



NYS Legislative Commission on Rural Resources

SUMMER 2013 ISSUE

Taking Action: Budget Update from the Commission

In keeping with its 30-year tradition of presenting a bipartisan, cooperative approach to rural issues throughout New York State, the Rural Resources Commission convened its first meeting of the 2013 Legislative Session. At the meeting, Chair Senator Catharine Young and Co-Chair Assemblyman Dennis Gabryszak discussed top priorities of the Commission, as well as budget initiatives targeted to help rural communities throughout the State.

The Commission secured \$5 million in the 2013-2014 enacted budget for the state's 13 critical access hospitals—federally recognized health facilities that serve geographically-isolated communities. The funding is part of a long-term effort by the Commission, which has developed legislation targeted at ensuring that these rural providers can continue to deliver vital services to their communities, and that those communities can access quality healthcare.

The Commission also spearheaded significant initiatives regarding implementing telehealth utilization in rural counties, reducing Medicaid fraud, and establishing agricultural and economic development through the Cornell Cooperative Extension.

The Commission is working on proposals targeted at health, education, agricultural and economic development sectors. Broadband access, cellulosic ethanol—a promising alternative energy source—and virtual learning are priority areas.

Please visit the Commission's website at <http://www.nysenate.gov/committee/legislative-commission-rural-resources> to view the full video of the meeting.

Inside This Issue:

Taking Action: Budget Update from the Commission	1
What Does Cellulosic Ethanol Mean to New York State? An Interview with Dr. Larry Walker	2-4
The Great New York State County Fairs	5
Farming for the Next Generation: 21st Century Agriculture.....	6
Preparing the Next Generation	7
The Truth Behind the Bite	8
Bouncing Back: New York's Farming Continues to Grow	9
Spotlight on: FARMNET	10
How Libraries Are Keeping Up With Technology	11
Tick Watch 2013: More Ticks in More Places	11-12
We All Love New York!.....	13
New York Ups the Ante on Veggie Production	13
Dentists Across NY	14
USDA Rural Development	14
Some of New York's Niche Industries By The Numbers	15
Micosta Enterprises, Specialty Berry Innovator.....	15
SAVE THE DATES - COUNTY FAIRS 2013.....	16

SUMMER 2013 Rural Futures**NEWS OF INTEREST
ABOUT RURAL
NEW YORK STATE**

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Commission on Rural Resources

The NYS Legislative Commission on
Rural Resources is a joint bipartisan
office of the State Legislature.



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What Does Cellulosic Ethanol Mean to New York State?

An Interview with Dr. Larry Walker



Cellulosic ethanol provides opportunities for energy production through the conversion of plant-based materials, namely cellulose and hemicelluloses, through pretreatment, hydrolysis and fermentation.

Cellulosic ethanol, unlike its corn and sugar predecessors, has a variety of feedstocks that may be used for production, including corn stover, switchgrass, wood pellets, grass species and food byproducts. Coupled with lower greenhouse emissions - some studies put it at 85% over reformulated gasoline - and global drivers incentivizing production, cellulosic ethanol has become a buzzword in the energy community.

The emergence of this energy alternative, however, has not come without controversy. A recent court case by the gasoline industry questioned blending levels set by the federal government that, they argued, producers were not able to meet. Moreover, critics have felt that while the beginning studies have shown promise, the industry is in its infancy, and its success cannot be predicted at this date.

Despite these critiques, there have been continuing advancements in the promotion of cellulosic ethanol. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has offered to reconsider cellulosic blending requirements under the renewable fuels standard, and the federal government has continued research and development efforts, even concluding in a recent May 2013 study by the United States Department of Agriculture that a new strain of yeast could help cut costs of this biofuel production.

Because of New York's unique climate and agricultural characteristics, it has shown promising advancements in this field, resulting in nationally-recognized

(Continued on page 3)

initiatives by Cornell University, as well as private companies. While there is still work to be done to develop this fledgling industry, with biofuel estimated to produce approximately 80 percent of ethanol production by 2025, it is hardly a passing discussion.



One individual adding significant insight to this discussion is Dr. Larry Walker, professor in the Department of Biological and Environmental Engineering and Director of the Cornell University Biofuels Laboratory located in Ithaca, New York. The laboratory, built in 2008, has been equipped with incubators, fermentors and other machinery so staff and students can work to convert materials, such as switchgrass and other perennial grasses, into cellulosic ethanol. Their work is seen as vital to the development of cellulosic ethanol in the United States.

Rural Resources: How do we transition biofuels, namely cellulosic ethanol, from the laboratory to the commercial sector?

Dr. Larry Walker: First and foremost, we must understand that laboratory research out of a university can provide the necessary science, engineering fundamentals and a preliminary techno-economic assessment of how an innovation might play out in the commercial sector. However, we are not often equipped or staffed to address broader challenges such as the scale-up of an innovation to pilot or commercial scale, or have a good sense of economic and

market challenges associated with integrating the technology into a current or evolving commercial opportunity. Therefore, to assess the added-value that our technologies bring to the biofuels and bioproducts sector requires that we engage a spectrum of commercial and public stakeholder sectors about the needs to be met by our intellectual property and how to best deploy it.

