

Cornell University Cooperative Extension Otsego County

2009 ANNUAL REPORT



Our Mission

To enable people to improve their lives and communities through partnerships that put experience and research knowledge to work.

Cornell Cooperative Extension Otsego County

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Staff

Don Smyers	Executive Director
Dan Palm	Interim Executive Director
Kevin Ganoe	Area Specialist, Field Crops
David Balbian	Area Specialist, Dairy Management
Dianne Dirig	Program Leader, Nutrition & Health
Susan Carver	Resource Educator, Youth Development
Heidi Tafel	Community Educator, Agriculture
Dottie Wehnau	Community Educator, Diabetes Coalition Coordinator
Marcia Kozubek	Community Educator, Reality Check Coordinator
Connie Bennett	Program Educator, Nutrition
Christina Lathan	Program Educator, Nutrition, Diabetes
Debbie Wojehowski	Program Educator, Nutrition, Energy, Financial Literacy
Madelyn Sanchez	Office Administrator
Mary Teller	Finance Administrator
Robin Henson	Administrative Assistant

How To Find Us

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Visit us on the web: <http://counties.cce.cornell.edu/otsego>

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A Year in Review

Dear Friends of Cooperative Extension:

On behalf of the Board of Directors and Association staff, I am pleased to present our 2009 Annual Association Report. The annual report highlights some of the many accomplishments of the organization, yet it is impossible for a report such as this to fully describe the many ways in which we have impacted the lives of local citizens.

The mission of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Otsego County is to help improve the lives of county residents by extending the resources of New York's land grant university - Cornell University - to Otsego County, and in particular, the expertise of researchers and educators within the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, the College of Human Ecology, and the College of Veterinary Medicine. But of course, it is our local, professional staff that drives the value of these university resources home for county residents. Our accountability and relevance to Otsego County residents is ensured by the oversight provided by our local board of directors who provide many, many hours of volunteer service to the Association.

The Association creates a unique plan of work that addresses the specific needs of residents and agricultural producers. We focus on

- Agricultural enterprise and technical support, including beginning farmer instruction,
- Dairy and field crop expertise through the Central New York Dairy & Field Crop Team,
- 4-H and youth development activities that impact children through meaningful, relevant, and fun experiences designed for youth,
- Family & Consumer Science Programs that impact adults and youth in areas of nutrition, food safety, energy conservation, and financial literacy, and
- Volunteers have greatly extended the reach of programs throughout the county. Master Gardeners provide educational gardening programs, demonstrations, and helpful garden information and diagnostic services for the public's benefit; 4-H volunteers are the backbone of supporting the 4-H Youth Development Program; and the many committee and board members who graciously volunteered their time to support the organization.

During 2009, several personnel changes occurred in the association. Dan Palm, Interim Executive Director, provided staff direction following the departure of Dinnie Sloman. I began in early September representing this and the Schoharie County Extension Associations.

Other changes include Sara Ackerman, former Ag Program Educator, who left to pursue other interests. Two grants wrapped up after several years of work providing benefits to county residents. Marcia Kozubek, Reality Check Program Educator and Dottie Wehnau, Diabetes Grant Coordinator, completed their terms during the final year-end quarter. We are, however, very excited that Heidi Tafel joined our staff in May as Agriculture Program Educator.

Please take a few moments to review our Annual Report. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Don Smyers

Executive Director

Cornell Cooperative Extension Otsego County

Core Program Highlights

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

The 4-H Youth Development Program offers a world of opportunities for youth ages 5-19. 4-H Youth Development creates environments for youth to develop skills, practical knowledge, and wisdom through observing, doing, and reflecting on experiences. This "learning by doing" model has been active and successful for over 100 years.

4-H Youth Development links the resources of Cornell University to young people. The basic mission of 4-H Youth Development is to create supportive, learning environments in which diverse youth and adults reach their fullest potential as capable, competent, and caring citizens.

Through 4-H Youth Development, youth practice effective problem solving and decision making skills; acquire positive work attitudes and skills; accept community and social responsibility; contribute to positive relationships with families, peers and community; demonstrate communication and leadership skills; and value lifelong learning. Adults volunteer their time and expertise in a variety of settings to provide meaningful and enriching opportunities for youth.

