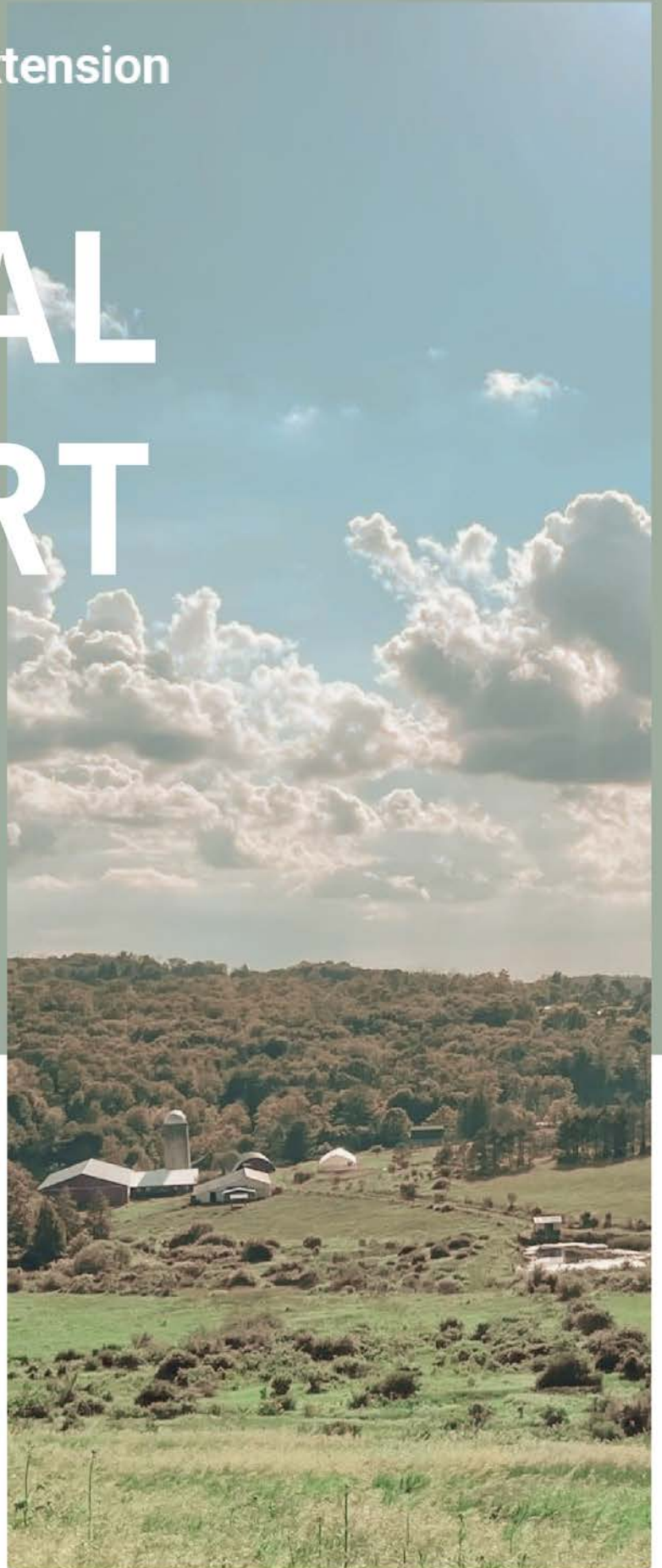


Cornell Cooperative Extension  
Tioga County

# ANNUAL REPORT 2023

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# BOARD & STAFF

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tioga County I am pleased to present the 2023 Annual Report. The organization continued its long history of supporting county residents through quality programming and technical assistance. Our mission is as relevant today as it was in the past. Our relationship with Cornell University and the research-based information they provide, contributes to a unique delivery system of programs and services that help county residents improve their lives and improve their businesses. We look forward to working and supporting Tioga County residents and businesses in 2024!

