



## Bridging the Digital Divide with White Space

Our communities need strong communication networks. In some upstate counties of New York, access to broadband technology is almost non-existent.

In Hamilton County, for example, only three percent of the population has access to broadband – making it the largest percentage of underserved residents in the State.

This lack of service leaves affected areas at a competitive disadvantage as broadband access impacts all aspects of life, including healthcare, education, agriculture, social services and economic development.

As a means of addressing these shortages, the state and federal governments have implemented a number of programs to incentivize development. New projects are developing throughout the state and exciting opportunities to bridge the “digital divide” are popping up in rural communities like Thurman and Gallatin.

The technology, known as *white space broadband* or *super wi-fi*, is a wireless network running on the unlicensed spectrum – blank channels on your television dial. White space has an estimated speed capacity capable of allowing for services including, but not limited to, email, web browsing, standard definition video, telecommuting, file sharing, internet protocol television (IPTV), limited telemedicine, remote education and IPTV High definition.

In September of 2010, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) approved the use of white space for broadband, making way for a new era in internet access. White space broadband signals, when compared to traditional wi-fi, can travel significantly farther and have fewer problems with interference from natural obstacles like mountains. These characteristics make it ideally suited to serve even the most isolated of communities.

By “wiring in” to a traditional fiber network, a white space system of repeaters and antenna receivers can extend the broadband signal out to those who may not otherwise have had access. This provides a great opportunity to address “last mile” access issues.

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## Spring 2013 Rural Futures

NEWS OF INTEREST  
ABOUT RURAL  
NEW YORK STATE

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The NYS Legislative Commission on Rural Resources is a joint bipartisan office of the State Legislature.



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"Last mile" access arises in service situations where it would be cost prohibitive for traditional internet providers to build out the infrastructure needed to provide internet to individual homes and businesses. This scenario arises when the population density in a rural area makes the extension of service unprofitable for the company which cannot support the estimated \$20,000 cost per mile to build out the system.

**A Spotlight on Whitespace Projects:**

**At present, two projects are catching the eye of those suffering from lack of internet access. The Town of Gallatin in Columbia County is making waves, as the white space provider ASA Networks finalizes testing and calibration of equipment for a pilot program. The pilot program will give 30 residents internet access, free of charge, for three months.**

**A representative for the proposed pilot program in Gallatin described the proposal:**

**Q:** Tell me about white space.

**A:** Going back to the old day when we had the rabbit ears on TV to get the television picture, now we can use a similar idea to get an internet signal through white space. After the switch to digital cable, the decision was made by the federal government to dedicate those white spaces to public use and approve equipment such as routers and repeaters to supply the whitespace.

**Q:** What made you pick Gallatin as the location for the pilot program?

**A:** Well, I am a New Yorker. Our whole group is New York focused. The biggest thing is how much of an impact a lack of internet access can have on a town.

Gallatin specifically had limited service at best, especially when alternative internet options and their susceptibility to atmospheric interference and unreliability are taken into account. After putting together a plan to do a white space pilot in rural New York, we raised money for the pilot program and met some individuals from Gallatin, including Town Supervisor Thomas Garrick and Lisa DeLeeuw, the Town Clerk. This town was an ideal candidate to show how white space can help the areas that time and metropolitan life forgot.

**Q:** So where is the project right now?

**A:** Currently, we have an antenna attached to the Gallatin Town Hall right now. We are recalibrating and operating. Once we feel the system is operating at optimum performance, we will open up the network to 30 public users. The pilot is expected to last 3 months, free of charge to the end user. At the conclusion of the trial, the public users will have the opportunity to get a commercial plan.

**Q:** What are the speeds you are seeing? Is it comparable to DSL?

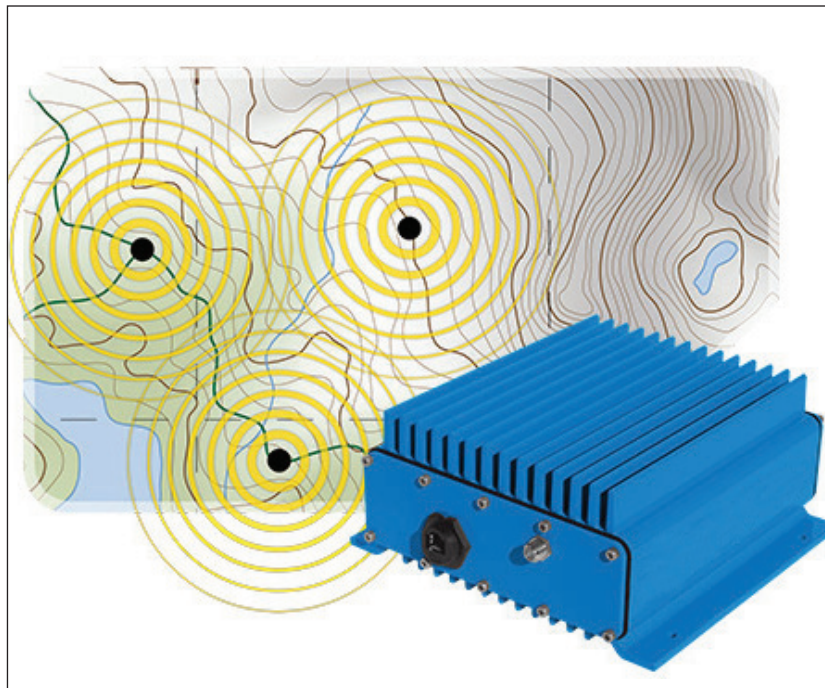
**A:** We have found white space to be on par with DSL or better. The speeds we provide are in line with both the Federal standards as well as New York State's.

