

Lewis County Farm Bureau News

September 2024



To Serve and Strengthen Agriculture



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Lewis County Farm Bureau Members,

I hope you're summer has been a good one and all is going well on the farm or in your business.

This is the time of year where we begin to focus on public policy issues for 2025. Over the next few weeks, I encourage you to think about issues on your farm and any policy changes that could help you and your family. Inside this newsletter is a Policy Development Discussion Forum for 2025 to get you started. Be sure to bring your ideas to our **Tuesday, September 17 LEWIS COUNTY POLICY**

DEVELOPMENT MEETING at the *Cornell Cooperative Extension of Lewis County, 7395 East Rd, Lowville, NY*. We'll begin at 7:30 p.m. and have light refreshments available. Policy ideas developed at the meeting will be brought forward at this year's County Annual Meeting (details on back page) where we will vote on any new resolutions. And you're invited to attend State Annual Convention this December 3- 5 at Turning Stone Resort in Verona, NY where the focus will be on leadership, innovation, and diversification. Registration is already open with an early-bird special! Go to NYFB.org to take advantage of the early registration.

Finally, if you have any questions or issues you would like to discuss, please reach out to me. 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.

Sincerely,

Joe Shultz, President

Lewis County Farm Bureau

FARMER AWARDS GIVEN AT LEWIS COUNTY FAIR

The 48th **Distinguished Farmer Award** was presented recently at the Lewis County Fair to John & Jean Demko of Demko Farms. This award recognizes a farmer or farming couple who are over 60 years old, still actively involved in farming and Farm Bureau members who are involved in their community. Purchasing the farm from John's father 47 years ago in 1977, they milked a little over 100 cows. Today the farm milks over 1,700 cows and crop around 4,000 acres employing 27 people. Together, this couple is recognized as a hard working couple. They work until the job is done and then they get up the next day and do it again.



Photo top: Jen Karelus (l), Lewis County Farm Bureau Board member presents the Distinguished Farmer Award to John (r) & Jean (c) Demko at the Lewis County Fair.



Sponsored by the Lewis County Dairy Industry Building Committee, the Lewis County **Young Farmer Award** recognizes a farmer for their level of farm management, dairy herd management, crop management, as well as business and financial management. This year the Young Farmer Award recipients are Dallen & Madalynn Farney. Dallen became a partner on the family farm with his uncle, Stephen in 2012, where they currently milk 250 Holstein cows with 300 acres of corn and 400 acres of hay. Together with his wife Madalynn and their 3 children: Jackson, Charlotte and Russell, they are the 4th generation on this family farm

Photo left: Lewis County Young Farmer Award recipients Dallen & Madalynn Farney with children: Jackson, Charlotte & Russell.

NEW YORK FARM BUREAU POLICY DEVELOPMENT DISCUSSION FORUM 2025

This forum explores several emerging issues relevant to agriculture in New York and the U.S. Please review these topics and bring this to your county Farm Bureau policy development meeting and County Annual Meeting this summer and fall as a jumping off point for discussion in your county. These issues are only suggestions and unique ideas generated from your county Farm Bureau and should be an important part of your consideration. These questions are also available on www.nyfb.org and in the July/August issue of Grassroots.

STATE TOPICS

Question: Should solar companies be permitted to have non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) in solar leases with farmers?

Background: Solar companies will include non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) in the solar lease documentation so that farmers cannot disclose the amount they are being paid by solar company for the lease. By signing this agreement, the farmer cannot tell neighboring farms what they are being paid. The concern is that farmers are signing the lease agreement, either knowing that the NDA is included but not able to get it taken out of the document, or the farmer misses the NDA language in the agreement and signs it unknowingly. It is also a concern that farmers are not able to share the price information in their area and thus, neighboring farmers do not know what prices to negotiate. On the other hand, NDAs can be a normal part of solar lease agreements and a way for solar companies to make sure that possible confidential information is protected.

Question: Should New York state prohibit certain wild animals from being transported to fairs for educational exhibition?

Background: There is proposed legislation that would prohibit kangaroos, non-human primates, wild cats, and wallabies from being transported for "traveling animal acts" which includes being transported to a fair for an educational exhibit. This bill's supporters want to ensure these types of animals are only located in their natural habitat, zoos, or wildlife sanctuaries. The NYS Association of Agricultural Fairs opposes this legislation since there are educational exhibits of wild animals still being brought to the fairs for the public to view and learn about the animals. There are also concerns that this bill could lead to other species of animals being banned from traveling fairs, including livestock.

Question: What issues have you had with getting an F or G endorsement to drive a CDL vehicle within 150 miles of your farm?

Question: How many miles do you travel from your farm with a CDL vehicle with an F or G endorsement?

Question: What do you use your F or G endorsement to transport? (e.g., products, farm equipment, animals, etc.)?

Question: Where do you transport products, farm equipment, animals, etc. when using your F or G endorsement? (e.g., farmers markets, fields, fairs, repair shops, etc.)

Question: Would a CDL exemption for farm plated vehicles (25 miles from farm) be helpful in transporting products and machinery from farm to field?

Question: Have you tried to enroll yourself or an employee in a CDL training program? If yes, how long is the wait until you could start the training? (e.g., 2 weeks, 2 months, etc.)

Background: New York Farm Bureau worked to have a bill introduced (S.8761/A.9726) that would grant farmers an exemption from needing a CDL (or the F and G endorsements) when operating a covered farm vehicle within 150 miles of the farm. However, legislators have had concerns with the bill, including the belief that 150 miles is too far for such an exemption. We would like to gather information about the difficulties with the current situation to help public policy staff develop a successful advocacy strategy for the coming year.

