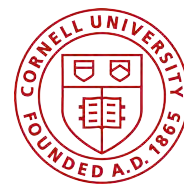


Cornell Cooperative Extension
Lewis County



ANNUAL REPORT 2026



WWW.CCELEWIS.ORG



CONNECTING CORNELL UNIVERSITY TO OUR COMMUNITY

PUTTING RESEARCH TO WORK IN LEWIS COUNTY

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Lewis County serves as a dynamic educational organization that uses Cornell University's world-class research and Cooperative Extension network to enhance the lives and well-being of all Lewis County residents. Cornell Cooperative Extension's dedicated team works with Cornell faculty, agriculture, parenting, and 4-H youth development teams to put research to work to grow, strengthen and sustain a healthy, vibrant, and economically strong Lewis County.

ROOTED IN EVERY COUNTY OF THE STATE, CORNELL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION (CCE) TRANSLATES CORNELL UNIVERSITY'S WORLD-CLASS RESEARCH INTO PRACTICAL, REAL-WORLD KNOWLEDGE THAT HELPS NEW YORK STATE RESIDENTS, BUSINESSES AND COMMUNITIES THRIVE.



LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

FRIENDS OF CORNELL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION LEWIS COUNTY:

We are pleased to share with you our 2026 Annual Report. The staff of Lewis County Cooperative Extension remains dedicated to providing purposeful, high-impact programs that both honor the traditions of Extension and embrace new opportunities. Our growth reflects a balance of preserving our agricultural heritage while addressing emerging issues and supporting innovative solutions.

This report highlights our wide-reaching work bringing timely, research-driven information to families, farmers, businesses, and professionals. While agriculture remains the foundation of our work, we are equally proud of the strength of our 4-H Youth Development programs, our in-demand parenting education, and our efforts in horticulture and community development. Together, these initiatives help prepare tomorrow's workforce, create educational opportunities, and respond to the real-life challenges facing Lewis County residents.

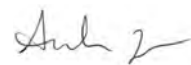
Our Tri-County Ag program, consisting of dairy, farm business management and field crops education and services has been tremendously successful since its implementation last year. As rural America continues to play a vital role in the health and fabric of our everyday lives, the mission of Extension has never been more important. We are proud to stand alongside farmers, youth, businesses, and community members, moving projects forward that strengthen and sustain our county.

CCE Lewis is fortunate to benefit from a unique partnership among federal, state, and local governments, which allows us to leverage resources to better serve our residents. We extend our sincere gratitude to the agencies, organizations, and individuals who provide funding and support throughout the year. In particular, we thank the Lewis County Board of Legislators and county residents for their continued investment in our work.

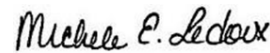
We invite you to explore the pages of this Annual Report and discover opportunities to collaborate with us in the year ahead. Follow us on Facebook and visit our website at ccelewis.org for the latest updates and programs.

Looking to 2027, we remain committed to delivering relevant, unbiased, and useful information to all Lewis County residents as we work together for the continued growth and vitality of our community.

With Appreciation,



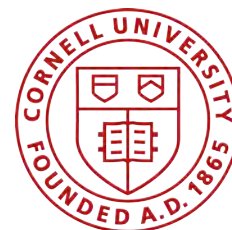
Sarah Zeger, DVM
President, Board of Directors



Michele E. Ledoux
Executive Director

**Our programs deliver
measurable impact and high
value to participants and the
community at large.**

Thanks to our strong connections with local stakeholders and Cornell University, we are able to bring research-based knowledge directly to the people of Lewis County.



LEADERSHIP DIRECTORY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sarah Zeger, DVM	President
Jenna Lauraine	Vice President
Roxiana Hurlburt	Treasurer
David Nisley	Secretary
Shellie Marks	Director at Large
Matthew Kraeger	Director at Large
Michael Hanno	Legislative Representative

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Harley Snyder	Representative to the Board	Chairperson
Holly Kraeger		Vice Chairperson
Kim Rotondi		
Martha Horahan	Representative to the Board	
Molly Scoville		
Cathy Littlefield		

AG COMMITTEE

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Eric Beiler	Vice Chairperson
Patty Moser	Secretary
Andrew Kramer	Representative to the Board
Matthew Swiernik	Representative to the Board
Michael Snyder	

STAFF

Michele Ledoux	Executive Director	Charlene Berrus	Finance Coordinator
Kelly Kunz	Parenting & Family Life Educator	Caitlin Humphrey	Administrative Assistant
Frans Vokey	Dairy Specialist	Colin Hostetter	Farm Business Management Specialist
Melissa Spence	Outreach Ag Educator	Eric Antrim	Crop & Soil Specialist
Denise DeVoe	4-H Youth & Family Team Leader	Carson Schweinsberg	Energy Advisor
Laura Perry	4-H Support Specialist	Lindsey Pashow	Harvest NY Ag Development & Marketing



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LEWIS COUNTY AGRICULTURE

Celebrating regional growth through hands-on farm tours,
pollinator science, stewardship, and sweet treats!