To give you an idea, we have test users right now who can stream Hulu without buffering.

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**Q:** How are you evaluating the cost to the public? Have you determined a cost per month?

**A:** There are several factors that will impact the cost of a white space development for the end users. The most important is the improvement in technology that we are seeing. We believe there will be a quantum leap in the next year and a half to two years with white space equipment. This should improve our ability to provide white space, and it should also improve the price of the equipment. At this time we are working to provide the service to home users for \$50 or less.

**Q:** What do you envision going forward?

**A:** We as a company are very focused on New York State. We are hoping to expand outward. The current system can support several thousand people. We are working with local leaders and speaking to other municipalities about opportunities going forward.

**The Town of Thurman, in the Adirondacks, is also attracting attention for its use of white space to address issues with last mile access, land use limits and naturally obstructed terrain. They have contracted for a propagation study and initial design from Rainmaker Network Services, a local company that has provided residential and visitor wireless Internet access for over ten years. Thurman's Town Supervisor, Evelyn Wood, is equally as excited about white space coming to her municipality:**

**Q:** How is the white space project going?

**A:** Our proposed initial coverage area will reach approximately 80 homes, which we expect will cost \$250,000 from start to finish. This includes providing a subsidy to our residents in order to make the individual home hook-ups affordable.

**Q:** How will white space actually work in Thurman?

**A:** Well, you start out with trunk lines. In this case, we have two trunk lines that have massive capacity. We plan to hook into those lines for the main base stations that are in a weatherproof enclosure. The base stations are connected to small antennas. From there, the signal goes to other base stations, then to houses with a small antenna. The antenna connects to a receiver in the house that provides an Ethernet connection.

**Q:** You mentioned that you had written a proposal for grant funding under the ConnectNY program, that included a subsidy for the individual homes. How did you structure that?

**A:** When we originally looked at this proposal, we projected that it would cost approximately \$600 per household for a one-time fee to purchase and connect the equipment to, and within, the home. Using the subsidy, we are hoping to drop that cost to a one-time fee of \$300 per household. Then there would be a monthly fee of \$40 to \$60 per house.

**Q:** At this time, is the program up and running?

**A:** We are very excited because we just received a shipment of second generation white space equipment that has a much higher capacity than the equipment used in earlier trials. This allows us to begin the first phase, which is the propagation studies. We had applied for grant approval to fund the build-out and are very happy to say that the Connect NY Broadband grant awardees were announced on March 5, 2013 and Thurman's White Space project received \$200,000 from the program. This award will allow us to proceed with the actual build out.

**Q:** What is the reaction of the local residents?

**A:** It is great. We need internet up here for those who telecommute, and to offer our children educational opportunities on the same level as area schools that already have internet access. This will help with all of those concerns. We are very excited!

## Feeding the Access Issues: Eating Disorders and Rural Communities

When one considers the most serious public health issues facing our rural communities today, few would place an eating disorder near the top of that list. However, according to information presented at a New York State Senate Roundtable Discussion on the topic, it has become more common now to suffer from an eating disorder than Alzheimer's Disease. In fact, the New York State Department of Health reports that up to 10 million females and 1 million males in the United States suffer from an eating disorder. Nearly 20,000 of those sufferers are Western New Yorkers.



While eating disorders can affect men and women from all walks of life, evidence shows that those living in rural communities are disproportionately affected by their disorders when compared to their urban counterparts. According to Dr. Richard Kreipe, the Medical Director of the Western New York Comprehensive Care Center, the root of the problem lies in an all-too-familiar dilemma—a lack of access to care and services.

“Care is pretty sparse out there,” said Dr. Kreipe, when asked about the unique issues facing rural patients. Treating an eating disorder, for any patient, requires the coordination of specialized physicians and mental health professionals and early detection of the issue is critical to ensuring a full recovery.

According to Dr. Kreipe, sufferers in rural communities do not always seek immediate help, as the stigma attached to the disorders is often heightened. Furthermore, signs and symptoms of eating disorders can be overlooked by physicians and practitioners who do not specialize in their identification and treatment. Therefore, patients often get sicker and become more withdrawn from their communities and families as a result, making treatment even more difficult down the road.

The challenge, then, becomes increasing access to care, services and resources for those living with an eating disorder. Along with an improved outreach and education program to reduce the stigma attached to the issue, Dr. Kreipe recommends considering the use of telehealth and telemedicine to bring services to areas where they are lacking most. Doing so would allow rural patients access to specialized practitioners and assist with the development of effective treatment strategies. While the benefits to patients are apparent, Dr. Kreipe notes that rural physicians could utilize the technology as well, as it would allow them to consult with and learn from those who specialize in the field.

