Processing Champlain Valley Apples

Location of Project: Churubusco, New York (Northeast Region)

Purpose: The overall goal of the educational project was to facilitate the establishment of home kitchens, train apple processors, and expand markets for processed apple products. The project offered education to interested individuals about how to process apples for commercial use. Classes also featured education on kitchen certification requirements, canning, labeling, insurance, and recipe development.

Accomplishments: Informational packets were sent out to over 150 farmers, agri-businesses, and processors from a list of individuals compiled by the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Franklin County, inviting them to attend a class on basic processing techniques. The class:

- Provided guidelines about kitchen certification requirements;
- Educated individuals on how to have recipes approved for processing; and
- Discussed requirements for jars, labels, and insurance.

Instructors also provided a guided tour of Adirondack Kitchens to show participants how a typical commercial processing kitchen facility operates.

Lessons Learned: There appears to be an untapped potential market base for Champlain Valley apples and other local farm products. One workshop participant successfully started her own roadside stand, selling apples, fruits, jams, jellies, and fresh baked goods. Such success enabled her to expand her marketing efforts to include Christmas trees and have a pumpkin patch.

Conclusion: Project researchers suggested that the State agriculture and education departments consider combining their resources to market New York State agriculture products. One possible area of collaboration they identified was a project aimed at making New York apples available for school fundraising projects.