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Making a Difference

1,356 Master Gardener Volunteers grew, harvested and donated 37 tons of fresh produce to feed Maine's hungry through the Plant-A-Row for the Hungry program. In Maine, this program is critical as:

- 10% of Maine households, representing 141,000 people, are "food insecure" according to the USDA.
- More than 40% of Maine children under the age of 12 show some evidence of hunger.
- 19,325 Maine children are hungry.

Due to an increase in Maine farmer suicides, UMaine Extension offered an online session for local farmers and staff including creation of extension.umaine.edu/agriculture/programs/farmers-under-stress/ with resources to help farmers and their families who are under stress.

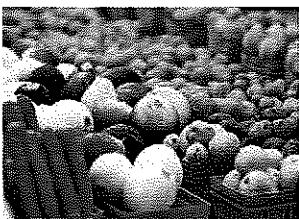
Master Food Preserver volunteers offered hands-on food preservation workshops to over 600 participants statewide in 2009. Requests for help with food preservation increased seven-fold last year and volunteers helped meet the need.

Due to many Maine residents having trouble meeting their needs for heating, transportation, and food due to rising prices, University of Maine Cooperative Extension responded with energy education:

- Web site extension.umaine.edu/energy provides research-based information on how to save money through energy conservation and alternative energy sources.
- Energy Savings Fact Sheet series comprised of nine bulletins that can help Mainers increase their home's energy efficiency and safety.
- Energy Education do-it-yourself video series.

A Maine 4-H York County club has harvested more than 6,000 lbs of fresh produce, which they donated to local food pantries. The group also used a donation of fleece from Polartec to make more than 100 blankets for the homeless, and made and served stew at local food pantries. The youth and volunteers have dedicated themselves to helping out during tough economic times.

Extension.umaine.edu/savemoney is a Web based resource on saving money and spending less. It is dedicated to offering ideas, and tools to reduce debt, save money, and make better spending choices.



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UNH Cooperative Extension's Response to the Declining Economy

The ultimate goal, financial security, is the cornerstone of prosperous communities, nurturing neighborhoods, and strong families. The goal of most Americans is financial security--the ability to save and invest for the future while keeping pace with day-to-day basic needs.

The changing economy that faces New Hampshire, the nation and the world has made individuals and families vulnerable to potential financial instability due to job loss, decreased retirement or college education portfolios and the rising costs and access to services for basic survival, such as food, housing, heating, transportation, child care and health care.

UNH Cooperative Extension is responding with a multidisciplinary, multi-media approach by providing a **Managing Money in Tough Times** workshop and fact sheets, coordination of the **NH Statewide EITC Alliance** that provides free tax preparation and taxpayer financial education, debt management education on the **Take Charge of Family Farm Finances Web site**, as a partner with a state agency, and money saving tips: (extension.unh.edu/Money/Money.htm).

In various locations around the state, UNH Cooperative Extension provides a **Managing Money in Tough Times** workshop for New Hampshire residents to learn more about managing money in tough economic times. These individuals and families found ways to reduce stress and increase money management. As a result of this workshop, 76 percent expect to increase money management skills, 75 percent expect to increase savings, 52 percent expect to decrease debt and 33 percent expect to reduce or limit credit card use.

Research has shown that most low- and moderate-income households lack adequate financial resources to pay for unexpected expenditures. To address this need, UNH Cooperative Extension coordinates the **NH Statewide EITC Alliance** (<http://nheitc.org>) where all asset-building coalitions and free tax preparation sites are members. In Tax Year 2008, the New Hampshire free tax preparation sites with certified IRS volunteers prepared 12,663 tax returns saving low and moderate income taxpayers \$1,582,875. In addition, education about the Earned Income Tax Credit has resulted in greater number of people taking advantage of this tax credit. In Tax Year 2008, \$115.2 million EITC was received in New Hampshire.

A collaboration with the NH Banking Department resulted in statewide distribution to libraries of a poster and brochures titled "**Are You Prepared for Financial Emergencies**," which provided guidelines for avoiding financial trouble when unexpected expenses arise.

