

A NEW LOOK AT NYS AGRICULTURE

NYS agriculture is indeed diverse. Our moderate climate, plentiful water, and rich soils enable local farmers to grow multiple crops and livestock competitively with other states and even countries. But growing food successfully isn't just an Upstate thing. On July 16-17 at our annual summer meeting and tour, NYS Ag Society board members and friends witnessed first-hand the viability and vibrancy of urban agriculture in NYC. They also experienced important and relevant programming to address workforce development, food access, environmental education and restoration.

"This tour was enlightening," said NYS Ag Society board member Rick Zimmerman. "It was enlightening to see what's being produced and how, as well as the diversity of items being grown. New York's agriculture industry is a broad spectrum of people, products and growing systems and urban agriculture is becoming a significant part of our food system. This tour was a great opportunity to establish connections and we are all stronger by working together to promote NYS agriculture." A retiring LEADNY board member, Rick is also the executive director of the Northeast Agribusiness & Feed Alliance.

Thank You Department!

This summer experience was largely coordinated by the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets. Kicking off at the Department's headquarters at 55 Hanson Place, the Ag Society group travelled to eight destinations crisscrossing Brooklyn and to nearby Governors Island.



NYS Ag Society board members and friends boarded a ferry to Governors Island as part of its 2-day urban agriculture tour. From L to R: Hans and Leslie Kunze, Daren Phillips, Kathy and Rick Zimmerman, Angela Phillips, Bethany Wallis.

"I'm excited about the cooperation and collaboration between the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets and the New York State Agricultural Society," said Commissioner Richard Ball. "Urban agriculture is growing in popularity in the five boroughs – from rooftop greenhouses to New York City's longstanding tradition of community gardens -- and, during our summer meeting, we were able to tour several urban growing sites. These sites are an important element in our mission to promote food and farms through education and outreach while also helping to reach underserved communities and connect farmers to new markets."

Oysters Providing an Education

The NY Harbor School, located on scenic Governors Island, is a public high school uniquely suited to instruct students on environmental stewardship and the skills associated with careers on the water. After all, NYC is surrounded



NYS Ag Society board member Chris Kelder opens the door to the NY Harbor School located on Governors Island. This public high school is helping to restore NY's oyster population.

by 538 miles of waterfront. One of several core programs offered to the school's 500 students, the Billion Oyster Project

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HOW TO SPEND AN EASY \$10,000



The Kingston YMCA received a 2018 Foundation grant to support field and cooking crews composed of high school youth.

What can you buy for \$10,000? A used car? Vacation get-away? Or really expensive cocktail? At the NYS Ag Society Foundation, we have something much more mundane in mind: planting seeds. With the support of our donors, we're planting seeds, spreading knowledge and building awareness with junior high and older students to help them be better consumers and industry advocates. They may even consider an eventual career in agriculture or food.

Putting Charitable Dollars to Work

Since 2014, the Foundation has been in the "seed" business, funding 20 grants worth a total of \$40,000.

- Projects have been funded as far west as Buffalo, east to Kingston, south to Harlem.
- Partners have included Cooperative Extension, NY Animal Agriculture Coalition, SUNY Cobleskill, SUNY Morrisville, Pavilion Central School, Kingston YMCA, Concrete Safaris, NYS Experiment Station in Geneva, Pioneer Central FFA, Finger Lakes Workforce Development Council, and Ag Stewardship Association
- Activities have involved advocacy training, NYS Fair birthing center, 4H programs, community gardens, teen leadership development, career fairs, school fairs, and interns at the NYS Agricultural Experiment Station in Geneva, NY

In 2019, the Foundation is again reaching out to local communities where you live and work to plant new seeds. Our grant budget is \$10,000.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT — Elizabeth Claypoole

What a whirlwind of a summer! Packed inside this newsletter are articles summarizing the activities we had, and the activities to come.

In July, for the first time ever, the Board of Directors had its summer board meeting and agriculture tour in Brooklyn! A key component of this meeting was to learn about our agriculture collaborators in NYC, especially NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets and the Cornell Cooperative Extension Harvest New York Program, both housed at the state offices in Brooklyn. Thanks to Ehle Shachter a member of both the Board and the Department, we were able to view some exciting farm operations in Brooklyn. Several contacts were made and board members all went home with a new appreciation for urban agriculture. More information is in this newsletter!



