Study of “Season Extension” for Vegetable Production in the Southern Tier of NY State

Advisors: Albert George (MAE and SYSEN) and Kenneth Schlather (Executive Director of Cornell Cooperative Extension, Tompkins County).

A quantitative investigation of the potential of applying season extension technologies for growing vegetables by current and new farmers on the regional economy. Effects on fossil fuel use, CO2 emissions, economy, jobs, etc. Season extension technologies include hoop houses, high tunnels, cold frames, heated greenhouses, storage technologies, etc. Develop an interactive Excel spreadsheet and supporting documentation that allows the user to calculate the economic viability and benefits of season extension (job creation, vegetable cost and quality changes, individual household and aggregate savings, cost effectiveness, enhanced competitiveness of local farming, impact on restaurants selling local food, and transportation emissions gas reduction potential). Co-advisor from Cooperative Extension would supply information on agricultural aspects while this project will investigate and codify quantitative effects that would enable users to investigate various season extension scenarios. Dependent on student interest the project could be integrated with the development of information suitable for websites that show site visitors HOW to implement season extension technologies or how to support their development and implementation through policies, education and promotion.