

Ontario County Farm Bureau

April 2025



PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

I am stoked to be starting off 2025 as the Ontario County Farm Bureau president. I originally became a member of Farm Bureau sometime in college for two reasons:

- The like-minded community of people I found at meetings and conferences.
- All the helpful information Farm Bureau provides to its members via newsletters and resources.

Since I left college and entered the working world, I have often referenced Farm Bureau as a place for trusted information and an organization that actively helps farmers locally and nationally. Members can easily log in to their member account and see all the helpful resources and fact sheets Farm Bureau has for producers. Members can also access all the benefits available to them, from discounts on a new truck to a night in a hotel.

Farm Bureau has also been working hard to lobby and educate on behalf of farmers in our state legislature. Kim Skellie, an Ontario County local and our state Farm Bureau vice president, reminded me of some of our most recent wins:

- NYS has passed authorization of intrastate and interstate direct shipment of alcoholic farm beverages.

This means both tourists and New York State locals can get more of what they like at wineries and breweries without having to return to the facility to purchase products. This helps our producers' bottom line with hopefully more sales online and gets their name out across the state and country.

- Successfully opposed the Extended Producer Responsibility bill for recycling.

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WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS

CAMRY SEMANS, YOUNG FARMER AND RANCHER CHAIR

Camry has an associate degree in agricultural business and is on track to graduate with a bachelor's degree in agricultural education in 2026. She works as a substitute teacher at Midlakes and currently serves as the Young Farmer & Rancher Chair. Camry also runs a small hobby farm and enjoys spending time with her animals, being outdoors, painting, and refinishing furniture in her free time.

THOMAS MUELLER, DIRECTOR

Thomas Mueller grew up in Clifton Springs, NY on his family's farm. He later attended Cornell University, where he received a bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies focusing on international agriculture and business management. After university, he was an area director of marketing for World Wide Sires, a cattle genetics company, and traveled to over 20 different countries to explore marketing opportunities and work with distributors to expand sales. He represented World Wide Sires in Germany, Kenya, Kazakhstan, Egypt and Azerbaijan, among other countries. Thomas moved back home to the dairy in June 2024 and looks forward to being a part of the next generation of dairy both domestically and abroad.



UPDATES FROM ONTARIO SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Submitted by: Alaina Robarge, Conservation District Educator
Ontario County Soil & Water Conservation District



Ontario Soil & Water Conservation District has had a busy 2024 and this year looks to be full of projects and events as well. Check out our 2025 Annual Report at www.ontariocountyswcd.gov/outreach to find

out more details about recent projects and our 2024 achievements. The District has been focusing a lot of efforts on nutrient management by working with local farms on waste storage, methane reducing cover and flare systems, manure transfer, and barnyard management projects. The District also offers a wide variety of technical assistance for all types of farms through the Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) Program. We are currently working with many farms with grazing management, fencing, cover crops, water management, and soil erosion projects.

The District is working on enhanced nutrient management planning with several CAFO farms in the County for a final round of funding opportunity. Water quality protection remains

a key focus with agricultural erosion and sediment control projects, with a goal of keeping soil in place and managing water volumes on farms. The District hosts and participates in a number of events throughout the year such as soil health workshops, grazing clinics, community education, and other agricultural related outreach events. Reach out to the District for more information on funding and technical assistance opportunities. Sign up for our newsletter at www.ontswcd.com to keep posted on upcoming events and projects!



Photo: Manure transfer line being installed.

Presidents Message Continued

This bill had the aim to shift responsibility for managing packaging waste from consumers and municipalities to the companies distributing the product. The goal of the bill was to improve recycling but did not have efficient means of making this happen. Penalties to companies for noncompliance would have been around \$1,000 per day for each violation. Overall, this bill needed to be reworked, and Farm Bureau members knew it.

Through listening sessions with Farm Bureau members, the state legislature heard you and listened. This shows the importance of showing up and making your voice heard.

- Farmers have received their first credits for the Overtime Tax Credit and Refundable Investment Tax Credit.

Since NYS has passed overtime laws applicable to farmers, they have also allowed for an Overtime Tax Credit. This credit is available to farmers who have paid overtime up to 60 hours and is a great benefit to NYS farmers. This shows the importance our farmers play in the NYS economy and that New York does want farmers to stay and keep contributing to the economy.

The Refundable Investment Tax Credit recently enacted in the state budget is available to farmers who derive more than two-thirds of their gross income from farming. This means that farmers can now claim a substantial tax credit on newly purchased farm equipment. Currently it is in place through 2027 and will be of great benefit to farmers.

