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Finger Lakes Food Business Incubation Program is expanding in 2020

Ithaca, NY, October 15, 2019 – The Finger Lakes Regional Prosperity Network (FLRPnet) in partnership with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County, announced today the award of a USDA Rural Business Development Grant to support its Food Business Incubation Program (FoodBIP). FoodBIP is a technical support program for the Finger Lakes food and beverage manufacturing sector. FoodBIP launched in December of 2018 serving four counties.

The \$86,500 award will provide industry-specific technical support to an expanded region including Cayuga, Chemung, Cortland, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Tioga, Tompkins and Yates counties. FoodBIP is developing the food sector’s entrepreneurial ecosystem in the rural Finger Lakes through technical assistance, connecting local food manufacturers to wholesale markets, and coordinating the food-sector value chain. The funding supports the program through 2020.

“Following the launch of FoodBIP in December of 2018, we are pleased to expand to serve this large rural region in the heart of the Finger Lakes,” said Dan Fessenden, Chair of the Finger Lakes Regional Prosperity Network. “FoodBIP is stimulating the growth of the Finger Lakes region’s nascent local-foods industry. We are excited to work with farm-based processors and other food manufacturers. These food and beverage entrepreneurs are eager for additional support to help them connect to their markets and grow jobs in the region.”

Ken Schlather, Executive Director of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County says, “This program brings together a partnership of CCE and economic development resources to address a regional challenge. This combination can uniquely support the local food sector’s growth to serve large commercial markets. FoodBIP is especially relevant in the highly competitive and increasingly regulated food sector.”

Amina Omari, Director of FoodBIP adds, “The Finger Lakes region is becoming a regional food and beverage powerhouse. I am thrilled that FoodBIP can help this vision become a reality on a larger scale.”

FoodBIP is a project of the Finger Lakes Regional Prosperity Network (FLRPnet), a nonprofit organization working to create rural wealth. FLRPnet connects regional partners to advance place-based development, entrepreneurship, and the Finger Lakes brand. For more information contact Martha Armstrong: marthaa@tcad.org (607) 273-0005, or contact the FoodBIP program at www.FoodBIP.org.

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