Telehealth—the use of technology to provide access to healthcare across distances—has long been a priority of the Rural Resources Commission. In 2012, the Commission sponsored a roundtable on the topic and was subsequently able to ensure the signing of a bill into law that removed barriers to the credentialing of telehealth providers (S. 6970). Such recognition and progress aims to increase awareness of telehealth and help patients access the highest quality care.



The National Eating Disorder Association maintains that females in the age group of 15-24 are 12 times more likely to die from their eating disorder than any other cause of death.

In order to prevent the growth of such a tragic statistic and others like it, the Commission continues to work to expand telehealth services, further improving access to care for all New Yorkers.





**ACCORDING TO THE RECOVERY CENTER OF WESTERN NY, SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF EATING DISORDERS INCLUDE:**

- **Preoccupation with body weight, size and appearance**
- **Significant loss in body weight** (not caused by a medical condition)
- **Attempt to hide weight loss** (i.e. wearing baggy clothes)
- **Excessive exercising before or after eating**
- **Fainting or feeling lightheaded**
- **Excessive erosion of enamel on the front teeth**
- **Cramping of muscles**



**ACCORDING TO THE NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, THE THREE MOST COMMON TYPES OF EATING DISORDERS ARE:**

- **Anorexia Nervosa-** an intense drive for thinness resulting in an extremely limited food intake.
- **Bulimia Nervosa-** binge eating followed by forms of purging like vomiting, laxative use, or extreme exercise.
- **Binge Eating-** compulsive overeating by a person with a history of diet failures who does not regularly purge in the way bulimics do.

**If you or someone you know is suffering from an eating disorder, please don't wait. Contact one of the resources below.**

**Recovery Center of Western NY**  
[www.nyeatingdisorders.org](http://www.nyeatingdisorders.org)  
 General Information:  
 1-800-700-4573

**Northeast Comprehensive Center for Eating Disorders (NECCED)**  
[www.amc.edu/patient/services/necced](http://www.amc.edu/patient/services/necced)  
 24 Hour Toll Free Hotline:  
 1-888-747-4727

**National Eating Disorder Helpline**  
 Mon-Fri 9:00am-5:00pm  
[www.nationaleatingdisorders.org](http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org)  
 1-800-931-2237

## Working Together: Rural Farmers Feed Urbanites

### *FarmieMarket*

Connecting busy farmers with busy consumers has always been a challenge that has prevented farms from growing their business and families from eating more local food. Enter FarmieMarket.

Created in 2010, FarmieMarket is a website where consumers can go to purchase goods from local farms to be delivered directly to their doorstep. Thanks to the service and convenience it affords area residents, the company has already doubled its business since its inception. It has grown from servicing one county with 500 deliveries, to six counties with 1,250 deliveries.

With a \$25 minimum order, a standard, weekly delivery time and a small delivery fee, FarmieMarket has made it easier to purchase the fresh, local goods that so many people desire, but can be difficult to find unless you actually visit the farm or a farmers' market. At the same time, it has lessened the burden on farmers, who no longer need to travel to a farmers' market and staff their booth with workers who could otherwise be working on the farm.

While currently only available in the Capital Region, FarmieMarket has received a dozen proposals for new markets, including some on the West Coast.

**Farmie Food Facts**  
Our Story of Sustenance

“This magical, marvelous food on our plate, this sustenance we absorb, has a story to tell. It has a journey. It leaves a footprint. It leaves a legacy.”  
- Joel Salatin

**FarmieMarket**

- 50** maximum mileage from farm to customer
- 58%** of FarmieMarket's farmers are women!
- <15%** of FarmieMarket's farmers are over the age of 55.
- 100%** of FarmieMarket farmers use conservation practices on their farms

**Did you know...**

- 78%** of FarmieMarket's customers are women?

For more information, visit their website at [www.FarmieMarket.com](http://www.FarmieMarket.com).

## The Veggie Mobile

It is no secret that fresh produce plays a key role in living a healthy lifestyle. For some, including fruits and vegetables in their diet is second nature. Yet for others, simply accessing this key food group presents a genuine challenge. For many living in the Capital Region, a problem arises when grocery stores and produce aisles are out of reach due to distance and a lack of personal transportation. One solution? The Veggie Mobile.

Launched in 2007, the Capital District Community Gardens created a refrigerated produce aisle on wheels to make fruits and vegetables more accessible and affordable to seniors and low-income residents in Troy, Schenectady, and Albany. The vegetables are purchased from local farms, many of whom feature their goods at the Menands Farmers' market, but they also come from areas as distant as Washington and Warren Counties and Germantown. The Veggie Mobile has managed to fulfill a significant community need and their success highlights the inherent value in urban-rural partnerships.



To learn more about The Veggie Mobile or to view their scheduled stops, please visit [www.cdcg.org/VeggieMobile.html](http://www.cdcg.org/VeggieMobile.html).