**Paul Barber**

PRESIDENT OF THE CCE TIOGA BOARD



## Staff

Kevin Jordan, Interim Executive Director  
Miranda Sundquist, Office Manager  
Jared Gulliford, Farm Manager  
Jean Koski, Horticulture & Facilities Manager  
Lisa Weston-Bialy, Youth Employment  
Erin Evans, Youth Employment  
Donna Gibson, Parenting Educator  
Joan Shultz, Parenting Educator  
Kristin Parry, 4-H Team Lead  
Eileen Hanrahan, Community Energy Advisor  
Caitlin Mizerak, Community Nutrition Educator

## Board

Paul Barber, President  
Bill Morse, Vice-President  
Dana Ouelette, Secretary  
Danielle Singer, Treasurer

KC Mandeville  
Dr. Eric Knolles  
Mark Griep  
Robert Murray  
Jake Brown

### Introducing new Board Members

in 2024: Kelly Whittemore, Deb Lawton, Dan Kosztzyo, Melissa Cavataio, Rebecca Maffei

IN OCTOBER 2023, WE  
CELEBRATED THE  
RETIREMENT OF MASTER  
GARDENER, BARB NEAL!  
HAPPY RETIREMENT BARB!





# FINANCIAL IMPACT OVERVIEW

## 2023 Funding Sources

- FEDERAL - INCLUDES SMITH LEVER & VARIOUS GRANTS **\$389,408**
- STATE - INCLUDES STATE 224 & VALUE OF BENEFITS **\$484,914**
- COUNTY - INCLUDES APPROPRIATION **\$268,027**
- OTHER - DIVIDENDS, ENROLLMENT, PROG PART, CONTRIBUTIONS, PRIVATE **\$158,519**

## 2023 Expenses

CCE strategically allocated funds to maximize its impact in order to meet the needs of its participants in the following priority program areas: agriculture, youth development, nutrition, workforce development, family development and energy education.

The Association has significantly leveraged the County Appropriation 4:1 with State, Federal and foundation funding thereby enhancing the benefit of Extension services to County residents.

Acknowledging the need for financial stability and sustainability, the Board of Directors has made these strategic allocations exemplifying its commitment to a balanced budget approach, low administrative costs, and targeted program funding.

Scan below to  
learn how to  
become a donor!





# HILLTOP COMMUNITY FARM

The CCE Tioga farm forged a partnership with a Cornell-based research group to investigate the feasibility of cultivating rice in New York State. Successfully cultivating and harvesting a small rice plot, we now proudly serve as a host site for cutting-edge rice processing equipment.



WE HAVE SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED SEVERAL SIGNIFICANT INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS, INCLUDING THE **CONSTRUCTION OF A 30 X 96 HEATED GREENHOUSE** SET TO BE OPERATIONAL IN SPRING 2024. ADDITIONALLY, A **25KW SOLAR ARRAY** HAS BEEN INSTALLED, ENHANCING OUR COMMITMENT TO *SUSTAINABLE ENERGY PRACTICES*. TO PROVIDE SHELTER FOR OUR ANIMALS, A **NEW 20X20 COVERALL BUILDING** HAS BEEN ERECTED. IN ADDITION, WE HAVE STARTED THE BUILDING OF OUR NATURE PLAYScape AND WILL CONTINUE TO GROW THIS COMMUNITY SPACE IN 2024!

IN A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT WITH CORNELL UNIVERSITY, WE ENGAGED IN THE CULTIVATION OF **SEVEN VARIETIES OF RICE**. OUR ENDEAVORS RECEIVED RECOGNITION WHEN **SENATOR KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND** VISITED THE FARM AND EXPLORED THE RICE PATCH, EMPHASIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR AGRICULTURAL PARTNERSHIPS AND INNOVATIONS.