NYS Ag Society President Beth Claypoole helped celebrate the 90th anniversary of the Daniel Parrish Witter Agricultural Museum at the 2018 NYS Fair. This year's fair set an all-time attendance record of 1,279,010 over 13 days.

Highlighted inside is also info on future activities and expanding the Ambassador Program. See more info about our "out and about" activities as the NYS Ag Society will be seen around the state and at the NYS Fair. Preparing for the future, we have the theme and speakers prepared for our Annual Meeting in Syracuse – mark your calendars for January 10, 2019.

We welcome your membership and sponsorship of NYS Ag Society and our many programs. Information has gone out in the mail and email. If you know of anyone who could benefit by participation, please share this newsletter and the good news about NYS Ag Society. Our focus is education, leadership development and recognition. We want to recognize our past and prepare for the future of agriculture in NYS, won't you be a part of this endeavor!

Thanks to all for your commitment to agriculture and the NYS Agricultural Society!

WANT TO PLANT SEEDS WITH NYS TEENS?

Over the past four years, the Foundation has funded less than half of the grant requests we've received for great agricultural projects in NYS communities. More can be done with you on board as a donor. Please consider how you can be meaningfully involved in growing our \$10,000 grant budget. Complete the attached donation envelope or contribute online at www.nysagsociety.org.

A New Look at NYS Agriculture

Oysters providing an education con't

– launched in 2012 – is engaging young people to help restore a sustainable oyster population to clean up local waters. The process starts in the lab with spawning. One female oyster can produce as many as 120 million eggs. Seeding takes place using recycled oyster shells from local restaurants; packaged in loose mesh similar looking to a bag of potatoes. At two months old, the oysters are ready to be “shelved” or deposited in harbor waters off Brooklyn, Staten Island and the Bronx where they are carefully monitored.

Making Food Production Fun

GrowNYC is a teaching garden on Governors Island which overlooks the Manhattan skyline. Over 40 years old in 2018, this open space gardening program is turning school children on to the marvels of fresh food grown in their own backyard. All programming is provided free. The ½ acre plot



Located on Governors Island in Manhattan's own backyard, GrowNYC is providing school children with a unique agricultural experience; a first for many students.

had to be cleared first of rubble, and now features raised beds, an outdoor kitchen, and engineering wonders like a container-hydroponic-aquaculture-garden. “Since this is likely the first time they’ve been exposed to this type of green space, we want to make growing food fun for kids so it’s less overwhelming,” said Shawn Connell, a former Maryland vegetable farmer. “With this type of hands-on experience, they can begin to make decisions on what role they can play as food consumers.”

Reclaimed Baseball Field Provides More than Food

In the shadow of a bright yellow IKEA box store, the Red Hook Community Farm was raised on the grounds of an asphalt baseball field. In 2012 Hurricane Sandy wiped out the farm, but today it has emerged as a resilient, viable urban farm despite being submerged by four feet of water. Partnering with the local sanitation



Red Hook Community Farm is providing food and education to its Brooklyn neighbors.

department, the non profit relies on 100% compost to raise its crops on 1 ½ acres. The Farm supports a market stand, 75-member CSA, youth leadership program, and makes regular contributions to the community food pantry. “It’s one massive raised bed,” said Saara Nafici, Director. Red Hook is the home of the largest affordable housing project in Brooklyn. The farm is in operation March through December.

Historic Beer Tunnels Perfect for Cheese

In 2014, Crown Finish Caves got its start utilizing 1850’s vintage lagering tunnels built 30 feet below the street in Crown Heights, Brooklyn.

At approximately 50 degrees Fahrenheit year round, the historic site is picture perfect for aging cheese.

Most product is produced less than 250 miles from New York City, and ages anywhere from two weeks to 12 months.

“We’re introducing a European model to the US market,” said staff member Caroline Hesse. “We want to keep our product as local as possible, and we are very cognizant of our carbon footprint.” Carefully controlled, mold and bacteria impact cheese flavor which is influenced by rubbing, turning, washing and brushing the raw cheese product.



Tour participants were treated to cheese samples at Crown Finish Caves located 30ft below street level in Crown Heights.

Nurturing a Circle of Food

“We’re turning waste into food,” said Yemi Amu, founder of Oko Farms in Bushwick, Brooklyn. Owned by the city, the 2,500 square foot aquaponics system houses a variety of fish that nourish a multitude of edible plants including rice, lemongrass, mint, okra, peppers, spinach, and more. Originally from Nigeria, Yemi’s mission is to make farming more accessible to the public. “This is a place where people can come and learn and have access to green



A vacant Bushwick building lot is home to Oko Farms, a complete aquaponics system.

