

# NY ANIMAL AGRICULTURE COALITION

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

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[www.nyanimalag.org](http://www.nyanimalag.org)

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*"Determined people working  
together can do anything."*

~Jim Casey

# A WORD FROM THE CHAIRMAN

During the November NYAAC Board Meeting our team spent some time reflecting on where NYAAC started, the progress we've made, and the future ahead. After nearly 20 years, this organization has overcome challenges resulting in growth and success. While our mission remains the same of helping others understand and appreciate animal agriculture, our implementation of projects and programs continue to flourish. As you'll see in the following pages, NYAAC has been on the forefront of providing positive change in the agriculture industry throughout New York.

Collaboration is a key component of our success and as a dairy farmer, I appreciate the partnerships that we've successfully created and continue to establish. As a not-for-profit organization, we rely on others throughout the year for funding, for time, and for support. Whether you're a member of one of our member organizations, a sponsor, volunteer, or have welcomed us onto your farm in the past year – we thank you! One thing we continue to learn is that there is plenty of work to do and it is going to take all of us, working together, to provide others with opportunities to learn about the New York agriculture industry.

"Great *leaders* don't set out to be a leader. They set out to make a *difference*. It's never about the role - always about the *goal*!"  
~Lisa Haisha



NYAAC's growth and continued success has only been made possible due to the incredible team working for us. Eileen Jensen, NYAAC's Executive Director, and Hannah Johnson, Communications Manager, are two of Agriculture's strongest advocates. The dedication, passion, and drive that they have has made NYAAC what it is today. We are truly fortunate to have them on our team.

We are proud of the work we've done and look forward to another exciting year ahead of building trust and changing perspectives while supporting and working with farmers along the way.

*Steve Palladino*  
Walnut Ridge Dairy  
NYAAC Chairman

# WHO IS NYAAC?

## 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.

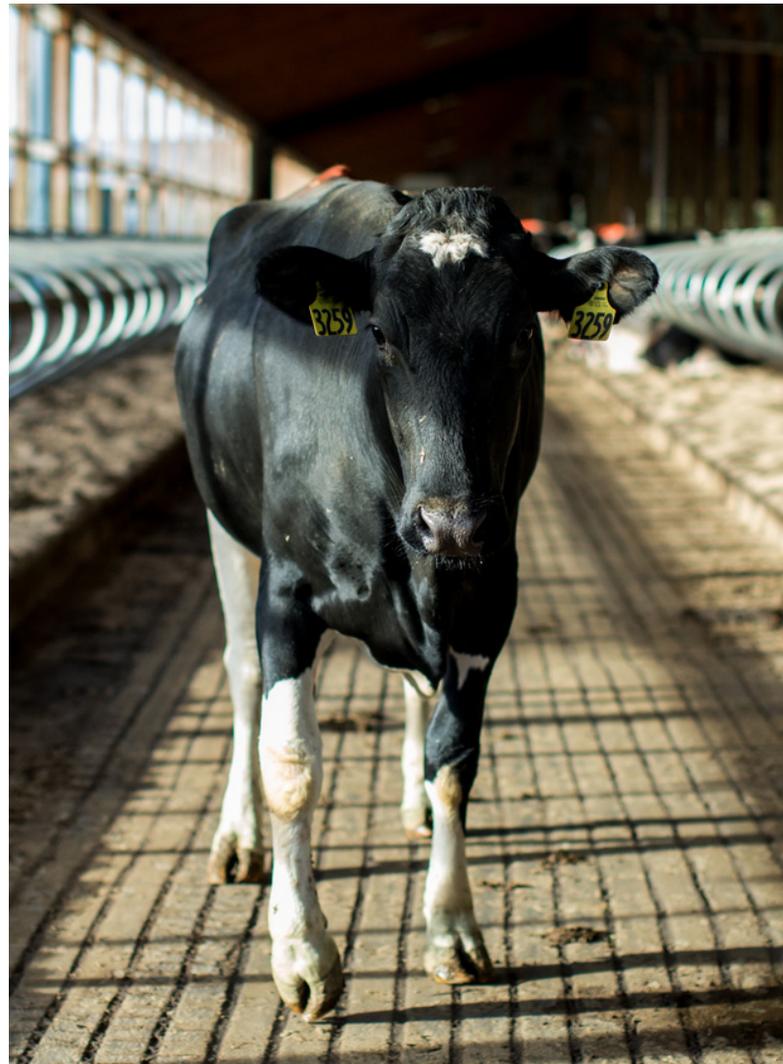
*2021 Financials will be posted on the NYAAC website, [www.nyanimalag.org](http://www.nyanimalag.org), when they become available.*

