“Each one of us can make a difference. Together we can make change.”
-Barbara Mikulski
A WORD FROM
THE CHAIRMAN

NYAAC has a mission to enhance the public’s understanding and appreciation for animal agriculture and the work that we accomplished in 2019 did just that, through engagement, dialogue and collaboration. Sometimes it’s a challenge to measure advocacy and outreach efforts but when we receive continuous, positive feedback from farmers and followers, we know that we’re doing something right.

2019 brought about some new, exciting projects for NYAAC, thanks to NY dairy farmers and their check-off program. This was the first time we had the opportunity to implement projects utilizing funds from the Dairy Promotion Order Board. It was a learning process for all of us and a stepping stone for things to come. We firmly believe in utilizing these funds to their fullest potential and making the biggest impact. NYAAC sought these funds again for 2020 projects and were awarded more than double our 2019 funding, a great success that we’re proud of. As an organization, NYAAC believes in making a positive impact through a proactive approach and we aim to continue that just as we did last year.

I have been part of NYAAC since its inception nearly 20 years ago and I have been proud to be part of an organization that focuses on growth, opportunity and embracing challenges. As you’ll read in this report, we had a great deal of success in 2019 and I would be remiss if I didn’t acknowledge that this report is coming out in mid-2020, in the middle of the global pandemic that we’re all facing. As we work through the challenges of 2020, we are proud of where we’ve come from and the accomplishments we’ve made. Facing adversity is not a new concept for farmers and it’s something that NYAAC continues to be part of as the dairy industry faces challenges and hardships ahead.

We are successful each year in bringing animal agriculture to the forefront of conversations because of YOUR support. The collaboration that our industry showcases all year long is unparalleled to any other and for that, I say thank you. Thank you for allowing NYAAC to advocate for you and with you to people across New York State. Thank you for your continued support over the years.

Steve Palladino
NYAAC Chairman
Walnut Ridge Dairy, Lansing, NY
WHO ARE WE?

VISION
To reside amongst a culture of understanding, trust and a positive image about animal agriculture, where consumers recognize the earnest efforts of farmers as they care for their farms, animals, environment and communities.

MISSION
To enhance the public’s understanding of and appreciation for animal agriculture by fostering a dialogue with consumers, engagement with farmers and cooperation among members of the industry.

CORE VALUES
Integrity: NYAAC is committed to following ethical principles that guide the personal and professional actions of this organization.

Care: NYAAC is committed to supporting and promoting the compassion farmers have for animals, employees, food safety, the environment and their communities.

Respect: NYAAC is committed to treating others with courtesy, kindness and respect.

Openness: NYAAC is committed to participating in open and honest two-way communication, acknowledging differences and shared values. We are also committed to possessing a willingness to embrace change or to walk away from an unproductive conversation or situation.

Credibility: NYAAC is committed to being knowledgeable and delivering accurate and transparent information about animal agriculture.

Helpfulness: NYAAC is committed to being a strong and positive voice for and with the animal agriculture community, as well as a resource of factual and timely information and personal connections for consumers.

Resourcefulness: NYAAC is committed to developing effective communication models, and being early adopters of new technologies and approaches to enhance our interaction with others and advance our mission.
The Dairy Cow Birthing Center began in 2013 and since then NYAAC has raised nearly $700,000 to ensure this experience continues to be a sought out attraction at the New York State Fair each year. Sometimes it’s a challenge to keep exhibits fresh and exciting in an environment that provides so much engagement for families but our experience continues to rise above the rest.

In 2019, with help of more than 200 volunteers and more than 40 sponsors, the experience that was provided to more than 300,000 fairgoers continued to showcase the importance of teamwork and collaboration within the dairy industry. This year we continued to welcome fairgoers into our tent to witness the miracle of life, see a calf up close and personal, and visit with farmers. Because State Fair made some changes with their entrance locations, we saw additional foot traffic and heard the question, “Is this new?” quite often during the 13 days of the Fair, making it obvious that our reach still has a long ways to go on the Fairgrounds.

We try to continuously enhance the experience for our visitors to attract people year after year. With continued support from the New York Corn & Soybean Growers Association, we were able to provide some additional hands-on and engaging activities to help fairgoers make connections within all facets of the agriculture industry, from crops to cows. Additional signage showcasing the process of milk going from the farm to the table and how calves become cows allowed visitors to visually see a process that might not have been previously understood.

