

Seneca County Farm Bureau

April 2024



To Serve and Strengthen Agriculture

President's Report

Spring will be here before we know it as planting season will get underway. But first, we have another important season to cultivate, New York State budget season.

Lawmakers are currently negotiating the spending plan for the next fiscal year, and this includes critical funding for agriculture. There is more than \$160 million earmarked for animal health and environmental programs, promotion of farm products, and research support among other needed funding.

Our county Farm Bureau traveled to Albany for the annual New York Farm Bureau Taste of New York Reception and Lobby Day. This is essential to the work of our organization. We meet with our local Senators and Assembly Members along with adopted lawmakers from New York City. This is our opportunity to advocate for the budget and discuss the impacts of other proposed legislation that we either support or oppose.

Some of the other priorities this session includes full funding for Nourish New York and the Healthy School Meals for All programs to increase access to locally produced food. NYFB is also prioritizing legislation allowing for direct-to-consumer shipping for all New York-produced farm beverages, including beer, cider, and spirits.

Farm Bureau also has serious concerns about the statewide push for electrification before farms can successfully adopt it or the rural power grid can properly handle the expected surge in use. The state cannot afford to go too far, too fast. We also are pushing back on plans to shift recycling costs onto the backs of producers that include dairy processors and wine makers. For a full look at the state priority issues, you can click under legislative affairs on the New York Farm Bureau website at nyfb.org.

I would encourage you to make your voice heard as well on these issues, by sending an e-lobby message through the website or by participating in the monthly calls to action that come through your email. It takes all of us getting involved to make things happen.

I wish all of you a good spring season, and may this year be fruitful for us all.

Emory Oese-Siegel

Seneca County Farm Bureau President

YF&R CORNHOLE TOURNAMENT HELD

The Seneca County Farm Bureau's Young Farmers and Ranchers group recently held a Cornhole Tournament at Wagner Vineyards in Lodi. Almost \$200 was raised to help provide the funds to offer quality opportunities and education for the next generation of farmers and ranchers in Seneca County.



SOLAR & AG IN SENECA COUNTY: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Solar development on agricultural lands is becoming more common in Seneca County. To address some of the critical issues surrounding this development, Finger Lakes farmers and landowners are invited to an educational workshop titled “Solar & Ag in Seneca County: What you need to know.”, hosted by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Seneca County (CCE Seneca) and Seneca County Farm Bureau. The workshop will take place on **Wednesday, April 10** from **9:30am- 2:30pm** at the Romulus Fire Department, located at 2010 Cayuga St, Romulus, NY 14541. This workshop is designed for farmers and landowners to gain information on important issues regarding solar development on agricultural lands, especially things to know when leasing to solar companies. The workshop fee is \$15.00 per person, which includes lunch, and registration is required. Interested persons can register by visiting the CCE Seneca website at www.senecacountyce.org. If you do not have access to the internet, please call our office at 315-539-9251.

“It’s important for every Seneca County farmer, each one of us, to understand the ins and outs of solar development” said Emory Oese-Siegel, President of Seneca County Farm Bureau. He added “The last thing we want is for any farmer to sign

their name on a contract without knowing the entire story around solar development and leasing land for solar energy.”

Check-in/registration begins at 9:30am with coffee and donuts. Programming starts at 10:00am with Senior Extension Associate David Kay, from the Department of Global Development in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell University discussing “Utility Scale Solar Development in NYS: Some Basics.” He will be followed by American Farmland Trust New York Regional Director Linda Garrett, presenting “Solar as an AG Viability Tool.” Then Matt Sousa, Senior Planning Associate for MRB Group will talk about “Solar Energy System Application Reviews and Process.” The program will conclude with Chris Denton of the Denton Law Office speaking about non-disclosure agreements (NDAs), solar leases and lease memoranda, attorney review of documents, and a discussion on how to examine a lease.

For further information or if you require an accommodation, please contact CCE Environmental/Natural Resources Educator Ryan Staychock, at 315-539-9251 or email ryan.staychock@cornell.edu.

AG ENERGY NY: A PROGRAM FOR FARM ENERGY EFFICIENCY

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Would you like to save on your farm energy bills? There may be opportunities to reduce energy use on your farm through efficiency improvements that save money, labor, and maintenance costs. Energy efficiency also helps buffer farms from high costs in energy market fluctuations and can make it easier to transition to electric power and renewable energy.

