2011

2010-2011 Piscataquis County Cooperative Extension Annual Report

Donna Coffin

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Making a Difference

For more than 90 years, University of Maine Cooperative Extension has worked with Maine volunteers to offer community-driven, research-based educational programs in every county. Our annual report features highlights of recent accomplishments and the difference we make in the lives of Maine citizens and their communities.

2010 – 2011

Piscataquis County Highlights
University of Maine Cooperative Extension’s successful educational programs result from a federal, state and county government partnership. Since 1919, when the Maine Legislature passed the County Extension Act*, the University of Maine has been in all Maine communities with a county office whose operations are funded by county government. Our educational programs anticipate and respond to local and state needs and issues. We also communicate those issues and opportunities to UMaine faculty to influence their research and development plans.

Executive Summary

Like many organizations, Piscataquis County Extension has faced the challenge of increasing need and demand for services concurrent with decreasing revenues and budget. As noted on page 9 we’ve actually experienced a 21% decrease in county funds since 2009 that resulted in a 35% decrease in state support. While this has created some obvious changes such as a 20% reduction in hours open to the public, we are pleased to note that we have not reduced our service to nor impact on the community by the same 20%.

Viewing Extension as a business, we are a significant contributor to the local economy. When all extension funding is taken into consideration, we are a business contributing in excess of a half million dollars to the county economy in real dollars, not counting monies being brought in to the county through grants and improvements to local businesses and individuals. We cannot, however, expect other sources of funding to increase and offset county reductions. These sources of funding are experiencing the same economic challenges and those challenges must be shared with some degree of equality.

These challenges have required sacrifices, creativity, improved efficiencies and an increased reliance on volunteers. While we understand, support and actually promote the need for fiscal responsibility, we also have a responsibility to the communities and citizens of Piscataquis County. This report will attempt to describe and summarize how we have attempted to meet that responsibility during this past year.

As we complete our second year of significantly reduced funding both proud of our accomplishments and exasperated by the needs and opportunities we’ve missed. This report is a synopsis of program results.

1. 4-H and Youth Development
2. Family Resource Management
3. Nutrition, Food Safety & Food Preservation
4. Sustainable Agriculture
5. Home Horticulture
6. Home Energy

Additional information is available and we of course welcome the opportunity to answer any questions.

Program Highlights

4-H and Youth Development

One successful program in Piscataquis County is the Maine 4-H Youth Community Action Program—a National Engaging Youth, Serving Community Project. The Milo project includes three objectives:

- Provide a safe space for supervised positive youth development
- Create a community garden when people can learn about gardening
- Develop a school cafeteria-waste composting project

Fifteen Milo area youth participated in a 4-H Leadership Weekend at Bryant Pond 4-H Camp. They planned activities; developed a code of conduct; planned what roles are needed; and gathered a list of items that students need to improve their academic work that parents cannot afford to buy them. Grant money purchased supplies and computer equipment for this afterschool Safe Space Program. The three objectives overlap: creating a recycling program for cafeteria waste creates a by-product (compost) for use in the raised beds; maintaining a Learning Garden provides fresh food for the cafeteria and creates a “safe place” that’s also developmental. We conservatively estimate youth and adult volunteers have contributed 300 hours over 10 months to the 4-HMYCA Learning Garden in Milo:

PHOTO BY BARB BAKER, UMAINE EXTENSION
Based on a commonly accepted $15 per hour rate for volunteer time, the total value of their contributions is $4,500. The federal grant was $2,000. Thus, for every $1.00 from federal funds, Extension provided a return on the investment of $2.25—plus value added by the learning and development participants experienced.

Youth and adults from the 4-H Afterschool program started the 4-H Learning Garden in 2010 on a vacant piece of land in Milo near the industrial park supported by the Milo Town Manager and Selectmen. This year it has expanded with interest and enthusiasm was so strong; the 4-H Afterschool programs started a project called Kids Can Grow.

4-H Aide Brenda Mowdy is working with thirty children in the Milo 4-H Afterschool Program to start seedlings, worm houses and built raised beds both at the Elementary School and at home. These children represent twenty-two families. Additional no cost resources include seven adult volunteers, fourteen parents and five teens from the Penquis Valley High School Key Club. At LaGrange Elementary, twenty young people have five raised beds and two group gardens at homes with the help of 3 volunteers. The same Kids Can Grow 4-H Afterschool program in Brownville involves twelve kids and seven families led by volunteer leader Sue Stetson. Produce goes to the Maine Hunger Network and is used at home by families eating more fresh vegetables.

