

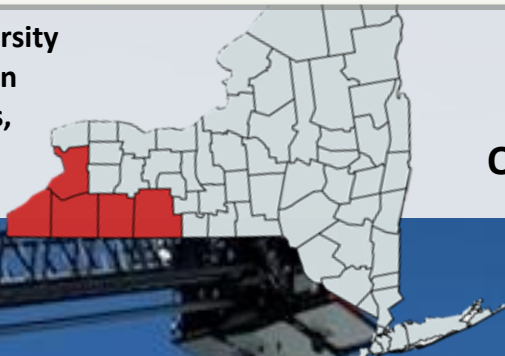
swnyteam@cornell.edu

# Cornell Cooperative Extension

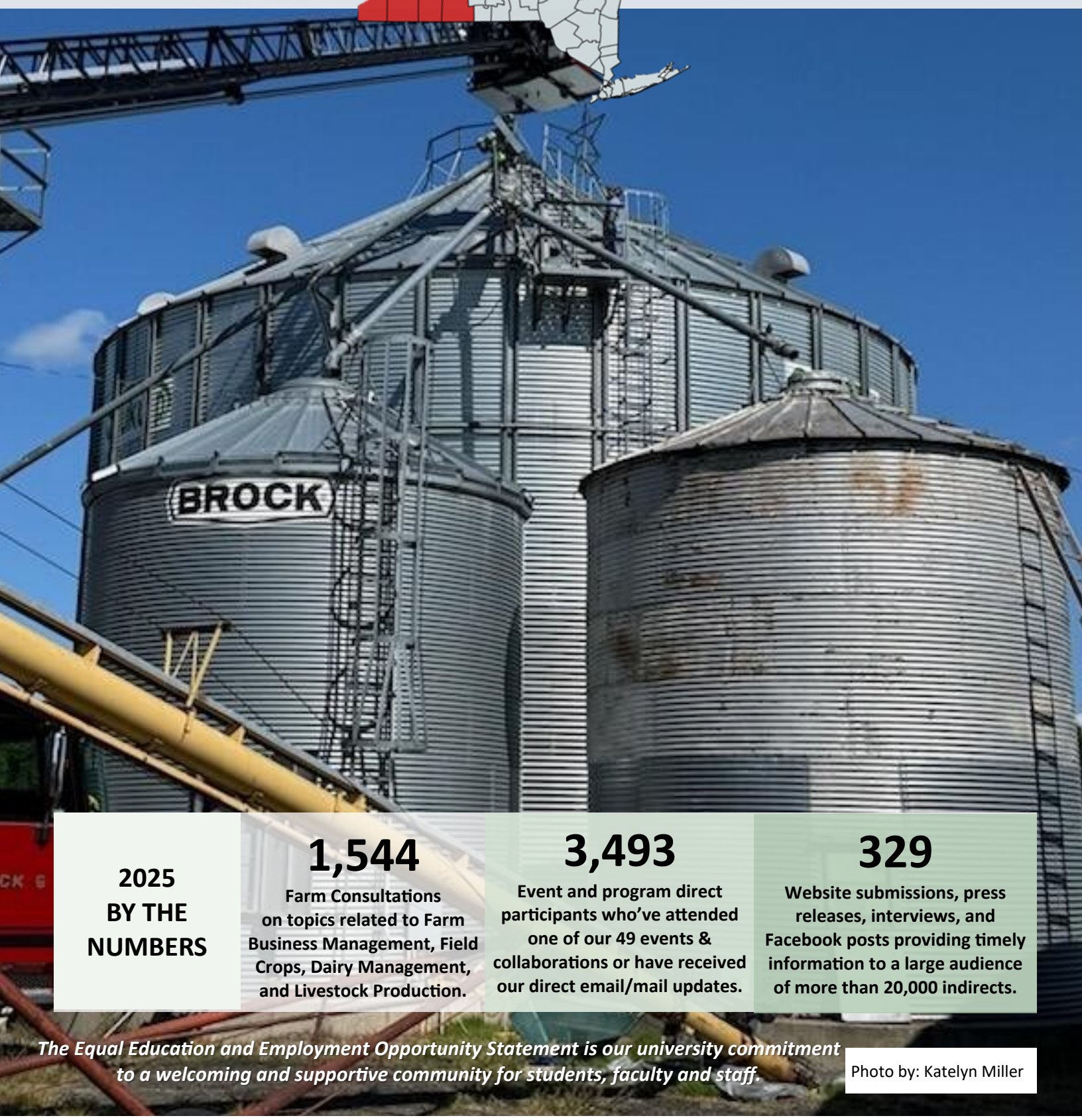
Southwest NY Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops Program

swnydlfc.cce.cornell.edu

A partnership between Cornell University and the Cornell Cooperative Extension Associations of Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, and Steuben counties.



