



Spring 2021

NYSAAF

NEWSLETTER

New York State Association of Agricultural Fairs, Inc.



President's Message

The last year has certainly been an adventure! As we prepare for this year's fairs, we reflect on individuals that we have lost in these challenging times. We are grateful for their contributions and will continue to remember them as we move forward. The pandemic has had a significant impact on our fairs. It is important that we remain hopeful. Our fairs

mean a great deal to our communities. Lobby days were a success. I would like to thank Renee St. Jacques at Farm Bureau and all our members for their dedication and time for lobby days. The legislatures expressed their appreciation and support for the work we do for our communities. The experiences and education that is gained by our fair-goers is meaningful in creating lasting connections. We believe that this work was well received. It is our hope that the budget items that we had asked for will be included in the finalized budget. At the time of this newsletter the State has not completed the budget so we will watch the process closely.

What to expect in the future is not clear as we prepare this newsletter. We are encouraged that several fairs in Florida have operated successfully with some restrictions on occupancy. We have been working with our partners at the New York State Ag and Markets, Health Departments, Showpeople and other fair managers on reopening guidelines. As information is finalized, it will be shared with the Association.

Thank you and be well.
Jason Lawrence

Policy Committee 2021 - Lobby Day

Thank you to those who were able to participate in our virtual lobby day this year.

Thank you also to Renee St. Jacques and her staff for spending the time to contact legislators and set up the meetings.

The results are very positive and it's clear that our time discussing the issues with the decision makers is very important.

Although our initial requests were for the Premium dollars, the discussion with Assembly member Donna Lupardo, chair of the Assembly Ag Committee, revealed that she had also included another round of capital dollars for \$5 million.

Further discussions with Deputy Ag secretary Pat Hooker and subsequently with Ag and Markets included a request for an infusion of dollars to help with the start up costs for fairs due to the lack of a fair last year and the additional cost related to Covid 19 regulations.

At the time of this writing there is \$8 million in the proposed budget for agriculture.

How much stays and how much is for the

local fairs remains to be seen.

We remain optimistic that there will be some relief for our fairs.

I believe there is a possibility that legislation could be past separate from the budget that would provide a quick infusion of money for start up. Unfortunately that could be too late for some fairs.

Respectively
R Harry Booth

Congratulation

Congratulations to Becca Lickfeld, Erie County Fair, a graduate from IAFE Institute of Fair Management in 2020. Becca commented "The Institute of Fair Management was a great experience. It allowed me to learn about different aspects of the fairs and I now have a better understanding of the fair industry as a whole. Meeting and networking with other fair employees was invaluable and I am happy to have made those connections."

Ag Awareness **FAIRSTRONG in 2021!**

2020 was a tough year for Ag Awareness, Covid-19 ended the Fair season before it began. Because of Covid-19, our 2020 Ag Awareness projects will showcasing in 2021. They are;

Afton Fair - will showcase their cattle show by enhancing the experience with a new sound system for better show operations. The **Altamont Fair** - is showcasing "Nutrition in Agriculture". **Broome County Fair** - knows the importance of proper hygiene when encountering animals. The new handwashing stations will encourage guest to wash their hands when petting the animals. **Essex County Fair** - will feature a new educational display with "Fun Facts" for veggies and dairy. **Hemlock Fair** - a new exhibit will highlight the importance of Livingston County Agriculture. They are partnering with Cornell Cooperative Extension to showcase hands-on interactivities for youth. **Otsego County Fair** - This exhibit will provide educational opportunities for fairgoers to learn where their food really comes from and will be located in the livestock area at the Fair. **Schaghticoke Fair** - a livestream experience will take place of the Birthing Center at the New York State Fair. **Seneca County Fair** - will showcase Seneca County agriculture at its best. Important facts about, numbers of animals, species, crop acres grown in the regions. **Trumansburg Fair** - will feature an exhibit on the fiber commodity. **Wyoming County Fair** - is repurposing a building in the "Agriculture Expositions Center."

Also showcase in 2021 will be the following Fairs;

Allegany County Fair - will build new wash racks to ensure the animals are clean and ready for the Showring. **Cattaraugus County Fair** - guests will be privy to additional educational signs. **Chenango County Fair** - a partnership with the Boy Scouts will feature an exhibit

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Ag Awareness

FAIRSTRONG in 2021.....from page 1

of local farm products in the education area of the grounds. **Cortland County Junior Fair** - 4-Her's will do public presentation about the importance of raising goats.

Delaware County Fair - new handwashing station will be available to everyone to insure the importance of public health. **Genesee Valley Breeders Association Horse Show** - provides a great opportunity to learn about the equine industry with Veterinarian presentation. **Goshen Historic Track** - will feature an exhibit on the history of the track and the importance to the Village of Goshen.

