



*LERGP Crop Update
December 18, 2025*

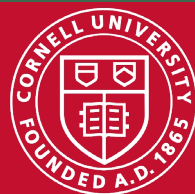


Cornell Cooperative Extension
Lake Erie Regional Grape Program



PennState Extension

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In this copy:

Registration for 2026 Winter Grape Grower Conference is open! [REGISTER NOW!](#)

New NRCS Regenerative Pilot Program- *Andrew Holden*- [page 4](#)

FREE Respirator fit testing-Save the Date! - *Megan Luke*- [page 12](#)

Grape Pathology Fruit School- Registration information- [page 13](#)

A reminder that CLEREL will be closed beginning Thursday, December 25 and will reopen Monday, January 5, 2026. See you in the new year!

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[Click here to
watch Podcasts](#)

The Lake Erie Regional Grape Program is a Cornell Cooperative Extension partnership between Cornell University and the Cornell Cooperative Extensions in Chautauqua, Erie and Niagara county NY and in Erie County PA.

LERGP Winter Grape Grower Conference

Thursday, March 19, 2026
William's Center
SUNY Fredonia Campus
Fredonia NY

Come join us for a day of education, friends, food, pesticide credits
and maybe a little wine.

The agenda is in the works, but will be posted soon. We have a great day of
programming lined up for you, with breakout sessions, something for everyone.

REGISTER TODAY!



Business Management

Andrew Holden, Business Management Educator, Penn State University, LERGP

Please see the USDA announcement of the New NRCS Regenerative Pilot Program, for more information or to sign up, contact your local NRCS office.

New NRCS Regenerative Pilot Program

In December 2025, [NRCS launched the NRCS Regenerative Pilot Program](#), a farmer first, outcomes-based approach to conservation designed to return the agency to its core mission – helping people help the land. NRCS is investing \$700 million to specifically support regenerative agriculture, including:

- \$400 million through the [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) (EQIP); and
- \$300 million through the [Conservation Stewardship Program](#) (CSP)



This pilot program addresses whole-farm resource concerns through support for voluntary regenerative agriculture conservation plans. It also puts American farmers first as a part of the solution to Make American Healthy Again (MAHA) by supporting access to American-grown whole foods, critical to addressing the chronic disease crisis nationwide.

For too long, divided and highly specific funding pools have unintentionally encouraged isolated, practice-by-practice conservation, rather than holistic management. By integrating bundled regenerative practices into single applications, closing program loopholes, and recognizing outcomes, NRCS will deliver lasting benefits for farmers, natural resources, and the American consumer.



Emphasizing regenerative agriculture builds upon [NRCS's 90 years](#) of existing conservation work by restoring land health, improving long-term productivity, and ensuring American grown production for the future.

For Producers, this means:

- Bundled practices will be integrated into a **single application**, making programs easier to access and more impactful;
- Whole-farm holistic conservation planning is the centerpiece of the program, ensuring that all resource

concerns (soil, water, and natural vitality) are addressed together, not piecemeal;

- Conservation planning and producer objectives drive the process, ensuring site-specific solutions that work for the producer;
- Outcomes are tracked, measured, and credited back to the farmer; and
- Producers at every stage, from beginners just starting out with cover crops to advanced operations with years of conservation experience, will find a pathway through this pilot program.

For Consumers, this means:

- The NRCS Regenerative Pilot Program puts American farmers first as a part of the solution to [Make America Healthy Again](#);
- Access to American-grown whole foods is critical to addressing the chronic disease crisis nationwide; and
- Engaging the supply chain to give farmers assistance and credit for taking care of the soil, water, and land while productively bringing food to our tables, gives American consumers more access to healthy choices.

Requirements

As part of participating in Regenerative Pilot Program, producers must:

- Work with NRCS staff, partners, or technical service providers to conduct a **whole-farm assessment**;
- Use at least one primary **regenerative management practice** (see list below); and
- Agree to perform **soil health testing** in the first and last year of the contract (at a minimum) to establish a starting baseline and to record the resulting changes.

