

# Onondaga County Farm Bureau News

## April 2021



*To Serve and Strengthen Agriculture*

### Presidents Report



It gives me great pride to say that farmers in New York, and particularly in Onondaga County, are some of the most resilient and adaptable people in the industry. To date, 2020 was one of the most challenging years many of us can remember. I could spend a lot of time recapping the challenges that we faced in 2020, but I believe we know those all too well. Instead, I prefer to always be looking forward, and just simply focus on the accomplishments of the past. I wrote the post below to bid 2020 farewell.

*We found courage and strength that we didn't know we had, we overcame and adapted, we learned how to do more with less, we reconnected and recognized what's really important, we learned lessons we didn't know we needed, we found appreciation and value within the simple, we found new perspectives, we found heroes in*

*forgotten places, and out of it all, we found lessons that make us better humans.*

As I reflect back on this, I find that I was describing life as a farmer. When I think about our members, and our organization, in the face of sometimes insurmountable challenges, we took to heart, we lived and applied this credo in every way possible.

Moving forward, we have much to focus on: COVID-19 vaccinations for farms, Farm Labor Law changes, and taking advantage of the opportunities that COVID-19 provided us in bridging the gap of the “continental divide” between upstate and downstate. Onondaga County Farm Bureau has reached out to our county executive and legislators to try to facilitate and expedite vaccines for farms citing all of the challenges that agriculture faces, from transportation, language barriers, lack of technology to simple timing, etc. On the Farm Labor Law front in regards to the overtime threshold, “we have won the battle, but the war continues”. The Wage Board has only been delayed from making changes, not overruled, and will convene at the end of this year. We must continue to work throughout the year to make sure that the Farm Labor Laws reflect the need for farming to remain financially sustainable, lowering the overtime threshold to anything below 60 hours will jeopardize agriculture in New York. Last but not least, COVID-19 uncovered the cracks in the foundation of our food system and food security. It exposed the disconnect between the people who grow food and the people who solely consume food. Due to these rising concerns, there is a greater desire from a broader range of the Legislature that have an urgent interest now in the success of agriculture and farming in New York for the benefit of their own respective communities. We will be looking to engage this part of the Legislature that we have not been able to reach, to spread knowledge and understanding of the importance of agriculture in New York, and, most importantly, why farming should matter to every single one of us.

As always, Onondaga County Farm Bureau is working hard to represent the vast farming commodities that we have in our county that make us so unique. We will be reaching out to our membership throughout the year with important legislative issues and how you can help to have your voice heard. In supporting each other, we are stronger together.

*Danielle Volles*, President

### WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBER

Onondaga County Farm Bureau would like to welcome **Kevin Niles** as the Young Farmers & Ranchers (YF&R) Chair on the Onondaga County Board. As YF&R Chair, Kevin will provide leadership and opportunities for the young farmers and ranchers. Kevin will help to add his voice and the voices of our young farmers and ranchers to the Onondaga County Farm Bureau. He will help define and address issues affecting agriculture, support member programming and educate the public and elected officials on important agriculture-related topics.

**Welcome and thank you!**

## WE ARE ONLY AS STRONG AS OUR MEMBERSHIP

The year 2020 certainly brought about a few more challenges than us farmers are used to dealing with: drought, COVID, and low commodity prices amongst them. The good news is that New York Farm Bureau did not slow down in its work advocating for all of us in Albany, Washington, D.C., and locally. With the political environment at all levels being so tough, it is more important than ever that we all continue to fight for our livelihoods through our own actions as well as those of Farm Bureau.

As we head into spring, please keep our organization in mind for not only volunteer work (if and when we can start doing events again) and advocating for your industry, but also advocating for Farm Bureau. We are only as strong as our membership and its solidarity and keeping farming in New York relevant.

Onondaga County Farm Bureau can always use your help with getting new members, whether they be full- or part-time farmers, or supporting business and people that eat.

Starting March 1 through June 30, we run a great special for new members. For \$129, new members get the rest of 2021 and all of 2022. That is a \$69 savings, and all the great member savings benefits that come

with it. To sign up, folks can either go to [www.nyfb.org](http://www.nyfb.org) or call 1-800-342-4143—it is that easy!

### **SIGN UP FIVE NEW MEMBERS TO RECEIVE A MEMBERSHIP JACKET!**

Dan Palladino, Onondaga County Farm Bureau member, talked with family and friends about the importance of becoming a member of New York Farm Bureau. He signed up five new members in 2020 and was awarded a New York Farm Bureau jacket. You can earn a membership jacket this year by signing up five new members. Reach out to your agriculture contacts and make sure they are members of Farm Bureau. If they are not members, ask them to join. Let them know that we are stronger together and get a great jacket, too!!



## 2021 STATE PRIORITIES

New York Farm Bureau works every day to advocate for agricultural industry and our rural communities. We identify key issues that directly and indirectly impact agriculture through a structured, grassroots policy development process that reflects the collective interests of our members. These policies determine the focus of our advocacy discussion and action for the year ahead.

- Support critical funding for current agricultural animal health, promotion, research and environmental programs in the final FY 21/22 state budget.
- Continue investment in the Nourish-NY program.
- Invest/harmonize agricultural programs at state agricultural colleges and universities, including CALS, Morrisville, Cobleskill and Alfred.
- Remove overtime requirement for voluntary day of rest for workers, if the employee will not work the number of hours needed to receive overtime.
- Extend the statutorily required farm housing inspection deadline for houses with four or less employees to Jan. 1, 2022.
- Oppose legislative pesticide prohibition or ban bills that circumvent the registration process at the Department of Environmental Conservation.
- 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 mitigation, including renewable energy.
- Enact a state renewable fuels standard to help mitigate methane while providing a reliable low carbon fuel source.
- Oppose efforts to further restrict the use of medically necessary preventative and therapeutic use of antibiotics.
- Ensure continued use of veterinarian and scientifically-based animal care practices on farm.
- Increase access to rural broadband to allow for enhanced marketing and sales, along with greater utilization of farm equipment technology.



