

NY Beginning Farmer Project



BF Project Background

- Impetus: increasing inquiries from aspiring farmers
- Local food interest offers market opportunities
- Influx of successful new farmers is crucial to the future of NY agriculture



What do we mean by Beginning Farmer?

Pre-Farming

- **Recruits** - people who might be interested in becoming farmers
- **Explorers** - considering farming options
- **Planners** - aspiring farmers planning the enterprise



More Types of Beginning Farmers

Beginning Farmers

- **Start-up** - farmers in their first 1-2 years operating a farm
- **Re-strategists** - farmers reorganizing in their first 10 years of operation
- **Establishing** - stable farmers operating farm less than 10 years
- **Diversifying** - Existing farmers seeking to start a new enterprise

Who are Beginning Farmers?

- Some high school students (BOCES/FFA)
- College students interested in sustainable farming
- College grads interested in starting a farm
- Rural landowners who want to use their land for some return
- Career change
- Retirees looking for something to do in retirement
- Established farmers looking to add value/diversify

New Farmers Need:

- Introductory info
 - Resources - what help is available
 - Finding good farm land
 - Enterprise options/opportunities
 - Networking opportunities
 - Farm tours/workshops
 - Legalities and logistics
- Production info
 - Finding and operating equipment
 - Enterprise specific info
 - Hands-on experience



New Farmers Need:

Marketing info

- Market regulations
- Where are the markets
- Estimating market potential
- Understanding pricing

Business Planning Assistance

- Start-up costs/funding
- Financial services
- Projecting costs and returns

BF Project Leadership



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension



- Team -10 Cornell Cooperative Extension Educators
- Managed by Cornell Small Farms Program
- Funded by Farm Viability Institute and Cornell Cooperative Extension

BF Project Mission

Our mission is to improve the likelihood of success of all new farmers by providing the education and support they need to develop and realize their agricultural visions.

Our efforts will also support educators by reviewing, distilling and packaging educational tools to make programming for beginning farmers easier and more effective.



BF Project Goals

- Any aspiring, new, or diversifying farmer in NY will have access to high-quality materials and training
- Extension staff will recognize, value and work more effectively with this audience
- Extension staff will document influx of new farmers to track their progress and collect info. that can be used to advocate for more programming and assistance for new farmers
- Over the next two years the resources and training programs of this project will help >30 new or aspiring farmers to improve farm profitability.

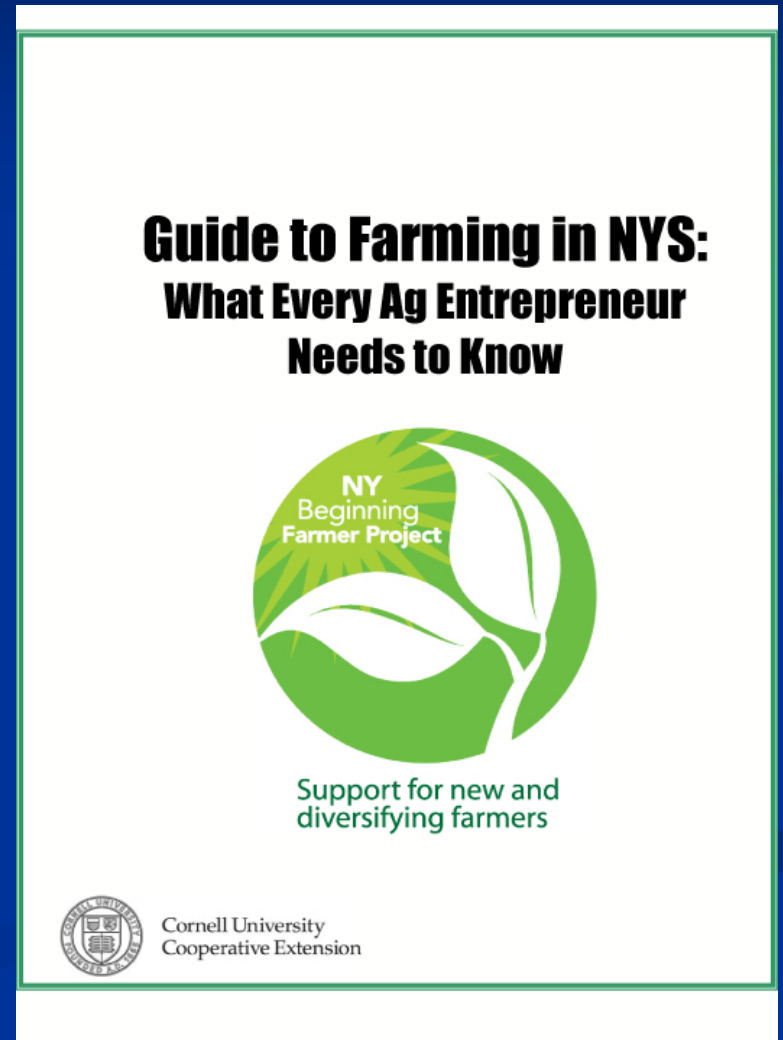
Strategies/Projects

- New information sources
- New training opportunities
- New tools for county-based extension staff to work more effectively with beginning farmers

