

New York Farm Bureau Sets
2018 State and National Priority Issues

Criteria for determining what earmarks them for a priority is as follows:

- ◆ Issue must have a broad-based agriculture impact.
- ◆ Issue must be of significant interest to county Farm Bureau.
- ◆ Issue must impact farmers’ ability to conduct business, make a profit, or effect quality of rural living.
- ◆ Issue should attract member interest in anticipation of drawing their active participation.
- ◆ Issue should have a reasonable chance of being resolved

State Priorities	National Priority Issues
* Support funding for critical food safety, animal health and agricultural promotion and economic development programs in the Agriculture and Markets Budget.	* Work to maintain and improve the farm safety net and other programs in the Farm Bill.
* Double the minimum wage tax credit for farmers starting in 2018.	* End the immigration stalemate and pass reform legislation that addresses short and long term farm labor needs.
* Support funding for the Environmental Protection Fund programs.	* Until guest worker reform happens, work with Congress to minimize negative impacts of farm labor shortages and continue to oppose mandatory e-verify.
* Cornell CALS Faculty Seed Fund and Capital Fund.	* Continue to oppose WOTUS and work with Congress and agencies as they roll out newly-enacted regulations.
* Oppose unworkable farm labor mandates and make much needed updates and reforms to NYS labor laws and regulations.	* Continue to support the next generation of trade negotiations that remove barriers to trade and provide expanded markets for U.S. farmers.
* Transfer farm tax assessment functions from the Department of Taxation and Finance to Agriculture and Markets.	* Work for greater investment in rural and agricultural infrastructure including broadband internet access, rural roads and bridges, etc.
* Increase school meal reimbursement to incentivize the purchase of local food.	* Monitor the implementation of any changes to the 2017 Tax Reform Law to ensure that it treats agricultural business structure in a fair manner.
* Allow for UTV registration for legal travel on roads from farm to field.	* Ensure policy that enhances the availability and affordability of energy for farmers and encourages the growth of renewable energy production.
* Increase funding for tick-borne disease enhanced detections and vaccine development.	
* Support the removal of an acreage requirement for farms in the agriculture assessment program that meet income eligibility requirements.	

2018 Taste of New York Reception and Lobby Day

March 5-6, 2018

New York Farm Bureau is hosting its popular Taste of New York Reception in conjunction with its Issues Forum and Lobby Day on March 5-6, 2018 in Albany. The reception for lawmakers, NYS agencies and staff will be held on March 5 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Empire State Plaza Convention Center. The Lobby Day will be held on March 6 at the Capitol.

Albany County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan Update

By Ed Kleinke III

Agriculture is a vital part of the Albany County economy. The county is home to 495 diversified small farms producing \$45 million in sales and contributing \$64 million to the local economy. The largest sectors are horticulture, livestock and dairy which collectively account for more than 75% of sales. Farm acreage has increased to nearly 63,500 acres (an increase of 4% over a five-year period). The average farm worker earns \$6,000 more than the average per capita income in Albany. Despite this positive economic data, there is a great deal of pressure on local farms to convert away from production agriculture.

Farmland protection plans are created to provide a framework on which a county and its constituent communities can accomplish certain agricultural protection objectives such as the creation economic development strategies, road design standards, sample ordinances and conservation easement programs. The first Albany County Farmland Protection Plan was completed in 2004 and is now being updated to reflect changes of the last thirteen years.

The update is possible because of a grant from the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets. The county has contracted with Agricultural & Community Development Services, LLC (ACDS), a company specializing in agricultural development and management consulting, to lead the project with help from Tom Gallagher of Cornell Cooperative Extension, Laura DeGaetano of the Albany County Department of Economic Development, Conservation and Planning, and the Albany County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board.

During the month of October the project team visited areas all over the county and interviewed farmers, business owners, and government leaders to collect the most relevant and recent information possible. ACDS—in partnership and with support from Albany County, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Albany County, Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy, Indian Ladder Farms, and a grant from NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets—just completed a one day bus tour for business and government leaders. Guests visited three diverse agricultural operations and spoke directly with the farm owners about issues they are facing. The tour also included remarks by Assemblymember Pat Fahy regarding work at the state level, as well as a short presentation from Mark King of the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy about existing land conservation programs.