The whole-farm assessment includes all resource concerns, and it must meet NRCS planning criteria in the soil and water resource categories.

Primary practices include:

- Conservation Crop Rotation (328)
- Contour Farming (330)
- Contour Orchard and Other Perennial Crop (331)
- Cover Crop (340)
- Drainage Water Management (554)

- Forage Harvest Management (511)
- Forest Stand Improvement (666)
- Irrigation Water Management (449)
- Mulching (484)
- Nutrient Management (590)
- Pest Management Conservation System (595)
- Prescribed Grazing (528)
- Residue and Tillage Management, No Till (329)
- Residue and Tillage Management, Reduced (345)
- Stripcropping (585)

For example: A farm may implement Conservation Crop Rotation, Cover Crop, and Nutrient Management as their primary management practices, but also identified the need for soil amendments using practice 333 - Amending Soil Properties with Gypsum Products, or 336 - Soil Carbon Amendment, as necessary to implement their conservation plan. These practices would be eligible for inclusion under the Regenerative Pilot Program.

Additional information is available in the Regenerative Pilot Program [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

Advisory Council

NRCS is also setting up a Chief's Regenerative Agriculture Advisory Council that gives farmers, consumers, and private partners a seat at the table, ensuring NRCS programs remain practical, transparent, and responsive to real-world needs. The Council will consist of 15 members – nine regenerative farmers representing production systems, three corporate supply-chain or consumer packaged goods (CPG) representatives, and three consumer or MAHA representatives. The Council will meet quarterly with the Chief of NRCS for one year.

Partnerships

Success depends on strong partnerships. NRCS will expand work with Technical Service Providers (TSPs) and local organizations to meet demand. In addition, NRCS's Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production (UAIP), supported by the UAIP Advisory Committee, will extend regenerative priorities into cities and communities, aligning with USDA's Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) agenda through programs like [The People's Garden](#).

Companies interested in partnering with USDA NRCS in the Regenerative Pilot Program can email regenerative@usda.gov for more information.

How to Apply

Farmers and ranchers interested in regenerative agriculture are encouraged to apply through their local NRCS Service Center by their state's ranking dates for consideration in FY2026 funding. Applications for both EQIP and CSP can now be submitted under the new single regenerative application process. On December 15, 2025, NRCS announced a [January 15 National Batching Deadline for](#)

Major NRCS Conservation Programs that includes the Regenerative Pilot Program.

More Information

- [Press Release: USDA Launches New Regenerative Pilot Program to Lower Farmer Production Costs and Advance MAHA Agenda](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#)
- [Soil Health](#)
- [Water](#)

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PA Update

Megan Luke, Penn State Extension Viticulture and Tree Fruit Educator



Save the Date!

FREE Respirator fit testing for NY and PA growers + 30 Minute Annual Respirator Use Certification (1 Core Credit, PDA only)

Wednesday, February 11th, from 8:30 AM-2:30 PM

Burch Farms Country Market, 9210 Sidehill Rd, North East, PA 16428

Details and registration coming soon, contact Megan Luke for more information

Megan Luke –LERGP Penn State Extension Viticulture and Tree Fruit Educator

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Cell:(716) 397-9674 Office:(814) 825-0900



2026

Cornell Grape Pathology Fruit School

January 22, 2026

Cornell AgriTech Campus

Jordan Hall Auditorium

630 W. North St, Geneva

8:45 AM Registration

9:00 AM to 12:00 PM (credits)

12:30 PM to 2:30 PM (optional)

Satellite rooms available at
Cornell CLEREL, Riverhead,
Hudson Valley stations, and
Capital District.

DEC Credits

Core 0.50 10 2.5

1A 2.5 22 2.5

Dr. Katie Gold

Dave Combs

Dr. Christophe Duplais

Dr. Scott Cosseboom

Dr. Yu Jiang

Morning session will be DEC credit eligible,
those who stay for AgriTech's optional
afternoon session will have lunch provided.