## Update on Food Hubs


Small farmers looking to step into big business will be getting a boost this year. We reported in our Fall 2012 issue the renewed focus on bringing farm food to peoples' tables through Food Hubs. Food hubs are centrally-located facilities that use a business management structure that assists in the aggregation, storage, processing and distribution and marketing of locally- or regionally-produced food products.


It was recently announced that four Food Hubs will gain an additional \$3.6 million in state funding to create distribution centers in Central New York, the Finger Lakes, the Hudson Valley and the North Country. With the existing Food Hub on Long Island, this new development will provide statewide support for smaller farmers to cooperatively achieve economies of scale and competitively offer their food products in the retail and restaurant market.

### The awards will be split among the four

 **\$1.5 million** to The Growing Upstate Food Hub in Canastota, Madison County to house six farmer-owned agribusinesses complete with Thruway access. This project has the potential to create 30 full-time jobs after its November 2013 opening.

 **\$826,000** to two established food processing and distribution firms serving New York State farms, Farm to Table Co-Packers and Hudson Valley Harvest for infrastructure investments in Kingston.

 **\$450,000** to The Finger Lakes Food Hub in Groton, NY for a 25,200 square foot facility that will package, brand, process and sell locally field grown food products including root crops, herbs and other fresh produce.

 **\$350,000** to United Helpers Management Company in Canton to help establish the North Country Food Hub.

The continued investment in our farmers shows just how important and relevant agriculture is to our New York State economy.



## The Health of Our Heroes



A recent study surveyed veteran populations in the United States and concluded that veterans have been increasingly concentrated in smaller rural counties. In fact, it has been estimated that 41% of total enrolled United States veterans, approximately 3.4 million men and women, reside in rural and highly rural areas of the country. In New York alone, 20% of the veteran population lives in rural areas, equaling over 200,000 people.

In light of these numbers, the need for adequate intervention and access to care for our returning soldiers is imperative. Statistically, these men and women have lower health-related quality-of-life scores and experience higher rates of physical illness. Services to provide for these veterans are delivered on federal, state and local levels – and in some cases, this can create a confusing framework of access and care coordination.

A new not-for-profit veterans service and advocacy collaborative in Buffalo, New York, slated to open its doors in early April will create a single point of entry for these veterans. The Veterans One-Stop Center of Western New York will provide assistance to the eight counties of Western New York with a cadre of case management professionals and will offer job and employment assistance, peer mentoring, mental health counseling, benefits counseling, legal services and housing services. The group, founded by Goodwill Industries of WNY, Inc., and the WNY Veterans Housing Coalition, Inc., serves all veterans, active service members and veterans' families.

The program, in its infancy, is looking to eventually roll-out a broad service network through close collaborations with existing, independent service providers and communities throughout all eight counties of Western New York.

“The One-stop Center, through innovative public and private partnerships, uses a collaborative approach by linking the veteran to community resources and providing an individually tailored community-based plan designed to meet the specific needs of the veteran and their family, along the entire continuum of care, locally,” says Chairman Roger L. Woodworth. “We look forward to building relationships throughout Western New York to mobilize and leverage our current assets in rural counties and build upon the current service infrastructure in these areas.”

The project is currently expected to service the more than 100,000 veterans and military families in the Erie and Niagara County region, and anticipates an expansion of its outreach catchment area to include the other six counties of Western New York to begin within the next year.

### RURAL VETERANS STATISTICS:

- There are approximately 22 million veterans living today with about 6.1 million (28%) living in rural areas.
- Nearly 43% (2.27 million) of veteran patients and 15% of overall veterans with at least a service-connected disability are from rural and highly rural areas.



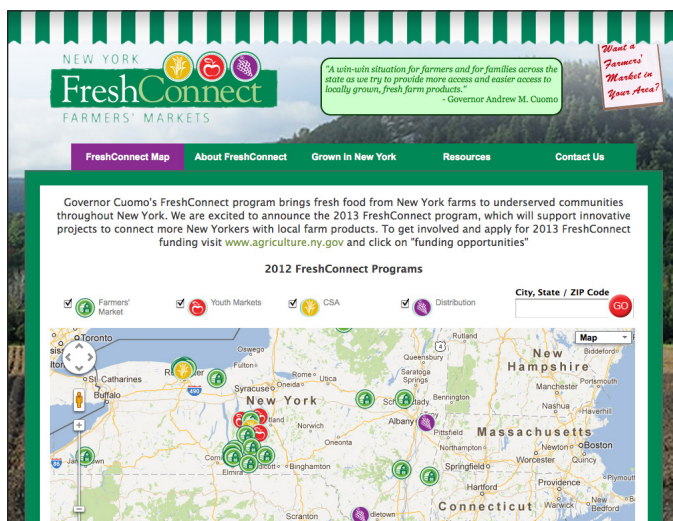
- Men and women from geographically rural and highly rural areas comprise one-third (31.9%) of the enrolled veterans who served in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.
- 44% of all soldiers killed during Operation Iraqi Freedom were from communities under 20,000.