"I HOPE THIS CONTINUES FOR A LONG TIME AND I PLAN TO VOLUNTEER AT LEAST FOR THE REST OF MY CAREER." ~BIRTHING CENTER VOLUNTEER

"THANK YOU! SEEING THE HARD WORK AND CARE THAT IS INVOLVED IN DAIRY FARMING HAS BEEN EDUCATIONAL FOR ME AND MY DAUGHTER." ~BIRTHING CENTER VIEWER~

2019 DAIRY COW BIRTHING CENTER HOST FARMS

- H. Wood Farms
- Lyg Lakes Dairy
- Milk Street Dairy
- Murcrest Farms
- North Harbor Dairy
- Sheland Farms
Our #uddermiracles were streamed live on YouTube with nearly 45,000 hours of watch time being recorded by our at-home viewers. Social media reached more than one million people as our online presence was enhanced with a new and improved website. We were truly appreciative of the “swAG” that was offered by more than 40 donors and put into swag bags for volunteers. This allowed our farmer and industry volunteers understand the financial support that goes into making the Dairy Cow Birthing Center come together.

It takes a year to plan and more than a week to set up the exhibit but many hands truly make light work. We could not make this happen without the support of our volunteers and donors. Teamwork truly makes the dream work and this is our dream, the dream of NYAAC, to help others understand and appreciate animal agriculture.

Thank you to our Sponsors!

Agri-Mark
Allflex USA
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Dairy Farmers of America
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Thanks to New York dairy farmers and their check-off funds, 12 dairy advocates were able to experience an opportunity to expand their network and learn new ways to advocate for the dairy industry in their local community. The goal of this new experience was to allow advocates to enhance current local advocacy projects or develop new programs that help share the positive message of dairy farming across New York. The All-Star Advocates program participants traveled to Minnesota in early November to visit with farmers, business owners and dairy industry professionals to expand their horizons and think outside the box when it comes to advocacy. One of the positive outcomes of the program was the inclusion of participants that were diverse in age, background and location throughout New York. Common themes of conversation included on-farm opportunities, thinking globally but acting locally, utilizing social media and technology, stepping out of comfort zones, and thinking creatively. Stay tuned for exciting events and programs in local communities from our participants.

"NYAAC should be very proud of this program. I'm proud to have been part of the launch."
~ All-Star Advocates Program participant

Tour stops included:
- Milk Specialties Global
- Culvers
- Zwebers Farm
- Redhead Creamery
- Riverview Farm
- Carlson Dairy
- Bonnie Mohr Farm & Studio
- Bongards Creamery

"This trip has spurred so many new ideas that I cannot wait to share with NY farmers. A 10 out of 10 experience."
~ All-Star Advocates Program participant

Program participants included Brian Aukema, Courtney Bailey, Hannah Bush, Emily Chittenden, Terri DiNitto, Christina Geary, Rachel Holtz, Quade Kirk, Rhonda Lindquist, Ann Prescott, Casey Porter, and Julia Robbins.
New in 2019 were the Dairy Dialogues, a project that was funded through the Dairy Promotion Order Board. This program provided local communities and college campuses the chance to invite community members together to have dialogue about the dairy industry. Each event included the showing of a dairy documentary, dairy products and a few local farmers sharing their story with attendees. NYAAC partnered with several organizations in a variety of locations from Broome County to Clinton County and hosted more than ten events throughout New York. Check out the new documentary, The Labor Behind Modern Dairy Farming, on our YouTube channel that was developed for this program. We faced some challenges while implementing this program and didn’t reach our attendance goal, however the dialogue we had during these events was engaging and impactful. We learned a lot through this project and based on what we learned, we hope to continue to utilize this format to provide dialogue opportunities with local community members.

**Dairy Dialogue Event Locations**

- Black River Naturals Creamery
- Broome County CCE
- Cornell University
- Hamilton Public Theater
- Hobart & William Smith College
- North Harbor Dairy
- Salem Public Library
- Saratoga Public Library
- St. Lawrence University
- SUNY Orange, Newburgh
- SUNY Plattsburgh
- Utica Public Library

"I enjoyed having the opportunity to ask questions in an informal setting."

