

President's Report – Ann Marie Heizmann



As the last year has taught us, we need to monitor both our town and county government as well as the state and federal governments. We need your support and assistance to do this. Maybe you already sit on a town zoning or planning board, or attend town board meetings or are interested in attending meetings. We are looking for volunteers to attend these meetings and send a quick email letting us know what transpired. Our hope is to be proactive to support farms and be able to diffuse any counter-productive ideas that come up. If you would like to be a part of this effort, please contact me.

Congratulations are due to **Fred Jensen** for spearheading the "Why I Farm" series. The Seneca County Promotion and Education Committee won the New York Foundation Excellence Award for the project. A big thank you to all who participated in the project. The articles appeared in the Reveille. You will also be seeing the articles rerun on SenecaDaily.com.

We are very excited to be celebrating our 100th anniversary this year in December. We will be having a big celebration party for our members. We would also like to honor the 100th year of more farms in the county. ***If your farm or you know of a farm that has been here for at least 100 years, please let us know.***

Sadly, we have had a couple of board members resign. If you are interested in serving on the board of directors, please contact me. Board members attend a meeting on the first Thursday of the month (all members are welcome to attend). We take off May and June if the sun is shining. Please consider joining our board.

Be sure to read Kelsey's column. Our Promotion and Education Committee has some great projects for the year. Please remember, we are stronger together. Every farmer needs Farm Bureau and Farm Bureau needs every farmer.



Fred Jensen (center) accepting the Excellence Award from Dean Norton and Phyllis Couture

State Legislative Update... Farmers from across the state have traveled to Albany in early March for New York Farm Bureau's annual Lobby Day. Seneca County Farm Bureau was there to advocate on behalf of all of our members. Here is a sample of what we talked about:

A refundable tax credit for farmers; Doubling the minimum wage tax credit for farmers, from \$30 million to \$60 million; securing finding for critical farm programs, including EPF, ag education, FFA, infrastructure, research, technical assistance; a procurement preference for New York grown food for state institutional purchasing; state tax credit for donation of locally grown food by farmers to food banks.

You don't have to travel to Albany to advocate on behalf of agriculture. The New York Farm Bureau website, nyfb.org, has made it easy to contact your legislators to ensure they know your opinion on important issues that affect your farm, your business and your food supply. Here you will find a host of issues and easy ways to help influence the way government responds toward agriculture. It has been a difficult couple of years, from low commodity prices, minimum wage hikes, excessive taxes to severe overregulation and rising input costs. We need to ensure our government is investing in you and for future generations to come.

Promotion and Education Update

The Seneca County Farm Bureau Promotion and Education committee met on Friday, February 18 to discuss this year's projects. The *Why I Farm* series of articles were a big winner last year and we hope to have Fred Jensen working with other counties in the coming months to broaden their reach. Tara Lott will continue working with local libraries and seed companies on commodity brochures and seed displays. Heidi and Tamara Lott continue to bring agriculture into our local school each month with their Ag Mag project.

The idea for this year's newest project came from Larry Ledgerwood. We are hoping to put together a composition of stories celebrating the innovation and impact agriculture has had on the building of Seneca County over the years. If you have any good stories or know someone who does, please let us know.

We are hoping this will dovetail with the celebration of the 100th anniversary of our Farm Bureau charter here in Seneca County. We are planning to hold a celebration in December somewhere at the northern end of the county. We are choosing the location because the annual meeting dinner will be at Wagners Vineyard Estate Winery at the southern end of the county. It only seems fair in a long skinny county that we all drive a little to enjoy an evening with our neighbors.

You can reach Promotion and Education Chair Kelsey DeCloux Rappleye at 607-387-3418 or email senecacountyfarmbureau@gmail.com.

Cameron Vanselow Awarded Youth Scholarship



Cameron Vanselow was named the 2017 New York Farm Bureau Agricultural Youth Scholarship Winner from Seneca County. Cameron, a senior at South Seneca High School, will start her path to become a Veterinary Technician at SUNY Delhi in the fall. She wrote a thoughtful essay on an important challenge facing agriculture that helped her stand out among many applicants. Her passion and dedication for animals, the environment and our local farm community is evident and we look forward to following her progress as she follows her dream.

Congratulations Cameron!

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