

# 2024 Agricultural Photo Contest Categories

## **January: Sunrises and Sunsets on the Farm**

Each month, the Department's photo contest will spotlight a different part of New York's diverse agricultural industry. In January, we are highlighting the quiet, cold months before the harvest season begins. With the winter solstice behind us, we watch winter light settle over cold ground as the slowly days grow a little longer. Send us a photo that captures your farm at the edges of the day!

## **February: Spotlighting Natural Fibers**

From the earliest days of weaving natural fibers to keep out the cold to modern textile manufacturing that influences art, fashion and culture, fiber and textile products are essential to our daily lives, and are rooted deeply in agriculture. In February, send us photos of the animals, production equipment, or finished product that keep us warm throughout this chilly month!

## **March: The Magic of Maple**

As sap begins to flow in the late winter, sugarmakers across the state tap into maple trees with meticulous care to collect the clear, watery sap that is boiled into the delicious liquid gold we know and love. This delicious blend of science and tradition is nothing short of magic, which is why this month, we want to see our agricultural alchemists' photos of all things maple, whether that be the production process or the delicious meals you make with the finished product!

## **April: Gearing Up for the Growing Season**

In the ever-evolving world of agriculture, the quest for efficiency is an ongoing endeavor. Since the earliest days of agriculture, farmers have been developing tools to better cultivate crops or care for livestock. From early tools like the plow and sickle to more recent innovations such as the mechanical reaper, tractor, and combine harvester, agricultural equipment has, over centuries, revolutionized farming practices and shaped the world we live in today!

Today, advancements in technology, automation, and sustainability continue to advance modern machinery, addressing challenges such as climate change and food security while continuing to increase productivity and efficiency. As we dive headfirst into the growing season, we want to see all the equipment that makes your lives easier – whether it be tried, true, and traditional or exciting, innovative, and advanced.

## **May: New York in Bloom**

April showers bring May flowers, which is why this month's photo contest category is "New York in Bloom!" With nearly 9,000 nurseries, greenhouses, and retail markets across the state, New York State is certainly home to a flourishing floriculture industry! From the

lavender fields of Long Island, the triumphant tulips touted across the Capital Region, or the vibrant botanical gardens blooming in the heart of the state's biggest cities, we're looking for photos that bring New York's flowers into focus!

### **June: The Heart and Heritage of New York Dairy**

Dairy farming has long been a cornerstone of New York agriculture, playing a crucial role in the state's economy and agricultural industry. As the fifth-largest milk producer in the nation, New York's dairy farms are renowned for their innovation, quality, and sustainability. This month, we're asking you to submit photos that capture the essence of New York's dairy industry: from the lush, green pastures where cows graze to the meticulous modern machinery of processing facilities, help us highlight the hard work of our dairy farmers who put fresh, delicious products on our tables!

### **July: Summer Harvest Snapshots**

With an abundance of fresh produce like cucumbers, radishes, zucchini, berries, cherries, peaches, and so much more blossoming into season, there's no better time to enjoy the freshest flavors that New York farms have to offer. This month, we invite you to share the delicious and colorful array of summer eats that decorate our plates and nourish our minds and bodies!

Whether it's a fresh farmers' market haul, a sizzling backyard barbecue showcase, or a handful of warm, sun-ripened berries fresh off the vine, show us how you savor the flavor of summer and contribute to a sustainable food system by shopping seasonally and locally!

### **August: Farm to Fair**

For nearly two centuries, county fairs have been a cornerstone of New York's agricultural industry, playing a vital role in building community and showcasing the very best of agriculture. Today, county fairs are a cherished tradition that bring people together year after year to explore New York's deep agricultural roots!

From livestock competitions to agricultural exhibits, thrilling rides and delicious foods, fairs bring together people of all ages and from all walks of life to celebrate local traditions, enjoy top-notch entertainment, and showcase the hard work of our farmers, producers, and craftsmen. This month, send us photos that encapsulate all that you love about New York's fairs, including our Great New York State Fair!

### **September: All Things Apple**

They don't call New York "The Big Apple" for nothing... not only is the apple our official state fruit, but New York is also the second-largest apple producing state in the country, growing over 30 million bushels annually of more than 40 different apple varieties. Apples and apple products play a huge role in New York agriculture, which is why this month, our photo contest category is "All Things Apple!"

Apples are more than just a fruit—they are a symbol of New York’s rich agricultural heritage, supporting local farmers and contributing significantly to the state’s economy. Submit your best photos showcasing apples in all their forms—whether it’s vibrant orchards, fresh-picked apples, delicious apple pies, cider-making, or creative apple dishes. Share your vision of how this iconic fruit is synonymous with New York State!

### **October: Autumn Agritourism**

There’s nothing like autumn in New York, which is why this month’s photo contest category is “Autumnal Agritourism!” With summer in the rearview mirror, there’s no better time than October to FALL head-first into all the fabulous agritourism opportunities that make New York’s agricultural regions such a special destination for residents and visitors alike.

Whether it’s visiting u-pick orchards, pumpkin patches, or flower fields, traversing thrilling corn mazes and hayrides (with or without spooky specters sneaking around for a scare), or decking the halls of your home with the fruits of fall harvest, this time of year offers endless opportunities to get outside and enjoy these beloved autumn traditions for New Yorkers of all ages! Send us the photos that capture New York’s amazing agritourism industry!

### **November: Cold Weather Countdown**

New Yorkers are no strangers to the cold, so of course New York’s farming community has learned over centuries how to transform their operations to meet the challenges of winter. That’s why November’s photo contest category is “Cold Weather Countdown.”

As the days grow shorter and temperatures drop, we’re inviting you all to share with us what the final days of the harvest season look like as you winterize your operation! Whether you’re covering fields, storing equipment, preserving the final fruits of your harvest, or bundling up livestock, we want to see how you prepare for the colder months ahead!

### **December: Holiday Traditions on the Farm**

As the year wraps up, many families across the state find time to gather together to brighten the darkest days of the year with food, family, and festivities. December’s photo contest category is “Holiday Traditions on the Farm” – what does the season look like on yours?

Whether it’s stringing lights up in barns and trees, cutting down a Christmas tree with your family, or gathering loved ones to cook holiday meals with fresh, local ingredients, we want to see it all! From cozy fireside moments to festive feasts, share the traditions that make your farm special during this special season.