



## Sullivan County Agriculture and Sustainability Policy Committee

April 16, 2015 AGENDA

2:00 PM

Committee Members:

Cindy Kurpil Gieger, Chair, Cora Edwards, Vice-Chair, Gene Benson, Alan Sorensen, Kitty Vetter

### Call to Order

### Attendance

Comments: Committee Chair

### Reports:

1. Agricultural Report- Melinda Meddaugh
2. Office of Sustainable Energy (OSE) Monthly Report- Carol Roig & Stephen Stuart

Presentation: None

### Discussion:

1. Agricultural Taskforce Efforts

Resolutions: None

### Public Comment

### Adjourn

**Farmland Protection Plan Update:** The Final report has been submitted to NYS Agriculture and Markets. We are currently awaiting final payment and approval. We are in the process of completing the plan outreach brochure. These will be distributed throughout the County and to municipalities. The Legislature formalized the Ag Task Force. The Task Force will meet the beginning of April and will start to prioritize implementing the plan strategies. A final Priority Implementation Document will be submitted to the Ag & Sustainability Committee at the May meeting.

**Dairy RBEG:** Staff are currently in the process of working with Catskill Mountain Dairies on the terms of the different lease agreements. Once signed, we can move forward with purchasing equipment. Staff also submitted the contract for Catskill Mountain Dairies for the CFA funding. We are just awaiting next steps.

**Agriculture Districts:** We currently have the Eight Year Review for Agriculture District #4 and the 30 Day Window of Inclusion for Agriculture District #1. Official notifications went out to 2100 landowners in Ag District #4 as part of the Eight Year Review. The municipalities were notified as well. Staff will be very busy the month of April answering questions and visiting properties. The Farmland Protection Board will meet in May to discuss recommendations. We anticipate having a public hearing in July, with a formal vote by the Legislature in August. We will need to send the final report to Ag & Markets by October. Planning staff worked with MIS to create new resource tabs on the County website relating to Ag Districts. To date, this has been very helpful with answering questions. Link: <http://www.co.sullivan.ny.us/Departments/DepartmentsNZ/PlanningandEnvironmentalManagement/AgriculturalDistricts/tabid/3867/Default.aspx>

**Educational Programming:** CCE is in the process of creating educational programs for the year. We are working with our regional CCE's to bring additional livestock education to our farmers. We are also developing a number of on-farm workshops, agri-business classes and beginner farmer classes (see attached flyer). The Beginner Farmer Classes are: Introduction to Farming, Introduction to Commercial Vegetable Farming, and Introduction to Poultry Farming. CCE has also launched a new website. The website contains helpful information related to Ag resources.

**Greenhouse/High Tunnel Project:** Staff and Sullivan Renaissance created an operational plan for the High Tunnel. CCE worked with BOCES to start seedlings. These plants will then be used for the High Tunnel for our educational programs and the Edible Garden. Sullivan Renaissance and staff are developing a pilot program to financially support commercial growers who want to incorporate High Tunnels into their farm operation. We anticipate releasing an RFP for the pilot project in June. For 2015, we are hosting the following Greenhouse/High Tunnel Classes: High Tunnel Management, Growing Winter Greens, Tomatoes and Cucumbers, and High Tunnel Pest Management.

**Sullivan Fresh Campaign:** A priority initiative in the FLPP, staff are in the process of writing the description of the campaign to present to the Ag Task Force. A main priority will be to find funding to implement the campaign. As part of the campaign, CCE is developing educational brochures focused around different production areas, such as the maple directory. Our next brochure will be SC Farmers' Markets and Farmstands/CSA's.

**Maple Campaign:** Staff worked to develop the Sullivan County Catskills Maple Directory. The Directories have been handed out throughout the County. We are in the process of working to develop additional directories (ie Farmers Markets, Farmstands, etc.)

**Agri-Business Revolving Loan Fund:** Staff are also in the process of developing outreach around the loan program in order to attract new applicants. We currently have a few potential applicants and are working on a brochure.

**In House Assistance:** Assistance included information on:

- Assistance with Livestock production and processing
- Loan and grant information, specifically info on the County Agri-Business Revolving Loan Fund

- Information on Agriculture Districts & Agriculture Assessments
- Assistance with Dairy Processing Requirements & equipment
- Assistance with general Beginner Farmer information
- Provided assistance with business planning information
- Animal Health
- Assistance with Maple Production
- Information on land use resources

**Upcoming Spring Classes:** See attached flyer



## Farm Food Safety Series

### 4/14 Expanding Your Market for Vegetable Farms: Intro to GAP & FSMA Training

Time: 5:30—8:00 pm

Cost: \$15 per person/ \$10 per CCESC enrollee\*

John-Erik Kocho-Schellenberg, GAPs Educator from CCE Orange will present an introductory class on what Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certifications and Farm Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) training is and how it applies to producers. Producers interested in education on farm produce safety, farm food safety plans, and third party verifications should attend. John Bruise of Gins-berg's Foods, a broadline foodservice distribution company and Hudson Valley Logistics & Distribution, LLC, operator for the pro-proposed food hub, and Dawn Boyes, Food Service Director for Sullivan BOCES, will be on hand to discuss the purchasing requirements and product demand.