## VISION

To reside amongst a culture of understanding, trust, and a positive image of 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 and appreciation for animal agriculture by fostering a dialogue with consumers, engagement with farmers, and cooperation among members of the industry.



# DAIRY COW BIRTHING CENTER



During the 18-day State Fair, the NY Animal Agriculture Coalition (NYAAC) collaborated with nine host farms providing 36 cows and an experience that thousands of visitors won't soon forget. Despite the challenges of low State Fair attendance, the visitors in the Birthing Center continued to be positive, plentiful, and appreciative during their visit. 37 uddermiracles were welcomed into the world in front of witnesses that have returned year after year, and new visitors that recently learned of the Birthing Center.

Visitors were welcomed into the Dairy Cow Birthing Center with a new, open-concept layout. With fewer bleachers provided, but more ancillary educational opportunities, visitors and volunteers had the opportunity to converse around a 24-foot wall with additional conversation starters and engaging components. Visitors could learn about the breeds of cows, nutritional benefits of milk, dairy nutrition, sustainability, importance of soil, and so much more! The new educational component of the Birthing Center was a huge hit with visitors and volunteers alike.

Even with lower volunteer numbers and a longer fair, the NYAAC team walked away with additional learnings and opportunities for improvement in 2022. As a result of a successful State Fair, more than 2,600 people joined our online social media following. Our Facebook page resulted in 1.2 million impressions throughout the 18-day State Fair. YouTube continued to be a go-to destination for our viewers that watched from afar. With nearly 18 full days of live streaming, there was more than 417 hours of viewing time with more than 2,500 unique viewers.

After the State Fair, a survey was distributed to visitors. The 373 responses provided the following information:

- 91% came from a non-farming background
- 75% were from New York State
- 56% are from Western/Central/Finger Lakes
- 40% of visitors watched virtually & visited in person
- 10% only visited in person
- 50% only watched virtually
- 47% of respondents have watched/visited the Birthing Center for 5+ years

# DAIRY COW BIRTHING CENTER

The Dairy Cow Birthing Center experience was shared with avid followers through social media, fairgoers through one-on-one conversations, and microphone explanations from farmers and industry volunteers. This experience is truly a labor of love and would not happen without the endless helping hands from volunteers, financial

support from sponsors, and guidance and assistance of the NYAAC Board of Directors. Thank you to everyone who helped make this experience better than ever before. We look forward to an exciting 2022 as we celebrate the 9th year of uddermiracles at the Great New York State Fair.



## Thank you to our 2021 Sponsors

2020 Consulting\*

Agri-Mark

ASAP Interiors

Atlas Ag Services\*

Balchem

Brown's Feed Inc.\*

Camping World

Cargill

Cayuga Milk Ingredients\*

Central New York Feeds, Inc.

Chobani

Cincinnati Home Center\*

Clinton Tractor

CNY Community Foundation

CNY Farm Supply

Community Bank

Cornell Center for Dairy Excellence

Corteva Agriscience-Pioneer Seeds

Dairy Farmers of America

Dairy Promotion Order Board\*

Dairy Support Services Company\*

Denkavit\*

DFA Farm Supplies

Diamond V\*

DuMond Grain LLC\*

Farm Credit AgEnhancement\*

Future Cow

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JDJ Solutions

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Lutz Feed\*

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Merck Animal Health

NBT Bank\*

NY Corn & Soybean Growers

Association

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Whites Farm Supply\*

Whittaker Farms\*

Zimmerman Construction\*

Zoetis Animal Health

*\*indicates NEW sponsor in 2021*

*Cattle Trucking provided by*

*Parker Trucking*

*Harlan Weaver*

*Pam Filkins*

Funded in part by NY dairy farmers and their dairy check-off

# INDULGE IN DAIRY

100% funded by NY dairy farmers and their dairy check-off  
NYAAC partnered with Spectrum News to place a media buy in November & December to encourage viewers to indulge in dairy. The media placement was aired more than 6,000 times on 11 different cable networks in Metro NY. In addition to cable networks, the 30 second television spot was also viewed on streaming applications. The spot resulted in more than 135,000 impressions and of all the people who were served the spot, more than 97%, watched it in its entirety.



