



Cornell University Cooperative Extension of Rensselaer County Annual Report 2010

# *Helping* **Rensselaer** **County** *improve lives and communities*

Countywide resources tailored to local needs —  
CCE of Rensselaer County opens doors to Cornell,  
New York's Land Grant University



**Cornell University**  
Cooperative Extension  
Rensselaer County

## *One great idea...*

Next year is the One Hundredth Anniversary of Cooperative Extension in New York. Cooperative Extension in Rensselaer County is not quite so old: our "birthday" is April 17, 1917. On that date our Legislature passed a local resolution identifying that "Whereas, a crisis now exists in this county from the declaration of the fact that a state of war exists..." and "One of the gravest questions which may arise in the conduct of said war may well arise from the shortage in the natural food supply of this land as the same produced upon the farms thereof."

Our Legislators then and now recognize that Cooperative Extension exists to provide educators and facilities to teach "... the intelligent and efficient tilling of the soil and the economic distribution of the products thereof, so that the already high cost of living shall not be unduly increased..."

The United States has been at war with terrorism at home and abroad for many years of the past decade and we have seen many instances where the high cost of living has adversely affected our food supply. Cornell Cooperative Extension of Rensselaer County has helped our farmers with the knowledge and techniques necessary to continue to produce local food. We have provided our youth with the knowledge and abilities to cope and succeed in their life's goals and endeavors. We teach our residents the importance of local food purchases and how to safely and economically prepare those foods. We enable our staff and volunteers to help our fellow residents in their quest to improve their quality of life through master gardener programs, youth development, parenting education, lead safety, horticulture and agriculture.

Cornell University has identified Cooperative Extension as "one great idea" that continues to grow and develop into our second hundred years...Cornell Cooperative Extension of Rensselaer is proud to be part of that long reaching vision and great idea. It is the trust that our residents and volunteers place in us that enables that great idea to grow into the future. I look forward to continuing this great idea into 2011 with you.

*David Hawley*

Executive Director  
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Rensselaer County

Our troops make remarkable sacrifices every day to protect us from harm and ensure our freedom. Cornell Cooperative Extension of Rensselaer County thanks one of their own, Steve Wiley, who is currently serving in Balad, Iraq.



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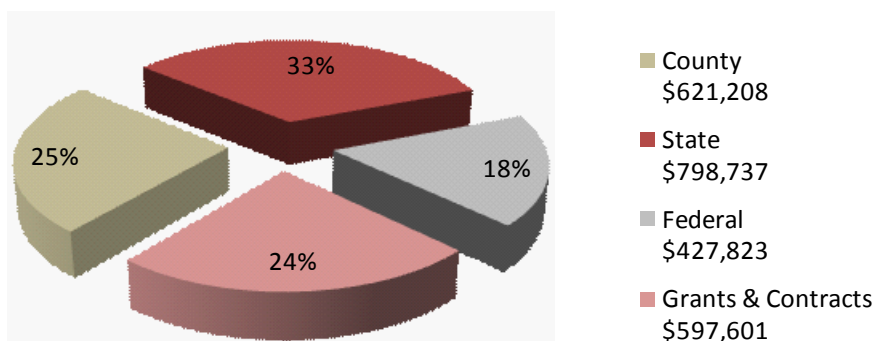
## *4-H Youth Development*

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Teen Representatives  
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Felisha Chandler, Nutrition Program Educator  
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Kandis Freer, 4H Program Administrator  
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Kirk Shoen, Ag Resource Educator  
Trevor Tripp, Dyken Pond/ 4H Educator  
Marcie Vohnoutka, Ag/Hort Administrative Assistant  
Bernadine Wiesen, Issue Leader 4H/FCS  
Stephen Wiley, Lead Program Educator  
Alex Wright, Ag Senior Resource Educator  
Ryan Yetto, Lead Program Educator

## **2010 Fiscal Support** **Total Revenue \$2,445,369.00**



## *Public Funding Partners*

County of Rensselaer - Honorable Martin T. Reid, County Legislature Chairman;  
Honorable Kathleen M. Jimino, County Executive

Cornell University - Dr. Helene Dillard, Director, Cornell University Cooperative Extension

National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) - Dr. Rajiv Shah,  
Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics, USDA

Farmers receive hands on training in crop scouting techniques for insects and diseases, as well as learning about crop growth and development during on-farm meetings where they also receive pesticide recertification credits.