Source: VHA Office of Rural Health

## NY State Initiatives

### FreshConnect

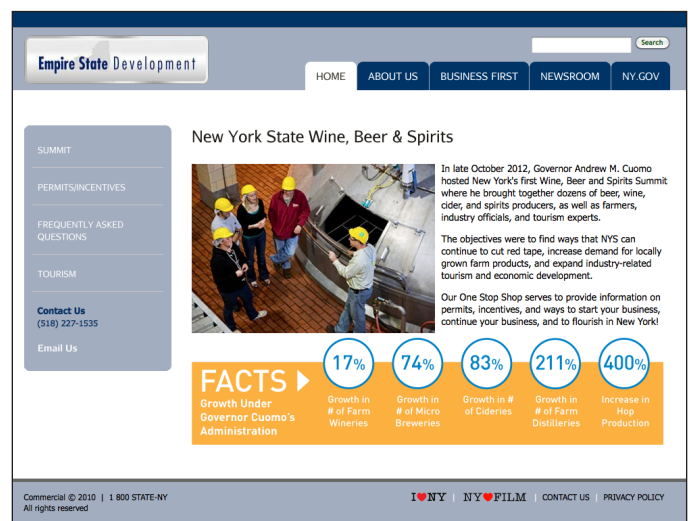
In March, it was announced that \$285,000 will be available to fund the third year of the State's "FreshConnect" program. Designed to promote farmers' markets that provide fresh produce to high-needs areas in both urban and rural parts of New York, the program aims to help increase the sale of locally grown food while simultaneously promoting healthy living. Since its inception in 2011, FreshConnect has provided market locations for over 100 farmers, supported work at over 50 project sites and created a flagship market in New York City that attracted nearly 2,000 people each week it operated in 2012.



For more information regarding the FreshConnect program, visit the Department of Agriculture and Markets' website at <http://www.agriculture.ny.gov/RFPS.html>.

### One-Stop Shop

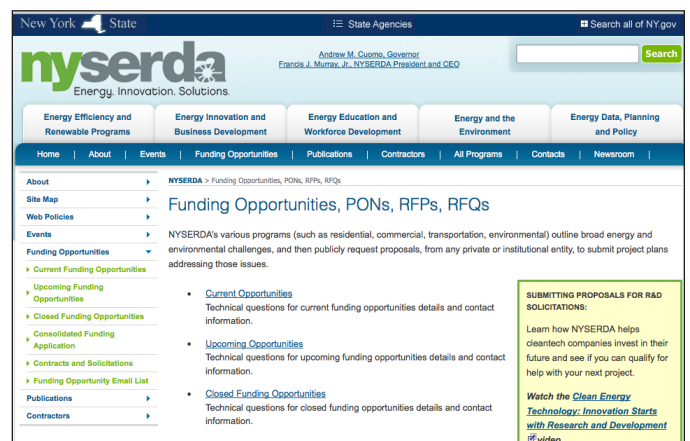
As a result of concerns shared during the October Wine, Beer and Spirits Summit, a one-stop shop has been created to provide producers with a single point of government contact for industry assistance at the Summit. It was noted that the number of state agencies involved in regulating and licensing wholesale beer, wine and spirits producers often caused confusion and hindered the development and success of small businesses—many of whom lack additional resources to effectively navigate the extensive red tape. By coordinating staff from all involved agencies, the one-stop will streamline the process and



reinforce the idea that New York is indeed, open for business. To access the one-stop shop, please visit <http://esd.ny.gov/NYSBeverageBiz.html>.

### Energy Efficiency

In order to help farmers reduce energy costs and remain productive, \$6.4 million in funding will go toward supporting the Agriculture Energy Efficiency Program (AEEP). AEEP is administered by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) and aims to facilitate energy audits to identify efficiency measures that can be taken in order to benefit both the farm and the environment. Additionally, the funding pays for 75 percent of the implementation cost of identified efficiency projects. For more information or to determine eligibility please visit NYSEDA's "Funding Opportunities" page at <http://www.nyserda.ny.gov/Funding-Opportunities.aspx>



**Invasive Species Watch: Asian Clam (*Corbicula fluminea*)**

**Q: What are they?**

**A:** Considered a mollusk, the clams are characterized by their yellowish to black-brown color and are otherwise known as Golden Clams or Prosperity Clams. The clams thrive in sandy, shallow lake bottoms that receive considerable sunlight. Because they are hermaphrodites capable of reproducing as a single organism, they can produce between 1,000-100,000 juveniles per year, resulting in considerably large colonies.



**Q: Where do they come from?**

**A:** As its name implies, the Asian Clam hails from eastern and southern Asia and was likely carried to the United States by immigrant populations in the early 1900's as a food source.

**Q: Why are they a problem?**

**A:** Because their excretions encourage the growth of algae, Asian clams pose a considerable threat to the ecosystems of the lakes in which they prosper. Their ability to procreate at such a high rate endangers the biodiversity of the areas they call home and their large numbers mean a significant amount of sharp, cracked shells eventually wash onto the beaches and shores. The combination of these effects can have a negative impact on lake tourism, area businesses and property values. Further, they can colonize inside water intake pipes of treatment systems and power stations, affecting their ability to properly function.