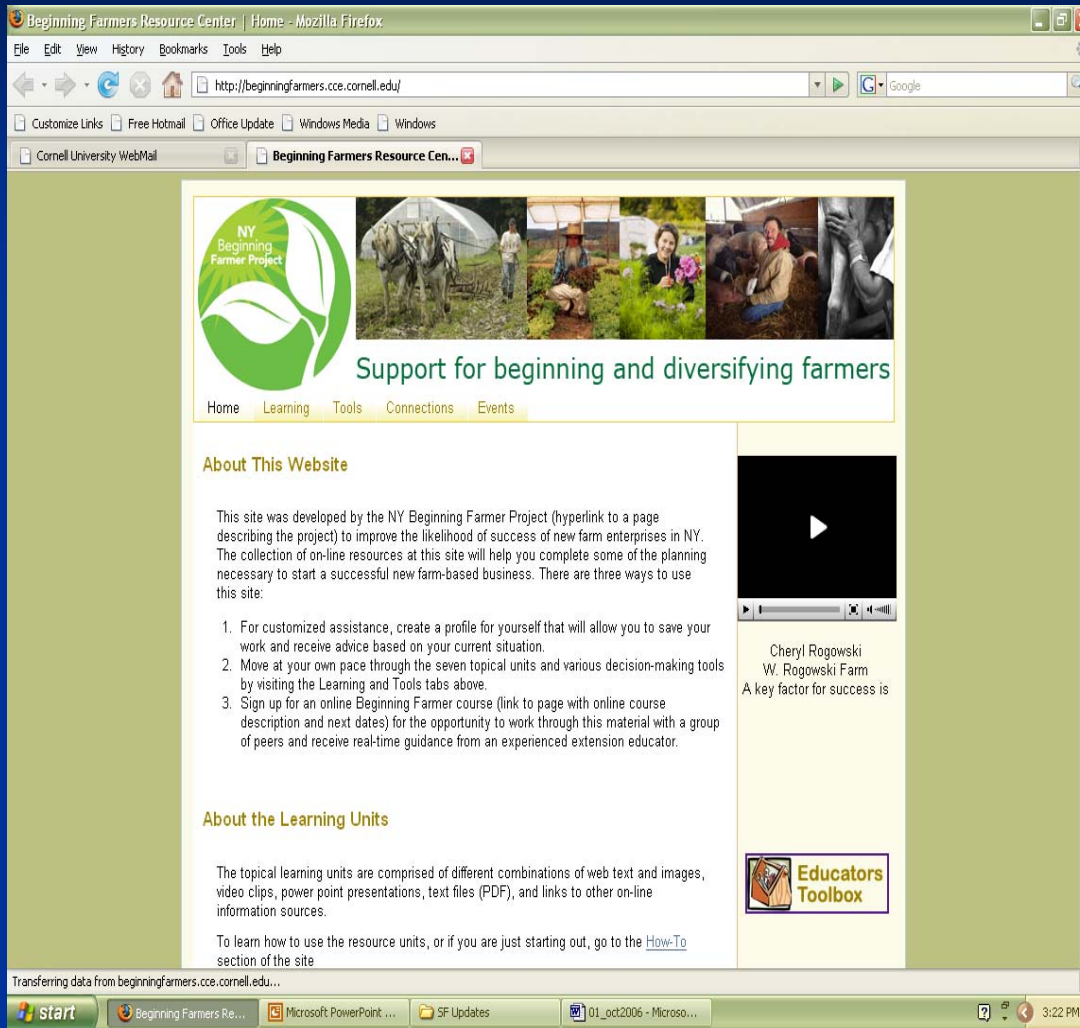


Guide to Farming in NYS

- Organized as series of 1-3-page fact sheets
- Comprehensive info. on Legal, Financial, Marketing, Regulatory, and other critical info.
- Well-received by ag community



Beginning Farmer Website



- Learning modules for the self-motivated
- Decision aids
- Personal profile for customized assistance
- Events calendar and links to helpful agencies
- Educator toolbox

