

Statement on Inherent Risk Reform Bill Signing

A Huge Win For New York Farm Bureau

The governor’s signature delivers a major priority for New York farms that are looking to access legal protections and reduce liability insurance costs for agritourism and equine businesses.

New York Farm Bureau achieved a major victory for farms across the state with the passage and signing of inherent risk reform for agritourism and equine businesses (S.1152/A.559). Governor Andrew Cuomo signed the legislation that will amend the general obligations law to clarify responsibilities for both farm operators and visitors alike.

This legislation establishes limited liability protections for the inherent risks of inviting the public onto a farming operation. Agricultural tourism and outdoor recreation activities that include horseback riding, u-pick Christmas trees and fruit orchards, along with tours of wineries and maple operations, all now have a new line of defense against frivolous lawsuits because of the new law. Until now, New York’s litigious environment had diminished the number of insurance carriers willing to cover these businesses, while dramatically increasing the cost of liability coverage. Many farmers have had to turn down opportunities to invite the public onto their farm because they could not find or afford the liability insurance necessary to host these opportunities in this state.

Under the legislation, farms must have proper signage to delineate pathways and buildings open to the public, adequately train employees involved in agritourism, take reasonable care to prevent foreseeable risks and post warnings to visitors about inherent risks of participating in activities on working farms.

The new law does not give New York farms blanket immunity from responsibility. Instead, it will protect owners from lawsuits by an individual who is taking no responsibility for his or her own actions. Farmers should not be at fault for a lack of due care by customers engaging in inherently risky activities or situations over which the farmer has no control. For example, customers should assume that there is some natural, inherent risk for riding a horse or climbing an apple tree and act accordingly to avoid injury.

“This legislation has been one of our organization’s major priorities. For too long, farmers had to choose between higher insurance costs or closing off their businesses to the general public that is eager to experience life outdoors on a

farm. Now that we have crossed the finish line, we are hopeful business costs will reflect the reduced liability our farmers now have. New York Farm Bureau is grateful to Governor Cuomo for signing the important legislation that brings New York law in line with most other states. We also appreciate the leadership of both sponsors of the bill, Senator Robert Ort and Assemblywoman Carrie Woerner, who have long championed the legislation. We are grateful as well for the effort of our members who made phone calls, e-lobbied their representatives, and spoke up about the need for this legislation. Their hard work made all the difference,” said David Fisher, New York Farm Bureau President.

New York Farm Bureau Website

Check out the new and improved NYFB website [www.nyfb.org](http://www.nyfb.org). It's easier to navigate and improves access to NYFB programs and services for members.

LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE



New York Farm Bureau  
Young Farmers & Ranchers

YOUNG FARMERS -  
AGRICULTURE’S LINK TO THE FUTURE

MARCH 16-17, 2018  
HOLIDAY INN, AUBURN



Keynote Speaker - Matt Lohr

All Young Farmers are invited to attend:

- Agricultural Tours
- Motivational Keynote Speaker
- Workshops to benefit you and your business
- Networking with other young agriculturalists
- Updates on State & National issues affecting Agriculture

More details coming soon

800-342-4143      NYFB.org

Ontario County Farm Bureau Wins Awards

Ontario County Farm Bureau was presented with Silver Key Awards at the New York Farm Bureau State Annual Meeting, held on Dec. 5-6 in Albany, NY. Silver Key Awards are presented to county Farm Bureaus that have exhibited excellence in a variety of categories relating to effectiveness in policy implementation, promoting agriculture amongst the public and in classrooms, leadership development, and membership building.

The awards were presented for excellence in the following categories:

Agriculture & Promotion, County Financial, Information & PR, Leadership Development, State & National Policy Implementation, Young Farmers & Ranchers.

Pictured L-R: Voting delegates Rich Jerome, Ann Peck and Kim Skellie

County Farm Bureau President’s Message (cont’d):

to for agricultural advice is the Commissioner of Agriculture, Richard Ball, a former NYFB board member. We will not always agree on all issues; however, we try to help if possible AND all members have the opportunity to influence and vote on the issues at both the county and state levels through annual meetings. Our youngest delegate from Ontario County said at the State Annual Meeting, **“this (the resolutions debate and decision making process) is democracy in action”**. There were 150-160 delegates in a room discussing and debating 150-160 pages in changes in policy or new policy proposals over two days. Some passed simply and some were significantly debated and came to a hand count. You can be heard by being involved or by going through your leaders. Other reasons to be members include:

- Social opportunities and comraderies with fellow farmers at our YF&R activities, summer picnic, ag appreciation dinner, golf tournament or other events.
- Member discounts – CAT, Nationwide, CASE/IH, Avis, Budget, Regal Cinemas and others.
- Free Accidental Death & Specific Loss Policy-starts at \$2,500 and increases with each year of membership paid on time.
- Opportunities to promote agriculture and food productions to those less knowledgeable.
- Opportunities to help local food banks.
- To influence policy development in a grassroots organization.