Farm families come under increased stress as their farm operations are financially squeezed by low commodity prices, their crop yields have diminished and the costs of inputs are high, and/or debt is great. In response to addressing the debt load of farm families, a web site educates the farm family on the impact of family-related debt and tools to reduce the debt (<http://familyfarmfinances.org>). This web site has also been linked to an eXtension online course titled Investing for Farm Families.

**The University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension is an equal opportunity educator and employer.
UNH, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture and New Hampshire counties cooperating.**

THE CONNECTICUT COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SYSTEM
University of Connecticut, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources
Response to the Financial Crisis Created by the Current Recession

The Connecticut Cooperative Extension System (CCES) <http://www.extension.uconn.edu/> creates learning partnerships that enhance the lives of adults and youths for a sustainable future. It is a dynamic organization that strengthens individuals, families, and communities statewide and beyond. Extension programs continually emphasize and promote economic enhancement and sustainability; however, in response to the current financial crisis, additional efforts and emphases have been implemented.

Impact of the Dairy Industry on the Connecticut Economy was completed. The study showed that this industry generated \$832 M - \$1.1 B in statewide sales, 2,465-4,242 jobs and household earnings of \$145-\$208 M. The contribution of the industry to state and local taxes was estimated at \$23M and additional non-pecuniary benefits from open space farmland were estimated at \$55M in additional public welfare.

Farm Risk Management workshops and materials assist CT farmers to manage risk through difficult as well as stable times. Workshops on **Multigenerational Opportunities, Communications for Dairy Farm Families** and **Moving New England Dairy Farms into the Future** allowed open discussions about addressing the dairy industry crisis through diversification opportunities and involving all family generations in decision-making. The **One-On-One Risk Management Advising Sessions** provide opportunities for farm families to discuss topics with an agribusiness professional, including farm business planning, marketing, estate planning, dealing with local officials, transition to organic agriculture and crop insurance.

Personal finance programs such as **Beyond Paycheck to Paycheck** and **Managing Family Money in Challenging Times** address issues faced by families in changing financial circumstances such as job loss, reductions in pay and benefits, finances and family relationships, the need for developing emergency savings as well as credit and debt management. Financial literacy programs such as **Welcome to the Real World, Connecticut Edition!** and **The Financial Facts of Life** reach teens and young adults with information about living within their incomes and budgeting, working toward their goals for their futures, managing financial decisions. Additional programs in **Identity Theft Protection** are also offered.

EFNEP teaches families on how to stretch food budgets, prepare meals, smart shopping, and food safety to maximize nutrition gained/per dollar spent. Families in need of food stamps; WIC benefits; housing, heating and utilities; food pantries; and credit assistance programs are advised on these processes to get help.

UConn Soil Nutrient Analysis Lab received 60 percent more soil samples from residential clients who wanted to grow edibles, including vegetables and fruits, this past growing season than in the previous year. This was attributed mainly to the poor economy and the desire of residents to reduce grocery bills by growing their own produce. The **UConn Home & Garden Education Center** also received a greater proportion of phone calls asking about home food production and preserving. **UConn Extension Master Gardeners** offered a series of workshops on community gardening, and they also worked with low-income families to create urban gardens through a 4-H framework in which teens are offered a positive alternative to dropping out of school, crime, drugs, and other barriers to success.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program have reduced the use of pesticides in Connecticut by more than 90 tons of active ingredient since the mid-80's resulting in nearly \$3 million in cost savings to growers and businesses. Such IPM programs were intensified this year to address unusual weather related needs and the economy that further threatened farm sustainability and farmer health. Farmers have also been encouraged to take advantage of more retail sales and higher profits by opening Community Supported Agriculture ventures.

Extension Forestry implemented a new service learning program to provide small stipends to student interns to help develop forest management plans for landowners in the Farm and Ranchland Protection Program. This provides income-earning opportunities for students, while providing the required forest management plan for these landowners at little or no cost. In addition, we are reaching out to forest landowners in general with specific information about cost-share assistance programs available to help them defray the cost of certain management activities to improve their forests.

