Governor Cuomo Announces First Projects Awarded Under the $5 Million Southern Tier Agricultural Industry Enhancement Program

Broome County Cornell Cooperative Extension Receives $500,000; Cornell University Awarded $627,055

Regionally Significant Projects Support Upstate Revitalization Initiative’s “Southern Tier Soaring”

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced the first two major projects awarded under the $5 million Southern Tier Agricultural Industry Enhancement program. These regionally significant projects received grants totaling more than $1.1 million, and will provide educational and training opportunities, support expansion and diversification opportunities for farmers, and improve economic viability in the Southern Tier. The Broome County Cornell Cooperative Extension was awarded $500,000 for a one-stop Agriculture Development Center and a Taste NY Market in Broome County, and $627,055 was awarded to Cornell University for the Stocker Cattle Initiative to further training and research in this industry well-suited for Southern Tier farmers.

“The state is investing in the Southern Tier like never before – and these new projects no doubt keep the momentum going,” Governor Cuomo said. “A robust and competitive agriculture industry is key to the Southern Tier’s success, and this initiative provides vital resources that promote growth into the next century – creating more jobs and boosting the region’s economy.”

The new projects complement “Southern Tier Soaring,” the region’s comprehensive blueprint created under the Governor’s Upstate Revitalization Initiative to generate economic growth and
community development. The Southern Tier’s plan invests in agriculture as one of the four key pillars of the region’s economy. The state has already invested more than $3.1 billion in the region, including $30 million in agriculture-related projects, since 2012 to lay the groundwork for the plan. The Governor’s $30 million Southern Tier Agricultural Industry Enhancement program will double the state’s commitment to growing the agricultural industry in the Southern Tier.

**Agriculture Development Center and Taste NY Market**

BC-CCE will develop and operate a one-stop Agriculture Development Center and a Taste NY Market that will provide education and resource opportunities to farmers in the Southern Tier Region. The Center will help farmers with business planning and market development, and it will provide the space for production-based learning and various types of training such as farmers’ market nutrition programs and food safety. The Agriculture Development Center will also provide workforce training to ensure a pipeline of skilled and trained agriculture workers.

The project will also include a new Taste NY store. The Taste NY Satellite Market will support operations of the Broome County Gateway Center. It will allow for the sale of a wider variety of items and fresh products such as eggs, produce and perishable items.

The Agriculture Development Center was also provided $500,000 through the New York State budget, secured by Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo. It is a critical component of a larger project being developed at the same site by BC-CCE that will also include a regional farmers market and a commercial production kitchen. Together, these projects will serve as a Food Innovation Cluster and small scale Food Hub for the Southern Tier that will work with local farmers to increase crop production, to provide education for small-scale food manufacturing, and to identify organizations/institutions to purchase local products or sell at local farmers markets, regional markets, local grocery stores, and multiple Taste NY markets and stores.

**Stocker Cattle Initiative**

Growing stocker cattle requires minimal investment in machinery and buildings compared to other types of agricultural enterprises. This low barrier to entry provides an opportunity for farmers, whether they are new to agriculture or are farmers that are interested in diversifying. The Southern Tier, in particular, is well suited for this agricultural sector, and demand is strong for cattle to finish on either grain or grass and for local beef, especially from institutional buyers.

Cornell University’s Stocker Cattle Initiative includes key components that will help promote stocker cattle as a viable career opportunity and help increase awareness of the stocker enterprise. Through the initiative, Cornell University will hold regional stocker cattle summits and create a training program geared for success in the industry. It will also provide personnel to assist in grading and marketing, and conduct research to support farmers and agri-service personnel.

The $5 million Southern Tier Agricultural Industry Enhancement program was enacted in the 2015-2016 Budget and is part of the overall $30 million Southern Tier Agricultural Industry Enhancement program. It provides funding for agricultural-related industries and not-for-profit organizations to protect, maintain, develop and grow farm, agricultural and related industries
located in Chautauqua, Cattaraugus, Alleghany, Steuben, Schuyler, Thompkins, Chemung, Tioga, Broome, Chenango, and Delaware Counties.

