

Tompkins County Farm Bureau

January 2025



To Serve and Strengthen Agriculture



Dear Farm Bureau members,

Happy New Year! I hope you and your family enjoyed being together over the holidays. As we enter into 2025, it's a good time to reflect on that togetherness – not just in our personal lives, but togetherness in our agricultural communities as well.

Tompkins County Farm Bureau was pleased to attend NYFB's State Annual Convention last month in Verona, NY, where a record crowd enthusiastically shared fellowship, education and new ideas. Most importantly, delegates from across the state came together in a spirited session on State Annual Meeting Day to vote on our 2025 public policy positions.

Some of our top legislative priorities include supporting critical funding for agricultural animal health; increasing funding for the state Farmworker Housing Program revolving loan fund; increasing and extending the farm workforce retention credit; supporting renewable energy policies that incorporate common-sense time frames; addressing transportation issues to facilitate the shipment of food products and farm equipment in New York State; establishing a New York State Equine Advisory Board; opposing the Temperature Extreme Mitigation (TEMP) act unless there is an exemption for agriculture; opposing legislation that prohibits the use of agricultural chemical protectants; and opposing Extended Producer Responsibility legislation that unduly burdens New York's food and wine manufacturing businesses.

As we get updates on state and federal legislation affecting NYS agriculture, we will update you in email communications, on our social media channels and in Grassroots. As always, New York Farm Bureau is committed to promoting and defending agriculture. A recent example of that commitment is the passage of the Direct to Consumer bill, which offers distilleries and cideries the same shipping privileges as wineries. We

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TOMPKINS COUNTY FARM BUREAU ATTENDS STATE CONVENTION

Tompkins County Farm Bureau helped chart the course for agriculture's future at the New York Farm Bureau 2024 State Convention (StaCon) December 3-5 at Turning Stone Resort Casino in Verona. This year's theme was "Farming Forward: Leadership, Innovation, Diversification." Workshops and an engaging program were offered to help NYFB members, farmers, and agricultural professionals better plan for the future. Member delegates also voted on public policy positions that the state organization will advocate for the 2025 year in Albany and Washington, D.C.

Photo: Tompkins County Farm Bureau members and StaCon delegates Shawn Bossard (c) and Rod Porter (r) discuss policy resolutions with Montgomery County delegate Russ Kelly (l) over dinner. Resolutions voted on and accepted at StaCon will become New York Farm Bureau policy for the upcoming year.



TOMPKINS COUNTY FARM BUREAU RESOLUTIONS REPORT 2024

The following resolutions were all discussed at the County Annual Meeting on October 28, approved and forwarded on for consideration at the District 4 Resolutions Committee Meeting held just before the State Annual Meeting in December. Whether these resolutions died in committee, passed or failed at the State Annual Meeting is indicated after each resolution.

- We support the increase of donations to food banks and food pantries by raising the refundable tax credit from 25% of the crop market value to 50% and raising the credit limit from \$5,000 to \$10,000. **Passed**
- We support state funding for DEC to eradicate invasive species, particularly hydrilla in the Finger Lakes, as this will completely change the ecology of the lakes if left unchecked. USDA funding is being removed. **Passed**
- We support CDL training at facilities such as SUNY schools that will offer not only training for full large scale truck operators, but smaller pickup truck/trailer combinations that exceed 26,000 lbs. GVRW. Was morphed into another resolution at the State Resolutions Committee – **did not pass**
- We support a mechanism that will hold tax assessors accountable for gross misinterpretation of Ag tax laws. **Passed**
- We support increasing emphasis of agriculture at the NYS Fair by capping rental rates for agricultural shows and product sales – and the expansion of 4-H and FFA exhibit space. Added to another resolution. **Passed**
- We support increased funding for county Soil & Water District and Cornell Cooperative Extension Associations. **Passed**
- We support and prioritize an annual appropriation for the NYS Agricultural Experiment Station/Cornell AgriTech for operations and maintenance to ensure the continued viability of the Experiment Station (including the Long Island Horticulture Research and Extension Center, Hudson Valley Research Laboratory, and Cornell Lake Erie Research and Extension Laboratory) to provide research-based solutions and extension for specialty crop farmers. This resolution and the one below were combined into one resolution at the State Resolutions Committee Meeting. **Passed**
- We support and prioritize an annual appropriation to support operations and maintenance at the Cornell University Ruminant Center for dairy and cropping systems research, development and testing of new technologies for NYS dairy farmers to improve economic and environmental sustainability. Combined at the State Resolutions Committee Meeting with the resolution above. **Passed**
- We support and prioritize funding for Pro-Dairy, including the newly established climate leadership position, for applied research and development in dairy science as well as creation of a Dairy Innovation Hub for dairy and food science product development for larger and smaller scale dairy entrepreneurs. **Passed**
- We support the elimination of NDAs (Non-Disclosure Agreements) in solar leases to farmers. Combined with another resolution. **Passed**
- We do not support the state legislation that would prohibit certain wild animals from being transported to fairs for educational exhibition. **Passed**
- We support the amendment to NYS Ag & Markets law so that it would allow an on-farm meat processor to process meat from other farms as long as it would not exceed 49% of the total meat processed. **Passed**
- We support making the ST-125 Farmer's and Commercial Horse Boarding Operator's Exemption Certificate valid for 5 years instead of 1. **Passed**
- We support the state establishment of a state SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) minimum benefit program. We also support funding and mechanisms to get food to rural food deserts. **Failed** – was felt that nothing should be taken away from the Federal Program.
- We do not support any legislation that would require wineries to collect and refill bottles. **Passed**
- We do support the suggested Bottle Bill increase from \$.05 to \$.10. **Passed**
- It is recognized that the cost for solar developers to install panels and batteries is very low due to tax breaks written into the Inflation Reduction Act. It is recognized that towns hosting installations can get from a PILOT agreement monies per megawatt, but also recognizing that the money is allocated by law. Towns can also receive money from a "Host Community Agreement" that is locally controlled as to allocation of funds. It is recognized that land under solar is no longer productive, or less productive for ag needs. If solar installations are to be sited on productive ag lands, we support a requirement that a portion of the income a host community generates through agreements be spent to support remaining farmland, making it more productive. Examples of investment include pattern tile drainage and precision farming technologies for smaller farm operators. **Died in Committee** – it was felt that there were other resolutions that addressed this.
- We do not support EPR for any ag related enterprise including wineries. If it passes we support a requirement that all agricultural related enterprises with less than \$5 million in gross receipts be exempted. **Died in Committee** – resolution for opposition passed.
- We support a cap on agricultural building appraisals that mirror the cap on agricultural land appraisals. **Passed**