Pesticide Safety Education programs provide training for individuals who wish to become certified by the state to apply pesticides commercially. This is a jobs training opportunity for those who wish to open a pesticide application business or move up in a business they are currently hired in at a lower level.



COMMUNITY

4-H & YOUTH

ENVIRONMENT

AGRICULTURE

FOOD

UNIVERSITY OF
VERMONT

EXTENSION

CULTIVATING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Farm Viability Program

Engaging Vermont's Farmers through Business Planning, Enterprise Analyses, Cash Flow and Dairy Management Teams

The University of Vermont (UVM) Extension Farm Viability Program keeps rural businesses active, diversifies Vermont agriculture and helps communities remain economically viable. The program assists farmers in developing successful whole-farm business plans which establish clear goals and objectives, and provide a strategy to achieve them in three to five years.

Qualified applicants work with Farm Business Management Educators to create vision and mission statements, identify and gather data on farm description, ownership structure, buildings and assets, farm labor and production practices. Initial financial information—which includes past years tax records, available balance sheets and income statements — are collected. Market description and assessment, alternative products, proposed construction projects needed and assistance in refining projected business ideas and strategies are included. Clients are able to make informed decisions about the future of the farm and the feasibility of proposed changes. Follow-up evaluation data collection includes information on implementation of the business plan. Since 2004, nearly 250 farm families have worked with Farm Viability staff. Over 100 business plans have been developed which keeps farm families and numerous employees actively contributing to Vermont's local food production.

The UVM Extension Farm Viability Program goes beyond business planning and enterprise analysis. In past years, numerous discussions were led by the Vermont Dairy Task Force to develop and implement Dairy Management Teams (DMT). The DMT program was designed to bring a facilitated, problem solving team approach to Vermont's dairy farmers. Farmers build their teams with trusted consultants from allied dairy industry professionals who have specific areas of expertise directly related to their team goals. Each farm DMT has a dedicated facilitator to schedule and manage meetings, record

meeting minutes and coordinate the flow of information from team members back to the farmer. UVM Extension has dedicated 66% of a full-time program staff position to coordinate 10 to 17 volunteer facilitators working with twenty two farms since 2008.

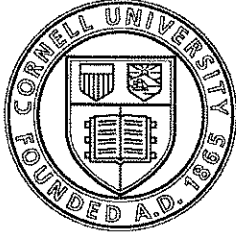
Last year, challenges facing Vermont farmers were enormous — from rising fuel, feed and fertilizer costs, to depressed markets and months of low milk prices — and 52 dairy farms in Vermont went out of business. The need for assistance was so great that UVM Extension launched a new program in 2009 called *Crunching Your Farm Numbers* to help farmers manage their cash flow in order to pay bills and make debt payments. During that time we fielded calls from dairy farmers through our toll-free helplines and assisted over 200 dairy farm families through on-farm visits and consultations.

The UVM Extension Farm Viability Program is funded by an innovative collaboration among the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board and the Vermont Agency of Agriculture and a grant from the United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service. UVM Extension leverages each dollar with three from other grants, donor and base dollars. Public support of local agriculture, as well as support from the Vermont legislature combined with federal, state and private grant initiatives are critical to maintaining a sustainable agricultural landscape in Vermont.

For more information, contact:

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Cornell University Cooperative Extension

Coping with the financial challenges of a difficult economy:

While CCE has not yet branded specific program initiatives aimed at coping with financial hard times, the following information is taken from 2009 indicator data regarding ongoing efforts to help New Yorkers with their overall financial health and well-being:

Agriculture/Natural Resources Businesses

- 2500 agriculture/natural resources enterprises reported improved profitability attributed at least in part to participation in extension education programs.
- More than 100 agricultural enterprises successfully completed an intergenerational transfer.
- 650 participants were documented to have initiated one or more alternative or expanded business ventures and 400 adopted value-added production practices such as starting their own value added business, or forming alliances.

