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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

*(See image attached: L-R: Amy Pollard, Margaret DeWitt, Janet Dewitt, Ulster County Dairy Princess, Katherine DeWitt, Clifford Crouch and Roy Hochberg)*

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**Farm Tour Offers a Closer Look at Farming in 2009 and Beyond**

On Thursday September 24, 2009, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County organized a farm tour for government officials and economic development administrators. Among the participants were Senator Kirsten Gillibrand's regional representative, Amy Pollard, New York State Assembly member Clifford Crouch, Ulster County Legislator District 3, Roy Hochberg, Assistant Deputy to the Ulster County Executive, Susanne Holt, Deputy Director of Planning for Economic Development, March Gallagher and Senior Planner for Ulster County Planning, Virginia Craft.

The tour began with a visit to Gill Farms in Hurley and a look at a sweet corn packing facility staffed with 50+ employees that help grow and ship over a thousand acres of fresh market sweet corn. The next stop was Domino Farms in the Town of Rochester that produces up to 8,300 lbs of milk per day (that's about 940 gallons). The group then made its way across the road to Flying Change Horse Farm to hear from owner/trainer Diane Schoonmaker about her family's long history in farming the Rondout Valley and how she got into the horse business.

At the Hudson Valley research Lab in Highland, participants enjoyed lunch that featured all local farm products such as eggs, goat cheese, chicken, butternut squash, apples, and watermelon. Over Lunch, Dr. Dave Rosenberger, a fruit pathologist working out of the lab, gave a presentation about the research and extension activities through Cornell University and how it directly benefits ag producers. The afternoon focused on fruit production. There was a walk through a high density apple orchard that was being harvested at Crist Farms in Milton. The final stop of the tour was an apple packing facility at W.G. Minard and Sons in Clintondale where food safety issues were addressed.

Participants got an insider's view of commercial farming in action and heard first hand from the farmer about issues that impact and shape the future of the industry in Ulster County, Statewide and Nationally. The tour was coordinated by Extension Educators Teresa Rusinek, Mike Fargione and Audrey Reith.

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