*"This is an unbeatable deal, with access to tractors and other machinery; experience and support, not to mention the infrastructure that has allowed us to increase our production."*

*"We always had support and were able to be part of a community. We felt that there were no wrong questions, so we always felt comfortable asking for help or advice."*

*-Craig and Debbie; Loving Farms (Incubator Farm Participants)*



# HILLTOP COMMUNITY FARM

(CONTINUED)



IN ITS INAUGURAL YEAR, THE HILLTOP COMMUNITY FARM ACHIEVED REMARKABLE SUCCESS WITH ITS INCUBATOR PROGRAM. WE **WELCOMED A DIVERSE GROUP OF PARTICIPANTS**, INCLUDING A VETERAN DEDICATED TO **ENHANCING SHEEP GENETICS FOR GRAZING BENEATH SOLAR PANELS**, A BEEKEEPER AND MEDICINAL HERB FARMER SHOWCASING **TINCTURES AND OTHER VALUE-ADDED PRODUCTS** AT THE ITHACA FARMERS' MARKET, A DAIRY GOAT FARMER **RETAILING LOTIONS AND SOAPS** THROUGH HER ONLINE STORE, AND A DEDICATED COUPLE CULTIVATING **CHEMICAL-FREE VEGETABLES** AVAILABLE THROUGH BOTH A CSA AND THE ITHACA FARMERS' MARKET.

**LOOKING AHEAD**, OUR VISION FOR THE SPRING OF 2024 INCLUDES THE ADDITION OF ANOTHER LIVESTOCK FARMER AND THE INTEGRATION OF THREE MORE CROP GROWERS, MARKING A **CONTINUED COMMITMENT** TO FOSTERING SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND SUPPORTING LOCAL ENTREPRENEURS WITHIN OUR VIBRANT COMMUNITY







THE FOOD FOREST GARDEN



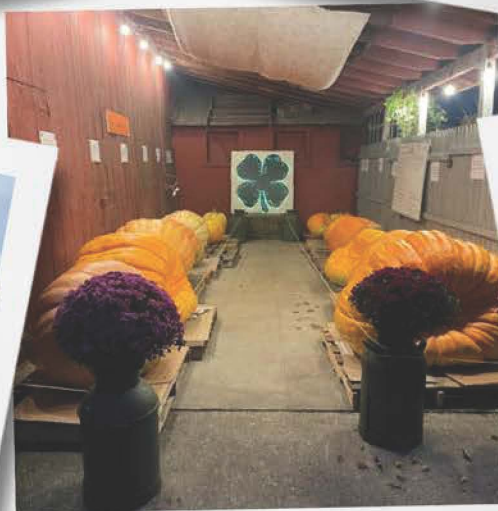
BUBBLES!



WINNING AWARDS



THE BEES KNEES



GIANT PUMPKIN AUCTION



DONATED SQUASH FOR A HARVEST SHARE

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



NAP TIME DURING FAIR CLEAN UP NIGHT



LEARNING DURING THE CHAINSAW SAFETY CLASS



# MASTER GARDENERS

Master Gardener Volunteers and Community Horticulture actively **contribute to the beauty and education of our county through planning, planting, and maintaining various garden spaces.** These spaces include demonstration gardens, nature walk areas, vegetable plots, and community spaces.

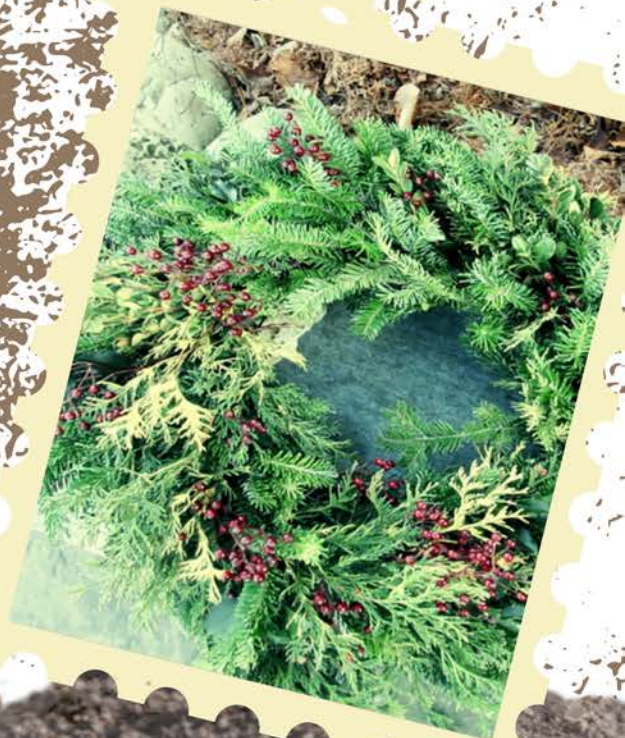
Our volunteers engage in diverse activities, such as participating in **Ag Literacy Week**, where they read to and educate children on various agricultural topics. Additionally, they **teach youth gardening** at the Boys and Girls Club in Owego, serving as mentors and fostering a love for horticulture.

