

POSITION TITLE: Extension Associate

WORKING TITLE: Vegetable Crops Specialist

TITLE OF IMMEDIATE SUPERVISOR: Cornell Vegetable Program Team Coordinator

DEPARTMENT: Cornell Cooperative Extension Administration

LOCATION: Western New York Region – Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Monroe, Niagara, Ontario, Orleans, Oswego, Seneca, Wayne and Yates Counties

Summary Statement of Purpose and Responsibilities

Provide commercial vegetable growers and industry representatives with the knowledge and educational resources necessary to assess production and management practices that will enhance their profitability and sustain the growth of the vegetable industry in Western New York.

Specific Job Functions and Responsibilities

Program Development, Implementation, and Evaluation 50%

- Provide leadership for planning, implementing and evaluating educational programs that address producer identified needs and opportunities. Emphasis is in the area of commercial fresh market vegetable production and adoption of principles and practices leading to economical and environmentally sound use of crop inputs to maximize quality, profitability, and sustainability.
- Provide producers and industry with a framework to analyze production and management alternatives and to maximize profit opportunities based on emerging best-management practices.
- Plan and implement educational programs utilizing a variety of methods including direct teaching through group experiences, mass media, newsletters, electronic technology, use of the internet and distance learning.
- One-on-one consultations with key producers and industry partners related to program development and problem solving.
- Analyze and evaluate major program efforts with the input of all program partners and make recommendations for enhancing these efforts.
- Communicate evaluation results, findings, and recommendations as appropriate.
- Prepare quarterly reports, impact statements, and yearly success stories on program progress and accomplishments.

Applied Research

20%

- Initiate and conduct field demonstrations and in-depth applied research projects appropriate to the needs of the commercial fresh market vegetable industry in Western New York.
- Participate in statewide, collaborative research projects with university and extension faculty and staff as well as other agencies and organizations.
- Define and implement reporting mechanisms for producer-focused “measurable” outcomes.
- Meet the evaluation and reporting requirements of funding partners.

Management

15%

- Responsible for routine operations, reporting and accountability.
- Support team efforts in communication with stakeholders and partners.
- Support team efforts in planning and implementing of regional and statewide events.
- Individually and collaboratively explore and pursue new and additional funding sources to enhance and extend program opportunities.
- Enhance and promote teamwork.

Organizational Leadership

10%

- Support Cornell University and Cooperative Extension system-wide initiatives through participation in program work teams, ad-hoc committees and advisory groups.
- Participate in regional, statewide and national work groups related to the work of Cornell University, Cooperative Extension and the Commercial Vegetable Industry.
- Foster strong collaboration among faculty, peers, and industry.
- Establish and maintain positive relationships with the many individuals and groups that support the work of the organization.

Professional Development

5%

- Participate in professional development opportunities, conferences and workshops appropriate to program and personal skill enhancement.

- Participate in related regional, statewide, and national professional organizations.

Requirements

Required

- Master's Degree in Agriculture from an accredited institution with a major in Vegetable Crops, Horticulture, Plant Pathology, Entomology or closely associated fields.
- 2+ years of relevant work experience in Agribusiness, Crop Production, Cooperative Extension, or closely related fields.
- Experience in conducting, interpreting, evaluating and communicating the results of applied research.
- Knowledge of the philosophy, objectives and operation of an informal education system such as Cornell Cooperative Extension.
- Strong interpersonal skills with proven ability to work with diverse audiences in group and one-on-one settings; working effectively with advisory boards and committees, community and funding partners.
- Proven organizational and time-management skills.
- Ability to define, conduct and interpret applied research and demonstration projects.
- Successful experience obtaining new funding including grants and industry support.
- Strong leadership and teamwork skills.
- Effective written and verbal communication skills.
- Fundamental competence utilizing current technology as a management and program delivery tool.
- Appreciation of Agriculture as a business and as a lifestyle.
- Creativity, energy, motivation and positive enthusiasm.
- Ability to meet the travel requirements of the job.
- Ability to work evenings and weekends as essential job functions require.
- Must possess or have the ability to acquire a New York State Certified Pesticide Applicators License within one year from start date.

- Must be able to meet the travel requirements of the position, and have reliable transportation as well as have and maintain a valid and unrestricted New York State driver's license.

Desired

- Coursework in Weed Science, Crop Production, Economics of Production, Pest Management, Plant Pathology, Soils, Adult Education, and Communications.
- Solid knowledge in current and emerging issues and production practices related to vegetable crops based on 3+ years of relevant work experience.
- Experience in initiating and conducting field demonstrations and in-depth applied research in general vegetable culture including pest management (weeds, insects, diseases), plasticulture, soil fertility and stand establishment.
- Experience in writing grant proposals.

Supervision

Administrative direction and guidance provided by the State Extension Specialist for Regional Agriculture Programs (CCE Administration).

Program development guidance and support provided by the Cornell Vegetable Program Team Coordinator and faculty leader.

Academic oversight and guidance provided by designated faculty in the Department of Horticultural Sciences.

Program oversight and direction provided by program advisory groups comprised of Executive Directors of partner Extension Associations, producers and industry partners.

Provides staff supervision and guidance as required.

Administrative and Program Relationships

Internal

Work as a member of a specialist team.

Work as a member of existing regional, multi-county and statewide teams and work groups.

Work closely with faculty and administration at Cornell.

Build collaborative relationships and maintain timely and effective communication with County Extension Associations.

External

Build and maintain effective relationships with producers/growers, consultants and other industry representatives.

Develop and maintain effective communication and working relationships with appropriate agribusiness, industry partners, other educational institutions and governmental agencies and organizations.