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AMBASSADORS PARTICIPATE IN NEW STATE FAIR EXPERIENCE

The oldest state fair in the US, the NYS Fair is an ideal venue for young adults interested in agricultural careers to polish their leadership and advocacy skills. Concluding on September 3, the fair broke an all-time attendance record, welcoming over 1.25 million consumers through the fair's main gates over 13 days. On August 24th, Ambassador Scholars, ranging in age from 20 to 25 came to the Syracuse, NY fairgrounds for a full-day program that included both hands-on workshops and tours with industry hosts. "AgVocacy" was the theme-of-the-day and the title of an established advocacy program supported by Bayer. Company representatives were on hand to provide facts, figures and personal stories working in the trenches with consumers.

Following a program on leadership competencies by Dr. Larry Van De Valk of LEADNY and lunch, Ambassadors toured the fairgrounds where they met with leaders from the NY Animal Agriculture Coalition, New York Beef Industry Council, NY FFA, NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, Daniel Parrish Witter Agricultural Museum, and equine organizations located at the NYS Fair Coliseum.

A research technician with the Miner Institute of Chazy, NY, Ambassador Amber Bornt was one of nine adults to participate. "This opportunity allowed my peers and I to see just how diverse NY agriculture is," said Amber. "It also showed us how the NYS Fair bridges the gap from farm to consumers allowing the public to get an insider perspective of how farms actually work. Where else can you see a cow give birth, and then enjoy a glass of NYS milk for just 25 cents?"

"Working with the Ambassadors is a unique opportunity to influence the next generation of ag leaders," said Ryan Locke, Bayer Northeast District Sales Manager. "Being able to not only start them on their own 'AgVocacy' journey, but to see all the efforts NYS is putting into telling their ag story was truly an incredible experience."

Launched in 2014, principal objectives of the Ambassador program include:

- ▶ Exposing young adults to potential academic and career paths in the agriculture and food industry
- ▶ Building awareness and knowledge of issues critical to industry sustainability and growth
- ▶ Connection to potential employers and mentors
- ▶ Building professional development skills

Looking for 2019 Ambassadors!

To participate in the 2019 Ambassador program, applicants must be enrolled in college with a degree program related to agriculture, natural resources, and/or food systems or individuals employed in the agricultural industry. Previous Ambassadors may re-apply for a second-year experience. Apply on-line at www.nysagsociety.org/forum/forum-scholarships by November 16, 2018. For any questions, please contact Ann Shephard at 315-727-5449, ann@nysagsociety.org.



Nine Ambassador Scholars attended the NYS Fair August 24, 2018 to polish their leadership and advocacy skills. The event was sponsored by the NYS Agricultural Society Foundation. From L to R: Christina Hall, Jacob Ernst, Amber Bornt, Emily Hiller, Sarah Peavey, Lucy Shephard, Sayvanna SFabian, Ashley Howlett, Megan Clancy.



Eileen Jensen of the NY Animal Agriculture Coalition spoke to Ambassadors at the NYS Fair Birthing Center August 24th. Eileen joins Sharon Detzer of Cornell University as new board members of the NYS Ag Society Foundation.



AWARDING GRANTS TARGETING JUNIOR HIGH STUDENTS

The NYS Agricultural Society Foundation will partner again with local community organizations in 2019 to increase the agricultural knowledge of junior high and older students in the Empire State. By doing a better job of informing kids about how their food is produced, and the diverse and exciting career opportunities that are available to explore in agriculture and food production, the Foundation envisions that a stronger tie can be forged with future consumers, opinion leaders and decision-makers. The Foundation will award grants up to \$10,000 for projects implemented in 2019. Due December 1, 2018, grant applications can be completed online at www.nysagsociety.org.

In 2018, the Foundation is supporting four projects including:

1. PRO DAIRY Junior Dairy Leader Program - a yearlong effort that helps prepare 16 to 19-year old youths for successful careers in the dairy industry and agriculture.
2. Agricultural Career Explorations Program at Cayuga County CCE - targeting youth in grades 8-10 to learn about different types of agriculture, career options, and visit agricultural college programs.
3. Concrete Safaris – supporting the garden internship cohort of Concrete Safaris’ Outdoor Leadership Academy in local resident engagement and garden productivity. Concrete Safaris’ mission is to prepare youth in East Harlem and beyond to lead healthy lives and shape their environment through outdoor education, play, exploration, and community engagement.