OFFICE BEAUTIFICATION LANDSCAPING

The Master Gardeners of Lewis County, who took the course from CCE Jefferson with Cierra Williams, volunteered to renovate the landscaping around the Maple Ridge Center as well as staff from CCE Lewis. It was a total of 2 days and 3 Master Gardener volunteers that helped with the project. To maintain the Master Gardener certificate, volunteer hours are required and it helped us tremendously to beautify the surrounding landscape.



BEEF STEWARDSHIP FOR SUCCESS

Lewis, Jefferson, and St. Lawrence invited beef producers to Gouverneur to learn more about how to market your products, the importance of biosecurity, where & how to give proper injections, handling, and stockmanship. There were hands-on learning and practice at Brad Love's beef farm. Guest speakers; Chrissy Claudio-NY Beef Council and Dr. Jessica Scillieri Smith-NY Ag & Markets Field Veterinarian were invited and this program counted as credits for BQA recertification.



CONTAINER GARDENING

This year, we grew sweet green bell peppers in our container garden buckets. We appreciate the continued support from Andrew and Dorothy Kramer from Cedar Knoll Farm for donating the plants. Our program reached ten libraries in Lewis County, and DSS of Lewis County and 140 buckets were planted. These workshops supplied everything participants need to start a small garden in a bucket and are very popular.

BEEKEEPING

Randall Cass; NYS Honeybee Extension Associate talked about the impact of pesticides on pollinators and the latest research and science surrounding honeybee health. The beekeepers group remains very active with our monthly meetings.



OPEN FARM DAY 2026

Over 700 visitors as far as Quebec, Canada, North Carolina, Ohio, Indiana, Maryland and Colorado spent the day enjoying what Lewis County Agriculture has to offer. They explored mushroom growing, maple production, lavender items, cheese curd, dairy farming, a meat market, petting animals, picking their own flower bouquet, and the cheese store.

Showcasing local farms,
food, and ag tourism.



LEWIS COUNTY ICE CREAM TRAIL 2026

The Lewis County Ice Cream Trail participants returned 81 maps this year. It began during the county fair and ended on Labor Day. There were 14 ice cream shops participating and several maps returned that stopped at every location.

This event increased economic growth with 533 novelty ice creams enjoyed and an average of \$2665 supporting the local ice cream shops. Stewart's donated an ice cream sundae party for 50 people including all the fixings, and Lewis Lanes donated a birthday party for 6 people with pizza and ice cream included.

The winners were Jeff Almy and Chris Bower.



Supporting one farm
at a time.

**CONNECTING TRAVELERS FROM NEAR AND
FAR TO HANDS-ON FARM EXPERIENCES.**

"Cornell Cooperative Extension is an employer and educator recognized for providing equal program and employment opportunities in accordance with applicable laws."

2026

HELPING LOCAL FARMS MEET FDA STANDARDS.

EMPOWERING LOCAL GROWERS WITH PRODUCE SAFETY EDUCATION

Hands-on training for
produce safety and IPM.



Food Safety

CCE Lewis hosted a Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training Course at a local farm centrally located for all Amish to attend. The Tug Hill Produce Auction initiated this event and wanted to encourage all growers to be food safety compliant. Instructors Lindsey Pashow, Robert Hadad, Elisabeth Hodgdon, and Sheri Card; Ag & Markets FSMA inspector for produce provided the in-person training. 31 producers attended and received a certification.

Following the next day, an IPM management and Wholesale Packaging meeting was provided for producers to ask questions to the same instructors for pest management and requirements for packaging.

CCE Lewis invited Amish community members to take the Better Process Control School-Acidified (Mild Thermally Processed) Foods online class at our office. This is for processing low-acid or acidified foods required to sell at businesses and after completion of the course, each producer receives a certificate for the training specified for FDA and USDA regulations. 5 producers attended the 2-day online course.

LEWIS COUNTY DAIRY EXCELLENCE

Celebrating our 2026 Dairy of Distinction honorees and Young Farmer Award recipients!

