

Attending: Three County Legislators who participated in the recently completed “Futures Task Force Report” (Harry Bronson, Doug Dobson, and Tony LaFountain); Judy Bender, Chairperson and Bill Wynne, Interim Executive Director of CCE-MC respectively. Legislator Carmen Gumina was unable to attend.

**Executive Overview**

- The “Futures Task Force Report” (FTFR) was completed in June and submitted to the County Supervisor and the County Legislature together with CCE-MC’s 2009 County Budget request.
- Judy Bender made a presentation regarding these submissions to the County Ways and Means Committee at their August Committee meeting.
- Bill Wynne was brought on as our new Interim Executive Director on 8/19.
- Bill developed specific action steps regarding each of the FTFR’s recommendations for Board review and discussion at the September Board Meeting.
- From over three dozen specific operational, program, governance, and financial recommendations, four priority areas were identified: Communications of the plan and the present situation of CCE-MC; 4-H programs; pursuit of more private funding alternatives; and all recommendations included in the FTFR with respect to our current Facility. There is more discussion below on each of these important areas.
- Bill was invited to speak at the recent Monroe County Farm Bureau (MCFB) Annual Meeting. As part of his remarks, he proposed the creation of a joint Monroe County Agriculture Advisory Committee including the MCFB, MCC’s Agriculture Institute, and CCE-MC. Worthy of note were the very positive statements made during the business part of the meeting regarding CCE’s Regional Agriculture Teams.
- Additionally, three very favorable resolutions regarding CCE-MC were made at this meeting, two of which were unanimously passed and one tabled for further discussion (Reference: letter to Maggie Brooks dated 9/30/08 from Judy Bender regarding this significant step towards improving this relationship with an important partner).
- Our 4-H program recently had several different displays and activities at Springdale Farm’s Harvest Festival.
- At the CCE-MC’s Foundation Board of Trustees September meeting last week, they unanimously approved a financial commitment for a revamped Annual Appeal to be launched during the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter, 2009. This will assist CCE-MC in countering the growing trend of decreasing public funding which looms even more critical in light of the current economic crisis.
- The quarterly CCE Agriculture Management Group meeting was hosted here at CCE-MC last Friday. This management team provides the leadership for the three regional Agriculture Teams providing support to the agriculture industry in Monroe County and other regional counties. The teams are the Lake Ontario Fruit Team, the Northwest NY Dairy, Livestock, and Field Crop team, and the Vegetable Program team. More on this later.
- Very positive internal audit of CCE-MC financials completed recently by Cornell indicating that CCE-MC is well managed and a good investment.

These are the highlights of the last 2-3 months and are expanded upon below as follows: Communications, Programs, Facilities, and Funding/Financial.

**Communications**

- Participation at October/November full Legislature and Committee Meetings as appropriate to provide updates of significant CCE-MC action steps
- Pending meeting with Kelly Reed, County Human Services Commissioner, to do the same and solicit input
- In October, we are planning on at least 2-3 Press Releases regarding the 4-H program; more on this later
- Also in October, we are planning to meet with members of the local press/media who have shown an interest in our situation over the past two years
- Our Annual Meeting will be held here on November 20<sup>th</sup> as you know based on the recent “save the date” e-mail. We will be focusing on the FTFR and associated action steps, and Les Malcovitch, the consultant who participated on the Task Force, will be the keynote. The Task force will be officially recognized for their work at that time. We are also planning on having a Press Conference and will be inviting the media to attend the meeting.
- Bill Wynne has been conducting a series of 1:1 meetings with individual Task Force members and other key friends of CCE-MC to bring them up to date on current events, solicit input, and encourage their support in getting the “good news” of Extension out there in whatever way they can.
- Ongoing dialogue with the Monroe County Farm Bureau and the MCC AG Institute has been fostered and encouraged at all CCE-MC levels. To date this has not been reciprocated by either of these two organizations.
- Pending: meeting(s) with State Legislators
- Bill Wynne has begun conversations with a local database marketing organization regarding our upcoming Annual appeal that will be completely revamped and underwritten by our Foundation. We will also be discussing some other PR/Marketing requirements as well during the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter.
- County Legislators were invited to a local farm this summer being visited by a group of world-class scientists from Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Chile and European countries. Frank and Hale Burch Farms, Inc. in Hilton, New York was showcasing world-class Cornell research being managed by researchers from CCE and Cornell University. This was publicized in R-News and one of the owners of the farm is also a current Board Member of CCE of Monroe County.
- Another longer-term initiative we will be promoting and including in our next Strategic Plan will be the celebration of our 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2013.
- We are also interested in the suggestions of the four Legislators who participated in the Task Force including meeting with Wayne Zyra, Dan Quatro, and perhaps other Legislators.