Too often we find start-ups that have one very unique piece of intellectual property with specific physical, chemical or biological attributes, but there are no guarantees that these attributes will add value to the complete systems. Also, as an engineer, I like to have a broader inventory of processes to integrate in a biofuel or bioproducts production system – the bigger the technology portfolio the more I can innovate – in my quest to develop economical and sustainable biofuels and bioproducts industrial ecology. Thus, again, having a diverse set of Cornell players engaged in a thoughtful and directed dialogue with our agricultural and industrial stakeholders is essential for transitioning promising laboratory outcomes into the commercial sector.

RR: A lot of questions had been raised with traditional ethanol production regarding the feed v. fuel debate. Are those questions relevant to the cellulosic ethanol discussion?

LW: This debate over the food versus fuels has taken many twists and turns over the last 25 years. Today, it is much broader and more nuanced than corn-for-food versus corn-for-fuel issue. The current debate hinges on how agricultural policy influences global direct and indirect land use. Both direct and indirect land use are driven by a number of complex market, policy and technological factors.

Depending on key assumptions about these factors, one can obtain very different outcomes in how direct and indirect land use plays out locally, regionally and globally. To circumvent the possible negative impacts of indirect land use, many policy makers have argued that biofuel and bioproducts feedstocks should be produced only on marginal lands. However, this does not recognize shifting patterns in local and regional agricultural land use where the acres under production may have decreased for a number of factors. Also, if producing energy crops in New York makes business sense for New York farmers, there may be a mismatch between markets and policy. As always, the devil is in the details, as was the case with the earlier food versus fuel debate, and a systems approach is necessary to get a better handle on direct and indirect land patterns.

(Continued on page 4)



RR: What are your answers to critics who argue that the success of cellulosic ethanol cannot be predicted at this time?

LW: Predicting the future of a resource or a technology is always a daunting challenge because of a number of factors that can shift the innovation landscape. The technologies for producing biofuels from plant-based resources have been with us for over 100 years and they continue to improve in performance, efficiency and cost effectiveness. The challenge is to produce biofuels and bioproducts that are competitive in today's market.

For much of the last 20 years, we have been working on the assumption that petroleum supplies would tighten, causing fuel prices to escalate and making fuels from biomass competitive. However, cheap natural gas from hydraulic fracturing, oil from non-traditional sources such as shale and tars, and oil from deep-sea platforms have significantly altered the US energy landscape.

Now, there are predictions out from the United States Energy Information Administration and the International Energy Agency that the US will be energy self-sufficient by 2016. This is a very different energy future than we were predicting just five years ago when there was much talk about peak-oil.

Also, the escalation in the cost of corn, due to drought in the mid-western part of the country, and the push from livestock producing states for delay or elimination of the biofuels mandates in the Energy Independence and Security Act (EISA) of 2007, has also sent a chill through the bioenergy

and bioproducts industry. In addition, the recession of the last several years has had a chilling effect on investment in new biofuels and bioproducts ventures.

However, despite these supplies, and market and policy challenges, biofuels continue to be part of our USA domestic policy to diversify our energy future and to provide opportunities for rural economic development. It is also reassuring that several large companies have broken ground on cellulosic ethanol ventures and see cellulosic biofuels as an important business venture. The bottom line is fuels and products from biomass must compete on performance, price and sustainability against petroleum-based fuels and products. The goal that my Cornell colleagues and I have is to drive this competition through innovative research and development.

RR: In your opinion, what could the cellulosic ethanol industry mean to New York?

LW: Twelve years ago a group of 26 Cornell faculty members came together to examine how we might use the scientific, engineering and business talent here at Cornell to more broadly participate in the global bioeconomy through the development of sustainable, agriculturally-based bioindustries. Cellulosic ethanol was part of the vision, but not the sum total of the vision.

We believed that there were great opportunities to exploit the “many breakthroughs in molecular biology, genetics and engineering that open up a broad spectrum of opportunities and challenges for manipulating microbial and plant systems to produce novel organic compounds and catalysts, and to meet part of the US energy needs.” This vision and commitment to New York State drives much of research that is being done in the BRL and the dialogue and collaborations that we have with our New York State stakeholders.

We still believe that “a strong bio-industry sector in New York State would allow rural communities to become more economically diverse and profitable, add value to products and may help the return of abandoned farmland to commercial use again.” My vision continues to be one of New York State as a leader in developing sustainable, agricultural-based bioindustries. The challenge remains to make the vision real!

The Commission on Rural Resources continues to work on legislation pertaining to the development of cellulosic ethanol in New York State including legislation sponsored by Chair Senator Catharine Young that would provide tax credits to companies developing this product.

The Great New York State County Fairs

Summer means something different to everyone: outdoor enthusiasts hit the trails, sun worshipers bask in the vibrant sunshine that is the trademark of our lazy summer days and kids everywhere revel in the joy of freedom from homework and exams.

