

Chautauqua County Farm Bureau

November 2025



To Serve and Strengthen Agriculture



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As the dust settles at the end of my first full year, I want to keep you updated about the activities your county Farm Bureau has been involved in since our last newsletter.

In April your County Farm Bureau hosted our annual Ag Trivia night – this year at the Cassadaga Legion to move it around the county a bit. We had a decent turnout, though we'd always like to have more.

At the end of April I accompanied the group from NYFB to Washington, D.C. While there, we visited with most of the members of Congress and staff that represent New York farms. We advocated for New York farmers, talked about labor, tariffs and tax policy and many of the current issues facing many of our producers in Chautauqua county. One of the highlights was an appointment we had with EPA administrator Lee Zeldin, where we discussed with him and his staff some of the pesticides that have come under scrutiny during the last administration. We particularly focused on Mancozeb and how important it is to the farms in Chautauqua County—how the producers use these products responsibly, and the hardship that would be caused by removing them from use. As always I did my best to express the virtues of Chautauqua County to all the folks we talked to and invited them to visit us. I really got a workout there as we must have walked ten miles throughout the city over the course of two days.



Photo: NYFB Washington DC trip participants April 2025.

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New York Farm Bureau Public Policy Tour



Photo: NYFB PPD staff touring Johnson Estate Winery.

On Monday, July 21 three members of our public policy staff from the Albany office joined Tim Bigham, our county manager, and Bob Patterson, our county president, to visit the Johnson Estate Winery in Westfield, stop at the Grape Discovery Center, also in Westfield, and then receive a hands-on demonstration of how a grape picker works at vineyards operated by Bob Patterson. We concluded the day with dinner at Cabana Sams on Sunset Bay. The next morning we were joined by two members of our communications staff who used the videos from the day to create a montage that made its way onto RFD-TV. Tuesday morning we visited Dennis Rak of Double A Vineyards and Matthew Walker from Walker's Wine Juice who talked to us about the problems their operations face and the obstacles they could use Farm Bureau's help to overcome. Chautauqua County put its best foot forward to show our state staff some awesome agriculture.

Chautauqua County Annual Meeting Results

Chautauqua County Farm Bureau was pleased to have New York Farm Bureau President David Fisher as our guest speaker at this year's annual meeting. President Fisher updated us about Farm Bureau initiatives, staff changes, and legislative accomplishments.

The primary outcome of our business meeting each year includes new policies and often new leadership to guide the organization. This year resolutions were passed regarding the following:

- elimination of abandoned grape vineyards
- proper support for invasive species control
- support for a CDL requirement for farmworkers handling 26,000+ pound trucks
- support for a state committee focused on grape issues
- support for stronger beef programs at Cornell
- a requirement for farm chemicals to come complete with MSDS sheets, and
- support for reuse of the Dunkirk power facility utilizing nuclear energy.

Leaders elected for the 2025-26 year are as follows:

Bob Patterson – President

Jim Joy – Vice President

Directors – Kaitlyn Bentley, Dick Kimball, Evan Schiedel, Rich Jozwiak, Cassandra Skal, Brian Jantzi and Lindsey Crisanti-Meeder.

Samantha Vanstrom joins the board this year to replace outgoing director Shannon Mardino. Shannon has faithfully served as board Secretary since 2019. *Thank you Shannon for all you've done to make ours a healthy and successful board!*

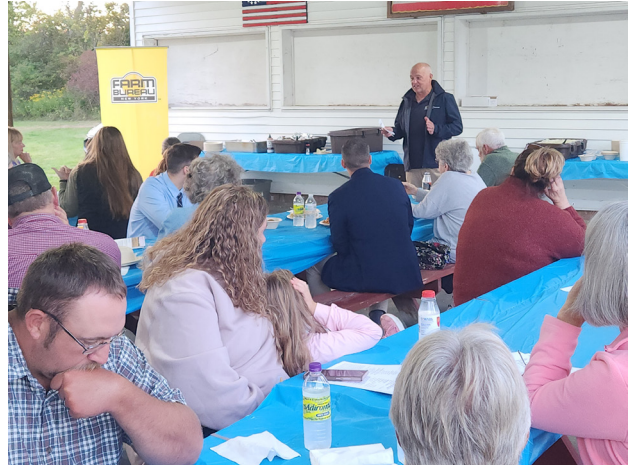


Photo: County Annual Meeting participants hear from President Fisher

Have You Renewed Your Membership?

Our strength comes from our members — Your support gives us the leverage to advocate effectively for New York agriculture. We've moved to an anniversary-date membership system, and most renewals are due now. Watch for your New York Farm Bureau renewal notice in the mail. *Every farmer needs New York Farm Bureau, and New York Farm Bureau needs every farmer to protect agriculture, support farm families, and strengthen our industry across New York State.*

County Fair Barn Contest Includes NEW Winners

Chautauqua County Farm Bureau has been conducting a contest at the Chautauqua County Fair for about a dozen years now. This contest encourages 4-H groups to spruce up their animal barns while educating the public. Barns are judged during the fair week by several members of the county organization. Winners this year were the dairy barn, taking the top prize of \$300 toward their program, with the horse barn receiving \$200 for their program for placing second. This is the first time that either barn received this honor.

Photo right: Dairy barn 4-H'ers accept first place prize for the county fair barn contest.

Photo far right: Horse barn 4-H'ers accept second place prize for the county fair barn contest.



Farm Bureau Focuses on Farm Safety

In an effort to make emergency personnel and farmers aware of some dangers present this harvest season, Chautauqua County Farm Bureau worked with Steve Bourgeois from County Emergency Services to hold a training regarding agricultural harvest equipment. A combine and grape harvester were on hand to illustrate some of the possible hazards, how they might result in an emergency situation, and how they could be remedied. There were 45 participants on hand for this timely and relevant training that came from Busti, Fluvanna, Sherman, Chautauqua, North Lake, Westfield, Portland, Ripley, South Ripley, Northeast PA, Fuller Hose from PA and Clymer Fire Departments. *Thank you Westfield Ag & Turf for hosting this event!*



Photo: Simulated rescue of a “victim” from the top of a Westfield Ag & Turf combine.

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AND EDUCATE THE PUBLIC

Contact Cassie @
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President's Message, continued

This year we had a presence at the county fair. We met many farmers and talked about Farm Bureau and the current state of farming. We also held the barn decorating contest for the 4-H and youth participants in all of the animal barns; pictures are in this newsletter.

The policy team from New York Farm Bureau, under the direction of Renée St. Jacques, made a rare visit to Chautauqua County this summer. Over the course of two days they, along with county manager Tim Bigham and myself, visited Johnson Estate winery, Double A Vineyards and Nursery, Walker's Wine Juice, and I even got to give them a primer on thinning the crop of Concord grapes. The members had opportunity to represent the priorities of the producers of our county to our staff. (An article about this is included.)

In August we supported the county's Farmer Neighbor Dinner. At our August meeting we hosted our state representatives, Senator George Borrello, Assemblymember Andrew Molitor and county legislator Fred Johnson. The board asked a lot of questions and expressed your priorities to our elected representatives.

In September we hosted a combine and grape harvester safety training event for county emergency personnel and members. We are next planning a large animal handling course. We also had our pig roast picnic and annual meeting in September.

It has been a productive and busy year as president and I look forward to another advocating for the producers, members and friends of Chautauqua County agriculture.

Robert "Bob" Patterson Jr.

Chautauqua County Farm Bureau President



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Chautauqua County Farm Bureau



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