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Cooperative Extension
ULSTER COUNTY

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ANNUAL COMMERCIAL FRUIT GROWERS SCHOOL HELPS AG GROW

With an agricultural heritage dating back to the earliest European settlers, the Hudson Valley has always considered farms and farming a dynamic part of a diverse regional economy. In fact, the country's first commercial apple orchard was established in Esopus in 1820. Although the local fruit industry faces increasing challenges from unstable commodity prices, overseas competition, and land pressure because of residential sprawl, it remains a force in the world fruit market. Cornell Cooperative Extension Hudson Valley Regional Fruit Program's annual Commercial Fruit Growers School and Trade Show, February 24th & 25th at the Holiday Inn, Kingston helps local growers remain competitive by providing them the latest production and marketing information. This year, the first day includes a session on changes in the ag district law that may affect growers; a presentation by JoyAnn Savino of Ulster County Mediation on resolving farm-neighbor conflicts; and a report by Tom DeChillo about **CleanSweep NY**, a DEC program allowing commercial growers to dispose of unwanted and outdated agricultural pesticides.

The second day's featured speaker is Nancy Foster, CEO & President of U.S. Apple; a national trade association representing all segments of the apple industry. Her presentation, *Future Challenges to the National Apple Industry & the Role of US Apple*, explores the current problems with agriculture labor laws and programs and proposed legislative reforms. NYSDEC pesticide re-certification credits will be available. Registration is \$25 per day (includes lunch). For more information about classes contact Mike Fargione, Commercial Fruit Extension Educator, at 845-691-7117 or go to www.cce.cornell.edu/hvfruit. To register, contact Barbara in Agriculture, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County at 845-340-3990.

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