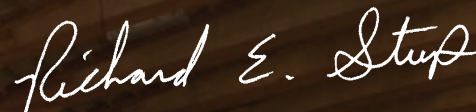


A letter from our director

The Cornell Agricultural Workforce Development program is proud to support the agricultural industry with relevant and timely education and applied research. Our mission is to help farmers and agribusinesses build committed and effective teams who will carry out the important work of feeding our local families and the world. We believe that agricultural work can, and should be, engaging and rewarding for everyone involved. Managers can build committed teams by applying the best human resource management practices for the agricultural setting.

Farm labor has emerged as one of the greatest challenges facing agriculture in New York and the United States more broadly. Agriculture remains the foundational industry in New York but securing a sufficient workforce is difficult. New York's farms are almost all family owned. These small businesses employ a modern farm workforce that is very diverse, including: traditional farm family members, lifelong residents of rural upstate communities, immigrants who have lived in the U.S. for decades, seasonal employees from foreign countries like Jamaica and Mexico, and migrant employees who come to New York for short periods to help with harvest. Lately, the farm workforce includes urban residents working in growing urban and controlled atmosphere farms. Of course, this only describes the on-farm workforce. Agriculture also employs thousands of other people who provide crop and nutritional support, financial services, transportation, processing, and many other valuable, food-industry jobs that support communities and feed the people in New York and around the world.



Dr. Richard Stup
Agricultural Workforce Specialist



Dr. Richard Stup (right)
visiting the Northrup Farm.

Cornell's Ag Workforce program is tackling today's farm workforce challenges directly with educational programs that:

- Assist farm employers to understand and comply with state and federal employment regulations.
- Help employers onboard new employees who are "Safe, Productive, and Engaged from Day One!"
- Develop the leadership skills of managers and supervisors so they create an engaging and rewarding work experience for every employee.
- Communicate COVID-19 prevention practices and strategies to keep the workforce and communities safe.

The Cornell Ag Workforce team is also engaged in applied research that:

- Identifies best practices in human resource management that work in the farm setting.
- Brings data and analysis to discussions of farm employment policy at state and federal levels.
- Helps farms adopt labor-enhancing management techniques and technologies to keep New York farms competitive in the future.

Cornell Ag Workforce Development works closely with farmers, employees, farm organizations, and New York agencies including Agriculture and Markets, Labor, and Health to support and enhance the farm workforce. This report helps to document the impact of the Cornell Ag Workforce Development program.

Many thanks to the collaborative organizations and individuals that help us support our critical farm workforce.

"Cornell's Agricultural Workforce Development program remains an unparalleled resource for New York's farmers and we are proud to support this program. Thanks to AWD's commitment to building a strong, effective, steadfast agricultural workforce, particularly during this difficult past year, our farmers can continue their vital work of getting nutritious, local foods on the tables of all New Yorkers. With this program helping to build the foundation for the next generation of agriculture leaders, the future of our industry is bright."

Richard A. Ball
State Agriculture Commissioner
New York State Department of Agriculture
and Markets

"New York farmers are some of the most devoted small business owners in our communities who are constantly working to foster safe and supportive workplace environments for their employees. Cornell's Agricultural Workforce Development program has been a great source of information, professional skills building, and training that provides our farmers with the tools to enhance their human resource needs. New York is an agriculture state and maintaining a strong farm workforce is vital to protect the future of our farms and food supply long into the future."

Senator Michelle Hinchey
Chair, Senate Agriculture Committee

"I've had the privilege of working with Cornell CALS and Extension team members to address the many challenges faced by farmers during the COVID-19 pandemic. I was very impressed with the work of the Agricultural Workforce Development program, from advising farmers on difficult topics like keeping farm employees safe in congregate housing, to conducting multiple training programs for farmers on how to meet the NY Forward re-opening requirements. I am proud to support the Agricultural Workforce Development program and its commitment to solving the many workforce challenges facing New York farmers."

Assemblymember Donna Lupardo
Chair, NYS Assembly Agriculture Committee



Cornell Agricultural Workforce Development team



Richard Stup, Ph.D.
Agricultural Workforce Specialist
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Richard Stup leads Cornell Agricultural Workforce Development and addresses challenges facing the agricultural industry through educational programs and applied research. He also provides leadership as a liaison between the agricultural industry and employment-focused regulatory authorities. His focus is on human resource management, enhancing employee engagement, regulatory compliance, and leadership development at the farm level. Rich earned his doctorate from Penn State in the field of Workforce Education and Development, including innovative research into the effects of human resource management on farm employee organizational commitment.



Julie Berry, M.A.
Communications Manager
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Julie Berry has a shared appointment as Communications Manager for Cornell Agricultural Workforce Development and Cornell CALS PRO-DAIRY. Julie is an experienced media professional and has worked in journalism, marketing, and extension education. Julie received her BS with honors in animal science from Cornell University and her MA in science writing from Johns Hopkins University.