Alexis Payne, Middleburgh, attended SUNY Cobleskill and was one of the recipients of the 2021 NYAAC Advocacy Scholarships.

Alyssa Rooda resides in Cayuta and is a Cornell University student. She received one of the 2021 NYAAC Advocacy Scholarships.



# SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

The inaugural NY Animal Agriculture Coalition Advocacy Scholarship was awarded in April of 2021 to two students who were actively involved in production agriculture and advocacy efforts. With nearly 40 applicants the NYAAC scholarship committee selected Alexis Payne of Middleburgh and Alyssa Rooda of Cayuta as recipients of the \$500 award.

Alexis Payne attended SUNY Cobleskill and through her deep involvement with the dairy industry, she has become inspired to pursue a career in agriculture. She enjoys taking care of and working with registered dairy cattle and would like to continue to do so in the future. Upon graduating with a Bachelors Degree in Animal Science, her goal is to eventually return to the farm she's worked on and start a creamery and agri-tourism business.

Alyssa Rooda is a Cornell University student and has plans to become an agricultural educator and pass on the importance of agriculture to future generations. She has a large interest in international work and has a dream of teaching internationally after receiving her Masters Degree. Alyssa has a desire to stay involved in organizations that have had an impact on her experiences including 4-H, FFA, and New York Holstein Association.

Congratulations to both recipients of the 2021 NYAAC scholarship. NYAAC is excited to offer this opportunity again in 2022 to support more young people on a path that positively promotes animal agriculture.

"Agriculture is the most healthful,  
most useful, and most *noble*  
employment of man."

*George Washington*



# DISPLAYING DAIRY IN METRO NY

In 2021, NYAAC utilized dairy check-off funds to help improve the image of dairy products and/or dairy producers among consumers, thus improving the acceptance and consumption of New York milk and dairy products. NYAAC acquired two fiberglass cows which were painted by local, New York State artists. Each cow depicts a different perspective on the dairy industry and speaks to very different audiences.

The project officially launched on June 11, 2021, during a press conference at the New York State Fair. The press conference introduced the project with the “herd” of cows being our eye-catching piece that will help others understand and appreciate animal agriculture. The press conference launched an online naming contest where these two cows were officially announced as Dani & Firefly. Commissioner Richard Ball was gracious in assisting in the announcement of the names for the two cows and provided a great video opportunity to share on social media.

As a digitally focused campaign, social media was the main driver for the beginning phases of this project. The two fiberglass cows virtually visited numerous farms, key locations that serve dairy products, and areas of interest to general consumers – all while making connections to dairy. All boosted posts were targeted based on geography and messaging. Specific social media results can be found on the following page.

Dani & Firefly made their in-person debut at the Dairy Cow Birthing Center at the New York State Fair. They were key components of the engaging part of the Birthing Center where they provided an opportunity for conversation and learning more about the dairy industry.

The two fiberglass cows are currently located in Metro NY and being utilized in discussions, lessons, and engaging conversations about the dairy industry at the Queens County Farm Museum and John Bowne high school. Both locations provide educational and promotional opportunities to learn more about NY agriculture and the NY dairy industry and will direct visitors to [www.DiscoverNYDairy.org](http://www.DiscoverNYDairy.org).

