FY 2012 PROGRAM WORK TEAM ANNUAL REPORT

1. Full name of your Program Work Team (PWT):
Cornell's Small Farms Program Work Team

2. Please list names, affiliations and e-mail addresses of the PWT Co-Chairs: (With an asterisk [*], please indicate the co-chair responsible for finalizing this report.)

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3. Please identify your PWT's activities, accomplishments, and, most importantly, outcomes and impacts over the past year.

The mission of the Small Farms Program is to support and encourage the sustainability of healthy, thriving small farms that contribute to food security, healthy rural communities, and the environment, with detail at www.smallfarms.cornell.edu. To this end, we have fostered small farms focused research, extension programs, networking and collaboration across NYS. Below is a description of the activities of the PWT over the last year. Included are some outcomes from the Cornell Small Farm Program's small grants program (Smith Lever funded).

Hosted the 2012 NY Small Farms Summit:

On February 29th, 2012, the Cornell Small Farms Program, in collaboration with Cornell Cooperative Extension, hosted the 4th NY Small Farms Summit. The Summit was a statewide, interactive gathering in which participants evaluate emerging opportunities and prioritize investments to enhance the viability of small farms. Over 150 farmers, educators, policy makers and community members gathered at 5 Cooperative Extension Offices around New York to provide feedback on regional and statewide priorities. For the detailed report, survey summaries and videos visit http://smallfarms.cornell.edu/projects/summit/

The following is a summary of the top five statewide priorities for investments to enhance the viability of small farms in New York selected by an audience of over 500 survey respondents and an additional 150 farmers, agriculture service providers, policy makers and other small farm supporters present at the 2012 NY Small Farms Summit.

1. Develop FOOD DISTRIBUTION STRATEGIES (e.g. collaborative marketing, product pooling and trucking, food hubs) to expand small farm access to local and regional markets
Researchers, Extension and Economic developers need to identify bottlenecks in local and regional food purchasing and distribution, and create and evaluate strategies that increase farmer/distributor/customer connections. Extension needs to provide support and education for new distributor businesses and farmer networks to increase the likelihood of long-term success.

2. DOCUMENT ECONOMIC IMPACT OF SMALL FARMS on their communities to increase investment in and support of small farms Researchers, Farmers, and Extension need to collaborate with local communities in developing methodologies and measurements of small farm economic impact to inform future investment decisions at the county, regional and state levels.

3. Develop new and/or expand existing LIVESTOCK PROCESSING FACILITIES Technical schools, Colleges, and Extension need to offer a variety of educational programs on how to open and manage small-scale slaughter & processing facilities and how producers and processors can work more effectively together. Rules/regulations for small producersprocessors need to be clarified, streamlined, consistent and scaled appropriately to serve the growing local meat industry.

4. Identify ALTERNATIVE FINANCING STRATEGIES accessible to small farms Extension needs to collaborate with agricultural funders and banks to provide educational programs, materials and guidance to assist small farmers in navigating sources for traditional loans such as banks, FSA, USDA and non-traditional sources such as community investment funds (ie, slow food) and venture capitalists.

5. Advocate for GREATER INVESTMENT IN SMALL FARM SERVICES (i.e. research, extension and education) Researchers and Extension need to develop new techniques for more efficient small-scale production and marketing. Cornell should take a leading role in research and education on rebuilding the local food economy and economic issues that impact agriculture and distribution. Farmers are losing access to critical information because of defunding extension services. Increasing funding for Extension will bring back critical services and result in increased farmer viability.

A full report is now published at http://smallfarms.cornell.edu/projects/summit/ and has been shared through numerous communication channels. We have suggested to Summit participants to use this report in at least 5 ways:

1. Justify grant/funding proposals
2. Promote rural economic development and revitalization
3. Stimulate farmer discussion
4. Influence policy-makers
5. Target investment to support the viability of small farms
Cornell Small Farm Grants Program:

The Small Farms Program continued funding and facilitating statewide Small Farms mini grant projects. The projects are from focus areas identified at the 2010 NY Small Farms Summit: grassland management, livestock marketing, small dairy, local market access and growth, and renewable energy. Project teams consist of a cross section of the farm sector including farmers, agriculture educators and service providers, community development groups, agricultural non-profit organizations, and community members in New York State. Successful applicants received up to $5,000 via Smith Lever funds to implement and evaluate their project. Below is a summary of the funded activities.

