

Farmers Take Center Stage in Albany



Roxianna Hurlburt of Mercer’s Dairy visits with Lt. Governor Kathy Hochul and the Democratic Leader in the State Senate Andrea Stewart-Cousins.

Lewis County Farm Bureau members joined farmers from across the state in Albany to advocate on behalf of agriculture during New York Farm Bureau’s Lobby Day. They kicked off the two-day trip with the Taste of New York reception, a popular event attended by elected officials that highlights the diversity of agriculture. Lewis County joined forces with Cornell Cooperative Extension to provide information and samples of Mercer’s Dairy Wine Ice Cream made in Boonville. Members spent a full day attending meetings with Senators and Members of the Assembly, with not only their own elected officials, but also with New York City legislators.

“Meeting with our ‘adopted’ legislators whose districts tend to be vastly different from rural New York have been of great value. It gives them a better understanding of what we do and why we do it, and they

are likely to remember our interactions when voting on legislation pertaining to agriculture,” said Joe Shultz, Lewis County Farm Bureau Vice President. They gave each lawmaker an honest assessment of the additional economic pressures family farms have been facing over the past two years, including low commodity and milk prices and rising labor costs. They discussed the need for critical funding and legislation to help protect and strengthen agriculture including offsetting the harmful effects of the minimum wage increase.

Grown in New York Series is Back



Last year, Lewis County Farm Bureau, and 11 other county Farm Bureaus, partnered with Spectrum News (formerly Time Warner Cable News) to produce an award winning series spotlighting Farm Bureau members and agriculture in the Central New York and Finger Lakes Regions. The purpose of this series is to educate the non-farm public on the scope and diversity of farming in their

region. Each county Farm Bureau receives recognition through promotional spots as well as a thirty second Farm Bureau advertisement encouraging viewers to join Farm Bureau. Each episode airs on the third Saturday of the month each hour for 24 hours. The first episode of the 2017 season features our own **Moser’s Maple**. Future episodes will air over the next seven months. These programs were recognized for their excellence at the American Farm Bureau Annual Meeting this past January. We hope you enjoy the content. If you are not a Spectrum subscriber, view the stories by going to www.twcnews.com.

Fostering a Love of Agriculture at an Early Age

In its 13th year, Agricultural Literacy Week (March 20-24) introduced elementary students to New York’s booming grape industry. South Lewis FFA students Libby McGuire and Alexis Hill joined countless volunteers in classrooms throughout New York to read Lynne Tuft’s *The Grapes Grow Sweet*, a wonderful story that captures the way of life for over 1,600 family owned vineyards in the state. After they read the book, students took part in hands-on activities that kept them engaged and learning. The opportunity to foster awareness, understanding and appreciation for local farmers has proven to be an invaluable and welcome resource. Thank you to Cornell Cooperative Extension and the volunteers that help bring agriculture into our classrooms.



The children enjoyed learning about life on the vineyard and their visit with Libby and Alexis.



*South Lewis FFA’s Libby McGuire (left) and Alexis Hill (right) share *The Grapes Grow Sweet* with Glenfield Elementary students.*

Dairy Princess Committee Looking for the Next Princess and Court... If you know anyone between the ages of 12 and 23 that would like to support the dairy industry, call Holly at 315-523-1668. It will be a very rewarding experience!

Save the Date for the Dairy Princess Pageant on April 29 at the Ridgeview Inn in Lowville.

New York Farm Bureau’s E-Lobby Center Allows *You* to Take Action and Be *Heard*... You don’t have to travel to Albany or Washington to affect agricultural policy. Visit NYFB.org, click on the Legislative Affairs tab and select the E-Lobby Center. Here you will find a host of issues that *need* your voice along with simple instructions that allow you to become an advocate for change.

The New York Farm Bureau Foundation

Fundraising Feast North

Friday, May 19

Tailwater Lodge, Altmar

6:30 p.m. reception with dinner at 7:15 p.m.

\$100 per person or \$750 for a table of 8

For more information, call Sandra Prokop

1-800-342-4143 or email sprokop@nyfb.org



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April 2017

President’s Report



We made it through another unpredictable winter and like many of you I am ready for the new beginnings that spring brings our way. Farm Bureau has spent the month of March closely monitoring the proceedings in Albany to ensure that the final state budget recognizes the significant impact agriculture has on our state. We are fortunate to have so many dedicated farmers that were able to take time away from their homes to travel to Albany and take part in our annual Lobby Day. It allows almost every lawmaker to hear directly from a farmer on issues that we face on a daily basis. The impact was evident in both the Senate and Assembly’s one-house budget bills released shortly after our visit that contained many positives for agriculture. I am optimistic that the budget, which is in the final stages of negotiations as I write this, will include initiatives and the support our farmers need and deserve. I encourage you to visit NYFB.org for the most up-to-date information and how you can let lawmakers know what is important to you. Our collective voice is a powerful tool in our continued fight to preserve and strengthen agriculture.

Membership Special: Through June, **new members** can join for two years (2017-2018) for **only \$99**. I encourage you to ask your neighbors, friends and family to become part of an effort to keep our farms viable. Thank you for your support!

Jen Karelus

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Lewis County Farm Bureau meets on the second Thursday of the month at 7:30 p.m. at the Cornell Cooperative Extension Offices of Lewis County, 5274 Outer Stowe Street, Lowville, N.Y.