2018
Enhancing the public’s understanding and appreciation for animal agriculture

NEW YORK
ANIMAL AGRICULTURE COALITION
annual report

www.nyanimalag.org
It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is most adaptable to change. - Charles Darwin
Henry Ford once said, “If you always do what you’ve always done, you’ll always get what you’ve always got.” This testament indicates the need and importance of change and 2018 was a year of change for NYAAC. As I became chairman of NYAAC at the beginning of 2018, we looked ahead at our ultimate goals of how we, as an organization, could continue to excel at what we do best – building trust with farmers and community members.

We needed to step out of our comfort zone of doing things the way we had always done them. We needed to challenge the status quo and we needed to challenge ourselves. In 2018 NYAAC developed new program ideas and sought and received funding from you, New York dairy farmers through the check-off program, to implement in 2019. This was a huge step for NYAAC and for the industry because time has never been more critical than now to stand up for what we believe in.

NYAAC continues to be a strong organization that farmers seek out for assistance, guidance and implementation of local, regional and state advocacy efforts. We’ve grown to realize and understand that change is the only constant in life and with that comes challenges. As dairy farmers, we’re all too familiar with challenges but I can assure you that NYAAC will thrive through the challenges and come out on top. Despite, the loss of a true NYAAC leader with Jessica Ziehm’s departure at the end of 2018, our organization continues to move forward with the passion and vision that was set forth through the inception of NYAAC.

As we look ahead to 2019 there are exciting changes on the horizon with new faces around the Board table, exciting new programs being implemented and new ideas on the forefront. We are successful in our events and programs as you’ll see in this report and it’s all due to the collaboration and trust that you instill in us to do what we love to do – advocate on behalf of New York dairy farmers. Thank you for your continued support as we look forward to a productive 2019.

Steve Palladino
NYAAC Chairman
For the third consecutive year, NYAAC joined forces with farmers to provide an opportunity for local leaders to see first-hand what it takes to operate a dairy farm. NYAAC provided professional assistance, technical advice and hands-on coordination for five “Twilight Tours” throughout New York. Thanks to the financial assistance from the New York Corn and Soybean Growers Association, we were able to impact nearly 75 local leaders in a variety of geographical locations of New York on topics timely and sensitive for those communities.

The greatest challenge with these tours is simple: time. Farmers are busy and it’s tough to get them to commit to host a tour. However, the impact of these highly personalized tours is immense.

We survey all attendees and have found that their level of understanding of timely and prominent ag issues increases significantly. For example, an understanding of manure and nutrient management increased from 5.67 to 8.17, on a 10 point scale. Similarly, we learned that the knowledge and understanding of dairy farming increased from 4.33 to 9.00, on a 10 point scale. That tells us, and should speak volumes to other farmers, that we need to continue to open our barn doors to the public, or at a bare minimum, open the lines for conversation.

Here are a few comments we received as part of the post-event survey we issued.

Has your opinion of manure and nutrient management changed?
“I can see that some farmers are working very hard to use the manure in a productive system that avoids problems such as runoff onto ditches or roads, eventually with the potential to damage other eco-systems.”

Explain one thing you learned about dairy farming?
“I learned how highly technical the industry is. I honestly had no idea prior to my visit. It was very interesting to learn about how they monitor crops as well as the animals and how much they rely on technology for a high level of detail. I was amazed as well at how self-sufficient the farm is as a result of the technology and level of skill of the staff.”

Has your opinion of dairy farming changed?
“I have a high level of respect and appreciation for the work that is done within this industry. I don’t think I ever paused to really think about or to learn about all that is required and all that occurs on a daily basis around the clock on a dairy farm.”

What was your overall impression of the tour?
“I was thoroughly impressed and it was one of the most impactful and memorable learning experiences of the past year.”
El-Vi Farms, Ontario County
While this was more of a traditional farm tour, it attracted a small but mighty group of influencers from local school districts and local government. For the tour, we hopped onto a hay wagon and cruised through the farm, making stops at critical parts of the farm and allowing farm partners and team members to explain what visitors were seeing and answer questions. Most questions reflected training the next generation and how to help get the next generation involved in agriculture. In most cases, attendees had not been on a farm.

Fessenden Farm, Cayuga County
Attendees of this tour were heavily interested in what farmers are doing to ensure nutrients stay on the fields and manure doesn’t impact the lake water. So, we decided to show them exactly how manure is applied and injected into the ground. One of the highlights for this tour was the inclusion of the custom manure applicator team, who gave an up close and personal tour of their equipment and the actual process in the field. The tour was engaging, full of questions and involved showing the public how farmers manage and apply manure, which is something that has never been done before in the state, and more importantly, this county where farmers are scrutinized for their stewardship efforts.

