

NEW
YORK
FARM
BUREAU



ANNUAL
REPORT

2023



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

New York Farm Bureau is the strongest advocacy organization for farmers in the state. Our mission continues to put our members first as we expand educational offerings and work hard to support public policies that benefit all of agriculture.



I often think of New York Farm Bureau as the big tent. We are open to a diverse group of farmers, agricultural organizations, and agribusinesses. No other group has the ability to bring everyone to the table like we do, which is evident in many of the offerings that we provide to members.

From the NYFB Agricultural Summit that explored business and policy issues to the expansion of our Annual Meeting and Convention, we help the industry explore the economic and political landscapes before us to find the strongest pathway forward, together.

This Annual Report is a positive reflection of the hard work our members, leaders, and staff have excelled in this year. We continue to look at ways to provide better service, expand communication, and more effective lobbying. I am confident that we are a stronger organization this year because of our collective efforts.

As we continue to build on this momentum, we look forward to the year ahead to be the voice for our members and New York agriculture.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Fisher". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

David Fisher, NYFB President

CEO'S MESSAGE

It is wonderful to look back over the past year to see all of the things that New York Farm Bureau has accomplished for our members. Our work is reflective of the goals our leaders set to provide top-notch programming, advocacy, and networking opportunities for the people we serve.



The organization's strategic plan laid the groundwork for what you will read about in this annual report.

Over the past 12 months, New York Farm Bureau has implemented new membership initiatives, event planning, and member outreach. We have increased educational webinars to offer the latest information for our members to better plan for the future. We have stepped up advocacy efforts across the state, including in New York City, through a new member lobby trip and tour. We continue to fulfill the strong fiduciary responsibility that our members have entrusted in us.

As agriculture continues to adapt to economic and market demands, so will New York Farm Bureau. Our members depend on us to be there for them to navigate through the challenges and create new opportunities for success. I commend our state and county leaders, volunteers, and staff for their commitment to making New York Farm Bureau the leading advocate for agriculture in the state. Working together, we will continue to have a strong, effective Farm Bureau.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth C. Dribusch". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Elizabeth C. Dribusch, NYFB CEO

NYFB BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President, David Fisher

Vice President, Eric Ooms

District 1, Lavern Warriner

District 2, Brad Macauley

District 3, Kim Skellie

District 4, Darleen Krisher-Meehan

District 5, Dan Palladino

District 6, Adam Miner

District 7, Tony LaPierre

District 8, Paul Molesky

District 9, Steven Smith

District 10, Tim Dressel

District 11, Robert Nolan

Chair, Promotion and Education Committee
Bill Zalakar

Chair, Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee
Christina Hudson Kohler

NYFB AG ALLIANCE MEMBERS

- **NYS Nursery & Landscape Assoc. Inc**
- **Agri-Mark Cooperative Inc.**
- **NY State Turfgrass Association**
- **NY State Maple Producers Association**
- **Upstate Niagara Cooperative Inc.**
- **Hop Growers of New York, Inc.**
- **NY State Vegetable Growers Assoc.**
- **Dairy Marketing Services LLC**
- **Northeast Dairy Producers Association Inc.**
- **The NY Wine and Grape Foundation**
- **NY Apple Association Inc.**
- **Empire State Forest Products Assoc.**
- **NYS Assoc. of Agricultural Fairs Inc.**
- **Farm Credit East**
- **New York Thoroughbred Breeders Inc.**
- **NY Assoc. of Agricultural Educators**
- **NY State Agribusiness Association**

NYFB Leadership in Action



LOBBY DAY SUCCESS

NYFB leadership and county Farm Bureau members followed up the Taste of NY reception in February with Lobby Day. NYFB had nearly 300 meetings with lawmakers at the Capitol in Albany where they had discussions on how the state can invest in agriculture and create new opportunities for our farms and food system. Pictured above from left are NYFB Board Director Kim Skellie, NYFB CEO Liz Dribusch, Majority Leader of the New York State Senate Andrea Stewart-Cousins and NYFB Vice President Eric Ooms.

