



Soil Management in Berry Crops as a Model for Management Education

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About The Project

Overview



The Issue

- Commercial berry growers in the Northeast have traditionally made standardized fertilizer applications based on crop age.
- This practice continues today, some 10 years or more after commercial berry crop guidelines for analysis-based fertilization programs became widely available.
- Adoption of soil health improving practices has also been slow.



The Issue

- Ag educators, frequently called on to cover multiple commodities and/or information areas outside their field of expertise, often struggle to assist commercial berry growers with berry crop soil and nutrient problems.
- No single comprehensive resource on this topic is currently available for either educators or growers.



Addressing the Issue

This 2 year project will provide in-depth berry crop soil and nutrition management training and resources for Ag educators/multipliers and the commercial berry growers they serve.

The Plan

Year 1

- Help Ag educators build soil management expertise through:
 - Providing a series of 12 in-depth webinars and case study learning modules on the subject.
 - Developing resources to be used by educators in grower training.

Year 2

- Assist Ag educators to:
 - Develop and implement grower training.
 - Recruit participating growers to do soil and nutrient testing.
 - Recruit 2-3 growers participating in testing to implement analysis-based fertilizer programs on a portion of their acreage.
 - Carry out one-on-one consultations with participating growers to discuss results.





About the Team

Team Members and Collaborators



Dr. Marvin Pritts, Project leader

Professor and Chair, Cornell University Department of Horticulture

Expertise: Berry Crop Production and Soil and Nutrient Management



Ms. Cathy Heidenreich, Project Coordinator
Cornell University Department of Horticulture
Expertise: Berry Crop Production, Pest Management



Dr. Harold van Es, Collaborator
Professor and Chair, Cornell University Department of Crop And Soil
Sciences
Expertise: Soil and Water Management



**Mr. Robert Schindelbeck,
Collaborator**

Extension Associate, Cornell
University Department of
Crop and Soil Sciences

Expertise: Soil Health Testing
and Soil Management



Mr. Jeff Miller, Project Team Member

Agriculture Issues Leader, Cornell Cooperative Extension Oneida
County

Expertise: Agronomy



Mr. Dan Welch, Project Team Member
Extension Resource Educator, Cornell Cooperative Extension,
Cayuga County
Expertise: Farm Business Management



Mr. Mario Miranda Sazo, Project Team Member
Tree Fruit and Berry Fruit Extension Specialist, Cornell Cooperative
Extension, Lake Ontario Fruit Team,
Expertise: Cultural Practices



Ms. Laura McDermott, Project Team Member
Regional Specialist, Capital District Vegetable and Fruit Program
Cornell Cooperative Extension
Expertise:



About You

Educator Participants





About You

Occupations include:

Extension & Ag educators, Professors, Instructors, Soil conservationists, Conservation agronomists & planners, Consultants, Horticulture, Research, IPM & Extension specialists, Scientists, District managers & conservationists, Technical advisors, Program coordinators, Water stewardship & Soil conservation technicians, Outreach coordinators, Program leaders, Environmental biologists & engineers.



About You

Professional Expertise includes:

Commercial agriculture & horticulture, Animal husbandry, Pest management, Farm business management, Postharvest technology, Natural resources, Environmental compliance, Consumer horticulture, Conservation technology, Plant pathology, Sustainable agriculture, Agronomy, Land protection, Pesticide education, Soil management, Best management practices



The Measure of Success

- We will document educator and grower expertise in soil management before and after participating in the project to monitor changes.
- Throughout the project and in subsequent years, we will monitor adoption and success of analysis-based berry crop nutrient and soil management by commercial berry growers participating in the project.



The Final Goal

- 50 educators from across the Northeast will participate in an in depth webinar series to expand their expertise in berry crop nutrient and soil management.
- Of those, 15 will develop and deliver outreach programs on the same, reaching 150 berry growers who manage a total of 750 acres of berry crops.
- 50 growers will participate in preliminary soil, nutrient and soil health testing, receive one-on-one assistance with interpretation of results, and implement analysis-based fertilization and soil health management practices on farm.