

Orleans County Farm Bureau
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Orleans County
Farm Bureau News

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Reimagine the Canals
Community engagement session

Last year's Reimagine the Canal Grant competition has led to some exciting discussions on how to use our canal resources in different ways. The Reimagine the Canal Task Force now has a western region subcommittee for agricultural irrigation. As part of this effort, the Rockefeller Institute of Government is offering community engagement sessions.

For our area, the Rockefeller Institute will moderate the following community session:

**Brockport: Tuesday, July 16, 6-8 p.m. at
SUNY Brockport Cooper Hall, NY Room**

The sessions are open to the public. Participants can RSVP at <https://www.ny.gov/reimagine-canals-initiative/reimagine-canal-task-force#public-meetings> prior to attending. The Reimagine the Canals website (<http://www.canals.ny.gov/reimagine/home.html>) offers more information about the initiative, as well as a portal where members of the public can submit feedback if they are unable to attend a community engagement session. The Rockefeller Institute will hold a second series of meetings later in the summer.

It is important for agriculture to be included in this process. The canal offers Western NY a unique resource and the potential for expansion of siphons and irrigation is an exciting opportunity for businesses in the area. Please attend and voice your support for improving access for the agricultural community to the Canal.

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Summer 2019



To Serve And Strengthen Agriculture

President's Message

Well, I will have to say it's been a challenging year so far! Between the labor issues and the weather that has been so unpredictable, we as farmers have had a lot of added stress and probably some sleepless nights trying to get through this spring and early summer.



There is a reason that we do what we do. Not everyone is cut out to be a farmer, and as difficult as this year has been both politically and weather related, we need to take a positive look and say next year will be better!

I hope this newsletter finds everyone well and gives you a little snapshot of how Farm Bureau has been working in our county. If we can help in any way, please contact me or one of the other board members.

May God bless all the farmers and help us to have a wonderful growing year to make up for the challenging spring.

Alan Panek
President

REMEMBER TO E-LOBBY!

NYFB e-lobbying efforts are on-going. To participate in the e-lobby action items that NYFB is working on, go to www.nyfb.org and click on the E-Lobby—Take Action! icon. Show elected officials you support New York Agriculture!

Tell Governor Cuomo to Stand Behind Agriculture

I strongly request your support for chapter amendments to Senate Bill 6578 (Ramos)/ Assembly Bill 8419 (Nolan), in relation to the farm worker fair labor practices act.

Farmers across the state have demonstrated the dramatic financial impact of this legislation. Although the version that was passed is more workable than the original proposed legislation, there are fundamental flaws that were included in the final bill at the last minute that are of great concern to me and my farm and must be addressed.

Orleans County Farm Bureau
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and all of 2020.

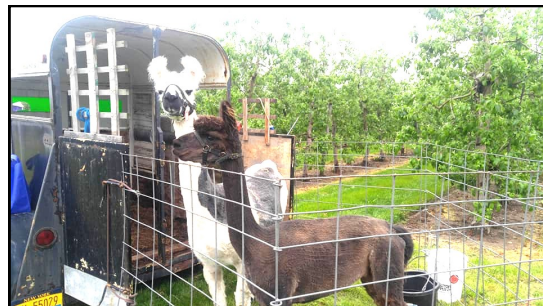


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3rd Grade Day at the Farm

Orleans County Farm Bureau sponsored an educational Day at the Farm for the Medina 3rd graders on June 6 at Ledge Rock Farms. The event featured a tour of the farm with seven different educational stations. The stations ranged from beehives and pollination, grafting at the apple orchard, tick awareness, description of different farm equipment and a variety of farm animals.

We would like to thank the Smith Family for hosting the event. The students and teachers had a wonderful time and we hope to make the event an annual affair! We would also like to thank Orleans County Cornell Cooperative Extension, Jim Doan of Doan's Family Honey, Poverty Hill Farm, Panek Farms, and the Medina FFA for volunteering at educational stations and making this a fun day for everyone involved.



Alpacas that Medina FFA brought to the farm.



This little calf from Poverty Hill Farms was a big hit with the kids. Thank you to Upstate Niagara for donating milk to drink at this station.



Guin Panek describes farm equipment used to maintain the orchards at Ledge Rock farms.



Cooperative Extension staff explain the danger of lyme disease from ticks and how to protect yourself.

Come see us at the milkshake booth at the
Orleans County 4-H Fair
July 22—27



Orleans County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting October 24, 2019

Please save the date so that you can attend and vote on policy. Member farmers can turn their ideas into official Farm Bureau public policy allowing the organization to advocate for particular positions or legislation.



Orleans County Farm Bureau members work hard to affect changes to the Farmworker Fair Labor Practices Act

The Farmworker Fair Labor Practices Act passed both the Senate and Assembly. It is a bill that will be incredibly difficult for agriculture to absorb, but also has some significant improvements compared to where we started. At the first of the year, the bill contained a 40-hour/week and 8-hour/day overtime threshold and collective bargaining that would allow for worker strikes. Given that both the Senate and Assembly had ironclad democratic urban majorities, the bill had enough sponsors to pass both chambers with those crippling provisions, but agriculture would not let that happen.

Agricultural organizations, farmers and farmworkers came together like never before to pool resources, organize outreach and develop an effective public affairs strategy that ultimately moved the needle. It was the largest legislative undertaking that many can remember for the New York farm community. Weekly, if not daily conversations to strategize were had among the group for the past six months

In the end, revised legislation passed overwhelmingly in both houses. Effective January 1, it includes a 60-hour overtime threshold, collective bargaining with an anti-strike clause, and no longer will farms have to pay unemployment insurance on H-2A employees. A simple "hell no, we won't go" opposition would not have been effective in achieving these significant improvements. Unfortunately, political realities meant we had to attempt to find middle ground with lawmakers who were philosophically against us. Ultimately, last minute additions are deeply concerning leading us to officially oppose the bill.



Jeff Toussaint speaks at a Press Conference at Stein Farms in Leroy on April 10 to give a personal account of how the Farmworker Fair Labor Practices Act would hurt his farm operation.



On April 11, Senator Ranzenhofer invited Senator Ramos to Genesee County to listen to multiple farm operators about how the devastating effects the Farmworker Fair Labor Practices Act would negatively impact each of their individual farms. Afterwards, Senator Ramos, the sponsor of the Senate Act, listened to many farmworkers at Torrey Farms to also hear their opposition to the Act.



On June 12 about 300 farm owners and farmworkers attended a large rally in Albany timed to coincide with the final weeks of session. Their message was that it was important for all sides to work together to find common ground on a bill that would do the least harm possible to agriculture. In the picture on the left: David Kibler and Jeff Toussaint with Senator Ortt at the rally. In the picture on the right: Members of Kast Farms at the rally.

