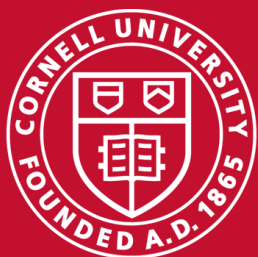


# Cornell Cooperative Extension Herkimer County

## Spring Newsletter



### **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.”

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May 2023

On April 19th staff from CCE Herkimer had the pleasure of participating in a tour of Herkimer County farms with Brian Murray, the State Director for the USDA's Rural Development office. The tour, arranged and organized by the Herkimer Industrial Development Authority highlighted the productivity and diversity of our county's agricultural producers. The group visited three farms with Mr. Murray and discussed the great potential of improving agriculture in our county. The farms visited were:

### **Jones Family Farm, Herkimer**

The Jones Family Farm is a two-person operation started over 20 years ago by Peter and Suzy Jones who were looking for an area with clean water, great soil and access to markets where they could sell their products. Their flagship product is New York Crème Cheese, a farmhouse-style spreadable cheese made from fresh, whole, NY milk direct from neighboring small farms.

### **Insight Dairy, Little Falls**

Success in the dairy industry requires constant innovation and hard work. Here in Herkimer County the Insight Dairy farm run by the Hula-Fredericks family is a leader. Their farm operations have grown to be one of the largest dairies in the region and are also great supporters of the local community. They host farm visits from everyone from schoolchildren who are learning about where their food comes to academic researchers working to improve the quality of our milk. They even host community events like their recent “Farm to Food Truck Hoedown.”

### **Beardslee Water Buffalo Farm, Little Falls**

Innovation sometimes takes unexpected turns, such as when Andy and Colleen Chlus met as undergraduates at Cornell and participated in a study trip to Italy. There they discovered that Water Buffalo were used as dairy animals to provide milk to make Mozzarella cheese. This became the inspiration for their farm business, producing Water Buffalo milk and meat for specialty food businesses throughout the Northeast.

The trip was a great success in both showcasing successful Herkimer farm operations and highlighting the need to support our Ag community. Herkimer's farmers help anchor our community through producing high quality food, keeping our landscapes open and productive as well as bringing in outside money into our economy.

Thanks to USDA State Director Brian Murray for making the trip as well as John Piseck and the Herkimer IDA staff for making it happen!

Sincerely,

Garet D. Livermore  
Executive Director

*Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities*



Pictures of the April 19th tour of Herkimer County farms with Brian Murray, the State Director for the USDA's Rural Development office.  
L-R: Insight Dairy (Jessica Fredricks, John Piseck, Brian Murray), Beardslee Water Buffalo Farm, Jones Family Farm (Peter Jones, Brian Murray)



Forty-three Master Gardener Volunteers (seven from Herkimer County, including two CCE staff) 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.

The 2023 Herkimer County Local Foods map will be available in early June for distribution (63 farms and six Farmers Markets on map). Copies of the map will be available at organizations and businesses as well as farmers' markets located in Herkimer County. The map is also available to view online at <https://bit.ly/CCEHerkCoLocalFoodsMap>. There are two new farmers' markets on the map this year, Frankfort and the Town of Herkimer, with a third new one hoping to open as well. Updates to Herkimer County Farmers' Markets can be found throughout the season at <https://bit.ly/CCEHerkFarmersMkts>.



After much anticipation, the website [CultivateHerkimer.org](https://CultivateHerkimer.org) should be live by the end of May! The farms on the Herkimer County Local Foods Map will be featured and there will be an ag service directory. The goal was to create a single, easily referenced source for folks looking to support and grow their farm operations. A marketing workshop was held in January in preparation for farms to heighten their farm's presence and grow the network of farmers.

The Central New York Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops (CNYDLFC) Team held events this spring which included: Introductory QuickBooks; 2023 Corn Day; Helping Your Employees-Services You May Not Know; Hands-on Calving & Dystocia Workshop (in both Spanish & English); 2023 Central NY Dairy Day; Soybean and Small Grains IPM Congress; Producer Discussion Group.

The CNYDLFC Agricultural Business Management Specialist has been trained via NY FarmNet to become a mental health first aid instructor through the National Council for Mental Wellbeing. Two one-day trainings were offered, one at Herkimer College. Farmers, agribusiness workers, and anyone who interacts with the agricultural community were invited to attend. Follow-up articles were found in the *Cornell Chronicle*, and printed in *Small Farms Quarterly*.



David Balbian, CNYDLFC Dairy Management Specialist, recently announced his retirement and will be leaving in late June. Dave has been a part of the eight county regional team for the past twenty-five years. Dave will be missed here at the Herkimer CCE office and by the farms he has helped over the years. Dave said in his retirement announcement: "The real satisfaction I've had with my work has been seeing producers take my advice and then be successful with it as they moved their business and family forward." We wish Dave the best in this next chapter of his life!



