



Agricultural Economic Development Program

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Washington & Saratoga Counties

Mission of AED Program

The Agricultural Economic Development bi-county program works to increase agricultural viability and profitability through partnerships that will support existing business and attract new enterprises while improving the quality of life for residents of Washington and Saratoga Counties.

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The CCE Equine program was funded in 2006 by the NYS Farm Viability Institute. The program will work with equine farms to create and improve their businesses.

A Resource to the Farming Community

The Agricultural Economic Development (AED) program focuses on the needs of local farms and agribusinesses to facilitate solutions that are in balance with local technical, financial and ecological resources.

A strong farm economy creates local jobs, provides fresh food and food products and preserves the close knit communities in our counties.

The bi-county program began in 2000 and since 2003 has secured over \$121,000 in grant funding for agricultural education programs directly benefiting our farmers.

Farmers are continuously educating themselves and striving to improve their businesses.

AED program provides resource information to local farmers through a variety of methods:

AED Website - Up to date program information, farm directories, information on protecting farmland, grants, resources,



The AED program promoted local farms and the Pride of NY program at Saratoga & Washington County Fairs

and related articles.

Email Listserve - 213 producers from 2 counties receive weekly email newsletters on topics pertaining to agriculture and economic development.

Resource Guide - Updated often to provide contact information for grants, small business development, protection boards, financial agencies, ag associations, conservation agencies, and farm bureaus.

Ag Business Service - Directory - A detailed listing of area businesses providing ag related services. Over 2,000 printed each year.

Increasing Agricultural Viability

The AED program gives agriculture businesses the necessary resources to help them succeed. The AED program promotes agriculture to consumers, helps create processing facilities for food products, and actively promotes farm to restaurant connections.

Successful AED program projects include:

The Battenkill Kitchen, Inc. - a not for profit organization operating an educational kitchen facility helping producers create food products.

Develop Marketing Materials - to promote agriculture such as the Washington County Farm guide, Saratoga Area Farm Tour brochure, and the Are You Thinking About Moving To The Country? brochure.

Educational Programs - in the areas of grants, Ag and Farmland Protection, Alternative Energy, and Marketing.

See the back for more detailed information about recent AED programs.



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AED Programs and Projects

Ag and Farmland Protection

In March, the AED program helped plan the *Planning a Future for Farms in Rensselaer, Saratoga and Washington Counties* conference held in Easton, Washington County to engage local officials, farmers, planners and others in a discussion of how town and county governments can support a future for farming.

This unique conference profiled agricultural trends and issues as they relate to local planning and

highlight examples of town and county actions in support of local farms. Over 170 participants from local planning boards, zoning boards of appeal, farmers, rural landowners and others interested in supporting farms in Rensselaer, Washington and Saratoga Counties and beyond attended the conference. Another program is planned for the Winter of 2007.

The AED program supported for the second year, Saratoga County

Farm Bureau's Local Officials tour. The tour is an opportunity for town and county representatives to learn about farms and how local governments can support them. The fact-filled event featured three local farms providing participants with maximum exposure to the importance of farms in Saratoga County, challenges facing the local agricultural industry and



Steve Griffen from Saratoga Sod talks to local officials about his families farm business at Farm Bureau's Local Officials tour

opportunities for local government to support farm businesses and protect farmland.

Farm to Chef Express

Farm To Chef Express project began working with farmers in 2004 to enable farmers to market and sell their products to New York City by working with a Project Coordinator who coordinated their products for weekly deliveries to New York City restaurant doors. Since its first delivery of products to New York City chefs on June 23, 2004, thirty farmers from Rensselaer, Saratoga, and Washington Counties have developed new relationships with twenty-five chefs selling over \$390,000 at the end of July 2006 of locally grown products. The farmers have formed a for profit corporation called Farm to Chef, Inc. and are continuing the business.

Pride of NY Promotion

The AED program partnered with well-known local events to increase visibility and showcase the Pride of NY Program and area agricultural products. Our goal was to educate the consumer to recognize and associate the Pride of NY logo with high quality, locally produced products.

Displays and interactive booths were presented for agricultural education and promotion at the Sundae on the Farm, Saratoga and Washington County Fair, and Saratoga Harvest Luncheon.

Sundae on the Farm

The Smith Brothers Farm and Orchard Bakeshop in Charlton Saratoga County hosted the event with over 2,500 people attending. Sundae on the Farm was a perfect opportunity to connect local chefs and local products. A Pride of NY display was set up next to where 3 local chefs prepared a

recipe using local ingredients. Recipes were available and included the local farms supplying ingredients. By engaging the consumers with food demonstrations, chefs taught the value of buying products with the Pride of NY logo and the importance of agriculture.

Saratoga & Washington County Fairs

A display promoting the Pride of NY program helped consumers easily identify and connect the logo with local products. The display featured promotional items, samples of products with the logo and educational information including local farm guides farmers' market sites, etc.

Product from 11 farms was sampled or demonstrated 16 times total at both fairs.

At the Washington County fair,

PSA's were announced daily about what was featured for sampling. The Holy Cow and Mr. Bully Show at the Ag Center each day also featured facts about the Pride of NY program in their show. The display in the building showcased a beautiful fresh cut Christmas tree from a Pride of NY member and free coffee to fair goers.

Saratoga Harvest Lunch

Over 100 people attended the luncheon which featured exclusively locally grown products from ten local farms and promoted good nutrition. The Pride of NY display was set up and information handed out. Featured speaker at the luncheon was Pride of NY Manager, Susan Santamarina.



Steidle Girls from Argyle enjoying Sheldon Farm's Famous Sweet Corn with Paula at the Washington County Fair
Photo by Annette Nielsen