## 2025 Annual Report October 2024 - September 2025



### 2025 BY THE NUMBERS

**1,544**

Farm Consultations on topics related to Farm Business Management, Field Crops, Dairy Management, and Livestock Production.

**3,493**

Event and program direct participants who've attended one of our 49 events & collaborations or have received our direct email/mail updates.

**329**

Website submissions, press releases, interviews, and Facebook posts providing timely information to a large audience of more than 20,000 indirects.

*The Equal Education and Employment Opportunity Statement is our university commitment to a welcoming and supportive community for students, faculty and staff.*

Photo by: Katelyn Miller



## Thank You Katelyn!



Our team has some bittersweet news to share. On March 24th, we said goodbye to the amazing Katelyn Walley-Stoll. Katelyn was the founding member of the SWNY Dairy, Livestock, and Field Crops Team, serving as both our Team Leader and Farm Business Management Specialist. Over the past five and a half years, her leadership and energy helped grow our team to five members who serve farms across our five-county region. Her passion, expertise, and enthusiasm will be truly missed.

We're thrilled for Katelyn as she steps into her new role as Agriculture Team Leader with CCE Chautauqua. While she's no longer on our team, we're excited she's staying within CCE and continuing to support agriculture in our region. Congratulations, Katelyn — we can't wait to see all the great things you'll accomplish!

## Welcome Kate!



Kate McDonald Polakiewicz has joined our team as Farm Business Management Specialist and will be offering programming in financial management, production economics, business planning, and market analysis.

Kate is a production and extension systems specialist with 15 years of experience working in federal government, private sector, academic, and international settings. She comes to CCE from the US Agency for International Development (USAID) where she managed the Farmer-to-Farmer program, a longstanding agricultural extension program that provided short-term technical assistance from US-based farmers to other farmer communities abroad. She also managed large-scale agricultural research awards in horticulture, agronomy, aquaculture, and in scaling new technologies for practical farm use. Before USAID, Kate worked on agriculture programs with farmers while living in Ghana, Ethiopia, and Uganda. Her work in research and extension also brought her to lead education on soil fertility and plant pathology in Honduras, Guatemala, and Mexico. Kate holds a master's degree from the University of California, Davis, and lives with her young family in Amherst, NY.

Kate is interested to apply her knowledge of agriculture to be of service to producers in Southwest New York production systems. She'll spend her first few months with CCE becoming familiar with local farm operations, meeting and learning from farmers, and building her network. Reach out to say hello at [kem348@cornell.edu](mailto:kem348@cornell.edu) or 716-640-0522.

## State-Wide Neonic Project

Five regional farms representing nine corn and soybean fields are participating in the largest on-farm research and demonstration project in Cornell Integrated Pest Management's history. There are 80 fields on the project state-wide. Over the next three years, our team will be implementing study plots and taking samples from these fields to help determine where and when there is a significant risk of seedcorn maggot pest damage, aid in the development of a seed pest risk assessment tool; and test and demonstrate IPM alternatives, including the viability of not using insecticide treatments. This work is a proactive step to support New York's growers as they prepare for the transition away from neonicotinoid seed treatments mandated by the Birds and Bees Protection Act, which will come into effect in 2029.

A field day, "IPM Strategies to Protect Corn and Soybeans in NYS", was hosted this past summer in the region as part of a state-wide series to present ongoing research focusing on neonicotinoid seed treatments of corn and soybeans. Corn and soybean fields in SWNY are part of a trial consisting of 80 fields statewide, making it the largest project ever conducted in Cornell IPM's history. Approximately 40 attendees, comprised of farmers and industry representatives, heard presentations about ongoing research and the impact of seed treatments on pollinators.





## Approval of the Trade: Butcher

Our team is excited to announce that after years of research and ideation, our recent work with Southern Tier West, the NYS Department of Labor, and our farmer and processor partners has resulted in the approval of the trade, “Butcher”, the fourth agricultural apprenticeship program in the history of the NYS DOL. We are excited about this for several reasons, including continuing the precedent for other agricultural sectors to develop their trades, bringing more awareness to this critical industry, and increasing our livestock processing capacity in SWNY and across the state.