One local event, however, is guaranteed to bring out the crowds this year and every year: the county fair. For many, the county fair is a rite of passage and a tradition embraced by countless generations. Youngsters shriek with delight at the sight of cotton candy, live animal displays and carnival themed rides and games. Spectators indulge in fair favorites like fried dough from sun-soaked bleachers, while taking in horse shows and livestock competitions. Midway rides offer a dizzying array of lights, laughter and vertigo—a combination sure to help families create cherished memories.

Present-day county fairs offer an opportunity to showcase the best that localities have to offer, with informative displays for the past, present and future of farming, homemade goods and action-packed events like parades, tractor pulls, rodeos and musical performances. It is a chance for community members to come together for an inside look at what their local producers are up to throughout the year, and they encourage an interest in these industries in children of all ages.

This year, 45 county and five youth fairs will take place across New York State.

Now, a new report by the New York State Association of Agricultural Fairs (NYSAAF) shows that not only are county fairs a great pastime for their more than two million attendees, but they are a booming business for the communities that surround the fair locations.

According to the report, NYSAAF projects \$189 million in spending at county fairs by individuals from outside of the fair's host county. This influx of funds creates more than 3,900 jobs across the state. Tax revenue generated by spending at county fairs is estimated to be more than \$8 million.

“These numbers drive home the point that county fairs are economic engines for our local communities and counties in New York,” said Association President Steve Berninger. “Without an ongoing commitment to our mission to serve our counties by educating the public about agriculture through our fairs, local communities would suffer greatly.”

The study, performed by Camion Associates over two years, analyzed the fiscal impact of four NYS county fairs—Jefferson, Washington, Dutchess and Erie—and extrapolated the data to estimate the statewide fiscal impact of all county fairs. By measuring new spending for lodging, restaurants, transportation and retail or other goods and services, Camion Associates was able to determine how much sales, hotel and property tax revenue was generated at each event. By finding common trends, Camion Associates was able to apply those trends to all fairs across the state.



Erie County Fairgrounds

Jobs Supported in the County: 1,725
Approximate Earnings: \$52.6 million
County Tax Revenue: \$4.1 million
Direct and Indirect Impact to
Town Residents: \$259,000

Dutchess County Fairgrounds:

Jobs Supported in the County: 688
Approximate Earnings: \$17 million
County Tax Revenue: \$1.7 million
Direct and Indirect Impact to
Town Residents: \$23,000 annually

Washington County Fairgrounds:

Jobs Supported in the County: 181
Approximate Earnings: \$3.1 million
County Tax Revenue: \$422,000

Jefferson County Fairgrounds

Jobs Supported in the County: 29
Approximate Earnings: \$538,000
County Tax Revenue: \$39,000

For information about New York's
Agricultural fairs, go to www.nyfairs.org

For more information on the county fair studies, please
visit www.camionassociates.com/fairs.aspx

For a complete listing of county fair dates,
see page 16 or visit the Fairs and Events page at
www.agriculture.ny.gov

Farming for the Next Generation: 21st Century Agriculture

Many would argue that in order to combat the brain drain and keep our youngest and brightest in our communities, generating interest in local industry and agricultural practices early on is key. The 21st Century Agriculture program, a satellite program of the Franklin-Essex-Hamilton BOCES located at Salmon River Central School, aims to do just that.

Students in 21st Century Agriculture are given the opportunity to complete a comprehensive, two-year program and receive a CTE Certificate of Completion, and to experience individual agricultural disciplines. All classes combine preparation for continued college education as well as training for today's jobs.



A “learn-by-doing” approach provides students with a unique experience that merges the traditional classroom with outdoor laboratory and community activities. The over five-acre facility includes vegetable and flower gardens, an apple orchard, a vineyard and a pond. The program also recently moved into a new sugar shack and boasts a working greenhouse.

The diversity offered by the program keeps students actively engaged in a wide range of agricultural techniques, allowing them to explore and gain a deeper understanding of their interests.

So far this year, students have been busy planting more apple trees in the orchard. “We planted 30 trees with three different kinds of apples, (Empire, Honey Crisp and Jonafree) that we will use for cider and apple sales,” said David Russell, the program’s

teacher, who noted that the students are also experimenting with a row of Honeysweet Pears.

The program’s vineyard sits on an acre of land consisting of different grape varieties so the students can determine what type of grape is best suited for this area—an invaluable lesson in a state with a rapidly-expanding wine industry. Most of the grapes will be sold to a local vineyard.

In April, nearly 80 newly-hatched salmon were released as a part of Salmon in the Classroom Program, sponsored by Lake Champlain Trout Unlimited. The students have also been busy working in the greenhouse, getting the spring vegetables ready to plant. Items produced and marketed by students are eventually sold within the local community.