Grasslands Management:
Chenango County CCE created a series of 12 videos focusing on grazing best practices. The video links can be found on YouTube. The partnership was between CCE Chenango, Chenango County Grazing Farmers, Conservation Grazing Lands Initiative Educator Karen Hoffman, NRCS Educators Robert Declue and Lauren Johnson, and many others developed 12 videos to highlight grazing best practices. The video series is targeted for livestock farmers and educators to improve understanding of grazing best management practices. Thus far there are over 500 site visits to the videos. Below are a listing of each video and the web link.

- **Electric Fence Charging System**
  - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KgSdAb5pc-I](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KgSdAb5pc-I)
  - This an informative video on essentials needed to correctly power an electric fence charging system.

- **Grazing Strategies during Drought Situations**
  - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a6YXhgYxIDQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a6YXhgYxIDQ)
  - Strategies presented in this video offer suggestions to farmers on how to contend with short grazing supplies. The information is applicable to all classes of livestock.

- **Highlights of raising a variety of poultry species in a pastured setting**
  - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ZujagKci0c](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ZujagKci0c)
  - Raising poultry is an excellent way to get into a Sustainable Agriculture enterprise, on either a full or part time basis. Raising and marketing a variety of birds such as laying hens, meat chickens, turkeys, and ducks and geese can be done without a large capital investment.

- **Weed management**
  - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=suzxT-ZtVul](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=suzxT-ZtVul)
  - This video provides information about strategies to manage weeds and to allow farmers to provide nutritious, cost efficient grazing for dairy cattle, beef cattle, sheep, and horses.

- **How to transition dairy cows from stored feeds onto grazing pastures in the spring**
  - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_G8h0pPrJaU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_G8h0pPrJaU)
This video is on how to transition dairy cows from stored feeds onto grazing pastures in the spring, and the same process in the fall when transitioning cows back onto stored feeds from pasture.

- **Pumped watering systems**
  - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sTrbjmmEjzw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sTrbjmmEjzw)
  - This is an informational film describing the basics of pumped watering systems for use in grazing systems.

- **Correct ways to set and pound fence posts used in high tensile electric fencing systems**
  - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TiQOsXvi1OY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TiQOsXvi1OY)
  - The building of fence braces and corners is also shown in detail. They are one of the key components of a successful grazing system for any class of livestock.

- **Establishing and maintaining pastures for grazing**
  - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FqrMhYnLK18](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FqrMhYnLK18)
  - Facts about seeding mixes, soil fertility, and equipment needed, and soil pH is discussed.

- **Of gravity based watering systems**
  - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nqtgotnCK-Y](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nqtgotnCK-Y)
  - This information is for all people considering a gravity based watering system for all classes of grazing livestock, including dairy cattle, beef cattle, sheep, and horses.

- **Planning for grazing systems**
  - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=etr5dvi0g2c](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=etr5dvi0g2c)
  - The video will present some of the many things which a farmer or grazier must consider when he or she decides to implement a grazing system for all classes of livestock.

- **Laneways for grazing systems**
  - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-4POu-pA9_A](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-4POu-pA9_A)
  - The video explains the basics of laying out a grazing laneway system so that animals can efficiently and safely get to pastures and return.

- **Feeding grain to grazed dairy cattle**
  - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZgXcAyoZ900](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZgXcAyoZ900)
  - This video will provide information on factors to consider when feeding grain to dairy cows in grazing systems, while making as much use of pasture resources as possible.

**Livestock Marketing**
A team led by Tatiana Stanton, Cornell Small Ruminant Extension Specialist, developed an improved website for sheep and goat marketing [www.sheepgoatmarketing.info](http://www.sheepgoatmarketing.info)
The site includes a *Marketing Directory* to assist farmers to network with sheep and goat buyers, processors, auction barns, and livestock haulers in the Northeast US. It also includes a *Producer Directory* where sheep and goat farmers can promote their products (dairy, fiber, and meat) and animals (breeding stock and market animals). The * Classified Ad* section is currently limited to advertising market animals for sale or market orders that buyers need to fill. We hope to expand it in the future. The *Calendar* section provides dates and marketing information for holidays when lamb and/or goat is traditionally consumed.