## ONONDAGA COUNTY FARM BUREAU SCHOLARSHIP ANNOUNCED



Onondaga County Farm Bureau is offering two scholarships open to Onondaga County residents pursuing a college degree in an agricultural – related field. **Scholarship amounts have been increased from \$500 to \$1,000.** Two winners will receive \$1,000 each. The application is available at

[www.nyfb.org](http://www.nyfb.org) under About > County Farm Bureaus > Onondaga County. You can also call the CNY Farm Bureau Regional Office at 315-252-1367 to obtain an application. The deadline is May 15, 2021.

We are able to offer this scholarship because of the past success of our LaFayette Apple Festival booth

and Farm Bureau Benefit Horse Show. Due to COVID-19 we weren't able to hold these fundraisers this past year, but we are committed to helping students study agriculture. Please share our scholarship information with any friends or neighbors that may be interested.

### 2020 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

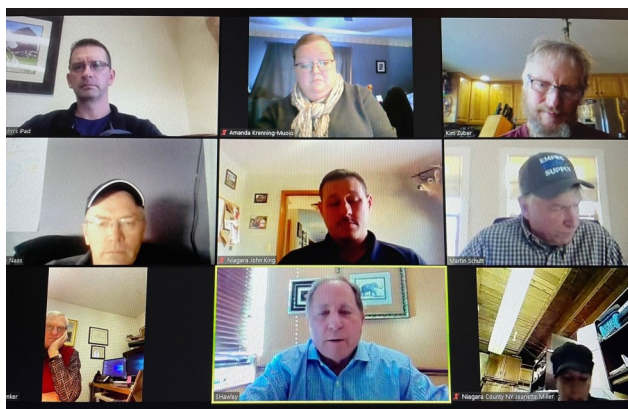
Two scholarship winners were named in 2020. They have now met all of the requirements of the scholarship and have been awarded \$500 each. Emma Hall is majoring in equine business management at Delaware Valley University. Claudia Leubner is majoring in agribusiness at University of Nebraska–Lincoln. Both students earned excellent grades during the Fall 2020 semester and we wish them continued success.

### IN MEMORIAM

**Naomi Blumenthal**, equine enthusiast and professional, passed away in December 2020. Naomi started our horse show fundraiser several years ago, volunteering her time, expertise, equipment and staff to run the show for us. Our annual horse show was one of our largest fundraisers. Young riders enjoyed participating in this show, as Naomi made sure it was fun for them. We, as well as all of the equine industry in central New York, will greatly miss Naomi.

**Metford Frost, Jr.**, retired dairy farmer, passed away in February 2021. Met served on our board of directors for many years, holding various titles through the years. We could always count on Met to show up at meetings and events. He would be the first to put forth a motion that would promote agriculture. As a great advocate of agriculture and Farm Bureau, Met will certainly be missed by many.

### NYFB LOBBY DAY WAS VIRTUAL THIS YEAR!



NYFB's Lobby Day was virtual this year due to the pandemic. Designed to help build connections and communicate the needs of agriculture to elected officials, the virtual meetings made for an interesting opportunity, as some who aren't usually able to make a two-day trip to Albany were more able to join us virtually. Meetings were scheduled with elected representatives over a span of days as we tried to make scheduling a little easier on everyone.

### EMPIRE FARM DAYS RETURNING TO PALLADINO FARMS AUGUST 3-5, 2021

You may not have noticed with all that has been going on but Empire Farm Days is returning to Palladino Farms in Pompey, NY. We are excited for its return as it has not been held in Onondaga County since 1988.

The event is the largest outdoor agricultural trade show in the northeastern U.S., showcasing all the latest tractors, farm implements, dairy industry innovations alongside working demonstrations, live animal seminars, and more than 600 exhibits loaded with the latest agricultural information for successful farming. Additional information, as well as any updates and announcements, can be found on the Empire Farm Days website at: [empirefarmdays.leetradeshows.com](http://empirefarmdays.leetradeshows.com)



159 Wolf Road  
Albany, NY 12205



Onondaga County  
Farm Bureau News



New York Farm Bureau  
Member Services, Inc.

*Serving our members Since 1967*

### Workers' Compensation Safety Group 486

Take a look at what NYFB Safety Group 486 has to offer.

- **16.3% Average Decrease** in 2019 rates for Safety Group 486 policyholder
- Cumulative rate decrease of over 51% in the past four years.
- **40% five-year Dividend Average**
- **25% Maximum Safety Group Upfront Discount**
- Low **8.5% Group Managers' Fee**
- **Licensed NYFB staff** services account and acts as liaison with NYSIF

*Call or email [winfo@nyfb.org](mailto:winfo@nyfb.org) for a quote.*

**NYFB.ORG      800-342-4143**

**STARTED BY FARMERS FOR FARMERS**

\* Percentage is based on dividends paid 2015 through 2019. Dividends are not guaranteed. Continued membership in NYFB is required to participate in Safety Group 486. Eligibility for insurance is subject to the New York State Insurance Fund underwriting requirements. NYFB and its subsidiaries have no authority to bind coverage for any member.

## ONONDAGA COUNTY FARM BUREAU BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Danielle Volles, President .....	315-420-3780
Mark Tucker, Vice-President.....	315-420-0569
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Mark James, Field Advisor.....	585-738-0242
CNYFB Regional Office.....	315-252-1367
NYFB Office .....	1-800-342-4143

The Board of Directors meets every second Monday of the month, except December, at the USDA Service Center in LaFayette.