Herkimer County Fair - a new tinsmithing attractions will be featured. Tinsmithing is a very old art. **Orleans County 4-H Fair** - is investing new cost-effective lighting will be installed into the barn area. **Oswego County Fair** - will feature the importance of the various local farm organization and the resources available to people in the County. **Tioga County Fair** - continues to make improvements to the agriculture area by purchasing a new sound system.

I look forward to visiting as many Fairs as possible, **FAIRSTRONG in 2021.**

Executive Secretary Message – Russell L. Marquart, CFE

What a year it has been. I missed seeing all of you very much this past January. I assure you we will meet again this summer and we plan to meet and mingle again in January in Rochester. I hope you will plan to attend, the opportunity to network is very important.

Our Association has not been idle. Throughout the year we have attempted to stay on top of what is going on in the area as well as the Fair industry. We have made available to you information regarding resources available to you as you plan your re-opening. I do feel that Fairs, and their respective presentation will forever be changed. What will the New Normal be? That is yet to be determined. Whatever it will be I guarantee that our Fairs will be strong showcases for New York Agriculture because we are resilient.

I am planning on visiting as many fairs this year as time will permit. The planning for the Convention is already underway. The committee is working hard to provide you with education and social functions.

I look forward to seeing all down the road!

CONVENTION 2022

Plans are in full swing for the 133rd Annual NYSAAF Convention. The program committee is working diligently to make this convention the best that it can be. Please let us know if there is a hot topic you would like to see at the convention or if there is something you would like to present on. Thinking of obtaining your CFE or CVFM from the IAFE? Presenting at our convention will allow you to gain points towards these certifications. Please feel free to reach out to myself, Ed, John or Julia with any ideas you may have.

Sincerely,

Ed Rossley – 1st VP NYSAAF

2022 NY Fairs Pass Available

An official New State Fairs Pass is available for \$100.00. The pass is good at all NYSAAF member Fairs and the New York State Fair. The pass admits the person named and one companion plus parking where available. Applications and a complete list of member fairs is available at www.nyfairs.org.

This & That

Hall of Fame Nominations

The Board of Directors has approved a change to the criteria for the Hall of Fame Award. Information will be sent out in the near future with regard to this change. For updated application form please see the Association website for up to date information.

Fair Managers Meeting

Mark Your Calendar

Fair Manager Meeting – President Harold Smith has announced the meeting is still moving forward with regard to the Fall Meeting to be held at the Tailwater Lodge, Altmar, NY. The dates are to be determined.

Would you like to serve on the Executive Committee?

The nominating committee is looking for people interested in serving on the Executive Committee. To do so, please submit a letter of intent, stating your interests, back ground and involvement with your Fair and our Association. Also, submit a letter from your respective Fair Board supporting you for the consideration. These 2 letters should be sent to the Executive Secretary, Russ Marquart NO later than November 1, 2021.

Dates to Remember

March 15	NYSAAF Annual State Pass sale begins
April 8IAFE Cyber Seminar – Agriculture Programming at Your Fair (IFM #130)	
April 9Scholarship application from students to respective Fair deadline	
April 14IAFE Cyber Seminar – Weather Safety – Mother Nature Can Be Nasty! – FREE	
April 16	Scholarship applications should be sent to and received by District Directors for evaluation
May 7	Scholarship applications – District Directors to Executive Secretary deadline
May 13-15.....IAFE Zone #1 Meeting – hosted by the York Fair, York, Pennsylvania	
TBD	IAFE Convention Registration Opens San Antonio, TX
July 6.....	Fair Season opens in New York IAFE "First Time" Convention Scholarship Deadline
September 8.....IAFE Cyber Seminar – Marketing and Advertising Basics (IFM #120)	
November 5- Approx	NYSAAF Convention Registration Emailed to all Member Fairs & Associate Members
November 15.....	NYSAAF Convention Center Registration Opens
November 28 – December 1	IAFE Convention & Trade Show San Antonio, TX
December 15	NYSAAF Convention Center Registration Closes
January 14 – 17	NYSAAF Annual Convention, Joesph A. Floreano Riverside Convention Center, Rochester, NY

Pushing through the Pandemic – Ulster County Fair

Thanks to the NYS Agricultural Infrastructure Grant Program, the Ulster County Fair was able to get a huge project done even with the Pandemic cancelling all of the other activities at the Fairgrounds. Thanks to Mike's Barn Painting from Massena, NY, we were able to do some major repair to several of our beautiful old barns and have them all decked out with two new coats of paint. This project was Task 1 of the 2017 Grant. Two more tasks remain to be completed as part of the 2017 Grant but are being delayed until spring.