Farmers have struggled with availability of getting meat animals in to be processed for decades. The pandemic years were especially brutal for both farmers, who had to wait up to two years for butcher slots, and the processors who were at capacity almost overnight and didn’t have the ability to increase throughput even with the unprecedented demand. While we are back to pre-pandemic wait-times for farmers to get their animals in, this can still be 6-12 months for relatively large numbers of animals or new clients. This shortfall has been identified repeatedly, and while there is funding available to increase structural, storage, and equipment capacity, there aren’t enough skilled butchers to fill the positions created or to continue keeping the current butcher positions filled. This workforce shortage has resulted in the closing of small local processing facilities, the pivoting of facilities to harvesting fewer animals, and the movement away from processing entirely. Stakeholders have been encouraged by the development of this new trade, and we’ve seen significant interest by both butcher shops and potential apprentices in participating in this new program.

A webinar recording of our October 2nd open forum to introduce the trade and process that butcher shops will need to undergo to take on apprentices is available upon request.



## “Growing Graziers” Grant

Katie received funding for a grant from the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NEDBIC) in collaboration with Wolfe’s Neck Center, PASA Sustainable Agriculture and the UVM Center for Sustainable Agriculture to facilitate the “Growing Graziers” program from the Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship. This program has been developed as a reimagining of the original Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship program, where apprentices are now brought together in more group-learning opportunities to take advantage of both one-on-one and peer-to-peer perspectives and experiences. Though workshops, discussion circles, and farm visits, the grant will help grow the grazing dairy workforce through this 9-month educational cohort program.



## Farm Financial Resolutions

### SETTING YOUR FARM FINANCIAL RESOLUTIONS

The start of a new year is the perfect time for farm businesses of all shapes and sizes to reset their financial management. Join this INTERACTIVE workshop to start your farm off on the right path towards financial success in 2025. Topics include Record Keeping, Tax Management, Financial Goals, and Strategies for Profitability. Participants will receive downloads that can be used throughout the year and a quarterly farm financial checklist.



Friday, 2/28 – Virtual Webinar

Setting your Farm Financial Resolutions was designed in a real-life, honest, step-wise format to help farmers start their new year off right! This free webinar covered the topics of recordkeeping, tax management, financial goals, and strategies for improving farm profitability. While the program was given virtually, participants received worksheets to download so that they could follow along, meeting the needs of multiple learning styles. The downloads were selected to assist in helping farmers with the new year’s recordkeeping, and included a quarterly farm financial checklist to keep them on track.

# Allegany County Highlights from SWNYDLFC

Amy partnered with Lynn Bliven to host a Sheep and Goat Internal Parasite IPM (FAMACHA) workshop and a Fecal Egg Count Workshop in June at Alfred State College. Following a 2-hour classroom session, producers received hands-on experience with performing FAMACHA tests, reviewing animal health using a 5-Point Check© system, and preparing/evaluating fecal samples for worm eggs.



“Shop Talk: Integrated Weed Management” was hosted in Andover, where Mike Hunter, Field Crop IPM Specialist, shared valuable insights on managing weeds across various production systems, including pasture, soybeans, and corn. Attendees also had the opportunity to earn DEC pesticide application credits.

SWNYDLFC has been working with an Allegany Dairy Farm as they continue a grant project with the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center. Staff met with the farm to discuss grant progress, implementation findings, and an educational effort to showcase the farm’s work and share their findings from working through the grant application process.

Farmers curious about how to lease their land and charging a fair price had their questions answered as part of the webinar, “Untangling Land Rental Rates, Ag Districts, and Leasing Considerations”. Another important aspect to this conversation was setting up leases when considering Ag Value Assessments and Ag District implications.

## Cornell Cooperative Extension of Allegany County Agriculture Staff

5435 County Road 48 Belmont, NY 14813 585-268-7644

**Laura Hunsberger**  
Executive Director  
lkh47@cornell.edu

**Lynn Bliven**  
Ag & Natural Resources Issue Leader  
lao3@cornell.edu

**Cristian Acosta**  
Ag Educator & Master Gardener Coordinator  
cfa34@cornell.edu

**Alyssa Dean**  
Farm to School Educator  
ald243@cornell.edu

**Kelly Bourne**  
Administrative Assistant  
klb288@cornell.edu

# Cattaraugus County Highlights from SWNYDLFC



The “Robotic Manure Collector Tour” at Nichols Dairy Farm offered a unique opportunity for farmers to see how new manure management technology, which uses robots to help farmers save time on labor, works on a functioning dairy farm. Twenty-eight attendees braved the cold to learn about the robotic manure collectors and the sales representative was able to offer insight on the financial investment associated with the system.

Farm diversification is an exciting way to increase farm sustainability and profitability when implemented correctly to achieve farm goals. SWNYDLFC partnered with CCE-Cattaraugus to present “Does Money Grow On Trees? Maple, Mushrooms, and Business” alongside Cornell University staff to discuss the financial implications of farm diversification.

