Climate Smart Farming Extension Team

Cornell’s Climate Smart Farming Extension Team gives New York farmers access to top extension specialists with the particular expertise to help manage the risks posed by increasing extreme weather, climate variability, and climate change. Working in partnership with Cornell Cooperative Extension and climate change and agriculture specialists at Cornell, the Team draws on the latest science to answer growers’ questions about changes they can make to their management practices that will help increase resiliency and farm sustainability.

To reach the Climate Smart Farming (CSF) Extension Team, contact the specific team members by email or phone, or visit us at www.climatesmartfarming.org.

CSF Team Members & Specialties

Small Fruit & Vegetables

Laura McDermott, a regional extension specialist in small fruit production for the Eastern New York Commercial Horticulture Program, currently serves 17 counties in the Route 87 corridor, where she concentrates on small fruit production and fresh market vegetable production. Her current research projects include low-tunnel strawberry production, resistance management education, and invasive species management. In her 25 years with the Extension system, she has also amassed experience with all types of horticulture, including maple, forestry, and consumer horticulture, and with commercial fruit and vegetable farmer education. A native of Stillwater, New York, she holds a B.S. in plant protection from Cornell University and an M.S. in fruit crops from the University of Florida. Contact Laura by email at: lgm4@cornell.edu, or phone at: 518-746-2562.

Field Crops & Soil Health

Dr. Kitty O’Neil, a regional field crops and soils specialist, and team leader of the Northern NY Regional Ag Team, works to improve the yield and production efficiency of field crops and forages – a goal that requires smart crop management and a keen understanding of climate-related risks and long-term soil health. A field crops and soils specialist, she leads the North New York field crops team, which designs crop and soil management programs to serve the region’s farms. Dr. O’Neil’s research has included cropping systems and the effects of soil amendments and cover crops on soil health on potato farms. Kitty grew up on a successful family dairy farm in Cayuga County, New York and went on to earn a B.S. in animal science from Cornell University, an M.S. in animal nutrition and plant biochemistry, and a Ph.D. in sustainable plant and soil cropping systems, both from Michigan State University. Kitty is also a certified crop advisor. Contact Kitty by email at: kitty.oneil@cornell.edu, or phone at: 315-379-9192.
Dairy Management

Dr. Kimberley Morrill, a regional dairy specialist, focuses on calf and record management, outreach programs and helping New York dairies improve their capacity to manage the risks associated with climate change. Dr. Morrill conducted research on transition cow and calf management, and colostrum absorption while earning a B.A. in dairy management and an M.A. in animal nutrition, both from the University of New Hampshire. Her work on neonatal development, colostrogenesis and colostrum management, gut development in newborn calves and dairy nutrition earned her a Ph.D. in animal physiology from Iowa State University. She is active in Annie’s Project and the Women in Ag Learning Network. Contact Kimberly by email at: kmm434@cornell.edu, or phone at: 315-379-9192.

Vegetables & Integrated Pest Management

Dr. Darcy E. P. Telenko, a regional vegetable extension specialist for the Cornell Vegetable Program, currently serves eleven western New York counties, where she focuses on fresh market vegetable production, weed management, and climate change resiliency. She brings a broad experience base to CICSS, beginning with a B.S. from Cornell University, an M.S. in plant and soil science from Southern Illinois University, and a Ph.D. in plant pathology and crop sciences from North Carolina State University. Her post-doctoral work includes studies in weed management of turf grass and agronomic crops at the University of Florida and disease management of agronomic crops at Virginia Tech. Contact Darcy by email at: dep10@cornell.edu, or phone at: 716-652-5400.

The CSF Team: A Resource for Extension and Farmers

Each member of the Cornell CSF Extension Team can provide specific information related to on-farm climate smart practices in their area of expertise, and are trained to help farmers:

- Identify on-farm vulnerabilities to extreme weather and variability
- Increase on-farm adaptation through best management practices (BMPs), including cropping systems, IPM, land-use planning, and water resource management
- Upgrade infrastructure, such as cooling, irrigation, drainage, and waste management for increased resiliency
- Increase farm energy efficiency and install renewable energy systems (cutting costs)
- Inventory energy use and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions
- Adopt BMPs to reduce emissions and sequester carbon through Cornell-recommended practices (e.g. soil health, cover crops, low-till practices)
- Improve on-farm recycling, solid waste disposal, and nutrient management practices
- Support local food and climate smart initiatives in the surrounding community

The Team members are located across the state, and are available to farmers and Cooperative Extension educators for consultation on the above strategies (and more), climate-related talks, and trainings on CSF tools and resources.

Cornell Climate Smart Farming delivers trusted, research-based information and decision-making tools to agricultural stakeholders in the Northeast. Cornell CSF is a program of the Cornell Institute for Climate Smart Solutions.

For more information visit us at www.climatesmartfarming.org, or contact us at cicss@cornell.edu