Happy Holidays!

The holiday season is officially here: a time for joy, celebration, and gratitude. Among the many things to be grateful for this year is the ever-present gift of agriculture. From the delicious food we prepare for our loved ones to the beautiful trees that light up our homes with holiday cheer, it is a privilege to enjoy our farmers’ great bounty.

In November, Commissioner Ball visited NYS Grown & Certified Stokoe Farms, a 6th generation, family-owned Christmas Tree farm in Scottsville, NY, for the Department's annual tree-cutting event. The event promotes New York's Christmas tree growers and encourages consumers to buy local this holiday season. A beautiful nine-foot-tall Fraser Fir is now on display at the Finger Lakes Welcome Center in Geneva, so if you’re travelling this season, be sure to stop in and check it out! In fact, each Welcome Center around the State is featuring a New York State Grown & Certified Christmas tree or wreath, helping to highlight New York’s Christmas tree industry. With approximately 300,000 New York-grown trees sold by more than 750 farms in Upstate New York each year, New York ranks sixth in the US for the number of acres dedicated to growing Christmas trees.

Find a NYS Grown & Certified Christmas tree farm near you at certified.ny.gov/wheretobuy or on the Christmas Tree Farmers Association of New York website at ctfany.org/.
Department Kicks off 2022 New York Produce Show

The Department was proud to kick off the 2022 New York Produce Show and Conference, and help honor the show’s creator, the late Jim Prevor, with a special recognition from Governor Kathy Hochul. The 2022 New York Produce Show, which is the largest produce show in the northeast, helped market New York’s specialty crop growers under the Department’s New York State Grown & Certified marketing label and connect our state’s producers to buyers from around the world.

New Opportunities Aim to Give Farmers a Boost Across New York

In November, the Department announced several funding opportunities aimed at supporting New York’s agricultural community by enhancing food security and the resiliency of the food system, connecting producers to new markets, and more. Check out information on each new opportunity below.

The $26 million New York Food for New York Families Program will provide a boost to New York farmers, increase communities’ access to local foods, and further enhance the resiliency of New York’s food system. There are two grant opportunities available through the program.

- **Track 1** is a competitive opportunity focused on the purchase and distribution of New York food products. Learn more: agriculture.ny.gov/rfp-0283-new-york-food-new-york-families-track-1.
- **Track 2** is a non-competitive, first-come, first-serve grant opportunity for eligible applications. This funding track will be awarded to organizations working within the food system to help producers access new markets, fill gaps in the supply and distribution chain, or increase access to food in underserved communities. Learn more: agriculture.ny.gov/rfa-0284-new-york-food-new-york-families-track-2.
- Applications for both funding tracks are due January 18, 2023.

The $700,000 Farmers’ Market Resiliency Grant Program will help farmers strengthen their
markets and make local food more accessible to consumers by establishing online sales, improving infrastructure, and enhancing marketing and promotion efforts.

- Eligible applicants include non-profit organizations, local municipalities, business improvement districts, local chambers of commerce, and public benefit corporations that currently operate one or more farmers’ markets in New York State.
- Watch a webinar about this opportunity.
- For more information on the program and how to apply, visit agriculture.ny.gov/rfp-0282-farmers-market-resiliency-grant.
- The deadline for proposals is 4:00 pm Wednesday, December 14, 2022.

The **Urban Farms and Community Gardens Grant Program** will support community growing spaces and recognize their impact on local food resiliency and food security for New Yorkers.

- Funding through the Urban Farms and Community Gardens Grant Program will help offset costs associated with projects that focus on food production, food safety, and food distribution, and can be used to fund worker wages, contractual expenses, equipment, and other operating expenses.
- For more information on the program and how to apply, visit agriculture.ny.gov/rfp-0280-urban-farms-and-community-gardens-grant-program.
- Proposals are due at 4:00 pm on December 15, 2022.

The **$850,000 Farm-to-School Grant Program** helps kindergarten through grade 12 schools increase the use of locally grown food on school menus while providing an economic benefit to New York’s farmers. A portion of the funding, $200,000, will be dedicated to applicants that have not received an award in previous rounds of the program.

