



## Cornell University Cooperative Extension of Delaware County

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### **The Delaware County Grass Bio-Energy Project**

Grass biomass is receiving renewed interest as energy prices have dramatically increased in recent years. Grass biomass for combustion is a very promising energy source that offers the following advantages:

- ◆ Local energy loop
- ◆ Very efficient energy conversion
- ◆ Existing infrastructure on farms to harvest haycrop
- ◆ Compatible with livestock and crop operations
- ◆ Maintains open space
- ◆ Annually renewable crop

In recent years Dr. Jerry Cherney at Cornell University and researchers elsewhere have been exploring the use of grass biomass for combustion. A thorough review of the issue is available at Dr. Cherney's grass bioenergy website: <http://www.grassbioenergy.org/home.asp>

In an effort facilitate the development of a local grass bioenergy system, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Delaware County in partnership with the Catskill Watershed Corporation, the Delaware County Department of Economic Development and Cornell University are developing a "production to consumption" grass bioenergy pilot project. The basics of this program are as follows:

- ◆ To work with farmers to produce and test grass biomass feedstock suitable for combustion purposes. This is not hard, but requires some different management techniques.
- ◆ To work with local grass biomass processors, in particular EnviroEnergy LLC of Franklin NY to produce and test grass biomass pellets
- ◆ To test and demonstrate bulk delivery and on site handling of grass pellets
- ◆ To install, research, and demonstrate residential and small business/municipality scale combustion technologies (pellet stoves and outdoor boilers) that are known to work with grass pellets. This will include a variety of technologies as they emerge in the next 3 years.

The project will sponsor outreach and education with the farmers regarding grass biomass production. Demonstration sites featuring burning technologies will be set up at local municipalities where the general public will be invited to openhouses to discuss the use of grass biomass and learn about management of the burning technologies.

The project is slated to run for three years and is funded by the Catskill Watershed Corporation

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