

# Oswego County Farm Bureau

February 2022



## President's Report



Oswego County Farm Bureau Members,

I hope winter is treating you well. I'm sure our maple producers are working hard to prepare for the sap to start running. Many of our farmers, like me, are looking forward to some warmer weather in preparation for a busy spring. Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Bruce Gibson and for 2022 I am the Oswego County Farm Bureau board president. My wife and I live in Sandy Creek and we are partners in Locust Hill Dairy LLC. My wife's parents started Locust Hill in Mannsville on Christmas Day 1975 with 39 cows. Today, Locust Hill milks 4,600 cows in Oswego and Jefferson counties. The majority of our farmland and livestock are in Oswego County. I came to the farm in 2015 after a career as a computer network engineer for a large IT company. In my time in

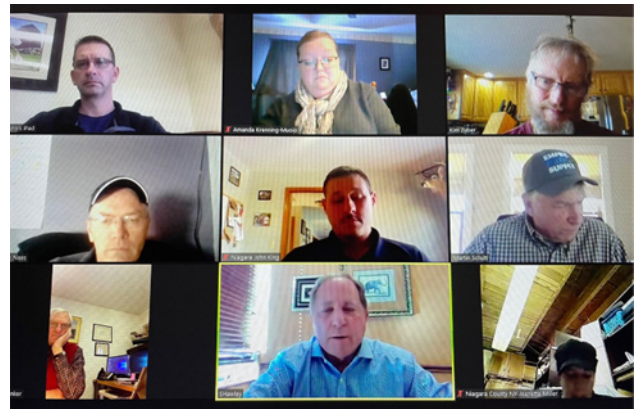
agriculture I've developed an interest in understanding issues that affect farmers of all types and sizes. New York, and the US, needs us all, large and small, organic and conventional. Our similarities should outweigh our differences and we need to speak with a common voice to keep our farms viable in New York State.

As we enter 2022, Oswego County Farm Bureau has continued working on behalf of our members to keep agriculture and the benefits it brings to the community top of mind. We had two delegates attend the New York Farm Bureau State Annual Meeting held at the Desmond in Albany this past December. This meeting is the culmination of policy development that begins at our very own County Annual Meeting. The State Annual Meeting determines New York Farm Bureau policies for the new year. Other activities included farmers and employees testifying at virtual hearings scheduled by the Wage Board as they continue to look at reducing the overtime threshold for farmworkers from 60 hours down to 40 hours. Their recent decision to phase this in over the next 10 years is troubling, and puts Oswego County farmers at a competitive disadvantage. In the coming weeks we will be participating in Lobby Days to interact with downstate politicians in an ongoing effort to help them understand a lifestyle that is completely foreign to them.

I wish you all a prosperous 2022. Here's to hoping 2022 sees the end of the pandemic and a return to normal for Oswego County NY farmers!

**Bruce Gibson**  
President

## NYFB LOBBY DAY GOES VIRTUAL AGAIN THIS YEAR



NYFB's Lobby Day will be virtual this year due to the ongoing pandemic. Lobby Day, usually scheduled as a two-day trip into Albany, is designed to help build connections and communicate the needs of agriculture to elected officials. Virtual meetings this year will make for an interesting opportunity, as some of you who aren't able to make an overnight to Albany might be able to join us virtually. Meetings will be scheduled with elected representatives over a span of days as we try to make scheduling a little easier on everyone. If you're interested in meeting with your elected officials "virtually" and representing Oswego County Farm Bureau, contact Mark James at 585-738-0242.

# OSWEGO COUNTY FARM BUREAU WINS STATE AWARDS

The County Excellence Awards are presented to county Farm Bureaus that have exhibited excellence in a variety of categories relating to effectiveness in agriculture promotion and outreach, leadership and county Farm Bureau management, legislative advocacy, and membership. Oswego County Farm Bureau was successful in being recognized in two categories this year: Agriculture Promotion and Outreach, and Leadership and County Farm Bureau Management.

Oswego County Farm Bureau sent two delegates to New York Farm Bureau's 65<sup>th</sup> State Annual Meeting on Dec. 7 in Albany. The farmer members took part in the grassroots process of discussing and voting on public policy positions on the delegate floor that lay the groundwork for New York Farm Bureau in the new year in Albany and Washington, D.C.

"Oswego County Farm Bureau's awards are recognition of the positive work we do on behalf of our members to improve the agricultural community. We are proud of our advocacy efforts and are always here to support our members at the local, state and national levels," said Bruce Gibson, Oswego County Farm Bureau President.

## 2022 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Below are the New York Farm Bureau 2022 Legislative Priorities. These priorities are a culmination of the grassroots efforts which began last fall at County Annual meetings and culminate at the State Annual Meeting held in December. These priorities reflect the collective interest of our members and rural communities and will determine the focus of our advocacy discussion and action for the year ahead.