In April 42 kids and 17 adults from Milo, Brownville, and LaGrange visited the University of Maine in Orono. The group toured the Planetarium, the Maine Bound Rock Climbing Wall, the Greenhouses, Page Farm and Home Museum and Witter Farm.

Local clubs have always been the backbone of 4-H and Extension supports the following clubs in Piscataquis County:

- **4-H Capra Kids** - A goat club from Parkman, ME has five youth who have exhibited their goats at Easter States Exposition in Springfield, MA, Union Fair, and North East Livestock Expo.
- **4-H Musketeers** - Members of this club are doing 4-H projects and community service in the Brownville area.
- **4-H Family Club** - The Oldfield family runs 4-H Animal Land so 4-H’ers can exhibit their animal projects and fair visitors can have a petting zoo type atmosphere to see animals up close and ask 4-H families questions.
- **4-H Adventurers** - A new club serving the Parkman / Guilford areas with nature-based projects and more.
- **Another Club This Fall!** We have volunteers who are getting the training to start a swine club this fall.

The Caring for Kids program offered by Jane Conroy prepares area youth to babysit for families. Safety and child development topics were included as well as developing a resume and managing money. This year we had 16 youth earn their Caring for Kids certificates.

### Family Resource Management

Extension’s Family Resource Management program over the course of this year has included over 15 programs or course offerings reaching over 700 individuals or families.

These programs include:

- **Grandma’s Yellow Pie Plate:** With Piscataquis County having the highest population of individuals over the age of 65 (as of 2009 it was 18.5%), this session starts a family discussion on the financial and emotional disbursement of non-titled property of a family member(s). Offered at Piscataquis Community High School in Guilford through Adult Education, one participant noted that with the recent and sudden passing of husband, they never had those conversations and now she is able to feel better prepared in making her own plans with those decisions with others.
- **Simplify Your Life** combines basic food safety, organizational and money saving ideas and tips for your families’ health and budget.
- **Money Sense** - The continued need for financial management education remains a priority. This bi-monthly newsletter is distributed statewide to over 430 families. It includes articles to encourage ways to save money and increase knowledge on consumer issues. As a result of the newsletter, readers identified actions for improving money-saving behaviors.
- **Save More and Spend Less Website** was created to address common areas in budgeting money. There have been over 2400 page views. [www.umext.maine.edu/savemoney](http://www.umext.maine.edu/savemoney)
• **Money Blogs** is a series of money-saving topics written for the Parenting & Caregiving Website. Topics have included free ways to spend time as a family, Giving Pets as Gifts and Managing Your Money. [http://extension.umaine.edu/parenting/feed/](http://extension.umaine.edu/parenting/feed/)

As our economy continues to impact Piscataquis County families, we seek creative ways to provide resources to those families.

Extension Educator, Jane Conroy continues to work with county food cupboards to gain federal funds through FEMA and AARA sources continues. Last year’s grant was for over $13,000.

In the coming year Extension will be introducing a Smart Money Moves program in collaboration with General Assistance (GA) Directors creating on-line tools that the GA Directors and other professionals will be used with GA clients.

**Nutrition, Food Safety & Food Preservation**

**Eat Well Nutrition Education**
The Eat Well program includes the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) and the Maine Family Nutrition Program (MFNP). Sue Henner and Anita Libby-Kain taught food and nutrition lessons to both adults and youth. Clients are taught individually in their homes, in small community groups or participate through a correspondence course called Eat Well by Mail. These programs teach them to plan and prepare nutritious, low-cost meals. They are encouraged to take part in supplemental food programs for which they are eligible.

This past year a total of 1,193 youth participated in groups through the Eat Well program in schools both during the regular school day as well as in after school programs. Henner and Libby-Kain worked with youth in the following schools: Piscataquis Community Elementary, Nickerson Elementary, Greenville Recreation, Brownville Elementary, Milo Elementary, Penquis Valley High School, Sedomocha Elementary, Derby Head Start, Dexter Head Start, and SAD#4 Preschool.

Besides the youth in the county, Henner and Libby-Kain also provide nutrition education to 104 adults throughout the county, including special senior group presentations that were given to the Riverbend Seniors in Guilford, Senior Café in Guilford, Milo Meals for ME, Brownville Seniors, Quary Pines Seniors in Brownville and Dean Park Senior Café.

