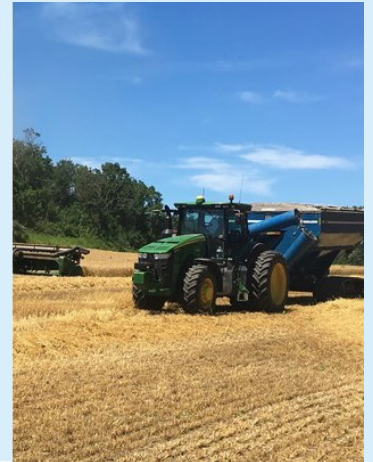


## 2020 FORUM TAKES PULSE OF NYS AGRICULTURE



The 2020 Forum was the NYS Agricultural Society's 188th annual gathering. Sponsored by CALS at Cornell University, the NYS Agricultural Society Foundation and the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, this historic event drew over 400 attendees representing a broad cross section of producers, suppliers, regulators, educators and promoters. CALS Associate Dean for Government and Community Relations, Julie Suarez set the table for discussion, drilling down into major trends reflected by the recently released 2017 Ag Census. According to Julie:

- ▶ Dairy – our largest agricultural sector – remains under stress and is evolving as a result.
- ▶ Diversification continues to be the key for NYS farmers. Value-added production — including novel crops and production methods — is clearly an ongoing trend and a smart business strategy to adopt.
- ▶ It's all about marketing. NY farmers are seeking opportunities to go directly to end users to expand their share of consumer food expenditures.
- ▶ While we have extensive policy debates over aging farmers, our greatest reason for optimism is our young, and new and beginning farmer growth.

- ▶ Our human capital is continuing to diversify including more women, and Hispanic and Latino primary producers. Are we doing enough to welcome a more diverse next generation?
- ▶ Farms continue to find efficiency strategies to cut production costs including decreasing employees, cutting input costs, and adopting new technology.
- ▶ While individual producers can be and are under significant stress, profitability is definitely possible. While more of our farms in 2017 had a net loss versus a net gain in farm income, the proportion was in alignment with 2012 statistics. Further analysis would be helpful to determine what are the determining factors that can help more of our farms in the next 5-year period wind up in a net cash positive situation.
- ▶ "City" farming is becoming "a real thing."



### Top 5 Counties Attending 2020 Forum

Onondaga County	3%
Ontario County	3%
Washington County	3%
Wyoming County	3%
Albany County	5%
Tompkins County	12%

## FINGER LAKES HERE WE COME!



NYS Agricultural Society volunteers will gather in the Geneva area July 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>. Stay tuned for our meeting and tour itinerary. Join us this summer!

## CHANGING ENERGY LANDSCAPE

Farm Practices	2017	2012	% change (# of farms)
<b>Farm w/Renewable Energy Installations</b>	3,283	1,379	138%
<b>Solar Panels</b>	2,493	815	205%
<b>Methane Digesters</b>	46	20	130%
<b>Wind Turbines</b>	490	317	54%
<b>Geothermal/Geoexchange</b>	306	123	148%

“More will happen in the renewable energy space in the next 10 years than in the last 100,” said Bill Jordan, CEO of Jordan Energy and Food Enterprises at the 2020 Forum. Julie Suarez of CALS acknowledged there was a stunning 138% increase in farms with renewable energy installations from 2012 to 2017.

For more information on the NYS Agricultural Society, Foundation or the 189th Annual Meeting & Forum, please contact Ann Shephard at 315-727-5449, [ann@nysagsociety.org](mailto:ann@nysagsociety.org)

## PRESIDENT’S REPORT — Judi Whittaker

Our Forum marked the advent of a new century with many of us in agriculture facing new regulations and serious challenges, but with renewed strength. Agriculture, as we know it, continues to evolve and it must. Remaining stagnant will lead to irrelevance.

The 2020 Forum was far from stagnant. We hope those who attended appreciated our tweaks and new additions. Although we fully anticipate more changes to come, our core values established over nearly 200 years remain steadfast in representing the farming community.