- Grant funding of up to $100,000 will be awarded for projects that support the establishment or expansion of farm-to-school programs in districts across the State.
- Proposals must be received by January 24, 2023, by 4:00 p.m.

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**Webinar Highlights** Beginning Farmer Fund and Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Farmer Funds
The Department hosted two virtual informational sessions to discuss funding for a $1 million Beginning Farmer Fund and a $4 million Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Farmer Fund. The sessions provided participants with an overview of the funding and the opportunity to give direct feedback about the programs, which were both included in this year’s state budget. The program is expected to launch its application period for administrators of the grant programs in the coming weeks, so stay tuned at agriculture.ny.gov and learn more about the farmer fund grant programs at https://agriculture.ny.gov/farming.

Give Feedback on USDA’s Regional Food Business Center Grant Opportunity

The Department is leading an initiative to develop a comprehensive application for a northeast Regional Food Business Center (RFBC). The USDA RFBC grant opportunity will support and create a more resilient, diverse, and competitive food system focused on underserved producers, processors, aggregators, distributors, and other businesses within the supply chain.

The Department is collaborating with other state departments of agriculture, land grant universities, and other key partners to identify a broad northeast region and envision a center that can serve a wide range of farm and food businesses and meet the long-term goals of the northeast region. As part of this, the Department held two webinars to engage stakeholders, and is also soliciting comments via a public survey. Learn more about the opportunity and how to submit your comments: agriculture.ny.gov/business-development.

$5 Million Awarded to Support New York's Companion Animals

Governor Kathy Hochul announced nearly $5 million was awarded to 17 not-for-profit animal shelters and humane societies through the Department's Companion Animal Capital Fund program. New York State was the first in the nation to fund capital projects for animal shelters. Since the program’s launch in 2017, $20 million has gone toward supporting construction, renovation, and expansion projects that help keep our furry friends safe. Projects funded this year include new living spaces for
additional cats, new medical facilities, and shelter renovations to include additional kennels.

The State is proud to continue its commitment to the care of animals awaiting their forever homes, including through an increased appropriation for the upcoming fifth round of the program made in the Fiscal Year 2023 Enacted Budget. Learn more about the program.

Department to Hold Roundtable Discussions on County Fairs

The Department announced an upcoming series of roundtable discussions with county fair representatives from across New York to help strengthen and expand these invaluable community events. For many New Yorkers, county fairs serve as the bedrock of agricultural education. From introducing kids and adults alike to agricultural practices to highlighting delicious local products, county fairs provide critical enrichment. These roundtable discussions will take place twice annually, with the initial dates to be chosen at the annual meeting of the New York State Association of Agricultural Fairs, which will be held in January 2023. The discussions will allow stakeholders the opportunity to expand and develop fairs’ agricultural initiatives statewide.

Topics for the first roundtable discussion will include:

- how to enhance fair marketing and promotion through existing programs such as Taste NY and I Love NY, as well as the creation of new programs to increase awareness of fairs statewide;
- plans for enhancing agricultural competitions at fairs, including ways to encourage county fair winners to participate at the Great New York State Fair; and
- other initiatives, including capital planning, emergency management, and commissioning an updated economic impact study.

Enroll for the Dairy Margin Coverage Program

Dairy producers still have time to enroll for 2023 coverage through USDA’s Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) Program! This program helps mitigate some of the risks involved in dairy farming and helps producers manage changes in milk and feed prices. Last year, USDA’s Farm Service Agency took steps to improve coverage for smaller dairies by offering a new Supplemental DMC program and updating its feed cost formula to better address retroactive, current, and future feed costs. The
Supplemental DMC Program allows dairy producers to protect their operations by enrolling supplemental production. Signup ends December 9, 2022. Find out more about the program and enrollment: fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/dairy-margin-coverage-program/index.

Governor Hochul Sends Assistance to Puerto Rico

Last month, Governor Kathy Hochul announced additional support to Puerto Rico’s agricultural industry and emergency food assistance organizations in the wake of Hurricane Fiona. With the help of the New York Farm Bureau, the Department worked to gather 19,000 pounds of food from New York farms to donate to Puerto Rican communities in need.