All these wins in our state legislature, together with the resources that Farm Bureau makes available to its members, makes me committed to speaking up for farmers, and proud to represent Ontario County as your Farm Bureau President. I hope this strengthens your appreciation for being a Farm Bureau member and inspires you to invite your friends and neighbors to join. Farm Bureau doesn't just work for its members; it advocates for all farmers in New York State. The more members Farm Bureau has, the stronger our voice becomes and only makes us more relevant to the people we are talking with.

Regards,

Jacob Maslyn

Ontario County Farm Bureau President

FFA CHAPTER UPDATES

MARCUS WHITMAN FFA

Maple season has been a tremendous success this year! Our students have gained invaluable hands-on experience, learning the entire process from tree to bottle, and even exploring the creation of value-added products. We hosted the UPK and 2nd grade students for Maple Day, where they learned the history of maple production, tapping techniques and collecting methods.

Our members have been actively involved in Leadership Development Events (LDEs), competing at both district and substate levels. We are proud to announce that 7th grader Travis Clark will represent the Western Region in both Junior Prepared Speaking and Junior Creed Speaking at the state level. Additionally, the Whitman FFA Conduct of a Chapter Meeting teams from the Western Region has qualified to advance to the state competition as well.

Members also traveled to SUNY Cobleskill on March 28 to compete in Agricultural Mechanics, Milk Quality and Products, and Meat Evaluation.

We are also excited to prepare for the 100th New York FFA State Convention, which will be held in Syracuse this year. Our students are actively preparing for various competitions, including the Agriscience Fair, Ag Sales, Veterinary Science, and Food Science events.

We look forward to the continued success and growth of our members this spring!

Anyone interested in volunteering at State Convention? Visit <https://bit.ly/4c3XBhz>

Save the date! Our banquet is June 5th this year.

Mary Coolbaugh

Marcus Whitman FFA

MIDLAKES FFA

Midlakes has been busy as a first year FFA chapter! The year started out with volunteering at Fun on the Farm alongside Whitman FFA, Penn Yan FFA and Lyons FFA. Throughout the year, members have attended leadership conferences where they have honed their leadership skills and networked with FFA members from across the state. The chapter has been working hard to build the K - 12 Ag Program as well. Midlakes Elementary students participated in a coloring contest during FFA Week and learned all about pumpkins during Ag Literacy Week. FFA members read *The Pie That Molly Grew* to kindergarten through third grade classes and helped the elementary students plant their very own pumpkin seed. The chapter is currently planning on growing lettuce in a hydroponic tower with the first grade classes and making bird feeders with sunflower seeds harvested from the elementary gardens with the second grade classes during their plant science units.

Midlakes FFA will host the second annual Ag Spring Fest for the elementary school on May 2. Four FFA members competed in their very first Leadership Development Event (LDE) this winter at the District 8 LDE Contests. Two members advanced to the Western FFA Substate Contests. The Milk Quality and Products team wompeted in the first Career Development Event (CDE) of the year on March 28 at SUNY Cobleskill. In May, Midlakes FFA will be attending the 100th NY FFA State Convention. They will have a Maple, Jr. Tool ID and Vet Science CDE team competing. Other members will be attending workshops, acts of service and local tours. One member will even be singing in the NY FFA choir. At State Convention, Midlakes will be recognized on stage as a new chapter as well as for having two FFA members who are finalists for the Individual Jacket Award. The members will receive their own personal FFA jacket from NY FFA. Over the summer, you will find FFA members showing at Ontario County Fair, volunteering at the Pageant of Steam and competing at CDE contests at the State Fair. Midlakes FFA is hoping to attend the National FFA Convention. The financial support of Ontario County Farm Bureau has been greatly appreciated. The chapter purchased a set of chapter jackets and FFA ties and scarves for members to use year after year. They continue to look for fundraising opportunities as they continue to accomplish more.

Marina Bartolotta-O'Brien

Midlakes FFA

SAVE THE DATES!

JUNE 14.....Summer Picnic/Meet the Candidates
SEPTEMBER..Kitchen Conference. Final date TBD.
OCTOBER 21 County Annual Meeting
FALL.....Golf Tournament. Final date TBD



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



ONTARIO COUNTY FARM BUREAU BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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COUNTY SUPPORT OFFICES:	
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Ontario County Farm Bureau board meets the third Monday of each month at 7 pm at the Cooperative Extension Office in Canandaigua.

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MEMBERSHIP MATTERS