New York Farm Bureau remains the premier advocacy organization for farmers in New York State. Members propose and vote on public policy positions, giving the grassroots membership a voice in the direction of the organization. They reflect the positions Farm Bureau takes on state and national issues. In addition, there is member support at the local level from county Farm Bureau activities.

The organization also provides premier networking opportunities, leadership development, and educational resources to help members be more effective with their own farms and agribusinesses. It is a strong organization that has lasted for more than a century.



PRESIDENT FISHER CONTINUES SERVICE TO NYFB AND AFBF

NYFB President David Fisher speaks at delegate session of the AFBF Convention. Fisher was appointed to serve another two-year term on the national AFBF board of directors and to serve on the AFBF Executive Committee by AFBF President Zippy Duvall.

NYFB Mission Statement: *Supporting today's agricultural needs and creating member opportunities for tomorrow through advocacy and education.*

NYFB Vision Statement: *The voice of New York agriculture that unites a diverse farm community and builds a stronger food system and rural economy.*

LEGISLATIVE FARM TOUR

NYFB's Public Policy Department hosted more than 50 lawmakers, agency officials, and their staff members in September for the 2023 legislative farm tour. The group visited five farms in Columbia County where farmers showcased the great work they're doing and were able to have an open dialogue about the challenges and opportunities that exist.



Connecting Farmers and Lawmakers



FARM BILL LISTENING TOUR

On April 14, NYFB leaders and members spoke in Binghamton about the significance and need for a strong Farm Bill at a special U.S. House Agriculture Committee listening session hosted by U.S. Rep Marc Molinaro, a member of the committee, and its chair, U.S. Rep. Glenn "GT" Thompson of Pennsylvania along with Rep. Nick Langworthy of western NY.

Left: NYFB member Judi Whittaker speaks at the listening session.



Kelsey DeCloux, center, graduated from AFBF's Women's Communications Boot Camp. Pictured with Kelsey are AFBF Women's Leadership Committee Chair Isabella Chism, right, and AFBF's Vice President of Communication Terri Moore.

MEMBER Achievement



Devon Shelmidine, left, is the 2023 NYFB YF&R State winner of the Achievement Award. Devon represented NYFB this past January at the AFBF Annual Convention in Puerto Rico. Devon received a cash prize from NYFB, the trip to Puerto Rico and from Kubota, the use of a tractor for 250 hours.



NYC LOBBY TRIP

NYFB members and staff traveled to Manhattan in February to meet with senators and assembly members in a first trip of its kind to the Big Apple.

Above: New York Farm Bureau representatives toured The Union Square Greenmarket hosted by Grow NYC.



Public Policy Department

STATE ACTIVITY

It has been very busy year for the Public Policy Division and our grassroots network of committed farmer advocates. The final enacted FY23-24 state budget included major funding for agricultural promotion, research, environmental and animal health programs. The state budget also included a significant refundable Investment Tax Credit to provide a major incentive for farmers to invest in farm infrastructure. New York Farm Bureau also played defense on a number of bills detrimental to agriculture, including pesticide bans and mandatory producer recycling.

New York Farm Bureau held a Young Farmers and Ranchers lobby trip to New York City where farmers met with state legislators in their district offices and brought the farm

experience to the five boroughs. We successfully brought back our in-person State Lobby Day in Albany in early March for our members, along with virtual meetings with members throughout the year. The Public Policy Division kept in daily contact with legislators, agencies and their staff on issues our members deeply care about.

In August, the Public Policy Division hosted a valuable in-person “Agricultural Summit” for agricultural leaders across the state. In October we hosted a legislative farm tour in Columbia County for over 50 legislators and staff.

Throughout this time we have worked with members and county Farm Bureaus on policy development and individual member issues.

Of course, we are looking forward to the 2023 State Annual Convention to help our members craft organizational policy for 2024.

FEDERAL UPDATE

New York Farm Bureau’s interactions at the federal level are a critical part of its grassroots advocacy which includes working with members of the New York Congressional delegation and advocating for sound regulatory reforms with agencies and the administration.

In 2023, NYFB members strongly advocated for an on-time Farm Bill that recognizes the unique needs of farms in the Northeast. We also continued to lobby for agricultural immigration reform.

