Step 1 of the 2016 Engaged Cornell Cooperative Extension Student Projects RFP process has been completed with the submission of proposals by CCE Associations that describe county-based projects seeking student and faculty participation. Step 2 seeks faculty proposals from all colleges and schools to address the seven candidate projects on the pages that follow.

Questions?
Contact Engaged Cornell through this page: http://engaged.cornell.edu/contact-us/
Broome County
Let’s Eat New York! Identifying Strategies To Address Food Insecurity and Promote Improved Health Outcomes

The Challenge
According to U.S. Census data (2013), 47 percent of children in the City of Binghamton live in poverty compared with 22 percent statewide and 67 percent of school-age children are eligible for free/reduced lunch. Recently, the USDA Economic Research Service reported that children in 9.4 percent of U.S. households are food insecure (September 2015). In Broome County, the food insecurity rate for children is 24 percent.

According to the NYS Department of Health, 17 percent of New Yorkers under the age of 18 are obese and nearly 33 percent are overweight. The Broome County health department reports that there are growing numbers of the county’s residents suffering from obesity and diabetes, due in large part to poor diet and lack of access to healthy, nutrient-rich foods.

According to the USDA’s Food Environment Atlas, poverty, food deserts, and food swamps (i.e., areas with an overabundance of unhealthy foods and lack of access to healthy options) are all too prevalent in Broome County, particularly in economically stressed areas of Binghamton, Johnson City, and Endicott. Currently, 70 percent of the students at Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School in Binghamton qualify for free school meals. Over 50 percent of these students are classified as overweight or obese. The economic impact of negative health outcomes associated with childhood obesity is frightening — New York state already spends over $4 billion on obesity-related illnesses.

Broome County pays a high price for hunger — medical problems, learning disabilities, and emotional distress, just to name a few. When children live in households without access to nutrient-rich foods and are chronically malnourished, their ability to learn is severely compromised. Their future job preparedness is jeopardized or vanishes and the trap of generational poverty grows.

CCE Broome’s Expertise and Programs
CCE of Broome County (CCE Broome) is working on a broad array of programs and initiatives to address these urgent public health and economic development issues. CCE Broome has an experienced staff of nutrition, youth development, and agriculture/market educators experienced and actively engaged on numerous community projects and initiatives with a broad network of community partners and collaborators.

Soon a vibrant, on-site regional farmers’ market at CCE Broome will provide year-round access to healthy, affordable, and nutritious foods, fresh from the farms throughout the region. In addition to the farmers’ market, CCE Broome will soon operate an on-site Taste New York market and one-stop agriculture development center on their campus in Binghamton. The farmers’ market will provide a myriad of opportunities for over 40 farmers, growers, and producers to sell their products and work with CCE and regional agriculture teams to expand growing capacity and access the venture center. A commercial production kitchen at the farmers’ market will support farmers in manufacturing and
preserving products for resale. A state-of-the-art classroom at the farmers’ market will provide workshops on:

- business planning, market development exploration, market channel assessment, agritourism, and sales;
- hydroponics and controlled-environment agriculture (CEA);
- raising and production-based livestock, poultry, growing fruits, vegetables and hops;
- product development, marketing, and distribution;
- connecting producers to Cornell University, NYS Agriculture and Markets, USDA, and other agencies through distance learning to foster the next generation of farmers and agricultural practitioners;
- Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) certification;
- food safety training for growers and food system career development; and
- agriculture workforce training: a partnership with the NYS Department of Labor and NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets to ensure a pipeline for a future agricultural workforce.

Together, these projects will form a food innovation cluster and small-scale food hub for the Southern Tier to:

- identify and work with local farmers to increase crop production;
- provide education for small scale food manufacturing and food safety;
- identify organizations/institutions to purchase local products or sell at local farmers’ market, regional markets, and local grocery stores; and
- serve as distribution location.

CCE Broome’s EFNEP and Eat Smart New York (ESNY) are aimed at increasing fruit and vegetable consumption, decreasing sugar-sweetened beverage consumption, and encouraging healthy lifestyles among low-income residents of Broome County. Other CCE programs and initiatives include:

- Fresh Sites: a CSA Initiative to bring local foods to SNAP participants
- Healthy Lifestyle Coalition, a community initiative to provide programs that address nutrition, cooking, food access, physical activity, community engagement and youth development in economically stressed areas
- Child Hunger Task Force, supported by the county executive’s office and led by Broome-Tioga BOCES, Broome County Health Department, and the Food Bank of the Southern Tier to address the problem of child hunger in Broome County through collaboration, education, awareness, and advocacy
- Farmers’ market recipe demonstrations
- CCE Broome’s on-site CHOW (Community Hunger Outreach Warehouse) Food Pantry where educators conduct cooking and food demos during CHOW Bus deliveries
- Food Safety Certification and Serv Safe classes geared to food service careers
- Farm-to-school programs where educators use theater and puppetry to teach the importance of eating locally
- Afterschool programs focused on nutrition and physical exercise; aimed at Medicare or insurance eligible children and families
The challenge ahead is how all these human and built capital resources can be used to stimulate food access and positively impact health outcomes. How can CCE Broome’s multidisciplinary programs be more effectively integrated within the food system to transform food insecurity into food security? What strategies can be applied to transform today’s school-age children into tomorrow’s locavores? How can CCE Broome’s resources be applied to food insecurity, accessibility and improved public health outcomes?

A New Approach
Through Let's Eat New York! CCE Broome proposes an interdisciplinary, community-based approach to examining Broome County’s food systems and what can be done to stimulate food access. Using a research-based, community-wide effort, the project will explore strategies for increasing access to local produce among residents of Broome County living in economically stressed areas of Binghamton, Johnson City, and Endicott, while simultaneously increasing the demand for healthy and nutritious foods throughout the county.

Student Participation
CCE Broome’s nutrition, youth development, and agriculture/market educators are committed to working closely with Cornell faculty and students on this project. CCE Broome will facilitate partnerships and collaborations for the student/faculty team through their well-established relationships with the Broome County Health Department and the Broome County Farm Bureau.

Through the Broome County Health Department, students involved in the project will join the Child Hunger Task Force and Healthy Lifestyles Coalition. The health department will facilitate these working partnerships. We envision possible student-led, focus groups and participatory action research projects.

Through its partnership with the Farm Bureau, CCE Broome serves as a hub for agricultural entrepreneurship and economic development. CCE Broome spearheaded the annual Broome County Farm Trail and Legislative Ag Tours so both the public and legislative representatives could more fully understand the economic impact of the agricultural community. Broome County Farm Bureau will work with the Engaged Cornell students to explore strategies for helping the public understand food systems and what can be done to more effectively address food insecurity.