COUNTY ANNUAL MEETING YIELDS NEW BOARD SLATE AND NEW DIRECTOR

Our county annual meeting October 28 at Bet The Farm winery included bringing a fun dish to pass. We thank our members and hosts Nancy and Kit.

We thank Paul Gier for manning the grill with custom burgers and our members for contribution of side dishes.

Three students from Cornell Farm Bureau attended.

Chris Wolfe, ag economics professor at Cornell presented an overview of the economics of agriculture for 2024, sharing trends for the future of ag commodities.

Interesting fact Despite five years of heavy drought, average corn production in New York State was actually 5 bushels higher than before the drought started.

SLATE OF OFFICERS FOR 2024-2025

Lin Davidson, President

Kate Cole, Vice President

Shawn Bossard, Treasurer

Paul Gier, Secretary

WELCOME NEW BOARD DIRECTOR

A new director joined the Tompkins County Board, Paula Wedemeyer of Ithaca Equestrian Center. Paula will help round out our board with her equestrian background. We look forward to Paula adding her voice and experience to the Tompkins County Farm Bureau. Welcome Paula!

President's Report Continued

fought long and hard for that bill, and our efforts ultimately proved successful. A more local example would be an assessment issue that a Tompkins County Farm Bureau member encountered. They were not getting a proper assessment on a new 10 year exempt building as the county was not exempting the increase in value year to year. We got a ruling to his advantage.

We can't do it alone. Our members are a critical part of our legislative efforts. Please take part in e-lobbying, which only takes a few minutes and is easily found on our website, and monthly calls to action. We also encourage you to join us for the Taste of New York Reception and Lobby Day on March 3 and 4 in Albany, one of the most important lobbying events of the year. Lawmakers from across the state must hear from us if we are to be successful.

Tompkins County Farm Bureau is here to support our members and help with any local issues that may arise. Please reach out to me or to our board members if you need anything.

I wish you all the best in the year ahead.

Regards,

Lin Davidson, President

Tompkins County Farm Bureau

NYFB TASTE OF NY RECEPTION

March 3, 2025, 5-7 p.m.

Empire State Plaza Convention Center in Albany

New York Farm Bureau will host its popular Taste of NY Reception at the Empire State Plaza Convention Center on March 3. The event brings together county Farm Bureau members, public officials and staff, and agricultural partners to showcase the diversity of NYS agriculture. This event is followed the next day with NYFB's Lobby Day at the Capitol in Albany on March 4.

Anyone interested in participating in Lobby Day or donating a product for the Taste of NY Reception should contact Mark James at 585-738-0242 or email mjames@nyfb.org.

Photo: Governor Kathy Hochul (r) and Commissioner Richard Ball (l) of the NYS Department of Ag & Markets visit the 2024 NYFB Taste of NY Reception.



New York Farm Bureau
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 Tompkins County Farm Bureau



TOMPKINS COUNTY FARM BUREAU BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT: Lin Davidson 607-227-3015

VICE President: Kate Cole..... 607-379-0217

DIRECTORS:

Tyler Addison Beck..... 607-591-6461

Shawn Bossard..... 315-679-8955

Eric Carey, YF&R Chair..... 607-591-6572

Paul Gier 607-254-1717

Rodney Porter 607-227-0836

Nancy Tisch 607-279-0387

Paula Wedemeyer..... 520-906-0832

COUNTY FARM BUREAU RELATIONS & DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

Mark James 585-738-0242

NYFB COUNTY SUPPORT OFFICES

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

Jill Williamson 518-431-5670

Tompkins County Farm Bureau board meetings are held the third Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Town Barn in Ithaca.

*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/>