**Food Safety & Food Preservation**

Our statewide Extension Nutrition Call Team has addressed over 275 calls or emails on the topic of food safety. Extension remains the most reliable source of food preservation information and gauge testing service in the area.

**Sustainable Agriculture**

**Maine Highlands Farmers**
The Piscataquis County Extension assisted area farmers in establishing the Maine Highlands Farmers organization in 2003 – bringing farmers in Piscataquis, Penobscot and Somerset Counties together to learn about agricultural topics and to participate in joint marketing efforts.

Extension Educator Donna Coffin has brought a variety of direct farm marketing educational programs from experts throughout the state including University of Maine faculty, commercial businesses and State of Maine department staff.

- Value added food products
- Agribility a program to help disabled farmers keep farming
- Advertising and Promotion…how to get spots on television
- High Tunnels…Using low cost technology to increase yields, improve quality and extend the harvest
- Using Internet Technologies: What is the Right Fit for You?
- Excel Spreadsheets for Tracking Farm Expenses,
- How to Participate in a Webinar, Use Video Conferencing and Finding Reliable Information on the Internet
- New Farm Markets and Marketing Opportunities
- Farm Vehicles, licensing, off road fuel, load limits

Promotional efforts include a cookbook of recipes from farmer members, the organizations website [www.MaineHighlandsFarmers.com](http://www.MaineHighlandsFarmers.com) that lists all members, contact information, products they sell, hours, location. Recently the group has started advertising their website on the WABI TV website. Summer meetings are held at member’s farms so they can learn from each other. This
group has enabled a number of farmers to work together to enhance their marketing efforts.

So You Want to Farm in Maine
Requests for information from new farmers or potential farmers in Piscataquis County increased 300% in 2010. Donna Coffin, working with extension educators Kathy Hopkins and Andrew Plant developed a five-part series, So You Want to Farm in Maine that was presented live in Bangor and downlinked in Skowhegan and Houlton. A total of 63 people thinking about farming or wanting to change agriculture enterprises participated in the program. The technology did have some glitches but most folks were forgiving of the problems. Participants reported in a post program evaluation the following knowledge and understanding gains:

- 76% learned about the rules and regulations affecting agriculture enterprises and the agencies that enforce them
- 68% learned where to look for resources and information about their farm enterprise of interest including web resources, government agencies, universities and other organizations
- 59% learned the importance of developing a business plan and the items a farm business plan should include
- 55% earned new market research techniques that they could implement to refine the knowledge of markets for their agriculture products

The balance of the respondents reported they already had these skills or knowledge before the sessions.

One-on-One Consultations
Donna Coffin has talked with over 70 potential, new and established farmers from Piscataquis County on a variety of topics relating to agriculture production, marketing, regulations and resource identification. Other statewide extension staff consulted with farmers to improve their production practices and become more profitable.

Newsletter
The Piscataquis County Farming Newsletter has been combined with Penobscot County. It is available monthly to electronic subscribers and bimonthly to those needing paper copies. The Penobscot County office does the surface mailings for both offices. A total of 285 people (43% from Piscataquis County) receive the newsletter with 84% receiving it electronically and 16% receiving a paper copy.

While the electronic versions of these newsletters have saved postage and printing costs, it must be noted that one third of Piscataquis County subscribers receive the surfaced mailed versions of the newsletter. Many folks have slow Internet connections or no Internet to receive electronic versions of these newsletters.

Home Horticulture

Master Gardener Volunteers
The 2009 class of Master Gardener Volunteers is just finishing their 40 hours of volunteer time assisting others in Piscataquis County. They have logged over 200 hours of service by helping others to learn how to have a more successful garden.

Several MGV’s assisted the Charlotte White Center greenhouse and gardening project. Others helped beautify their communities by establishing or maintaining public green spots and gardens. And others taught classes on seed starting, rain gardens and butterfly gardens. Some were able to help at the Extension Office.

We will be offering the Master Gardener Volunteer program in the fall of 2011 with a focus on ornamentals including flowers, trees, shrubs, and landscaping. One project already on the docket is to assist the Piscataquis County Commissioners with designing a plan for landscaping around the new courthouse addition. If you are interested in becoming a University of Maine Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Volunteer contact
the Piscataquis County office for an application. There is a sliding-scale fee to accommodate all income levels.

**Home Gardening Programs**
Home gardeners have benefitted from programs and displays on starting seeds, early gardening, gardening with children, horticulture as a job, raised beds, container gardening and fruit tree pruning. Over 170 Piscataquis County gardeners have attended these programs and learned techniques to be more successful in their gardening efforts.