4. Kingston YMCA – providing an opportunity for high school students to experience agriculture from soil to plate through a farm-based youth development program and afterschool cooking crew.



NYS Ag Society Foundation President Mark Modzeleski met with Ambassador Scholars at the Birthing Center at the NYS Fair August 24th.

“Our Foundation donors, who represent the NYS agricultural and food industry well, want to deliver a strong, positive message for agriculture in local communities,” said Mark Modzeleski, NYS Ag Society Foundation president. “By working with organizations that have the requisite skills and experience, we can deliver a positive impact to all involved. Speaking on behalf of our board of directors, it’s exciting to see the energy and creativity that local groups are expending on behalf of agriculture. In 2019, the sixth year of our grant program, we expect to see even greater results.”



The NY Junior Dairy Leader program is one of four organizations receiving a grant from the NYS Ag Society Foundation in 2018. To apply for a 2019 Foundation grant, apply online by December 1 at www.nysagsociety.org.

**NYS AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY FOUNDATION
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TRADE IS FOCUS OF 2019 FORUM

Trade has dominated the headlines of major industry and national press in 2018. Four speakers – addressing global, national and local perspectives - will help bring the message home to Syracuse, NY on January 10th for our 187th annual meeting and Forum.

1. Dr. Robert Thompson - professor emeritus at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign who has extensive international experience and has lectured, consulted, or conducted research in more than 90 countries worldwide.

2. Tom Sleight - president and chief executive officer of the U.S. Grains Council, that promotes the global use of U.S. barley, corn, sorghum and related products including ethanol and distiller's dried grains

3. Bill Schreiber, CEO, O-AT-KA Milk Products Coop., Inc. – Owned by two dairy cooperative owners, Upstate Niagara Cooperative and Dairy Farmers of America, O-AT-KA has R&D expertise combined with advanced manufacturing capabilities to deliver premium bulk liquids, milk powders, canned milk and award-winning butter to the marketplace.

4. Kathryn Bamberger - International Trade Specialist and staff member of the NYS Department of Economic Development

At our 186th annual Forum, the NYS Ag Society welcomed over 470 attendees, including producers, NYS colleges, commodity/advocacy organizations, finance and law professionals, farm suppliers, processors, production consultants, Cornell Cooperative Extension staff, county, state and federal government representatives, students, and the media. This is an ideal opportunity to meet, greet and learn from industry decision-makers. For more information on sponsoring the Forum, supplying NYS products and/or exhibiting, contact Ann Noble Shephard at 315-727-5449, ann@nysagsociety.org.



Four speakers will weigh-in on the hot topic of trade at the 2019 Annual Meeting & Forum of the NYS Ag Society, our 187th! Born and raised on a dairy farm near Ogdensburg in St. Lawrence County, Dr. Robert Thompson will kick off the day by providing a global perspective on trade. He is Professor Emeritus at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.



A former executive director of the NY Farm Viability Institute, Tom Sleight will zero in on how trade policy impacts agriculture nationally. Tom serves as the president and CEO of the U.S. Grains Council.

A New Look at NYS Agriculture

Nurturing a Circle of Food con't

space. She also provides nutrition and culinary information to her clientele. "We're not necessarily here to grow food to feed all of NYC," added Yemi. "We're here to create awareness of how food is produced. With a lot of resilience and optimism, you can grow food in small places."

Farming in a Parking Lot

An old pharmaceutical plant, 630 Flushing serves as a neighborhood food hub. The bricks and mortar houses an incubator for new food businesses while the parking lot provides the footprint for indoor farms created from shipping containers.



Ehle Shachter of NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets served as coordinator of the Brooklyn tour pictured here at the Square Roots Farm.

Specially outfitted containers, featuring LED lighting, temperature and humidity control, and irrigation systems, can pump out 30 pounds of leafy greens per week. The next iteration of structure will double the output and could produce strawberries, tomatoes, eggplants, and more. The cost of a container could range from \$80,000 to \$100,000 if sold outright. According to staff, this is a hyper-mobile system that could pop up anywhere. Square Roots provides two-types of educational programming; one for farmer entrepreneurs, and the second for apprentices 18 to 24-years old.