ACDS continues to move forward with this project and anticipates completion in 6-10 months. They continue to solicit input and request that members of the public do the same. If you would like to help by completing a short survey, please contact Anna Jensen at ajensen@acds-llc.com.



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P.O Box 5330
Albany, NY 12205



Albany County
Farm Bureau News



President’s Message:

Greetings from Albany County Farm Bureau...



I hope this late winter newsletter finds you thinking of spring! Warmer weather and the thought of making preparations for planting are welcome... after what seems like a long season of snow and cold.

In this newsletter you will find a summary of the ongoing update of the Albany County Farmland Protection Plan. This summary provides some interesting information about agriculture in Albany County, particularly positive economic data. But, as I think we all know, there is a great deal of pressure on local farms to convert away from production agriculture.

It is my hope that this plan update will offer opportunities and avenues that can be taken to keep local farms as farms. During this update time, please feel free to offer thoughts to me or directly to the county’s consultant, Agricultural and Community Development Services, LLC.

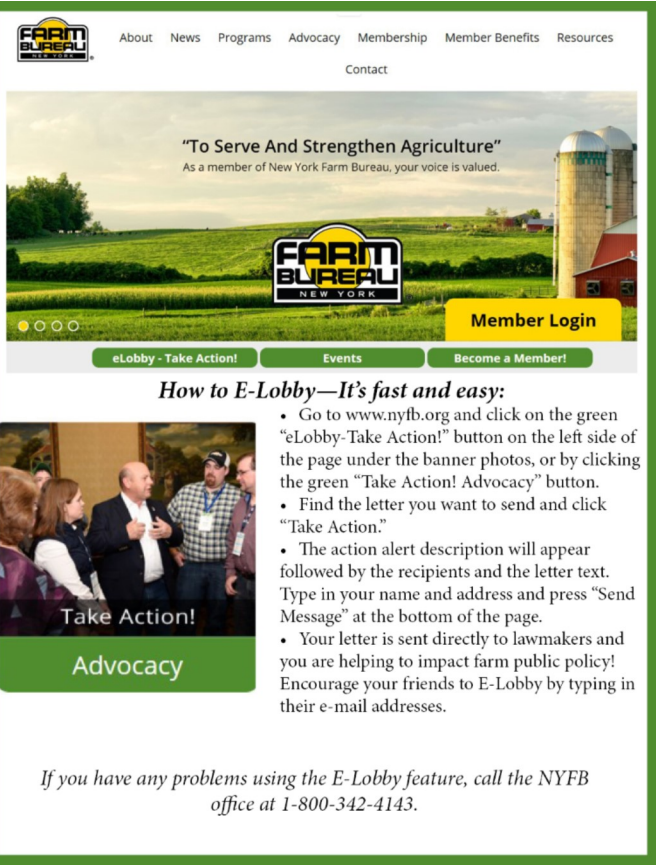
Also in this newsletter you will find further information about current issues of concern that will be brought to our elected officials on Lobby Day. As Farm Bureau members, it’s up to us to bring these issues to our County Annual Meeting for consideration. Please feel free to contact anyone on the Albany County Farm Bureau Board with your concerns and ideas.

I hope you find this newsletter informational and I look forward to your thoughts and comments. My contact information is: 62landarch@gmail.com and 518-466-5770.

Sincerely,
Ed Kleinkle, III

New York Farm Bureau Website

Check out the new and improved NYFB website www.nyfb.org. It's easier to navigate and improves access to NYFB programs and services for members.



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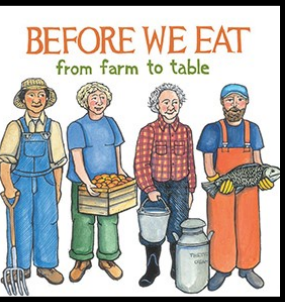
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Ag Literacy Week-March 19-23
Book: Before We Eat: From Farm to Table
By Pat Brisson and Illustrated by Mary Azarian



From the busy hub of New York City, to the mountains of the Adirondacks, and to the fertility of the Finger Lakes, our state is expansive and encompasses all types of agricultural industries