- Double the Agricultural Workforce Retention Tax Credit
- Establish a refundable investment tax credit for agriculture.
- Support critical funding for current agricultural animal health (such as the Avian Disease Program), promotion, research, and environmental programs in the final FY 22/23 state budget, including a \$500 million Environmental Protection Fund.
- Support legislation that adjusts New York's unemployment insurance employer contribution rate, which would allow New York to replenish the UI trust fund without overburdening businesses with high UI tax bills as they recover from the pandemic.
- Support legislation allowing direct to consumer shipping for all New York-produced farm beverages, including beer, cider, and distillates.
- Support farmers in their efforts to adapt to and mitigate climate change through funding of critical programs in the Environmental Protection Fund and legislative programs that support on-farm renewable energy.
- Support the development of solar energy that balances private property rights and current and future land needs of agriculture in the state. Whenever possible, prime soils and actively farmed lands should be avoided in favor of previously disturbed or fallow lands and rooftop development for distributed generation. Power should be generated more closely to where it is going to be used.
- Support investment in new meat, vegetable, fruit and seafood processing facilities in New York.
- Oppose legislation that prohibits the use of agricultural pesticides.
- Oppose Extended Producer Responsibility legislation that doesn't require consumer responsibility of packaging they receive.
- Ensure a common-sense resolution to DEC's water withdrawal regulatory actions for farms.
- Pursue legislation that would require utilities to maintain a minimum height of 20 feet for power lines and 18 feet for other lines over farm fields upon request of landowner or farmer who is leasing the land.



## NYFB Youth Scholarship

Available to 2022 High School Grads

**DEADLINE**  
March 1—5 PM

**\$3,000 First Place**  
**\$2,000 Second Place**

*Sponsor: NYFB Promotion & Education Program*

### Applicant Guidelines

- 2022 graduating High School Seniors who will continue their education to prepare for a career in some way connected to the diverse agricultural industry. This includes advancing their education through college or pursuing advanced training in the skilled trades.
- Live or work on a farm or be involved with agriculture via any avenue.
- Family Farm Bureau membership or Student Farm Bureau membership is required. Students can join as a Student member by visiting [www.nyfb.org/membership](http://www.nyfb.org/membership)

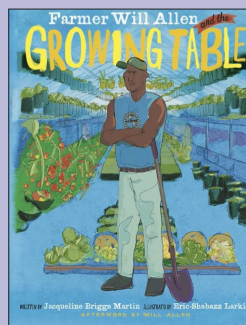
### Process and Procedure

- Applications & information is available at the NYFB website, [www.nyfb.org](http://www.nyfb.org) or more specifically <https://www.nyfb.org/programs/promotion-education/scholarship>
- Students are required to complete an application which is on the Reviewr on-line platform.
- The direct application link is: [https://my.reviewr.com/site/NYFB\\_Ag\\_Youth\\_Scholarship22](https://my.reviewr.com/site/NYFB_Ag_Youth_Scholarship22)
  - » After creating an account in Reviewr, the student will log in and begin the application. The student can stop, restart, and edit their application any time before the submission is due by logging into their Reviewr account.
- Applications must be completed and submitted by 5:00 pm on March 1, 2022.
- A District level competition will be held. Scoring will determine the County winners as well as the District winner. If applications do not meet the criteria to be a district winner, no district award will be given. The judging event may necessitate a personal interview and essay presentation or may be based solely upon the application and attachments. The judging will take place prior to April 20, 2022. Each District Winner will receive \$250 plus a memento of their selection.
- State winner selection will be made from District Winners, based solely on the submitted applications; there will be no personal interviews.

**For More Information:** [www.nyfb.org](http://www.nyfb.org), [proed@nyfb.org](mailto:proed@nyfb.org), 1-800-342-4143

## AGRICULTURAL LITERACY WEEK

March 21-25, 2022



For the past 17 years, volunteers throughout the state have helped to celebrate New York agriculture by reading a book with an agricultural theme to elementary school students.

This year's featured book, *Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table*, written

by Jacqueline Briggs Martin with art by Eric Shabazz Larkin, focuses on farmer Will Allen who is no ordinary farmer. A former basketball star, he's as tall as his truck, and can hold a cabbage, or a basketball, in one hand. Farmer Will sees what others can't, the opportunities for growing food whether you have 100 acres or a rooftop and shares the journey from soil to table with those around. This book will take students on an explorative journey learning about community gardens and inspire them to build communities through food, even if they only have a pot on their porch to cultivate. Hands-on activities related to the book are also offered to extend learning. Books are then donated to the school or classroom library. Last year 2,300 books were donated while 75,000 elementary students participated in an experiential learning activity.

## IT'S TREE TIME!

Oswego County Soil & Water's Tree and Shrub sale has begun. The order form for our 2022 Spring Tree and Shrub Sale is now available in PDF format on the home page of their web site at: [www.oswegosoilandwater.com](http://www.oswegosoilandwater.com)



Orders are due by April 4, 2022 and may be mailed in, or NEW this year, you may enter data in the fillable PDF, save it, and email it to the address listed on the form.

**Gift certificates are available** for Oswego County Soil & Water annual tree & shrub program! If interested, please email [laura@oswegosoilandwater.com](mailto:laura@oswegosoilandwater.com) for more details, or call the office at 315-592-9663.



New York Farm Bureau  
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Oswego County Farm Bureau

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### **OSWEGO COUNTY FARM BUREAU BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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Ericka Vrooman (YF&R)..... 315-456-8878

**FIELD ADVISOR** Mark James..... 585-738-0242

**CNY OFFICE** Jill Williamson..... 315-252-1367

Oswego County Farm Bureau meets on the first  
Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. at Stefano's Pizzeria,  
3273 Main Street in Mexico.