A total of $5 million has been allocated for regionally significant projects that meet the criteria listed above. In addition, projects should fall within at least one of the Southern Tier Strategic Priority Categories:

- Increase delivery of producer education in areas such as production, business development and expansion, market development, food safety, environmental sustainability.
- Increase the region’s processing capacity and markets for locally produced agricultural products.
- Expand the livestock industry and opportunities for meat production in the Southern Tier.
- Support expansion and growth of the forest products industry, with particular attention to the wood supply chain.

Eligible projects will be developed by the Department in coordination with an eligible entity.

New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets Commissioner Richard A. Ball said, “The Governor has made it clear that the agricultural industry is vital to a healthy New York economy, and these two exciting projects will help our producers connect the dots. We know that this targeted funding will go a long way in supporting the training and marketing needed for our industry to thrive.”

Senator Pattie Ritchie, Chair of the Senate Agricultural Committee, said, “All across our state, there are so many different regions that are poised to become a bigger part of New York’s growing agriculture industry. These important programs will give the Southern Tier the support it needs to encourage more people to pursue farming careers, spearhead new research that will help grow the region’s cattle industry, and provide an overall boost to New York’s agriculture economy.”

Assemblyman Bill Magee, Chair of the Assembly Agriculture Committee, said, “This investment demonstrates the Governor's continued support of New York’s agriculture businesses. The Southern Tier Agricultural Industry Enhancement Program will strengthen the farm and agribusiness industry with increased production capacity and improved agricultural infrastructure in the Southern Tier; incentivizing successful expansion of farm operations.”

Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo said, “I am pleased to announce I was able to secure a legislative grant to match the Department of Agriculture and Markets’ funding to make the Agriculture Development Center a reality. This new center will expand on the great work already being done at Cornell Cooperative Extension and compliment the new regional farmers market, CCE’s commercial kitchen, and Culinary School at SUNY Broome. Food production is a key component of our economic recovery and the hands-on education and training available at this center will play an integral role.”

Michael J. Baker, PAS, PhD, Senior Extension Associate at Cornell University, said, “This
project is especially exciting to me, because the stocker cattle enterprise is one of the few agricultural businesses that young people can get involved in without a lot of capital. What they do need is training and this project will provide intensive training to increase their opportunity for success. The Southern Tier is the perfect location for this project as there are thousands of acres of idled farm land that are very suited to grazing. This is our competitive advantage and this project will support use of this idled land by new farmers and farmers wishing to diversify.”

**Harvey Stenger, President of Binghamton University said,** "I am excited about this agricultural initiative in the Southern Tier and look forward to its impact."

**Cornell Cooperative Extension Broome County Executive Director Victoria Giarratano said,** “Cornell Cooperative Extension is here to support and assist farmers and the agricultural community. We are committed to developing a workforce to support food system production and safety. It is only with our partners from the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, the New York State Assembly, Broome County government, Cornell University and our local foundations and businesses that we are positioned to grow agriculture in the Southern Tier region. The Extension campus will become an Agricultural Food Hub, including the site of a TASTE NY store that will allow for innovative, value added production, an advanced workforce through education and certification and will serve as a conduit for the future URI Projects.”

**Cornell University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Associate Dean and Director of the Cornell Cooperative Extension system Chris Watkins said,** “I am delighted at the continuing partnership between the Cornell Cooperative Extension system and the State of New York, particularly in Broome County. It is clear that this new facility is more than just a building, but an opportunity to extend research based learning in the agricultural sector at Cornell University right into local communities – creating new jobs and boosting the local food and farm economy. The Cornell University Stocker Cattle Initiative will also feed into this market, creating excellent training and expansion opportunities for Southern Tier agriculture.”

**Accelerating Southern Tier Soaring**

“Southern Tier Soaring” is the region’s comprehensive blueprint to generate robust economic growth and community development. The state has already invested more than $3.1 billion in the region since 2012 to lay for groundwork for the plan – attracting a talented workforce, growing business and driving innovation.

Now, the region is accelerating Southern Tier Soaring with a $500 million state investment through the Upstate Revitalization Initiative, announced by Governor Cuomo in December 2015. The state’s $500 million investment will incentivize private business to invest well over $2.5 billion – and the region’s plan, as submitted, projects up to 10,200 new jobs. More information is available [here](#).