
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Steuben County



The 'Front Door' to Cornell University

Jason Jordan - The Provider Network

For more than 100 years, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Steuben County has assembled expertise for farmers in hopes that disseminating current research and best practices to the county level would help rural farms thrive.

On March 1, 1918, the first Steuben County agent set to work. The mission and services quickly grew from a focus on growing crops to encompass other areas of farm and rural life, from canning and food preparation to services for involving youth in agriculture and farm industry.

Services offered vary based on the needs of each of the 62 counties in New York State, all of which host Cornell Cooperative Extension satellite offices.

Of course, in rural Steuben County, a major focus remains on working directly with farmers to cultivate healthy foods and communities by offering four major areas of programming: Agriculture, Nutrition, Finance and maintaining 16 4-H chapters.

AREAS OF FOCUS:

Agriculture
Nutrition
Finance
Organizing 4-H chapters

A Breakdown of Program Priorities

Nutrition: Made up of the SNAP supportive programs and EFNEP nutrition education programs for low income families and children.

SNAP Highlights:

- o 13 staff members across six county region.
- o Fruit & Vegetable Prescription program – promotes fresh fruits and vegetables as means of preventing and treating chronic diseases,
- o Providing online and in-person workshops working with families to eat healthier.

EFNEP Highlights:

- o Working with families with young children to eat more fruits and vegetables and drink less sweetened beverages.

Agriculture: The CCE agriculture teams provide cutting edge research and education to Steuben County's 1,542 farms, operating on 397,157 acres with a total market value of \$738,265,000 (land, equipment, machinery) and generates annually over \$196 million/year for the local economy according to the USDA 2017 Ag Census.

In the Garden:

- o CCE Steuben trains amateur gardeners to serve as expert resources for others. This term, 35 people graduated from the Master Gardener course.
- o A grant has allowed CCE Steuben to provide free Container Gardening kits and instructions to members of the public in five counties.

On the Farm:

- o Agriculture roundtables are being set up to facilitate local sharing of knowledge among farmers for them to better access education and networking opportunities.
- o Unprecedented collaboration with three regional agriculture programs (Finger Lakes Grape Program, Cornell Vegetable Program and Southwest New York Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops teams) helps support Steuben County farmers.

FINANCE: Cornell Cooperative Extension programs help keep people out of a financial hardship before it becomes a crisis by providing access to education on topics like proper budgeting, financial and estate planning.

- o The organization has trained 23 Master Money Mentors who work with individuals who face hardship and are in need of budgeting counseling,

- o An annual Financial Conference just for Southern Tier area women draws up to 100 people each fall – scheduled for Oct. 23, 2021. The event is in its seventh year.
- o Courses are offered online and in-person on topics such as budgeting, addressing clutter, estate planning, saving energy, identity theft, and more.

4-H:

- o There are 16 local 4-H clubs and several independent members.
- o Chapters have created afterschool STEAM kits at a rate of 100 a month, or 600 in total for one local school district to facilitate advanced, in-demand areas of learning during COVID-19 restrictions.
- o 4-H members learn life skills such as sewing, public presentations, shooting sports, gardening, robotics and animal science
- o The 4-H's most publicly identifiable event is its annual Fair Preparation, when 4-H members showcase their projects in front of judges for ribbons and sell their animals in the 4-H/FFA Market Animal - A fundraiser that sustains the chapters for the next year. (this year's event is August 21).



Despite changing over time, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Steuben County's mission has always maintained touchstones to its original mandate - collecting and disseminating expertise to rural residents to improve the agriculture, health and to engage the communities it serves.

The four, sprawling program areas are administered by 15 staff who measure the organization's success through constant feedback and data collection. However, the most impactful measure they judge programs by is a very tangible, very human one ...

How many people are helped?

"We're trying to build strong communities that can sustain youth, managing their money, managing their foods and maintain their livelihoods"

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Steuben County prides itself on keeping a finger on the pulse of community needs to maintain mission focus and its 100 year track record speaks for itself, successfully keeping the front door to Cornell University open to all.

To learn more, visit their website
www.putknowledge to work.org