Extension staff has assisted over 90 Piscataquis County home gardeners with questions on pest management, gardening techniques, variety selection, and garden site preparation. Gardening information has been supplemented with the Piscataquis County Gardening website, Piscataquis and Penobscot Counties Gardening Newsletter and the Piscataquis County Master Gardener Newsletter.

**Newsletters**
The Piscataquis County Gardening Newsletter has been combined with Penobscot County. It is available monthly to electronic subscribers and bi-monthly to those needing paper copies. The Penobscot County office does the surface mailings both offices. A total of 611 people (32% from Piscataquis County) receive the newsletter with 87% receiving it electronically and 13% receiving a paper copy. Staff from both counties contributes articles and calendar items for the newsletter.

While the electronic versions of these newsletters have saved postage and printing costs, one third of the Piscataquis subscribers receive the surfaced mailed versions of the newsletter. Many folks have slow Internet connections or no Internet to receive electronic versions of these newsletters.

**Home Energy**
Three Home Energy workshops were held in Dover-Foxcroft. Post program evaluations showed that 90% of those responding plan to do an energy audit of their home; 81% plan to seal any holes or gaps around their windows, lights & plumbing fixtures; 72% plan to weather strip doors and windows. 81% rated the program as “excellent” in providing them with new knowledge and skills on home energy conservation.

**Staff Accomplishments**

**Thirty-Year Anniversary**
Donna Coffin was recognized for 30 years of service to the Piscataquis County Extension program. "On October 15th, 1980 I returned to Maine from my extension position in Geauga County with the Ohio State University Cooperative Extension Service to start my work with the University of Maine Cooperative Extension Service in Piscataquis County. I have enjoyed serving the people from Piscataquis County and beyond in sustainable agriculture, home horticulture, home energy and 4-H youth.”

Also, on July 1, 2011 Donna was promoted to full Extension Professor by the University of Maine to acknowledge her...
leadership, research, teaching and scholarship in agriculture, home horticulture and home energy.

Community Collaborations

County-staff have collaborated with a number of Piscataquis County organizations serving in leadership and/or advisory roles, assisting with organizational development and supporting grant writing capabilities. Some of these organizations include

- **Piscataquis Public Health Council** including the SNAP-ed school, farm and community Growing Connections project- Board Chair
- **Pine Tree Hospice**- Member of Board
- **Friends of Central Hall** the grant-writing sub-committee
- **Piscataquis County Soil and Water Conservation District** including work on summer agriculture and natural resource camps, gifted property discussions, & Federal and State grants to support conservation in Piscataquis County
- **Piscataquis County Locally Led Committee** – of the Natural Resource Conservation Service
- **Charlotte White Center Agriculture Advisory Committee** – Business Development Team
- **Maine Highlands Farmers** including educational program development and marketing opportunities

Piscataquis County Extension Association Executive Committee

Our County Extension Association is the vital link between the county, our communities and UMaine. The Association’s Executive Committee is comprised of local volunteers who represent community interests by advising UMaine Extension staff on educational programs, advocate for and secure funding from county government to support the county office, oversee the office budget and facilities, and guide UMaine Extension staff in identifying their programming goals.

The purpose of this committee is to help determine priorities, promote and evaluate the University of Maine Cooperative Extension’s educational programs, to address the needs and interests of area residents according to its mission. If you would like to learn more about PCEA or to join, contact the Piscataquis County Extension Office.

**Executive Committee Members 2010-2011**
Felix Blinn – Brownville  
Walter Boomsma – Abbot  
Nancy Matulis – Dover-Foxcroft  
Paul Matulis – Dover-Foxcroft  
George McKay – Dover-Foxcroft  
Judy Merck – Dover-Foxcroft & Blanchard  
Walter Sinclair – Brownville  
Lilly Weatherbee – Dover-Foxcroft  
Thelma Regan, Wellington

Financial Support for the Piscataquis County Extension Office

As a unique partnership among federal, state and county governments, UMaine Extension uses funding from Maine counties and the University to match and leverage support from the United States Department of Agriculture, other federal grantors, state agencies and private foundations. Each county UMaine Extension office is also part of a statewide organization and the national Extension system.