Dairy of Distinction 2026

Established in 1983, the Northeast Dairy Farm Beautification Program recognizes the hard work and dedication of dairy producers who have attractive, well-kept farms and promote a good dairy industry image. The Dairy of Distinction Program is based on the concept that attractive farmsteads enhance consumer confidence in the dairy industry. This year's Dairy of Distinction Award goes to Joe Shultz and his partner Dianna Brouty located on Number Three Road in Lowville.



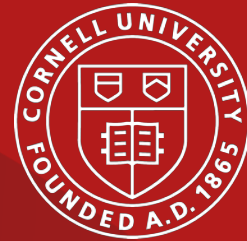
Joe Shultz and his partner Dianna Brouty from Shultz Family Cheese.

Young Farmer Award 2026

Since 1975, the Lewis County Dairy Industry Building Committee has honored a young Dairy Producer who has exhibited sound management practices that help them stand out from their peers. They are nominated by someone in the local community and recognized for their level of dairy herd, crop and financial management. The Lewis County Young Farmer Award 2026 was presented to Robbie, Mazie, and Chad Sullivan from Sullivan Farms in Constableville, NY.



Robbie, Mazie, and Chad Sullivan from Sullivan Farms.



**PROMOTING CONSUMER
TRUST AND SOUND
MANAGEMENT.**

**Elevating the
image of Lewis
County dairy**

Saluting superior farm
standards in 2026.

REGIONAL AGRICULTURE



Over 40 animal care workers and managers attended hands-on workshops to better identify hazards and understand cattle behavior.

DAIRY CATTLE HANDLING AND SAFETY WORKSHOPS

Each year, numerous people working on farms are seriously injured or killed by farm animals, including dairy cattle. According to the NY Center for Animal Medicine and Health (NYCAMH), the primary causes include poor judgment and a lack of understanding animal behavior. With new workers constantly entering this work environment, farms need training programs to ensure cattle are handled efficiently, and with regard for the safety and welfare of people and animals alike.

The Tri-County Ag Team partnered with NYCAMH, Cornell Ag Workforce Development, and Cornell PRO-DAIRY to create an on-farm workshop that was delivered to three locations across the region addressing this need.

Over 40 animal care workers and managers attended to learn how to identify hazards and escape routes around cattle facilities, better understand cattle behavior, and gain tips to interact with cattle in ways that result in safe and efficient movement and care. A separate track for managers and owners focused on strategies to build and manage a proactive culture of safety and animal welfare. Participants were awarded certificates to document continuing education to help meet the National Dairy FARM Program's requirements.



The group learned about Klock Family Farm's use of robotic feeding and milking systems.



Marc Larabee, Grace-Way Farm, talking to participants.

DAIRY FARM TOUR HELPS PRODUCERS PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

As New York's dairy industry continues to grow, with processors expanding existing facilities and investing in new plants, many North Country dairy farmers are evaluating how to position their businesses for future opportunities. A common challenge is determining whether and how to transition from traditional tiestall barns to freestall housing and new milking technologies.

To address this need, the Tri-County Ag Team organized a dairy farm tour that connected producers with farmers who had already made these investments. Participants visited three dairy farms that had successfully transitioned from tiestall to freestall systems and adopted different milking technologies. The tour created an opportunity for firsthand learning, open discussion, and practical insights from fellow producers who had experienced the process themselves.

The program attracted 37 dairy producers from Lewis, Jefferson, St. Lawrence, and Oneida counties. Throughout the day, participants explored facility designs, management strategies, and technology options while engaging directly with host farmers.

The impact extended beyond the tour itself. Participants reported greater confidence in making future expansion and investment decisions and identified new practices they plan to implement on their farms. The event also strengthened connections among producers and created new relationships between Cornell Cooperative Extension staff and dairy farmers throughout the region. By fostering peer-to-peer learning and informed decision-making, the tour helped support the long-term success and competitiveness of North Country dairy farms.



FARMER-CENTERED EDUCATION TO IMPROVE CROP PRODUCTION IN THE NORTH COUNTRY

Agricultural production in Northern New York is limited by a significantly shorter growing season compared to other parts of the U.S., which is accompanied by wet spring and fall conditions that delay fieldwork during crucial planting and harvesting windows. Two key programs aimed to address these challenges and assist the region's agricultural producers. The Tri-County Ag Team reestablished CCE Crop Congress events that featured experts from Cornell University sharing recent research findings and recommendations on forage, nutrient, weed, and insect pest management.