Rooftop Farming and More

Brooklyn Grange operates the world's largest rooftop soil farms, located on two roofs in New York City, and grows over 50,000 lbs of organically-cultivated produce per year. Brooklyn Grange also operates an apiary, keeping bees in over 30 naturally-managed honey bee hives, on roofs dispersed throughout NYC. In addition to growing and distributing fresh local vegetables and herbs, Brooklyn Grange hosts events and educational programming, provides urban farming and green roof consulting and installation services to clients worldwide, and partners with numerous non-profit organizations throughout New York to promote healthy and strong local communities.



Urban agriculture is capitalizing on unique spaces to grow quality food. Given the proximity to where consumers live and work, consumer education efforts for these entrepreneurial efforts are critical.

RECRUITING NOW FOR 2019 LEADNY CLASS

By Larry Van De Valk, Executive Director, LEADNY

With nearly 500 alumni and in continuous operation for over 30 years, few can dispute the fact that LEAD New York has had a positive impact on our state's food, agriculture and natural resource industries. It is difficult to look at the leadership of virtually any agricultural organization in our state and not see at least a few LEAD alumni serving in leadership positions for that organization. For example, over half of the current members on the NYS Agricultural Society board of directors are LEAD alumni (including nine of the twelve most recent presidents), both Cornell trustees are LEAD alumni, 11 of the 17 committee chairs are LEAD alumni, and countless others have served as committee members or in other volunteer capacities for the organization. How's that for LEADNY representation in this organization's leadership? The story would be similar in lots of other organizations and communities around the state.

Despite our track record of success, we can't allow ourselves to get complacent. People change jobs, relocate, retire, or move on to other leadership roles, which means there is a continuous need for leadership renewal in most organizations. The problems, issues, challenges and social/political environment that organizations must deal with are also constantly changing – as are the methods to address them - and we need leaders that have the skillset to effectively operate in these constantly changing contexts. So programs like LEAD New York – that work to develop the next generation of industry leaders – have a never-ending task. And we need strong cohorts of high-potential participants to do our work.

So much of the success of our program hinges on our ability to fill each class with the best aspiring leaders we can find. And all of that begins with a strong recruitment effort. Producers of all types, agribusiness managers, service providers, government agency and NGO employees, not-for-profit staff, educational institution employees, and even community volunteers – anyone that has even a remote connection to our food, agriculture and natural resource sectors – are potential applicants to LEAD New York. All they need is a desire to learn how to become a more effective leader and a commitment to serve our industry and communities in the future.

Do you know someone who would be a good candidate for LEAD New York? How about you? We will be accepting applications for class 18 beginning in January 2019. Applications will be due March 1, 2019, and the selection process will be completed later that spring. The new cohort will begin their leadership development journey during the fall of 2019. Please see our website (www.leadny.org) for more information about the program. Hundreds of our alumni, board and current class members will also be present at the NYS Agricultural Society's Annual Forum; you should talk to some of them about their experience as well. And finally, if you have additional questions or would like to be added to our prospects database, please don't hesitate to contact our office at (607)255-7907 or tld1@cornell.edu. We look forward to reviewing your application!




The current LEADNY class will cap their experience with a study trip to Kenya in 2019. It's been over 30 years since the program began. Applications for the 2019 class are due March 1, 2019.

**NEW YORK AGRICULTURAL
SOCIETY FOUNDATION, INC.**

Attn: Ann Shephard
1818 Linwood Road
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2019 FORUM

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**CAN WE FEATURE YOUR PRODUCT
AT THE 2019 FORUM?**



Contact Peter Pamkowski at 518-221-5161 or ppamkowski@gmail.com if you have interest in showcasing your food product(s) at the 2019 Annual Forum. Expected attendance will push the 500 mark. Thank you to our 30-plus 2018 contributors including Red Jacket Orchards and NY Chips.



Mel Chesbro of the NYS Fair and Bayer's Ryan Locke were featured speakers at the first-annual Summer Leadership Experience for nine Ambassador Scholars. Applications for the 2019 Ambassador Program are due November 16. Ambassadors, ages 18 to 15, will attend the 2019 Annual Meeting & Forum free of charge and participate in professional development opportunities. Visit www.nysagsociety.org for more information.

For more information on the NYS Agricultural Society, Foundation or the 187th Annual Meeting & Forum, please contact Ann Shephard at 315-727-5449, ann@nysagsociety.org.