4-H Youth Development served a total of 358 Otsego County youth through 28 traditional clubs, special interest programs, and independent members. One hundred forty one volunteers contributed their time to our youth programming. Susan Carver, Resource Educator, spearheaded our 4-H Youth Development effort. Youth participated in a wide variety of activities, including Public Presentations, Community Service projects, Focus on Careers at Oneonta Daily Star and ISD in Oneonta, Dairy Judging, Hippology, Dairy Challenge, Dairy Bowl, Horse Bowl, County and State Fair, Cornell Career Explorations, various county-wide Animal Clinics, Photography Clinic, Tree Planting and Holiday Green Cutting, Earn-an-Animal, Gardens on Parade, and more. Volunteers added new clinics in Cooking, Sewing, and Livestock Judging in 2009. In addition, the Association participated in the second 4-H National

Youth Science Day at the Milford Central School Afterschool Program.

Some other activities that happened in 2009 included stipends for Otsego County 4-H'ers to attend 4-H Camp Shankitunk in Delaware County, holding the Homemade Holidays Workshop in Milford to teach youth how to make a variety of holiday decorations, publication of eleven issues of the 4-H Youth Development newsletter, *Power of Youth*, and two major fundraisers--Seeds Sales in Spring and Cheese Sales in Fall.

These programs were led by 130 4-H volunteers and 10 CCE Otsego County Master Gardeners.

AGRICULTURE

One of the important services the Association offers Otsego County residents is the provision of answers and resources to agricultural questions. Often Association staff facilitates connecting clients with Cornell University faculty, other Extension experts, and other community agencies. Consistent with previous years, the number of calls, emails, and drop-ins numbered in the hundreds on topics ranging from animal husbandry, to buying a farm, to value-added production. In addition, part of our service includes helping farmers test soils through the Agro-One Soils Laboratory in Ithaca, thus helping farmers save thousands of dollars by guiding them to the most profitable and productive fertilizer purchase decisions.

Agriculture & Environment continued programming on three fronts:

1. Focused programming to the dairy and field crops industries through our participation in the Central New York Dairy and Field Crops Team of Kevin Ganoie and David Balbian. The Regional Team is comprised of specialists in dairy management, field crops, and farm business

management. The Team operates in the six New York counties of Chenango, Fulton, Herkimer, Montgomery, Otsego, and Schoharie. Educational activities provided by the team to the agricultural community emphasize not only technical subject matter but also resource management and problem solving. Teaching techniques emphasize small groups that allow for interaction among participants and instructors. The participants learn to solve production problems through the experiences of others. Training sessions are made as “hands on” as possible with the use of classroom activities, field demonstrations, and farm tours. At every stage of the educational process, achieving profitability while meeting personal and business goals is stressed;

2. Initiation of programming for commercial livestock producers by Heidi Tafel, Community Educator for Agriculture; and
3. Consumer-oriented horticulture programming, the *Master Gardener Program*, involving 24 trained volunteers. Master Gardeners answered about 560 inquiries; pH tested 20 soil samples, conducted several workshops, and helped 4-H youth with gardening and craft projects. The 2009 Master Gardener Plant sale was very successful, netting over \$1,500 from sales. During the gardening season there was a Master Gardener in the office answering questions by phone and e-mail.

MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

The Cornell University Master Gardener Program is a public service program that provides training to volunteers for the purpose of enabling them to serve their communities through horticulture, gardening, and pest management. Volunteers participate in a series of science-based educational sessions that include many aspects of horticulture and related topics. Then, in return for this training, they assist Association staff in providing information and education.

Today's Master Gardener volunteers join educators in sharing their knowledge of and enthusiasm for

gardening to meet crucial needs within their local communities. Master Gardener volunteers make it their mission to educate local community members in applying horticultural science to manage their landscapes and gardens in a science-based, sustainable manner. They address environmental and social priorities such as water conservation, the protection of water quality, reducing the impact of invasive species, increasing public awareness of the value of home and public landscapes, and the opportunities for healthy living through gardening.

