

Legislative

A quarterly report for government officials & agencies; financial supporters; members of the Board of Directors & Program Committee



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Update

Summer 2008

ACHIEVEMENTS

A **Zone Tillage Twilight Meeting**, organized by our **Commercial Horticulture Program**, was hosted at Gill Farms on July 2 as part of the Summer Vegetable Twilight Series. The program included equipment demonstrations and sweet corn field comparisons of zone tillage to conventional tillage. Growers learned about the benefits to soil structure, plant health, affects on weed populations and savings in diesel and labor from fewer passes through the field using zone tillage as compared to conventional tillage. Zone tillage is a reduced tillage method that improves soil quality and is gaining prominence in the Northeast. Thirty commercial farmers were in attendance.

Four **Weatherization and Energy Savings Workshops** designed to help homeowners reduce energy bills were held in Kingston, Ellenville, Phoenicia and Port Ewen in the months of May and June by our Family and Consumer Science Department.

Fifteen **Master Gardener** volunteers from Ulster County came together on May 20 at the Town of Ulster Town Hall to plant a rain garden to manage the storm water runoff from the Town Hall building. The Master Gardener program was assisted by New Jersey's Rutgers Extension. Other rain gardens are planned for The Town of Saugerties Town Hall and the Rosendale Library in 2009. All locations will host storm water management training sessions.

The **10th Annual 4-H Golf Tournament** was held at Apple Greens in Clintondale on May 15. Ten teams competed for the Hudson Valley Harvest baskets. All proceeds went to the 4-H Youth and Volunteer fund.

Our **Hudson Valley Regional Fruit Program** hosted **Pest Management and Cropload Adjustment Meetings** in Ulster and Columbia Counties on May 20. Over one hundred growers learned how to adjust pest management and thinning strategies to the season's insect, disease, and weather conditions. Some Cornell faculty talks were video taped and placed on the Regional Fruit Program web site for growers to review or view for the first time.

Pasture Walk for Equine and Livestock Owners was held on June 2 at Loosetrife Farm in Kerhonkson. This was a program on soil fertility and weed identification. Participants learned the benefits of soil testing and nutrient management, how to take and submit soil samples from their fields and to identify and control common grasses, weeds and plants toxic to horses and livestock. This was an in-field, hands-on program that included demonstrations and discussions. Twenty three participants attended.

4-H Career Explorations: seven youth and two adults spent three days attending workshops in career track areas of: "Veterinary Science", "Natural Resources", "Digital Storytelling", "Self-Awareness and Leadership", "Birds, Arts, and Technology" and "University U" on the Cornell campus. In the evenings, youth enjoyed bowling, swimming, dancing, and meeting new friends from around the state. Everyone who attended had a great time and starting thinking about their careers!

Our **Family and Consumer Sciences Relatives As Parents Program (RAPP)** assisted four families in sending youth to camp this summer. We helped to pay for two families, and we referred and assisted with paperwork for two other families to attend camps with scholarships sponsored by other organizations.

IN PROGRESS

The **Master Gardener Program** is once again looking for gardeners to help feed people who are hungry in Ulster County by joining the **Plant A Row for the Hungry (PAR)** campaign. The Nutrition Program educators at Cornell Cooperative Extension will use and distribute the produce collected when they go out to teach their hands-on nutrition education programs that work with low-income families, children, and seniors residing in Ulster County. This program runs through October 2008.

Community and Commercial Horticulture, Ag Issues Educator is currently assisting ag landowners and municipalities in the application process for the New York State Ag & Markets Farmland Protection Grants program.

Family and Consumer Sciences are continuing to offer two of our financial education programs, **Saving Energy, Saving Dollars and Making Ends Meet** that are funded through the EmPower program. We also periodically offer Making Ends Meet, which is a seven session financial education program offered in collaboration with the **Nutrition Education Program**, targeted to families eligible for food stamps.

The **4-H Nutrition and Gardening Program Development Committee (NGPDC)** is off to a great start. Attendees included 4-H club leaders, school teachers, community leaders, and three youth. Emerging initiatives from the NGPDC include an Ulster County 4-H youth gardening website to connect and serve youth gardeners around the county, support for a new garden project at the George Washington Elementary School, and a Kingston-based teen leadership 4-H gardening club that would support school garden projects.

Efforts continue on the **NY Tall Spindle Training System Video Project**. The project, funded by the NY Farm Viability Institute, is being conducted in collaboration with Cornell researchers. The end result will be a CD distributed to apple growers throughout NY, video clips placed on the Cornell Fruit web page, and interpretive signs placed in existing cooperating grower demonstration plantings. Quarterly progress reports are submitted to Farm Viability Institute.

Welcome Laura Weyeneth, new Watershed Educator! **Esopus Creek Management Project** hired on Laura to help develop and deliver watershed education programs for the Ashokan Watershed.

The **Farm Labor Housing Grant** issued by New York State is proceeding as scheduled. Applications have been reviewed and the farms have been inspected by the FLH Committee. At this phase of the grant, final bids are being accepted from the mobile home sellers. The FLH Committee will then decide which contractor will provide the mobile homes for the farm workers. According to the grant schedule, the mobile homes should be installed by October 2008.

WHAT'S NEXT

The **Commercial Horticulture Program** will be hosting two Twilight Meetings as part of the **Summer Twilight Series** in August. A **Vegetable Pests** meeting at Tantillo Farms in the Town of Gardiner on Tuesday, August 5 and a **Commercial Christmas Tree Growers** meeting at Hurd's Farm in Modena on August 6.

More than 300 **Ulster County 4-H** youth members will gather together at the **Ulster County Fair** in New Paltz to participate in more than two thousand exhibits ranging from home economics, agriculture and horticulture to arts and crafts. The fair begins on Tuesday, July 29 and continues through Sunday, August 3.

The **Master Gardeners** will host **Tea in the Garden** on Saturday, August 23 at their award winning Xeriscape Garden at SUNY Ulster. The principles of drought resistant garden design and planting techniques will be discussed. Tea and a tour of Victoria's Gardens in High Falls immediately follows.

Preparations are underway with Cornell Horticulturist Steve Hoying to conduct a pre-meeting farm tour for international scientists attending the **9th International Symposium on Integrating Canopy, Rootstock and Environmental Physiology in Orchard Systems**. The meeting will be held in Geneva, New York from August 4 to August 8.

Esopus Creek Management Project will host a Stewardship Class: Mapping Invasive Plants on Saturday, July 26. Stream Steward Volunteers will learn to use a Global Positioning Unit to record and map locations of the invasive plant, Japanese Knotweed. Maps will be used to develop a plan for control of the invasive plants in tributaries of the Esopus Creek, where the invasive plants have taken hold only in a few locations.

Shandaken Day August 23. Cornell Cooperative Extension will have its stream demonstration model and other information at Shandaken Day at the proposed future site of the Catskill Interpretive Center.