We fully anticipate that the students will bring a fresh perspective to the issues facing these community groups and be able to research strategies that can be used to address food insecurity, improve food access and identify opportunities to improve Broome County’s food system. Options for student engagement include:

- analyzing Broome County’s food systems to better understand how to improve food access
- examining the food hub and identifying strategies for more efficient delivery/access from “farm to table”
- examining options for food distribution so that “day-old” foods from area restaurants and grocery stores can be distributed through food banks and food pantries
identifying potential strategies for growing indoors with controlled atmospheric storage so that produce can be available year-round

Potential student research questions include:

- How can CCE Broome’s nutrition, youth development, and agriculture/market programs be better integrated to ensure a holistic, integrated approach and maximize opportunities in Broome County’s food systems to addressing food insecurity?
- To what extent and in what ways are CCE Broome’s programs helping to address childhood obesity and other chronic diseases in Broome County?
- To what extent and in what ways can the regional farmers’ market help to meet the needs of low-income individuals and impact food insecurity?
- What do low-income families want? What can CCE Broome’s educators do to influence behavioral changes in purchasing patterns, home preparation, and food choices?
- What can be done to maximize food access among the food insecure households in Broome County?

The knowledge about food systems generated through Let's Eat New York! will benefit CCE statewide as strategies to increase food access and promote food security are identified for replication statewide.

**Team Members**

Vicki Giarratano  
*vlg4@cornell.edu*
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Broome County  
Executive Director

June P. Mead, Ph.D.  
*jm62@cornell.edu*
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Broome County  
Association Team Leader, Children, Youth and Families At Risk

Beth Roberts  
*bar75@cornell.edu*
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Broome County  
Contracts and Community Engagement

Laura Biasillo  
*lw257@cornell.edu*
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Broome County  
Agricultural Economic Development Specialist

Kelly White  
*kb452@cornell.edu*
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Broome County  
Supervising/Environmental Nutritionist
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Delaware County and CUCE-NYC
Catkill-NYC Watershed/Food Shed: Connecting Delaware County Farmers with NYC Consumers

The Challenge and Opportunity
This project focuses on assisting Delaware County’s farmers to expand their sales and market reach to downstate consumers. CCE Delaware County is collaborating as rural partners with CUCE-NYC to advance a concept of a Catskill Food Shed that connects local producers with urban consumers.

Two New York City watershed reservoirs are situated in Delaware County and contribute clean water for nine million New York City residents. Environmental regulations govern county land use and economic activity while Delaware County’s closeness to New York City markets supports agricultural expansion by farmers to urban consumers.

Student Research
During summer 2016, Cornell University faculty and two teams of students will research and assess/analyze the barriers, challenges, and opportunities presented by this Catskill-NYC Watershed/Food Shed concept. Working with both CCE offices and partners, the multidisciplinary faculty and students teams will identify steps to make this local food procurement system an economic reality.

Students will analyze:
- opportunities for and barriers to defining a local food shed in the New York City watershed region;
- concerns that demand from downstate customers could out-compete other local markets;
- strategies for balancing the need and interest for and pricing of local food for limited-income urban households with New York City food shed costs to expand and deliver farm foods;
- opportunities for New York City to make positive impacts in the Catskill region economy through city agency purchases of foods;
- foods that could be grown or produced by farmers for New York City consumers with plans and strategies to increase production and procurement of these foods in the New York City watershed.

Benefits
New York City regulations favor local foods procurement by city agencies that serve low-income and limited-resource populations because of these benefits:
- Full implementation of local foods policies would add local healthy foods to meals served by city agencies such as schools and senior centers.
- Economic connections of a steady market supply/demand would grow and be strengthened.
- Stronger collaborations between CCE and university faculty would shape future research projects.
• Cornell students would gain meaningful life experiences and engaged learning outcomes that shape their careers and studies.

**Assessment**
Students will:
• create assessment tools, using language that is clearly understood by rural and urban partners;
• gauge the feasibility of a Catskill food shed procurement system that addresses barriers and opportunities within food processing systems and policy initiatives;
• contribute to identifying next steps, language, and policy to facilitate Delaware County farmers selling to New York City agencies and their consumers.

**Expertise and Partnerships**
CCE Delaware leads in providing Cornell research and resources to county farmers. CCE Delaware has a strong track record of vital inter-agency partnerships, in the areas of agricultural watershed issues, with Watershed Agricultural Council (WAC), Center for Agricultural Development and Entrepreneurship (CADE), and Farm Catskills.

CCE Delaware and CUCE-NYC are collaborating with the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), whose funding supports and guides WAC while protecting quality of city water.

CUCE-NYC and CCE Delaware reach and educate low-income and limited-resource households on menu planning and cooking healthy meals using produce from local farmers’ markets; engage youth and families in learning about healthy eating and active living through nutrition education in the EFNEP program; and partner with policymakers, schools, and youth development programs to implement cutting edge nutrition and STEM education programs. CUCE-NYC’s network of partnerships within the city offers multiple policy, program, and community linkages that will be of benefit to this project. CUCE-NYC’s links with Weill Cornell Medicine, Cornell Tech, and other Cornell New York City–based programs likewise will be assets to students and faculty involved in this project. Building on all these partnerships is critical for the Catskill food shed project’s success.

**Student Interactions**
Students will meet with CCE Delaware and CUCE-NYC partners and be supervised weekly by both offices. Students will meet selected Delaware County farmers to identify their needs to meet the New York City demand and to establish regional branding recognition, while overcoming challenges of weather, economic, and environmental issues. They will also meet with selected city agencies to learn the government foods procurement policy and regulations, such as packaging, storage, and delivery. With input from the CCE offices, partners, farmers, and agencies, students will translate these regulations into straightforward language and clearly written checklists that are easy for farmers to follow.

**Outcomes**
Students will present their findings as exhibits, handouts, videos, and PowerPoint presentations to CCE Delaware, CUCE-NYC, Engaged Cornell, partners, and farmers.
Opportunities to present include the fall 2016 student intern presentation event and Delaware County Fair, and optimally at the January 2017 Regional Agricultural Conference.

Students’ research will inform both CCE Delaware’s and CUCE-NYC’s plans of work, contracts between local producers and urban consumers, and future collaborations involving Cornell faculty and students from multiple disciplines.