We hope you will work with us during this next phase of our vast history. As we look forward to our bicentennial celebration, we reflect back to those who contributed to our remarkable history. Thank you to all who keep believing in what we stand for.



Members of the 2020 NYS Agricultural Society board L to R bottom row: Terry Hughes (NYS Ag Society Foundation), Katie Carpenter, Natalee Wrege, Teia DeCarlo, Judi Whittaker, Jeannette Kreher, Chris Kelder, Sandie Prokop. Top row: Hans Kunze, Anthony Colangelo, Mark Modzeleski, Daren Phillips, Rick Zimmerman, Ann Noble Shephard (Executive Secretary). Absent: Shawn Bossard, Peter Call, Barb Hanselman, Beth Keene, Melissa Keller, Tim Veazey, Nancy Weber, Chris Whipple, Craig Yunker.

## GOODBYE FRIENDS, WELCOME NEW DIRECTORS

Mary Beth LaMay and Miquela Hanselman are retiring from the NYS Agricultural Society board of directors. Judi Whittaker, Katie Carpenter, Chris Kelder, and Jeannette Kreher will be serving another three-year term. SUNY Morrisville Farm Manager Shawn Bossard and Melissa Keller, a former Ambassador Scholar, are the board’s newest members.

“I grew up with farming in my blood,” said Shawn Bossard of Munsville, NY. “Both sides of my family farmed in Victor and Howard, NY.” Bossard transferred from SUNY Morrisville to Cornell University after earning an associate degree in dairy. His bachelor’s focused on agronomy, forestry, and media. Prior to his Morrisville tenure Shawn worked for ConsulAgr. Inc., O’Hara Farms and Merrell Farms, and Cornell Cooperative Extension in Cayuga and Seneca counties. He earned his MBA at SUNY Oswego.



Shawn Bossard

Shawn has previously led the New York State Agri-Business Association and Northeast Certified Crop Advisor Program.



## FORUM PANELS GIVE VOICE TO COMMODITY AND ADVOCACY GROUPS

Prior to lunch, industry trade groups representing livestock, grains, and NY vegetables weighed in on major trends impacting their membership. According to Colleen Klein, Executive Director of the NY Corn & Soybean Growers Association, climate change concerns and increased regulatory threats to crop protection tools will be critical factors influencing corn and soybean producers moving forward. "New York corn and soybean growers have a great story to add to this discussion as it revolves around sustainability through their use of reduced tillage methods, soil health practices, integrated pest management and precision application technologies," said Colleen. "We look forward to coming together with new, interested partners outside our normal circle of agricultural friends to not only learn about their environmental concerns but also to share how we can be part of the solution." Joining Colleen on the panel were Jean O'Toole – NY Beef Industry Council and Corey Mosher – NY Vegetable Growers Association.

After lunch, Eileen Jensen – NY Animal Agriculture Coalition (NYAAC), Steve Ammerman – NY Farm Bureau (NYFB), and Tonya Van Slyke – Northeast Dairy Producers Association (NEDPA) took the Forum stage. The three organizations have formed an issues management team to help shape positive industry responses to breaking news and proposed legislation impacting NY agriculture.

"One challenge we face is competing interests within agriculture," said Steve Ammerman, NYFB public affairs manager. "Just look at organic versus conventional production, large farms versus small, grain fed versus grass fed. All are important and rely on a common infrastructure among other things. We can't speak from the mountain top on all the good things that are happening on individual farms but block the view of our neighbors. In the end, we agree on most issues. Working together will help the entire industry grow and be stronger. If we reject ideas outright, we reject a seat at the decision-making table and agriculture being part of the solution."



Three of NY's largest producer groups participated in the Forum's morning program moderated by Julie Suarez. L to R: Corey Mosher, Jean O'Toole, Colleen Klein, and Julie Suarez.