Horse Barn Repair and Painting



Agricultural Museum

From the Vice President

Hey Everyone:

I hope you are all doing well. The good news is the days are getting warmer and longer. Last month I enjoyed a trip to Florida. I visited some fairs -that's right fairs! It was encouraging to see the dedicated fairgoers, exhibitors and Carnivals were not deterred by the virus. I observed signage which encouraged adherence to the CDC guidelines. Hand sanitizer was plentiful, and masks were required when entering buildings and suggested when it was impossible to socially distance. At some locations there were arrows indicating one way foot traffic.

Although we are awaiting regulatory guidance it is not too early to draft a reopening plan that can be presented to your local Department of Health. It is important to keep the communication lines open. I hope you have a great spring which, leads to reopening news soon!

Ed Rossley

1st Vice President

Ontario County Fair 2020 Take Two: A Lesson in Resilience and Adaptability



When the Ontario County Fair as we historically know it was canceled, it did not come as a shock as many other fairs and events were being canceled all across the state because of the COVID-19 pandemic. But, the Ontario County fair is an important experience that many people look forward to every year, and many people were saddened when this event became another causality of the pandemic. 4-H'ers were no exception. For 4-H youth, county fair is a milestone in their year, a time where they come together to for fun and learning and to exhibit their hard work. From rabbits and dairy cows and dresses and science projects, 4-H'ers work hard all year to prepare projects for exhibition in the county fair. When New York State started announcing plans for reopening, the 4-H staff, volunteers, and the Ontario County Fair board came together to develop an alternative plan that would recapture some normalcy and give youth the opportunity to get their hard work evaluated and rewarded. The week of August 10th through the 15th, the dream became reality when series of shows took place.

Our Emphasis was on our youth and was made possible because of the collaboration of the Ontario County Fair board, 4-H staff,

volunteers, and local sponsors. The shows were held at the fairgrounds, and all state guidelines were followed.

The goal of shows at the fair has always been to provide a safe space for youth to interact with their peers, share what they had learned, receive feedback and encouragement from caring judges, and step up into leadership roles. However, what made these shows very special was the challenges that were overcome to make them possible. Volunteers got creative in how they ran the shows, and judges donated their time to the effort. The youth were the most impressive. From getting the fairgrounds ready the week before, to preparing their projects and wearing their masks faithfully, to helping out at the shows themselves, the youth showed leadership and resilience that was stronger than ever before. Most that stepped up to help with running shows were teens but even the younger members were seen taking responsibility and caring for their friends throughout the week. One instance was 9-year-old Mason who noticed a younger youth struggling with reading during the poultry science contest and came alongside to help.

The Ontario County Fair family was so excited to be able to gather for a unique show experience during an unprecedented time. In addition to the traditional value of this specific experience, the resiliency and adaptability that the youth were able to practice are invaluable skills that are more important than ever in times like these. As Sherry Thompson, the volunteer 4-H rabbit superintendent so aptly put it in her address to the youth: "Hopefully we will be back to normal next year, but even if not, we've proven that we can do anything."

As we look forward, and prepare for 2021 with continued improvements we are optimistic that anything is possible.

Your New District Directors

District 1 Director – Gary Newkirk, CFE, Ulster County Fair

I was elected to the Board of Directors of the Ulster County Fair in November of 1983. I served as President and Vice President for several terms and my main responsibility was Concession's Manager and grounds layout. I was a volunteer until 2004 when I took over as Fair Manager. 2020 would have been my 36th Fair.

My first NYSAAF Convention was in January of 1984 and have not missed one since. I have served on several committees, have served as District Director in the past, President of the NYSAFM and President of the NYSAAF.

I have been involved with the IAFE for almost 20 years and have served as Chair of the Concessions and Commercial Exhibits Committee, and still remain on that committee.

The Fair has always been a family event for me, with my daughters and Grandson being very much involved.

District Director 5 – Rhonda Barriger, Afton Fair

My husband and I organized the demolition derby for 14 years and I was concessions manager from 1989 until 2003 and then I returned in 2006 as a director and concessions manager. I have been president of The Afton Fair for the last 5 years. I oversee several committees at the fair some of them include entertainment, vendors as well as the grounds upkeep and maintenance. I think I do as every other director and do whatever needs to be done to make the fair a success.

I have attended the NYSAAF convention for over 10 years and each year I am excited in anticipation of what I will learn while we are there.

I have 3 children and 4 grandchildren. 2 of my children and 2 of my grandchildren

Associate Member – Reminder

Associate Members as a reminder, your membership dues in our Association has been waived for the current year, 2021. You are all considered members in good standing. We understand that it has been a tough year and we are understanding of your difficult times. The Associate Member dues renewal applications for 2022 will be mailed to all current members in August/September 2021 with a due date of December 1, 2021 for inclusion in the Membership Directory.

Have a great Fair Season!!!!

are shareholders of The Afton Fair. My son was a director and my daughter is currently a director. I have tried to instill the love of fairs on my children but most the time they think I love the fairs too much.