**Cornell’s Participation**
This Engaged Cornell project connects faculty and students with county-level issues that are relevant to the extensions offices’ partners and community residents. This project, Catskill-NYC Watershed/Food Shed: Connecting Delaware County Farmers with NYC Consumers, is an example of CCE offices and partners working collaboratively to link Cornell faculty research and teaching with students’ community engagement activities. These real-life experiences will tap students’ creativity and potentially shape their careers.

The strengthened linkages with campus resources and research will assist CCE Delaware and CUCE-NYC to be more responsive to communities in addressing emerging complex issues of sustainable agriculture and nutrition. Students provide additional insight and energy — a fresh look that strengthens the extension offices’ annual and five-year work plans, and provides for other meaningful collaborations.

This move away from Ivory Tower boundaries creates a more cohesive system, joining the local ability to identify real issues and the campus capacity for analysis and research, resulting in effective action in our communities.

This project complements existing agriculture and food systems collaborations with the College of Human Ecology and College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, and is likely to interest faculty in fields such as community nutrition, agricultural economics, and natural resources. It is likely to spark interest in fields such as policy analysis and management, regional planning, and environmental analysis, and will link closely with the interests of faculty involved in the new Cornell Institute for Health Futures. We anticipate working in partnership with the Small Farms Program.

This project addresses the learning outcomes Engaged Cornell seeks to promote. We anticipate that students would develop intermediate levels of achievement in:

- civic engagement by learning to develop and use tools that allow them to connect and extend academic knowledge to civic life, politics, and government;
- intercultural competence to identify and explain more deeply others’ assumptions, feelings, modes of communication and world views, and demonstrate and apply intercultural skills and knowledge within diverse communities – including rural and urban communities;
- integrative learning to incorporate diverse methodologies by comparing community-engaged experiences with academic knowledge and to infer differences as well as similarities that acknowledge perspectives and experiences between rural food producers and urban consumers within governmental food procurement regulations and policy;
critical reflection through activities that involve writing, asking questions, observing, analyzing, listening, and engaging with others in a positive discourse that supports the validity and reality of a local foods chain to benefit the wellbeing of low income and limited resources urban populations;

- ethical practice that results in identifying fair pricing for farmers for their products and for consumers who struggle with food deserts and/or food insecurity to support their capacity to access and purchase local healthy food.

Through this project, students will explore both ethical and practical elements of developing a food shed linking Delaware County farmers with New York City consumers.

**Team Members**

Jeanne M. Darling  
*jmd30@cornell.edu*  
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Delaware County, NY  
Extension Executive Director

Jennifer S. Tiffany  
*jst5@cornell.edu*  
Cornell University Cooperative Extension - New York City  
Extension Executive Director

Mariane Kiraly  
*mk129@cornell.edu*  
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Delaware County, NY  
Ag Core Team Coordinator

Dale Dewing  
*drd4@cornell.edu*  
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Delaware County, NY  
Extension Team Leader

Richard Toebe  
*rrt43@cornell.edu*  
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Delaware County, NY  
Resource Educator-Dairy/Livestock

Linda Ameroso  
*lma6@cornell.edu*  
Cornell University Cooperative Extension - New York City  
Extension Educator
Erie County
Buffalo Farm-to-School Project

The Project
CCE of Erie County (CCE Erie) brings local experience and research-based solutions together to build stronger communities by providing educational programs in agriculture, 4-H youth development, nutrition, and consumer horticulture. CCE Erie prioritizes the development of cross-disciplinary programs such as our Buffalo Farm-to-School project. The Buffalo Farm to School project teams the CCE Erie agriculture, 4-H, and nutrition staff with the Buffalo Public School District (BPS) and other community partners. This project incorporates multiple CCE Erie program areas to address many challenges in the local food system: improving healthy food options and educating food service staff and students about these options, while building connections to farmers in the western New York region and expanding market opportunities for these farmers. This Engaged Cornell project will support CCE Erie and community partners in a project to advance and evaluate the value of Farm to School’s work with BPS in the following two multi-disciplinary ways: 1) The development and evaluation of various types of research-based interventions delivered in classrooms, the community, and cafeteria; 2) The degree of farm-level impact through sourcing local produce, as well as the economic impact to the local community.

The Need
In December 2014, BPS was awarded a USDA Farm to School (F2S) Planning Grant to copartner with CCE Erie, as well as the Massachusetts Avenue Project (MAP) and the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus (BNMC), to develop a sustainable F2S Plan for the 34,000-student school district. The plan is two pronged: provide healthy food options to students, with education about these new local foods; and expand market opportunities for farmers in western New York.

Some of the statistics that drive this programming are:
- 39 percent of households with children in the City of Buffalo are food insecure, considerably higher than New York state and U.S. figures of 14.8 percent and 16.2 percent respectively. (Neuner, Kailee, and Samina Raja. 2010. Healthy Eating and Active Living for Children in the City of Buffalo);
- Many households with children have poor healthy food access and less than 50 percent of Buffalo neighborhoods with a high percentage of children are located within a 5-minute walk from the nearest healthy food retail, coupled with low rates of car ownership in Buffalo. (Delgado, Cristina, Travis Norton, and Samina Raja. 2013. Indicators for a Healthy Food and Built Environment in the City of Buffalo);
- 39.2 percent of students district wide were overweight. (2012–14 Student Weight Status Category Reporting System https://health.data.ny.gov/Health/Student-Weight-Percent-Obese-by-School-District-Ma/i9hu-ki7z).
- In the 11 westernmost counties of New York state, 88 percent of the 8,879 farms are small farms as defined by the USDA — annual gross cash farm income is less than $250,000 (USDA 2012 Census of Agriculture).
Addressing the Need
The educational component (classroom, cafeteria, and farm tours) of the Buffalo F2S project serves as an opportunity to combat some of these alarming statistics while also benefiting regional farmers by opening access to a large wholesale market. Currently, the Buffalo F2S project is working with Eden Valley Growers (a 10-member grower cooperative), the Western New York Food Hub, and eight other farms on procurement and education via farm tours.

Bridget O’Brien-Wood, BPS food service director, and Cheryl Thayer, Harvest NY ag development specialist, lead the Buffalo F2S coordinating committee, a team comprised of CCE Erie agriculture, nutrition, and urban 4-H staff, BPS food service staff, and MAP and BNMC staff. The result of the USDA planning grant will be a written plan for instituting F2S best practices in BPS.

As the coordinating committee worked through planning, it identified a need for student engagement and education, which grew into a small-scale three-month pilot called the Harvest of the Month (HOTM) program that ran from September through December 2015 in 11 pilot schools. Students were introduced to a specific food, in the classroom and the cafeteria, based on the month’s local farm harvest. HOTM is now set to expand based on recent grant funding to BPS from New York state’s F2S program (NYS F2S). HOTM expansion will include development of a 10 month HOTM toolkit to ultimately use in all 65 schools in the district, adapted for grades pre-K through 12.