**Q: What is being done to prevent their spread?**

**A:** Unfortunately, there is yet to be published research regarding the control of the species, but that has not stopped localities from trying techniques of their own. Lake communities across the state have started initiatives to control the Asian Clam population and more than one have started a task force to address the issue head on.

*Information provided by the Cornell Cooperative Extension and Sea Grant New York. To Learn more, visit <http://www.nyis.info/>.*

**Fighting Invasive Species**

Invasive species can destroy ecosystems and create economic hardship. Emerald ash borers threaten ash trees across the state. Mats of fast-growing hydrilla clog waterways, replacing native species. It is a problem that requires coordination, education and significant attention. Steps are being taken all across New York to address this growing challenge.

Eradicating or managing invasive species requires careful coordination, and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is creating eight Partnerships for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM) in various regions in the state. PRISM is a product of a report from the Invasive Species Task Force, which recommended creating these partnerships to prevent or minimize the harm caused by invasive species.

In Western New York, DEC recently awarded a five-year, \$1.1 million grant to create a PRISM office at the Great Lakes Center at Buffalo State College. This partnership will work with environmental groups, provide education and training, arrange workshops and coordinate with volunteers to detect, monitor and eradicate invasive species in Western New York.

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There is still a need for legislation to create educational programs aimed at fighting invasive species. A bill advanced by the Rural Resources Commission would allow soil and water conservation districts to undertake an extensive public information and education program with a goal of preventing the spread of invasive species. The Commission, under Senator Young, continues to advance this initiative.

Fighting invasive species will continue to require the attention of New Yorkers. With careful coordination and education, New York State can develop a proactive approach to detecting, managing and eradicating invasive species.



## New Invasive Fruit Fly Brings Concern to New York State Farmers

Since 2011, the spotted wing drosophila, a native of northern Asia, has been found terrorizing crops throughout New York State. These insects are dangerous to crops because they resemble regular fruit flies, but infest ripe fruit compared to the over-ripe or rotting fruit that regular fruit flies will inhabit. The females will cut small holes in ripening fruit to lay their eggs, and while the fruit may appear fine to the naked eye, it quickly becomes inedible in only a day or two. These flies have commonly been found in raspberries, strawberries, cherries and blueberries.

However, the influx of these dangerous flies has not gone unnoticed. At a recent regional meeting of small fruit experts in New York, the fruit fly was discussed extensively. Many scientists were seen applying for research grants to find how to best combat the insect. In addition, Cornell University researchers and peers from the Northeast and Canada are working together to find ways to combat the spotted wing drosophila. Although the spotted wing drosophila troubled growers in the Hudson Valley in 2011, it is now just about everywhere in the state, said Greg Loeb, professor of entomology at Cornell. "Some growers lost 100 percent of their crops, and those losses weren't just isolated incidents," added Loeb. "This new pest is a serious threat."

The Cornell Cooperative Extension has offered some suggestions regarding how to deal with this invasive insect. Under no circumstances should an individual compost contaminated fruit. Contaminated fruit should be sealed in a zippered bag and left in the sun to kill the larvae, or the fruit should be buried at least two feet deep in the ground. If a grower thinks that his fruit is infected, the Cornell Cooperative Extension is urging individuals to call them. This extension will also give more information on how to properly kill the insects and protect crops. For more information call (716) 664-9502 ext. 204 or ext. 224.

**Some growers lost 100 percent of their crops due to the spotted wing drosophila.**



## Are We Still Rural?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is proposing to change the definition of a rural area to “those places with a population of 50 thousand or less,” in an effort to simplify eligibility and implementation for the myriad of rural programs it provides. The proposal was one of four recommendations provided in the USDA’s *Report on the Definition of Rural* that was required under the 2008 Farm Bill.

Of concern to many rural-minded individuals is the impact this change will have on an already-shrinking funding pool. By changing the standard for what is considered a “rural area,” the number of eligible areas will increase, competition for funding targeted specifically to rural areas will increase and, most concerning, the smallest towns and villages - even by rural standards - may be unable to receive necessary funding.

**For more information, and to view the report please visit:**  
[http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/SupportDocuments/rdStakeholderFeb22\\_2013.pdf](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/SupportDocuments/rdStakeholderFeb22_2013.pdf)

## Federal Update: Food Safety and What it Means to You

UPDATE - Following up on our mention of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) in the Summer 2011 issue, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration is requesting comments on two proposed rules under the FSMA that will impact food, farmers and processors globally.



**Rule Number One:** *Preventative Controls for Human Food: Current Good Manufacturing Practice and Hazard Analysis and Risk Based Preventative Controls for Human Food (Preventative Controls)*

**Who will be impacted?** Facilities that manufacture, process, pack or hold human food that must register with the FDA under the current food facility registration rules, i.e. manufacturers, warehouses, storage tanks and grain elevators.

**What will it do?** Effected business must have written protocols that:

- evaluate possible hazards;
- define and implement strategies to prevent hazards;
- monitor to ensure prevention strategies are followed; and
- provide a corrective action plan should any problems occur.

In addition, the new rule revises Current Good Manufacturing Practice Requirements previously published by the FDA.

