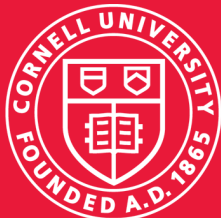
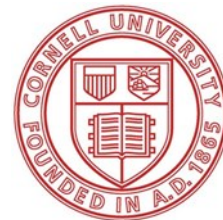


# Cornell Cooperative Extension Herkimer County



## **Mission Statement:**

"The Cornell Cooperative Extension educational system enables people to improve their lives and communities through partnerships that put experience and research knowledge to work."

5657 State Route 5  
Herkimer, NY 13350  
t. 315 866-7920  
f. 315 866-0870  
e. [herkimer@cornell.edu](mailto:herkimer@cornell.edu)  
[www.cce.cornell.edu/herkimer](http://www.cce.cornell.edu/herkimer)

Find us on Facebook:  
CCEHerkimer County

December 2021



## 2021 Annual Report

Greetings to the Cornell Cooperative Extension Herkimer County Community:

With the close of 2021 just a few days away, I'm happy to report to you on the successful work of CCE Herkimer County this year. Your Cooperative Extension Association has been busy keeping its core programs running and productive throughout a very challenging time by focusing on the needs of Herkimer County residents and how to best meet them while upholding health and safety standards. By following this basic strategy, we continued our successful work with farmers, families, land owners and community leaders.

The farming heritage in Herkimer County stretches back for many centuries. In the beginning the Mohawks, part of the Haudenosaunee nation, farmed large swaths of the Mohawk Valley, growing mostly corn, beans and squash. European settlement brought waves of innovation in farming moving from grain, to vegetables and then dairy farms that shipped their products across the United States. Today we are in another period of rapid change with dairy farms consolidating into large operations that milk thousands of cows and help feed our nation's people.

Transitions create turning points of change and opportunity. The farms and rural communities of Herkimer County are at just such a turning point. Fewer and larger dairy farms lead to more Amish and Mennonite farmers starting vegetable and specialty farms. We are also seeing interest in our farmlands from beginning farmers who have been priced out of the Hudson Valley and the Catskills. Here at CCE Herkimer we are working to support all of our communities thrive by providing access to university research.

For those involved in farming it means helping farmers reach their highest potential through the work of our staff. This work varies from specific technical advice on crop management or livestock feed or the opportunity of leasing land for solar developments. Families also benefit from CCE programming by getting their children involved in 4-H and Ag in the Classroom activities that teach about healthy living and civic engagement. Homeowners and gardeners can avail themselves of Cornell's latest research on invasive pests and plant diseases that plagues their gardens and threatens our natural environment.

This year we take notice of one special transition. That is the retirement of Linda Robbins our Assistant Director and Nutrition Educator after a 52-year career with the CCE system. The work of Linda and her staff have helped hundreds of families eat better for less. She has also been a tireless supporter of CCE in the community by serving on many boards and committees working to improve life here in Herkimer County. We will miss her here at CCE but also hope she enjoys more time at home and with family.

Sincerely,

Garet D. Livermore  
Executive Director

*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.

# 2021 Board of Directors and Committees

## Board of Directors

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 Michael Marsh  
 Debrah Murphy  
 Cynthia Powers\*  
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 Katie Whitcomb

## Human Ecology Program Committee

Rebecca Cristman  
 Melissa Glova  
 Linda Lamb\*  
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 Rae Raffle-Maxson  
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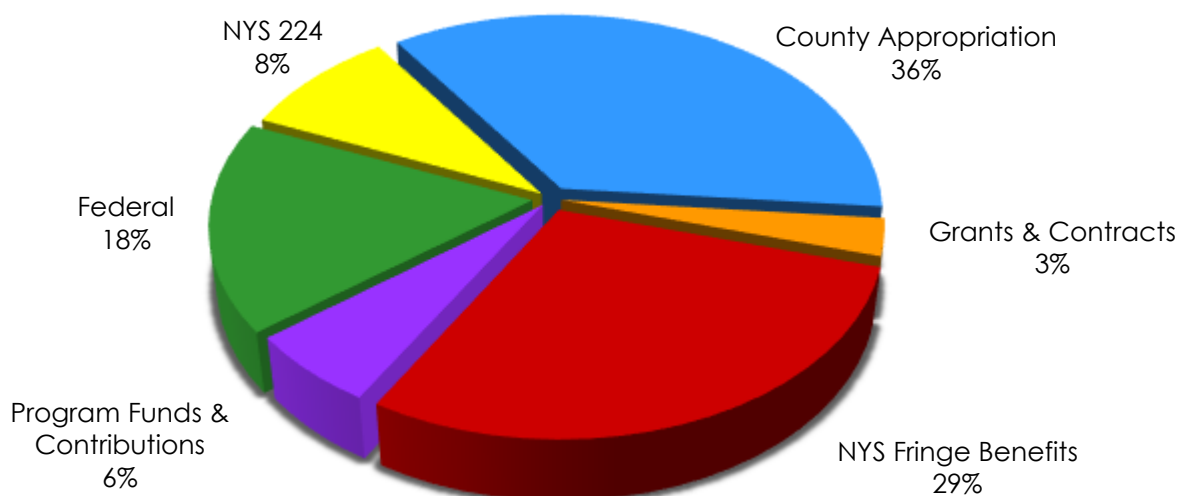
## 4-H Program Committee