**Statewide Funding Support**
Without statewide support, UMaine Extension would not be present in this county. Funds for projects are provided through the University of Maine, Federal Formula Funds, grants, contracts, and fees. Dollars from other sources support salaries and benefits for Extension Specialists, County Educators, Extension administration, computer equipment and networking, publications, postage, telephone, and travel.

**Funding from Piscataquis County**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2010 – 2011 Funding for Piscataquis County</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local Salaries &amp; Benefits</td>
<td>$318,453</td>
<td>$8,274</td>
<td>$326,727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment &amp; Supplies</td>
<td>$5,687</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
<td>$8,687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postage &amp; Publications</td>
<td>$5,436</td>
<td>$25</td>
<td>$5,461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>$1,461</td>
<td>$1,200</td>
<td>$2,661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>$13,897</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$13,897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations Grant</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building</td>
<td>$49,487</td>
<td></td>
<td>$49,487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>$349,934</td>
<td>$61,986</td>
<td>$411,830</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Each year, Piscataquis County tax dollars support the UMaine Extension with physical office space, support staff salaries, office supplies, equipment and some programming expenses.

This year the state office has provided a one time $5,000 grant to help the Piscataquis County office stay open. The county secretary is working 60% of her time for Piscataquis County and 40% of the time assisting with their statewide staffing needs in the financial office.

Other Grant Money Coming

Piscataquis County Extension Funding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County’s Building Expense</th>
<th>Supplies 3%</th>
<th>Telephone 2%</th>
<th>Secretaries Salary 13%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The Piscataquis County Office has been closed to the public on Tuesdays to allow secretarial staff to complete statewide work. Other county-staff continue to conduct educational programming without secretarial support on this day. Clients are asked to leave a message at 564-3301 to be answered the next day. They can also drop off non-perishable samples with a note with their contact information in the drop box by the door and the item will be retrieved the next day. If immediate assistance is needed they can call the state office at 1-800-287-0274.

### Piscataquis County Funding Comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>2008 - 2009</th>
<th>2009 - 2010</th>
<th>% change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>County Operating Costs</td>
<td>33,700</td>
<td>12,500</td>
<td>-63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Building Costs</td>
<td>44,478</td>
<td>49,487</td>
<td>+11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total County</td>
<td>78,178</td>
<td>61,987</td>
<td>-21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Support</td>
<td>531,756</td>
<td>349,934</td>
<td>-35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Budget</td>
<td>609,934</td>
<td>411,830</td>
<td>-33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During this difficult time we appreciate the public’s understanding. A number of folks have commented that it has been inconvenient to come to the office on Tuesday only to find it closed. Hopefully the economic climate will improve and additional funding can be reinstated to allow a full time secretary for the Piscataquis County Extension Office.

### Social Media Presence

The University of Maine Piscataquis County Extension Office now has a Facebook Page where current events and items of interest are posted. “Like” us on Facebook at [http://www.facebook.com/umaineeextpsq](http://www.facebook.com/umaineeextpsq). We have from 150 to 200 views on each item that is posted even though we only have 39 “Likes.”

### Assistance Given for Other Grant Funds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$13,000</td>
<td>Piscataquis Food Cupboard Federal Funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$3,500</td>
<td>Piscataquis Public Health Council SNAP Ed Grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$4,000</td>
<td>Part of Adobe Youth Voices Grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$7,000</td>
<td>Part of Tech Wizards National Mentoring Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$7,500</td>
<td>4-H Maine Youth Community Action Grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$150,000</td>
<td>USDA Conservation Innovation Grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>Community Kitchen Viability Study Grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$600</td>
<td>Master Garden Demonstration Garden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$185,600</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Current operations:
Don’t forget to visit the Piscataquis County Extension Website at http://extension.umaine.edu/piscataquis/.
In the last year we have had over 6,500 unique hits to our website and blog pages. The top visited page was our home page followed by the sign up page for the Gardening Newsletter, Garden topics page.

The County Extension Act

_The County Extension Act explains the role of county government in funding local Extension offices:_

Cooperative extension work shall consist of the giving of practical demonstrations in agriculture and natural resources, youth development, and home economics and community life and imparting information on those subjects through field demonstrations, publications and otherwise. For the purpose of carrying out this chapter, there may be created in each county or combination of two counties within the State an organization known as a “county extension association,” and its services available to all residents of a county. The county extension is viewed as a unique and important educational program of county government. The executive committee of each county extension association shall prepare an annual budget as requested, showing in detail its estimate of the amount of money to be expended under this chapter within the county or counties for the fiscal year. The executive committee shall submit to the board of county commissioners on a date requested by the county commissioners, and the county commissioners may, if they deem it justifiable, adopt an appropriate budget for the county extension program and levy a tax therefore. The amount thus raised by direct taxation within any county or combination of counties for the purposes of this chapter shall be used for the salaries of clerks, provision of office space, supplies, equipment, postage, telephone, a contribution toward the salaries of county educators and such other expenses as necessary to maintain an effective county extension program.¹

¹Excerpted from Title 7, Chapter 7 of the Maine Revised Statutes, §191–§195.