## SINGING AT LUNCH?

While the 2020 Forum Program Committee, under the helm of VP Mark Modzeleski, implemented many new ideas at the 2020 Forum including a shortened day, video award presentations and a late afternoon reception, presenters singing at the podium was not on the radar. But that's exactly



what happened when brothers Greg and Kendal Peterson performed a selection of their 13 musical parodies which appear on their online platform advocating for agriculture. Using YouTube and Facebook, three Peterson brothers ranging in age from 22 to 28 have built up an audience of over 50 million strong. According to Greg, their original intention was not to become a social influencer for agriculture, but quickly found they had a unique platform to address concerns and shape public opinion. "Establishing trust is critical," said Greg. "We use a critical eye in the stories we choose to tell. Facebook has been our best tool to enable these critical conversations about agriculture to take place."

The Petersons also presented a social media workshop to Ambassador Scholars and Class 18 of LEADNY, allowing this audience to learn more about the nuts and bolts of how their social media platform works.

## KNOW YOUR ABC'S?



Our afternoon speakers included L to R: Julie Suarez, Steve Ammerman, Bill Jordan, Tonya Van Slyke, and Eileen Jensen. "Farmers and consumers motivate me to look for opportunities to make an impact," said Eileen, NYAAC's executive director. "My mantra is based on the ABC's: Always Be Creative and Collaborative."

# BALANCING TRADITION, CHANGE & RELEVANCE

By: Mark Modzeleski, VP NYS Ag Society and 2020 Forum Program Chair

Those of you who attended the 188th Forum probably noticed several important changes to the program and format. A special thank you to the Program Committee: Sandie Prokop, Larry VanDeValk, Craig Yunker, Tim Veazey, Peter Pamkowski, Barb Hanselman, Chris Noble, and Julie Suarez. A special thanks also to Peter Pamkowski, Ann Noble Shephard, Jen Noble, Megan Clancy of DFA, and our President Judi Whittaker who were all working behind the scenes leading up to and the day of the event.



L to R: Jody Hatch – Snowmass Alpacas, LLC, Lisa Sears – Gateway Consulting & Coaching, LLC, Mark Modzeleski – Legacy Wealth Advisors of NY.

While change is rarely easy or perfect, attendee feedback was largely positive! We had more comments in 2020 than previous years combined. Looking forward, we will continue to balance change and tradition to engage the NYS ag community. In addition, we will prioritize registration value for Forum attendees.

Our board and committee are working hard to implement your feedback providing relevant engaging programs, speakers and format changes. Our focus is to grow attendance by reaching more NYS ag producers and agribusinesses. We are also looking to bring together other organizations in the state at our flagship event.

## Updates for Future Forums

In 2020, Judi, Ann and I have worked to develop an ad hoc committee of leaders within the ag community to provide future guidance and direction to our board of directors for their consideration. This committee's task is to identify our organizations strengths, weaknesses and opportunities in preparation for our 200th anniversary. They will be asked to challenge the Society's leadership to relook at what we do and why we do it. This includes the Forum, programs, speakers, funding and leadership structure. This committee will also explore avenues to work closer with the NYS Ag Society Foundation and formulate how we, the NYS Ag Society and the Foundation, can help our state's farming community best.

We are excited to share in the future growth and success of the Forum and the Society. As mentioned earlier, our goal is to expand the Forum's attendance. We can't do this alone. We need your support! If you'd like to get involved, have ideas, would like to introduce a sector not well represented, please reach out to us!

# COMMISSIONER BALL DELIVERS ANNUAL STATE OF AGRICULTURE ADDRESS

"It is an honor to be here with you today to highlight the state of agriculture in New York," said Commissioner Richard Ball of the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets. "The Forum is probably the best and one of the largest networking opportunities available in the country. The network, the program, and the opportunity to renew friendships has been special to me for many years. Things I learned here have inspired much of what my farm is doing today.



L to R: Kendal Peterson, Commissioner Richard Ball, Greg Peterson.

