



ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATIVE NEWS

ULSTER COUNTY NEWS INFORMATION
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Left to right: Amy Pollard, Margaret DeWitt, Janet Dewitt, Ulster County Dairy Princess Katherine DeWitt, NYS Assemblyman Clifford Crouch and Ulster County Legislator District No. 3 Roy Hochberg

Farm Tour Offers a Closer Look at Farming in 2009 and Beyond

On Thursday, September 24, 2009, **Ulster County Legislator District No. 3 (Hurley, Marbletown, Olive) Roy Hochberg** joined Cornell Cooperative Extension on an organized farm tour for government officials and economic development administrators. Other participants included Senator Kirsten Gillibrand's regional representative, Amy Pollard, New York State Assembly Member Clifford Crouch, Assistant Deputy to the Ulster County Executive, Susanne Holt, Deputy Director of Planning for Economic Development, March Gallagher and Senior Planner for Ulster County Planning, Virginia Craft.

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The tour began with a visit to Gill Farms in Hurley with a look at a sweet corn packing facility staffed with 50+ employees. The next stop was Domino Farms in the Town of Rochester which produces up to 940 gallons of milk per day. The group then made its way to Flying Change Horse Farm to learn from owner/trainer Diane Schoonmaker's family's long history in farming the Rondout Valley.

During lunch at the Hudson Valley Research Lab in Highland, participants enjoyed a meal that featured all local farm products such as eggs, goat cheese, chicken, butternut squash, apples, and watermelon. Dr. Dave Rosenberger, a fruit pathologist, gave a presentation about the research and extension activities through Cornell University and how it directly benefits agricultural producers. The final stop of the tour was an apple packing facility at W.G. Minard and Sons in Clintondale, where food safety issues were addressed.

Legislator Hochberg got an insider's view of commercial farming in action and heard first hand from the farmer about issues that impact and shape the future of the industry in Ulster County, statewide and nationally. The tour was coordinated by Cooperative Extension Educators Teresa Rusinek, Mike Fargione and Audrey Reith.

Legislator Hochberg made the following comment on the Farm Tour, "Ulster County farms include apples, sweet corn, dairy, horses, and more. The diversity of our farms and farm products provides both opportunities and problems. My understanding of the problems including farm workforce, insurance, and increasing rules and regulations was an important part of the tour. Equally important, it was clear Cornell Cooperative Extension helps our farms deal with many of these issues on a daily basis in Ulster County."