

JANUARY 2024 AG REPORT

Cornell Cooperative Extension Sullivan County

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:

Farm Visits: 2 **Technical Assistance/Inquiries:** 85 **Soil Tests:** 1

Business and Marketing Plans, Sales Channels, Ag Districts, soil tests, field crops, poultry production, plant pests, disease, and ID, vegetable production, whole farm planning, farmers markets, CSA's, Farm to School, Funding sources, Mobile Markets, agricultural job posting, farm start up.

Catskills Kitchen: 4 renters using the commercial kitchen. Technical assistance was provided to 5 inquiries on licensing, permitting, testing, labeling, packaging and food business start up.

Horticulture: Technical Assistance was provided to 12 contacts on seed starting, composting and invasive species. Horticulture staff provided support to community gardens and will be teaching at public facilities such as community libraries.

PAST WORKSHOPS

Crop Planning Panel (1/30/24): Over 30 people attended this workshop to hear from Hidden Acre Farm, Bobolink Farm and Willow Wisp Organic Farm about how they manage their crop planning for their farm.

Funding Webinar Series (NRCS) (1/8/24): For the January webinar, the Natural Resources Conservation Services presented on the different funding opportunities they offer to over 25 people.

Invasive Species Webinar (1/10/24): Over 60 people registered for this webinar to learn about invasive species including Emerald Ash Borers, Spotted Lanternflies, Japanese Knotweed, and Water Chestnuts.



UPCOMING WORKSHOPS for February

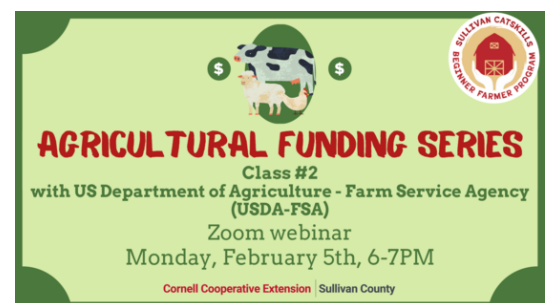
Funding Webinar Series (USDA FSA): 2/5/24 from 6 to 7pm A webinar on ag funding with the US Dept. of Agriculture - Farm Service Agency (USDA-FSA). Learn about the variety of funding opportunities out there for agricultural businesses.

Farmer Mixer at Upward Brewery: Thursday, February 8th from 5-7pm. Enjoy an evening with great conversation and community with folks from our farming community.

Garden Design Series: Feb 8th & 15th

Get ready to dig into our two-part series on garden design, and start taking notes for your own green oasis! Learn about: site assessment, elements of design, garden styles, plant selection.

Farm to School Farmer & School Food Service Director Meet Up: Monday 2/5/24. As part of our Farm to School program, we are hosting a Farm to School buyer/producer networking event to help connect farmers to schools in order to sell their products.



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AG & FOOD SYSTEMS PROJECTS

Beginner Farmer Program: CCE, through funding from the USDA, secured a 5 year grant to develop a Beginner Farmer program. As part of the program, we provide one on one technical assistance, connect farmers to professional business and marketing consultants, host farmer mixers, develop workshops and webinars and launch a Beginner Farmer Mentor Cohort. The Mentorship Cohort is a farmer-to-farmer mentorship, that focuses on individual learning opportunities through mentor-mentee interactions. The mentee's farm business goals are the foundation for the mentorship, and the mentee and mentor will work together to determine where the mentor's knowledge and skills will be most helpful for the mentee's learning process. Outside of the mentor-mentee interactions, mentees will be expected to participate in a certain number of workshops and farmer networking events. Mentees will work alongside other participants in the Mentorship Cohort and learn as a community with the other mentees. Mentees and mentors will be matched with the help of CCESC staff. We received 27 applications and accepted 10 mentees in the program, which is launching in February 2024.



Farm to School: CCE, Sullivan 180, Single Bite/Catskills Food Hub, local farms and school districts, are working to get more local farm products into school. This group meets on a monthly basis and works on training for farmers, producer/buyer networking events, training for food service directors, educational programming for students and technical support for cafeterias.

Research project & Regional Teams:

- **Cornell Livestock Program Work Team:** CCE Sullivan staff Michelle Proscia participates in this statewide team. The statewide team has developed a livestock resource website for NYS and works to offer programs regionally and through webinars based on timely topics.
- **Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Grant Project:** CCE Staff are part of a team conducting a research project on broiler poultry production and ways to make the process more efficient. The final research is being compiled. The next step is to develop trainings and publish the findings and recommendations.

Farm Food Safety: The farm food safety program provides technical assistance and training for vegetables farms to help them come into compliance with FSMA rules (Food Safety Modernization Act). Staff are working regionally to help farmer prepare for audits, develop farm food safety plans and provide hands on workshops and webinars in 2024.

Sullivan Fresh: The Sullivan Fresh program continues to operate in the winter months, providing food to 500 people on a weekly basis, purchasing from local farms. Staff are also in the process of preparing for the 2024 market season.

Invasive Species Outreach: CCE was just awarded a \$72,000 grant from NYS to develop an invasive species educational and outreach project. The project will also entail translating fact sheets and resources on invasive species into Spanish.

LAND ACCESS, AG ZONING, FARMLAND PRESERVATION PROJECTS

- **Land Access:** Staff are working to develop land access workshops for 2024. These workshops include a Realtor Workshops where they will receive CLE credits, a land leasing series for farmers and landowners and succession/estate planning workshops. CCE staff recently hired a new agriculture educator who is going to focus on these land access issues. She is also a designated Ag Navigator, which is an online platform that helps to connect farmers with farmland.
- **Municipal Training:** CCE, Planning and the County Ag Board are working to develop workshops on agriculture for municipal officials. Workshops will focus on conservation easements, agri-tourism and a farm tour for municipal officials.
- **SC Ag Board:** CCE provides staff support for the County Ag Board. They meet quarterly and are working on providing resources and training on the topics above.
- **Ag Zoning:** Staff provide technical assistance to municipalities on ag zoning and other land use topics.
- **Agricultural Districts:** Staff coordinate the Ag District program for Sullivan County. Landowners can apply to be included into an agricultural district every April. In addition to coordination of this review, staff provide technical assistance to both landowners and municipalities on how this program works.