"I remember back to one of my first Cabinet meetings as Commissioner and I recall words that Governor Cuomo shared with us. He said: "Government is typically relegated to bureaucracies, which are consumed with process. The processing of documents and function, and from input to output." The Governor challenged us to question process; in fact, he challenged us to question everything and to ask why. Always with the end goal of not just moving the process along but by answering the question: What did you do to make a New Yorker's life better? When he asked me to take this job, he asked me to be part of the team. Acting as a team, instead of working in silos, we can improve.

"The list of issues facing us is daunting at times — labor, immigration, climate change, infrastructure, trade, and confusion in Washington. Trying to build a consensus to address any, let alone all of these issues is challenging. I think many of us are looking to this new year and new decade with a sense of hope for a turnaround, particularly in some of our most challenged areas, like our dairy sector, which has now endured several years of low prices. Rightfully, trade and labor continue to top our list of concerns.

"So as 2020 begins, the challenges we have dealt with over the last few years have some promise of resolve, and I am more hopeful than ever for New York's farmers. I am proud of the programs we have put in place to help our agricultural community weather the current conditions — and the Governor's newly announced proposals — to build a framework to grow from for the future."

**To listen to the complete State of Agriculture Address by Commissioner Ball, go to [www.nysagsociety.org](http://www.nysagsociety.org)**



# WELCOME AMBASSADORS

2020 marked the sixth year that the NYS Agricultural Society Foundation has sponsored a class of 15 young adults — ages 18 to 25 — to participate at the Annual Meeting and Forum. Ambassadors are eager to know more about agriculture, build career skills and expand their personal professional networks. Competitively selected, this year's candidates included students from Cornell University, SUNY Morrisville, and SUNY Cobleskill studying topics including Ag Entrepreneurship, Ag Business, Animal Science and Technology. Those in the workforce included employees from Farm Credit East, Cornell Cooperative Extension, NY Farm Bureau, FSA, NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, and Dairy One. Two Ambassadors were "Year-2" participants. This experience shapes academic, research and career paths for agriculture's next generation of leaders.

In addition to three days of organized program, Ambassadors receive business cards, resume critiquing, and professional photography for online networking. They are also supplied with a list of internships available from Forum exhibitors/ attendees.

## LEADNY Interface

LEADNY has developed into an outstanding partner for the Ambassador program. In 2020 Ambassadors participated in two workshops with LEAD Class 18 focusing on social media and "unconscious bias."

"Everyone has the responsibility to create a culture of inclusion and perceptivity," said presenter Rodney Patterson of the Learner's Group. "The rise in use and capability of technology only exacerbates potential problems in the workplace. Diversification is healthy, and everyone has a diversity story; dimensions that make each person unique. No one likes the feeling of walking on eggshells when something goes south and radio silence is not an effective course of action when conflict arises. We need to educate ourselves. Everyone will



The 2020 Ambassador Scholar Class bottom row L to R: Karly Marshman, Emily Hiller, Emma Rose Wegner, Shala Peters, Hannah Bush, Damian Hill. Top row L to R: Bailey Jordan, Courtney Livecchi, Zachary Boekeloo, Faith Clancy, Alexis Payne, William Britt, Ellie Ainslie, Molly Gildea. For more information on the Ambassador Scholar Program, go to [www.nysagsociety.org](http://www.nysagsociety.org).

and does make a false step when working closely with others. To be successful, your focus should be in how you respond to the offending situation not your humble intent."

## Next Up: Summer Leadership Experience

Ambassador alumni and interested candidates are encouraged to apply for the Ambassador's Summer Leadership Experience to take place in the Fingers Lakes Region July 13<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup>. In addition to professional development activities, participants will shadow the NYS Agricultural Society board and tour local industry. For more information, contact Ambassador Coordinator Katie Carpenter at 518-480-1978 or [kse45@cornell.edu](mailto:kse45@cornell.edu).



The NYS Fair was the site of the first Ambassador Scholar Summer Leadership Experience.

## THANK YOU AMBASSADOR DONORS!

The following individuals have either contributed a one-time gift over the past year or made a pledge contribution.

Richard & Joyce Church  
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William & Alicia Lipinski  
Ken Mattingly  
Mark Modzeleski

To make a gift to support the Ambassador Scholar program, go to: [www.nysagsociety.org](http://www.nysagsociety.org).

