Farm-to-School Month

October is Farm-to-School Month! There’s no better time to celebrate the bounty of New York’s agricultural products in our schools than harvest season. From local New York apples to fresh veggies, schools across the state have been supporting our farmers by serving up delicious lunches and teaching our students all about where their food comes from.

The Department is proud to be a key player in the Farm-to-School effort, with programs like the 30% Initiative, the Farm-to-School grant program, New York State Grown & Certified and Nourish New York. Stay tuned for an exciting announcement on the Farm-to-School grant program coming later this month!

Celebrating Climate Week

With agriculture being one of New York State’s largest economic sectors, sustainable practices on the
farm go a long way toward protecting our natural resources against the effects of climate change. To celebrate Climate Week, September 19 - 25, Governor Hochul announced nearly $7.9 million was awarded through the Climate Resilient Farming Grant Program. This round of funding will help 70 New York State farms reduce their environmental footprint and prepare for climate change-related extreme weather events. The Climate Resilient Farming Program was launched in 2015 and is helping New York’s agricultural community meet its goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions under the state’s Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act. So far, the program has received six rounds of funding – totaling nearly $20 million – to help farms across New York State implement best management practices to protect our environment. This year’s selected projects will reduce greenhouse gases by an estimated 68,495 metric tons of CO2e per year, an equivalent to eliminating almost 14,800 cars per year from the road.

Governor Hochul also announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) awarded $60 million to the NYS Connects: Climate Smart Farms and Forests Project. The NYS Connects: Climate Smart Farms and Forests Project will help agriculture producers and forest landowners implement climate smart practices and foster connections between landowners and companies with a growing demand for climate smart commodities. With this funding, the initiative will:

- fund landowners working to implement climate smart agriculture and forestry (CSAF) practices;
- identify and combat social and behavioral barriers to practicing CSAF practices; and
- develop new tools to measure, quantify, monitor, report and verify CSAF practices.

Sending Hurricane Assistance to Puerto Rico

In response to the devastating effects of Hurricane Fiona, the Department sent a team member to Puerto Rico as part of a multi-agency team of emergency response personnel, coordinated by Governor Hochul’s office. The Emergency Operations Center Support Team will help families and key industries, including the agricultural industry, as they recover and rebuild. The Department is proud to help with the coordination of an approximately 37,000-pound donation
Honoring Hunger Action Month

In September, the State recognized Hunger Action Month, giving us an opportunity to raise awareness about and combat food insecurity across our state. New York has long been committed to the fight against hunger by launching critical programs to help ensure our most vulnerable residents have food on their plates, including the Department’s Nourish New York initiative. The initiative allows New York’s emergency food providers to purchase surplus products from New York farmers and dairy manufacturers and deliver them to New York families in need through New York’s network of food banks and emergency food providers. Nourish New York, which was initially established to fight food insecurity during the pandemic, is now permanently enshrined in state law and has helped food banks purchase over 50 million pounds of New York farm products.

On September 23, several state landmarks were lit in orange to recognize Hunger Action Day and Hunger Action Month. To help make a difference to those in need, visit feedingamerica.org/take-action/ to find out more about how to help year-round.

Spotted Lanternfly Confirmed in Buffalo Area

The Department is urging residents in Western New York to be on the lookout for Spotted Lanternfly (SLF), after a population was found in the Buffalo area in September. SLF is a destructive pest that feeds on more than 70 plant
species, including tree-of-heaven, and plants and crops that are critical to New York’s agricultural economy, such as grapevine, apple trees, and hops.

The Department’s Division of Plant Industry inspectors responded to reports of SLF in a residential area of Buffalo adjacent to an active rail line; around 100 adults were found in early September. Agriculture and Markets staff is continuing to survey the surrounding areas. While surveys in the area are ongoing, the Department is asking for the public’s help in slowing down the spread of SLF in this area by reporting any sightings immediately to agriculture.ny.gov/reportSLF.

In addition to reporting, residents across New York State are asked to:
- Take pictures of the insect, egg masses, or infestation you see and, if possible, include something for size, such as a coin or ruler.
- If possible, collect the insect. Place in a bag and freeze, or in a jar with rubbing alcohol or hand sanitizer.
- Note the location (street address and zip code, intersecting roads, landmarks, or GPS coordinates).