Corn, soybean, and alfalfa fields are scouted on a bi-weekly basis and area farmers are updated with relevant information in a monthly or bi-weekly newsletter called "The Acre Maker", with a readership of around 200.

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Rensselaer County collaborates with professors at Cornell University to bring land grant research to local geographies regarding current topics affecting the farm industry. One such study is looking at reducing the need for starter N in certain situations, with Nitrogen being one of farmer's highest input costs in crop production.



Cornell Cooperative Extension also acts as a resource for new and developing agronomic concerns that farmers may otherwise be unaware of. For instance, we have a study being conducted on treatment timing and methods for gray leaf spot in corn, traps are set up for capture of western bean cutworm moths, and our agronomy senior resource educator is now a resident expert in identifying soybean rust which is a potentially devastating disease that is difficult to diagnose in its early stages.

The Young Farmer Program gives young people a chance to learn about current topics while networking with other young farmers. It provides significant information on the future of farming in the area, and gives CCE a chance to work with young farmers to build a good working relationship.

At the Schaghticoke Fair we are able to inform the public of our educational agriculture programs. The booth displays the faces and farms from the county. Activities like the tractor track engage youth so that parents are able to ask a variety of questions - both agricultural and non-agricultural.



The Dairy Farm Business Summary is a valuable tool that compares local farms with regional and statewide production. With the current agricultural economy, business and financial tracking are more important than ever. CCE of Rensselaer County links local farmers to Cornell's (DFBS) program to provide valuable information, to help them maintain income and equity with lower milk prices and higher costs.

Farms are using diversification to provide more income opportunities. Calls for information and assistance for alternative crops and livestock have increased. CCE is responding to the cultural and ethnic diversity in the area that is creating new markets and opportunities for small and diversified farms.



An energy-saving, run-off reducing “green roof,” consisting of an environmentally-friendly growing medium and drought tolerant plants, was installed at the Master Gardener Demonstration Garden. This is the only place in Rensselaer County residents can see this new technology in action.

Fifteen county residents received over 60 hours of training to become new Master Gardener volunteers, joining the 70 veteran Master Gardeners who contribute over 3,000 hours of service each year.

Through various programs and events, Master Gardeners funded more than \$5,000 worth of improvements to the Demonstration Garden, including a kiosk with signage and message board, and new fencing for the “Plant A Row For The Hungry” garden.

Thirty-six turfgrass managers, including golf course superintendents, lawn care professionals and estate managers, attended the two-day “Turfgrass 101” training and learned how to take care of turfgrass in an environmentally-responsible manner.

The Regional Horticulture Program trained 27 individuals in responsible pesticide use and safety, and enabled them to take the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Certified Pesticide Applicator exams, thereby allowing them to expand their businesses and their individual earning potential.

Readers of three local newspapers, with a combined circulation of over 20,000 copies, learn about new insect pest problems, local growing conditions and reliable plant varieties in Extension’s “Green Thoughts” column.

Over 1,000 Capital District gardeners and businesses receive ten issues of the “Root Concerns” email newsletter, spearheaded by Rensselaer County. Email newsletters are produced for little cost but provide a large impact with a targeted audience and provide an ideal method for distributing timely horticultural information.

647 residents learned about environmentally-sound gardening in Rensselaer County through just three programs – “Spring Garden Day,” “The Garden Tour,” and “The Gardening Through The Seasons” class series – sponsored by the Horticulture Program.

Master Gardeners designed, installed and now maintain a garden at The Community Hospice building in Rensselaer, adding an area of beauty and peace for all who use the facility.

The Diagnostic Lab examines hundreds of plant, soil and insect samples. Notable cases include diagnosing powdery mildew of hops, finding summer patch disease on golf course turfgrass, discovering tilehorned prionus beetles killing pines, and pinpointing the causes of decline for a commercial peony farm.