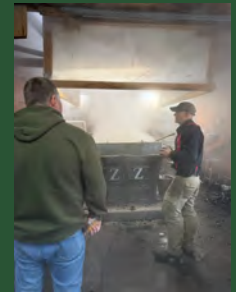
The events at two locations attracted over 50 producers and agribusiness people and provided continuing education credits for pesticide applicators and Certified Crop Advisors. It was also an opportunity for growers to socialize in the dead of winter, strengthening the regional and statewide CCE network.

Adopting practices that improve soil health benefits agricultural production and reduces soil erosion and runoff. The team collaborated with the New York Soil Health Team to organize a free Soil Health Day at Sheland Farms in Adams to highlight the farm's innovative agricultural practices of double cropping triticale.

Several presentations and a panel of farmers focused on the benefits of manure injection, cover crops, and strategies to reduce field compaction. The Cornell Soil Health trailer had a rain simulator demonstration to drive home how better agricultural management practices enhance the soil's ability to handle increasing extreme weather events that are occurring in the region.



NYS MAPLE WEEKEND 2026



Maple Weekend provides an opportunity for maple producers to work with consumers and give them a hands-on view of the maple industry. From wood walks to tastings, visitors experience what maple sugaring is all about. The variety of value-added maple products sold in Lewis County and the surrounding counties is a wonderful mix of eat now, use for cooking and save for a group friends get together.

As we have done for over twenty some years Cornell Cooperative Extension of Lewis County partnered with the Lewis County Maple Producers Association to promote participating sugarhouses as part of this statewide marketing and educational initiative. Some of the promotional efforts included television interviews, radio advertisements, news releases and social media

conducted throughout the month of March to promote the two Maple Weekends. Cooperative Extension continues to provide research-based information to new and beginner producers as they start up their sugarbushes.



VISITORS EXPLORED LOCAL SUGARHOUSES FOR AN AUTHENTIC LOOK INTO MAPLE SUGARING.



Lewis County 4-H

It has been an exceptionally busy and rewarding year for Lewis County 4-H. With a packed calendar of events, plenty of adventures, and a few memorable surprises along the way, our members, volunteers, and families once again demonstrated what makes 4-H so special. Interest in our programs remained strong, with Day Camp filling to capacity and maintaining a wait list, while both the Small Animal Barn and Youth Building were bustling with activity throughout the County Fair.

Participation also remained strong in our cattle and horse programs, where youth proudly showcased the knowledge, skills, and dedication they developed through their project work. Through these experiences and many more, our 4-H members continued to learn, grow, lead, and build lasting connections. It has been a year filled with accomplishments, friendships, memories, and countless moments worth celebrating.



DAIRY PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



The Lewis County 4-H Dairy Program continues to provide outstanding opportunities for youth to develop knowledge, responsibility, and leadership through hands-on experiences with their animals. Once again, our dairy barns were full during the Lewis County Fair, a reflection of the strong interest and dedication of our dairy exhibitors. Many of these hardworking youth went on to represent Lewis County at the New York State Fair, showcasing the skills they have developed through years of commitment to their projects.

DAIRY SHOWMANSHIP CLINIC

Another highlight of the year was the Dairy Showmanship Clinic, held on Juneteenth at Moserdale Farm. The clinic attracted another great turnout of eager participants and provided youth with the opportunity to learn from experienced dairy producers and industry professionals representing a variety of dairy-related fields. Events like these help youth build confidence while strengthening the knowledge and skills needed for success in and out of the show ring.

DAIRY BOWL

For the first time in several years, the Regional Dairy Bowl Competition was held at South Lewis Central School. The event was a tremendous success and brought together enthusiastic youth from across the region to test their dairy knowledge in a fast-paced and engaging competition. Lewis County was well represented, with youth from each age division advancing to the state competition following outstanding performances at the regional level. The success of our Dairy Bowl program would not be

possible without the dedication of our volunteer coaches. A special thank you goes to **Lynn Stacey-Lyndaker** and **Holly Kraeger** for the many hours they devoted to organizing practices, preparing study materials, and sharing their extensive knowledge and passion for the dairy industry with our youth. Their commitment helps ensure that participants gain not only valuable dairy knowledge but also confidence, teamwork, and lifelong skills.