The coordinating committee will continue to conceptualize the HOTM program but there is a gap to fill in order to implement, deliver, and ultimately evaluate the value of the HOTM program. This gap is where Cornell faculty and student support can have a significant impact on the Buffalo F2S project.

Given BPS’s size, limited resources, and diverse student population, the Buffalo F2S coordinating committee believes that testing a series of interventions in the pilot schools is the most effective way to determine program activities with the highest correlation to the primary goal of increasing awareness, familiarity, and acceptance of the new HOTM items by BPS students. The interventions being deployed by the coordinating committee are time consuming and not feasible for either district-wide roll out or execution without additional personnel time – which is not available from coordinating committee members. The interventions that will serve as best practices for district-wide roll out need to be both scalable and attainable by schools within the district, utilizing largely in-house human capital and the toolkits developed through the USDA and the NYS F2S grants. The expertise required for additional design, testing, and evaluation of the interventions is beyond what coordinating committee members possess.

Assessing the Benefit to the Buffalo Public School Community
The opportunity to partner with Engage Cornell is welcomed, as the Buffalo F2S coordinating committee has been brainstorming a two-pronged approach to long-term program evaluation; first the research-based interventions as detailed in this application, and second an economic analysis of the presumed benefits to the local economy through the sourcing of local and regional farm goods.
Cornell Involvement

Research-based Interventions
Cornell faculty expertise is needed to assist in applied research in two ways:
First, by developing research-based interventions in the following three categories, with suggested interventions listed. While these interventions have been delivered during the small-scale three-month pilot, information concerning which are the most effective is missing, and altering and adding interventions is also possible:

1. Classroom interventions: food system lessons in the classroom, school garden lessons, farm field trips, and morning announcements about HOTM items.
2. Cafeteria interventions: Know your Farmer information on the lunch line, promotion of F2S recipes during lunch, having recipes served as samples and as a full serving, larger signage in cafeteria, recipe demonstrations in the cafeteria.
3. Community interventions: community-oriented F2S events, recipe contests for Harvest of the Month recipes, recipes sent home with families.

Cornell student involvement, with faculty guidance, in developing, delivering, and evaluating these interventions would not only improve the experience for BPS, but could also elevate the value of the Buffalo F2S program as a replicable model for other schools that are interested in procuring local farm products and educating students about new, local foods.

Local Agriculture Impact
And second, Cornell faculty and student expertise is needed to measure the actual economic impact that sourcing local farm products has on both the individual farms and the surrounding local community. It has been argued that connecting farms with new wholesale market opportunities benefits both the farm and the local economy, but empirical data to support that claim specific to our region is missing. There has been considerable research from Cornell’s Dyson School about the multiplier effects of local food purchasing, but it would be useful to have more than anecdotal evidence that there is a positive impact at the individual farm level. Possible research questions could include, but certainly are not limited to:

1. Has the BPS Farm to School project increased sales to our partner farms?
2. What level of purchasing is required to have an impact on the local food system?
3. What are the varying levels of impact depending on the farm size?
4. What is the local economic multiplier effect as a result of the farm to school project in Buffalo?

The research derived from this economic analysis could serve as a case study to other regions that are considering investing resources into developing a farm to school project, putting Cornell at the forefront of research-based evidence to assist in developing a more impactful farm to school program.

Students
Cornell students will be expected to spend June through December 2016 in Buffalo working on the Buffalo F2S project. During the summer months while school is not in session, the students will work with the Buffalo F2S coordinating committee and Cornell faculty to develop and design all components and evaluations for the interventions for grades pre-K through 12. Diane Held, CCE Erie executive director and Cheryl Thayer, Harvest NY ag
development specialist, will have primary responsibility for supervising the Cornell students’ work on a day-to-day basis. Becky O’Connor, CCE Erie Eat Smart New York project manager, and Sara Jablonski, Urban 4-H educator, will work with the students on specific aspects of the project.

To further enhance the student learning experience, the Engaged Cornell students will participate with 20 other Cornell students in the Cornell University-Partnership for the Public Good’s (PPG) High Road Fellowship days each Friday in June and July. High Road fellows learn about the entire social economy of the City of Buffalo and Erie County which will put the BPS work into a broader community context and extend the reach of current grants and Cornell ILR’s applied research activities in Buffalo.

Through the High Road Fellowship, students are placed at an individual project with a variety of community partners affiliated with PPG. On Fridays the students meet as a group to discuss their work and explore topics related to economic development through speakers, tours and other activities. One theme during last summer’s program was “Education and Urban Revitalization,” during which students met with a range of stakeholders in local secondary and higher education institutions to understand the challenges and opportunities facing public education and its connection to the economy and larger community.

Once the BPS year begins in September, Cornell student[s] will facilitate implementation and evaluation of the pre-K through grade 12 interventions in the 11 pilot schools in BPS with the guidance and support of the Buffalo F2S coordinating committee. Economic analysis would be developed and performed throughout the entire seven-month timeframe, and would need to consider the district as a whole, not just the 11 pilot schools.

**Diversify Cornell’s Participation with the Association**

The Buffalo F2S project could build on the existing effort out of Cornell University’s Division of Nutritional Sciences, Farm to School Outreach by utilizing extension’s outreach expertise and experience to link Cornell applied research with the HOTM program in BPS. This project could also be an extension of local and regional food system research from the Dyson School. Including Cornell University ILR and PPG as partners in this effort further connects Cornell and CCE Erie through the work that each is currently doing in Buffalo and Erie County.

**Team Members**

Diane Held  
$dbh24@cornell.edu$  
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Erie County  
Executive Director

Cheryl Thayer  
$cbt32@cornell.edu$  
Harvest NY/Cornell Cooperative Extension of Erie County  
Ag Development Specialist
Sara Jablonski
dej57@cornell.edu
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Erie County
Urban 4-H Educator

Becky O'Connor
rao84@cornell.edu
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Erie County
Eat Smart New York Project Manager
Jefferson County
Food Systems: Developing a Regional Food Hub in Northern New York

The Challenge, Need, and Rationale
Senator Ritchie kicked off the process of exploring a food hub in the fall of 2015 with a series of public meetings with various stakeholders throughout the region. The meetings have generated a list of interested groups to work with as the project progresses and also a forum to begin to gather stakeholder comments, suggestions and information. As staff have been exploring opportunities and engaging key stakeholders, several known challenges have been presented that need to be addressed. At its simplest, the food hub concept for the North Country is depicted in the following visual:

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GROWER-------> DISTRIBUTOR------> CONSUMER (Business)
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This concept, currently in development, is looking at helping growers sell directly to existing distributors who would in turn sell the local products to businesses and organizations such as schools, restaurants, hospitals, and grocery stores throughout the North Country region.

