E-alerts received
by total producers

74 Field Meetings, Trainings &
Workshops

2053 Producers in Attendance

16 Webinars with Producer
Participants

Specialists Ethan Grundberg and Crystal Stewart organized the first annual **Organic Grower Farmer to Farmer Conference** in Poughkeepsie on February 15th. The school featured a mixed format of presentations from experienced organic farmers from the region as well as faculty and researchers from Cornell, Penn State University, and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. The 67 farmers in attendance left overwhelmingly positive feedback for the new program and the presentations that covered subjects including alternatives for weed management, precision cultivation, biocontrols, compliance with Worker Protection Standards, and considerations for scaling up production.

Orange County Onion School was held on February 28th at the CCE office in Middletown. Ethan Grundberg brought in researchers and faculty from Cornell University, the Cornell Vegetable Program, Penn State University, and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to present the latest research on weed management, pest control, food safety, and more. The 49 growers who attended also had the opportunity to hear updates from industry sponsors from Bejo Seed, Stokes Seed, DuPont, Bayer, and Helena Chemical.

Amy Ivy battled inclement weather and had to reschedule the **Northern Vegetable School** for March 31st at the Whallonsburg Grange Hall in Essex. The 32 farmers who attended heard presentations from extension specialists on a variety of topics related to soil health. Will Stevens, the owner/operator of Golden Russet Farm in Middlebury, VT, also lead a discussion of practical considerations for how to incorporate cover crops into vegetable rotations.

The team of vegetable specialists will collectively review the feedback left by both growers and sponsors of the regional vegetable schools. This information will help inform the broader conversation about how to best serve the diversity of vegetable operations in our region and ensure growers are accessing the expertise that the Cornell extension system has to offer.



Growers at the Northern Vegetable School listening to Crystal Stewart of ENYCHP speak about Improving Efficiencies on the Farm

CCE ENYCHP works with NYS Berry Growers Association to offer 'Protected Culture' Workshop

By Laura McDermott-ENYCHP



A berry grower using the microscope to learn mite predator identification

Berry specialists Laura McDermott, Jim O'Connell and technician Annie Mills worked with NYS Berry Growers Association this quarter to offer 2 in-depth, interactive workshops focusing on protected culture (berries grown in high or low tunnels or under exclusion netting) to berry farmers across the state. These workshops combined cultural, pest management, climate adaptation and enterprise budgeting information to growers that want to adapt this intensive production method to their farm. Grower comments support the use of hands-on activities like building the strawberry low-tunnel and looking for mite predators using magnification (see photos).



Laura McDermott and Annie Mills demonstrating how to set up the low tunnel

Student Feedback

"I want to outreach to the Amish growers and local growers with the netting and non-pesticide practices. This was great with the hands-on activities. I learned a lot and plan on spreading the information and contact info."

"I really enjoyed the interaction part, it helps to see what we are learning about and puts everything together."

"Great job- the interactive part really helped to change it up!"



Cornell Professor Dr. Andrew Landers Hosts an Orchard Sprayer Technology Workshop for Hudson Valley Tree Fruit Growers

Dan Donahue - ENYCHP

The proper application of pesticides in orchards is an essential to produce a safe and profitable crop in the Hudson Valley. Professor Andrew Landers of Cornell University is a renowned expert in sprayer engineering and application technology who is highly respected by Hudson Valley growers. On February 22nd, 2017, Professor Landers, in Collaboration with CCE-ENYCCP Tree Fruit Specialist Dan Donahue, hosted a workshop focusing on the latest technology for spray applications in orchards. Eighteen Hudson Valley tree fruit growers attended the orchard workshop, which was funded by a New York Farm Viability Institute grant. A number of topics were covered including:

- Sprayer Layouts and Components*
- Nozzles and Droplets*
- Nozzle Selection and Calibration*
- Adjusting the Sprayer for Improved Deposition*
- Pesticide Drift and Its Reduction*
- Safety and Reducing Operator Contamination and Exposure*
- Effective Orchard Spraying & Management of Spraying Operation*
- Precision Spraying in the Orchard and Vineyard*



The growers in attendance also qualified for 5.5 New York State Department of Environment Conservation pesticide applicator recertification credits, and received a copy of Professor Landers' recent book "Effective Orchard Spraying".