Lawnel Farm, Livingston County
We gathered on a beautiful October afternoon and were joined by numerous local leaders that were interested in learning more about how they can help the farm succeed. With many attendees being involved in education and workforce development, discussions were focused around preparing today's youth for employment on local farms. We got onto a wagon and received a full farm tour that lasted two hours because of the in-depth, personal discussions and conversations that were occurring throughout the duration of the tour.
A Message from the Executive Director: Be the Change.

December 31, 2018 was my last day with NYAAC. Bittersweet, for sure!

NYAAC is an organization you can’t help but support as it’s a true grassroots effort to do what is needed right now. Regardless of a farm’s reputation, location or generation, the work we are doing at NYAAC is for everyone's benefit.

Our vision is 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 family, animals, environment and community.

Think for a moment what the world would look like if we were able to accomplish this in the dairy industry. How would our lives differ if we lived in a world where consumers recognized the earnest efforts of farmers and I dare say, celebrated as the heroes you are for working 365 days a year to feed consumers, not only a safe and wholesome product, but a delicious and an affordable one at that.

What would change if NYAAC’s vision became reality? Would regulations ease up? Would you receive more money for your milk? Would milk consumption go up? Would neighbors be more supportive? Would there be more interest in ag careers? Would consumers allow us to embrace technology? Would banks lend us more money to be creative? Would there be less emotional stress on farmers?

When I started, NYAAC was housed as a sub-committee of NEDPA and today we are a stand alone 501-c-3 not-for-profit organization that has raised over $1 million in the past five years. We’ve initiated new programming to help you be better, stronger and more effective advocates. Programs such as our Twilight Tours and Neighbor Newsletters have helped you communicate real and timely topics to those in your communities. We’ve provided signage for your farms, training sessions for advocates, and crisis management in times of trouble. We’ve also created the infamous Dairy Cow Birthing Center at the New York State Fair where we attract over 300,000 people annually to spend an hour or more with us learning about the dairy industry, talking to real farmers all while awaiting the birth of a calf. And we’re just getting started!

NYAAC is known for thinking outside the box and I encourage you all to do the same. Let’s get creative and be the change we want to see in the world – and that our industry so desperately needs! And so that’s what I am doing. I’m trading in the NYS Thruway for the back roads of my home county and going to practice what I’ve been preaching all these years. I’m going to be a more local and vocal advocate for farmers. I’m going to spend more time advocating for my own farm, offering true transparency. I’m going to be an active member of my community so that our family is known and present for the tough conversations and the spur of the moment farm tours. I’m going to be leading by example.

I’m going to do all this knowing that NYAAC is in a great position with plenty of opportunities, but also in very good and capable hands. Eileen Jensen moved back to New York three years ago with a mission to help all of you. She’s a farm girl, a millennial, a worker bee and a positive force with a grain sack full of experiences who can and will carry NYAAC into the future. Her passion and abilities, coupled with the vision and direction of our board of directors will enable NYAAC to continue to achieve great things and blaze new trails. NYAAC has a solid foundation, an incredible vision, strong supporters and plenty of opportunities. Embrace change. Be the change.

Thank you all for the opportunity to serve you and work with you! Cheers to change!

Jessica Ziehm
Issues Management

With representatives from the American Dairy Association North East, New York Farm Bureau, the Northeast Dairy Producers Association and NYAAC, the Dairy Issues Management Team works to assist both individual farmers and the industry as a whole when crisis strikes. The Team communicates regularly and meets quarterly to monitor and discuss current issues impacting the dairy industry, as well as public relations strategies – both proactive and reactive.

The team once again focused the majority of its time on the issue of harmful algal blooms in Owasco Lake and in response, organized more print ads, conducted a farm tour focuses on manure management and a public forum through the Partners for Healthy Watersheds collaboration. While the work in this area has helped alleviate some of the personal concerns of homeowners, the area continues to feel pressure from local and county municipalities and special interest groups. At the end of 2018, the group reconvened with local farmers and decided to revamp the efforts moving forward and would be gathering more farmer input for 2019.

In addition to the Issues Team, NYAAC also responded to 22 additional requests for assistance. While a quarter of the requests were proactive in nature with farmers seeking to do some kind of outreach, the remainders were in response to either a crisis or a local issue. Manure and neighbor relations were the major issues at hand in 2018 and NYAAC was able to respond with timely assistance in the form of advice, written material, on-site coordination and planning. Calls that come into NYAAC are handled confidentially and professionally.