# CONGRATULATIONS 2020 WINNERS

## 2020 Century Awards:

Recognizing Western NY farms in 2020 that are in continuous operation for 100 years or more by the same family on the same land. Sponsored by Farm Credit NE Ag Enhancement.

### **Bricdale Farm:**

Established in Perry, NY in 1889, the Brick family began as a small dairy. To accommodate subsequent generations the operation has evolved to include a beef operation, and specialty crops including lettuce, microgreens and sunflower sprouts. In 2016 they installed a top-dry grain bin.



L to R: Sandi Prokop – Century Farm Chair, Judi Whitaker – President, NYS Ag Society, Jean Gallagher – Farm Credit NE Ag Enhancement, Jackie Czuba – NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, Sandy and Jim Brick, Mark Modezeleski – VP, NYS Ag Society.

**Windmill Farms, LLC:** Established by Belgium immigrants in 1916, the Coene family farm has a significant apple legacy. Growing from their original 55-acre tract in the Town of Webster, today the operation encompasses 500 acres and produces over 30 varieties of apples.

## Businesses of the Year:

Awarded to both a producer and an agribusiness, recognizing quality, leadership and innovation. Sponsored by the NE Agribusiness & Feed Alliance and Gold Star Feed and Grain, LLC.

**Producer Category: Lakewood Vineyards** was founded in the early 1950s on the western banks of Seneca Lake. Four generations of the Stamp family have grown this business from growing grapes for Welch's and other large wineries, to producing their own estate grown fruit for vintages under their own label. The Stamps have a legacy of stewardship and entrepreneurship within the Watkins Glen community and wine industry. Their tasting room draws over 60,000 visitors annually.

**Agribusiness Category: King Brothers Dairy** has a long, storied history in Eastern NY. Today's generation — Jan and Jeff King — have returned to their roots, bottling and delivering milk from their own 1,000-cow herd to commercial and private customers in their community and Hudson Valley. In 2019, they launched a retail store at their farm location, selling over 34 flavors of ice cream.

## Next Generation Farmer Award:

Recognizing a long-time producer and those new to the industry who are farming in new and vibrant ways. Sponsored by Freed Maxick and The Voss Group.

**Dead End Farm:** Ben and Kate Whittemore have grown their certified organic dairy from a single heifer to a 170-cow herd in Candor, NY. They manage over 300 acres of pasture for rotational grazing, and till an additional 500 acres for hay, corn, soybeans and small grains. Dead End Farm has adopted modern technologies to conserve and carefully manage natural resources including a manure storage pit and a leachate treatment system for their feed bunk.

**Hanehan Family Dairy:** Generations two and three of the Hanehan family are working side by side at two farm locations in Saratoga Springs and Mt. Upton. The operation has strategically expanded to accommodate five family members who have returned to the business after completing college or working elsewhere. The Mt. Upton expansion is 50 percent complete. The farm has grown to just over 2,000 cows who are milked in a 72-cow rotary. The home farm is comprised of 700 milking head with 1,400 owned and rented acreage.

## Distinguished Service Citation:

Recognizing an individual who has dedicated a lifetime of service, resulting in outstanding contributions to NY agriculture. Sponsored by NY Farm Bureau.

**Dr. Kathryn Boor** grew up on her family's dairy farm in Horseheads, NY. She received her undergraduate degree in food science at Cornell University, which served as a launchpad for an extensive industry career. Boor was the first woman faculty member in Cornell's Food Science Department. In addition to establishing the Food Safety Research Laboratory at Cornell and her research to improve the quality and safety of locally produced fluid milk and dairy products, she has served as CALS Dean since 2010. CALS is the second largest college at Cornell.



Dean Kathryn Boor was awarded the 2020 Distinguished Service Citation sponsored by NY Farm Bureau.

## Farm Safety Award:

Recognizing farm operators who have unique and successful farm safety programs that protect their employees and other valuable resources. Sponsored by Cargill, Inc.