Extension Collaboration: Beginning Farmer On-line Courses

By Amy Ivy, Ethan Grundberg, Laura McDermott, Anna Wallis and Jim O'Connell -ENYCHP

Several team members lead on-line courses through the Cornell Small Farms Program's Beginning Farmers Project on a variety of topics. Each course runs for 6 weeks and includes recordings of each webinar, online discussion forums and extensive resources available only to enrolled students. Instructors interact with the students throughout the course via email and live discussions during the weekly course webinars.

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The courses are geared to beginning farmers and most students are from New York, although other states and even other countries are often represented. Laura McDermott and Jim O'Connell lead Introduction to Berries last fall. This winter Amy Ivy and Ethan Grundberg, along with Darcy Telenko from the Cornell Vegetable Program led Parts 1 and 2 of the Beginning Vegetable Production series; and Anna Wallis along with Terry Bradshaw from UVM lead Introduction to Tree Fruit Production. Each of these courses has between 30-50 students and course leaders often include experienced farmers, Extension Specialists, and Cornell faculty as guest speakers.

Participants receive in-depth learning opportunities using a variety of formats to thoroughly cover each topic. The weekly webinars encourage students to pose questions and live-ly discussions often result. These are recorded and posted so that students can catch up on any missed sessions or review previous sessions for deeper understanding. The instructors are available by email and the online discussion forums to answer follow up questions, post additional resources and/or delve deeper into topics of interest to the group. In the course evaluations participants comment on how much they learned and that the course .

Student Feedback

“The course was a wonderful opportunity to interact with other farmers/vegetable growers and share ideas and information.”

“This class has shown me how to take what I want to accomplish and has given me a starting point and given me the steps I need to take to reach my end goals.”

“This course has helped me make a great plan and timeline that, I believe, will be the difference between whatever was going to happen before and success.”



Farm Business Succession Planning Program

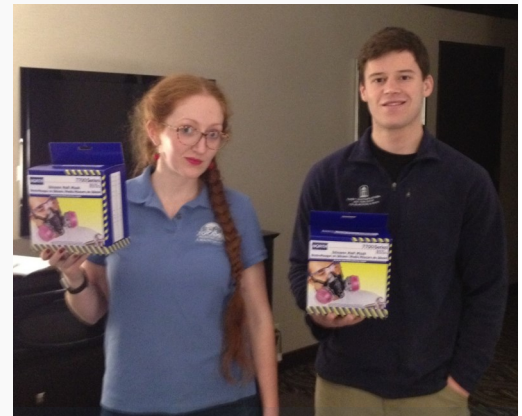
Liz Higgins-ENYCHP

In January and February 2017, the ENYCH team, in collaboration with the Capital District Hort. Team offered a 2-part farm business succession planning program at CCE Albany, which was attended by 5 farm families. In the first session in January, Steve Hadcock and Sandy Buxton of the Capital District Hort. Team covered risk management and the “five D’s” that must be planned for if a business is going to be in a position to transfer to the next generation - disaster, death, disability, divorce, and disagreement. Hadcock challenged the senior generation to “have a fire drill” and allow the junior members to take over aspects of the farm for a trial period. He took participants through an exercise to help the senior generation begin to share their knowledge with the junior generation.

Michael Stanton and his son, of Stanton Farms, spoke about their 2 generations of experience in transferring their dairy farm business, first from Mike’s father to Mike, and now Mike’s process with his son. Following their story, NYS Ag Mediation staff, Christine Tauzel and Claudia Kenny, discussed the importance and challenges of communication in family farm business transfers and led the participants through an exercise to help practice active listening in conflict situations. The families were given additional study materials and exercises to work through on their own prior to session 2.