All students who participate in the 21st Century Agriculture program are required to complete an internship with local employers. Some students participate for up to six weeks and get to experience real-world, hands-on techniques used in the industry. “This year, I have a student, Thomas Hill, who is working in the SRMT Environmental division and has plans to attend a four-year program in environmental Science,” said Mr. Russell. “Josh Turner is doing a six-week internship at Ellis Automotive and is attending Ohio Diesel in the fall to continue his aspirations of being a diesel mechanic.”



Preparing the Next Generation



Bradley Fontaine Talks with Senator Young about the tractor he is working on at Pioneer Central School. The school has partnered with local businesses so the students can learn equipment repair. Also, several pieces of equipment had been donated to the school for use by students.

The Dream-It-Do-It campaign, which was started by the National Association of Manufacturers, currently is run by the Chautauqua County Chamber of Commerce and the Manufacturers Association of the Southern Tier. The program promotes manufacturing careers by linking businesses with local high school students. By opening potential career doors early in the process, the program gives students exposure to potential opportunities and can provide specialized training for these careers.

Pioneer Central School District has also provided new learning experiences for its students. The district, which includes parts of Allegany, Cattaraugus, Erie and Wyoming counties, has expanded its offerings past the traditional courses, adding programs that teach aquaculture, engine and tractor repair and introductions into specialized fields like the maple industry. The common and crucial thread is that all of these are fields that produce employment opportunities in the local areas.



Senator Young talks with technology students Jordan Schutte, Devin Williams and Jacob Logel about their projects.

**For more information visit their website at:
www.themanufacturinginstitute.org/Image/Dream-It-Do-It/Dream-It-Do-It.aspx**

The Truth Behind the Bite



In today's diet and nutrition-crazed society, media reports centering on healthy living are quick to cast suspicion on ever-evolving agricultural practices and farming techniques. While the goal of alerting consumers to potential dangers involving their food choices is a noble one, it is important to consider all sides of an issue before accepting many of these reports at face value.

A perfect example of this phenomenon was seen in news outlets just recently. Around March, you may have heard a claim made by Associate Professor of Animal Science at Cornell University, Michael Van Amburgh, that farmers are giving their cattle things like stale candy and junk cookies in place of expensive feed. That idea in particular was used to make the argument that even if you, as a consumer, are trying to eat healthfully, the animals you are consuming may not be.

While many sources who cited this idea followed up by stating, "the sweets don't alter the food's nutritional value (or even hurt the animals' health)," a detrimental seed had already been planted in the minds of health-conscious individuals across the country.

We caught up with Professor Van Amburgh to get the real story.

"Is it true?" The answer, according to Mr. Van Amburgh, is yes, it is in fact true, but not nearly to the degree with which it is implied. After taking the time to do our own research and to talk frankly with the professor, we learned that the sound bite being used was actually a singular lined pulled from a much larger study and, as such, had limited merit on its own.

Professor Van Amburgh explained that it is an accepted industry practice for cattle to consume byproducts of things that we produce, in addition to their standard feed. Consider, for example, almonds. The health conscious among us go crazy for the high protein, high fiber snack. However, the nut comes with a great deal of natural byproducts like the shell and the hull. Professor Van Amburgh pointed out that California alone produces nearly 4 billion pounds of highly-digestible almond hulls that would need to be burnt or sent to a landfill for disposal. Instead, the hulls are used as additional feed for the livestock, adding value to almond growers, saving money for dairy farmers and avoiding an environmental issue. Given last year's record drought coupled with the rising price of both soy and corn feed, the substitute is often necessary for many farmers to keep their herds nourished, as feed is often the costliest production expense for these farmers.

Granted, healthy, natural almonds sounds better than gummy bears, but Professor Van Amburgh went on to explain that as ruminants, cows, unlike other animals, are uniquely able to break both of these byproducts down into energy before it comes anywhere close to our dinner tables. Further, cows consume nearly 100-120 pounds of feed per day, and of that, maybe only one pound is made up of the candy. Therefore, the addition of these products to the feed has no negative effects on either the health of the cows or the nutritional value of the animal products we are consuming.



Bouncing Back: New York's Farming Continues to Grow

Increased initiatives to raise the production of milk along with ever-expanding food companies have helped incentivize growth in New York State's agriculture industry. This is largely due to the recent yogurt boom that has had a profound and positive economic impact on New York State by providing farms with a direct outlet for their milk. As highlighted by a recent article in the *Poughkeepsie Journal*, companies such as Chobani and Fage have set their sights on the state because they prefer the quality of the milk produced here.



The yogurt boom in New York State has been led largely by Chobani, the top-selling Greek yogurt producer in the country. The company started making yogurt at its plant in South Edmeston in 2007 and reached about \$1 billion in sales by 2012, while employing over 1,300 workers there. The New York plant is supplied by about 850 New York farms, and about 93% of its milk comes from farms in the state. "We move close to 10 percent of New York's milk into this plant, so the economic impact is large," said Halil Ulukaya, the Chobani Chief Operating Officer. "Our focus is bringing that quality milk in upstate New York and making high-quality yogurt, adding value to it. I'm sure the local farmers are happy coming to their backyard, instead of miles away and having to pay transportation costs."