Neighbor Newsletters

Newsletters continue to be a go-to outreach effort for farms throughout New York to connect with their nearest neighbors, landowners and vendors with news and every day events happening on the farm. For the past five years, NYAAC has offered this free service to farmers that entails writing and creating a personalized newsletter that is customized for individual farms. This year, NYAAC provided assistance to fourteen farms who issued a newsletter or two over the course of the year. Those farms, coupled with a handful of others that issue newsletters on their own after initiation from NYAAC, reached over 16,000 mailboxes in rural communities throughout New York. Farmers shared information about animal husbandry, manure management, cover crops and even the milk price to help their neighbors understand what is taking place on the farm. This form of communication doesn’t take a lot of time or resources, yet the impact is immense and participating farmers have received numerous positive comments from recipients that support this type of information exchange that also helps build positive and lasting relationships.
Social media continues to be an avenue of positive, pro-active engagement for followers near and far. This is a simple, yet effective way to connect with consumers who have an interest in what occurs on dairy farms throughout New York. NYAAC posts information about dairy farming, dairy products and farm families allowing followers to engage, ask questions and show support for the industry that we all love. Through more than 500 posts on Facebook alone, NYAAC reached nearly 2.5 million people while making an impression on nearly 3.5 million followers. The top Facebook post for NYAAC was a simple one with a simple message. Reaching more than 140,000 people and garnering more than 1,500 shares, this post helped emphasize the importance of simplicity in social media messaging. Sometimes the most unexpected posts are what make the biggest impact and largest impression.

With nearly 10,000 Facebook followers, it is our goal at NYAAC to continue to share the dairy story in 2019. Facebook will continue to be the social media outreach avenue with additional engagement being through Twitter and Instagram. If you’re in need of content for your farm social media page or want to get started on social media, reach out to Eileen Jensen and she can help guide you in the right direction. In the meantime, be sure to follow @NYAnimalAg.

#1 FACEBOOK POST of 2018

Happy Friday everyone! #farmlove #farmlife #AskAFarmer

"My grandfather used to say that once in your life you need a doctor, a lawyer, a policeman and a preacher but every day, three times a day, you need a farmer."

@NYANIMALAG

149,566 People Reached
14,102 Engagements

Sarah Rath, Gretchen Klaehn and 406 others 6 Comments 1,532 Shares

#2 FACEBOOK POST of 2018

On October 12th, we celebrated National Farmer’s Day honoring farmers of all generations. Our new video highlights three generations of dairy farmers at various stages of their career. You’ll witness their excitement and passion for the Industry they live and love as they continue to prosper and grow every day.

62,557 People Reached
9,581 Engagements

289 Comments 399 Shares 24K Views

Utilizing analytics allows us to determine that NYAAC social media followers respond to photos and videos over other shared content. The top two posts from 2018 were a simple photo and a post sharing the NYAAC produced video honoring farmers of multiple generations.
A hero is an ordinary individual who finds **strength to persevere** and endure in spite of overcoming obstacles.

- Christopher Reeve
## Year-End Financials

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<td><strong>Total liabilities &amp; shareholder equity</strong></td>
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## More About Us

The New York Animal Agriculture Coalition is a charitable 501-c-3 not-for-profit organization in New York State that is committed to being a proactive voice and source of factual, credible information about New York dairy farms and their role in today’s food system. It is our intention to strengthen the public’s trust and support for our family farms that contribute to a safe, wholesome, affordable and sustainable food supply.

We focus our efforts primarily on dairy farms, as they are the most prominent type of farm in New York State, contributing over $3.4 billion dollars from the production of milk on 5,400 farms with a total of 615,000 dairy cows. New York is the fourth leading producer of milk in the nation.

If you care to make a contribution to join us in enhancing the public’s perception of animal agriculture and dairy farms in New York State, please contact us and let us know how you’d like to help.
In July, NYAAC challenged the status quo and submitted a proposal to the NYS Dairy Promotion Order (DPO) Board requesting checkoff funds to support future programs. This was an unconventional avenue that was a new territory for NYAAC and while the DPO Board did not approve 100% of the funds that was requested, they did approve two new projects totaling over $70,000. These funds, provided by dairy farmers and collected and administered by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, will allow NYAAC to extend their programming in 2019 to reach more consumers, empower more farmers and continue to move the needle in public trust for the dairy industry in New York. The details of the approved programs are still being developed, so stay tuned for more information to be provided throughout 2019.

The two programs that were approved are:

**All-Star Advocates:**

New York is blessed with some amazing dairy farmers who go above and beyond to promote their livelihood. We will be investing in these key players and hope to attract more advocates in an effort to build a stronger army to defend and preserve our livelihood. The goal of this program is to reward, inspire, arm and challenge a group of movers and shakers in the NY dairy industry by providing the opportunity to think outside the box of typical advocacy work and be challenged to implement new programs within their own communities.

**Dairy Dialogues:**

NYAAC will orchestrate and promote one-hour informational sessions about New York’s dairy industry to a variety of local community organizations and classrooms throughout the state. Each session will feature a short video produced by NYAAC and will be accompanied by a local dairy farmer. These sessions will allow for personal dialogue to occur between attendees and a local dairy farmer resulting in relationship building, networking, and a pro-active conversation to take place.