~Dairy Dialogues participant

"The farmers that led the conversation were honest in their answers and shared their true passion for farming. It was appreciated."

~Dairy Dialogues participant
Neighbor newsletters continue to remain an effective tool to communicate with those closest in proximity to farms. Oftentimes, farmers don’t typically talk about the farm with their neighbors at a community gathering or get together, but rather about the topic at hand being family, community, school, sports, and so much more. Farm work and exchanging knowledge about current farm events are not usually at the top of the conversation list. This is why newsletters have proven to be an effective and efficient way of spreading proactive, positive news about the current happenings on the farm. In 2019, NYAAC worked with a variety of farms to create and mail 12 different newsletters reaching more than 15,000 mailboxes. Newsletters will continue to be sent to mailboxes throughout the state and help community members understand what’s going on down the road.

"Your fall newsletter just arrived and I have just finished enjoying reading it. You and your organization are wise to publish this and to keep your neighbors informed as to the challenges faced in the dairy industry, and the reasons for what we see going on around us." – Newsletter recipient
Reacting to any farm or industry crisis is not something anyone looks forward to but we have to be prepared to do so when the need arises. The NY Dairy Issues Team is comprised of four individuals from American Dairy Association Northeast, New York Farm Bureau, Northeast Dairy Producers Association, and the New York Animal Agriculture Coalition. The team helps individual farms and industry members communicate in a reactive manner when the need arises. Working together, the team members meet quarterly and communicate regularly to discuss challenging topics, reactive concerns, continued proactive approaches, and potential future issues. In 2019 the team communicated about nearly 100 issues, including published stories in the media. The majority of issues discussed by the team related to animal activists, farm labor issues and, water quality and environmental concerns.

As a collaborator within the Partners for Healthy Watersheds group, NYAAC continues to be involved in monthly calls, regular communication, and long-term planning. In August, the Partners group hosted a forum featuring Dr. Kim Schulz, SUNY-ESF, as she discussed Quagga Mussels and their impact on Owasco Lake. NYAAC looks forward to continuing open discussion and collaboration to provide accurate information to lake property and homeowners and special interest groups in the Owasco Lake watershed area.

All issues discussed with the Dairy Issues Team are confidential and handled with professionalism by the Issues Team members.
Today, most consumers have the ability to answer a question with the touch of a button. We are living in the age of having technology at our fingertips and social media remains an important avenue of delivering honest and transparent content to our followers. NYAAC utilizes Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram with the majority of time being focused on the Facebook platform. During 2019, NYAAC posted nearly 400 times on Facebook alone reaching more than five million unique users. A single video from State Fair highlighting cows heading home garnered a reach of 3.5 million people! A Snapchat filter was created and used 550 times and was viewed nearly 20,000 times by Snapchat friends. Twitter continues to be a platform that is utilized during Twitter parties that are organized and promoted through the American Dairy Association Northeast DairyFAN program. NYAAC plans to continue to utilize social media in the future so be sure to follow along @NYAnimalAg.

NEW NYAAC WEBSITE

NYAAC launched a redesigned website in August, just in time to feature the Dairy Cow Birthing Center live feed from the State Fair. The new design allows additional content to be shared including featured farms located throughout the state. Farms will be featured that are willing to open their barn doors to in-person visitors, or questions on social media. Dairy Cow Birthing Center content and information will now live on our site instead of a third party site increasing traffic to NYAAC content. Blog posts will continue to be developed and shared along with additional resources for honest, reliable information.

Check it out today! www.nyanimalag.org
BERTHA GOES ON THE ROAD!

Bertha the Blimp made her debut at the Dairy Cow Birthing Center a few years ago and since then, she’s traveled the state to serve as an eye-catching point for festivals, events, and dairy programs. Last year Bertha even traveled to college! The Cornell University Dairy Science club utilized Bertha to engage students in conversations during their Ag Day events. Bertha also traveled to a few Cornell Cooperative Extension events and the Livingston County Farm Fest at Mulligan Farms. Bertha continues to be available to rent for any upcoming events in your local area. She’s sure to catch the attention of interested community members.

For more information about renting Bertha for your next event or for farm tour assistance, please contact Eileen Jensen, eileen@nyanimalag.org.