Stacey Day  
 Robert Drumm  
 Kate Hitchcock  
 Heather McCutcheon\*  
 Kathy Stalteri  
 Jim Tavares  
 Kiley Treen\*

*\*Committee Representative to Board of Directors*

## 2021 Financial Support

Federal Smith-Lever & EFNEP Allocation	18%	\$118,863
State 224 Allocation	8%	\$53,286
County Appropriation	36%	\$233,319
Grants & Contracts	3%	\$17,025
NYS Fringe Benefits	29%	\$187,706
Other Sources	6%	\$38,678
<b>Total Financial Support:</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$648,877</b>



The **Ag and Farmland Protection Plan** was completed and approved by the Herkimer County Legislature and New York State Ag and Markets in 2020. CCE, working with County officials, farmers and others formed the Herkimer County Agricultural Council as called for in the Ag and Farmland Protection Plan. Although the implementation of the Council was delayed by the pandemic, work began in earnest this year with meetings held in the summer and fall. The Council is a component of the Herkimer County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board which is charged with preserving farmland and helping create opportunities for the County's farmers.

2021 marked the 22<sup>nd</sup> year of a unique partnership between Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) Herkimer County, NY FarmNet, and Herkimer County Mental Health with the **Farm Family Assistance Project**. The purpose of the collaboration has been to provide improved support and assistance to the Herkimer County farm community affected by the stresses of operating a farm business and farm life.

Funds from this project helped support the printing of the 2021 Herkimer County Local Foods Map, "Marketing Your Farm Products 101 Workshop" and "Navigating Solar Lease Agreements and the Solar Development Process: A Program for NY Farmers and Rural Landowners Webinar."

**NY FarmNet** personal and financial consultants had 19 open cases (10 new) in 2021. 42% of the 19 open cases had high personal stress which is a 20% increase compared to 2020. 36% of the 19 cases had high financial stress which is a 28% increase compared to last year. Types of farms worked with in Herkimer County were dairy, apiary, livestock, eggs/poultry, and vegetable. NY FarmNet is a 24-hour, 7 day a week answering service that is free and confidential. Call 1-800-547-FARM (3276) or visit website at [www.nyfarmnet.org](http://www.nyfarmnet.org)

**"Marketing Your Farm Products 101"** was a free four-session mini course to help guide farm families in starting their business. Fifty-eight people registered for the series with an average attendance of 22 at each session. Program impacts included farms redesigning their logos and marketing materials to promote their business on Facebook and in the community to opening farm stores and roadside stands to sell local foods and expand their businesses.

***Navigating Solar Lease Agreements and the Solar Development Process: A Program for NY Farmers and Rural Landowners*** was held virtually on October 25th. This live webinar was presented by industry experts to help landowners, farmer and municipal officials understand the solar development process to help make informed decisions, as well as be more informed to better negotiate solar lease agreements.

CCE Herkimer County worked with **Cornell University's Natural Resources Department** and non-profit partner, **Trout Power** in Blue Mountain Lake to promote the conservation of the Adirondack cold water fisheries of Northern Herkimer County. Public information sessions were held at the Adirondack Experience Museum, the WILD Center in Tupper Lake and the Old Forge Farmers' Market. The presentations were based on the work of Cornell's Little Moose Lake Field Station in the Adirondacks that has researched the influences of pollution and climate change on Brook Trout and other species for over 75 years.



