



## Annie's Project: Farming in New Jersey's Cities and the Urban Fringe

Some challenges are common to all farms, while some are unique to urban locations. **New Jersey** is heavily urbanized, with 92.2% of its population residing within urbanized areas. Some of the unique challenges that urban farmers face includes; soil quality issues such as lead contamination, off-farm employment requiring time management skills, irrigation water quality and availability, direct marketing in food deserts, food safety, working with WIC and SNAP-Ed clients, overcoming language and cultural barriers, and acquiring short-term leased land.

In 2013, a national study of urban farms by ATTRA found that 64.8% of the farms had been in operation five years or less. The average age of the respondents was 44 (compared to 58.3 for the average farmer according to the most recent Census of Agriculture), and 53% were female. This indicated that the number of urban farms was increasing, and that urban farmers were young, mostly

female, and with fewer years of farming experience compared to all farmers, indicating that they would likely benefit from in-depth farm management training. A nationally recognized educational program called **Annie's Project** addresses risk management for women farmers and provides training in the five areas of farm risk: marketing, production, financial, human, and legal. The goal of **Annie's Project: Farming in New Jersey's Cities and the Urban Fringe** nicknamed **Urban Annie's Project (UAP)**, under the leadership of **Robin Brumfield**, was to provide classes on production and business management skills specifically geared to urban farmers and the unique challenges they face.

Many obstacles arose such as a change in location, unexpected change in facilitators, and a change in media specialists that resulted in a delay of WebEx recordings and disruption to classes online. Despite those challenges, the Annie's Project curriculum adapted by being urban-focused and met the demand among the growing number of urban farmers for educational training in urban agriculture by bringing in a diversity of speakers with agricultural expertise. Remote access through WebEx broadcasting as well as recorded classes allowed for greater access throughout New Jersey as well as nationally. Additionally, the program highlighted resources available to urban farmers by including speakers from NJDA, NRCS, FSA, and Farm Credit East, such as technical assistance, loans, and the Farmer-to-Farmer Link program.

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*"Developing a business plan was good; homework made us use what we learned."*

*-New Jersey Farmer*

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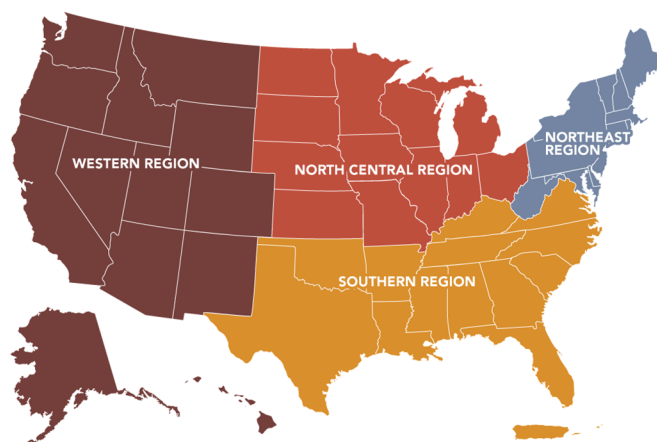
Extension Risk Management Education is supported by  
the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

## “Educating America’s farmers and ranchers to manage the unique risks of producing food for the world’s table.”

**Extension Risk Management Education (ERME)** is delivered through four regional centers that provide grant funding and leadership within their regions.

Projects are producer-focused, results-based and encourage public-private partnerships. Funded projects must identify targeted results that will help producers manage risk and then describe how the project will measure those results.

Extension Risk Management Education has funded innovative education projects that have generated tangible results for agricultural producers in 56 US states and territories. Beginning in 2020, the Centers initiated a new funding opportunity for the delivery of risk management education to agricultural producers underserved by the Federal crop insurance program. Priorities for both of these programs include commitments to funding results, providing transparent accountability, and encouraging collaboration. The accomplishments of all funded projects are available for public viewing on the ERME website:  
<http://ExtensionRME.org>



### ERME REGIONAL CENTERS



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