Elizabeth Higgins, M.S.
Ag Workforce Supervisory Leadership
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Elizabeth Higgins is the Ag Business Management/Production Economics Extension Specialist with the Eastern New York Commercial Horticulture team and partners with Cornell Agricultural Workforce development to teach Onboarding and Agricultural Supervisory Leadership classes. Her focus areas are risk management, farm business management and ag regulations and programs, with an emphasis on land use and labor. Liz received her BA in economics from Fairfield University and her MS in resource economics from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.



Rachel McCarthy, M.P.S.
Program Coordinator
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Rachel McCarthy is a skilled science communicator, working in higher education and extension to develop online and in-person learning programs. Rachel has a joint appointment as a Training and Education Program Manager with the School of Integrative Plant Science and coordinates the Cornell Agricultural Workforce Development Agricultural Supervisory Leadership online courses. Rachel received her BS and MPS from Cornell University in Landscape Architecture and Ornamental Horticulture.



Bob Milligan, Ph.D.
Cornell University Professor Emeritus
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Bob Milligan is an instructor in the Ag Workforce Development Agricultural Supervisory Leadership certificate program. Bob is an award-winning Cornell professor emeritus and taught in the undergraduate business program. Bob is best known in extension for developing and leading PRO-DAIRY. Bob's vision is to provide insight to managers by presenting complex human resource and business concepts in formats that are understandable and usable. Bob received his BS and MS in dairy production and agricultural economics from Michigan State University and his doctorate in agricultural economics from the University of California, Davis.



Lucas Smith
Student Employee
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Lucas Smith is a junior studying Agricultural Sciences with a concentration in business management and pre-law at Cornell University.



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College of Agriculture and Life Sciences



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Cornell Cooperative Extension

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Agricultural Supervisory Leadership certificate program

Supervisors are critical to the success of farm businesses. They have a major impact both on employees' daily work experiences and on the production performance of the business. Agricultural Workforce Development in 2021 launched an Agricultural Supervisory Leadership certificate program to help farm supervisors and managers learn and apply human resource management practices and leadership skills that foster rewarding workplaces and drive business results. Confident managers who thoughtfully apply leadership and management skills improve employee performance, develop teams, reduce employee turnover, and increase employee engagement. The six courses within the certificate program offer extensive practice and engagement activities to build confidence and skill sets.

- **Managing Performance:** Understand motivation. Harness the power of performance feedback and coaching. Build clear and effective workplace communications, including leading team meetings. Set safety expectations. Conduct effective performance reviews.
- **Ethics and Employment Regulations for Supervisors:** Implement responsible and ethical labor practices and understand why this matters for agriculture. Recognize and prevent sexual harassment. Understand and follow minimum wage and overtime laws. Implement Equal Employment Opportunity laws to prevent discrimination and harassment. Use an employee handbook. Handle employee discipline and termination.
- **Becoming an Effective Trainer:** Identify training needs. Understand learning styles. Design and plan learning experiences that accommodate learner needs. Develop effective training skills and techniques. Evaluate learning results and training effectiveness.
- **Staffing and Organizing Your Team:** Develop job descriptions. Learn how to find potential employees, interview and select the right people. Implement new hire documentation, employment authorization, and onboarding: bringing new employees into the business successfully and productively.

More than 60 current and aspiring supervisors enrolled in the first course in the program. Enrollment is underway for subsequent courses. Participants in the first course highly recommend it and say the tools have empowered them to become better managers.

Extension education

Cornell Agricultural Workforce Development engaged in extension education to farmers during the COVID-19 pandemic with live webinars and curated materials posted on the Ag Workforce website.

- From June through August 13,356 users initiated 17,763 visits to the Ag Workforce website, and in each session they visited on average 1.64 pages, which resulted in 29,048 pageviews. The NY Forward Business Safety Plan Support for Farms was the most visited page.
- In March, Ag Workforce partnered with PRO-DAIRY to offer COVID-19 and Your Dairy webinar. 600 people accessed a recording of the webinar.
- In April, Ag Workforce partnered with PRO-DAIRY to offer Disruption to Key Personnel on the Farm: Developing Contingency Plans webinar. About 100 people participated in this webinar.
- In June, Ag Workforce partnered with Cornell Cooperative Extension specialists to offer a webinar series on NY Forward Business Safety Plans and curated resources for Dairy/Livestock/Crop, Fruit/Vegetable, Retail, Equine, and Greenhouse/Landscaping/Ornamental, and Christmas Tree farms, that attracted 1,000 participants and views of the webinar recording.
- Dr. Richard Stup, Ag Workforce Specialist, was featured by DairyBusiness in a podcast on managing coronavirus on your dairy farm.
- Libby Eiholzer, CCE Northwest NY Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops Team, and Richard Stup, Cornell Agricultural Workforce Development, prepared a new resource "Reliable Resources for Spanish and English-Speaking Farmworkers" about COVID-19 to help Spanish and English speaking farm employees access credible, multi-lingual information about COVID-19.
- Updates are offered regularly through the Ag Workforce Journal, an educational and current events blog. A recent popular post provided Guidance for Essential Workers Arriving in NY from U.S. States with Significant Community Spread.
- Agricultural Workforce is currently surveying farmers to measure the extent farmers have taken actions to prevent the spread of the coronavirus and COVID-19, the disease it can cause. The purpose is to provide accurate information for farm managers, educators, and decision-making authorities.