NYAAC is looking forward to utilizing dairy check-off funds in a positive, pro-active approach to promote dairy farmers, their livelihoods and ultimately the product they work hard to produce every day. With a different approach to promotion and outreach, NYAAC prides itself in providing unique opportunities for farmers to make local connections with consumers in their local communities.

For more information on how to become involved with the two new projects being implemented in 2019, reach out to Eileen Jensen at 315-719-2795 or eileen@nyanimalag.org.

*Be the change you wish to see in the world. -Ghandi*
It’s amazing the power and influence just one positive unit can have on other things. That’s what always amazes us at the Dairy Cow Birthing Center: the impact this one exhibit, this one act of transparency can have. Whether that unit be one birth, one donor, one volunteer or one conversation, the multiplier effect of that sole interaction is immense.

Our goal at the Birthing Center is to re-instill a faith in dairy farming, and the law of attraction entices others to join us, talk with us, and understand us better - whether they be a farmer learning about advocacy or a consumer learning about milk – it all starts with one. The adrenaline rush you get when you make a positive impact on someone’s life makes orchestrating this three-ring circus so rewarding! In this correspondence, we will provide some details on our achievements this year, along with some “one-liners” to help relay the sentiments of our target audience: our consumers.

This year marked our sixth year at the New York State Fair and it proved to be another successful season with fairgoers and farmers intrigued to participate and opening their hearts and minds to something new. We had an estimated 309,000 fairgoers visit the Dairy Cow Birthing Center, 97 percent of which rated it an excellent or very good exhibit. We also had 5,400 fairgoers subscribe to our free text alerts to notify them of a new baby. In doing so, we were also able to survey them and collect some information, allowing us to know that we continue to reach new people as 43% of our subscribers claimed to be new to the exhibit over the past two years.

“It was my second year watching and I love every one and all the information you give as well.”
For those unable to be with us in person at the State Fair, the 24-hour live webcam continues to be popular. This year, we had over 128,000 people watch our live feed from YouTube, which resulted in 39,021 watch hours. Viewers become addicted (their words, not ours) to the webcam and enjoyed the second camera we added this year that was dedicated to the baby calves, where viewers could see how they are cared for, where they stay and how they react to their new environment.

“It’s my favorite part of the fair...hands down! If I can’t be there in person, I watch the live feed.”

To reach an even larger audience, we enlist the help of social media where we shared photos and videos in 144 posts that reached an additional 442,000 people. This medium allowed us to engage with consumers in a two-way dialogue both in the comments sections, as well as private messaging.

“I now have much more respect and appreciation for my milk products.”

This powerful educational exhibit would not be possible without our sponsors that step up year after year to provide the resources needed to offer this complex educational exhibit - some even doubled their commitment to ensure the momentum continues. Our volunteers, of which 226 dairy farmers and industry professionals from across New York State, gave their personal time and talents for more than 2,000 hours at the exhibit. They served as spokespeople for the industry they live and love, and spearheaded tough questions, nurtured conversations and ultimately moved the needle in a positive direction on consumer trust for dairy products and animal care. Even if that needle was moved one point, it was still positive and our efforts together proved effective. The bonus: we had fun doing so!

“The power of one, if fearless and focused, is formidable, but the power of many working together is better.”
- Gloria Macapagal Arroyo

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Alltech
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Cargill
CaroVail
Central New York Feeds
Chobani
Clinton Tractor
Community Bank
Cornell Center for Dairy Excellence
DFA Farm Supplies
Dairy Farmers of America
Dairy One
DuPont Pioneer
Elanco Animal Health
Farm Credit East
Genex
Gold Star Feed & Grain
Holtz-Nelson Dairy Consultants
Lallemand Animal Nutrition
Legacy Wealth Advisors of NY
Mercer Milling
Merck Animal Health
MicroNutrients
New York Beef Producers
New York Corn & Soybean Growers
New York State Fair
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Rasmussen Rents
Select Sire Power
Upstate Niagara Cooperative
Zoetis Animal Health

Thank You!
to our generous sponsors
Member Organizations

NYAAC appreciates the support and funding of the following farmer-led organizations. Each organization receives two board seats in exchange for an annual contribution. Per our by-laws, one seat is reserved for a farmer nomination from that organization, and the other seat is reserved for a professional from that 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

Contact Us Today!
Contact us for more information about the programs and events that NYAAC implements or for sponsorship and/or collaboration opportunities.

Eileen Jensen, Director of Promotion & Outreach
eileen@nyanimalag.org
315-719-2795

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NEW Mailing Address
Make note of NYAAC’s new mailing address
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Penn Yan, NY 14527