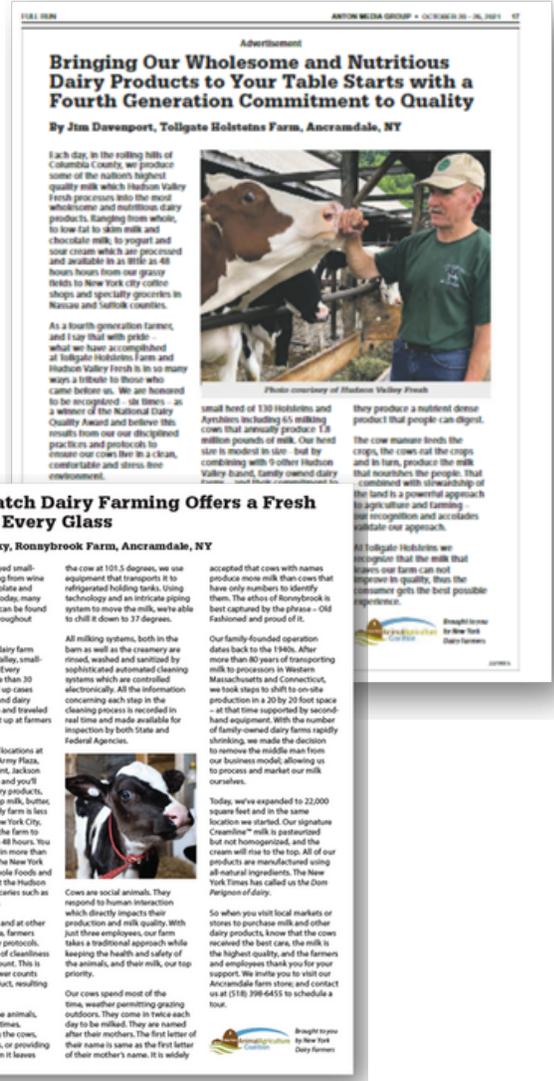


# SHARING DAIRY IN WORDS & VOICES

The goal for this project was to promote the uniqueness of New York dairy products while positively promoting New York dairy farmers. This project had two components with the first being the “words” component and the follow-up being focused on the “voices.”

Through collaboration with numerous dairy farmers who shared their story from a first-person point of view, we were able to publish six op-eds in Metro NY. Op-ed articles focused on environmental sustainability, animal care & dairy products, dairy product processing, essential employees, dairy products, and animal health. The one constant between all the articles was showcasing the importance of making the connection between the topic, farmer, and media being pitched. The goal was to allow readers and listeners to make connections and understand where their dairy products originate.

Following each published op-ed, a video was developed, each with the voiceover of the farmer, and shared on social media. All farmer stories and videos can be found at [www.nyanimalag.org](http://www.nyanimalag.org). As a result of this project, we were able to showcase more farmers and provide their voice as advocates for the industry that they love.



Op-eds were published in the following areas of New York: Westchester County, Long Island, Nassau County, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, Bronx, Rochester, Utica, Elmira, and Albany. Nearly 650,000 people were reached through distribution, in print and online.

Thank you to the following farmers who provided their time and expertise for op-eds and videos to be developed and shared with others.

- Chris Noble, Noblehurst Farm
- Jim Davenport, Tollgate Holsteins
- Rick Osofsky, Ronnybrook Farm
- Ray Dykeman, Dykeman Farms
- Corinne Banker, Blue Hill Farm
- Jessica Smith, LT Smith & Sons



"It is only the farmer who *faithfully* plants seeds in Spring, who reaps a harvest in the Autumn."

*B.C. Forbes*

# NEIGHBOR NEWSLETTERS

Neighbor Newsletters, now a digital or old-school paper flyer with a personalized message from farmers to their community members, continues to help farmers form meaningful connections with their neighbors. These newsletters continue to allow farmers to relay relevant information and open a friendly line of communication that might otherwise stay closed. Through multiple positive responses directly back to the farmers, 2021 showed how valuable reaching out to those in the surrounding area can be. In 2021, NYAAC helped 12 farms create 15 newsletters reaching more than 26,000 people in 11 different communities. As digital communication becomes more accessible, neighbor newsletters are hitting more than the mailbox on the side of the road. Many farmers are expanding their means of communication by sending digital copies of their personalized newsletter. It is exciting to know that neighbor newsletters continue to make meaningful impacts for those that work hard to contribute to produce food for their communities.