As a valuable community resource, our volunteers **assist individuals in resolving garden-related challenges.** They host informative **workshops on gardening and horticultural subjects** relevant to the community's interests.

This year, we organized an **orcharding series**, featuring a Zoom session on planning orchards and hands-on sessions focused on pruning and grafting. Our annual 'Seedorama' event provides a **platform for sharing seeds, plants, and knowledge** with the community.

Moreover, our **annual plant sale at the demonstration gardens** in Owego, NY, is a highlight, showcasing a variety of plants nurtured with care.

Our Horticulture Specialist Jean Koski has overseen the maintenance and adjustments to the food forest at the farm. Future plans include **continuous design improvements** and expanding the farm's capacity to serve as a **demonstration area for alternative horticultural practices.**



Scan here to join our  
new Tioga County  
Garden Community  
Facebook Group!





# 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



“

“4H means making the best better. That isn't limited to making yourself better, it applies to helping other make themselves better”

-Jamison Thompson, Tioga  
4-H Teen Council Member



In 2023, we had **102 4-H youth members** and **14 adults** who volunteered their time in Tioga County.

GIANT  
PUMPKIN  
CLUB



Wyatt Zorn broke his brothers previous record by growing this giant 337 lb. Pumpkin!

Harper, a bright 4-H youth, passionately presents her project on the therapeutic impact of horses for individuals with disabilities. Her insightful public presentation earned the honor of representing Tioga County at the NYS Fair in 2023

Despite a year marked by transitions and change, Tioga County 4-H remained resilient and engaged in impactful activities. Participants achieved **tractor safety certification**, nurtured a thriving **Giant Pumpkin Club**, and delivered noteworthy public presentations, with some going on to **represent us at the NYS Fair**. A highlight was the annual 4-H auction at the Tioga County Fair, showcasing the **dedication and achievements** of our members as they proudly presented their animals. We celebrate the **resilience and accomplishments** of our 4-H community, anticipating **continued growth and success** in the coming year.



Follow Us on  
Facebook!





# FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

The Family Resource Center has been out in Tioga County at various locations to offer parent/child activities. Staff have been working with partners throughout the county to offer playgroups in Nichols, Spencer, Candor, Berkshire, Owego and Waverly towns. Also offered are both in-person and virtual parenting education classes.

Over the Summer, local families and children were able to help with tending the Family Resource Center community garden plot at Inspire! in Spencer, NY. They loved watching the vegetables grow and getting to taste test them was really fun as well! The plots were donated by the Spencer-Candor Lions Club.

## Looking Forward:

We are looking forward to partnering with local school districts in 2024 as we offer a Strengthening Families Workshop geared for both parents and children ages 10-14.



Learn... Connect... Be Involved  
Family Resource Centers of Tioga County



Follow us on Facebook for Updates!

[facebook.com/FRCTioga](https://facebook.com/FRCTioga)



*Tending the  
Community Garden*



*Story Time at the Library*



*Playing with the  
Water Table*



# WIOA & YOUTH OPPORTUNITY NOW

The WIOA Youth Employment Program works to build work readiness and financial literacy skills in youth and young adults ages 16 to 24. Program educators provide assistance in Career Exploration, Job Search, education and Occupational Skill building through Training and Apprenticeship programs.