Another company leading the way in yogurt production in New York is Fage, which opened a yogurt plant at the Johnstown Industrial Park in Fulton County in 2008. Fage announced in December a \$100 million expansion at the Johnstown site, which could be operational by the beginning of 2014. This expansion will double the plant's output and add an additional 150 jobs to the county.

This increase in demand has helped create an influx of farms in New York State. In 2008, there were 36,600 farms covering 7.1 million acres, which is 1,600 more farms than there were in 2006 before the yogurt boom. This has helped pave the way for New York State to become a leader in milk production. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the state's total milk production in 2010 reached 1.27 billion pounds, an increase of about 290 million from the previous year. New York State is also currently the fourth highest producer of milk in the country, behind only Idaho, Wisconsin, and California.

In addition to yogurt, New York State has also seen Crown Maple Syrup come on the market recently. This is an organic product that is produced on Madava Farms in Dover Plains. The syrup has only been out a year and a half, however the product is now sold in other states across the country, as well as internationally in places such as Germany and Lebanon.

New York's farming industry has also been aided by "Grown in New York." The plan aims to grow the state's agriculture industry and help New York's family farms prosper by reducing taxes on farmers and helping farmers expand their markets, boost productivity and increase their profitability.

Some specifics of the plan include:

- phase out the burdensome 18-a energy tax surcharge,
- a repeal of outdated regulations,
- expand farmers markets and food hubs to improve farmers' access to customers,
- put more New York grown products in schools and government facilities,
- encourage the growth of New York's maple and wine industries,
- put idled farmland back in production,
- improve farm safety

Recognizing the importance of farmers and the agricultural industry, the Legislature is working to remove onerous red tape in order to ensure that farming in its many forms remains a successful cornerstone of our state for generations to come. This is certainly an exciting time to be a farmer in New York State.

Spotlight on: FARMNET

In the mid-1980s, American farms were experiencing a crisis. The farm economy was suffering from reduced profitability and, as a result, farmers across the nation were lacking the ability to repay their loans. Riddled with debt, a desperate farmer in the Midwest tragically shot his loan officer. Within six weeks, a task force was assembled to prevent similar tragedies from occurring in New York and, from there, FarmNet was born.

Since its 1986 inception, FarmNet has embarked on a mission to provide farm families with a network of contacts and services to help them develop skills for dealing with life challenges and transitions. Funded primarily by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, FarmNet began as a 1-800 helpline and was utilized mostly by farmers who were already embroiled in crisis situations. It has since evolved from a helpline to an organization of 47 part-time consultants with backgrounds in finance and social work, poised and ready to assist farmers with both economic and personal issues. Now, instead of calling in the midst of a crisis, farmers utilize FarmNet as a proactive resource to take control of their futures and help adapt and advance their business plans to the ever-changing agricultural economy.



Take, for example, the stories of Chip and Peter Shafer, owners of Nanticoke Gardens in Endicott. The pair stumbled upon FarmNet while searching online for information regarding the purchasing of an existing retail nursery and bedding plant business. FarmNet worked with the Shafers from the start, bringing the various pieces of their business plan together, assisting with securing financing and eventually acquiring the business. According to Peter Shafer, "FarmNet helped us bridge the gap," between wanting to acquire a business and making that goal a reality.

During their first year of operations, Nanticoke Gardens was running and profitable. That is, until Tropical Storms Lee and Hurricane Irene filled the business' greenhouses with almost eight feet of water. Having been such an asset during the planning process for the business, Chip and Peter called on FarmNet again in their time of crisis. Originally, the Shafers thought they would need to start from square-one, rewriting their entire business plan. However, after working with their consultants, the Shafers were shown how they would be able to continue operations under their original business plan and as a result, saw a second profitable year.

FarmNet works with approximately 2,000 farm family members across the State and also offers consulting to assist with personal matters that affect families in a completely confidential manner. Consultants understand that personal issues can arise between farm family members as a result of the taxing environment in which they work. FarmNet consultants are uniquely suited to assist with personal issues like stress and intergenerational conflict. As Ed Staehr, FarmNet's Director, noted, this is an important point given that there has been an increased interest in transferring farms generationally, and such transfers are vitally important to the continued success of our State's agricultural industry.

If you or someone you know is a member of a farm family that could benefit from the free services provided by FarmNet, please call their hotline at 1-800-547-FARM (3276).

For additional information regarding the work done by FarmNet or to access their list of resources, you can visit their website at www.nyfarmnet.org/.

How Libraries Are Keeping Up With Technology

In our technology-driven world, it is easy to see that more and more of us are making the move from paper to digital. In the interest of time and cost efficiency, people are trading in their books, newspapers and magazines for electronic subscriptions and handheld devices. While many of us will forever prefer the feel of a good book, it is sometimes hard to turn away from the convenience afforded by their electronic counterparts. Needless to say, this shift has given rise to a unique set of challenges for the places in our communities that count on our need to read—our libraries.

