

Ontario County Farm Bureau

Fall 2023



To Serve and Strengthen Agriculture

Presidents Report



Hello Ontario County Farm Bureau members,

It has been a long time since we put out a newsletter.

In preparation for this article, I have been asking myself, "What is the state of Ontario County Farm Bureau?" As I thought about this, I kept coming

back to Farm Bureau as a

whole and a few conversations that I have had with some of our members. They expressed frustration that Farm Bureau had been unable to change the addition of overtime for agricultural workers and agricultural unions to New York farmers. After these conversations, I kept thinking about what Farm Bureau could have done differently to prevent either of these two major issues from happening. With a state government that has all three branches controlled

by the democratic party, I believe that the labor situation was going to happen, no matter what. We should be thankful that Farm Bureau did manage to slow the rate that overtime was implemented, giving farmers time to adjust. In California, their Farm Bureau was unsuccessful, and overtime changed to anything over 40 hours/week in one step, not the 5 steps that will take place in NY.

Regarding the labor union situation, Farm Bureau has held multiple information sessions both online, via ZOOM, and in person, to provide members with valuable guidance on what we can and can't do, and how we can hopefully protect ourselves from the ruthless efforts of the unions to get onto our farms.

What else has Farm Bureau done for agriculture in Ontario County? They communicated with NYS DOT when it was realized that they intended to

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All are cordially invited to attend the
ONTARIO COUNTY FARM BUREAU

ANNUAL MEETING

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20TH

at the

CARRIAGE BARN EVENT CENTER

Ontario County Fair Grounds, 2820 Co Rd 10, Canandaigua, NY

SOCIAL AT 6:30 PM * DINNER AT 7 PM

\$14 per person payable at the door

Join us for a delicious meal of brisket and sides as we entertain and discuss policy development to be sent on for consideration at the New York Farm Bureau State Annual Meeting in December.

RSVP BY OCTOBER 12: jwilliamson@nyfb.org or call 518-431-5670

DISTRICT 3 DIRECTORS REPORT



Getting the Word Out!

Communication is a challenge in many businesses and organizations, NYFB included. We have about 12,000 members and 30 plus staff members. Many members participate on county boards, commodity, YF&R and Pro-Ed committees, while many more receive all of their information electronically or through print.

Members who are involved tend to be up to date by attending meetings in person or on Zoom and hearing the latest updates. Assuming 2,000 members are regularly involved, that leaves 10,000 who want a membership to support and be informed. NYFB has a great communications team comprised of three staff members, who put information out to members on multiple platforms. At the American Farm Bureau's annual recognition conference, our team dominated the communication awards winning 11 total. Congrats to Steve, Brooks and Seth! Here are the regular communication avenues they create and supply:

1. Grassroots – bimonthly, in print or electronic – more feature oriented stories and detailed information. Due to the every-other-month schedule of this newspaper, it is not intended to be the urgent, breaking news.
2. Social media – Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), Podcasts – for those like to follow the latest on these platforms and get it quickly.
3. Email – This is intended to cover everyone quickly, through urgent email blasts whether targeted to certain groups, counties, or all members. Every Thursday afternoon, the Weekly Update is sent.

This contains anything and everything you should need regarding recent developments on public policy, events, regulations, NYFB activities, and much more.

4. Text blasts – we have done this on a limited basis, usually for meeting reminders. .

We try to cover all preferred methods of communication. Phone calling is too time consuming to cover such a large organization, although we have done this on a limited, targeted basis.

As a state board member, I don't want you to miss out on important information that can impact your farm or business. I admit, it can be frustrating to hear from members who say they "did not know" about something, whether it be important meeting notices, alerts to changes in law or threats to our industry that need activation from members.

I challenge our members to assign someone in your business to be responsible for keeping up with industry communication. This is an important modern-day reality and requirement of running a business. Ultimately, you should be able to go to your Thursday NYFB email, on your phone, and find everything you need to keep up with.

I would certainly like to hear feedback from any member, including how best to communicate with you. And if you have a question about anything, I can answer it or steer you in the right direction to get you the answer. Good luck with the harvest, and I hope to see many of you at the annual meetings in October.

Kim Skellie

District 3 Director
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ONTARIO COUNTY FARM BUREAU KITCHEN CONFERENCES SCHEDULED

Wednesday, September 27

Brewery Ardennes Tap Room & Kitchen
570 Snell Road, Geneva, NY
6-8 PM

Tuesday, October 10

Other Half Brewing Tap Room
6621 State Rte 5 And 20, Bloomfield, NY
6-8 PM

Join us for one of our Kitchen Conferences, as we start the dialogue that is our Policy Development process! This is your opportunity to help shape our Farm Bureau policy book, to help remove or change burdensome regulations/laws that exist that will help make your farm or business more profitable, efficient and sustainable.

Every single Farm Bureau policy is first passed at the county level. This is a grassroots organization where all policy comes from the bottom up. ***Now is the time that we ask for your thoughts, ideas and vision on how to make a more ideal farming system.***

Every member is encouraged to attend and be part of the discussion that will help strengthen and protect agriculture.

It all starts with you!