DAIRY PROSPECTS

Cornell Cooperative Extension Lewis County, in cooperation with Cornell Cooperative Extension associations in Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties, successfully delivered the Dairy Prospects Program during the 2025-2026 program cycle, providing 10 youth with educational and career exploration opportunities within the dairy and agricultural industries. Offered every other year, the program helps participants develop a deeper understanding of modern dairy production while connecting them with agricultural professionals, industry leaders, and potential career pathways.

A highlight of the program was participation in Cornell University's Dairy Discovery Program, where youth engaged in hands-on learning focused on dairy herd health and management, calf and heifer production, quality milk production, feed management, and whole-farm planning. Additional educational experiences included attending the New York State Farm Show and touring a variety of farms, agribusinesses, equipment dealerships, cooperatives, and dairy processing facilities. These visits exposed participants to diverse management systems and

emerging technologies, including rotary parlors and robotic milking operations. The continued success of Dairy Prospects demonstrates the value of regional collaboration in preparing the next generation of agricultural leaders and increasing youth awareness of the many opportunities available within New York's dairy industry.

A Year of Growth and Achievement

We are incredibly proud of all of our dairy youth for their hard work, perseverance, and accomplishments throughout the year. Whether competing in Dairy Bowl, participating in educational clinics, showing at the county fair, or advancing to the New York State Fair, these young people continue to demonstrate the dedication and enthusiasm that make the Lewis County 4-H Dairy Program so successful.



The Pratt Northam Interns: Making an Impact Every Step of the Way

Words cannot adequately express the value our two Pratt Northam interns brought to Lewis County 4-H this year. They joined us during a year filled with excitement, change, and more than a few unexpected adventures, and embraced every opportunity with enthusiasm, flexibility, and a positive attitude. Whether they were assisting with programs, supporting special events, working directly with youth, or helping move what felt like an endless number of supplies and pieces of furniture, they never hesitated to lend a hand. It is safe to say they not only gained valuable experience,

but likely a few extra muscles along the way. One of the greatest rewards was watching both young women grow in confidence and recognize the impact they were capable of making. Throughout their internship, they willingly took on every challenge presented to them, approaching each task with grace, professionalism, and a smile. Their efforts helped create meaningful experiences for youth throughout our community, and the impact of their work will continue to be felt for years to come. Beyond the projects completed and events supported, they became

valued members of our Extension family. Their dedication and positive energy made them an incredible asset to our team. We are grateful for everything they accomplished during their time with us and are excited to see what the future holds for them. They are already sorely missed.



Robotics

STEM programming continues to be a growing area of interest within Lewis County 4-H, providing youth with opportunities to explore science, technology, engineering, and problem-solving through hands-on experiences. This year, our technology offerings expanded with the addition of several new VEX Robotics kits, giving youth even more opportunities to design, build, and experiment. Our Ozobots remained a favorite among participants, generating excitement at both 4-H Day Camp and most recently at Lewis County Night Out, where youth and families eagerly tested their coding and navigation skills. Looking ahead, we plan to use the remaining 2026 grant funding to purchase Spheros robots, further expanding access to engaging STEM experiences. These new tools will help introduce youth to emerging technologies, encourage creativity and critical thinking, and provide opportunities for young people throughout our community to explore new interests and discover skills they may not have realized they possessed.



Conservation Field Days

Sixth graders from across Lewis County came together at the Lowville DEC site for a day of outdoor adventure, environmental education, and hands-on discovery. A total of 272 youth participated in the event, rotating through 12 educational stations led by experts from a wide variety of fields, including soil and water conservation, public health, environmental education, beekeeping, and natural resource management.

These interactive sessions gave youth the opportunity to learn directly from professionals while exploring potential career paths and gaining a deeper understanding of the world around them. Of course, fishing remained a favorite among participants. This year, we switched from worms to fishing lures, which streamlined the process and reduced the wait for baiting hooks, allowing youth to spend more time doing what they came to do: fish! The change gave participants additional opportunities to practice their skills on the water. Throughout the day, youth gained a deeper understanding of the environment and discovered ways they can help protect and preserve natural resources for future generations.

CELEBRATING AMERICA AT THE COUNTY FAIR

From Hooves to Feathers: Barns Full of Animals and Hearts Full of Pride

This year's County Fair was a vibrant celebration of youth achievement, hard work, and hands-on learning. The Small Animal Barn was bustling from start to finish, and we did more than a little creative problem-solving to find enough space and cages for all the rabbits, guinea pigs, poultry, sheep, and goats exhibited by our 4-H members. The enthusiasm and participation from our youth were incredible, reflecting the many hours they invested in caring for, training, and preparing their animals throughout the year.