The Master Gardener Program is open to everyone with an interest in gardening and a willingness to use their knowledge, experience, and enthusiasm to make a positive impact on their local community. Then, in return for this training, they assist Association staff in providing information and education.



This year the Master Gardeners created a vegetable “Victory Garden” that demonstrated skills taught in several of their workshops. Produce from the garden was incorporated in the *Eat Smart New York!* (see photo page 9).

Eat Smart New York!



FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES

One of the traditional services that the Association provides to Otsego County residents is education and outreach regarding nutrition, health, and financial wellness. Nutrition and Health's primary focus continued to be *Eat Smart New York!* delivering nutrition education to the county's food stamp recipients through a contract with the Department of Social Services.

In New York State, the USDA Food Stamp Nutrition Education program is known as *Eat Smart New York!* (ESNY!). The New York State Office of Temporary Disability and Assistance submits an annual plan requesting funding from USDA that allows local social services districts to use funds to help low-income residents achieve food security. This program provides valuable nutrition education services through a series of six hands-on lessons to improve the likelihood that individuals and families will make healthy food choices within limited budgets.

Residents participating in Food Stamps, Head Start, SSI, Medicaid, WIC, or Job Corps are eligible to enroll in the ESNY! Program. During the 2009 grant year, the program served 319 people in 130 families.

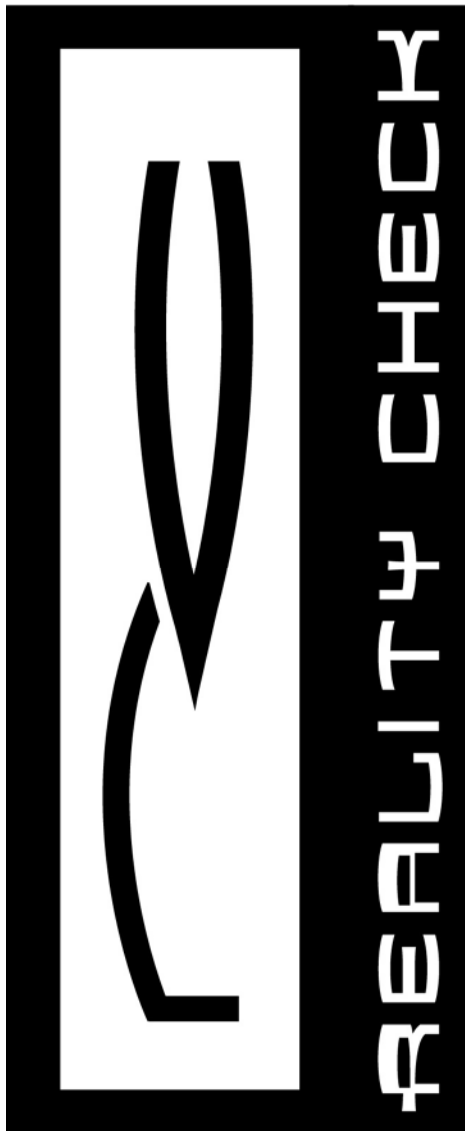
Staff for Eat Smart New York! include Program Leader Dianne Dirig and Nutrition Program Educators Connie Bennett, Debbie Wojehowski, and Christina Lathan. In addition to ESNY! the team answered telephone and email questions regarding nutrition, cooking, food preservation, and food safety from residents of Otsego County. In April, we co-sponsored the 25th Annual Food & Fitness Conference with the presentation of "Obesity and Adult Diabetes."

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

In 2009 the Association continued to host satellite teleconferences offered by the NYS Office of the Controller.

These teleconferences are offered to help educate local officials on new and emerging issues. Target audiences included newly elected officials, justices, fire districts, and others.

Special Projects Highlights



REALITY CHECK

Reality Check, New York State's Anti-Tobacco Program was coordinated by Marcia Kozubek (\$85,000 grant from the NYS Department of Health). Reality Check is a movement where teens inform other New York teens about the manipulative promotion by the tobacco industry to convince us that smoking is normal, cool, and rebellious. It is funded by New York State through the State Department of Health.