Onboarding

Cornell Agricultural Workforce Development developed an onboarding program "Safe, Productive and Engaged from Day One" with support from the New York Farm Viability Institute. Employee onboarding is a management process to bring new employees into the farm business, complete necessary paperwork, equip them with safety and performance knowledge and skills, and help them feel connected to and engaged with a worthwhile team. The onboarding process sets the tone for inclusion as a valued new farm team member and effective onboarding helps retain valuable employees.

Identified as a priority by New York's Ag Workforce Development Council, in the first year of the project Agricultural Workforce Developed helped 25 farmers develop tools, trainings, and templates to navigate employment requirements and improve human resource management practices. Projects included development of employee handbooks, SOP's, training videos, new hire forms, job descriptions, farm safety plans, checklists, organizational charts, mission statements, written policies, and more.

As programming converted to a virtual environment, Agricultural Workforce Development developed an

"Onboarding Template" and a series of three webinars that 49 people attended in December to quickly develop a complete onboarding program with orientation and training that:

- Ensures compliance with basic regulations and policies
- Provides clarification on work procedures and expectations, and offers safety training
- Establishes a workplace culture based on values, philosophies and traditions
- Creates connected relationships at work that allow employees to engage and thrive

"*Safe, Productive and Engaged from Day One*" is farmer recommended:

"Participate. It makes the process better for both employer and employee. It improves compliance, safety, performance, and morale."

"It helps keep hiring organized and gives a sense of professionalism."

"It organized and standardized our system of onboarding. We are now more in compliance than ever."

"This made me so much more confident as I go through the new hire process with employees."

"I got major bonus points on my FARM evaluation for the new employee training with my google classroom that I have set up!"



Cornell Agricultural Workforce Development's mission

is to help farms and agribusinesses build committed and effective teams who will carry out the important work of feeding local families and the world. We believe that agricultural work can, and should be, engaging and rewarding for everyone involved. Managers can build committed teams by applying the best human resource management practices for the agricultural setting.

Support for agriculture during the COVID-19 pandemic

Cornell Agricultural Workforce Development led efforts to support farm managers and employees to protect the farm workforce, communities, consumers, and businesses from COVID-19 in 2020. Engagement focused on four main areas:

COVID-19 prevention education

Cornell Agricultural Workforce Development developed industry-specific COVID-19 webinars (dairy, fruit and vegetable, greenhouse) to help farmers meet safety and regulatory requirements.

Impact of these webinars was amplified as educators across the U.S. used materials posted at the Agricultural Workforce Development website and shared the webinars. In NY, 300 people attended the dairy webinar and 500 people attended the fruit and vegetable webinars.



Offered by the Ag Workforce Development Council, the New York Labor Road Show updates farmers on regulation changes to best position their

business for compliance and success. Several important changes to state regulations occurred in 2020, including which employees are covered by overtime and day-of-rest and which can be designated as family members or exempt employees.

Labor Roadshow IV topics included:

- FLFLPA overtime and day-of-rest updates
- New NY permanent sick leave law and insurance requirements
- Paid family leave, disability, and worker's compensation
- Sexual harassment prevention training requirements
- Union education for farm managers
- FLFLPA employee housing requirements
- COVID-19 and farm workforce health

Business safety plans

Cornell Agricultural Workforce Development also created support materials and offered training for NY Forward-required business safety plans. The Ag Workforce team led development of farm-specific resources, guidance, and templates, that enabled farm employers to rapidly develop and implement comprehensive COVID-19 business safety plans.

About 750 people, mostly farmers, attended the webinars, and the resources have been downloaded over 5,000 times.

Local leadership and organization

Cornell Ag Workforce Development partnered with New York Farm Bureau to organize training, communications, and planning among local health departments, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and NY Farm Bureau. Our team initiated a local planning process among agriculture groups and local health departments across every county in the state, especially those with a high number of agricultural workers.

As a result, local authorities across the state now understand the needs of the agricultural workforce more clearly and have prepared plans to support farms and farmworkers with quarantine and isolation housing needs.

Data analysis

Our team conducted analysis of federal and state data about the size and distribution of farmworkers in New York, and how the population changes throughout the growing season.

The resulting report was used by state authorities and partners such as Cornell Cooperative Extension to deliver prevention materials, including face coverings and hand sanitizers, to appropriate distribution sites at the right times.

Research efforts

Cornell Agricultural Workforce Development conducts applied research to help farm solve problems and adopt better management practices.

- The **Farm Employee Compensation Benchmark** gives participants a detailed analysis of how employees are compensated and how their farm practices measure up.
- **COVID-19 Prevention Efforts by New York farmers.** This study captured information during the pandemic about the rate of adoption of COVID prevention practices and the cost to producers.
- **NY Farm Workforce in Transition.** This ongoing project seeks to describe how farms are adapting to changing labor markets and regulations, to identify management practices and technologies farms are using successfully to improve workforce efficiency, and best practices in farm human resource management to improve performance and quality of work life.