The cattle and horse barns were alive with activity as youth proudly exhibited their animals and showcased the hard work, responsibility, and dedication that went into their projects throughout the year. From early morning chores to time in the show ring, these members demonstrated perseverance and a genuine passion for their projects. It was inspiring to see so many youth taking pride in their accomplishments and supporting one another throughout the week. Across all of the barns, our senior



members were quick to lend a hand, offer encouragement, and share their knowledge with younger exhibitors. It was heartwarming to see the spirit of 4-H shining through as experienced youth stepped into leadership roles, helping to guide and inspire the next generation of 4-H members



NEW YORK STATE FAIR

SHOWCASING LEWIS COUNTY EXCELLENCE

The New York State Fair provided another opportunity for Lewis County 4-H members to showcase the results of their hard work, dedication, and commitment to their projects. Members proudly represented our county in a variety of competitions, exhibits, and educational events, demonstrating the skills and knowledge they have developed throughout the year.

Our dairy judging youth demonstrated an impressive depth of knowledge while competing against some of the strongest competitors from across New York State. Several members returned home with ribbons recognizing their outstanding performances, but the experience itself reflected the many hours spent studying, practicing, and preparing throughout the year.



The competition was fierce, providing youth with valuable opportunities to strengthen their evaluation, critical thinking, decision-making, and communication skills. Through their participation, our dairy judging members continued to grow both personally and professionally while representing Lewis County with professionalism, sportsmanship, and pride. A special thank you goes to our dedicated dairy leaders and the parents of our dairy youth, whose countless hours of coaching, mentoring, transportation, encouragement, and support help make these opportunities and achievements possible. Our rabbit and cavy judging participants also demonstrated the results of countless hours of study, practice, and preparation while competing against youth from across New York State. Their strong performances showcased an impressive understanding of breeds, evaluation, and animal care, reflecting the knowledge and skills they have developed through their project work. A special congratulations goes to Tristyn Gutierrez, who earned First Overall in the combined events competition, an outstanding accomplishment.

The success of this program is also a testament to the dedication of our small animal families, who spent countless hours studying alongside participants, transporting youth and animals to events, and even serving as contest judges.

Their support, combined with the determination of our youth, helped create meaningful learning experiences that strengthened knowledge, built confidence, and fostered growth both in and out of the show ring.

The outstanding quality of youth building projects exhibited by our members was evident throughout the fair season and continued at the New York State Fair, where two Lewis County 4-H projects returned home with rosettes recognizing their excellence. These accomplishments reflect the hard work, creativity, perseverance, and commitment that youth demonstrate as they explore new interests, develop valuable life skills, and strive for excellence in their project areas.

From livestock exhibits and judging contests to educational displays and project showcases, our members continued to embody the spirit of 4-H, making us incredibly proud of all they accomplished on the state stage. Their achievements serve as a reminder that success is measured not only by awards earned, but also by the growth, confidence, leadership, and life skills developed along the way.



Youth Building A Hub of Creativity, Learning, and Fun

From arts and crafts to STEM, photography, fiber arts, and more, the exhibits demonstrated the wide range of opportunities available through 4-H. The Youth Building continues to be a place where learning, creativity, and achievement come together, inspiring youth to explore new interests, develop new skills, and proudly share their accomplishments with the community.

One of the most popular attractions was the newest addition to our Rock the Bike activity, a spin art attachment that quickly became a favorite among both youth and adults. The station was in near-constant use throughout the fair, with participants eagerly creating colorful works of art while learning firsthand how pedal power can fuel creativity. Of course, some of our longtime favorites were just as popular. The bubble machine and Farmers' Market activity kept smiles on faces all week long, with youth enthusiastically returning again and again to participate in these interactive experiences. Together, these hands-on activities helped make the Youth Building a fun and engaging destination for fairgoers of all ages.





Buzzing about Pollination at the Lewis County 4-H Day Camp at Aldersgate

What an incredible adventure this year's Lewis County 4-H Day Camp at Aldersgate Camp & Retreat Center turned out to be. With new 4-H leadership last year, we were initially hesitant about taking on such a large undertaking, but looking back, we could not be happier that we did. Interest in camp exceeded our expectations, with all 50 camper spots filling quickly and additional youth placed on a waiting list. In fact, many parents asked if there was a way to reserve their child's spot for next year before registration even opens, a true testament to the positive experiences campers had throughout the week.