The Horticulture Program is helping landowners, homeowners, municipalities and others to cope with two new invasive insects – hemlock woolly adelgid, which was recently discovered in Troy, and emerald ash borer, coming to us from the west – which will devastate our trees in landscapes, cities, parks and natural areas in the years to come.



The Primary Lead Prevention Education Program of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Rensselaer County works in partnership with Rensselaer County Department of Health to assist in providing technical services to track, target and reduce childhood lead poisoning in Rensselaer County.

The Primary Lead Prevention Education program subcontracted with CCE Albany and was able to train 151 participants in Lead Safe Work Practices (LSWP) and 97 participants in Renovation, Repair, and Painting (RRP) Trainings, with a total of 248 participants trained.

CCE's Primary Lead Prevention Education Program completed 46 lead inspections and distributed 6,500 door hangers in its first year.

A radio spot promoting our Primary Lead Prevention Education program broadcasts on 19 radio stations, reaching 675,400 people; 516,100 of those people heard the radio spot seven times.

Our Eat Smart NY (ESNY) Nutrition Education Program and Expanded Food and Nutrition Program (EFNEP) provide nutrition classes to income eligible participants residing in Rensselaer County reaching approximately 421 adults and 500 youth.

The Family and Consumer Sciences Department provides cooking demonstrations during the Schaghticoke Fair. Twenty "Savor the Flavors of the Harvest" cooking demonstrations were presented to approximately 500 people. The fair recipes are available at [www.ccerensselaer.org](http://www.ccerensselaer.org)

Nutrition Program Educators (NPE) attend the Farmer's Markets throughout Rensselaer County to provide information and samples of a recipe using fresh produce. Approximately 500 people were reached. NPE's encourage participants to buy fresh, and support their local farmers.

Capital District Physicians Health Plan insurance and Rensselaer CCE team up to present informative, fun, hands-on nutrition workshops. Participants gain cooking skills and an abundance of easy, nutritious recipes are given. Workshops include "Power of a Colorful Plate," "Snack Attacks," and "Easy Winter Soups & Stews"

The registered dietitian works with the Office for the Aging to assist with home bound and congregate menu review, kitchen site evaluation, and counsels seniors with special nutrition needs; and also works with the Rensselaer County Health Department and Early Intervention to assist children with special health care needs and tackle childhood obesity.

The Family Living for Teens Program provides pre-parenting education to youth and families on a variety of topics including: basic parenting skills and support to parents and families whom are going through custody divorce or separation issues.





Healthy Lifestyles is a common thread woven through Rensselaer County 4-H programs, reaching youth in traditional clubs, special programs and 4-H Afterschool. Raising awareness of how personal habits affect physical and emotional health has taken center stage in all areas of 4-H, from the Teen Council planning of the Snack Bar menu, to ATV Safety, and more.

Rensselaer County 4-H is home to three county wide teen groups - Teen Ambassadors, Teen Council and Teen Exchange. These groups along with community club efforts provide project areas of leadership and community involvement that give youth the opportunity to effect change. Approximately 200 teens participate in some type of teen endeavor.



Career Exploration is a focus of award trips and many annual program offerings. 4-H not only “Connects Kids to Cornell,” but also connects kids to careers. Over 120 youth participate in programs that introduced career opportunities in the areas of Science, Engineering and Technology, including Agribusiness, Veterinary Science and Agricultural Mechanization.

The knowledge of where our food and fiber comes from is the basis of our Ag Awareness Program. Nearly 1600 school aged youth participated in one of our Ag Days, Ag Literacy or Container Garden Programs which provide youth with hands-on experiences linking the farm to their plate or hanger.

4-H’s National Goal is to have “One Million New Scientists, One Million New Ideas” by 2013. In the 2009-10 project year Rensselaer County youth participated in 6,292 projects based on Science, Engineering, and Technology and hopes to spark an early interest in these fields.

4-H Afterschool Programs take place during the hours referred to “as a time of risk or opportunity”. Rensselaer County currently offers programs that reach 570 youth who would not otherwise have these experiences. This allows them to feel a sense of belonging and gives them the opportunity to master a skill, develop independence, and experience generosity by responding to others needs.



*The mission of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Rensselaer County is to put experience and research knowledge to work through educational partnerships that improve residents' lives and communities.*



**Cornell University**  
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