In addition, members worked to prevent the inclusion of harmful tax provisions in spending bills as well as lobbied for voluntary conservation and climate programs to assist farmers with unpredictable weather patterns.

NYFB was able to accomplish these measures by hosting a number of lobby events this year where farmer members traveled to the nation’s Capitol with support from the state organization.

In addition, opportunities were created so that farmers could interact with their Congressional representatives during in-district meetings. NYFB also worked with farmer members to submit comments on harmful regulations for the agricultural industry.

Left photo: New York Farm Bureau held a successful educational summit meeting on Aug. 8 in Syracuse bringing 100 members, agribusiness owners, and leaders together to focus on some big picture issues about the future. New York State Sen. John Mannion, left, speaks at the third panel with Jim Bittner, of Bittner-Singer Orchards moderating and New York State Sen. Zellnor Myrie to Mannion’s left.

Right photo: NYFB members had a busy two days in April meeting with a number of congressional offices. Members met with national leaders to discuss federal milk marketing order reform, local food production, and conservation funding and USDA staffing capacity.

County Farm Bureau Relations and Development

The County Farm Bureau Relations and Development Department works as a resource to support the activities and operations of county Farm Bureaus, the building blocks of NYFB. Our staff act as liaisons between the county Farm Bureaus and the state organization, and provide leadership development education, member acquisition support, and guidance, as well as make sure that county Farm Bureaus have the tools necessary to make a difference in their communities.



County Farm Bureau Relations Development Director John Wagner speaks at the 2023 New York State FFA Convention.



This past year, several county Farm Bureaus worked in collaboration with local law enforcement officials and county governments to create heightened safety awareness campaigns. The purpose of these Share the Road campaigns to bring a keen sense of awareness about rural road safety issues. Above: Oneida County Sheriff and NYFB member Rob Maciol speaks at a campaign press conference.



Employees from Syracuse-Onondaga Food Systems Alliance (SOFSA) conducted a gleaning at the end of The Downtown Market in Syracuse in July. SOFSA and NYFB volunteered to deliver the produce to local food pantries. From left are Alex Warshal, SOFSA Project Coordinator; Rich DeMeyer, NYFB YF&R State Committee member and Bailey Coon, Manager, County Farm Bureau Relations and Development.

LOCAL ENGAGEMENT 2023



8.1 Million

Pounds of Food Donated to Harvest for All and **220** Volunteer Hours

97

County Farm Bureau Events Across the State

\$84,400

Donated to Community Activities, such as FFA, 4-H and Food Banks

\$32,750

Awarded in Youth Scholarships



Members of the NYFB Staff traveled to Pompey, NY for Empire Farm Days. From left are Amanda Krenning-Muoio, Nately Batiston, Tom Denman, Bailey Coon and Renee Ciardi.

Communications Department



NYFB's Communications team won 11 awards at the recent American Farm Bureau Federation Communications Awards held at the annual AFBF Communications Conference in Savannah, Ga. NYFB competed in the small-state membership category and won the most awards of any state. From left, Seth Moser-Katz, Brooks Brown and Steve Ammerman.

378,000

reached on
social media

5,000+

podcast downloads

1,180

press mentions

52

Weekly digital
newsletters

New York Farm Bureau's Communications Department is finding new ways to reach members, public officials, and consumers, showcasing the positive things happening on farms across the state as well as the issues facing agriculture.

Social media expansion remains a primary focus for the organization. The growth of Facebook and Instagram, through the use of video storytelling and drone footage, has allowed thousands more people to learn about life on the farm, production methods, and the importance of family farms in our communities.

We are also active on X (formerly Twitter), LinkedIn, TikTok, and YouTube. This has led to a more coordinated approach to sharing content with county Farm Bureau social media managers. We also expanded our podcast News Bytes, featuring 19 enlightening episodes

in 2023 that have been downloaded more than 5,000 times.

Member outreach is a priority as well. This year, we gravitated onto a new digital alert platform that makes it easier for members to digest weekly news alerts and urgent communications on major topics. Our open rates are routinely more than 40%, which is a high industry average.

The *Grassroots* newspaper went to a bi-monthly publication this year to reduce costs and divert more attention to timelier outreach for members.