Question: What changes in law would help you grow or develop agritourism on your farm?

Background: The NYFB State Board of Directors has created an agritourism working group to help develop policy proposals that could make engaging in agritourism easier for farmers. The working group would like to have more policies in our policy book (we currently only have three policies that mention agritourism and there is no agritourism section of our policy book) that could help public policy staff advocate for this segment of farming in Albany.

Question: Should Agriculture and Market's law be amended to allow on-farm meat processors to process meat from other farms as well?

Question: If the answer to the above question is yes, what percentage of on-farm processed meat must be required when accepting meat for processing from other farms?

Background: Currently New York State Agriculture and Markets law requires that an on-farm processor

(in an agriculture district) must produce 100% of the meat processed from the farm operation itself to be protected legally by Agricultural Districts protections. This is the only Agriculture and Market law requiring 100% on farm production, as most other laws (including farm beverage laws as well as farm market laws) only require greater than 50%. This is problematic particularly for meat processing as there is an extremely long lead time in scaling up operations for growing livestock to meet and respond to demand. In addition, there continues to be a significant shortage in USDA slaughterhouses and slaughterhouse appointments.

Question: Given the increasing prevalence of deer on farmland causing extensive crop damage, what management tools should landowners be provided to better control deer populations?

Question: Do you utilize the Venison Donation Coalition program to process harvested deer for donation to food banks and pantries? What changes can be made to improve the program and funding?

Background: The Public Policy Division has heard numerous complaints over the past year about large deer populations, especially on farms that lack the ability to control the herd.

Question: Would making the ST-125 Farmer's and Commercial Horse Boarding Operator's Exemption Certificate valid for a set number of years be helpful? Do the businesses you shop from make you submit the form annually?

Background: NYFB members have contacted the Public Policy Division to share that the businesses they shop from require the form to be submitted annually while others say they do not. Should this be an issue that NYFB should be pursue for bill introduction?

Question: Should the state establish and fund a state SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) minimum benefit program?

Background: In 2020, New York State began issuing emergency supplemental benefits to households receiving less than the maximum monthly amount of SNAP benefits. This emergency allotment of benefits ended in March 2023. There is proposed legislation that would establish a state SNAP minimum benefit program which would give households receiving SNAP an additional monthly state SNAP benefit equal to the difference between the household's federal SNAP monthly benefit and ninety-five dollars. Supporters of the bill state that this increase in SNAP would combat food insecurity and lead to more purchases of New York food products at locations where SNAP is accepted, including farmer markets. States including

Massachusetts and New Jersey have used state dollars to fund supplemental SNAP benefits.

Question: Should New York State prohibit the use of certain food additives and food color additives in products such as brominated vegetable oil (BVO), potassium bromate, propylparabens, red dye azodicarbonamide, butylated hydroxyanisole (BHA), and titanium dioxide.

Background: There is proposed legislation that would prohibit the use of these food additives and food color additives in food products. The legislation exempts dairy products containing titanium dioxide. Supporters of this bill state that these additives negatively impact the health of consumers. These additives have been banned in the U.K. along with California banning all the additives except for titanium dioxide.

Question: Should wine bottles be required to be refillable?

Background: There is proposed legislation that would require bottles including wine to be refilled. Supporters of the bill believe this is a way to cut down on waste, while opposition has concerns with costs and health risks.

Question: Should the redemption value on bottles be increased to \$.10?

Background: There is language in the latest bottle bill proposal that would increase the redemption bottle from the current \$.5 to \$.10. Many states have increased their redemption bottles or are considering an increase. Current NYFB policy opposes increasing the bottle redemption rate to 10 cents.

Is there a state law or regulation that you believe should be changed?

Background: Each year NYFB Public Policy Staff pose questions regarding specific issues that either have come up directly from an issue a NYFB member has had or an issue that we have been discussing with lawmakers or agency staff. Please take this opportunity to present issues that you may have had on your farm, or you know has been an issue in your county.

LEWIS COUNTY FARM BUREAU POLICY DEVELOPMENT MEETING

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

at the

**Cornell Cooperative Extension
of Lewis County Offices**

7395 East Rd, Lowville, NY

We'll begin at 7:30 PM
and have light refreshments available.



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

© Lewis County Farm Bureau

Save the Date!

**LEWIS COUNTY FARM BUREAU
ANNUAL MEETING**

and

CELEBRATION OF AGRICULTURE

on

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 23

at

**Cornell Cooperative Extension
of Lewis County**

7395 East Rd., Lowville, NY

**WATCH FOR A POST CARD WITH MORE
INFORMATION IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS!**

**LEWIS COUNTY FARM BUREAU
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

PRESIDENT: Joe Shultz..... 315-376-7548

VICE President: Ryan Nortz..... 315-376-2059

DIRECTORS:

Barry Widrick..... 315-376-6910

Tim Yancey 315-346-6356

Jen Karelus..... 315-486-8820

Melvin Phelps 315-688-2508

Courtney Ebersol 315-222-8474

Courtney Markham 315-486-1064

County Manager: John Wagner 315-761-9770

NYFB County Support Offices:

Jill Williamson 518-431-5670

Felicia Dougherty..... 518-431-5650

Lewis County Farm Bureau meets the third
Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the Cornell
Cooperative Extension Office in Lowville.