Statewide Highlights

_A sampling of programs that have statewide and local importance:_

- **Our Digital Evolution**: The past year marks an important division between Extensions past and future. While still believing in the value of human connection, we have put a strong emphasis on developing digital resources and educational programs in order to meet the measure of how people learn and interact in the world, now and in the future. We are creating new educational videos that address an ever-widening array of needs that are shared across the University of Maine website and embedded in online publications making it possible for anyone to learn how to grow, harvest, and/or preserve strawberries in Maine, …or learn about food safety at farmer’s markets, …or understand how to look for BEDBUGS, …and much, much more. Is it working? Google Analytics data suggests an enormous response, exponentially extending our ability to help Maine people access research-based information and improve their lives.

- **The Maine Compost School** helps people understand how to recycle organic material, reduce their contributions to landfills, and produce rich, valuable, soil enhancing compost, a marketable commodity. Participants come from throughout world and are professional compost operators, farmers, municipal workers, homeowners, teachers, and students who gain certification in week long or 2-day programs. The School is a partnership between UMaine Extension, the Maine Department of Agriculture Food and Rural Resources, Maine Department of Environmental Protection, and the Maine State Planning Office. In the last two years, six new compost businesses were started in Maine as a direct result of the Maine Compost School, creating 17 new jobs and a variety of seasonal employment opportunities.
Harvest for Hunger: UMaine Extension's Harvest for the Hungry Program involves home gardeners, Master Gardeners, and other volunteers who grow and glean fresh fruits and vegetables and donate them to needy individuals and families in Maine. During the 2010 garden season, UMaine Extension collected 191,977 pounds of fresh fruit and vegetables to give to food banks, soup kitchens, service organizations, and directly to families as part of our healthy lifestyles educational programs. At an average market value of $1.69 per pound, the contribution was valued at more than $325,400. The program’s objectives are to mitigate hunger, improve nutrition and health, and help the recipients develop lifelong positive nutritional habits.

Growing Alternative Fuel: For the past two years Extension has been researching the use of perennial grasses left from small grain rotations to be used as solid fuel crops. We are now working with the University Maine Process Development Center on a Biomass Engineered Fuel Project, a $1.65 million initiative recently funded by the State of Maine Technology Asset Fund linking UMaine research and development with Maine farmers, energy consumers, companies, and entrepreneurs to develop and commercialize biomass fuel in the form of grass-based pellets. In the next four years, the project will focus on the manufacturing efficiencies of converting energy crops to solid biofuel, and testing that biofuel for performance, combustion efficiency, and ultimate commercial potential.

2010 – 2011 Piscataquis County Staff Members

**Extension Educators**
Barbara Baker
Donna Coffin
Jane Conroy

**Program Associates**
Anita Libby-Kain
Sue Henner
Hannah Todd
Tom Goodspeed

**Eat Well Regional Supervisor**
Wanda Lincoln

**Support Staff**
Amanda Miles

For More Information about Piscataquis County Cooperative Extension contact the local office at:
165 East Main Street
Dover-Foxcroft, ME 04426
(207) 564-3301 or in Maine 1-800-287-1491
cespq@umext.maine.edu

[http://extension.umaine.edu/piscataquis](http://extension.umaine.edu/piscataquis)

Please note, due to reduced county funding the office is open to the public Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday from 8 am to 4:30 pm. Tuesdays we are closed to the public. Other office staff continue to conduct educational programming without secretarial support on this day.

Have any comments or suggestions? Do you want to complain or tell us we are doing a great job? To help us in our efforts to better serve you, we have created a Customer Comment Card that is accessible online. Please visit [http://tinyurl.com/psqccc](http://tinyurl.com/psqccc) to express your opinion, provide valuable feedback or share a testimonial. Or stop into the office during regular business hours. Thank You!

Cover photos by Donna Coffin, Extension Educator and Edwin Remsberg, USDA.