American Farm Bureau recognized the effectiveness and quality of the communications efforts, awarding New York Farm Bureau 11 AFBF Communication Awards at the 2023 National Communications Conference. This was the most of any state in its membership category. One of the major awards was the Anne Marie Moss Memorial Teamwork Award. This honored NYFB staff for working together to tell member

stories and to live stream and run all of our event production in-house, saving the organization thousands of dollars. NYFB also developed new website splash pages to better inform members about our major events.

New York Farm Bureau maintained a strong public affairs program on many important issues facing our members. We issued 28 press releases, published op-eds included in the Empire Report and letters to the editor, and worked with state and national reporters on many major stories, including the Farm Bill, farm labor, farm safety, and state and national priority issues. Media outlets that featured NYFB included Fox News, NY Times, Buffalo News, NPR, RFD-TV, and many more.

New York Farm Bureau also works closely with other agricultural organizations on communication needs, including Grow NY Farms, Partners for Healthy Watersheds, NY Dairy Issues Team, and New York Animal Agriculture Coalition.

Member Advocacy

Business
Solution
Partners:

As an organization that relies on membership, both for the success of activities and advocacy, and for our financial strength, we've taken a hard look at membership and our strategy to grow. In 2023, NYFB created a new position, Manager of Membership Development and Engagement and hired Tom Denman to lead our new strategy.

As part of our growth strategy, and in follow-up to our delegates' vote in December 2023, we have successfully implemented our new Enterprise Membership category, and a switch to anniversary date billing.

Enterprise Membership was created to provide a more equitable dues scenario for different sized businesses. It provides a more seamless experience for members wishing to increase the number of memberships in their operation and creates internal efficiencies.

Our switch to anniversary date membership eliminates the complexity we've faced in our membership structure for many years. This change normalizes our membership cycle



*Tom Denman
is the Manager
of Membership
Development and
Engagement.*

and reduces periods of complimentary memberships that resulted in a financial drain on our organization.

We have evaluated our membership goal structure and have developed a more focused effort on helping county Farm Bureaus see

membership success.

Regular membership communications deliver helpful sales tips, member value talking points and updates on success. Staff are mining data to develop valuable prospect lists, and we've created a membership tool kit to help guide recruitment efforts.

The coming year will see a roll out of a county-level member savings and discount programs, and an increased member engagement effort.

Our plan and our implementation road map, have us on a path to seeing membership growth for the first time in many years.



NYFB/Nationwide Connection Enters Twelfth Year

New York Farm Bureau continues to strengthen its relationship with Nationwide as it enters its twelfth year.

Nationwide's farm transition planning services offered through their Land As Your Legacy® program continues to be a signature service available to members.

2023 brought a focus on risk management, with Nationwide highlighting resources to help farmers, ranchers and other agriculture operators identify and reduce hazards, keep workers safe and protect



assets. From fire prevention to ATV safety, to manure pit safety, Nationwide is sharing resources through their Ag Insight Center.

NYFB is participating in a pilot program with Nationwide to provide direct communication to our members about the Ag Insight Center every two months.

Together, Nationwide and Farm Bureau are planning for a future that benefits both organizations, while prioritizing our members' needs.

Promotion & Education

The NYFB Promotion and Education (P&E) Program had a successful year of programs and activities organized by the State P&E Committee as well as the County P&E Committees.

There were more than 40 applications received for the NYFB Agricultural Youth Scholarship program. Jacob Ziehm in District 8 received first place and a \$3,000 scholarship. Holly Niefergold from District 1 received second place and a \$2,000 scholarship. The other nine district winners received cash prizes. Another scholarship program is planned for 2024.

Working with NYS Ag in the Classroom, the P&E committee remains committed to distribute agricultural children's books to schools and libraries across the state. State P&E Committee Chair, Bill Zalakar began serving on the NY Ag in the Classroom Advisory Committee in 2023 as the NYFB representative. The 2024 Ag

Literacy Week Book will be "I LOVE Strawberries!" by Shannon Anderson. The P&E committee members are excited to plan more activities at schools and libraries using this book as a way to communicate with youth about agriculture.



Bill Zalakar is the P&E Committee Chair.