Community Economic Development

- More than 350 communities were assisted with planning for and the implementation of initiatives related to community economic development including: community based agriculture, main street revitalization, workforce development, business development and assistance, and other elements of sustainable growth.
- 300 employers contributing to community-based workforce development approaches such as internship and job training.

Family Resource Management

- About 5,000 individuals reported practicing wise money management skills such as comparison shopping, paying bills on time, paying more than minimum payment, checking credit report, and reviewing and understanding bills/statements.
- More than 2200 individuals reporting to have reduced debts and/or increased savings.

Consumer Energy

- Of 9,000 people who participated in consumer energy conservation programs, 6,200 (69%) implemented recommended practices which are estimated to save each household \$400 annually or nearly \$2.5 million in energy cost savings.

Total Individual Contacts across all Programs = >1,000,000



Cornell University Cooperative Extension

Environment & Natural Resources: *Helping communities preserve and protect the environment*
Cornell Cooperative Extension's environment and natural resources programs aim to develop knowledge that will help individuals and communities make decisions and take actions that preserve and enhance environmental quality and, therefore, human health.

Environment and natural resources programs consist of water resources, agricultural environmental management, including manure management, waste management, land use management, forestry, wildlife habitat and human interactions, fisheries, lawns and turf, invasive species, and energy, both conservation and renewable energy sources.

Cornell Cooperative Extension environment and natural resources programs serve the general public, resource managers, such as foresters, water and wastewater treatment plant operators, and farmers, and policy makers.

NIFA Priority Areas Addressed:

- Climate Change
- Sustainable Energy

4-H Youth Development: *Building tomorrow's leaders*

Cornell Cooperative Extension's 4-H youth development programs engage young people and their families in the work of Cornell University and the land grant university system.

In classrooms, after school, and in community clubs and camp settings, 4-H youth learn by doing, and participate in practical, real life experiences that encourage them to experiment, innovate, and think independently.

Major 4-H programs provide opportunities in science and technology, youth community action, and healthy living. Program work teams provide up-to-date resources and support professional development needs of county educators working with youth in local settings.

NIFA Priority Areas Addressed:

- Childhood Obesity
- Sustainable Energy

Agriculture & Food Systems: *Maximizing the value of agricultural and natural resources*

Cornell Cooperative Extension's agriculture and food systems programs address the needs of New Yorkers by promoting sustainability, environmental stewardship, a safe, reliable, and healthy food supply, renewable energy, recreation, and agri-tourism.

Cornell Cooperative Extension offers agricultural programs and resources in dairy and livestock, fruits, vegetables, viticulture and enology, field crops, nutrient management, food safety, and farm business economics and policy. Regional specialists and agriculture teams develop resources for

small and large farms, beginning and established farmers, and commodity and specialty producer groups.

NIFA Priority Areas Addressed:

- Global Food Security
- Climate Change
- Sustainable Energy
- Food Safety

Community and Economic Vitality: *Addressing quality of life, social cohesion, ecological integrity, and economic opportunity*

Cornell Cooperative Extension educators help residents gather and synthesize knowledge, develop decision-making skills, and improve the use of community resources.

Cornell Cooperative Extension associations design community and economic development programming based on the context, issues, and needs of their communities. Community and economic vitality programs include land use training, inter-municipal collaboration on shared municipal services, leadership training, agroforestry workforce development, local food regional economic impact strategies, not-for-profit development, sustainable community-based initiatives, and small business agricultural education.

These and other programs help communities forge strong partnerships with campus faculty and staff, local government officials, community and economic developers, not-for-profit directors, community colleges, planners, policymakers, and informal leaders.