It has been determined that new and existing growers in the area need assistance with GAP certification, costing of inputs, farm business financial benchmarks, horticulture technical assistance, business planning, and planning for geographic clustering/coordination. Likewise, information is needed from the distributors: type of products to grow, quantity of each product, schedule, and quality specifications. The distributors have indicated their ability to provide this and their desire to buy locally, but not to coordinate the entire effort. Time and time again, the need for coordination has been identified.

Currently the unknowns include how products will be delivered to the distributor and the required specifications for delivery. For instance, do the products need to be washed and packaged in a certain way? Which leads to further questions about the potential need for minimal processing and packing facilities to accommodate requests from area institutions. Other unknowns include specific local economic impact.

Multidisciplinary Approaches and Disciplinary Expertise
Given the challenges and needs described above, a multi-pronged approach and a diverse skillset are needed to move this project forward. Expertise in the following disciplines is needed:

- business development
- horticulture
- community development
- food safety
- marketing

The proposed project will increase the variety of programs CCE Jefferson is engaged in with the university as the key features and goals of this project require the interplay of several departments and specialties.

Key Features/Goals
The key features of this project involve work with growers, distributors, and end buyers – key members of the regional food system. Specific goals are outlined below.
1. Assist growers in developing business plans and models that involve selling directly to a food distributor
2. Assist growers in obtaining GAP certification
3. Assist growers in producing food that meets the requirements of the food distributor (type, quantity, quality)
4. Assess and work through regional infrastructure challenges such as the size of the region, the aggregation of product and minimal processing and packing needs.
5. Assist food distributors in marketing local products to their customers.

**Student Involvement and Solutions**
The challenges presented must be worked on concurrently to move the project forward. Attempting a piecemeal approach will make the process very cumbersome and likely lead to failure. A multidisciplinary team of students, faculty, and CCE educators would have the diverse skillset that would not likely be found in just one or two interns. This team will provide coordination, technical assistance, research, and planning. In particular, business development experts could assist growers in developing business plans. As the plans are implemented, they would need to include the recommendations and technical assistance from horticulture and food safety experts. Likewise, the community development representatives would assist with the necessary level of coordination to ensure efficient product aggregation, including planning for pickup and other transportation logistics, and delivery to the distributor. In turn, marketing personnel would assist the distributor to reach customers (institutions and businesses) and increase demand for local produce and ensuring they are aware local products are readily available. In addition, information on the local multiplier effects of increasing sales of local foods would be made available to educate potential buyers on the economic impact and benefits of buying local.

**Community Benefit Assessment**
The benefit to the community will be measured in multiple ways and will impact many key stakeholders. The intended benefits are outlined below.

*Economic*
- Increased opportunities for farmers (measured by increased sales/profit)
- Increased job opportunities (measured by jobs created)
- Community economic impact (multiplier effect) for the local economy (measured by economic impact study)

*Health/Nutrition*
- Improved access to fresh vegetables and fruits which are often more nutrient dense (measured by the amount of locally sourced produce available in local institutions/businesses)
- Improved access to food that is sourced following GAP practices (measured by the number of GAP-certified farms selling to the food hub)

*Environmental*
- Decreased transportation (measured by miles driven by distributor to procure food or farmer to deliver food)
- Maintaining or increasing the amount of local land that is used for farming (measured by the amount of land used for farming)
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**Social**
- Increased access to local high quality produce in high need communities (measured by the amount produce procured by institutions in high need communities)
- Increased knowledge of agriculture, food systems, and sources of food (measured by consumer knowledge survey)

**Strengths of the Student Work Environment**
CCE of Jefferson County has a long history of working with interns from college, community, and military settings. The management staff value the opportunity to mentor and guide students as they engage in meaningful, experiential projects. CCE Jefferson staff will engage students in all aspects of the project and provide opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration and work that will truly benefit the community. Students will find a welcoming, comfortable environment that supports their desire to learn and make a difference. They will engage with staff, community partners, government officials, and business owners.

**Student Supervision Plan**
The team of students will be supervised by CCE staff including the agricultural and nutrition program leaders. Both Cathy Moore and Amanda Root have extensive experience in supervising staff and interns. Both have had multiple interns from several colleges, including Cornell University. CCE Jefferson has an intern protocol, orientation, and evaluation system in place. This includes a communication plan will supporting faculty at the sponsoring college.

**Role/Active Participation by the Association and Community Partners**
The North Country Food Systems/Food Hub project is sponsored by Senator Patty Ritchie. Numerous partners have participated in information and discussion sessions. CCE Jefferson has been asked to lead the effort. CCE Jefferson's local foods team is committed to maximizing the area's strengths and working through challenges to develop a vibrant food hub in the four county region. We look forward to the added benefit of engaging with a multi-disciplinary team of Cornell University students and faculty to further impact the success of the project.

**Team Members**
Kevin Jordan  
kJj33@cornell.edu  
Jefferson  
Executive Director

Amanda Root  
arr27@cornell.edu  
Jefferson  
Nutrition Program Leader

Cathy Moore  
cmm17@cornell.edu  
Jefferson  
Ag Program Leader
April Neujean  
aln48@cornell.edu  
Jefferson  
Farm to School Coordinator

Sue Gwise  
sjg42@cornell.edu  
Jefferson  
Horticulture Educator
Sullivan County
Supporting Sullivan Seniors Planning Project

The Challenge
According to the U.S. Census, in 2014, seniors age 65 and over accounted for more than 22 percent of the population of Sullivan County, with 29 percent of households having one or more senior living there; both measure a full 2 percentage points higher than the state average. 35 percent of those seniors have some form of disability. Almost 20 percent of Sullivan County residents live below the poverty level, with the majority of them being seniors and children.

Sullivan County is a rural county at the foot of the Catskills with an average population density of just 80 individuals per square mile. The rural nature of the county means there are almost no public transportation options, long and sometimes treacherous travel to town, and village centers where residents must go to shop, socialize, and tend to personal and medical appointments.

In addition, the 2015 Robert Woods Johnson Foundation Public Health Report ranked Sullivan County 61 out of 62 counties in health outcomes, only ranking better than the Bronx in New York City, due presumably to the fresh Catskill air.