One of the services that our team offers is helping farmers develop grazing plans. Our specialists work with farmers in the county to determine factors including forage availability and quality throughout the season, designing paddock sizes to meet rotational goals, and how to manage soil nutrition to improve pasture performance.

“Shop Talk: Drone Discussion” hosted in West Valley brought together close to 2 dozen producers and industry representatives. This meeting was an open discussion between participants and covered the legalities of drone use, nuances of pesticide applications, and allowed everyone to connect with their peers.

## Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cattaraugus County Agriculture Staff

28 Parkside Drive Ellicottville, NY 14713 716-699-2377

**Kelly McDonald**  
Executive Director  
kmm525@cornell.edu

**Sheldon Kenyon**  
Farm to School Educator  
smk348@cornell.edu

**Kim Oudemool**  
Natural Resource Educator  
kkr35@cornell.edu

**Tamara Bacho**  
Administrative Assistant  
tsb48@cornell.edu



# Chautauqua County Highlights from SWNYDLFC

Amidst new regulation changes, Katie and Kathy Barrett interviewed Kirsten Workman and Jason Oliver on the Cornell Cow Convos podcast about livestock mortality management practices. They discussed the best options, benefits, and challenges involved. The podcast also included a link to an updated fact sheet with the new rules.



Kate participated with other CCE educators in the annual Farm Business Management (FBM) retreat, a forum for relationship building and technical information exchange in the FBM field. From this, Kate will be leading a collaborative process with other FBM specialists in the state to develop programming on best practices for grant-writing and access to capital for our farmer clients in SWNY.

Our producers are facing a large production risk in their corn – the disease Tar Spot. In a joint presentation with Sarah Pethybridge, Associate Professor of Plant Pathology at Cornell Agritech, we were able to share information on identification, risks, and management options available for producers.



Amy continues to work with sheep and goat farmers to understand the severity of internal parasite problems within individual herds and flocks. Learning which dewormers a farm's parasites are resistant to helps with developing a

whole farm integrated pest management plan to allow the dewormers that are still effective continue to work for years to come.

## Cornell Cooperative Extension of Chautauqua County Agriculture Staff

Carnahan Center at JCC 525 Falconer Street Jamestown, NY 14701 716-664-9502

**Emily Reynolds**  
Executive Director  
eck47@cornell.edu

**Katelyn Walley-Stoll**  
Agriculture Team Leader  
kaw249@cornell.edu

**Eliza Hensel**  
Natural Resource Educator  
emh275@cornell.edu

**Sofia Russo**  
Agriculture Coordinator  
ssr236@cornell.edu

**Lucia Conti**  
Administrative Assistant  
lpc33@cornell.edu

# Erie County Highlights from SWNYDLFC

A new corn disease, known as corn stunt, was identified this fall in four New York counties, including Erie County. The identification of this disease was made possible through the strong working relationship between our region's farmers, bringing together local and statewide experts to address the issue.



There are often regulation changes and requirements that are implemented quickly and quietly—causing anxiety and stress for farm business owners. One such requirement was for LLC businesses to file with the Department of Treasury. Our team shared information to farms through emails, paper mailings, and in individual conversations about this change.

Katie provided a farmer with key workforce resources, including connection to Cornell's Agricultural Workforce Development team and access to future bilingual training opportunities. She also shared Spanish-language materials to help strengthen on-farm training and communication.



Over 125 farmers and ag service providers attended the 2025 Stockmanship and Stewardship event at the Erie County fairgrounds in October. This event brought in nationally renowned speakers who discussed topics including industry trends, the national BQA quality audit results, facility designs, and a live cattle low stress handling demonstration.

## Cornell Cooperative Extension of Erie County Agriculture Staff

21 South Grove Street East Aurora, NY 14052 716-652-5400

**Diane Held**  
Executive Director  
dbh24@cornell.edu

**Sharon Bachman**  
Ag & Natural Resources Educator  
sin2@cornell.edu

**Kathleen McCormick**  
Agriculture Educator  
km864@cornell.edu

**Jolie Hibit**  
Administrative Assistant  
jah663@cornell.edu

# Steuben County Highlights from SWNYDLFC

Internal parasite management is a top priority for sheep & goat farmers, which can be achieved through judicious use of anti-parasitics combined with nutritional and grazing strategies. A hands-on FAMACHA training and pasture walk were hosted to support this educational effort at a mid-size sheep farm in Woodhull. As a result of our team's introduction to 40 farmers through this workshop, we've seen an increased number of individual consultations in the region in the areas of small ruminant management and grazing systems design and management for these species.