NIFA Priority Areas Addressed:

- Global Food Security and Hunger
- Climate Change
- Sustainable Energy

Nutrition and Healthy Families: *Supporting healthy and active communities*

Cornell Cooperative Extension's nutrition, health, and resource management programs address the interaction between individuals and the world around them to help people achieve their potential, solve problems, and strengthen their families and communities. Cornell Cooperative Extension educators use multidisciplinary academic approaches and apply varied cultural, social, and economic perspectives to provide learner-focused education.

Nutrition and health programs work to reduce the incidence of childhood obesity and alleviate chronic disease prevalence through improved nutrition and the promotion of healthy lifestyles. Programs foster developmentally appropriate parenting and child care as well as elder care, address environmental hazards, and support education in financial literacy, health care issues, and energy costs and conservation.

NIFA Priority Areas Addressed:

- Global Food Security
- Childhood Obesity
- Food Safety

**Extension Strategic priorities/opportunities.
Northeast Extension Directors (6 States)
Survey of your University Cooperative Extension programs.**

Identify what extension in your state is best positioned to do about these needs now (current capacity).

A. Global food security and hunger - Keep America agriculture competitive while ending world hunger:

- Lead the Plant A Row (PAR) for the hungry in our state and donate vegetables and fruits to food pantries and shelters (35 tons donated in 2009)
- Conduct EFNEP & SNAP-Ed programs
- Partner with Maine Agriculture in the Classroom to build awareness for agriculture and food production with teachers.
- Work with food producers to identify new markets
- Working in partnership with UVM on grain for human consumption initiative what was funded by USDA.
- Support local food producers -- including the local fishing initiative we recently facilitated by local campaign for native shrimp and fish.
- can increase our reach to needy areas of the world
- provide education on pricing and cost control for farm enterprises
- Field trials and documentation of best management practices effectiveness
- MRTC ability to offer assistance to entrepreneurs and others existing businesses through business and market plan development

B. Climate change -Mitigate and adapt agriculture to variations in climate:

- Work with Sea Grant on education for coastal regions on adaptations.
- Work with agriculture community to adapt to new crops, change in water conditions, pest and disease issues
- Work with schools to bring researched based resources to local students and families on adapting to a changing climate.
- a leader as land-use planning and management and water quality education

- Sea Grant extension addressing fisheries coastal ecology water quality aquaculture and marine ecology
- extension is well-positioned to help vegetable crop growers and others make a switch to field preparation techniques that help reduce problems from excessive precipitation
- integrated pest management program can provide methods and educational programs to growers and others to address variation in tests and cropping systems to variations in climate
- measure wind flow and cooling in barns during hot weather using vaneometers is another methods to maintain animal health and production
- changes in crop cultivars as they are available to address changes in climate
- fuel cells and digesters to provide methane fortunately shale gas is much cheaper than manure gas at this point
- need to demonstrate farm of the future energy-efficient practices to do climate projections
- limited other than through our current research effort to do variety trials --
- programs directed at environmental issues such as nutrient management Climate Master volunteer program

C. Sustainable energy- Secure America's future through renewable biofuels:

- 4-H Power of Wind curriculum being implemented with support of VISTA workers
- Applied research on oil seed crops for bio diesel, grasses for palletized fuel, wood pellet boilers for sustainable energy in small scale commercial buildings.
- extension can help vegetable growers convert to a reduced tillage such as deep zone tillage
- gasification project with Cambridge environmental
- working with the natural resources impact team

D. Food safety - Improve food safety for all Americans:

- Work with small food processing businesses to address food safety concerns
- Conduct HACCP and Better Processing Control Schools for food processors.
- Work closely with media to inform public regarding emerging food safety issues.
- Support Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) education for agricultural producers to meet the requirements of their markets.
- Food preservation education

-training for food service workers search safe and safe register

E .Childhood obesity -Improve nutrition and childhood obesity:

- Conduct We Can! training for educators and health providers to promote childhood physical activity.
- Conduct SNAP-Ed and EFNEP with limited income eligible audiences.
- Build more physical activity into the 4-H program.
- Working with families through EFNEP
- incorporating active living activities and 4-H afterschool programs
- = schools, athletic teams, parents, adults and youth come