**Horticulture and Homeowner Questions:** This was a busy year for CCE staff and Master Gardener Volunteers helping Herkimer county residents address their home and garden issues by answering questions and serving as a resource for all residents and property owners. This year the most common questions were about our record outbreak of Gypsy Moth infestations and fungal infections of plants caused by the rainy weather of the summer and fall. We continue to process large numbers of garden soil samples brought to us by residents to help them improve their gardening outcomes. In March we hosted an on-line beekeeping class that had 62 people enroll.

Forty-one **Master Gardener Volunteers** (five from Herkimer County) completed the eighteen-week training program in March. The volunteers in the program will work with CCE staff on community garden projects across the county including school gardens, answering homeowner questions and working with community based organizations on food access projects.



**Herkimer County Local Foods Map:** Eating locally grown and raised foods increases awareness of where your food comes from, local growing seasons, and the importance of supporting local agriculture. Local foods are fresher and more nutritious than foods that have traveled many miles and days to get to your table. When you buy direct from local farmers, your dollars stay within your community and strengthens the local economy. This helps preserve farming as a livelihood and rural landscapes as farmland in Herkimer County. The 2021 Herkimer County Local Foods Map listed sixty-four farms that grow and / or produce local foods along with information on five Farmers' Markets in Herkimer County. Five thousand copies were distributed at eighty organizations, businesses, libraries, farms and other public locations in Herkimer County. To view an online version of this map, please visit <https://bit.ly/HCLocalFoodsMap21>



**Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP):** Despite another year of COVID restrictions, Nutrition Program Educators (NPEs) continued outreach to limited resource families through Zoom, phone, and Facebook Live sessions. By fall NPEs returned to in-person programming in homes along with groups through Arc Herkimer, Valley Commons, Care Net, and Employment Readiness Training at the Herkimer Working Solutions Career Center.

Both NPEs completed (and passed) the **Certified Lactation Counselor (CLC) Training** this year which has provided an important professional development opportunity that enhances their ability to support and encourage breastfeeding with EFNEP participants. They are also part of the workgroup updating the Cornell EFNEP breastfeeding curriculum for statewide use.



EFNEP NPEs participated in several **community events** in the summer with educational displays at the Wellness Fair for Kids at the Arc Park in Herkimer, Local Fresh Thursday Market in Little Falls, and the Ilion Food Truck Frenzy. They also attended Open Houses at Jarvis Middle School and Dolgeville Elementary School in the fall.





### Six free **Food Preservation**

webinars from CCE Saratoga County were promoted locally throughout the season. Topics ranged from 'Canning Salsa and Tomatoes' and 'Pickling' to 'Pressure Canning Vegetables, Meats, and Soup' to 'Making Meat Jerky' and 'Fermenting Kombucha and Jun' to 'Preserving Apples'. CCE purchased a Presto Testing Unit this year to test pressure canners with dial-type gauges free of charge for area consumers.



The **Herkimer County 4-H Government Intern Program** sponsored by the Herkimer County Legislature and administered by CCE Herkimer County 4-H Youth Development Program, was back in person this fall after having to cancel half-way through in the spring of 2020 due to COVID-19. Four students from three Herkimer County school districts participated by exploring current issues and learning more about the functions of their county government through the committee system. Students reviewed issues, toured county facilities, interviewed county legislators, and attended a county legislature meeting.

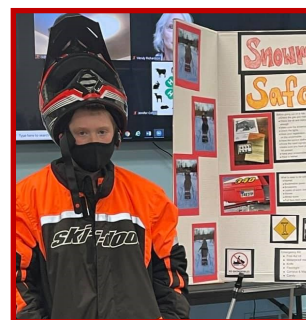


**Tractor and Machinery Safety** was held in-person at the VFW in Clinton supported by Clinton Tractor with twelve participants. 4-H Youth Development provides certification for youth 14 years and older, which allows 14 and 15 year-olds to legally operate tractors and machinery while off the family farm. Farm safety awareness is a major focus.



**"4-H at Home: Garden Series"** was a five-part webinar series offered regionally via Zoom, with CCE Herkimer County in charge of two of the sessions. *Three Sisters Gardening: Iroquois Living History*, was the topic Garet Livermore, Executive Director/Ag Issues Leader spoke on. Seed packets were then mailed out to participants, so that they could plant their own corn, beans and squash.