The *Education section* has a wide range of articles to help farmers to evaluate their animals and educate themselves more about marketing and processing. It also includes information on livestock management and processing requirements for Halal and Kosher marketing and information about previous marketing projects.

**Local Markets, CSA**
Laura McDermott, CCE CDVSFP Regional Agriculture Educator, Teresa Whalen, Adirondack Harvest Southern Chapter Coordinator who led a team in developing and delivering a series of events and activities to explore institutional CSA purchasing in the Adirondack region. They conducted trainings for those interested businesses and farmers in the southern Adirondack region (Warren, Washington and Saratoga counties). All materials including the PowerPoint training session can be found on our website at [http://smallfarms.cornell.edu/projects/grants/](http://smallfarms.cornell.edu/projects/grants/).

As a result of their activities, 21 prospective workplaces attended trainings, 38 potential farms attended trainings, 3 worksites hosted Worksite CSA’s. Because of the success of this project CCE Clinton County educator and executive director, Amy Ivy, is applying for a NESARE Community Development grant to further explore, educate and foster Worksite CSA’s in the northeastern corridor of NYS.

**Local Markets, Distribution:** Assessing Local Foods Distribution Systems: Farmer Experiences and Models for Building Successful Farmer-Distributor Relationships

Led by Monica Roth of CCE Tompkins County and Becca Jablonski a PhD. Candidate in City & Regional Planning they completed the second phase of study in assessing local food distribution systems. The report details “farmer experiences and models for building successful farmer-distributor relationships.” Their finding report that small and medium sized farmers are clearly vested in a variety of direct marketing channels. To learn more and read the full draft report go to: [http://smallfarms.cornell.edu/projects/grants/](http://smallfarms.cornell.edu/projects/grants/)

**Renewable Energy**
2012 Field Day Series offered “How-to” information on incorporating solar panels, wind turbines, radiant heat, passive solar and ecological stewardship practices into your farm or homestead. We hosted 3 on-farm renewable energy workshops with 98 participants attending. The farms in our 2012 series are producing a wide range of products spanning vegetables, poultry, milk, eggs, honey, garlic, koi fish, and even lemons and figs, using sustainable energy. Solar thermal, solar photovoltaic, wind turbines, radiant heat, and a variety of other ecological production techniques are empowering these farms to stabilize their energy bills into the future and conserve resources for the next generation. During these farmer-led, inspiring
tours, participants learned about how to decide what renewable energy source is right for them; grants and loans available for financing; installers that work with farmers; and other sustainable production techniques.

Region: Central NY, Schoharie County
Address: 116 Davis Rd. Summit, NY 12175.

Energy from the Sun! Summit Naturals Organic Farm. The farm produces 11 varieties of garlic in raised fields, eggs from heritage Dominique breed of chickens, and bottled honey, comb honey and beeswax candles from 12 bee colonies. Leo and his farm crew have spent the past several years raising approximately 450 pond bred Koi fish for retail sale. Their 60 X 21 foot high tunnel is double walled plastic and excess solar heat is circulated through 250 feet of corrugated pipe 2 feet underground. This active solar heating system allows Summit Naturals to grow greens throughout the winter. Their smaller glass greenhouse attached on the south side of the family home has 520 feet of corrugated pipe, 5 feet underground which runs through an insulated stone pit and radiates back up thru the concrete floor. Leo has been able to produce tropical fruits such as oranges, lemons, and figs in this greenhouse. The 9.4 KW grid tied PV electric system consists of two separate arrays: Each array has three pole mounts and its own inverter. Their roof mounted evacuated tube solar hot water system provides all of their hot water needs. The farm is considering an electric tractor purchase in 2013 to use the excess electricity they now produce and reduce diesel fuel needs.

Region: Fingerlakes, Tompkins County
Address: 266 Blackman Hill Rd., Brooktondale NY 14817.

