

Genesee County Farm Bureau
29 Liberty St., Suite 212
Batavia, NY 14020



Genesee County
Farm Bureau News



2019 Young Farmers Night Out a Success

The District II Young Farmers and Ranchers held their annual Night Out at BW’s Restaurant in Pavilion on Sat., Feb. 16. They had pizza, wings and appetizers and enjoyed listening to the local band Riding Shotgun. There were over 150 young agricultural professionals from at least six counties in attendance. A big thanks goes to BW’s for hosting once again, and to all of our great sponsors! We are already looking forward to next year’s event!

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Spring 2019

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Message from the President

No time is more important to be heard!

by Christian Yunker

As we all get excited for some warmer weather and look to move outside, we need to stay focused on what is happening around us. We are starting 2019 with a new set of political circumstances at the federal and state level, especially in Albany with a now Democrat-controlled Senate. This situation poses many new challenges as well as opportunities for us to have a substantive impact on future rules and regulations that will soon confront us. The most significant is the proposed Farmworker Fair Labor Practices Act which, if enacted as written, will require farm employers to pay overtime beyond 40 hours per week and eight hours a day. According to a 2019 report from Farm Credit East, mandatory overtime would increase labor costs on farms in New York by almost \$300 million. For most farms, this would increase their labor cost by 20-25% in the first year. This legislation could make it very difficult for farms with employees to compete with farms in other states and countries that have much lower labor and production costs. This legislation, combined with the downward pressure of commodity prices, would be devastating to our industry, most likely shrinking it in our state as producers will find ways to cut high labor cost activities.

We have already started to reach out to our newly-elected officials in an effort to get acquainted and develop working relationships. On March 4-5, several members from the Genesee County Farm Bureau board, as well as many from across the state, spent two days in Albany for lobby days to acquaint ourselves with lawmakers and try to educate them about issues on farms. This activity is critically important and one of the core functions NYFB provides as an organization to our farmers. We know that most don’t have the time to devote. However, you may have a few minutes to talk to or send a letter to one. Or maybe just discuss with your neighbor the impact and how important a voice in Albany is and how important Farm Bureau is. In my opinion, the best money spent is the percentage of Farm Bureau dues that go to our talented staff. Our staff are the key to providing information and staying in front of all of these issues with our elected officials so we can inform them before they make consequential decisions for our industry. Please help us! Talk to your elected officials, friends and neighbors. Tell them to get involved and voice their concerns. Encourage them to become a member.

As farmers we generally have little time to devote to anything political. **We all must realize that from now on, it is critically important to be engaged and heard!** No time is more important. We’d like to again thank you for your continued support. Also, we are always looking for interested people to become involved with our board of directors. Feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns. Also, please check out our updated website www.geneseecountyfarmbureau.com.

Genesee County Farm Bureau
Board of Directors

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Genesee County Farm Bureau Attends NYFB Lobby Days in Albany March 4-5

Members from Genesee County Farm Bureau attended New York Farm Bureau's State Lobby Days in early March. The two-day event started with a Taste of New York reception where Genesee members served Intense Milk from Upstate Niagara to state lawmakers, commissioners and staff. Following the evening event, members met with both their local Senator and Assembly member as well as New York City lawmakers that the county Farm Bureau "adopted".

Genesee County Farm Bureau advocated for a number of priorities this year. The organization supports critical funding for current agricultural, animal health, promotion, research and environmental programs in the final FY 19-20 state budget, ensuring staff funding for critical positions at the Department of Agriculture and Markets, and funding for a farm tire cost-share disposal from DEC Part 360 regulations through the Environmental Protection Fund.

They also advocated for important budget funding for a myriad of agricultural research, promotion and marketing programs, to expand the Farm Workforce Retention Tax Credit to Christmas trees, maple, farm wineries and cideries. They also voiced their strong opposition to unworkable employer mandates in New York State, and advocated to remove unemployment insurance requirements for H-2A workers.



Christian Yunker, James Kingston and Melissa Keller with Senator Michael Ranzenhofer in Albany



Assemblyman Stephen Hawley with Christian Yunker at the Taste of NY Reception

GCFB Wins National Award

In January, Genesee County Farm Bureau was recognized at the American Farm Bureau Federation's National Convention in New Orleans with a County Activity of Excellence Award for its Kinderfarmin' event. The AFBF County Activities of Excellence Awards celebrate unique, volunteer-driven programming at the local level. Kinderfarmin' was recognized in the education and agriculture promotion category and was one of 30 counties recognized across the country. Promotion and Education committee chair, Natasha Sutherland, and board member Emmaline Long had the opportunity to attend the convention and had a booth in the exposition hall to talk to attendees about the event. Genesee County won \$2,250 to put towards Kinderfarmin' in future years.



Natasha Sutherland and Emmaline Long accept the AFBF County Activities of Excellence Award from newly-elected AFBF YF&R Chair Paul Molesky of NYFB.



Genesee County Talks GMO's

April 25 at GCC
6-00-8-00: p.m.

Ever wonder how GMO's are produced and how they are being used in agriculture?

The GCC Biology Department is hosting a viewing of the movie "Food Evolution", followed by a panel discussion of local farmers and seed company representatives to discuss the science and technology of GMO's in modern agriculture. "Food Evolution", narrated by Neil deGrasse Tyson, uses the controversy over genetically-modified foods to show how easily fear and misinformation can overwhelm objective, evidence-based analysis.

This event is being sponsored by GCFB and we invite you to join us on Thurs., April 25 from 6-8pm in room T102 at Genesee Community College. Bring friends, especially those who eat, and *especially* those with questions about how our food is produced!

Kinderfarmin' Seeks Volunteers

Saturday, June 5

Reyncrest Dairy

Spring is just around the corner, and with it comes Genesee County Farm Bureau's annual event - Kinderfarmin'! This event brings kindergarten students from the county to see a working dairy farm and learn about agriculture. The day includes guided tours, hands-on learning stations and lots of fun. We are reaching out to you to encourage participation and renew excitement about our nationally-recognized educational event. We now have every school in Genesee County attending, and thus are in need of more volunteers!

Schedule for the day:

- 8:15 a.m. - Volunteers arrive
- 8:30 a.m. - Volunteer informational meeting
- 9:00 a.m. - Students begin arriving
- 1:00 p.m. - Final bus departs
- 1:30 p.m. - Lunch hosted by Reyncrest



Any and all help is appreciated! Even if you can only help first thing in the morning, we have roles available for you. A few specific independent teaching stations are available if people have a real interest in interacting with our kindergartners. Thank you in advance for your consideration and time. This is a great opportunity to let our county's resources shine! If you are interested in volunteering, fill out our online form at: www.tinyurl.com/GCFBvolunteer or contact Diane at the GCFB office at 585-343-3489.

Scholarship Available For High School Seniors

Genesee County Farm Bureau is once again offering a scholarship for graduating seniors who are continuing their education beyond high school through a trade school or a two or four year collegiate program related to agriculture. The award will go to the child of a regular or associate member of the county Farm Bureau. Scholarship applications are available from the regional office or on the website at www.geneseecountyfarmbureau.com.



The award decision will be based on:

- involvement in agriculture and the applicant's stated intentions to remain involved in agriculture;
- scholastic participation;
- activities; and
- application responses and essays.

The scholarship committee will review all applications and make a final decision about the award recipient.

Completed applications must be returned to the office no later than April 30, 2019. Interviews will be held if necessary. The award recipient will be notified by June 1. Please share with graduating seniors you may know!