Herkimer County 4-H members participated in **4-H Public Presentations**, held at CCE Herkimer County. Twenty-one 4-H youth, from all over the county took turns giving illustrated talks, and demonstrations in-person as well as virtually who evaluated their presentation skills. The Occupational Hazards 4-H Club, a Herkimer BOCES classroom club, held a Public Presentation event at the Herkimer BOCES. Sixteen students participated in demonstrations and illustrated talks in front of fellow students and staff, both in person and virtually.



2021 **Ag Literacy Week** was a huge success across our second grade classrooms in Herkimer County. The virtual platforms worked and most importantly the students got to make and eat their own ice cream! Thank you to all of the schools that participated: Dolgeville, Benton Hall, Central Valley Academy, West Canada Valley, Frankfort-Schuyler, Mount Markham, and Town of Webb.



Several 4-H families helped maintain and harvest the vegetable gardens at the **Utica Zoo** this year. Herkimer 4-H'ers grew sunflowers, lettuce, kale, squash, peppers, beans, carrots, peas, cucumbers, catnip and sweet potatoes.



4-H was at the **Beaversprite Conservation Education Center of the Utica Zoo** for workshops including building a stomp rocket, geocaching, string art and painting clovers for the planter boxes that were built as a collaboration between Herkimer County 4-H and Mt. Markham FFA. The planter boxes were used at the Herkimer County Fair as a community service project to help beautify the Fair.



Twenty-five 4-H members from six 4-H clubs entered 108 non-animal exhibits in this year's **Herkimer County Fair**. Thirteen 4-H exhibitors had items selected to go on to the virtual New York State 4-H State Fair Showcase.



Herkimer County 4-H Youth had a great week exhibiting their animals at the **Herkimer County Fair**, exhibiting Supreme Junior and Senior dairy cattle as well as taking home top honors in the beef and goat shows.



Thirteen Herkimer County 4-H members participated in the 73<sup>rd</sup> Annual **Farmers' Museum Junior Livestock Show** held in Cooperstown. The show looked a little different this year but was still able to test the handlers' ability to present their animals to their fullest potential. Herkimer County youth had an amazing three days at the show. Kudos to all of the participants on a job well done. Herkimer County took home top honors with the Master Beef Showman, Champion Steer, and Champion Heifer which was also named Supreme Beef and ultimately won the F. Ambrose Livestock Cup, the highest livestock honor at the show!



The **4-H Member and Volunteer Event** was held at the Town of German Flatts. The awards ceremony was much more relaxed as 4-H members shared stories of projects and fun activities they participated in during the year, and concluded with a community service project making Christmas cards for nursing home residents. 4-H members and Cloverbuds received certificates of Year End Completion, All Around 4-H'er, or Outstanding 4-H'er awards. Volunteers were also recognized for their support of 4-H. Volunteers are huge parts of what keeps 4-H going in Herkimer County.



CCE Herkimer County was recently awarded a grant by the **American Farmland Trust** to be a Regional Navigator. CCE will dedicate staff time and share specialized local expertise to assist farmers and landowners keep farms in production by serving as advisors who apply local knowledge of regional conditions and resources to help new farmers find land and aid farmland owners or current farmers in finding someone to continue farming on their land. The grant will also support agricultural programs for the Spring of 2022 including: "Farm Real Estate Trends in the Mohawk Valley," "Evaluating Agricultural Properties" and "Co-siting of Farms with Solar Power Installations."

CCE worked with **HeatSmart Mohawk Valley** to present a series of five on-line workshops in January and February. The workshops focused on cold climate heat pumps familiarizing homeowners, businesses and farmers about this new energy saving technology and New York State financial incentives to help them install the climate control



devices in their homes and businesses.

In April, twenty staff members of the Village of Ilion Public Works and Water Departments received **Game of Logging** chainsaw safety instruction through the coordination of CCE working with NYCAMH and professional forestry trainers.

Although hampered by another year of COVID restrictions, the **Central New York Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops (CNYDLFC) Team** still connected with the farming community. Team members had a presence at Empire Farm Days, completed training to be a facilitator for Annie's Project; monitored fields for First Cutting Forage Quality Monitoring Project; and had an article published in Progressive Dairy Magazine. The CNYDLFC Team offered numerous meetings and workshops this year, reaching almost 1,000 farmers. Many were held virtually, with some in-person programming returning mid-year.

