

Schenectady County Farm Bureau News July 2024



President's Message:



I hope you are having a good summer and all is going well on the farm or in your business.

There are many advantages to being a member of Farm Bureau. One of the most important is the group of farmers we have locally to network with and talk about

issues important to each of us. This also includes having a say in the direction of the organization at the state and national levels. There is no other place for farmers to turn to for help and feedback than Farm Bureau.

Our successes were on display at the state capitol in Albany. In the end, we had a strong legislative season, in large part because of our member advocacy. New York Farm Bureau secured record budget funding for agriculture which will help the broad diversity of our farms. We also were successful in getting some major legislation across the finish line, including securing the right of our craft cideries and distilleries to directly ship to the customers.

The legislature amended the farmworker overtime tax credit that will ensure all farms have access to this important tool to help minimize rising labor costs. And a bill was passed making cannabis an agricultural crop, opening important resources to members who choose to grow it. We also defended and stopped some additional bills that could have posed serious challenges to our farms and increased the cost of doing business.

The passage of the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Act would have upended the state's recycling program and especially burdened agricultural producers and food processors. *Cont'd on back:*

You are invited

All Welcome To:
Summer Member Appreciation Event
Wed. August 7th from 5-8pm.
Wolf Hollow Brewing
6882 Amsterdam Rd, Schenectady

NYFB new CEO Deanna Fox will be in attendance as one of the newest member. Come out to welcome her and get to know your state leadership!

Come out and join us for a Schenectady County Farm Bureau summer member social event.



Your dinner and a complimentary

beverage are being provided for FREE as just another benefit of your membership in the Schenectady County Farm Bureau. This is a great chance to take a moment of time away from your agricultural activities to meet your fellow members, network, and share your successes and challenges with those who will truly understand them both. We also encourage you to bring along a friend who is not a Farm Bureau member. Let them share in what Farm Bureau is all about and with any luck, by the end of the evening, we will have one more member to build our advocacy strength at the local, state, and national levels.

Getting to know your County Board of Directors

Mike Nally (County President) raises beef, keeps bees, and lives with his wife Patty and son Sam in Glenville. Sam, by the way, is growing his coffee roasting business across the region.

Jeff Klein (County VP) raises organic apples and sheep on the farm he shares with his wife Louise in Rotterdam Junction. They also own the Hungry Chicken Country Store.

Anne Vernooy (County Treasurer) keeps horses on the family homestead and helps out with the family landscape business (Kulaks Nursery & Landscape) in Rexford. She and her husband Peter live in Glenville.

Mike Diana (Board Member) manages the Mabee Farm historic site for the Schenectady County

Historical Society, and lives with his partner in Schenectady.

Lyle and Frances Brown (Board Members) own and operate Brown's Farm Stand in Rotterdam, where they have grown fruit and vegetables for over 50 years.

Ken Gibbons (Board Member) is an attorney and owns Schenectady Distilling, a NYS Farm Distillery on Route 5 in Glenville. Ken and his wife Terry live just over the border in Montgomery County.

Rebekka Henriksen (Board Member) is the Farm to School Project Manager for Schenectady City schools. She lives with her husband Erik and three kids, River, Jasper, and Griffin in Schenectady.

A Note from the Board of Directors Greetings Schenectady Farm Bureau Members!

Your Board has been busy the past few months planning for our summer get-together on August 7th.

As you know, an organization like ours has to grow or it will wither on the vine. We are asking you, our members, to reach out to friends, neighbors, and co-workers about the benefits of Farm Bureau membership. The benefits are many, from networking and discounts at many agricultural equipment and service suppliers, to joining our voices and influencing how our local, State and Federal governments work to support and grow agriculture.

We ask that you bring prospective members to our August get-together (details on the front) to meet our group, enjoy some food and drink, and learn about the ways the Schenectady County Farm Bureau can help them grow and succeed. Our county is small but its agricultural diversity is vast. Let's add some new members, new thoughts and directions, and new goals to our County this summer.