### 4/30 - 5/1 GAP 2-Day Farm Food Safety Training

Times: 8:30 am—4:00 pm

Cost: \$50 per farm/ \$24 each additional attendee

Farmers who are interested in produce safety or who are being required by buyers to develop farm food safety plans and provide third party verification of their food safety practices are invited. Learn what is needed to have a USDA GAP/GHP audit, and about the two types (harmonized and basic). Begin writing a farm food safety plan that complies with a USDA GAP/GHP audit.

### 5/6 Conventional & Organic Pesticide Re-Certification

Time: 9:30 am—3:45 pm

Cost: \$35 per person/ \$30 per CCESC enrollee\* (lunch and credits included)

This full day workshop will offer pesticide re-certification credits in NY and PA. Partial funding provided by NYS Agriculture and Markets. Topics to be discussed are organic pesticide management practice, corn and small grain insect pests and diseases, and crop insurance and risk management.

## Beginning Farmer Series

### 4/23 Introduction to Farming

Time: 5:30—8:00 pm

Cost: \$15 per person/ \$10 per CCESC enrollee\*

This workshop will focus on the rules and regulations of farming. Topics to be discussed include how to get started such as zoning and lease options, business considerations like agricultural assessments and writing a business plan, and marketing considerations that include direct marketing rules and regulations.

### 5/21 Introduction to Commercial Vegetable Farming

Time: 5:30—8:00 pm

Cost: \$15 per person/ \$10 per CCESC enrollee\*

Do you want to start your own vegetable farm? Topics to be discussed include insect, disease, and weed management, soil fertility, and organic certification requirements.

### 6/25 Introduction to Poultry Farming

Time: 5:30—8:00 pm

Cost: \$15 per person/ \$10 per CCESC enrollee\*

Michelle Lipari, CCESC Agriculture & 4-H Community Educator, will present on various topics including breed selection, egg hatching, raising chicks and adult birds, feed and nutrition, equipment, healthcare, and the regulations for selling eggs and meat.

**Call 845-292-6180 or email [srb46@cornell.edu](mailto:srb46@cornell.edu)**

**All workshops to take place at the Gerald J. Skoda Extension Education Center**

**Space is limited. Paid pre-registration is required. No refunds.**

*\*Anyone can enroll in CCESC for an annual donation of \$25 per household.*

*Enrollees must identify membership status at time of payment to receive discount.*

## **OSE Activities Report for April 2015**

### **Reporting on March 2015 activities**

#### **I. ENERGY MANAGEMENT FOR SC FACILITIES**

**NYPA Potential for HVAC replacement at SC Government Center** – In progress. We have shared OSE's review of Pres Engineering's design proposal with DPW.

**Hybrid Vehicles for SC Fleet:** We have shared draft specifications for hybrid vehicle purchase with the DPW for their review.

**Solar PPA** – NYSERDA awarded Solar City \$900,000 in incentives to develop the 2MW solar array at the Liberty Health Complex. The project's engineering firm is proceeding with tree clearing at the site.

- We have shared information about the next round of NY Sun solar incentives with Heather Brown and will work with her to identify potential sites for a second large-scale array.

**Main Street Programs 2015** – with SCDPEM

- In collaboration with SC DPEM, we will give a presentation on April 13<sup>th</sup> to prospective participants in the Monticello Main Street initiative. Topics include most effective energy saving measures, potential cost savings, available resources and incentives and how business owners can apply.

#### **II. SC CLIMATE ACTION PLAN/CLIMATE SMART COMMUNITIES**

We are working with VHB Engineering to develop the first of two upcoming CSC roundtables. The first will be convened in May, and will address LED street lighting options. Street lighting retrofits encounter obstacles from utilities, and street lighting tends to be one of the highest electricity expenses for our towns.

#### **III. NY PRIZE**

NY Prize is a \$40 million competition for funding to design and build micro-grid projects in NYS. Micro-grids are community-scale energy systems that contribute to overall grid reliability and resiliency. The micro-grid can be islanded from the main grid in case of a power failure, providing continuity of service for critical community infrastructure such as municipal facilities, emergency responders, health care facilities, schools, law enforcement, etc. It can also foster the development of renewable energy assets within the load zone. The RFP for NY Prize was issued on February 11<sup>th</sup>. The Phase 1 award is \$100,000 for a feasibility study. The deadline is May 15<sup>th</sup>.

We have scheduled a meeting on April 14<sup>th</sup> for representatives of the key stakeholders in Monticello and Liberty to meet with representatives from Booz Allan Hamilton, a micro grid developer with extensive experience. We have met with Charlie Barbuti re participation of Town of Liberty; met with Monticello Village Manager Dave Sager and Trustee Jill Weyer on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, and reached out to the Village of Liberty.