In Otsego County, the Association operates the Reality Check program. In 2009, a new club was added when Lighthouse Christian Academy, Oneonta, formed a club. This brought the total to nine Reality Check clubs, with a total of 120 youth. The teens were involved in a wide variety of activities, including surveys of stores to identify ways the stores could adjust their advertising to avoid soliciting youth, presentations to municipal, county, and private boards to request that boards adopt resolutions against tobacco sponsorship of community events, and attendance at community events, such as Oneonta Tigers baseball games to distribute information to teens.

June included a trip to New York City, where five teens attended a statewide Youth Rally to encourage removal of smoking brands and scenes from movies.

Kick Butts Day took place in April when teens from across Otsego County spoke out against the marketing tactics of the tobacco industry. Reality Check clubs in Cooperstown, Edmeston, Laurens, Morris, and Richfield Springs high schools participated by spreading the word to family and friends about the deadly impact of cigarettes and spit tobacco. Through games and school presentations, teens taught others to be smart consumers, calling attention to the lure of tobacco ads.

In April Reality Check teens collected cigarette butts in Milford's Wilbur Park. The teens presented the outcome to the Milford Village Board resulting in the Board voting to have a No Smoking Policy for the park. This followed the successful event in Fall 2008 when Cooperstown Club teens held clean-ups in five parks in Cooperstown, resulting in the Cooperstown Village Board voting to make all parks smoke-free.

Special Projects Highlights

SENIOR NUTRITION EDUCATION

Supported by a grant from Excellus Blue Cross Blue Shield, the Association extended its nutrition & food safety programs to Otsego County seniors.

FOOD PRESERVATION

Through a \$500 grant from WEGO (Walking Example Group) we were able to improve the equipment available to offer education on the topic of food preservation.

One consumer workshop was held in August in addition to consumer questions being addressed by phone or in person throughout the year.

DIABETES PREVENTION & CONTROL

The Diabetes Prevention and Control Program was coordinated by Dianne Dirig and Dottie Wehnau. The Association was the lead agency for a four-county coalition funded by a \$98,000 grant from the NYS Department of Health. Christina Lathan, Nutrition Program Educator, provided diabetes programming under this grant.



Diabetes is one of the most significant health problems facing New Yorkers. Due to the growing number of cases, especially adult-onset diabetes (Type II), the State Department of Health has organized coalitions around the state to educate New Yorkers on preventing the disease and lessening its impact should one become diabetetic. The Association was the lead agency for the Healthy Living Partnership of Fulton, Montgomery, Otsego and Schoharie Counties (also referred to as the Diabetes Coalition).

The Diabetes Coalition, made up of about 17 agencies and organizations, reaches out to the public, health care providers, special interest groups, and community leaders to spread the word about the deadly disease. Otsego County partner organizations include the Otsego County Health Department and Bassett Healthcare.

The Diabetes Coalition's activities reached thousands of people in its four-county region.

CEPREE

Consumer Education Program for Residential Energy Efficiency

A \$3,000 grant funded by NYSERDA (New York State Energy Research and Development Authority) helps educate county residents about reducing energy expenses in the home. This effort was coordinated by Educator Debbie Wojehowski.

EMPOWER NEW YORK

With growing long-term energy prices, Otsego County residents are getting more concerned about managing household budgets. The Association is part of the *EmPower*

New York grant funded by New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) to provide energy and financial literacy education to county residents. Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County is the lead agency. *EmPower New York* offers three workshops: *Save Energy Save Money*, *Making Ends Meet*, and *What You Should Know About Credit/Debt*. In 2009, the Association held 17 workshops for 184 people. With each workshop, free energy saving or money management tool kits were provided to participants. These workshops are conducted by Dianne Dirig and Debbie Wojehowski.



EmPower New YorkSM

Picture Gallery

4-H'ers plant pine trees for future club harvest.