One Earth Farm. Erika and Mauricio The farm provides vegetables, eggs, raw honey, turkeys, chickens and wool from a small flock of Finn sheep. A 3kW solar photovoltaic (1.5PV is currently installed) system powers the family and farm’s current electrical needs (including water pumping). Erica and Mauricio have a small CSA and offer workshops at the farm in sustainable living skills, renewable energy, and permaculture. They also run a Renewable Energy Business (One Earth Energy) which designs and installs solar PV and solar thermal systems with a specialty in off-grid/battery based systems.

Region: Central NY, Oneida County
Address: 7874 Water St. Oriskany Falls, New York 13425

Wind, Water & Pasture: Managing for Sustainability. Fuess Meadows Organic Dairy. Kevin and Christine Fuess use multiple energy and ecological conservation strategies on their 100 acre organic dairy. In early 2012, they worked with the company “Earth, Wind and Solar” to install a 10KW Bergey Wind Turbine. The Fuess's took advantage of grants and tax credits available to farmers and rural businesses so that the costs associated with the purchase and installation were affordable. Additionally, the Fuess's conserve water by using pre-cooled water to supply fresh drinking water to their pastures. Their herd of 40-50 milking cows are rotated though one acre sections of pasture.
Small Dairy Innovations
In an effort to bring visibility to the innovations of New York’s small dairy producers, the Cornell Small Farms Program teamed up with small dairy operators in 5 counties and local extension educators to presents a series of small dairy field days this spring and summer. Five field days in regions across the state on dairy farms milking from 35 to 75 head took place from May 9th thru July 11th. Each farm highlighted an innovative production or marketing strategy that represented new opportunities to enhance small dairy viability in NY. Over 200 participants attended the field days.

Steube County, Whitesville, NY: John & Tammy Stoltzfus of Be-A-Blessing Organic Dairy hosted “Barley Fodder Feeding for Organic Dairies: Sprouting small grains to increase benefits.” They shared their technique of sprouting small grains to not only increase their nutritional benefits but also to reduce the negative effects of feeding grains to ruminants. Scheduled Speakers were Jerry Brunnetti and Veterinarian Silvia Abel-Caines, DVM. Both are proponents of Small Grain Fodder Feeding.

Tompkins County, Brooktondale, NY: Arron and Calib Snow of Snofarm Dairy presented “Staying small through a century of dairy farming.” The farm has been in the Snow family for three generations. A year and a half ago Calvin (father) and Aaron (son) started producing cheese from a small percentage of milk to sell locally. Snofarm is milking 35 cows, primarily Holsteins, a few Dutch Belts and a few Brown Swiss. The afternoon consisted of field, barn, and cheese making facility tours and discussion.

Columbia County, Ancramdale: Lowell “Jim” Davenport of Tollgate Holsteins led a field day titled, “Achieving Low Somatic Cell Count on Small Herds.” The Davenports consistently produce high quality milk from their herd of 60 cows with average somatic cell count less than 100,000. Due to this low somatic cell count, Jim has been able to capitalize on working cooperatively with other dairy producers to process and market their milk under the Hudson Valley Fresh label. Their milk has gained a reputation of being high quality and marketing of the milk under this label continues to expand. Jim also is a firm believer in feeding a high forage diet to his herd and has developed a system to take advantage of the soil resources at the farm to consistently produce high quality forages.

Cortland County, Groton NY: Ed and Eileen Scheffler hosted “On Farm Energy Production (Oilseed Press/ Grass Pellet Demonstration).” Ed & Eileen Scheffler have purchased an Oilseed Press through an Organic Valley project. They demonstrated the oilseed press. The Schefflers talked about how their plans have evolved and what their goals are now for the oilseed press. John Stoker an organic dairy farmer from Cazenovia NY talked about his business pressing oilseeds for human consumption. Matt Dedrick, a crop Farmer from Lansing NY brought his homemade grass pellet maker for demonstration.
Delaware County, Bloomville, NY: Ernest and Barbara Hanselman owners/operators of DelRose Farm led a field day titled, “Adding Income Streams to a Small Dairy.” The Hanselmans’ milk 75 Registered Holsteins and Brown Swiss in the fertile valley of the Delaware River. They have been in the dairy business for over 30 years and have gradually added enterprises that diversify the farm into various income streams. They discussed making the best use of on-farm resources and trends to create a diversity of income streams that add to farm income and farm viability.