According to a 2012 Pew Research study, over half of the Americans surveyed had visited a library or a bookmobile in the past twelve months. While it is clear that Americans are still using their libraries, at the risk of falling behind the times, many have embraced the technology of a digital world by providing computer access to community members, free internet service and a collection of e-Books. Some have gone so far as to operate without a single book, offering instead a fully-digital experience like the one provided by the Digital Public Library of America—an on-line forum that seeks to bring together resources from libraries across the country in one centralized location.

In rural communities where in-home broadband is sometimes limited, a library's ability to adopt technology is even more important. For many, a library acts as an informational hub and resource for everything from personal internet surfing to job hunting. According to the American Library Association (ALA), 36% of those surveyed looked at or applied for jobs using technology provided by a library and 66% were able to do research for work or school.

Recognizing this trend, libraries have fought hard to stay ahead of the times in an ever-changing landscape and remain relevant and viable for the future. According to Citytowninfo.com, 62% of libraries report that they are the only place in their respective communities that offer free computer and internet access while 76% of the libraries surveyed provide community members with access to e-books—a service that only 31% of Americans are aware is even offered.

Given the demonstrated need for our local libraries, as the trend to digitalize continues, our libraries will also continue to evolve and adapt accordingly.



To experience the Digital Public Library of America, visit their site at <http://dp.la/>.

Tick Watch 2013: More Ticks in More Places



Following the trend of the last decade during which the tick population across the country has boomed, experts expect that we will be seeing even more ticks in more places again this year. With an increase in population comes an increase in risk for contracting tick-borne illnesses like Rocky Mountain spotted fever and Lyme disease.

A bacterial infection caused by the bite of an infected deer tick, Lyme disease is the most commonly-carried illness by ticks, with over 98,500 confirmed cases in the state since it first became reportable in 1986. Early treatment of the disease with antibiotics can bring about rapid and complete recovery. However, left untreated, the disease can result in severe health problems and affect both the heart and nervous system. People of all ages who spend time in grassy or wooded areas during the warmer months of the year are at risk for contracting Lyme, as well as other tick-borne illnesses.

As the weather warms up and we begin to spend more time outside, it becomes even more important to safeguard ourselves and our pets against these infectious carriers.

What to Look For:

Most tick bites are characterized by a rash resembling a bullseye and are accompanied by symptoms including chills and fever, headache, fatigue, stiff neck, muscle and/or joint pain, and swollen glands in the early stages.

Symptoms can occur between three and 30 days after a bite, so it is important to remain vigilant.

If Lyme disease goes untreated in the early stages, more acute symptoms may occur like severe fatigue, a stiff, aching neck, and tingling or numbness in the arms and legs, or facial paralysis.

Symptoms including severe headaches, painful arthritis, swelling of the joints, and heart and central nervous system problems can continue for weeks, months or years after the tick bite if they are not addressed.



Because ticks cannot fly or jump, they can only be transmitted by direct contact. It is especially important to remember that, even if you are not entering a high-risk area, ticks can be carried by family pets and visitors, and contact can still occur.

How to Prevent a Tick Bite:

- Wear light-colored clothing with a tight weave to spot ticks easily.
- Wear enclosed shoes, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt. Tuck pant legs into socks or boots and shirt into pants.
- Check clothes and any exposed skin frequently for ticks while outdoors and check again once indoors.
- Consider using insect repellent. Follow label directions.
- Stay on cleared, well-traveled trails. Avoid contacting vegetation.
- Avoid sitting directly on the ground or on stone walls.
- Keep long hair tied back, especially when gardening.

While not all ticks are infected with Lyme or other diseases, it is critical to remove them immediately if they are found attached.

How to Remove a Tick:

- Using tweezers, grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible.
- Gently pull the tick in a steady, upward motion.
- Wash the area with a disinfectant.

When trying to remove the tick:

- **DO NOT** touch the tick with your bare hands.
- **DO NOT** squeeze the body of the tick as this may increase your risk of infection.
- **DO NOT** put alcohol, nail polish remover or Vaseline on the tick.
- **DO NOT** put a hot match or cigarette on the tick in an effort to make it “back out.”
- **DO NOT** use your fingers to remove the tick.

Safe Guard Your Home Against Ticks

- Keep grass mowed.
- Remove leaf litter, brush and weeds at the edge of the lawn.
- Restrict the use of groundcover, such as pachysandra in areas frequented by family and roaming pets.
- Remove brush and leaves around stonewalls and wood piles.
- Discourage rodent activity. Clean up and seal stonewalls and small openings around the home.
- Move firewood piles and bird feeders away from the house.
- Manage pet activity; keep dogs and cats out of the woods to reduce ticks brought into the home.
- Use plantings that do not attract deer; contact your local Cooperative Extension or garden center for suggestions, or exclude deer through various types of fencing.
- Move children’s swing sets and sand boxes away from the woodland edge and place them on a wood chip or mulch type foundation.
- Trim tree branches and shrubs around the lawn edge to let in more sunlight.
- Adopt drier or less water-demanding landscaping techniques with gravel pathways and mulches. Create a 3-foot or wider wood chip, mulch, or gravel border between lawn and woods or stonewalls. Consider areas with decking, tile, gravel and border or container plantings in areas by the house or frequently traveled.
- Widen woodland trails.
- If you consider a pesticide application as a targeted treatment, do not use any pesticide near streams or any body of water, as it may kill aquatic life or pollute the water itself.