If you know someone who should be a member, please reach out to them with this information or give me a call, text, email or Facebook message and provide their contact information.

Also, if you have a local or state policy concern or issue, please contact me to see if county Farm Bureau can help out. I can be reached at [kimskellie@gmail.com](mailto:kimskellie@gmail.com) or 315-879-0943. Thank you, Kim Skellie.



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Nationwide® is proud to be the exclusive insurance provider of the New York Farm Bureau Member Services, offering NYFB members significant savings on farm insurance, and a full range of insurance and financial services, including:

Farm Insurance\*

Automobile Insurance\*

Pet & Travel Insurance\*

Commercial & Home Insurance

Powersports Insurance

Life Insurance

Farm Transition Planning

\*Select savings may apply

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1.800.342.4143  
NYFB.org





Ontario County  
Farm Bureau News

# Ontario County Farm Bureau News

## January 2018



To Serve And Strengthen Agriculture

### Hello Ontario County Farm Bureau Members,

I am Kim Skellie, your new county president. For those of you who don't know me, I am a native Eastern New Yorker who, during my college years, spent a lot of time traveling through the Finger Lakes and fell in love with the area. In 2000, an opportunity came to move my family to the area which I jumped at. I am a partner at El-Vi Farms just south of Newark, a 1,900 cow dairy farm. My main job responsibilities are personnel, especially on the barn side of the business, and fresh cow monitoring. I have three kids: Edith, a 2017 Cornell graduate who is employed as Food Safety Manager and Field Project Assistant for Fowler Farms in Wayne County; Jessica, an Animal Science major at Cornell and Nathan, a junior at Midlakes High School. My wife, Beth, is an RN and a massage therapist.

This year we have four new board members who bring a lot of enthusiasm and energy to our board. The recently married Martha Hilton is our new YF&R chairperson. She has been with Wegman's for nine years and is a store manager. Her husband is a dairy farmer in Hopewell. She is teaming up on YF&R activities with another new board member, Quade Kirk, who is the herd manager for Black Brook Farm in Shortsville and a recent Cornell graduate. Debbie North, with roots in Clifton Springs, lives and farms with her husband in Gorham. She and Jeff have a cash crop farm. Debbie is also passionate about horses and is an active member of the NYS Registered Haflinger Association and the WNY Combined Carriage Association. She has a business, Happy Hunter Equine Services, and designs custom show apparel and provides professional horse show announcing services. Lori Weykman grew up on a dairy farm in Delaware County and now lives in Clifton Springs with her two high school-aged children and her husband Jason. She is a crop insurance adjuster for Rural Communities Insurance Services. In addition, she is a 4-H leader, a Cornell Cooperative Extension board member and the Ontario County Dairy Promotion Team chairperson. We welcome these energetic new members and look forward to their new ideas.

In addition to great new board members, we also need more regular members. Farm Bureau is for—and needs—EVERY FARMER! We all have our own commodity organizations and associations and they are very important. The first place our New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets turns to on agriculture issues is NYFB. The first place the governor turns (*cont'd inside*)

### New York Farm Bureau Sets 2018 Priority Issues

Listed below are some of the priority issues recently announced by New York Farm Bureau for 2018.

#### State Priorities

- \* Support funding for critical food safety, animal health and agricultural promotion and economic development programs in the Agriculture and Markets budget.
- \* Double the minimum wage tax credit for farmers starting in 2018.
- \* Support for funding of Environmental Protection Fund programs that provide cost-sharing of critical farm water quality and farmland protection projects that allow farms to reinvest in their farm business.
- \* Oppose unworkable farm labor mandates and make much needed updates and reforms to New York State labor laws and regulations.
- \* Transfer farm tax assessment functions from the Department of Taxation and Finance to the Department of Agriculture and Markets.

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.

### Featured Benefit Of The Month



NYFB members can now save  
up to \$2,500 on new CAT machines.

Including: wheel loaders, skid steers,  
backhoes, excavators and more.

Members must provide a valid Member Verification  
certificate at the time of purchase.

Go to [NYFB.org/member-benefits](http://NYFB.org/member-benefits) to obtain your certificate.

### Dates To Remember

March 5-6 - Taste of NY/Lobby Days, Albany

March 16 - Ag Appreciation Dinner, Club 86,  
Geneva 6:30 p.m.

March 16-17 - Leadership Conference, Auburn

April 20 - New York Farm Bureau Feast in the West

April 22 - Ontario Co. Farm Bureau Golf Tournament

### Ontario County Farm Bureau Board of Directors

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