NYFB members and staff attended the AFBF FUSION Conference in March where leaders from the three program areas—Promotion & Education, Women's Leadership and

Young Farmers & Ranchers—came together to share ideas and information. Bill Zalakar also attended the Ag TASK Conference in Pennsylvania to gather information for a possible NYFB P&E Conference in 2024. NYFB members also participated in the AFBF Market Basket surveys that show consumers the cost of a Thanksgiving Day dinner.

Throughout the year, the State P&E Committee met virtually and then in an in-person meeting at NYFB State Convention for all state and county committee members. Also at the convention, the committee held a Wine, Beer, Cider, and Spirits Tasting event which raised funds towards the P&E Committee's future activities and programs.

We are looking forward to continued growth of this committee and program in the upcoming year. Any support would be greatly appreciated.



Karl Auwaerter from Long Island Farm Bureau was one of the volunteers who read this year's Ag in the Classroom book to school children in the area. The books were distributed to area schools and libraries around the state.



Jacob Ziehm



Holly Niefergold



Washington Co. Farm Bureau member Mapleland Farms hosted open houses in March. It was a great opportunity to talk with the next generation of sugarmakers about how maple syrup is produced. Mapleland Farms partner Terry Campbell demonstrates the process.

Young Farmers & Ranchers

The NYFB Young Farmers & Ranchers (YF&R) Program continues working to offer programming to our state's young farmers and agricultural professionals. Our State Committee meets virtually on a quarterly basis to discuss program planning. This year's annual in person committee meeting was held in Wayne County and included farm tours along with an interactive media training conducted by specialists from the American Dairy Association North East. The State Committee continues to work in conjunction with the Harvest for All program by volunteering their time to regional food banks and collecting donated goods. The group partnered this year with Nationwide Insurance to offer informational webinars on topics like risk management and financial planning.

Summer of 2023 programming also included sponsoring a Grain Bin Safety training at the annual NY Corn and Soybean Expo. The state committee is currently working on program planning for 2024, including a Young Farmers & Ranchers Leadership Conference slated for Feb. 2-3, 2024. NYFB YF&R members joined with Pennsylvania Farm Bureau's Young Farmers & Ag Professionals (YAP) group to sponsor a leadership conference this past February. Several NYFB young farmers including our 2023 Collegiate Discussion Meet contestant attended the AFBF YF&R leadership conference in Jacksonville, Fla.



Young farmers from across New York attended the Joint Leadership Conference with Pennsylvania Farm Bureau's YF&R Program.

Young farmers participate in monthly AFBF YF&R Connect calls to learn more about programs for young farmers, different commodities and to network with other young farmers from across the country. They also participate in the YF&R competitive events, the Achievement Award, the Excellence in Agriculture Award and Discussion Meet contests at this past year's AFBF Annual Meeting in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

The NYFB also works with three active collegiate chapters: Cornell, SUNY Cobleskill and SUNY Morrisville. The chapters conduct regularly scheduled meetings, participate in campus events and offer other activities for students including farm tours and attendance at NYFB events.

NYFB Young Farmers & Ranchers continues to support the youth involved in NYS FFA and 4-H.



NYFB's YF&R program received a plaque from American Farm Bureau at the 2023 Fusion Conference for the Harvest for All effort. Above, Fusion conference attendees from NYFB's YF&R and P&E programs.

NYFB YF&R: Second in Nation in Food Donations

NYFB members donated nearly 6.4 million pounds of food to regional food banks across the state last year through the Harvest for All program. The number was announced at the annual AFBF Fusion Conference in Jacksonville, Fla. That was the second highest donation total in the country for 2022, behind Florida. NYFB was awarded a \$250 grant from Nationwide for its effort which was be donated to Feeding New York State. Additionally, NYFB's YF&R program was recognized for its 699 hours of volunteer service and for collecting \$30,900 in donations last year to the regional food banks across the state.

Safety Group 486

The New York Farm Bureau's Workers Compensation SG 486 saw growth and improved services in 2023. The group welcomed over 50 new dairy farm members after gaining approval for the Milk Depot and Milk Dealer code 2070. With dairy being integral to many of the 2,200 SG 486 members, this code approval enabled more farms to diversify and access affordable coverage through the state fund.