For more information about ticks and the diseases they may carry, please visit <http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/lyme/>.

Source: NYS Department of Health



WE ALL LOVE NEW YORK!

For those who live in New York State, it is easy to see why someone would want to visit. We have thriving metropolises, unsurpassed scenic views, delicious local food products and world class wine and craft beers.

Unsurprisingly, Governor Cuomo recently cited numbers showing that tourists from around the country agree.

According to the Governor, New York saw 202 million visitors last year, whose spending provided a boon of \$57 billion. This number is up from a Tourism Economics study of 2011 that showed \$53.89 billion in visitor spending.

The tourism industry continues to grow based on spending patterns for lodging, dining, transportation, recreation, shopping and fuel. According to Tourism Economics, overall spending has increased by 8.7% in 2010 and 8.1% in 2011. Further, tourism provides 714,000 direct, indirect or induced jobs, producing \$29 billion in income.

Citing tourism's significant economic impact and employment capacity, Governor Cuomo announced \$60 million in funding for tourism initiatives in the state. The proposal also includes a program aimed specifically at spurring tourism in upstate New York. As the summer months begin, the trend is expected to continue, so spread the word. There's a lot to love about New York!

New York Ups the Ante on Veggie Production

According to King Whetstone, director of USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service's New York Field Office, New York's vegetable production for 2012 totaled a remarkable \$450.3 million. This statistic shows just how important vegetable production has become to the state's economy, especially in our upstate areas.

Riding the strength of its total area harvested and the value of principal fresh market vegetables, New York is now ranked fifth in both categories.

Of the \$450.3 million, \$405 million came from the state's principal fresh market vegetables. The remaining amount derives from processing vegetables, whose total production was 144,000 tons.

Also of note, the farm gate value on cabbage exceeded \$100 million, making it the first single vegetable to pass that milestone.



Dentists Across NY



Untreated oral disease can lead to a number of health problems, some of them even life threatening. Despite this fact, there remains a severe shortage of dentists in underserved areas of New York, leaving many without access to adequate care.

According to the New York State Department of Health, about 24 counties, most of them rural, have only one dentist for every 3,000 people. Coupled with the aging population of available dentists in these areas and the decline in the number of practicing dentists, these statistics represent a troubling trend. In order to fill this gap and decrease the shortage, the Health Department estimates that the state needs an additional 371 dentists.

A bill (S. 2190) meant to alleviate the issue, sponsored by Senator Catharine Young, passed the Senate in May. The legislation expands the successful “Doctors Across New York” program to enable dentists to be recruited and receive incentives to work in communities where there are notable shortfalls.

For many, oral health is viewed as the first line of defense against some of the most severe medical conditions, including heart disease and diabetes. Oral health is particularly important for children who are especially affected by the sparseness of dentists. According to the Pew Foundation, dental care is the single greatest unmet need for health services among children.

The legislation, which has now been sent to the Assembly, assists dentists with loan repayments in exchange for committing to practice in underserved areas for five years. The investment will work to close the gap in access to oral care, while simultaneously saving taxpayer monies by decreasing medical costs for more serious related diseases caused by untreated dental issues.

USDA Rural Development

The Community Facilities Program provides loans and grants to assist in the development of essential community facilities in rural towns and villages up to 20,000 in population. USDA Rural Development is committed through its Community Facilities Program to ensuring that essential facilities - such as health care clinics, police and fire stations, schools, food pantries/community kitchens, schools/colleges, and libraries - are readily available to all rural Americans. Direct loans can be made to applicants who are unable to obtain commercial credit. Community Facilities Grants are authorized on a graduated scale. Grant funding limitations are based on population, income, economic feasibility and availability of funds.

Eligibility: Loans and grants are available to public entities such as municipalities, counties and special purpose districts, as well as non-profit corporations and tribal governments. Applicants must have the legal authority necessary for construction, operation and maintenance of the proposed facility. Funds may be used to construct, enlarge or improve public facilities; to purchase equipment; and to purchase fire/rescue/police vehicles.

Funding: \$25 million in available loans – no minimum or maximum amount; Grants can range from \$10,000 to \$30,000 depending on the total project cost. Interest rate is 3.5%; maximum term is 40 years.

Deadline: Applications will be accepted on a continuous basis.

Contact: Gail Giannotta, Community Facilities Specialist
gail.giannotta@ny.usda.gov

Website: www.rurdev.usda.gov/NYHome.html

Some of New York's Niche Industries By The Numbers

Plants & Flowers

- The value of New York floriculture production grew three percent in 2012.
- New York floriculture production ranked #8 in the nation in commercial sales, with the total surpassing \$171 million.
- In 2011, there were 615 growers, which does not include all retail operations.
- The total covered areas of floriculture crop production was 25.3 million square feet and the total open ground production space was 670 acres in 2011.
- The state's horticulture businesses spent \$93 million in wages in 2009.