**What will it cost?** The projected cost is \$701 million the first year with a yearly estimated cost of \$472 million thereafter for 97,600 U.S. manufacturers, processors, packing and food holding facilities.

**Rule Number Two:** *Produce: Standards for the Growing, Harvesting, Packing and Holding of Produce for Human Consumption (Produce Safety),*

**Who will be impacted?** Farms that grow, harvest, pack or hold unprocessed produce for human consumption.

**What will it do?** The proposed rule will define best practices and standards to address food borne illnesses caused by:

- contamination by wild animals
- cross contamination
- naturally occurring hazards
- animal based soil amendments
- facility and worker hygiene
- packaging
- temperature controls
- agricultural water

**What will it cost?** This rule is expected to cost approximately \$459.46 million per year for the estimated 40,496 farms in the United States.

Both regulatory actions offer flexibility on requirements and implementation based upon the size of the impacted business. Also, certain businesses, such as small, limited revenue direct farm marketing operations or companies that perform low risk activities like jam, jelly, maple syrup and honey production may be exempt or subject to modified requirements.

For additional information, please visit <http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodSafety/FSMA>. Comments on both regulations are due by May 16, 2013.

## Farm Children Are Healthier



According to a recent article produced by ABC News, farm children are, in general, healthier than their city kid counterparts. Many may argue the reason is because farm children are exposed to a more active lifestyle, with lots of fresh air, sunshine and exercise. Instead, the focus of this ABC News report describes how exposure to low levels of bacteria and allergens actually can benefit the immune system.

Farm kids are regularly exposed to animals, dust and bacteria while children in the city, in general, live in much cleaner environments in sealed homes. As a result of this, farm kids are half as likely to develop asthma and a quarter as likely to develop “hay fever” allergies as city kids. Farm children are also more likely to develop the antibodies to

combat pathogenic bacteria due to low-level exposure on and around the farm. However, there is always more one can do to lead a healthy lifestyle. To promote the health of all walks of life, and to learn more information for yourself please visit <http://www.eatright.org/nm/content.aspx?id=5342>.

## New York’s Veterinarian Shortage

As of 2009, New York had 1.6 million cows, cattle and other large animals, with only 300 large-animal veterinarians to provide medical care. As recently as last year, Schuyler County, home to 18,000 people and 14,000 farm animals, had no livestock veterinarians in the county. For an upstate area that relies heavily upon larger animals for agricultural needs, the lack of these vets is both surprising and troubling.



Such figures, however, highlight the significant veterinarian shortage that is gripping the nation and the state. To date, there are three veterinary schools that service the Northeast, and only one has been built within the last 25 years. According to the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges, of the 28 colleges nationwide, there are only enough spots for one out of every nine applicants. The effects of this limited applicant pool are further compounded by findings that many of those who graduate focus strictly on domestic animals, exacerbating the need for livestock vets.

In response, Cornell University, the top ranked veterinary school in the nation, and the only current veterinary school in New York State, is in the middle of a major investment in its program, which would allow the school to enroll more students and produce more veterinarians. Last year, New York invested \$250,000 in the veterinary program so the school can begin to expand its current class size from 90 seats each year to 120 seats. The increase in class size is coupled with preference given to those students studying large animal medicine. Historically, the program has had an informal policy of admitting two-thirds of its class from New York State applicants. Advocates stress that the increase in class size, in addition to New York State preference, will yield more area veterinarians in the coming years.

Another emerging project in Western New York will help address the need as well. Officials from Western New York, Kaleida Health and Chase Affinity announced plans for a new veterinary school in Buffalo. Located at the former Millard Fillmore Gates Circle Hospital, Chase Affinity won a \$1 million prize for development of the property – with plans including green design elements, a park and pedestrian-friendly areas. The project has been lauded for its planned reuse of closed buildings and the projected economic development opportunities.

## THE USDA HAS IDENTIFIED CRITICAL VETERINARIAN SHORTAGES

Through its Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program, it will pay up to \$25,000 each year towards qualified educational loans of eligible veterinarians who agree to serve in a designated veterinarian shortage situations for a period of three years.

- **Delaware and Otsego Counties: private practice**  
Beef Cattle, Dairy Cattle, Small Ruminant
- **Tompkins County: public practice**  
Veterinary Diagnostics
- **Ontario, Wayne, and Seneca Counties: private practice**  
Beef Cattle, Dairy Cattle, Swine, Poultry, Small Ruminant

For the Fiscal Year 2013, the application period closes in June. For information on how to apply please visit the USDA website.



**Protecting Our People: Genesee Community College Graduates a New Class of Rural Police**

It is no secret that there are various facets of rural life that make it unique and the way in which public safety is upheld in rural communities is no different. Protecting our rural areas and the families within them, often require special, localized training, distinct from the training offered in urban academies.

The Rural Police Training Academy (RPTA), housed at Genesee Community College, strives to provide just that. Started in 1985 at the suggestion of rural Police Chiefs and Sheriffs in Genesee, Livingston, Orleans and Wyoming Counties, the Academy has since graduated almost 600 police recruits. The goal of the Academy is to act as a training source for local police departments, offering the required basic training courses with a local and markedly rural spin. The Academy also partners with the New York State Division of Justice to provide a range of Police In-Service Courses.