Pre-registration is required

[Click here to register](#)

<https://forms.gle/fPaic9faL11GyVJ26>

**YOU MUST E-MAIL A COPY OF YOUR PESTICIDE
LICENSE TO dbc10@cornell.edu OR UPLOAD TO THE
REGISTRATION FORM BEFORE THE PROGRAM IF YOU
ARE SEEKING PESTICIDE CREDITS.**



Dr. Katie Gold
Cornell University

The future of disease management is (almost) now

An update on what's new from Cornell Grape Pathology—dsRNA, next-gen biologicals, disease-resistant varieties, phenology-based scheduling, dynamic spray volume (“smart” spraying), and emerging AI decision support—and how to judge these against the *unchanged* fundamentals of pathogen biology and viticultural practice. Using grapevine downy mildew as an example, attendees will connect pathogen life cycle to product choice and timing, learn where our data says the new tools can help with old problems, and leave with clear questions to ask before adopting new products and approaches.



Dave Combs
Cornell University

**Fungicide efficacy 2025:
Results Cornell Grape Pathology's powdery mildew,
downy mildew and black rot trials**

An overview of the materials and their effectiveness in the Cornell pathology vineyard field trials in 2025. Fungicides will be evaluated and compared against like modes of action as well as untreated controls and grower standard programs. This program will also suggest materials to use in the future and what pathogens they are most effective against.



Dr. Scott Cosseboom

Cornell University

Building an effective spray program for cluster rots and development of an AI pesticide database

Protecting fruit from cluster rotting diseases is critical, but can be challenging due to the long growing season, constraints on effective chemical classes, multiple pathogens, and potential losses of fungicides like mancozeb. Effective products for each cluster rotting disease and timings of applications will be discussed as well as decision management tools including disease forecasting models and a newly developed, AI-driven pesticide database.



Dr. Christophe Duplais

Cornell University

What growers should know about spray adjuvants

Growers are overwhelmed by the large amount of information about adjuvants, but which ones are relevant to their decision-making process. This seminar focuses on the practical question of adjuvant efficacy: when they work, when they fail, and how to anticipate their performance. The seminar offers a chemistry-based framework for understanding how adjuvants affect pesticide performance, including water compatibility, droplet formation, deposition, and uptake. Through demonstrations and field case studies, the seminar illustrates that adjuvant performance critically depends on pesticide chemistry, crop tissue, and the target pest or pathogen. The seminar's goal is to help growers select adjuvants that enhance the efficacy of active ingredients, reduce drift, and limit chemical waste.



**Dr. Katie Gold &
Dave Combs**
Cornell University

**The compatibility quest & biofungicide interchangeability:
Can biologicals be tank mixed with conventional fungicides
& can we use biologicals in place of conventionals?**

A recap of the two ongoing studies in the Cornell Pathology Vineyards to derive rules of thumb for rotating and tank mixing biofungicides and conventional chemistries. Both programs evaluate the ‘unholy trinity’ of powdery mildew, downy mildew and black rot on susceptible varieties.