While it has been difficult for officials to gain hard data, county offices estimate that as much as 40 percent of Sullivan County does not have access to broadband or high-speed internet, and there are several pockets in all regions of the county with no internet or cell phone access at all.

Basic services are available to seniors through the Sullivan County Office for the Aging and the Department of Public Health. Those services include information and assistance regarding long-term care; general screening of social, medical, and financial needs; congregate meal sites in four (of 13) municipalities; referrals to care providers; home energy assistance; home health care; and limited transport in population centers. The main offices are located in the center of the county in the towns of Monticello and Liberty respectively. There are no satellite offices and little to no field staff due to small budgets and competing priorities, raising questions around adequate outreach to ensure awareness and then, accessibility to those services by seniors across the county. Anecdotal data suggests that homebound seniors in particular have little knowledge of and access to the limited services that are available.

The Project
CCE Sullivan County (CCE Sullivan) seeks assistance from a team of three Engaged Cornell students to design and implement a research project that will help us more accurately identify the current state of need of Sullivan County residents, age 60 and up by gender and ethnicity in the larger socio-economic context of the entire county, including disparities in accessibility and quality of services, opportunities, and supports between populations; map the landscape of relevant services, opportunities, and supports (SOS) across life areas/disciplines (physical health, mental health, community connection, family, etc...)
available for seniors age 60 and up; identify barriers to access of existing SOS; and identify gaps in the SOS. Student roles would be assigned by discipline and population. For instance:

**Student A**
- Collect, analyze, present current socio-economic state of Sullivan County residents *under age 60*
- Assess SOS needs of Sullivan County residents *under age 60* by gender and ethnicity

**Student B**
- Collect, analyze, present current socio-economic state of Sullivan County residents *age 60 and above*
- Assess SOS needs of Sullivan County residents *age 60 and above* by gender and ethnicity

**Student C**
- Map existing services, opportunities, and supports (SOS) available for Sullivan County adults by age group, i.e. 18-24, 25-35, 35-45, 45-59, 60 and above

**Student Team**
- Identify socio-economic and demographic indicators to be collected to present a picture of the current socio-economic state of Sullivan County residents by age cohort
- Identify life areas and/or disciplines under which to categorize SOS
- Plan and implement assessment of availability, accessibility, and quality of identified SOS for residents by age cohort, gender, ethnicity
- Identify gaps and disparities in SOS by age, gender, ethnicity
- Publish and present joint report
- Propose a process whereby Sullivan County stakeholders may begin to address gaps and disparities in availability and accessibility of SOS across life areas/disciplines for adults over 60

This project will provide CCE Sullivan with baseline information to engage local stakeholders in an intentional educational, planning, and program-development process to ensure that the SOS needed for the growing senior population in the county are relevant, available, accessible, acceptable quality, and an ability to respond to anticipated needs of future generations.

Ultimately, through research-based knowledge, public issues education, collaborations, partnerships, and promoting active and representative participation, the project will enable the community to shape their collective future.

The Engaged Cornell work in Sullivan County will provide a baseline assessment of the state of affairs for Sullivan seniors in the larger community context. CCE Sullivan will continue to survey seniors and update the program landscape map at least every other year as a means to assess the benefits of the project to the community over time. In the meantime, output and outcome data related to the research project and subsequent activities will be collected,
summarized, and reported to the CCE Sullivan Program Advisory Committee (PAC), and interested students and faculty, for the duration of program development and implementation activities. The PAC is a subcommittee of the board of directors and their role is to provide input and general oversight of program evaluation efforts.

**Association Oversight, Expertise, and Support**

CCE Sullivan's role will be to:

- provide a supportive setting with basic office tools for the student(s) during the summer project;
- provide day-to-day administrative supervision;
- provide input to student(s) and faculty during research project development based on local knowledge;
- provide community connections and referrals to student(s) to implement research;
- provide mentorship in workplace skills, relationship development, and community outreach.

If needed, CCE Sullivan will assist Cornell student(s) in securing local housing, which will be paid for through Engaged Cornell funds.

Project oversight will be provided by Susan Hamilton, CCE Sullivan director of programs. Hamilton will have weekly check-ins with student(s) to address administrative or benchmark and timeline related needs, concerns, and successes.

Programmatic direction and consultation will be provided by Bonnie Lewis, caregiver resource educator, and Sean Welsh, energy and consumer educator. Both educators have more than a decade experience at CCE Sullivan working in family and consumer sciences with senior citizens, their caregivers, and families. They have established relationships with the Sullivan County Office for the Aging, the Alzheimer’s Association, Action Towards Independence, Adult Care Home, congregate meal sites, and AARP and will serve as liaisons and connectors to the senior population. The team will meet as needed to provide tips, insight, contacts, and brainstorms with the student(s).

**Why the Project Matters**

The Supporting Sullivan Seniors Planning Project aligns with both the CCE Sullivan and NYS CCE Strategic Plan Initiative A: University-Community Engagement, Objectives A.1-1.3 and Objectives A.2-2.1, and Initiative B: Core Programming, Objectives B.1-1.2, Objectives B.2-2.3, 2.4-2.5, and Objectives B.4.1-4.2

The project falls under CCE Sullivan’s Community and Economic Vitality and Youth and Family Services program areas and thus requires a multidisciplinary approach. As noted in the local and statewide plans of work, CCE has a commitment to Sullivan County citizens and local officials to build their capacities so they can solve problems and build strong and vibrant communities. Our family emphasis includes human development and social wellbeing, economic wellbeing, and quality of home and work environments to enable vibrant and resilient communities.
CCE Sullivan has hosted a program that is somewhat unique to the CCE system for almost 15 years, the Caregiver Resource Center. The Caregiver Resource Center is funded through the local Office for the Aging with state and federal Office for the Aging funds and provides informal educational opportunities and referrals for people who provide in house care for aging relatives or friends. Research shows that physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually healthy caregivers are able to give their care-receivers have a safer and better quality of life as they age.

We have had several internal discussions about the lack of language in the statewide and local plans of work addressing the senior population. CCE Sullivan knows that Cornell University has been expanding and strengthening its research and work around aging and related issues and participated in the Dr. Pillemer’s Building Community Legacies Together (BCLT) research project for the first time in 2015. The CCE Sullivan board of directors will be updating the local plan of work language in 2016 to better reflect CCE Sullivan activities with and for the aging population.

This proposed Engaged Cornell project provides an opportunity to diversify Cornell's participation in the interests of Associations through real and relevant applied research. With Baby Boomer's retiring in droves now, and for the next 10–15 years, this project is an exemplary example of how the land grant university system can engage with local communities through CCE associations to address emerging and time sensitive issues.