Thanks for your help and interest. Your Board and I look forward to seeing you at Wolf Hollow on August 7th. Mike Nally, SCFB President



Members of the County Board at the 2024 NYFB Taste of NY Reception

Bottlenecks – Where are they and how do we overcome them?

As I have worked with NYFB and the state of NY over the past decade, I have identified a few bottlenecks that have affected agriculture. The first one I saw was back after the signing of the Farm Brewery Law. At that time, there were only a couple of malt houses in the state. That was a bottleneck that dramatically slowed down the expansion of the Farm Breweries. Today there are a couple of dozen malt houses across the state – small and large, custom, and conventional. Personally, I have noticed other bottlenecks such as in the industrial hemp industry. It is said that over 25,000 products can be made with hemp. To date, not many of those products are being made which slows the agricultural production of hemp fiber by the farmers that would like to expand into this market.

As we approach this year's policy development cycle and ask you, our members, for your ideas.

I will ask you two questions. First, what are your bottlenecks in your business? Second, how can New York Farm Bureau work to loosen up that bottleneck and make your agricultural operation more efficient and profitable? These are the issues that I believe we need to be working on. The problem is that we can only work on what our members tell us to. I invite you to reach out to any of your county board members who are listed in this newsletter and let them know what your thoughts are and what we should be doing to address them.

I also invite you to your county Summer Gathering to meet with your board of directors as well as network with other members of the Schenectady agricultural community at Wolf Hollow Brewing on Wednesday, August 7th from 5-8pm.

As always, if I can ever be of any service to you, do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Todd Heyn
NYFB County Manager & Training Specialist
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Agriculture Energy Audit Program

- Agriculture Energy Audit Program (AEAP): This program offers NY state farmers no-cost energy audits to help identify energy efficiency opportunities on their farm.
- REAP Technical Assistance Program (RTAP): This program has been designed to assist farmers at no-cost to make applications to the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP). If awarded, farmers can receive up to 50% of the total project cost.
- Energy Best Practices for Agriculture: The best practices have been developed to help producers with energy-efficient technologies, how they function, the average cost, and the average payback in years.

To learn more about these programs and eligibility, go online at [Agriculture Energy Assistance - NYSERDA](#).



Contact us now:
800-732-1399

Schenectady County Farm Bureau Board of Directors ~ Dial 518 first.

Michael Nally, President	384-1535
Jeff Klein, Vice President	441-4770
Anne Vernooy, Secretary & Treasurer	469-9111
Ken Gibbons	225-3909
Lyle Brown	355-2955
Rebekka Henrikson	929-8590
Mike Diana	694-6411
Frances Brown, ProEd Chair	355-2955
Paul Molesky Jr., NYFB Director	487-1769
Todd Heyn, NYFB County Manager	431-9338
County Support Office	431-5650

Schenectady County Farm Bureau

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Albany, NY 12205



Pres. Message:

Likewise, the TEMP Act would have set new workplace standards, reporting requirements and worker health screenings when temperatures top 80 degrees, hardly a heat extreme. Our advocacy made a difference.

With the session behind us, we can begin to focus on the public policy for 2025. Over the next few months, I encourage you to think about issues on your farm and any policy changes that could help you and your family. We will gather this fall at the County Annual Meeting to vote on any new resolutions. And you're invited to attend State Annual Convention this December at Turning Stone Resort in Verona, NY where the focus will be on leadership, innovation, and diversification. Registration opens August 1, so be watching for more details.

Finally, if you have any questions or issues you would like to discuss, please reach out to any member of your county board of directors. The county Farm Bureau is here for you to help connect you with resources, find answers, and be a source of support. Thank you for being a member and for what you do every day on your farm.

FARM BUREAU NEW YORK MEMBER BUSINESS SOLUTIONS

Retail Council
RCSC
Services Corp.

Exclusive NYFB Savings!

You need payment and software solutions tailored to your business. And, you need local, customized support. The Retail Council has both — and NYFB members enjoy exclusive discounts. Selling on the go? Our mobile payment solutions get the job done. If you use weight scales, or if you accept EBT or SNAP cards, we have the perfect software to make your job easy.