



Happy New Year! This newsletter is brief and provides us all with a purposeful pause: a moment to recharge, an opportunity to reflect on shared accomplishments, and a space to prepare for the year ahead. We look forward to continuing our work together in 2026: aligned, connected, and ready.

“Each day, life will send you little windows of opportunity. Your destiny will ultimately be defined by how you respond to these windows of opportunity.” – Robin Sharma (2006) in *The Greatness Guide*, HarperCollins Publishers, New York, NY.

Action items:

- *Hold the date:* Our next agInnovation Northeast virtual gathering will be on January 15, 2026, at 8:00 AM. An agenda and connection details will be emailed to you.
- Prior to the beginning of the new year Secretary Rollins issued a directive, [Secretary’s Memorandum 1078-020](#), on departmental research and development priorities. The memo directs all USDA agencies to focus research and development on projects that prioritize: increasing profitability of farmers and ranchers, expanding markets for U.S. ag products, protecting American ag from invasive species, promoting soil health, and improving health through precision nutrition and food quality. Clearly, this will be reflected in upcoming RFAs. Secretary Rollins issued an additional directive, Secretary’s [Memorandum 1078-021](#), enacting a new set of [USDA General Terms and Conditions for Federal Awards](#). The intent of these Terms and Conditions is to decrease administrative burden and increase efficiency. We’ll be monitoring this as the new rules and regulations become practice.
- The Northeast Administrative Heads (NE AHS) will be meeting

via zoom on January 16 at 8:00 AM. An agenda and connection details will be forwarded to the NE AHS this week.

- For a good read, check out this story: [Margaret Smith, “embodiment of the land grant mission,” elected emerita](#). Margaret is the former director of the Cornell University Agricultural Experiment Station.

Reminders/Updates:

- The [minutes for our agInnovation Northeast Business Meeting](#) held on December 18, 2025, are now posted on our website. Check those out!
- During our December business meeting we discussed the Northeast Computational Research Initiative. We are now seeking prospective members for an initial leadership group to initiate defining priorities and strategies. If this opportunity interests you, [please contact Rick and David](#).
- *Save the dates:*
 - agInnovation Northeast Spring Meeting, Geneva, NY, March 16-18, 2026 (hosted by Cornell AgriTech)
 - Joint Summer Session (agInnovation Northeast and NEED), Shelburne, VT, June 1-3, 2026 (hosted by the University of Vermont)
 - agInnovation Annual Meeting, Grand Junction, CO, September 21-25, 2026 (hosted by Colorado State University)
- *agInnovation Northeast virtual meeting dates (2026, all begin at 8:00 AM)*
 - January 15, February 26, April 16, May 21, July 16, August 20, October 15, November 19, December 17 (agInnovation Northeast Winter Meeting)

Informational items:

- The BAA’s Communications and Marketing Committee shared the January 2026 Communications Toolkit. It’s titled, [“The Land-Grant University System’s Unique Power: Accelerating Discovery, Developing the Workforce, and Delivering Solutions”](#). Check it out! As a heads up there’s reference to the recent study undertaken by Purdue that projects employment opportunities in the food, agriculture, renewable natural resources, and environmental sectors. (To access the full study, go to [Food and Agriculture Career Outlook for College Graduates](#).)

- Sara Delheimer has shared the [MRF Impacts toolkit for January](#). Please share this toolkit and use the materials!
 - *The forever green reminder:* In past newsletters, we've made a pitch for "station" photos for both the agInnovation Northeast website and The Parting Shot. We encourage you to share shots from your libraries as well as other image sources. Please [forward pictures to us](#) with a caption and a photo credit.
-

From the Archive:

- The parting shot of the first annual report from the Experiment Station at Cornell University is a reminder of the importance of archived materials. As we share with you regularly, your agInnovation Northeast website is our version of the "archive". To that end, we've archived a working paper from [Huffman and Evenson \(2005\)](#) (see [Reports and Whitepapers](#) and scroll to 2005) in which the authors conclude that "...an increase in federal competitive grant funding at the expense of federal formula funding for state agricultural experiment stations lowers the productivity of public agricultural research significantly." In 2026, we expect to collectively work on increasing investment in Capacity Funds. We have data (archival to present) to support a request for a significant increase.

The Parting Shot:

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

CORNELL UNIVERSITY

EXPERIMENT STATION

1879-80

ITHACA, N. Y.

THE UNIVERSITY PRESS

1880

“Back where it all began, Cornell University Experiment Station’s First Annual Report, 1880” (photo credit: Shawn Bossard, Cornell AES).

agInnovation Northeast
www.aginnovation-northeast.org
35 Campus Avenue
Green Hall room 115
University of Rhode Island
Kingston, RI 02881

Executive Director, [Dr. Richard C. Rhodes III](#): (401) 874-2468
Coordinator, [David Leibovitz](#): (401) 874-4801

agInnovation Northeast and its member institutions are committed to the principles of affirmative action, diversity, and inclusion.

Please do not reply directly to this MailChimp message.