**Agriculture Programs (see other reference materials)**

- **Fruit Team:** representative of this team’s many other activities, their annual summer fruit tour was held in July with 200 attendees. There were six stops in western Monroe and Orleans Counties. Growers learned about new horticulture and pest management technology to produce high quality fruit including:
  - New disease resistant rootstocks for fresh and processing apple production that bring fruit trees into bearing early
  - All aspects of control of pests
  - The full-range of care required for new plantings
  - Control of anthracnose in blueberries
  - Adjusting sprayers for optimum deposition and reduced drift
  - New weed control materials

Additionally, after several major hailstorms across the region this summer the Team also distributed education materials to help growers determine how to manage hail damaged crops.

- **Dairy, Livestock, & Field Crops Team:** Among this team’s other great work, a relatively new and growing program was presented at the Agriculture Management Group meeting last Friday: the Dairy Farm Business Summary and Analysis (DFBS). DFBS’ objective is to allow producers to analyze their production and financial performance, set future goals, and to then make sound financial decisions. The DFBS also allows producers to compare their business performance to that of other dairy producers. There are many advantages to participating including:
  - Business education and the ability to set goals for the future
  - Benchmarking against other dairy operations to prioritize areas for improvement

The department of Applied Economics and Management at Cornell University, the NY Farm Viability Institute, Inc., and County Extensions cooperate in sponsoring the DFBS.

- **Vegetable Team:** again at last week’s Management meeting, another tremendous aspect of CCE’s work in the field became was demonstrated. Through a recent challenge grant, one of the team members conducted a field test focusing on how best to control leaf diseases in onions with so many fungicides to choose from. Through very tedious and labor-intensive analysis, it was proven conclusively that there is an opportunity to save money by delaying the start of a fungicide spray program. This test resulted in a real savings of almost \$3000 on just this one 30 acre field. Extrapolated beyond that has significant cost saving implications for Monroe County farmers.

Bottomline: as referenced in the Executive Overview regarding the MCFB’s recent Annual Meeting, local farmers and growers have typically nothing but great things to say about each of these Regional CCE Agriculture teams. As a MCFB officer told me recently, “I like to think of MCC’s AG & Life Science Institute as the ‘table top’ support of agriculture in Monroe County, and CCE as the ‘in the trenches’ support. There is room for both, but we have to AGREE (her emphasis) to work together and then figure out HOW (her emphasis) to actually do it.” There might be some debate on some of the terminology, but the intent of working together in a cooperative way is quite clear in this quote.

Also, the day-to day contact and information sharing provided by these CCE teams is virtually irreplaceable based on not only their expertise, but also the resources of Cornell University by nature of their “cooperatively extending” their knowledge to the field teams through the years and generations.

**4-H Program**

- 4-H re-enrollment for 2009 is in full swing
- Local 4-H youth will be competing in National poultry and horse contests in Kentucky this Fall.
- Rochester hosts the New York State Association of Cornell Cooperative Extension 4-H Educators in October from 10/15-17. We are inviting local Legislators to attend this event. It highlights our City and Monroe County and brings 120 visitors for 3 days to our County. Monroe County will also be next year's site for the annual National 4-H Conference welcoming 1200 people for a week-long conference October 25-29, 2009. We will continue looking for opportunities to fulfill our educational mission while increasing economic impact in Monroe County.
- CCE-MC has plans to sponsor and coordinate a Pumpkin and Sunflower Contest next year for growing varieties of each plant. One of the goals of this contest would be to double the number of youth engaged in 4-H activities and to increase the number of 4-H clubs. This will also be used as an opportunity to promote the recently announced "Grow Monroe" program and to further encourage gardening and community gardening projects throughout the County.
- We have been in contact with the Monroe County Farm Bureau to follow-up with them on their recently passed resolution to collaborate with CCE-MC regarding 4-H programs. Specifically, we welcome their support in encouraging agricultural "experts" to teach or lead activities, or to become Project Leaders for agricultural related events and activities. The Farm Bureau agrees with CCE-MC that 4-H is very important for the future of the agriculture industry in Monroe County. Therefore, since CCE is the only organization that can administer 4-H programs, a vital CCE-MC is essential.
- We also have been in contact with Springdale Farm to potentially expand our programming at their location. Space has been offered for 4-H youth to garden and 4-H is welcome to use Springdale's facilities for club meetings and field trips. Additionally, there has been interest expressed in having leader training at Springdale and a leader training session has been scheduled for 10/25.
- On October 22, there will be a special 4-H team leader meeting to generate even more ideas and plans for the future.
- An Agricultural Career Camp series began this year sponsored jointly by the Finger Lakes New Knowledge Fusion Project and Regional CCE 4-H Youth Development offices including CCE-MC. The series is meant for all area teens in grades 7-12 and runs from September 2008 – April 2009. Programs include Environment/Watershed, Viticulture Industry & Field Crop Farms, Dairy Industry, Agriculture Mechanics, Livestock, and Swine Industries, Horticulture/Greenhouse Industry (in Monroe County on 2/7/09), Fruit & Vegetable Industries, Food Industry and Interactive Forum about Consumer Choices. See the brochure regarding this exciting new program.
- We are also exploring college intern possibilities to assist in program development at a lower cost since presently there is only one staff resource for the 4-H program at CCE-MC.

