

# Oneida County Farm Bureau

February 2026



## President's Message

Greetings!

As we forge ahead into the new year, I wish you, your farm families and your businesses a productive and successful year ahead.

I'm thrilled to announce that New York Farm Bureau has officially reached our goal of 9,650 voting members!

This milestone could not have come at a better time. It demonstrates that our grassroots organization continues to find meaningful pathways to success and creates significant impact in the agricultural community. The more members we have, the stronger our collective voice becomes in shaping the future of agriculture.

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## NYFB Agricultural Youth Scholarship Application Available

New York high school seniors who are graduating and interested in pursuing a career related to agriculture can apply for New York Farm Bureau's Agricultural Youth Scholarship. Eligible students can use the financial award for college or advanced training in the skilled trades.

Use the QR code provided for details and to access the application.

*Deadline for submitting applications is April 1, 2026.*

For more information, email [proed@nyfb.org](mailto:proed@nyfb.org) or call 1-800-342-4143.



## NYFB Taste of New York and Lobby Day

**Right:** Members of Oneida and Lewis County Farm Bureau grab a photo with NYS Ag Commissioner Richard Ball during the New York Farm Bureau Taste of NY Reception.

**Below, left to right:** Oneida County Farm Bureau member Karen-K Howard, VVS FFA student and 4-H member Bladen Lohr, Assemblymember Marianne Buttenschon and Oneida County Farm Bureau County Manager John Wagner pose during a meeting with Assemblymember Buttenschon.



### Right:

Assemblymember Brian Miller (second from left) receives a Farmers Voice Award during Lobby Day from Oneida County Farm Bureau members John Collins (left), Ben Simons (center), VVS FFA student Bladen Lohr (second from right) and Farm Bureau member Karen-K Howard (right). A Farmers Voice Award is given for a representative's positive voting record pertaining to agricultural legislation.



## 2026 New York Farm Bureau Legislative Priorities

Below are the New York Farm Bureau 2026 Legislative Priorities. These priorities are a culmination of the grassroots efforts which began last fall at county annual meetings and culminated at the State Convention held in December. These priorities reflect the collective interest of our members and rural communities and will determine the focus of our advocacy discussion and action for the year ahead.

- **Support** critical funding for current agricultural animal health, promotion, research, and environmental programs in the final FY 26/27 state budget.
- **Support** for a significant funding investment in the Cornell University College of Agriculture and Life Science to forward its mission of collegiate agricultural education, research, and extension.
- **Extend** the refundable investment tax credit and allow construction costs for farmworker housing to be eligible for the tax credit.
- **Move** the administration of product marketing and research orders from Empire State Development to the Department of Agriculture and Markets.
- **Remove** the requirement for overtime payment on the weekly consecutive 24-hour rest period when total work hours are still below the overtime threshold.
- **Support** legislation that would develop a Clean Fuel Standard.
- **Support** funding for the NY Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health to do research and promote education on temperature-related working conditions before any legislation (such as the Temperature Extreme Mitigation Program Act) is passed.
- **Support** the exemption of agricultural businesses from Extended Producer Responsibility legislation until a cost-effective and practical agricultural recycling program is established and funded by the state.
- **Support** mandating that fire, rescue, library, and other ad valorem taxing districts use agricultural assessment values when calculating property taxes.
- **Support** renewable energy policies that incorporate common-sense timeframes for adoption based upon grid capacity and support for the use of other energy sources including nuclear. Strongly oppose all-electric mandates and bans on the use of propane, wood burning, oil, or natural gas appliances.

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### President's Message, continued

As most of our members' renewal dates fell in December, I want to extend a sincere thank you to everyone who renewed. You may not always see it firsthand, but your membership and support are incredibly valuable to our agricultural community, our county and beyond. Know someone who should be a Farm Bureau member? Invite them to our next Oneida County Farm Bureau meeting, or simply share a cup of coffee and talk about how Farm Bureau has helped you succeed

NYFB has been busy planning for the year ahead, including putting together a comprehensive document outlining our state priorities. These priorities were critical to Lobby Day meetings in Albany and will continue to guide discussions as the legislative session gets underway and continues through June. The 2026 New York Farm Bureau Legislative Priorities are listed directly above this article.

As I write this, a robust 2026 calendar is under way

at both the county and state levels, including events, workshops and webinars. Please keep an eye on your weekly news emails for updates and opportunities. Upcoming statewide events to mark on your calendar include a D.C. lobbying trip on March 12 and the Young Farmers & Ranchers Conference on March 21-22. Details on these and future events can be found at [www.nyfb.org/events](http://www.nyfb.org/events). Financial support to attend these events may be available through your County Farm Bureau.

If you have ideas for events, workshops or other opportunities, or if you would like to be involved, please reach out. I truly value your input, and your feedback helps shape what we do for our members.

Thank you again for being a member of New York Farm Bureau. Your support makes a difference every day, and I look forward to working with you this year.

Regards,

*Neil Collins*

Oneida County Farm Bureau President

## ONEIDA COUNTY FARM BUREAU ATTENDS STATE ANNUAL MEETING

Oneida County Farm Bureau helped chart the course for agriculture's future at the New York Farm Bureau 2025 State Convention (StaCon) December 2-4 at Turning Stone Resort Casino in Verona. This year's theme was "Navigating Your Ag Future." 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 in Albany and Washington, D.C.

**Right:** Oneida County Farm Bureau delegates Neil Collins and Larry Hobin, Jr. are joined by NY FFA State Reporter Dylan LaFave as they review the policy document for this year's New York Farm Bureau Annual Meeting. Oneida County had a large contingent of members attend the conference. Joining our delegates in attendance were Pat and Lory van Lieshout, John Collins, Ben Simons, Tyler Wisley, Karen-K Howard and Bladen Lohr.



### Another Successful Ag Trivia and Raffle Event!

The Annual Ag Trivia and Raffle Event was held Friday, Dec. 12 at Hart's Hill in Whitesboro, NY. We had an incredible response with donations and attendance. With the generous donations of our sponsors and the support of our volunteers, money raised will be used to benefit youth programming and scholarships in Oneida County! Thank you one and all – we couldn't have done it without you!

#### Gold Sponsors

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- River Road Farm & Greehouses
- Kerryynn Knarr
- Collins Maple
- Wilde Wind Farm, LLC
- Rosanne Hurley
- Kevin & Melanie Angell



*Congratulations to the first place Ag Trivia Team - The Bravos/Simons Team!*

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





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**March 21-22, 2026**



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 Deadline: March 9

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 The board usually meets on the third Monday of the month at  
 the CCE of Oneida in Oriskany.