**Youth Opportunity Now** is a coalition of Tioga County Departments, service providers and education facilities working toward system change to improve outcomes for youth with disability and at risk of legal system engagement.

## HIGHLIGHTS

In 2023, the WIOA program worked with **88 participants**, which includes assisting 39 people in **obtaining employment**, 21 people enrolled into **occupational training programs**, and 7 people getting **enrolled into college**, and more!



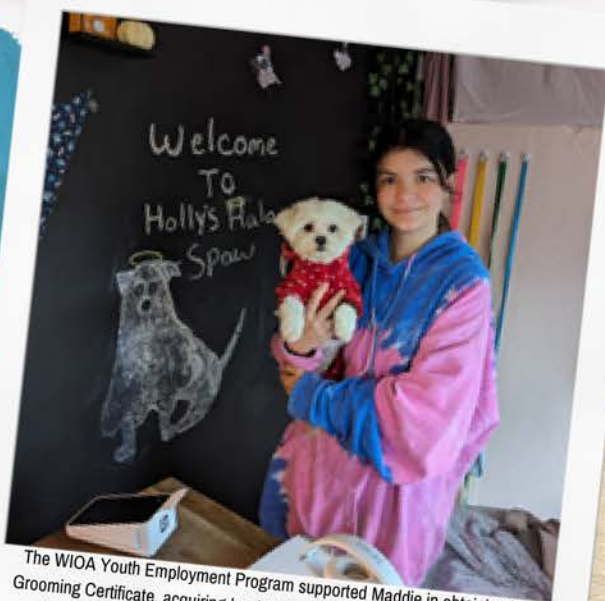
## FOR THE COMMUNITY

Many of our clients are **referred by community organizations** such as Tioga Probation, DSS, CPS, and others.

WIOA works collaboratively with the Waverly School District to plan and facilitate **Project Launch**.

Provided Tioga County organizations and departments an informative and engaging conference series that offered **64 hours of training** in Disability Awareness, Motivational Interviewing, Crisis Intervention, Vicarious Trauma, ACES and Financial Social Work.

Funding for the Youth Opportunity Now Coalition is from the **NYS Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (DDPC)**. It is administered by the Yang Tan Institute at Cornell University.



The WIOA Youth Employment Program supported Maddie in obtaining her Grooming Certificate, acquiring her initial grooming tools, and developing her business plan. We connected her with Score and SUNY Broome for Entrepreneurship training. After gaining experience as a groomer, Maddie diligently budgeted and saved, leading to the successful launch of her business in July. She recently garnered media attention through a news interview.



# NUTRITIONAL EDUCATION



*In 2023, SNAP-Ed NY collaborated with local organizations in Richford, New York, addressing health challenges in a food desert. Cooking classes, walking clubs, and CSA pickups were offered, guided by nutrition educator Caitlin. The partnership improved nutrition, exercise habits, and provided access to fresh produce through the Produce Prescription Program, making a positive impact on community health*



In this photo, Linda shops for a budget-friendly, healthy meal under \$10 with fall produce at a mock grocery store during a SNAP-Ed NY class led by Caitlin Mizerak at Richford Congregational Church in September 2023. The session, part of the last lesson in the Community Supported Agriculture season, focused on teaching participants affordable ways to incorporate seasonal fruits and vegetables into their diet. Participants attended bi-weekly classes from July to mid-October, receiving fresh produce boxes from Shared Roots Farms. SNAP-Ed food demonstrations showcased quick, easy, and delicious ways to prepare the contents of their CSA boxes.





# SMART ENERGY



Smart Energy Choices is a collaboration of CCE associations from Tioga, Tompkins, Broome, Chenango, Chemung, Delaware, Schuyler and Steuben Counties and comprises the Regional Clean Energy Hub for the Southern Tier region. The Hub's educators are focused on helping households with limited income learn about and access clean energy resources and opportunities. This includes incentives to help make households more energy efficient and transition to renewable energy. CCE educators, called Community Energy Advisors, reach out to community members directly at food pantries and community events and through local partner organizations to connect with constituents. CCE educators provide individualized advising to help residents understand clean energy and energy efficient options, access relevant applications and connect to qualified contractors.