Dr. Yu Jiang
Cornell University

myEV HANDS-ON WORKSHOP – AgriTech only

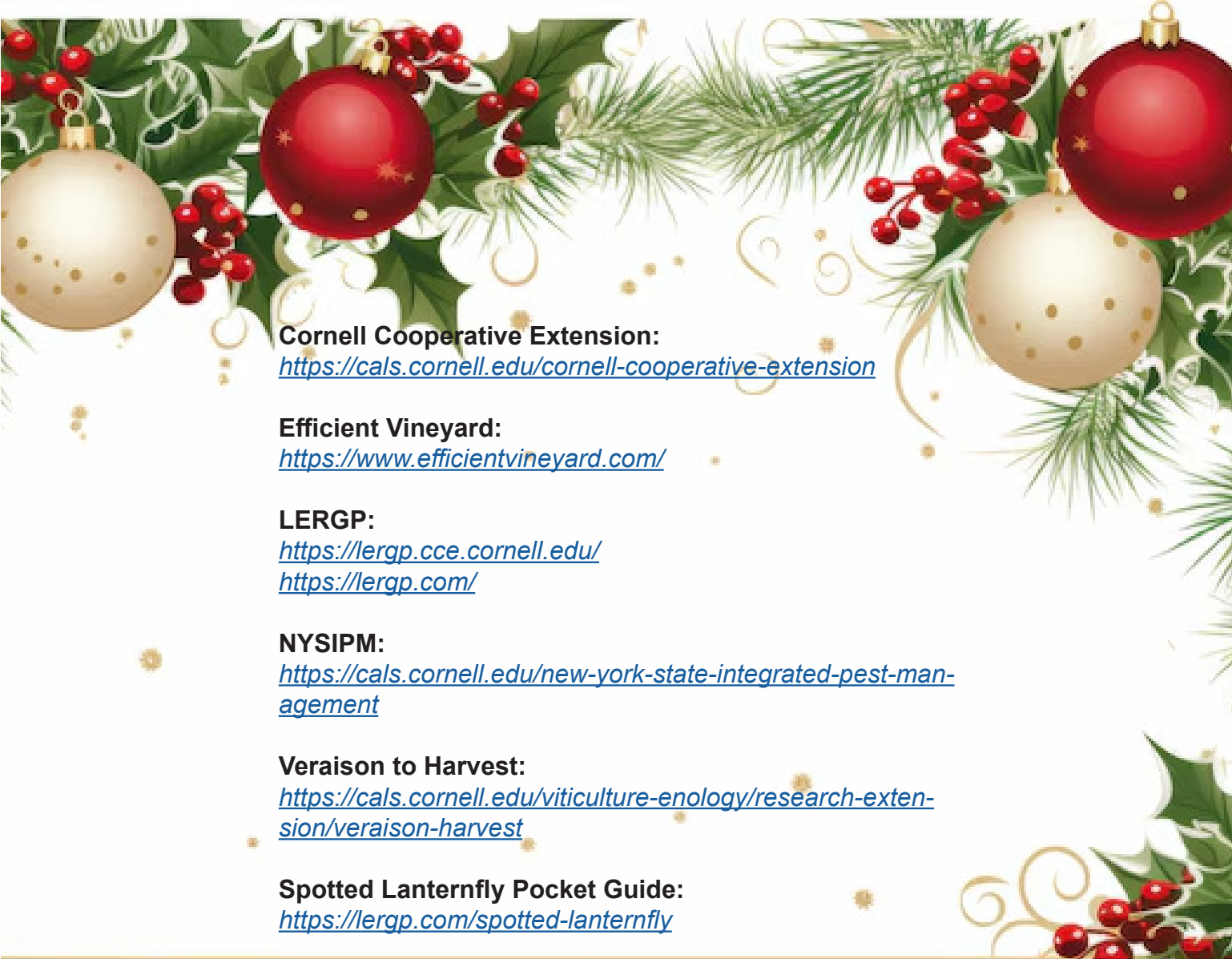
Participants who stay for the optional afternoon session will be given lunch, but pre-registration is required. A short field session will take place (weather permitting), and then a return to auditorium where the information taken will be used as a hands-on learning session in myEV, the app designed to tag specific issues within a vineyard.

Upcoming Events and Mark Your Calendar Days

Thursday, January 22, 2026- Cornell Grape Pathology Fruit School- see information in this Crop Update

Thursday, March 19, 2026- Winter Grape Grower Conference- [register today!](#)

Links of Interest:



Cornell Cooperative Extension:

<https://cals.cornell.edu/cornell-cooperative-extension>

Efficient Vineyard:

<https://www.efficientvineyard.com/>

LERGP:

<https://lergp.cce.cornell.edu/>

<https://lergp.com/>

NYSIPM:

<https://cals.cornell.edu/new-york-state-integrated-pest-management>

Veraison to Harvest:

<https://cals.cornell.edu/viticulture-enology/research-extension/veraison-harvest>

Spotted Lanternfly Pocket Guide:

<https://lergp.com/spotted-lanternfly>