Since the legalization of cannabis, SG 486 has expanded to include cannabis growing operations under existing approved codes 0005, 0006, and 0034. Obtaining a cannabis license does not require enrollment in the proposed cannabis safety group.

Farm Bureau has been educating members on their ability to choose where to place cannabis business WC coverage.

During the year of 2023, Eman Badr Wilder was brought on as the new Director of Insurance Services to further develop and evaluate lines of insurance, including expanding Safety Group 486. With nearly 20 years of insurance experience, Wilder is dedicated to growing options and providing top-notch service for New York Farm Bureau members.



Eman Badr Wilder is NYFB's new Director of Insurance Services.

Safety Group 486 was formed in 1967 to supply members with reliable, affordable workers compensation insurance. Today the group insures over \$700 million in payroll for agricultural businesses across New York. Robust performance allowed the group to return a 40% dividend of over \$7 million to eligible 2022 policy holders. Renewals also received a generous 25% upfront discount this year.

Committed to being more actively engaged with claims strategy, new in 2023 the NYFB and NYSIF collaborated to offer its first complimentary English and Spanish safety course.

The New York State Insurance Funds Risk Consultancy Program identifies and analyzes losses to improve the group's performance. Between dividend returns, upfront discounts, and free safety training, Farm Bureau continues to lower costs and maximize value for individual farms and serving to strengthen agriculture. After over 50 years, Safety Group 486 remains dedicated to supporting New York's agricultural community.



Speaking in Spanish, NYFB County Manager Nataly Batiston demonstrates the proper use of a ladder during a barn fire at safety class for McMahon Thoroughbreds of Saratoga employees.

MEMBER SAVINGS 2023



\$7.1 million
Paid in Dividends to Workers' Compensation Safety Group 486 members

1,850
Members Saved on Members-Only Programs such as Budget, Cat, Choice Hotels, Grainger, Ford and John Deere

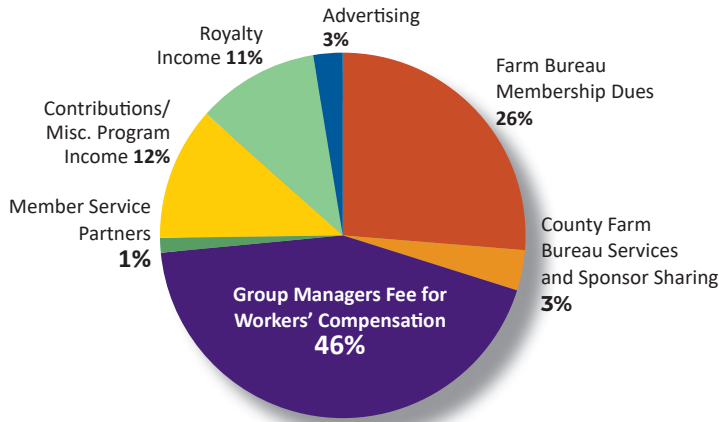
2,213
Members Enrolled in Safety Group 486

\$450,000+
members saved through NYFB Business partner programs

BY THE NUMBERS:

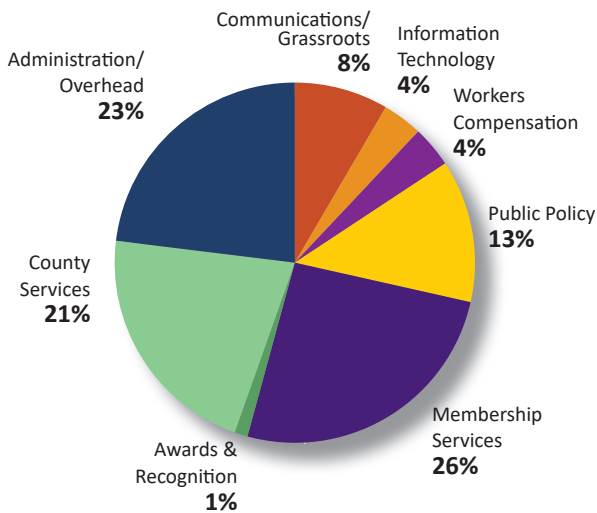
Revenue based on FY 2022

(includes Farm Bureau and Member Services)



Expenses based on FY 2022

(includes Farm Bureau and Member Services)



NYFB's Legal Referral Service

NYFB's Legal Service and Referral Plan continues to assist members who may be in need of legal counsel. This includes members who have legal questions or concerns and are looking for attorneys who specialize in the area of law that matches their needs.

