

NEW YORK FRUIT QUARTERLY

Editorial

The Future of Applied Research and Extension at Geneva

Applied research and extension are key components of the mission of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell. Of the four academic priorities recently identified by the College, faculty at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station in Geneva are well positioned to contribute to those associated with the land grant mission, environmental sciences and the new life sciences. Land grant mission-related programs are highly visible at Geneva, and often include objectives that positively impact the environment. Faculty are expanding their efforts in the new life sciences as they place more emphasis on plant, insect and microbial genomics and nanobiotechnology, and the application of these technologies to New York food and agriculture.

Declining levels of state and federal funding are influencing our ability to maintain excellence in applied research and extension programs. Budgetary reductions at the State level affect all facets of operations in Geneva and Ithaca, and are contributing to a decline in faculty numbers. In Geneva, there were 68 faculty members in 1978; we now have 48.

It is apparent that we must do a better job of communicating the value of research and extension programs to state and federal government representatives. We must clearly articulate technological benefits to stakeholders, as well as related impacts on business and job creation. Faculty need to actively convey current success stories and participate in the creation of a vision for meeting future challenges.

It will be important to assess how efficiently state and federal funds are used. This effort will require strategic planning between departments in Geneva and Ithaca, clear definition of present and required strengths, and future goals. Cross-disciplinary expertise including those in IPM, the USDA PGRU and the Hudson Valley and Fredonia laboratories should also be recognized. Changes in food and agricultural industries must be taken into consideration, and stakeholder input sought. Results from this process will allow the filling of faculty positions based on a clear vision of future goals.

A key to Geneva's future success is the hiring and retention of the very best faculty. Faculty provide the leadership, initiative and knowledge that is needed to maintain excellence in applied research and extension. Faculty must be opportunistic, embrace new technologies, and lead strong cooperative programs that are visible and able to attract competitive funding.

Excellence in applied research and extension is vital in assuring a prosperous future for New York food and agriculture.

Thomas J. Burr
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BACK COVER: Blueberries offer opportunities for NY fruit growers even in the colder areas of the state if special precautions are followed. See article by Iungerman and Pritts in this issue.



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