

Extension Connection



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
Oneida County

Fertilizer & Profits

Fertilizer prices have risen 300% in three years. A local 700-acre farm reported spending \$30,000 in 2006 and \$90,000 in 2008. Fertilizer optimizes yields and has a direct impact on the financials of the farm from the initial cost of purchase to the higher return on investment. CCE hosted a training on optimizing use of fertilizer or “nutrient management” to allow farmers to identify soil needs so that fertilizer is applied with precision accuracy thereby saving upwards of 10% on this cost.

CCE Preparing Farmers for Cropping Loans

Milk prices dipped below cost of production, as input costs rose dramatically. Many Oneida County producers found themselves in need of short-term credit to prepare for the cropping season. CCE partnered with a local lender who explained the process and required documentation for receiving a crop loan for interested farmers.

Cornell University Researchers in Oneida County

Fuel costs on farms have risen astronomically. Each pass over a field in preparation for crops costs money. Traditional methodologies of tillage are both labor intensive and resource intensive as they require three passes with equipment. Strip tilling, recently studied at Cornell University, has shown to lower costs, conserve energy and reduce negative affects on the environment. It was determined that strip tilling resulted in similar yields as conventional at a substantially reduced cost. Research was shared with Oneida County producers, to increase profitability.

Corn; To Purchase or to Grow?

Corn prices rose drastically from 06-07. A farmer reported spending \$33,000 in 2007 and \$56,000 in 2008 for seed. Local dairy farmers feed costs rose in unison, thereby affecting profitability. CCE hosted a seminar and cost benefit analysis of traditional purchasing vs. growing feed as those farms with the capability of growing their own feed have an opportunity to realize significant savings.

AED Explores Value Added Sales Opportunities Through NYS Grant

AED is working with Upstate New York Growers & Packers Cooperative in conjunction with Karp Resources and C.H. Robinson to identify products that can be raised cost effectively and have marketability. Products being explored include carrots, celery and smaller pumpkins (54 to a bin). These products have been identified because there is a need and not many farmers are growing them in New York. Value-added products continue to be explored such as the butternut squash cookies and Tasselberry Farms line of strawberry based vinegars, marinades and dressings. AED also worked with the city of Utica and a bio-fuel company to explore the feasibility of growing sugar beets for bio-fuel.

First Switch Grass Test Plot in Oneida County

CCE facilitated a connection between a local grower and a Cornell researcher. This connection led to the first establishment of switch grass in Oneida County. A 5-acre plot was prepared by the local grower and planted by the Cornell researcher. Data will be collected on the site providing needed information for other NY state growers.

Researchers Test Bio-Film For Cost Savings using Green Technology

Cornell researchers collaborated with a grower in Oneida county and other growers throughout the state to test a biofilm, made from cornstarch, to determine if it could replace plastic mulch currently being used. This biofilm was used as mulch for the establishment of raspberries and day-neutral strawberries on a farm in Oneida County. The biofilm breaks down into organic components over time eliminating costs and the need for collection and trucking to a landfill.

Utica City School; Exploring Local Products for School Menu

Meetings with the director of Utica school district food service were held with the purpose of securing local produce for the 2008-09 school year. As of September 2009 the Utica City Schools have secured some locally produced apples and tomatoes for the 2008-09 school year.

CCE Nutrition Staff Head to Farmers Market

In response to WIC participants expressing difficulty spending WIC coupons at the farmer’s market and being unsure how to pick or prepare fresh produce, ESNY promoted “Meet Me At the Rome Market Day” in August 2007. WIC participants who attended the market received a copy of the Farmers Market Nutrition Program 2007 Leafy Green Fact Sheet that included information on purchasing and preparing leafy greens. CCE nutrition educator was available through out the day to answer consumer questions and offer recipes.