This past year the free referral program provided information to 62 NYFB members who called the state office. As part of the program, participating attorneys offer Farm Bureau members a 15% discount off their fees.

In addition, New York Farm Bureau continues to raise money for its Legal Defense Fund to protect farmers' rights in the legal arena. The Legal Defense Fund is utilized in cases that involve a Farm Bureau policy issue and stand to have far-reaching impact on farmers throughout the state. Plus, the NYFB Legal Library sold issues of its Farmer's Guide to Truck and Implement Laws and Regulations and the Farmer's Guide to ICE and Law Enforcement Activities to help employers know their rights and responsibilities.

Fletcher Named Golden Owl Award Winner

To thank educators for their exceptional contributions and devotion, students, parents, and community members nominated more than 900 agricultural educators across the nine states for the 2022-23 Golden Owl Award®.



Deb Fletcher

Deb Fletcher of Cobleskill Richmondville Central School was recognized as the Grand Prize Winner in NY.

She was recognized at the NYS FFA Convention in May and earned the title of Ag Educator of the Year. She received the Golden Owl Award Trophy, and \$3,000 in funding to help promote new opportunities to her school's programs.

The Golden Owl Award is offered through a partnership among NYS FFA, New York Farm Bureau and Nationwide®.

NYFB ADVOCACY 2023



\$5 Million

in Ag Promotion in State Budget from Lobbying Efforts

\$15 Million

in Agriculture Research in State Budget from Lobbying Efforts

1196

Legislative Bills Monitored

1,680

E-Lobby Letters sent to Legislators by Members

224

Topics Lobbied on at the Local, State and Federal Levels

\$100 Million

in Farm Environmental Programs in State Budget from Lobbying Efforts

NYFB Sets Priority Issues for 2023

New York Farm Bureau delegates looked forward to 2023 and approved a new set of public policies to support New York agriculture at the 66th State Annual Meeting in Buffalo. More than 100 delegates representing nearly 52 county Farm Bureaus from across the state voted on public policy positions and elected new officers and board members to lead the organization.

State Annual Meeting followed a special day-long event, New York Farm Bureau's "Focusing on the Future of Northeast Agriculture: Adapt. Advance. Achieve." The conference brought members, agricultural experts, and thought leaders together to look at major challenges



and opportunities facing agriculture including business and market trends, environmental issues, and regulatory reforms.

Brett Sciotto, right, of Aimpoint Research, a global, strategic intelligence firm specializing in agri-food, gave the keynote address. He explored consumer trends, a



complex food system, and how the Northeast is positioned to best capitalize on change in the agricultural industry.



Jensen Selected for AFBF's PAL Program

The AFB Federation selected Eileen Jensen a NYFB member from Yates County, as a new member of the organization's Eleventh Partners in Advocacy Leadership (PAL) class. Ten participants were selected from Farm Bureaus across the country. AFBF designed PAL to help agricultural leaders accelerate their engagement abilities and solidify their roles as advocates for agriculture.

Eileen and her cohorts toured Chile this past year, including a stop at the U.S. Embassy in Santiago.