Energy inputs are required at every stage of farm production – from soil preparation through harvesting crops, to heating and lighting livestock housing. Farms can get substantial energy savings and enhance productivity by maintaining equipment, maximizing fertilizer inputs, improving building efficiency, and installing high-efficiency motors or lighting when older equipment needs to be replaced.

[Ag Energy NY](http://AgEnergyNY.org) is a program provided by Cornell Cooperative Extension. Ag Energy NY is developing a resource hub to support farm energy efficiency in New York. AgEnergyNY.org includes

mobile-friendly webpages and print-friendly factsheets to help farmers learn about potential energy use and savings specific to their farm sector.

Ag Energy NY focuses on the following farm sectors: crops and vegetables, beef, swine, poultry, grain drying, maple production, orchards, small fruit/berries, and vineyards. Ag Energy NY is part of a broader NYSERDA program, [Energy Best Practices in Agriculture](http://EnergyBestPracticesinAgriculture.org), which also provides support for dairy and greenhouse operations.

After reviewing energy efficiency measures online, you can reach out to the Ag Energy Team with questions and to connect with a NYSERDA FlexTech Consultant for farm-specific advising. NYSERDA offers no-cost, no-commitment energy assessments to help farmers prioritize areas for improvements and identify incentives to help with implementation. To get started, visit www.agenenergyny.org.

SENECA COUNTY FARM BUREAU ATTENDS LOBBY DAYS

Seneca County Farm Bureau members attended New York Farm Bureau's Lobby Day and Taste of NY Reception on March 4 & 5 in Albany. The Taste of NY Reception (March 4) showcased products from around New York State. Seneca's table featured wine and cheese items from *Lively Run Goat Dairy*, *Muranda Cheese*, *Boundary Breaks Winery* and *Fleur de lis Brewery*. Thank you to all these great local businesses for the donations that showcased Seneca County this year! Lobby Day (March 5) was an opportunity for members to meet with and give a rural production perspective to elected legislators. Seneca County Farm Bureau also met with urban "Adopted Legislators." For some of these legislators, it may have been the first contact with an agricultural producer.



Photo Top Right: Seneca County Farm Bureau members Brittany Updike and Emory Oese-Siegel at the NYFB Taste of New York Reception.

Photo Right: NYS Senator Tom O'Mara (5th from right) met with Farm Bureau members to discuss the NYFB's 2024 Legislative Priority Issues.



FARMWORKER OVERTIME TAX CREDIT PORTAL NOW OPEN

Governor Kathy Hochul recently announced the launch of the State's new Farm Employer Overtime Credit advance portal, which is now open for farmers to register and begin preparing the documents they will need to apply for reimbursement. Later this year, eligible farm employers may apply to the Department of Agriculture and Markets for a certificate of advance payment of eligible overtime paid to their employees between January 1 and July 31, 2024.

The Farm Employer Overtime Credit is a refundable tax credit available for eligible farm employers who pay overtime wages after January 1, 2024, based on the gradual phase-in of the overtime threshold in New York State.

Farm employers are encouraged to prepare to apply this year by taking the following steps:

- Ensuring that they are registered for a [NY.gov ID](https://www.ny.gov) through [My.NY.gov](https://my.ny.gov).
- Taking the [farm employer eligibility assessment](#)
- Discussing the program with their tax and payroll advisors to ensure they are keeping necessary records during the January 1 – July 31 period this year.
- Registering their farm in the online portal now if they plan to apply for the advance payment in 2024. The application portal can be accessed by visiting taxcredit.agriculture.ny.gov.
- Optionally, choosing to delegate authority to a representative (e.g., a tax preparer), who may complete and submit the application on the farm employer's behalf later in the year.

New York Farm Bureau
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Albany, NY 12205



Seneca County Farm Bureau



*Must be a New York Farm Bureau member for 30 consecutive days prior to purchase. Proof of membership is required. A valid member email address is required for eligibility. Discounts are subject to change without notice. Check out the savings on the following equipment categories; commercial mowing, residential mowing, utility vehicles, tractors, and compact construction. <https://www.deere.com/en/rewards/equipment-discounts/>

SENECA COUNTY FARM BUREAU BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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CNY County Support Office 518-431-5670

Seneca County Farm Bureau Board meetings are held the first Thursday of every month at 7:00 p.m. at CCE Seneca County, 369 East Main Street, Waterloo, NY.