Master Gardeners, Nader Towers, Oneonta



FAMACHA Workshop,
The Farmers' Museum and CCE



Vegetable "Victory Garden"
Cornell Cooperative Extension, Cooperstown



Otsego County Fair, Morris

2009 Estimate of Support

(As of 11/30/09)

Cornell Cooperative Extension Otsego County 2009 Estimate of Financial Support

County

Funding Appropriation	\$174,167
Other County Support (FSNEP)	\$ 82,476
Total County Support	\$256,643

State

County Law 224	\$ 45,226
Direct Aid (grants, contracts)	\$145,249
Fringe Benefits	\$122,760
University Resources	\$108,455
Total State Support	\$421,690

Federal

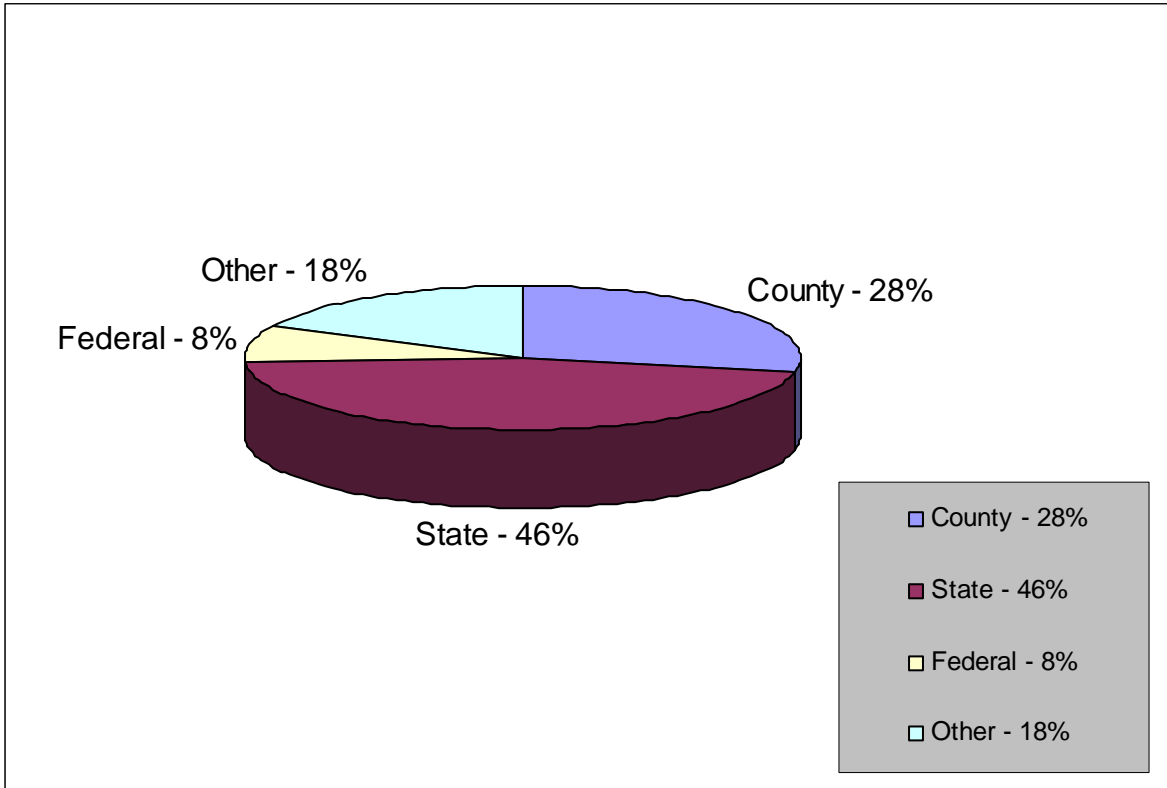
Smith Lever Act	\$ 5,487
Grants, Contracts, Special Projects	\$ 0
Direct Aid	\$ 63,445
Fringe Benefits	\$ 9,168
Total Federal Support	\$ 78,100

Other Sources of Support

Program Participation, Fees, Enrollment Fees	\$ 8,635
Ad Sales, Interest Income, Fundraising, etc	\$ 97,459
Contributions	\$ 47,622
Special Projects	\$ 8,780
Total Other Support	\$162,496

Total Support	\$918,930
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2009 Estimate of Support



Cornell Cooperative Extension
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