Northeast Beginning Farmer Project: This year we continued to refine and expand the Northeast Beginning Farmer Project website (http://nebeginningfarmers.org) based on user feedback, to make it a national leader in farm start-up information. The site's video gallery, capturing production and business wisdom from experienced farmers and their successful production techniques, gains about 10 YouTube subscribers/day, rapidly approaching 2,000. The website’s ‘New Farmer Hub’ is now more actively integrated into several of our online courses, and continues to use tutorials and interactive worksheets to help farmers draft a pre-business plan. Our Beginning Farmer Learning Network has grown to include over 115 new farmer service providers from around the Northeast. Over the summer we offered a series of four professional development webinars with a total of 140 participants from around the country. This included sessions on one-stop shopping models for beginning farmer support, creative land access and financing, and developing trainings and organizations that are inclusive of the full diversity of new farmers.

In the past year we again offered 10 online courses with an average of 25 participants per course to help beginning farmers continue their educational growth. Course topics range from very introductory material on getting started in farming to more advanced business planning, and several production courses cover soil health, and growing vegetables, berries, and poultry. Participants have reported a range of impacts resulting from these courses, including increased confidence in their plans, improved soil management practices, and increased revenue. Several have used business plans written during the course to secure loans for land or operating costs.

The Guide to Farming in NY continues to be one of our most popular resources, especially for those who don’t have easy access to the internet. This year we have developed a new Guide to Urban Farming in NY, which supplements fact sheets from the original guide to provide information on issues specific to farming in a city, like soil contamination, theft, materials sourcing, city codes, and more. This new Guide will be officially published and distributed in early 2013.

Outreach:

Our outreach includes coordinating the writing and editing of the Small Farm Quarterly as a special insert in Country Folks magazine. Over 27,000 households receive research-based and farmer-generated information via Small Farm Quarterly. With each issue, 14-18 CCE educators and Cornell researchers, 4-6 agency/NGO staff, and 3-4 farmer-authors are enabled to reach and serve this small farm audience. Over 5,000 subscribers to our monthly email Small Farms Update have access to announcements, news, events, funding opportunities and educational resources. Our extensive web site averages 3,200 hits per week. Our program efforts have
resulted in 88% of NY’s county CCE offices conducting educational programs specific to small farms. Our work teams have provided testimony, state-wide action plans and educational events on key issues affecting grasslands utilization, livestock processing, small farm energy, local markets, and beginning farmers. Since the Beginning Farmer website launched in 2011, we have had nearly 70,400 visitors, averaging 180 visits per day. Several hundred people have created accounts on the site, and about half of these have completed 3 or more new farmer planning worksheets. In 2012 we offered 10 online courses with an average of 30 participants per course - including 4 new topics - to help beginning farmers continue their educational growth. We do not offer any academic credit, but those who successfully complete a course will receive a certificate and are also eligible for Farm Service Agency (FSA) borrower training credit, which can improve eligibility to receive a low-interest FSA loan. We have distributed more than 6,000 hard copies of the Guide to Farming in NY, in addition to copies downloaded electronically, and have received very positive feedback from farmers.

Small Farm Quarterly: http://www.smallfarms.cornell.edu/pages/quarterly/
Small Farms Website: www.smallfarms.cornell.edu
Beginning Farmer Resource Center: http://nebeginningfarmers.org
Small Farms Youtube Channel: http://www.youtube.com/user/cornellsmallfarms

Publications:
Co-authored by: Lynn Bliven, CCE Allegany/Cattaraugus; tatian Stanton, Cornell Department of Animal Science; Erica Frenay, Cornell Small Farms Program New York State: On Farm Poultry Slaughter Guidelines: Food Safety and Best Management Practices for Farmers Processing less than 1000 birds/year
can be viewed at http://nebeginningfarmers.org/publications/on-farm-poultry-slaughter-guidelines/