**Team Members**

Colleen Monaghan  
cm638@cornell.edu  
CCE Sullivan County  
Executive Director

Susan Hamilton  
sch248@cornell.edu  
CCE Sullivan County  
Director of Programs

Bonnie Lewis  
bil25@cornell.edu  
CCE Sullivan County  
Caregiver Educator

Sean Welsh  
sw288@cornell.edu  
CCE Sullivan County  
Energy and Consumer Educator
Tompkins County
Food Security for All

The Challenge
In Tompkins County approximately 1 in 6 households where all the children are aged 0–5 live below the poverty level. In the City of Ithaca this number increases to almost 100 percent in the case of single mothers with all children under 5. Children in this age range living in poverty are at risk of food insecurity, obesity, and nutrient deficiencies that can have negative consequences lasting a lifetime. Low-income single mothers are subject to numerous challenges in adopting and maintaining healthful behaviors for their families. These include lack of access to healthy, affordable foods; limited resources (including time, childcare, disposable income, and the restrictions of government assistance programs); cycles of stress, anxiety, and depression; fewer opportunities for physical activity; greater exposure to marketing of obesity-promoting products, and limited access to health care.

Our Goals and How Students Contribute
Our association's ECCESP proposal has the goal of facilitating both short-term and long-term solutions to the above challenges in accordance with our mission to put knowledge to work for the sake of the community's wellbeing. Specifically, this proposal builds on and augments existing CCE Tompkins' food security programming — which includes federally funded nutrition education, and subsidized shares for Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) — to provide engaged-learning experiences that intend to help students and the community tackle this very real problem. Currently, our Healthy Food for All (HFFA) program subsidizes CSA shares for low-income mothers when they agree to participate in our educational opportunities around nutrition, fresh food preparation/preservation, and other healthy food security matters. Our proposal is to facilitate engaged relationships between students and the single mothers of children 0–5 through having students become involved in all aspects of that programming. This work will involve — but is not limited to — research, producing educational materials, and interactive presentations. In this way the students are concerned with producing measurable improvements in a number of healthy eating indicators.

Interwoven with the above engaged learning activities, students will be learning from the mothers (and other context and content experts) about the individual, familial, and structural barriers mothers face when trying to achieve the food-related goals they have for themselves and their children. This understanding will be used to develop proposals and policies — which students then work to have implemented — as part of a larger project to produce sustainable solutions to Ithaca’s food security challenges.

What the students bring to the community is time and access to resources which enable them to support the whole community in its collective attempts to understand and think through these complex issues. Students will be involved in producing educational and/or policy-oriented materials in an effort to increase individual and community capacity in this area. To what extent individual students focus on the differing aspects of the above — e.g., listening, dialogue, educational delivery, analysis, policy formulation, presentation, implementation, and so on — will be determined through initial and iterative discussions with faculty and students.
Please note that the engaged learning opportunities offered by this proposal can accommodate undergraduate, graduate, and/or professional students’ interests.

**Community Partners**

To broaden and deepen this learning experience, students will work not only with the mothers involved directly in the above HFFA programming, but also with a new support and advocacy group for single mothers with children (Sista4Sista) organized by Southside Community Center. As one of our partners in this project, Southside will convene a number of special student-oriented meetings on the themes of food security and related policy. Students will participate in these discussions and will have the opportunity to achieve greater understanding of the social realities of food security. They will also be offered a space to present and receive feedback on their related proposals. Based on the results of these dialogues, CCE Tompkins and Southside intend that there will be future policy-informing collaborations between our student-related programs and themselves.

**Assessment of Impacts**

As noted above, this student project intends immediate benefits for family members as well as taking a systemic capacity-building approach to the issue. At the individual and familial level, benefits are assessed via an evaluation of the HFFA single-mother household project participants. This will be completed in accordance with the established evaluation procedure of CCE Tompkins’ subsidized share CSA program (Healthy Food for All). Participants complete a pre- and post-season survey that measures the consumption of fresh produce (quantity and variety), familiarity of, and comfort level with preparing locally grown produce, and the qualitative impact of participating in the program on their lives. Feedback is also collected to measure the effectiveness and usefulness of educational resources (tools/classes/workshops) through surveys and informal interviews.

The evaluation method adopted for the more systemic capacity-building and policy-oriented elements of the student project will depend (to an extent) on the precise nature and duration of the project itself. Broadly speaking, however, we anticipate that there will be an evaluation of how the mothers feel about the proposals developed by the students; the community members’ actual or intended participation in those; the students’ demonstrated understanding of the barriers to and requirements for that participation; the credibility and sustainability of anticipated results; and, if policies are enacted, the results of those in the lives of the participants, and future prospects for the same. This evaluation will be carried out with the participation of the HFFA program participants, as well as the Sista4Sista group at Southside Community Center.

**Roles, Responsibilities, and Supervision**

CCE Tompkins (including HFFA) and Southside Community Center staff will facilitate student interactions with the mothers in a number of contexts. Our nutrition programming leader, along with our student and community coordinator, will oversee student engagement with CSA programming, as well as this project’s relation with Southside Community Center.

In our project supervision role, CCE Tompkins’ staff will work together to apply best practices in implementing food security strategies:
• recruiting local participants; maintaining participant engagement;
• helping students become informed by the participants’ needs and challenges;
• manage any work in our certified teaching kitchen facility;
• provide support for students in developing materials and proposals for individual and community-capacity building;
• build students’ understanding of the importance of grassroots participation in any sustainable solutions; and
• we will evaluate impact.

The meetings at Southside Community Center will provide an additional invaluable resource on the realities of food security alongside providing a forum for ideas to be presented, critiqued, and developed. The students’ experiences there will be facilitated by the executive assistant, a single mother and Cornell graduate herself.

**Community Engagement Beyond the Funding Period**
If students and/or faculty wish to continue their involvement with the project’s goals in the future, we are more than willing to work with them since our programming on local food security will be expanding and intensifying in the coming years. More immediately, we have a small student-led HFFA project commencing in 2016 which the ECCESP students may segue into for the purposes of continuing their engagement.

For those students and faculty wishing to expand their work outside Tompkins County, we anticipate a deepening relationship with other CCE associations on HFFA-related matters. Recent preliminary discussions with other Associations suggest there are significant benefits to be gained through pooling different associations’ resources on HFFA’s educational materials and in sharing related program data. In this way we hope this and similar projects will bring benefits to extension associations system-wide. These collaborations will in turn help facilitate potentially state-wide data sets and research projects for faculty and students.