CCE's Farm Business Manager Assists Seneca Foods to Secure Additional Acreage in Oneida County

CCE Farm Business manager worked with Seneca Foods in Geneva, NY to locate 800 plus acres in Oneida County to contract and produce green beans for their Geneva NY plant. To date, seven new growers and an additional 550 acres have been contracted with the Geneva NY plant.

Helping Farmers Harvest at Optimal Time Promotes Optimal Nutrition for Livestock

CCE recognizes the great importance of this task and offers free moisture testing of corn plants. CCE Staff processes the corn samples and then reports moisture status via e-mail to 90 area farmers and agribusinesses as an early alert to help farmers harvest their silage at optimal moisture contents preserving its quality.

CCE Launches Woman Working in Farming Study Group

Local farms are small businesses. On many of these farms there is an unwritten partnership between husbands and wives who operate these farms. Each takes a part in the management and operation of the business. CCE organized a discussion group in December 2007 for local women in farming to support their efforts in the operation and management of their farm business. Thirteen women, the majority of which are dairy farmers from Oneida and Herkimer county, have held monthly meetings to discuss topics including record keeping, bookkeeping, marketing, human resource management, transitioning farms, and managing personal risk.

CCE helps Farmers Understand Carbon Credits

New York State, along with 8 other states in the northeast is working on establishing carbon dioxide emission thresholds. When they are established, there will be a market for carbon credits. Farmers will be in a position to be able to sell carbon credits for specific practices that they perform that conserve on CO2 emissions or that sequester carbon. CCE held a workshop on carbon credits for local producers to help them understand this emerging industry.

CCE Connects Local Producers With Fulton Ethanol Plant Purchasing Agents

Many local field crop producers sell their grain to feed mills in NY and Pa. These markets usually pay less than the posted price on the Chicago Board of Trade (CBOT). A new ethanol plant is being constructed in Fulton NY. The Fulton plant's need for corn grain far exceeds our production capacity requiring them to purchase grain at the CBOT price for grain produced in the mid west plus pay for transportation. Therefore NY grain producers would have a new market willing to pay prices above CBOT. CCE organized a meeting between local growers and the purchasing agents for the Fulton Ethanol plant to help local growers take advantage of this new market.

4-H Tractor Safety Program Certifies 8 Local Youth

The 4-H Tractor & Machinery Safety Certification Program certified 8 local youth ages 14 to 16 in safe farm, tractor, and equipment procedures. Certification is required for these youth to be employed on local farms to operate tractors & machinery. Two local tractor dealerships served as the training sites.

CCE's Nutrition Staff Helping Families Stretch Their Food Budget

CCE's Eat Smart New York staff adopted a new curriculum entitled Money for Food. The goal is education regarding managing family resources, (includes activities on how to make a budget and reduce spending) to better enable participating families to purchase adequate, nutritious food throughout the month. WKTV partnered with CCE to offer a four part series Maximizing Nutrition Minimizing Cost. Segment topics included; saving money by planning and preparing ahead, buying in season produce when prices are low, preservation methods, cost comparison of convenience versus home made, and online resources.

CCE Providing Financial Literacy Classes Through United Way Grant

CCE educator holds financial literacy classes throughout Oneida County. Topics covered include: Basic banking, developing a spending plan, credit and credit reports, identity theft and other scams, credit card basics, and preparing for taxes. A series is in the works for WIBX morning radio to cover similar topics.

CCE Oneida County Web Site : A Wealth of Information

A new and updated website was revealed in 2008. www.cce.cornell.edu/oneida The home page was given a new look, which was more "user" friendly for the consumer. A "News and Events" section was added announcing all up coming meetings, trainings & events that are being offered for CCE consumers. Easy to identify links were added to find departments, pdfs, staff, directions, strategic plan, etc... Statistics reveal that in December of 2007 we had: Visitors 59, Views 1012, Hits 1146 In September of 2008: Visitors 1307, Views 6182, Hits 21520 . December of 2007 we had 32 pages to visit. September of 2008 we now over 1400 web pages. To learn more about these changes and updates to our website, check out our Strategic Plan found on our home page.