A NOTE FROM ONTARIO COUNTY PROMOTION AND EDUCATION

In Ontario County when you think of agricultural promotion and education, I bet one of the first things to come to your mind is Fun on the Farm. It is certainly one of our best events as far as people reached. This month we will be picking the date of next September's Fun on the Farm, the 17th one, to be held at Hemdale Farms in Seneca Castle. Look to later in the fall to hear about the beginning of the planning process of this event.

We can't forget about the smaller ways that we promote agriculture in this county. The ripples of small events can be just as impactful. All through the year I am the adult mentor for a group of kids that show animals at the County Fair, together we form the Youth Fair Board, and for 10 years I have been teaching them how to be a part of a board, be leaders to their peers, how to raise money and how to diplomatically spend that money. I can see the kids that I started this board with, now out in their communities being leaders and advocates for the agricultural industry. Farm Bureau in supporting those kids all through the years is now reaping those rewards with young leaders representing Farm Bureau as adults.

Every year we award scholarships, support the FFA

groups in our county with leadership opportunities, support the Ontario County Dairy Ambassadors with their efforts to spread the good news about dairy, and support kids in 4H with all the opportunities that are available to them. Some of these kids will stay in agriculture their whole life, some will move in different directions and become adults doing things outside of the agriculture world, but they will always have memories of how those of us in agriculture held them up, and supported them. We may never be able to measure those ripples, but we have faith that they will come back to us full circle when we need them.

I will end this note by reminding you that in this County we are lucky to have a friendly relationship with all the agricultural organizations around us. It is not this way in other counties, because we don't live in those counties sometimes I think we forget, and we might take some of our organizations for granted. We are very lucky, and as a transplant (30 years ago) to Ontario County I want to remind you what a great county we are living in agriculturally!

Julie Maslyn, Chair

Ontario County Promotion and Education

Presidents Report Continued

eliminate the off-ramp from Routes 5&20 East to Route 96A this summer. Through Farm Bureau's efforts, DOT was informed about the importance of that ramp to farms with large equipment on the roadway and has agreed to repair and then reopen the ramp. It has come to the aid of farmers dealing with right-to-farm issues by providing guidance and recommendations on how to deal with these issues. They worked with Soil Water Conservation Districts to stop the hijacking of the program by misinformed lake water interests, keeping our voice heard on their boards and a moderate/balanced approach to Soil and Water District efforts throughout the state.

We hosted two meet the candidate nights last summer to give the community a chance to get to know - candidates and their positions. Last month we held a picnic to give members a chance to gather in a relaxed and picturesque atmosphere. Farm Bureau has sponsored FFA Jackets for new members, sponsored Ag in the Classroom, Lead NY, and Fun on the Farm. Last year, hosted two Kitchen conferences, one near Geneva and the other near Naples to give members a chance to voice their opinions on Farm Bureau policy and will host two more this September. Ontario County Farm Bureau's Young Farmers & Ranchers hosted trivia nights, and a book club. The list goes on.

Want to drop out because you feel that Ontario County Farm Bureau isn't presenting your position

on a topic? That will ensure that our position won't change. The best way to change what Farm Bureau's position is on a topic is through active participation. Talk to your Farm Bureau board members. Attend the kitchen conferences so that you can see what is being discussed and plan on bringing your issue(s) for discussion at the meeting. Issues brought up at the kitchen conferences can result in policy resolutions that are then brought up for discussion and voted on at the annual meeting on October 20th. This is another opportunity to share your point of view. If the resolutions are accepted, they then go on to the State Annual Meeting in December where they can become New York Farm Bureau policy. These policies are what form the lobbying efforts in Albany and Washington DC, a push for what the members want and need to help their businesses thrive, be productive and profitable. If the policy has national relevance, and passes the NYFB vote, it goes to the American Farm Bureau national meeting.

That's how Farm Bureau works, from the grass roots/county level. So, get involved. Join a committee, join the Farm Bureau county board. Learn what's going on and have an active voice to make a difference. Remember, Farm Bureau is stronger with you in it, especially an ACTIVE you!

Thanks for your membership and looking forward to seeing you at the upcoming meetings.

Eric Amberg, President

New York Farm Bureau
159 Wolf Road, Suite 300
Albany, NY 12205



Ontario County Farm Bureau

YOUNG FARMERS AND RANCHERS REPORT

This year the Ontario County Young Farmers and Ranchers held their annual trivia night at the Cracker Factory in Geneva. It was once again a success bringing more people out to enjoy agricultural based trivia and the presence of others.

Many of our members attended the YF&R annual meeting over the winter and connected with other young farmers across the state.

Throughout the spring and summer our members have been busy with crops, and other farming duties. In the moments of spare time we have been able to meet in other counties for young farmers events and see each other at county fairs and festivals.

In the next year we look forward to again having agricultural trivia, more young farmers events, and potentially having a young farmer's field trip to another region in the state. Stay tuned to Ontario County's Young Farmers and Ranchers as they have many places to go and people to see before they become the next group of experienced professionals leading the way.

Jacob Maslyn, Chair
Young Farmers and Ranchers

ONTARIO COUNTY FARM BUREAU BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Ontario County Farm Bureau board meets the third Monday of each month at 7 pm at the Cooperative Extension Office in Canandaigua.