Learn more: agriculture.ny.gov/news/state-agriculture-department-asks-residents-be-lookout-spotted-lanternfly-western-new-york

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**Avian Influenza Update**

With Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) still a concern in the US and the number of cases in both commercial and backyard flocks increasing as we head into the fall, the Department is reminding farmers to practice biosecurity measures to prevent the spread of HPAI.

The Department is encouraging poultry producers to follow best practices, which include:
- Discourage unnecessary visitors and use biosecurity signs to warn people not to enter buildings without permission;
- Ask all visitors if they have had any contact with any birds in the past five days;
- Forbid entry to employees and visitors who own any kind of fowl;
- Require all visitors to cover and disinfect all footwear;
- Lock all entrances to chicken houses after hours;
- Avoid non-essential vehicular traffic on-farm;
- After hauling birds to processors, clean and disinfect poultry transport
coops and vehicles before they return to the farm; and Report anything unusual, especially sick or dead birds, to the State Department of Agriculture and Markets.

Poultry owners should also take steps to reduce wild bird attractants, as this is a risk factor for the spread of HPAI in the current outbreak. They should:

- Store poultry feed in covered containers. Be sure to clean up any feed spillage immediately;
- Fence off ponds where wild birds congregate and remove any areas of standing water;
- Keep poultry waste and carcasses securely covered at all times;
- Do not walk through or move equipment through areas where waterfowl droppings may be present; and
- Consider limiting outdoor access for poultry during high-risk periods, such as migration season.

Best practices for visitors to farms include:

- Never enter a farm without permission;
- Wear clean clothes and shoes for any visit to a farm;
- Stay in the parking lot on arrival and call for an escort onto the farm;
- Do not touch animals unless it's part of your job; and
- Report anything unusual, especially sick or dead birds to the State Department of Agriculture and Markets.

In addition to this reminder, the Department is working with Cornell Cooperative Extension's Livestock Program Work Team to offer a free presentation to farmers to learn more about HPAI, what we know so far about the current outbreak, and how we should prepare for the fall migration.

This event will be held virtually on Wednesday, October 12 from 7 - 8pm. Register here. https://www.tinyurl.com/HPAIFall22.

Upcoming Events and Reminders

Census of Agriculture, Coming in November

The Census of Agriculture is a complete count of America’s farms and ranches and the people who operate them. Taken every five years, the census provides valuable information used at the local, state, and national levels to plan for the future. The census is the only source of uniform, comprehensive agricultural data for every state, county, and county equivalent in the nation. By participating in the census, you show the value and importance of U.S. agriculture.

USDA will begin data collection for the 2022 Census of Agriculture in November 2022. Please respond in one of the following ways:
Online at www.agcounts.usda.gov. Online reporting is fast, user friendly, and secure.
By mail. Fill out the census questionnaire and return it in the prepaid envelope provided.

For more information on the Census of Agriculture, visit: nass.usda.gov/AgCensus

**Mental Health First Aid Trainings**

Join NY FarmNet and county Cornell Cooperative Extensions statewide for a series of Mental Health First Aid trainings throughout the month of October. Mental Health First Aid teaches you how to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental health and substance use challenges among adults. You'll build skills and confidence you need to reach out and provide initial support to those who are struggling. You'll also learn how to help connect them to appropriate support.

Farmers, agribusiness workers, and anyone who interacts with the agricultural community are encouraged to attend this free training. Lunch will be provided. Learn more and register: nyfarmnet.org/trainings.

**Farm Bill**

Throughout the summer, Commissioner Ball and Department staff traveled across the state to hear from stakeholders about issues important to them in preparation for the upcoming 2023 Farm Bill. Feedback gathered during the tour is being provided to Governor Hochul to help develop New York State’s Farm Bill priorities for critical funding and policy changes in the areas of agriculture, nutrition, and the environment.

For those who were unable to attend a listening session in person, the Department is encouraging written comment to be submitted. The deadline to submit written comment is December 19, 2022. Email FarmBill@agriculture.ny.gov to let us know what is important to you.