The second session in February covered business transfer legal issues and how to ensure that the business is in a financial position to be transferred. Jeff Fetter, of (law firm) covered the legal session, which was well received by participants. Two of the families said that this session helped them identify tools to transfer their property to the next generation that they were unaware of. Elizabeth Higgins, of ENYCH covered the business life-cycle and discussed the importance of making strategic investments to help keep a business viable to transfer. David Rifenburgh of Farm Credit East covered the financial aspects of transferring a farm business, including developing family budgets, saving for retirement, including contributing to social security, and assessing what level of income is needed to allow the business to support an exiting and an entering farmer. Both Fetter and Rifenburgh addressed questions and concerns that participants had. Evaluations of the program were positive. **“I go to a lot of extension programs and this [Farm Business Succession Planning] was the most useful program I have ever attended. Now I have a clear direction for transferring my farm to my daughter” – Mike Athanas, Athanas Farm.** Financial support for this program was from a grant from the Doris Duke Foundation through American Farmland Trust of New York.

Work has started on HT BMP projects funded through NYFVI and Hatch. Soil in HT is sampled in spring and fall at cooperating farms and foliage samples are taken every other week. ENYCHp educators are working with 8 operations throughout ENY to develop sampling and management recommendations for growers to produce excellent quality and yielding HT crops while fine tuning and in many cases lowering fertilizer inputs.



Jim O’Connell worked with Anna Meyerhoff and John VanDerwerken of NYCAMH to provide respirator fittings at the Hudson Valley Fruit School

RPI plant pathologist Dr Jaimin Patel at Washington County high tunnel in March. Amy Ivy is helping connect him with Eastern NY growers that have spinach or basil downy mildew. Dr. Patel and lighting engineers are studying ways to use light to disrupt the sporulation of oomycetes. Lights have been used successfully to control downy mildew elsewhere in the country.



2017 Eastern New York Fruit Schools

By Anna Wallis and Jim O'Connell

First
Quarter
Report
2017

*Northeastern NY Commercial Tree Fruit School, February 13th, Lake George
Hudson Valley Fruit School – Tree Fruit Sessions, February 14-15th, Kingston
Hudson Valley Fruit School – Grape and Berry Sessions, February 16th, Kingston
NENY & VT Winter Grape School, March 9th, Lake George*

These events provided over 600 apple, grape, and berry growers, workers, and other related industry members across eastern NY with a total of five days of programming, including updates on current research, presentations on topics identified as industry needs ranging from invasive species updates to general pest and disease management, and an opportunity to network with other industry members and businesses.

26.5 total hours of programming was offered, including 50 presentations. 13.5 DEC pesticide applicator recertification credits were available in total. Mini tradeshow including over 45 vendors total were offered in conjunction with each these events.

Tree Fruit program highlights included out of state speakers Dr. Duane Greene, UMass Amherst who gave advice on PGRs, and Dr. Win Cowgill, private consultant and professor emeritus at Rutgers University, who provided recommendations on weed management and practical alternatives to buying finished apple trees from the nursery. Growers were able to meet the new president of the NYAA, Cynthia Haskins, who showed she is extremely well informed about the apple industry, and has acted as a strong spokeswoman for agriculture industries in multiple positions in the past. Dr. Srdjan Acimovic, Plant Pathologist at the Hudson Valley Research Lab, gave a timely presentation about the catastrophic effects of climate change and implications for managing fire blight in our region.

This year's grape school topics included nutrient management, floor and weed management, management of pests including birds, SWD, and diseases, pesticide resistance management, and information on insurance programs available to growers, as well as an update on the status of the Hudson Valley Research Lab vineyard and a summary of the Eastern NY grape industry. The NENY & VT grape program included a wine faults workshop offered by Cornell enologists, Dr. Anna Katharine Mansfield and Chris Gerling.

Feedback was extremely positive. Participants felt the value of topics and quality of presentations were overall very high. Topics of particular interest included mechanization, use of PGRs, pest management, pollinators, and sunburn mitigation; participants asked for future topics to include pruning and more information on WPS and other government regulations. Over half of participants responded that they would make changes on their farm based on information presented.



Participants observe characteristics of 'wine faults' at the NENY & VT Winter Grape School. Photo: R.J. Anderson.