**Du Mond Companies:** Safety is not just a philosophy at Du Mond, it's a lifestyle given the complexity and diversity of activity, equipment, materials and long work hours dedicated to planting, harvesting and processing grain. Du Mond Companies is operated by Todd Du Mond and a team of 30 dedicated managers and employees. Their operation includes a 6,000-acre farm, trucking, and feed businesses. They produce GMO and





Congratulations to Du Mond Companies for receiving the 2020 Farm Safety Award sponsored by Cargill, Inc. First row, L to R: Tim Foster, Todd Du Mond, Anna Meyerhoff – New York Center for Agricultural Medicine & Health, Chris Lehman, Kevin King – Deputy Commissioner, NYS Agriculture and Markets. Row two, L to R: Justin Wayne, Bill Chamberlain, Crystina Brooks.

non-GMO feed products based in Union Springs, NY. In 2019, Du Mond launched a soybean extrusion facility.

## NYS FFA Chapter of the Year:

Founded nationally in 1925, FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of high school students by developing their potential for leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education. In 2020, the NYS FFA Award sponsored by the NYS Grange, is recognizing new or emerging FFA programs.

**Delaware Academy Central School District at Delhi:** Delaware Academy FFA is a prime example of a new program making a powerful impact on kids and community. All high school students are required to take an FFA leadership course. Club specific activities include a maple sugaring enterprise, mandatory community service, and events interfacing with school and government leaders at the Delaware County Fair.



The Delaware Academy FFA received the Golden Tractor Award as the winner of the FFA Chapter of the Year sponsored by the NYS Grange.

## Ag Promotion Award:

Recognizes individuals and groups for their efforts to improve the understanding of agriculture in NYS. Sponsored by Alpha Zeta Fraternity at Cornell University, Kreher Family Farms and the NY FFA Foundation.

Since 1840, the **Washington County Fair** has been bringing together generations of agriculturists and their neighbors to its Greenwich, NY fairgrounds, spreading out over 130-acres. Over 100,000 visitors attend the fair annually, and they have 18,000 on-line followers.

## Cap Creal Journalism Awards:

Named for farmer, Ag Society member and NYS Assemblyman Harold "Cap" Creal, the "Cap" Creal Journalism Awards were created to inspire positive coverage of NYS agriculture.

**Printed News Story:** Judy Rife, *Times Herald-Record*, "Orange County Farmers Investing in CBD Hemp"

**Printed Feature Story:** David Sit, *Ithaca Times*, "Will Our Rieslings Survive?"

**Printed Series:** Margo Sue Bittner, *Lockport Union-Sun & Journal*, "Outstanding in the Field"

**Audio/Video News Clip:** Fernando Narro, North Country Public Radio, "How One North Country Dairy Farmer is Surviving the Long Slump in Milk Prices"

**Blogs/Online Feature:** Christa Lemczak and Kelsey Thompson, *Syracuse.com*, "Hemp in NY: How Marijuana's Controversial Cousin Could Benefit NY Farmers"

**Photograph:** Troy Bishopp, *Farming Magazine*, "Beef Calf in the Pasture"

For more information on NYS Ag Society awards, go to [www.nysagsociety.org](http://www.nysagsociety.org). Award videos are also accessible courtesy of the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine and NYAAC. Thank you to Melissa Osgood for her production and voice talents.

## THANK YOU FOUNDATION DONORS

The following donors have contributed an unrestricted gift to the NYS Ag Society Foundation. These contributions are used to enhance Forum and NYS Agricultural Society activities, and support the Foundation's 2019 community grant program. To make a gift, go to: [www.nysagsociety.org](http://www.nysagsociety.org).

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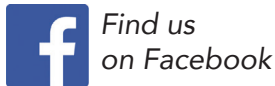
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## Tasty NY Products!



*Twenty NY organizations either sponsored or provided NY products for sampling at the 2020 Forum. They included award winning dairy and wine products. Thank you Peter Pamkowski for being our 2020 Forum Site & Menu Coordinator.*