One of the most rewarding aspects of camp was watching returning campers welcome first-time participants and immediately make them feel like part of the 4-H family. Friendships formed quickly, confidence grew daily, and campers embraced every opportunity to learn, explore, and have fun together. This year's theme, Pollination, was woven into nearly every aspect of camp. From hands-on educational activities and creative crafts to games and even themed snacks, campers explored the important role pollinators play in our environment. We were especially fortunate to welcome Brian and Amy Siegrist of Turin Bees as guest presenters. Their enthusiasm and expertise captivated campers of all ages and created quite a buzz around camp. In the hours that followed, our Cloverbuds could be heard retelling bee facts to anyone who would listen.

One favorite fact was learning that when a honeybee stings, it releases an alarm pheromone that can signal other bees to investigate the same threat, which is why beekeepers encourage people to calmly move away from the area after being stung, to avoid subsequent stings. Their excitement was a wonderful reminder of how meaningful hands-on learning experiences can be. Of course, camp would not be complete without favorite outdoor adventures like boating, fishing, gaga ball, and archery. These activities were among the highlights of the week, with many campers asking for even more time on the water and range. Based on their feedback, we plan to expand these opportunities next year as part of an exciting Environment and Wilderness theme that will encourage even more outdoor exploration and discovery.

We are incredibly grateful to Paul O'Connor for helping connect us with the outstanding team at Aldersgate Camp & Retreat Center. Their beautiful facility, dedicated staff, and partnership played a tremendous role in camp's success. Together, they helped create an unforgettable experience filled with learning, laughter, friendship, and memories that will last a lifetime.

The overwhelming response to camp has also prompted conversations about the future. With camp filling to capacity, a waiting list of eager participants, and families already asking about next year's registration, we are exploring the possibility of adding a second week of Day Camp in the future. While there is still much planning to be done, the enthusiasm shown by campers and families makes it clear that there is a strong desire for additional opportunities for youth to learn, grow, and experience the sense of belonging that 4-H Day Camp provides. We are excited to see what the future holds and look forward to building on the success of this year's program.



One of the highlights of the week came during the Aldersgate Board of Directors dinner, where the New York State 4-H Camp Specialist commended Lewis County 4-H for offering the most content-rich camp programming in New York State. What stood out most, however, was his recognition of the relationships being built between youth, volunteers, and staff. He shared a story of witnessing a camper excitedly tell a volunteer that they had put their face in the lake water for the first time. The volunteer responded with genuine enthusiasm, celebrating the accomplishment and expressing how proud they were of the camper for trying something new. He noted that moments like these exemplify the power of camp and the extraordinary dedication of our volunteers and staff. Their encouragement, mentorship, and support help create an environment where youth feel safe to take healthy risks, build confidence, and discover strengths they never knew they had. It was a meaningful reminder that while activities and programming are important, it is the connections and sense of belonging that often leave the most lasting impact.

We continue to be incredibly grateful to the Lewis County Youth Bureau for their ongoing financial support, which helps make camp accessible to more youth and families. Their investment in positive youth development allows us to provide meaningful experiences that might otherwise be out of reach for some participants.

We would also like to thank our Cornell Cooperative Extension Board of Directors for their continued encouragement, enthusiasm, and willingness to share ideas as the program continues to grow. The support we receive from both organizations extends well beyond funding. The encouragement, thoughtful conversations, constructive feedback, and genuine excitement they bring to the program inspire us to continually evaluate, improve, and find new ways to make camp even better each year. Their belief in the value of camp and the impact it has on young people motivates us to keep striving to provide exceptional opportunities for Lewis County youth.

PARENTING PROGRAM

12-14

DSS COLLABORATION

Families Visited Weekly
In-home support each month

5-7

COURT PARTNERSHIP

Monthly Referrals Supported
Lewis County Family Court

● A New Chapter at the Farmhouse

This past year has been a year of change and adjustments. The move to the farmhouse has been an opportunity to look at programming and make some positive modifications.

The farmhouse is a wonderful place. It provides a friendly and warm environment for our programs. I continue to work with the Department of Social Services providing parenting to families with regular, dedicated home visits.

● A New Chapter at the Farmhouse

In addition, I work with families from the community that were referred by Lewis County Family Court. The families need assistance in working through chaos within their homes.

The majority of the families were able to come together and develop a parenting plan outside of court. This has been a great success—it reduces stress and empowers families to resolve their own issues.

"The farmhouse provides a friendly, warm environment for our programs—helping families resolve issues and thrive together."



Out-of-Court Resolutions

Strengthening family bonds through collaborative conflict resolution and dedicated parenting plans.