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“I just finished reading your fall newsletter. I enjoyed reading about all of you and your farm. It's always nice to know what is going on around us in our neighborhood. I am a lifelong supporter of farmers and all that they do for us. Thank you for letting us know. I look forward to hearing more news about you and the farm.” – Farm Neighbor

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“The newsletter we did was awesome, and we got a ton of positive feedback. A lot more people said something to me about it than what I expected and actually they all seemed interested in it. I was very very happy with how it went and how it was received.”

Farmer in Castile, NY

# NY DAIRY ISSUES TEAM



The New York Dairy Issues Team works alongside farmers through some of the toughest and challenging times. Throughout the year, farmers are faced with farm accidents, labor issues, environmental concerns, water quality issues, neighbor relations, and so much more. It is our responsibility, as the Dairy Issues Team, to help farmers work through these challenges. In 2021, the team of four representatives from ADANE, NEDPA, NYFB, and NYAAC collaborated on implementing a four-week webinar series focused on different issues within the dairy industry. During the summer, the team worked to establish a hybrid of virtual and in-person farm tours for three farms, in a single day, in Cayuga County. The goal was to help local leaders understand dairy farming, first-hand. While a proactive approach to public relations and advocacy is always the goal, the Dairy Issues team understands that farming will never be 100% positive in the eyes of consumers. Therefore, we encourage farmers to reach out to Steve Ammerman, Eileen Jensen, Beth Meyer, or Tonya Van Slyke for more information about the Dairy Issues team.

All issues discussed with the Dairy Issues Team are confidential and handled with professionalism by the Issues Team members.



# A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I have had the honor and privilege of working for the NY Animal Agriculture Coalition for six years and there's never been a regret in my mind, ever since the day I said, "yes." One thing that continues to remain constant, even after numerous years, is the need to communicate, collaborate, and advocate. As an organization focused on helping others understand and appreciate animal agriculture, our mission goes much deeper with every project we develop and every program we offer.

For nearly two decades, NYAAC has worked alongside numerous organizations, assisted hundreds of farmers, and made an impact in every corner of New York State. We communicate. We collaborate. We advocate. And we couldn't do this without the support of every sponsor, donor, volunteer, farmer, and Board Member.



2021 was another challenging year. However, we continued to assist farmers because despite challenges, farming continued. In this Annual Report, we share with you the projects and programs that came to life, allowing farmers to find their voice, open their barn doors, and share their own story.

## ***Communicate***

Throughout the year, we encourage farmers to find a variety of ways to communicate with others including social media, newsletters, volunteering, public speaking, and farm tours. Communicating with each other within the industry and communities throughout the state is essential for positive advocacy efforts. During the year we work alongside farmers to assist them in communication efforts resulting in enhanced relationships and increased trust.

## ***Advocate***

Our goal is to help others understand what you, as farmers, do every day. Not only are we advocates for you, but we encourage you to be advocates for your farm. It will continue to take all of us to advocate for the industry we love.

2021 was an incredibly successful year for NYAAC and it would not have happened without your support. Thank you for your time, your treasure, and your talent. We look forward to another great year ahead of working with and for NY farmers.

## ***Collaborate***

NYAAC has continually focused on collaborative efforts while working with and for NY farmers. We collaborate with farmers, community groups, checkoff organizations, volunteers, and member organizations. Collaboration showcases joint efforts while utilizing time and money in the most effective and efficient way possible. There is so much to be done in the realm of advocacy, so collaboration is key as we continue to find ways to work together for a better and more positive tomorrow.

*Eileen Jensen*  
NYAAC Executive Director

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**Thank you for your support!**

## 2021 Member Organizations

*NYAAC is a farmer founded and funded organization and appreciates the support and funding received in 2021 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 as 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

## 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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## 2021 Board of Directors

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- Corinne Banker, Secretary
- Brian Monckton, Treasurer
- Steve Ammerman
- Emma Andrew-Swarthout
- Nate Chittenden
- Lisa Ford
- Loren Herod
- Alyssa Kealy
- Colleen Klein
- Mark Modzeleski
- Peggy Murray
- Julie Richardson
- Board Advisor: PRO-DAIRY