FARM TOUR ASSISTANCE

Tompkins County Farm Trail is an event held in August involving a variety of farms and agri-businesses. Fouts Farm decided to step up and be part of the action this year. As a family, Paul & Laura and their family, opened their doors and provided information about agriculture and dairy farming to visitors on a beautiful sunny August day. Agriculture industry members including a veterinarian, nutritionist and more provided an opportunity for visitors to engage in conversations on the farm following wagon tours discussing manure management, environmental sustainability, and cow comfort. NYAAC provided assistance in logistics, day of scheduling, and hands-on help throughout the day.
NYAAC was awarded $150,000 from the Dairy Promotion Order Board to implement in 2020.

VISION 2020

Providing a clear vision of what is happening on local dairy farmers is important to helping develop a positive image of dairy farming and agriculture. Vision 2020 will do just this. It’s a project that will promote dairy farmers, the practices they follow, the challenges they face, and the overall vision of the industry in 2020.

DOCUMENTING DAIRY

Documenting Dairy will be focused on providing positive stories about dairy farms and dairy farmers to local media. The goal is to provide local media with stories throughout the year to showcase the variety of challenges, opportunities and excitement that takes place on modern dairy farms.

Funds were also awarded to support the 2020 Dairy Cow Birthing Center and other new activities at the New York State Fair.
A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

EMBRACE OPPORTUNITIES

My story is simple. I grew up as a dairy farmers’ daughter in a rural New York town. I went to college, became an Ag teacher, traveled the country, lived under the city lights, worked for nationally recognized agriculture companies, sought an opportunity back in NY and here I am today. Ok, so it’s not quite as simple as it sounds, but the one thing that is constant through my life is: opportunity! I believe seeking and embracing opportunities is what makes anyone or any business or company successful year after year.

For nearly five years I have been fortunate to work for NYAAC. I remember the moment like it was yesterday when the NYAAC Chairman at the time called me to offer me the opportunity to join the NYAAC team. The reason I said “yes” was because it was finally the chance for me to give back to the industry and the people who had given me so much in my life. Since I had left New York early in my professional career, NYAAC had been developed, established, and became my dream opportunity. It’s an organization that continues to pride itself in providing positive, proactive measures to help people understand and appreciate the industry that all of us love so much.

This past year proved to be an incredibly successful year for NYAAC and the farmers we collaborated with throughout the year. One of the highlights of the year was a new opportunity that 12 farmers took the risk to participate in and one that NYAAC embraced - the All-Star Advocates program. Providing 12 agricultural advocates the opportunity to explore new ideas, motivate them to implement new programs, enhance existing events, and think creatively about how they advocate was a true win for the year. I anticipate that you’ll see a lot more from these 12 All-Stars in the coming years as they put their new excitement and inspiration to the test in their local communities.

NYAAC continues to offer opportunities for farmers to become involved in their towns, regions, and at the state level. We continue to offer the opportunity for farmers to communicate with their neighbors through our neighbor newsletter assistance. The Dairy Cow Birthing Center remains a sought-out location at the State Fairgrounds as we collaborate with farmers and industry volunteers to ensure its continued success.

As we look ahead to 2020 I am sure there will be challenges and hardships but I assure you there will be endless opportunities as well. NYAAC is dedicated to advocating for and with farmers throughout New York State. We have some exciting new programs that we’ll be implementing in 2020, some of them being funded by NY dairy farmers and their check-off funding. These will be perfect opportunities for YOU to become more involved, more transparent, and to start or continue to build relationships. I look forward to working alongside each of you in the coming years to help you brainstorm new ideas, celebrate successes, get through any crisis, and to help you develop and share your story.

Thank you to each of you for being part of the NYAAC story and for allowing us to help you embrace new opportunities.

"The only time you have no opportunities is when you decide to stop taking them."

~Danny Wallace
NYAAC is a farmer founded and funded organization and appreciates the support and funding from the following organizations. Each organization receives two board seats in exchange for their annual contribution. Per our by-laws, one seat is reserved for a farmer nomination from the organization, and the other is reserved for a professional from the organization or their designee.

American Dairy Association Northeast
Cayuga Marketing
Farm Credit East
New York Corn & Soybean Growers Association
New York Farm Bureau
Northeast Dairy Producers Association
PRO-DAIRY

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CONTACT US
Contact us for more information about the programs or events that NYAAC implements or sponsorship and/or collaboration opportunities.

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!