

# Video Series Offers Advice for Aspiring Farmers

By Lynn A. Bliven, Agriculture Team Coordinator

Cornell University launched an innovative, online video series that will help agricultural entrepreneurs successfully initiate new farms in New York State. Produced by the NY Beginning Farmer Project with support from the Cornell Small Farms Program, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and the NY Farm Viability Institute, the video series, titled, “Voices of Experience,” covers essential topics such as financing farm start-up, marketing, profitability, and goal setting, to name just a few. The ‘voices of experience’ in the series are actual farmers who have successfully started their own farm business.

Two Cattaraugus County farmers are featured in the video series. Mark Schindlbeck of Franklinville operates a vegetable and fruit farm utilizing 4 acres to produce apples and pears along with 20 types of vegetables, encompassing over 70 varieties. Pierre Dionne is raising chicken, turkeys, hogs and beef cattle at Sojourner Farm located in the Town of Portville. Both had participated in the Beginning a Successful Small Farm workshop series offered by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Allegany/Cattaraugus County. As an educator working in Agricultural Economic Development, it is exciting not only to see these enterprises succeed but also to be a part of furthering the growth and success of other aspiring farmers throughout the state. I have provided trainings targeted toward beginning farmers in the 2 county area since 2000 and served on the statewide Beginning Farmer Program Work Team since its inception.

“Every new farmer should have a peer mentor to go to for help. But as a starting point this series of videos offers new farmers some incredibly valuable but more generalized peer wisdom, “ said Erica Frenay, NY Beginning Farmer Project Coordinator at Cornell’s Small Farms Program. “It is so powerful to hear advice coming directly from people who have been through the adventure of starting their own farm business.” Voices of Experience online videos are available at the Beginning Farmer Project Web site: [www.nybeginningfarmers.org](http://www.nybeginningfarmers.org)

For more information on a variety of small farm topics, visit the Cornell Small Farms website at: [www.smallfarms.cornell.edu](http://www.smallfarms.cornell.edu), Cornell Cooperative Extension of Allegany & Cattaraugus County Agriculture website at: [ccealleganycattaraugus.org/index.php/agriculture](http://ccealleganycattaraugus.org/index.php/agriculture) or feel free to contact me directly at 585-268-7644 ext.18.