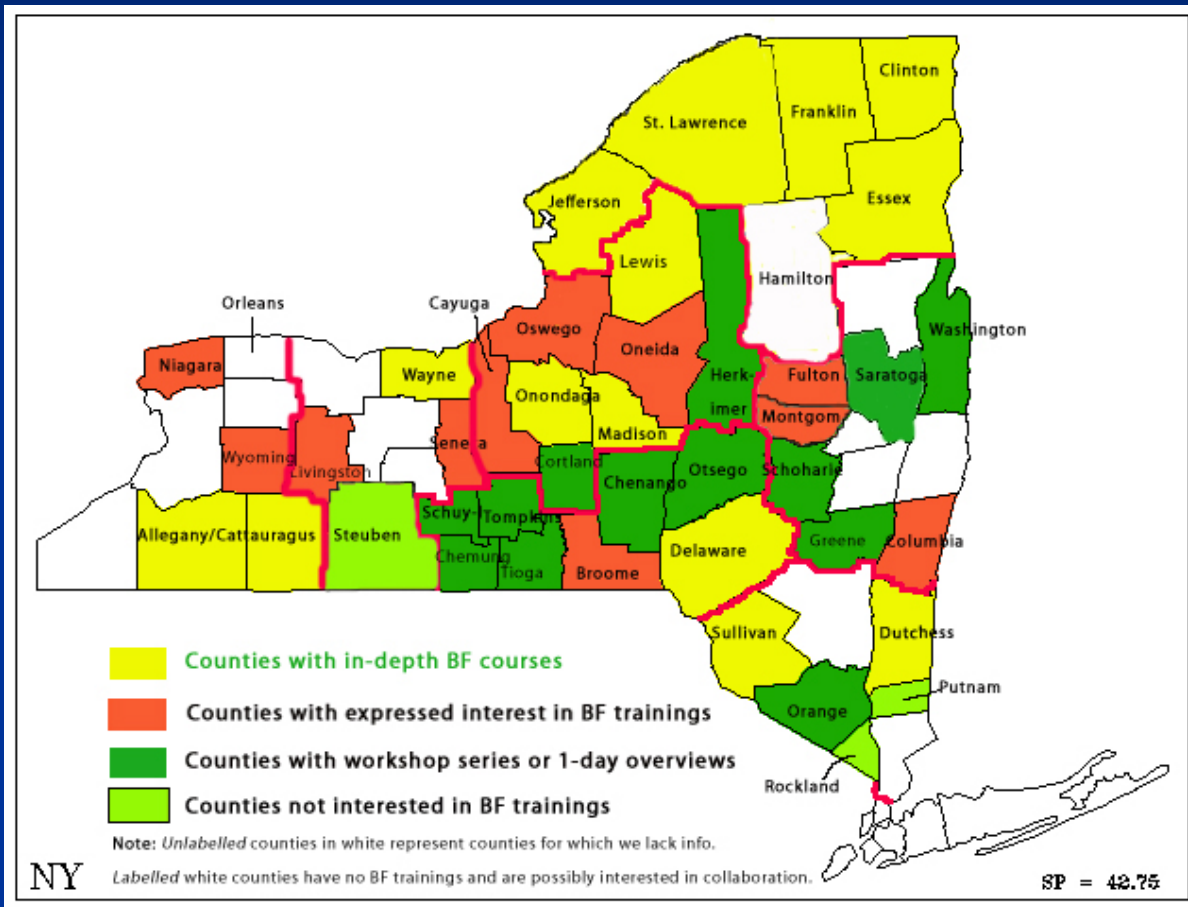
<http://beginningfarmers.cce.cornell.edu>

Online Course

- 9-week course titled Beginning Farmer 101
- Utilizes content from new BF website
- Integrates dynamic elements: discussion groups, quizzes, real-time Q&A, networking among peers
- Instructed by county-based extension educators
- Focus on pre-business planning

Regional Trainings

- Surveyed educators in Nov. 2006 to determine where statewide training gaps were



Regional Trainings

- Offered 3 last fall: NNY, WNY, ENY
- Have funding for 3/year through 2009
- Criteria: in-depth, not 1-day workshops
- Use any curriculum, focused on business planning



Building CCE Capacity



- Training county staff to recognize and support new farmers
- Providing tools for efficient management of new farmers:
 - Intake form
 - Resource packet

Accomplishments to Date

- Guide to Farming in NYS met with rave reviews from educators and farmers
- Online course was successfully piloted Fall '07 for and will be offered March '08 publicly.
- Reg. trainings have reached >80 people in 10 underserved counties and helped mentor 5 educators to offer future county/regional trainings
- In year one, BF Team has helped over 30 new or aspiring farmers create plans and is monitoring progress. More to come in '08...

How can communities help?

- Promote existing resources and services
- Inventory local resources, services, suppliers
- Promote connections (with farmers, agencies, producer organizations, land)
- Develop Mentoring programs/Farmer Discussion Groups
- Business Services/Advice

How can communities help?

- **Financial assistance** (loans, grants, services, etc.)
- **Promotional assistance** - local food directories, local food events, tourism, media, etc.
- **Research enterprise opportunities** that farmers don't have time for



Questions??

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