**Multidisciplinary Approaches**
Through developing students’ relationships with HFFA and Southside Community Center, students will have the opportunity to learn about the social realities of food insecurity, build project management and community organizing skills, engage in non-profit operation, formulate policy proposals, and work towards implementation. Our association is involved with these issues on many levels and it is our desire that the multidisciplinary approaches driving this proposal will attract a diverse range of students and faculty.

Faculty from the Department of Development Sociology and the Division of Nutritional Sciences have expressed interest in this and similar projects, but the range of faculty interests that could work within this project's boundaries are extremely broad (e.g., public administration, public policy, race and equity, economics, education, and more). Responding to any possible intersection of interests — both in this project, and in related initiatives to come — our association programming can expand to work with students and faculty in mutually beneficial ways.
Team Members
Chris Kai-Jones
cbj7@cornell.edu
CCE-Tompkins
Student and Community Coordinator

Lara Kaltman, MPH, RD
ljp9@cornell.edu
CCE-Tompkins
Family & Community Well-Being Issue Leader

Elizabeth Karabinakis
evw4@cornell.edu
CCE-Tompkins (HFFA)
Director, Healthy Food For All
Tioga County
Our Farms; Our Stories

The Challenge
Momentum is building for agriculture in Tioga County. After years of corporate downsizing and the loss of manufacturing, residents of the county understand that agriculture holds at least part of the key to economic recovery and sustained growth. Interest in local agriculture is growing steadily and initiatives like the local foods in the schools hold great promise for our farmers. The Southern Tier region was chosen as a recipient of $500M in grants as part of the state’s Upstate Revitalization Initiative, and investment in agriculture — from improving access to markets and food processing facilities, to research in promising new agricultural ventures such as controlled environment agriculture — was a key part of the winning proposal. Even closer to home, the Tioga County legislature recently increased funding to support an agriculture development resource educator who will focus solely on helping county farmers establish and build on their farming ventures. The increase in funding is to implement the newly adopted Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan for the county.

The data we have on the size and breadth of agriculture in Tioga County comes from the 2012 Agriculture Census. We know that we have 536 farms that completed the census, and that the largest sector of agriculture is in dairy and that the total agricultural market value of products in the county tops $36M. What we do not know much about are the smaller producers: the farmers who grow vegetables for market, the folks who have a small herd of beef cattle in their pasture, the very small-scale homestead farmers who augment their off-farm incomes with sales from their farm.

We at CCE Tioga feel that the larger dairy farms are well served by our local extension dairy team, but we know that the low price for milk has severely challenged dairy farmers to remain solvent — and some are even contemplating getting out of farming. This project would help give voice to the struggles of our county’s dairy farmers.

We at CCE Tioga would also like to identify and learn more about small scale, diversified farms and beginning farmers. We know little about their lives — why they chose to farm; how they balance farm chores, family life, and work; what their needs are and why they do what they do. The more we know about our farms, our farmers, and their stories, the more we at CCE Tioga can tailor programs to meet their needs.

The Response
Our Farms; Our Stories was conceived of to learn more about our county farms and farmers. Rather than a strict census of farms, production levels, and the like, we hope to gather a greater understanding of the folks who produce our food and fiber in Tioga County. We envision a team of three Cornell University students:

- an agriculture/agronomy student who will be adept at assessing the physical resources of each farm as well as the farmers’ production methods;
- a human ecology/sociology student who is familiar with rural communities and rural development, and
• a communication/labor relations student who has experience in compiling data and information into engaging and informative presentations.

The student team will work with the agriculture and horticulture educators at CCE Tioga and the educators will be the primary points of contact for the team. The project will span eight weeks over the summer, tentatively from June through the end of July.

The Plan
The first week, the students will review relevant agriculture data for the county and get acquainted with CCE staff. They will visit the offices of Tioga County Soil and Water Conservation Service, Tioga County Economic Development and Planning, and contact staff on the CCE regional dairy team to begin building an overview of farms and farmers for the county. From this initial data review, they will construct a matrix of different farms and production methods so that as they decide who to visit and interview that they encompass the range of farming in the county. For example, they will want to visit a commercial dairy farm, an organic dairy farm, a conventional vegetable production farm, a Community Supported Agriculture farm, and a small-scale homestead farm, to name just a few. The team will also learn about the Community Capitals Framework, which is an approach to analyze how communities work. The team will devise a series of questions that will delve into several of these “capitals” (Flora and Flora, 2008):

- Natural Capital: what are the physical resources (soil, infrastructure, equipment, labor) available to the farmer
- Cultural Capital: how the farmer sees him or herself and how they interact with the greater community
- Human Capital: how did they become farmers, learn about farming, improve on their production practices, and do they hire off-farm employees
- Social Capital: what groups or organizations the farmer relies on to support their farming; how CCE can best support farmers with technical or other educational support
- Political Capital: how they work to influence farming regulations and land use zoning
- Financial Capital: farming as a profit-making venture; future capital investments; the need for an off-farm income

For six weeks, they will visit at least two farms per day, spending about an hour with each farmer, getting a tour of their farm and hearing and recording some of the farmers’ stories. The final week of the team’s engagement will be to produce a written document of their findings as well as a multi-media presentation that illuminates farming in Tioga County. The presentation will be shown to leaders of the Tioga County — legislators, Farm Bureau members, the board of Tioga County Agriculture Resource Group, Economic Development and Planning, and Tioga County Tourism.

In May of 2015, the Tioga County Legislature adopted the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan, which outlines a series of goals, strategies and recommended actions to strengthen and enhance agriculture in Tioga County. Our Farms; Our Stories directly aids the implementation of the plan’s goals by providing insight into the needs of the county’s farmers. Specifically, this project will help with three goals:
Engaged Cornell Cooperative Extension Student Projects (2016) | Candidate Projects from Association Proposals

- support new and beginning farmers in the agriculture sector
- develop and support agriculture education and technical assistance programming and to provide technical assistance
- improve communications between farmers, rural landowners, and public agencies

The more we at CCE Tioga know about our farms, our farmers and their needs, the better we can tailor educational programming. The more our community leaders understand about the struggles of farmers, the better able they are to address their needs. Our Farms; Our Stories will also enrich the students’ understanding of rural life and the struggles and triumphs of small-scale farming. They will end the summer with a greater appreciation of the people who work daily at producing our food and fiber and of our local food system.

**Team Members**

Andrew Fagan  
agr1@cornell.edu  
CCE Tioga  
Executive Director

Barbara Neal  
ban1@cornell.edu  
CCE Tioga  
Community Horticulture Educator