Herkimer County 4-H Tractor Safety certificate training was held at the VFW in Clinton supported by Clinton Tractor, Workforce Development Institute and Walmart. 4-H Youth Development provides Tractor and Machinery Certification for youth 14 years and older. This certification allows 14 and 15 year olds to legally operate tractors and machinery while off the family farm. Farm safety awareness is a major focus.

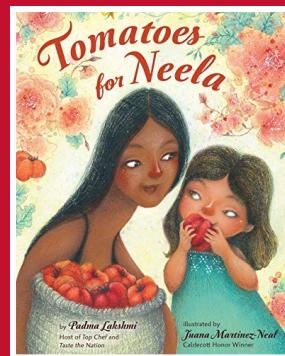


Youth from Herkimer & Oneida Counties have been participating in our 4-H vet science program this spring. They have learned about being a vet and what it takes, visited a dairy farm and learned about calving and have visited a horse farm.

Livestock Fitting & Showmanship Clinics were held this spring covering beef, sheep and swine. Participants got hands on experience on how to get their animal ready for show and what to expect when they get in the show ring.



Herkimer County 4-H members participated in 4-H Public Presentations, held at Herkimer BOCES. 4-H youth, from all over Herkimer County took turns giving illustrated talks, and demonstrations in front of judges who evaluated their presentation skills. Seven were chosen to go on to District Public Presentations!



Volunteers from around the county read to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students in nine schools throughout Herkimer County during Ag Literacy Week, March 21-24. 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students were read the book *Tomatoes for Neela* and then led in activity of planting tomato and basil seeds to grow in their classrooms. Lessons learned included how to build a good relationship with food, math, geography, history, food sustainability and where their food comes from.





The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) continues to offer hundreds of hours of education to Herkimer County residents. EFNEP is the nation's first nutrition education program for low-income populations and remains at the forefront of nutrition education efforts to reduce nutrition insecurity of low-income families and youth today.

Routinely, 80 percent or more EFNEP families report living at or below 100 percent of poverty, and nearly 70 percent indicate being of minority status. This is important because chronic disease and poor health disproportionately affects minority and low-income audiences. Annual data confirms graduates: improve their diets, improve their nutrition practices, stretch their food dollars farther, handle food more safely, and increase their physical activity levels.

EFNEP uses education to support participants' efforts toward self-sufficiency, nutritional health, and well-being. EFNEP combines hands-on learning, applied science, and program data to ensure program effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability.

EFNEP Educators work closely with other agencies to enhance the outcomes of many health-promoting programs in the area. A notable example is the Lead Prevention Program through Herkimer County Public Health where clients are referred to EFNEP to expand on nutrition education. In children with high blood lead levels, nutrition plays a critical role in reducing poor health outcomes such as damage to the brain and nervous system, slowed growth and development, learning and behavior problems, and hearing and speech problems. EFNEP educators provide special nutrition resources to these families across 8 lessons that empowers participants to advocate for healthy outcomes for their children.

Additionally, CCE Nutrition Educators from EFNEP and SNAP-Ed have partnered with the Herkimer County Prevention Council to provide regular education to the addiction recovery community at the RISE community outreach center in Herkimer. Nutrition education improves recovery outcomes, making it a priority of CCE to reach this audience in a non-clinical setting.

EFNEP has reached hundreds of students with fun and interactive nutrition classes in a school-setting where kids can try new recipes, try-out cooking skills, and learn about healthy nutrition across the lifespan. SNAP-Ed has also regularly been offering nutrition education within the schools, ensuring that our youth are equipped with the skills to live a healthy and active life!

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## Upcoming Programs

The Farmers' Museum Junior Livestock Show is scheduled for July 9-11. The event tests the skills of youth handlers ages eight to eighteen from a nine-county region who present animals that they own, care for, and have prepared for competition. This will be the 75th Anniversary of the Show! An alumni gathering is being planned for Sunday evening of the show.

4-H is beginning to prepare for the Herkimer County Fair (August 15-2) and the New York State Fair (August 23-September 4). CCE Herkimer County is planning to have a booth in the Youth Building at the County Fair, rotating the program areas.

Herkimer County 4-H is continuing their work with the Utica Zoo to grow vegetables to be harvested for the zoo animals. Work on the Utica Zoo garden will begin in May. Herkimer County 4-H'ers will be maintaining and harvesting produce throughout the summer months. In turn, the volunteers receive free admission to the zoo. We began this project in 2016 and it's been expanding each year.