At the March graduation ceremony, Senator Young read a special proclamation honoring Dick Tiede, the former Assistant Director of the Rural Police Training Academy. Mr. Tiede passed away in August, 2012. With Senator Young is Brenda Tiede, Dick's wife, and members of the academy staff.

**To learn more about the program and its requirements, please visit <http://www.genesee.edu/best/development/rural-police-training-academy/>.**

**Opportunities Expanded for Dairy Farmers**



Governor Andrew Cuomo recently announced two programs that will help dairy farmers in New York expand their businesses, increase profitability and reduce their energy costs.

The first program, the Anaerobic Digester Biogas to Electricity (ADG) provides incentives for anaerobic digesters installed at farms that treat organic waste. These anaerobic digesters turn waste produced on the farm into energy that can be used by farmers to help offset a farm's electricity purchases from their utility and reduce their energy costs. The amount of incentives provided by this program will be doubled from \$1 million up to \$2 million per installation in order to provide farmers with the means to reduce their energy consumption and costs at the same time.

"We want to make sure the dairy and yogurt business stays and flourishes in New York," said Governor Cuomo regarding the ADG.

The second program, the Dairy Acceleration Program (DAP) will provide \$450,000 in grants. The program will also coordinate funding and technical programs to help farmers interested in expanding their operations or increasing their efficiency. Specifically, farmers will be able to coordinate with the Cornell Cooperative Extension network and other agricultural programs to grow their business and in turn increase production on their farms.

"This important funding will help dairy farmers grow, increase their production and reduce the costs of their operations," said Darrel Aubertine, Commissioner of State Agriculture.

DAP will also provide grants of up to \$5,000 per dairy farm for services such as financial analysis, strategic planning for growth, executing business plans to expand and other various operational needs of the farm.

## Biofuel: An Emerging Industry

Biofuel has become a possible alternative to fossil fuels with New York State once again emerging as a hot spot for innovation. As a commercially viable biofuel crop, shrub willows could put more than one million acres of underused land into production in New York State, providing farmers with a new, low-maintenance cash crop, while at the same time pumping out renewable fuel.

While the biofuel industry is still in its infancy, things began to heat up late last year with \$950,000 in new funds for a breeding program from Cornell's Northeast Sun Grant Institute, along with installation of a new boiler to heat two buildings at the school's campus in Upstate New York. The boiler will burn shrub willow biofuel produced on the campus. In addition, Robert

McDonagh, the owner of Celtic Energy Farm in Cape Vincent on Lake Ontario has been leading the way in biofuel innovation by forming a group of investors to grow shrub willows in Northern New York. This farm owns or rents 1,100 acres of land to grow willows to supply renewable energy producers.

Timothy Volk, a researcher at SUNY's College of Environmental Science and Forestry in Syracuse, explained that "with a typical yield of five dry tons per acre per year, 800 acres of willow could produce 1 megawatt of electricity, enough for 750 homes for one year." Biofuel energy from willows is quickly moving out of the experimental stage and into commercial production throughout New York State.



## Prime Time for Farmers

Using one of the most popular Super Bowl television advertisements of this year's game as a springboard, Ram Truck authoritatively stamped 2013 as the Year of the Farmer. The ad features the audio of a speech given by Paul Harvey, the famous radio personality, at a Future Farmers of America convention in 1978. "So God Made a Farmer" swept the country by storm, some 35 years after it was first heard, and was one of the most talked-about ads following the game.

As part of the promotion, Ram Truck will donate \$1 million to National Future Farmers of America, thanks to reaching viewing goals for the YouTube video in only one week.

Also, Ram Truck has teamed up with agricultural equipment manufacturer Case IH, Farms.com and other brand partners, to raise awareness and generate funds for FFA hunger relief efforts in local communities across America.

The year-long initiative will include a book of photographs shining a spotlight on the contributions of American farm families.

# SAVE THE DATES!



## **New York State Public Health Association**

2013 Annual Meeting and Conference

**APRIL 24-25, 2013**

Hilton Garden Inn

Troy, NY

<http://nyspha.roundtablelive.org/>

## **NYS Conference of Mayors and Municipal Officials**

104th Annual Meeting & Training School

**MAY 5-7, 2013**

Gideon Putnam Hotel

Saratoga Springs, NY

[www.nycom.org](http://www.nycom.org)

## **North Country Clean Energy Conference**

**JUNE 5-7, 2013**

Lake Placid Conference Center

Lake Placid, NY

[www.adirondack.org/Clean-Energy-2013/Clean-Energy-13/](http://www.adirondack.org/Clean-Energy-2013/Clean-Energy-13/)

## **2013 Rural Schools Association Annual Conference**

**JULY 14-16, 2013**

Otesaga Hotel • Cooperstown, NY

<http://education.cornell.edu/rsa/conference.html>

More options:

<http://www.clrp.cornell.edu/workshops/workshops.htm>

**If you have any suggestions for upcoming editions,  
please email the Commission at [ruralres@nysenate.gov](mailto:ruralres@nysenate.gov)**