In early October, our team paired with CCE Steuben, Steuben Co Soil and Water, and the Cornell Waste Management Institute to bring a mortality composting training to SWNY. Fifteen farmers, butchers, and DOT employees joined the training, which included a hands-on compost pile management review at Bluegill Farms in Bath.



During November's Crop Symposium, the team shared information about Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and Farm Business Management. This is a toolbox of strategies farmers can use to manage pests by combining biological, cultural, physical, and chemical tools in a way that minimizes economic, health, and environmental risks. SWNYDLFC provides IPM support to farms through educational efforts, individual consultations, and industry connections.

Katie worked closely with a small farmer in Steuben County to assist them in applying for the Dairy Advancement Program grant hosted with Cornell's Pro-Dairy team. This grant can help the farmer fund a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) which will allow them to protect their soil and water resources.

## Cornell Cooperative Extension of Steuben County Agriculture Staff

20 East Morris Street Bath, NY 14810 607-664-2300

**Tess McKinley**  
Executive Director  
tsm223@cornell.edu

**Susan Walker**  
Agriculture Educator  
smw272@cornell.edu

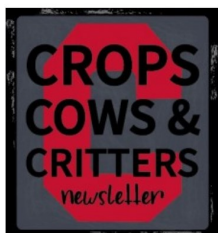
**Stephanie McKinley**  
Ag in the Classroom Educator  
sem358@cornell.edu

**Anne Zschoche**  
Administrative Assistant  
amz65@cornell.edu

## SWNYDLFC 2025 Funded Projects

### Funded projects that were completed or worked on in this year:

- **VAAF**M: Value-Added Dairy Production
- **NERME**: Mitigating Tar Spot in SWNY
- **PRO-DAIRY**: Dairy Market Watch
- **PRO-DAIRY**: Dairy Advancement Program
- **FarmOps**: Marketing Cohort
- **FarmOps**: Live Seminars
- **NERME**: Farmers Market Benchmarking Survey
- **SARE**: Ag Educator Bootcamp
- **NERME**: Improving Production Outcomes and Reducing Parasite Resistance in Small Ruminants in Southwest New York Using Targeted Deworming Strategies
- **NEDBIC**: Northeast Regional Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship Program
- **NYSDAM**: 2025-2026 Integrated Pest Management (Bioeconomy) - Neonicotinoids Implementation
- **CSFP**: BF102 Markets and Profits
- **AFTRNG**: Non-Operating Landowner Outreach
- **NERME**: Creating Active-Learning, Grab n' Go Pesticide Safety Education Modules and Toolkits
- **SARE**: Optimizing the Economic Return of Pasture-Raised Slow-growth and Conventional Broilers
- **BFRDP**: Empowering Refugee, Immigrant and Black Beginning Farmers through Personalized, Culturally Adapted Training & Education at PFC
- **NYFVI**: Precision Feed Management for Beef Cattle



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# Connect with our Team!

Cornell Cooperative Extension's Southwest New York Dairy, Livestock, and Field Crops Program provides free workshops, trainings, individual consultations, email and mailed newsletters, and research-based resources and information.



**Amy**

**Barkley**

*Livestock  
Management  
Specialist*

716-640-0844  
amb544@cornell.edu

Beef, Sheep, Goat, and Poultry Production  
Product Marketing  
Meat Safety and Quality  
Livestock Pasture and Grazing Support  
Beginning Farmer Guidance  
Livestock Health and Welfare  
SWNYDLFC Leadership and Outreach



**Katelyn**

**Miller**

*Field Crops &  
Forage  
Specialist*

716-640-2047  
km753@cornell.edu

Soil, Water, and Nutrient Management  
Forage and Grain Production  
Variety Selection  
Soil Analysis and Fertility Recommendations  
Pest and Disease Management  
Field Trials and Troubleshooting



**Katie**

**Callero**

*Dairy Management  
Specialist*

607-422-6788  
krc85@cornell.edu

Calf and Heifer Management  
Dairy Records Analysis  
Herd Health and Troubleshooting  
Dairy Cattle Pasture and Grazing Support  
Animal Nutrition and Reproductive Management  
Automated Milking Systems and Farm Technology



**Kate**

**McDonald  
Polakiewicz**

*Farm Business  
Management  
Specialist*

716-640-0522  
kem348@cornell.edu

Farm Financial Analysis and Industry Benchmarking  
Farm Specific Business Planning  
Risk Management  
Production Economics  
Market Analysis  
Beginning Farmer Guidance



**Kelly**

**Bourne**

*Administrative  
Assistant*

585-268-7644  
klb288@cornell.edu

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