**Horticulture Program**

- Regionalization of this program remains in the concept stage. The plan is to maximize and leverage the experience gained through our strong Regional Agriculture Teams to the best advantage for Monroe County businesses. Regionalization of the Horticulture program would provide additional expertise beyond that which is presently available for the Horticulture industry in Monroe County. Additionally our contract with the Regional Invasive Species program is another possible model for a full regional horticulture program.
- Annual objectives include:
  - Commercial and consumer clientele gain greater understanding of cultural and pest management issues becoming greater environmental stewards.
  - Commercial horticulturists embrace wise stewardship of production inputs, reducing costs.
  - Commercial horticulturists positioning their firms with improved business and marketing practices.
- Commercial Horticulture 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter highlights include:
  - Fifteen arborist/landscapers participated in the Arborist field day held at Sonnenberg Gardens. X-ray technology and tree interpretative software aiding in hazard tree assessment was featured in both a classroom and on a field walk. Ornamental pest management was also updated.
  - The diagnostic lab is on target to receive over 600 samples for the year (577 through the end of September). The majority of plant insect and disease problems examined were due to poor cultural practices and environmental stress (as opposed to weather related diseases.) Hemlock wooly adelgid was confirmed in Seneca Park Zoo. The invasive species European crane fly adults was also widely found in area home lawns. Major revisions were completed to The Certified Nursery Landscape Professionals State manual and submitted to the NYS Nursery/Landscape Association State certification committee.
- Consumer Horticulture:
  - Gathering of Gardeners Symposium had 134 participants hearing four lectures by regional/nationally know speakers on perennials and garden design. This event is operated/run/facilitated by volunteers bringing \$5,500 to the self-funded consumer horticulture program.
  - The Master gardener garage sale raised nearly \$1,300 in support of the self-funded consumer horticulture program.
- Major Activities/Events Planned for Next Quarter:
  - Horticulture Roundtable (December 2)
  - Composting field day (October 24)
  - Diagnostic lab reaches into Towns and communities with services through area library partnerships.
  - ‘What goes into a weed walk’ training sessions for public parks program managers, Master Gardeners, PRISM members and 4-H leaders
  - Protocol training for voucher collection of invasive species specimens.
  - Invasive species education for colleague field staff at Cornell.

**Nutrition Education Program**

- This program continues to be sustained through a couple of non-County, federal grants.
- Have begun discussions with the City about re-establishing nutrition education programs on a contract for service basis.
- CCE-MC could do much more for Monroe County citizens with Nutrition education as well as other programs such as energy conservation and management if we had additional funding. Consumer demand and need are there; our resources to accommodate additional programs are not.
- In that regard and in order to provide increased staff efficiencies, we recently went from a mixed part-time and full-time staffing arrangement to an all full-time team.

**Facilities**

- All tenant leases have either been updated or in progress with monthly rental increases instituted in some cases.
- We are currently updating the quotes for replacing the boilers and heat rezoning. There is grant money still available for this work through the NYS Dormitory Authority's Community Capital Assistance Program (CCAP).
- During the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, we will also be evaluating our ongoing operational space requirements and will be considering additional consolidation. As a result, more space might be available to lease.
- And lastly, it should be stated that we are open to explore other alternatives with the County regarding building utilization.

**Funding/Financial Highlights**

- Increasingly less reliance is being placed on public funding at all levels of government beginning two years ago with the County and with what appear to be accelerating trends. This is especially significant in light of the current economic crisis.
- However, CCE is a partnership among County, State, and Federal governments. County funding provides the base upon which State and Federal funding is leveraged. Without County funding, CCE-MC does not exist and a formal working research and outreach relationship with Cornell will be lost.
- Presently, CCE-MC is working with a deficit budget for 2008 and projected to be in the range of \$30-50k by year-end.
- Staff resources have been virtually cut in half over the past two years. All major local CCE programs have been impacted (i.e. Agriculture, Horticulture, 4-H, and Nutrition Education).
- Bill Wynne has begun conversations with the Council of Agency Executives regarding shared support services.
- We are planning on revamping our Annual Appeal during fourth quarter and launching the campaign during the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter. The goal is to significantly exceed past appeals in the range of 5-10x.