In October, the Department sent a team member to Puerto Rico as part of a multi-agency response to help families and key industries, including the agricultural industry, as they recover and rebuild. The Department also helped coordinate an approximately 37,000-pound donation of mixed fresh produce.

Register for the New York State Agricultural Society Forum

There’s still time to register for this year’s annual New York State Agricultural Society Forum! The Forum, which will take place Thursday, January 12, 2023 at the Syracuse OnCenter, offers an opportunity for farmers and other key stakeholders to discuss some of the biggest issues facing the food system and natural resource industries. Commissioner Ball will also deliver the 2023 State of Agriculture Address and provide an update on New York State’s ongoing efforts to support New York farmers and agricultural businesses. Don’t miss it! Register here: nysagsociety.org/

Shop for the Holidays at Taste NY Markets

With the holiday season in full swing, make sure to look locally for your gifts! New York is home to
over 33,000 farms, 700 farmers' markets and farm stands, and thousands of small agribusinesses that offer delicious, home-grown food and beverages as well as local products that make perfect gifts for friends and family. From local gourmet food items and locally produced craft beverages to New York made novelty items, and even bath and beauty products, Taste NY has everything you need for the holiday season! Welcome Centers and Taste NY locations are featuring a wide variety of gifts and gift sets filled with local products made and produced by New York farms and food and beverage producers.

Taste NY gift stores and product displays can also be found at service areas along the New York State Thruway, airports, train stations, and more – so if you’re travelling this holiday season, be sure to stop in! You can also shop for delicious, local food and products from home by visiting Taste NY’s online marketplace, shoptasteny.com.

New York Farm Viability Institute Selected to Administer NYS G&C Infrastructure, Technology, Research, and Development Grant Program

In November, the Department announced its selection of the New York Farm Viability Institute (NYFVI) as administrator of the New York State Grown & Certified (NYS G&C) Infrastructure, Technology, Research, and Development Grant Program. Program administrator applicants underwent a competitive selection process through Round XII of the Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) initiative.

As program administrator, NYFVI will now develop a program to administer $5.8 million to farms and food processors that are already in the NYS G&C program or will be joining the program. A total of $5 million will be dedicated to capital projects designed to improve critical farm infrastructure or help farms implement innovative technologies and purchase state-of-the-art equipment. Additionally, $800,000 will support research and development projects supporting the development of new products to be marketed under the NYS G&C program. All projects must have a direct impact...
on the region served and focus on priority areas including environmental sustainability, new product development, food safety and labor efficiency.

Learn more about the program, and watch this space for upcoming updates on how to apply for funding.

## Current Funding Opportunities

- **RFA 0284 - New York Food for New York Families Track 2**
  - Applications are due on January 18, 2023, at 4:00 pm.
- **RFP 0282 – Farmers’ Market Resiliency Grant**
  - Proposals are due at 4:00 pm on December 15, 2022.
- **RFP 0281 - New York State Farm-to-School Grant Program 2023**
  - Proposals are due January 24, 2023.
- **RFP 0280 - Urban Farms and Community Gardens Grant Program**
  - Proposals are due January 10, 2023.
- **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: Grow-NY Round Four Winners Announced

The Grow-NY Summit awards prizes to innovative food and agriculture startups that are focused on enhancing the emerging food, beverage, and agriculture innovation cluster in Central New York, the Finger Lakes, and the Southern Tier. At this year’s fourth annual summit, ProAgni ProTect, an agricultural startup company that produces antibiotic-free livestock supplements and feeds to lower methane emissions from sheep and cattle, took home the $1 million top prize!

Now in its fourth year, Grow-NY attracts exceptional startups and entrepreneurial talent from around the globe to compete in its business development accelerator and two-day pitch competition at the Grow-NY Summit. The winning teams must commit to operating in the Central New York, Finger Lakes, or Southern Tier regions for at least one year, while providing Grow-NY with a small equity investment stake in their entity. Funding for the competition, which is administered by Cornell University's Center for Regional Economic Advancement, is provided through the state's Upstate Revitalization
We congratulate ProAgni and other prize winners, including Craft Cannery, Hempitecture, Labby, Sweet Pea Plant-Based Kitchen, Vivid Machines, and Zalliant on their success, and look forward to another year of agricultural advancement. Learn more.