Installation of the Solar Panels



CCE TIOGA | ANNUAL REPORT 2023



- The regional clean energy Hub began in September 2022 and in the past year the CCE Tioga educator, Eileen Hanrahan **reached over 3000 Tioga County residents**,
- provided advising on *home energy efficiency* and *clean energy* to over **1000 residents** and
- Assisted with **23 households** to have *home energy efficiency upgrades* installed on their homes with an average of **\$7000 of grant funding per household** totaling **over \$160,000 in grant funding for community residents**
- Provided **advising and assistance** to CCE Tioga to connect with a *reputable solar array installer* and learn about grant funding for a **solar array installation** at CCE Tioga farm
- Connected CCE Tioga with the *NYSEG Make Ready* program to help provide funding to **install two EV charging stations** at CCE Tioga





# Planned For 2024:

FLOOD MITIGATION  
RESEARCH PROJECT  
AT THE FARM

COMPLETION OF  
THE NATURESCAPE  
PLAYGROUND

4-H 5K RACE,  
COMMUNITY DAY OF  
SERVICE AND TIOGA FAIR  
2024

NEW PARTNERSHIPS AND  
PROGRAMS FOR FAMILY  
RESOURCE CENTER

...AND MORE!



4-H PUBLIC  
PRESENTATIONS

"Farming is not  
just about growing  
crops; it's about  
nurturing  
communities and  
sustaining  
traditions."

-WENDELL BERRY



4-H CLOVER CAFE 2023 CREW



SLINGIN' SNACKS AT THE  
COUNTY FAIR!



IN LOVING MEMORY OF  
BRODERICK M. HINES



CELEBRATING NEW  
PARTNERSHIPS!

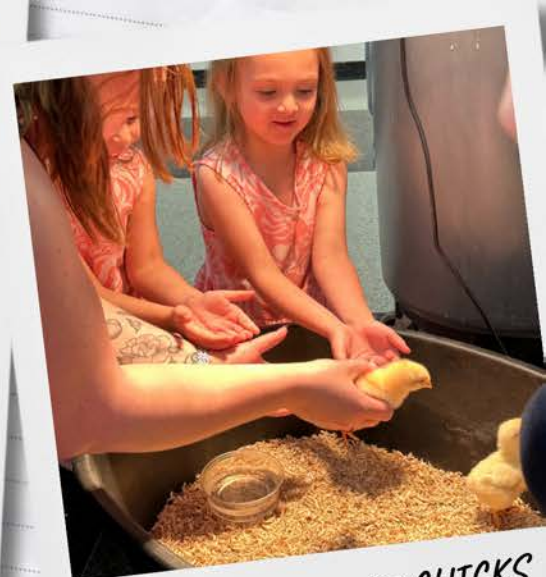




A FAMILY PLAYING IN  
THE WATER TABLE



MIKE DEMONSTRATES THE NEW  
LIVESTOCK HANDLING SYSTEM



PICKING UP SOME CHICKS



COUNTY FAIR 4-H  
GRAND CHAMPIONS!



4-H AWARDS AND CEREMONIES  
AT THE ANNUAL MEETING



MASTER GARDENER JEAN  
HELPS KIDS WITH SEEDING



TASTE TESTING APPLES AT  
THE ANNUAL MEETING

The CCE Board of Directors acknowledges the many participants, volunteers and staff that help make CCE Tioga a place to learn, grow and thrive. We thank our volunteers who donate so many hours of their time and resources each year to the organization. We value our participants and the opportunity to work with all of you throughout the year. Finally, the Board of Directors thanks the staff for their dedication to the community and the tremendous impact they make each and every day.

**Cornell Cooperative Extension**  
Tioga County



BARB GIVING A FARM TOUR