**Cider Week**

Mark your calendars for fall Cider Week New York, running through October 9! From tastings to tours, New York Cider Week offers events across the state to help
you get to know local cider producers. For more information on how to enjoy some of New York’s most delicious local beverages, visit [ciderweeknewyork.com](http://ciderweeknewyork.com). Visit [certified.ny.gov/wheretobuy](http://certified.ny.gov/wheretobuy) to find a NYS Grown &Certified cidery near you.

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**Taste NY Highlights New York Apples**

Taste NY Markets are taking a shine to New York apples! October is National Apple Month and New York is the second-largest apple producing state in the country - in fact, New York State produces 29.5 million bushels each year! To celebrate this month, Taste NY Markets across the state will offer specials, showcase local U-pick information, and feature various other promotions to "apple-aud" our growers’ efforts. Visit [Taste.ny.gov](http://Taste.ny.gov) for a list of locations.

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**Grown and Certified Gets a Boost!**

New York State Grown & Certified farms got a promotional boost in September
with help from a new marketing campaign that was seen by consumers across the State. The campaign highlighted New York’s diverse array of specialty crops and encouraged consumers to “Look for the Label” and find New York State Grown & Certified products, such as fruits, vegetables, herbs, honey, maple, and more at retailers across the State.

The campaign, which was created by Paperkite—a marketing firm in Cooperstown— included digital media advertisements placed on all social media platforms, including on Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, TikTok, Snapchat, Spotify, and YouTube; radio advertisements and sponsorships; and a traditional marketing campaign that included billboards that were visible in Albany, Buffalo, Kingston, Rochester, Syracuse, and in New York City. The advertisements directed consumers to the Grown & Certified website at: certified.ny.gov/lookforthelabel.

Current Funding Opportunities

- **RFP 0279 - Implementation of Agricultural Environmental Management Plans on New York State Grown & Certified Farms**
  - Applications are due October 24, 2022.
- **RFA 0263 - Municipal Agriculture and Farmland Protection Planning Grants**
  - Applications are taken on a rolling basis.
- **RFA 0262 - County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Planning Grants**
  - Applications are taken on a rolling basis.
- **RFA 0181 - Source Water Buffer Program**
  - Applications are taken on a rolling basis.

For more information on these or other funding opportunities, please visit our Funding Opportunities page.

Spotlight: New York State Hosts the NASDA Annual Meeting

Last week, the Department hosted commissioners, secretaries, and directors of agriculture from across the country at the 2022 National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) Annual Meeting in Saratoga Springs. The meeting, which was themed “Still Growing,” focused on opportunities presented by the 2023 Farm Bill, international trade, securing a skilled, sustainable workforce for the agricultural and food industry, and other pressing issues.

The event was packed with exciting events and engaging discussions,
including:
- expert panels on agriculture careers, climate change, and more;
- an announcement and words of wisdom from U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack;
- an opening Plenary Session featuring a performance from the Leading Tones of the Schoharie Central School District, a recitation of the FFA Creed and presentation of the colors by the South Jefferson Chapter of the New York FFA Association, and two great poems read by New York Agriculture in the Classroom’s #StillGrowing poetry contest winners;
- a delicious President’s Dinner featuring donated produce from Commissioner Ball’s farm; and in conclusion of the week-long meeting; and
- a committee and business meeting, where policy was debated and voted on.

It was a great week, and we thank everyone who participated in these important discussions and actions that chart a number of opportunities ahead for agriculture in the United States. NASDA members passed 12 policy amendments and five action items to continue working toward the advancement of agriculture.

At the end of the conference, Commissioner Ball passed the oar to Director Doug Miyamoto from the Wyoming Department of Agriculture, who will take the lead as NASDA’s new president in the coming year. Commissioner Ball has been honored to serve at the helm of NASDA this past year, helping to guide important policy initiatives for agriculture. We look forward to Director Miyamoto’s leadership moving forward.

Check out some photo highlights from the event, below.
REGISTER TO VOTE
Sign up online or download and mail in your application.
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