ENERGY REPORT



In 2026, the CCE Lewis County Energy Advisor provided direct support and education to 153 residents across 12 community events and presentations. Through tailored outreach, seven local households were enrolled in the Empower+ Program, opening access to up to \$74,000 in potential free home weatherization improvements. In addition to weatherization assistance, the Energy Advisor assisted residents in navigating key state and federal financial incentives, including the Comfort Home Program, NY Clean Heat, NY-Sun, HEAP, and Residential Tax Credits, helping Lewis County families build more comfortable, energy-efficient homes.

RESIDENTIAL ENERGY TAX CREDITS FEDERAL AND STATE TAX INCENTIVE GUIDANCE

HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (HEAP)

HEATING FUEL AND UTILITY SUPPORT

NY CLEAN HEAT PROGRAM
HEAT PUMP TECHNOLOGY AND
REBATES

NY-SUN PROGRAM

SOLAR ENERGY ACCESS AND
INCENTIVES

FINANCE OVERVIEW

2026 Financial Support and Funding Sources

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Lewis County leverages Lewis County tax dollars to benefit the county's economic vitality and residents.

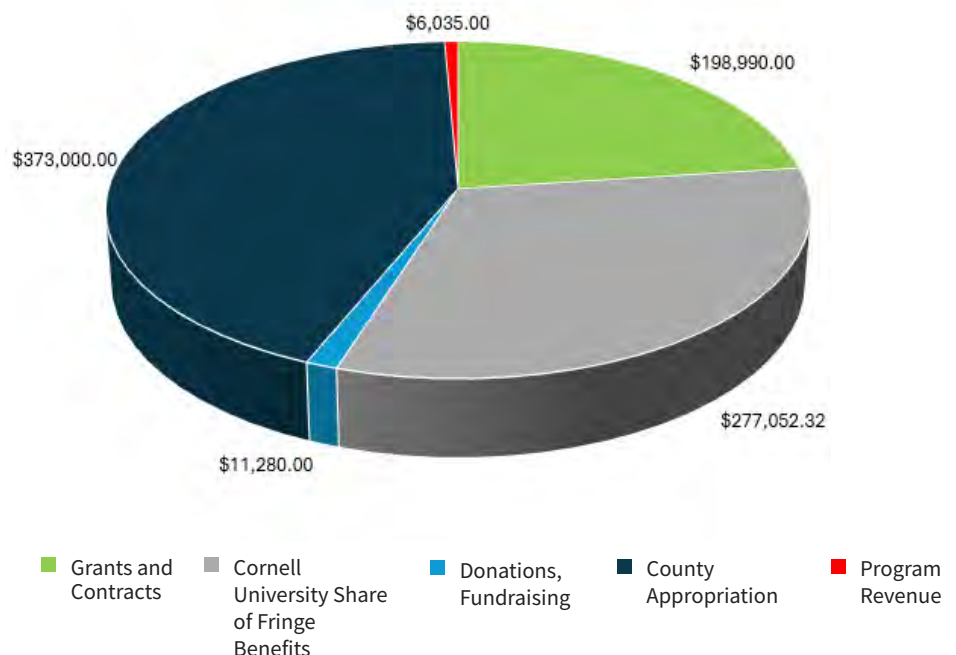
CCE Lewis County is a subordinate governmental agency with an educational mission that operates under a form of organization and administration approved by Cornell University as agent for the State of New York. It is tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

The association is part of the national cooperative extension system, an educational partnership between County, State, and Federal Governments. As New York's land grant university, Cornell administers the system in this state. Each Cornell Cooperative Extension association is an independent employer that is governed by an elected Board of Directors with general oversight from Cornell. All associations work to meet the needs of the counties in which they are located as well as state and national goals.

Value of employee fringe benefits covered by Cornell University is \$277,052.32

Volunteer support – 150 volunteers donated over 972 hours valued at \$35,128.08

2026 Budget for CCE Lewis: Source of Funds





"Cornell Cooperative Extension is an employer and educator recognized for providing equal program and employment opportunities in accordance with applicable laws."

Please remember that every story of success and connection in this report belongs to our entire community. To our generous donors who help invest in our mission, our dedicated volunteers who give so generously of their time, our hardworking staff who drive our daily work, our program participants who bring vitality to our workshops, our remarkable 4-H youth who inspire our future, our community partners who keep us grounded and growing, and you, our reader, for taking the time to share in our progress: thank you. Your support makes everything on these pages possible, and we are deeply grateful to carry this work forward together.

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