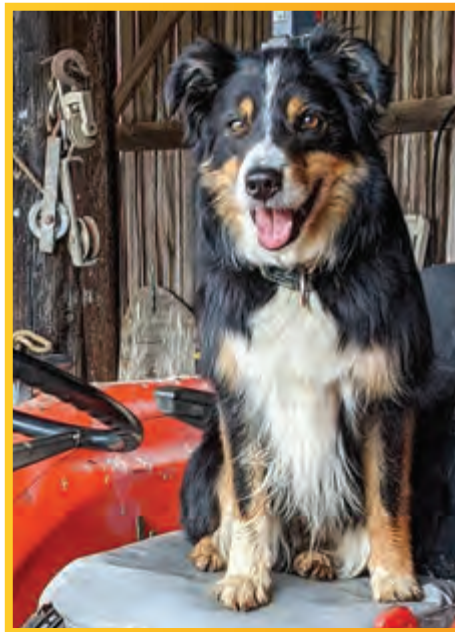


Devon Shelmidine, left, the 2023 NYFB State winner of the YF&R Achievement in Ag Award and Julia Hudyncia, second from right, winner of the YF&R Excellence in Agriculture Award received their prizes at the AFBF Annual Convention in Puerto Rico. They were accompanied by their spouses Erica Shelmidine and Stephen Davis.

NYFB Awarded at AFBF National Convention

NYFB was honored with all four Awards of Excellence during the opening session of the American Farm Bureau national convention in San Juan, Puerto Rico for outstanding programming in Advocacy; Engagement and Outreach; Leadership and Business Development; and Membership Value. And the organization received the New Horizon Award for outstanding innovative programming for its leadership involvement with the Grow NY Farms coalition. The coalition pushed back on a lower overtime threshold and secured an overtime tax credit to offset some overtime costs.

NYFB also won for northeast farm dog of the year. The Northeast Farm Bureau Farm Dog of the Year went to Stan, a sheep rounding dog owned by Lexie Hain and Marguerite Wells of



Tompkins County Farm Bureau. Stan was also runner-up for the national award sponsored by Purina. The family received a \$1,000 prize. Wells attended AFBF with their daughters Phoebe and Petra Wells, and their father John, who were excited about the experience and Stan's win.

Columbia County Farmer Expands Worker Housing Thanks to NYFB Newsletter

Russell Bartolotta, president and CEO of Klein's Kill Fruit Farm said he was reading the New York Farm Bureau newsletter that comes out once a month. It said the state was giving out farm housing grants to update housing.

"The people in charge of giving the grant came and looked



Russell Bartolotta, on his apple farm.

at the property, and then Columbia County came out to the farm a couple of times a year to look at the farm, and they knew we needed to update housing," Bartolotta said. "I applied as soon as I found out about it, so I knew we had a need. We waited a couple of weeks and were approved."

"When people get something new, it makes them feel better about themselves," he said. "They get a nice place to put their head down at night, and the facilities are brand new," Bartolotta said. "It's a win-win for all."

AFBF President Addresses Big Issues Facing Farms During Tour of Western NY Farms

American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall toured Western New York in late August to engage with local farmers and gain valuable insights into the agricultural landscape of the region.

Duvall noted the diversity of agriculture in the area, particularly the intensive labor needs driven by the cultivation of fruits and vegetables and in dairy. He emphasized the need for skilled labor to support the agricultural industry, especially in regions like Western New York.

He says there is a desire for young people to enter farming but securing farmland and loans can be difficult, adding to the complex issue of labor in agriculture. He also addressed the challenges faced by the dairy industry, emphasizing the need for milk pricing reforms and enhanced support for dairy farmers, an issue of significant concern in New York.

“Dairy policy is going to be a part of this Farm Bill, and AFBF has really led the way. This past year in trying to bring the industry together and bringing lawmakers together too, we’ve looked at some of those issues around milk pricing and milk marketing order reforms,” said Duvall.

Duvall’s visit to New York was an excellent opportunity to showcase the diversity and innovation within the state’s agriculture. He left inspired by the dedication and hard work of local farmers, with a strong sense of optimism about the future of American agriculture.

“I’ve enjoyed New York, and I just encourage everybody, let’s just keep our heads up, work hard, and be a part of Farm Bureau so we can provide that one united voice. The strength of this organization lies in the county Farm Bureau Boards of Directors. And we are as good as they are active. And if they’re engaged and active, we’re a powerful force to be dealt with,” said Duvall.



AFBF President Zippy Duvall speaks with Erie Co. Farm Bureau member Allison DeHonney of Urban Fruits and Veggies, an urban farm in Buffalo. Duvall visited a wide variety of farms on his tour including dairy, fruit, and vegetable operations throughout western NY.



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linkedin.com/company/new-york-farm-bureau