Source: New York State Flower Industries, Inc.

Deer & Elk Farms

- 56% of the state's deer and elk farms have been created since 1998.
- Deer and elk farms average 282 acres in preserved open space per farm.
- There are deer or elk farms in 45 of the state's 62 counties.
- The industry invested \$167 million in new capital in rural communities over the last five years.
- The 200 farms in the state support over 700 jobs.
- It is one of the fastest-growing, non-traditional agriculture industries and has seen 17% growth per year over the last several years.



Source: New York Deer & Elk Farmers Association

Equine industry

- The economic impact for the industry is \$4.2 billion, and it supports 33,000 full-time equivalent jobs.
- 80 jobs are created for every 100 racehorses.
- Over 2,300 breeding, training and racing enterprises are located in New York.
- \$445 million in receipts are generated from equine operations.
- 3,700 private contractors are employed by equine operations.
- The industry accounts for 390,000 acres of fenced pasture.
- 14 colleges and universities in the state offer equine programs or classes.



Source: New York State Equine Industry Economic Impact Study

Micosta Enterprises, Specialty Berry Innovator

As New York seeks to support and expand its agricultural industries, and consumers seek to support locally-grown food and health initiatives, more and more unique products and techniques are popping up across the state. This year's Farm Bureau-sponsored event, Taste of New York, featured multiple companies and organizations who aim to meet those particular demands.

Micosta Enterprises is a young company out of Hudson, NY, that specializes in artisan processing of high anti-oxidant berries. With a focus on unique berries like aronia, elderberry, sea buckthorn and black currant, the company brings the public diverse, value-added products including beverages, chocolates, sorbetos, ice cream, yogurt, pies, dressings and raw seed bars. The focus is on low- to no-added sugar, low fat, high-fiber and high-nutrient content.

While Micosta has its own line of products, it aims to support its community by helping small, local producers elsewhere develop locally-based kitchens to do simple and healthy processing. For example, they have been developing a new economical pulping machine for small-scale producers that can separate seeds, leaves and stems from the fruit, leaving a pulp that can be used to make many retail products. Another process employed by Micosta infuses berries with fruit concentrates, which again yields primary processed products suitable for a variety of value-added products.

Further, compostable and recyclable packaging materials are employed as one of the company's green production practices, and they process buckets of pulp to be shelf-stable in order to avoid the use of energy in freezers.

Micosta represents a niche in the farming world that can serve as a model for other local producers looking to meet the demands of an expanding marketplace.



SAVE THE DATES - COUNTY FAIRS 2013



**Afton Fair
(Chenango County)**
July 11 - 14 • Afton
(607) 639-2682

Allegany County Fair
July 15 - 20 • Angelica
(585) 466-7670

**Altamont Fair
(Albany County)**
Aug 13 - 18 • Altamont
(518) 861-6671

**Boonville-Oneida
County Fair**
July 22 - 28 • Boonville
(315) 942-2251

**Broome
County Fair**
July 23 - 28 • Whitney Point
(607) 692-4149

Cattaraugus County Fair
July 29 - Aug 4 • Little Valley
(716) 938-9146

**Chautauqua
County Fair**
July 22 - 28 • Dunkirk
(716) 366-4752

**Chemung
County Fair**
July 30 - Aug 4
Horseheads
(607) 734-1217

**Clinton
County Fair**
July 16 - 21 • Morrisonville
(518) 561-7998

Essex County Fair
July 31 - Aug 4 • Westport
(518) 962-8650

**Genesee
County Fair**
July 16 - 20 • Batavia
(585) 344-2424

**Gouverneur
and St. Lawrence
County Fair**
July 30 - Aug 4
Gouverneur
(315) 287-3010

**Hemlock Fair
(Livingston County)**
July 16 - 20 • Hemlock
(585) 367-3370

Lewis County Fair
July 16 - 20
Lowville
(315) 376-8333

**Livingston County
Fair at Caledonia**
July 30 - Aug 3
Caledonia
(585) 538-2168

Ontario County Fair
July 23 - 27
Canandaigua
(585) 394-4987

Orange County Fair
July 12 - 28
Middletown
(845) 343-4826

Otsego County Fair
July 30 - Aug 4
Morris
(607) 263-5289

Saratoga County Fair
July 16 - 21
Ballston Spa
(518) 885-9701

**Schoharie County
Sunshine Fair**
July 27 - Aug 3
Cobleskill
(518) 234-2123

Seneca County Fair
July 15 - 20
Waterloo
(315) 539-9140

Ulster County Fair
July 30 - Aug 4
New Paltz
(845) 255-1380

FOR A COMPLETE
LISTING OF COUNTY
FAIR DATES, VISIT

WWW.AGRICULTURE.NY.GOV