Virtual topics included: Paycheck Protection Program/Economic Injury Disaster Loan Advance / Expansion of Coronavirus Food Assistance Program



webinars; Small Scale Food Processing Workshop; Annie's Project: Risk Management for Farm Women (12-part series); Marketing Your Farm Products 101 (4-part series); Value Added Producer Grant Training Course (3-part series); Dairy Forward Grant Informational Webinar; 2021 Corn Day; Soybean and Small Grain Summit; USDA Resources for Beginning Farmers in NY / Understanding Eligibility Requirements for NRCS and FSA Programs; 2021 Central NY Dairy Day (two days); March Madness Management Series for Equine Owners, Operators, and Enthusiasts (5-part series); Considerations in Finishing Beef; Digital Agri-Marketing (3-part series); and Farm Financial Management (3-part series); Pigweeds & Soybean Cyst Nematodes ID & Management; Hemp Grain & Fiber; COVID-19 Vaccine webinar; Corn Silage Pre-Harvest; Farmer Tax School (3-part series); Transition Cow Tuesdays (7-part series); Supporting Organic and Transitioning Farmers Through Cost-Share and Conversation Programs; Federal Labor Standards in Agriculture; Labor Roadshow (6-sessions); and African Swine Fever.

In-person workshops offered included: Ventilation & Heat Abatement (2 locations); Faffa Malan Chart (FAMACHA) Training (2 locations); No-Till Cover Crop Interseeding for Soil Health; Laying out a Grazing System: A Program for Veterans; Invasive Species in NY; as well as pasture walks and farm tours.



# Cornell Cooperative Extension Herkimer County Staff

**Garet D Livermore**

*Executive Director / Agriculture Issues Leader*

**Linda Robbins**

*Assistant Director / Nutrition Educator*

**Jennifer Collins**

*4-H Youth Development / Animal Science*

**Wendy Richardson**

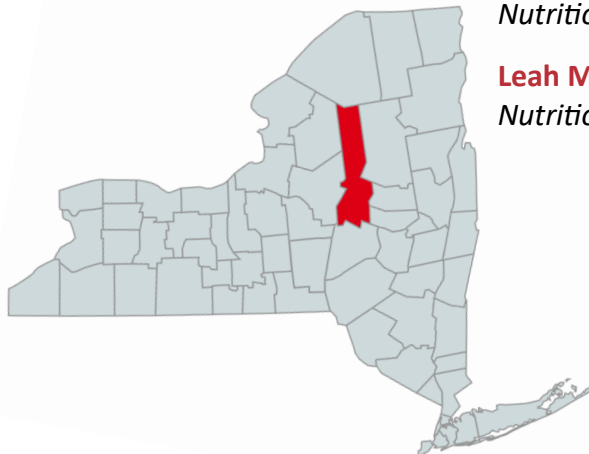
*4-H Program Assistant*

**Veronique Stormes**

*Finance Administrator*

**Barbara Johnson**

*Administrative Assistant*

**Mary Franklin**

*Administrative Assistant*

**Valerie Pettengill**

*Nutrition Program Educator: EFNEP*

**Shari Purcell**

*Nutrition Program Educator: EFNEP*

**Sue Elliott**

*Nutrition Program Educator: SNAP-Ed*

**Leah McCaskey**

*Nutrition Program Educator: SNAP-Ed*

*Central New York Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops Team, a regional partnership between Cornell University and the CCE Associations in Chenango, Fulton, Herkimer, Madison, Montgomery, Otsego, Saratoga and Schoharie Counties:*

**Nicole Tommell**

*Team Leader / Farm Business Management*

**Dave Balbian**

*Dairy Management Specialist*

**Ashley McFarland**

*Livestock Specialist*

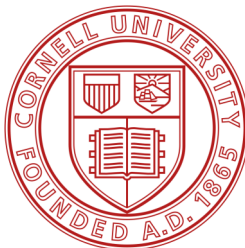
**Erik Smith**

*Field Crops Specialist*

## Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) Herkimer County

**Your Source for Information on  
Agriculture, Nutrition, 4-H**

5657 State Route 5  
Herkimer NY 13350  
herkimer@cornell.edu  
Phone: (315) 866-7920  
[www.cce.cornell.edu/Herkimer](http://www.cce.cornell.edu/Herkimer)



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