I am employed at a not for profit agency and have worked in the not for profit field for 13 years.

My hobbies are visiting other fairs to see what great ideas they have and trying to use some of those ideas for the betterment of The Afton Fair. Almost every weekend is spent at the fairgrounds doing projects and upkeep.

My father had harness race horses so we never knew what fair we would end up at but he stabled the horses at Afton Fairgrounds so this place is very dear to me. I remember the fun I had at fairs and all the different fun things

I got to do while at these fairs and try to bring the same fun and memories to The Afton Fair for all the guests that come to the fair.

District 7 Director – Sharlene Reeves, Monroe County Fair

Sharlene has been with the Monroe County Agricultural Society for 20 years and currently serves as President. I became involved in the Fair when I started showing cattle at the Fair and in 4-H projects. Sharlene is married with 4 children and 9 grandchildren. She is currently employed as an Executive Assistant at Birchcrest Tree and Landscaping. In addition, she is Show Manager of Gardenscape. I look forward to being involved with NYSAAF.

Visit us on our website at: www.nyfairs.org

Newsletter

The NYSAAF Newsletter is published 3 times a year in April, September and December. Send information for the newsletter to Russell Marquart at nysaaf@gmail.com. Thank you to all who contributed to this newsletter. Visit us on our website at: www.nyfairs.org.



NYSAAF Contact Information

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IAFE Zone #1 Meeting
May 13-15, 2021
York, Pennsylvania

*Spring
is Here!*



Maintaining Partnerships during the Pandemic

Submitted by Jenny Lang-
Ulster County Fair

Many of you may recall that Jaime Churchill, Lucy Joyce, and myself held a roundtable discussion at the 2020 Convention regarding relationships between Agricultural Societies and Cornell Cooperative Extension offices in their respective counties. We thought we would keep you all apprised of how we have worked to maintain the working relationship of the Ulster County Agricultural Society and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County during the pandemic. The following is a summary of a 4-H event held on the Ulster County Fairgrounds this August. It is a wonderful example of how we are all working to maintain our relationship and keep the lines of communication open between the two organizations. I hope you enjoy reading about the "4-H Safari" which is also the third place winner in the IAFE Non Fair Usage awards category and will be presented in the champions circle at the virtual convention this year!

On August 1, 2020, Cornell Cooperative Extension's Ulster County 4-H Youth Development Program held a 4-H Drive Thru Safari(affectionately referred to as the "Safari" by those creating the event) at the Ulster County Fairgrounds. The event was scheduled to run from 12-4 with free admission. The concept was to give the 4-H youth who would have showcased their animal and static exhibits at the Fair a place to do so in a safe, socially distanced way. This was also a way to offer a safe, socially distanced event that people could attend with their families.

Attendees drove through the Safari seeing animals such as horses, cows, goats, and poultry as well as displays of static exhibits made by the 4-Hers. As they made the turn out of the Safari, they were offered the chance to purchase 4-H milkshakes on their way out! While the event was free to the public, the 4-H Milkshake Booth served as an important fundraising event for the program and many donations were received.

The Ulster County Agricultural Society and Fair Manager Gary Newkirk manage the Ulster County Fair and the Fairgrounds. The Agricultural Society and Mr. Newkirk created a working group to closely assist CCE/4-H to ensure the safety and success of the Safari. The decision was made to hire the main security guard that oversees the Ulster County



Fair to be on the grounds for the event since he has extensive knowledge of the grounds and has worked closely with the UCAS for years. As a team, we all worked together to map out the route that the attendees would take to get maximum use of the grounds in a safe way. Policies regarding mask usage by exhibitors and rules for social distancing were created and observed. Attendees were to remain in their vehicles the entire time. Signage was produced and posted to remind them of this throughout the event. The UCAS and CCE/4-H held weekly meetings via Zoom, exchanged emails, phone calls, and text messages, and met in person (socially distanced, of course) to create an operating plan of the event. Everyone involved brought their own expertise to the table giving us the advantage of working out a detailed plan as to how the day would run. Volunteers were organized and given specific positions that they were to be in charge of as well as a few extra volunteers to jump in where needed. Working together

to create such an event could have proved challenging seeing as none of us had any experience hosting an event like this but because we have worked so hard to create a positive working relationship between the two groups, all went rather smoothly. Everyone had the safety of the exhibitors and the public in the forefront of their minds.

The event was announced via email to the 4-H community, on Facebook, and the Cornell Cooperative Extension website as well as the radio station WDST.

The event was promoted through press releases, e-blasts, social media, Radio Woodstock, and the Cornell Cooperative Extension website. The event press release was pick up by WPDH Radio ([Ulster County 4-H plans 'Drive-thru Safari,' online livestock auction](#)) and the Daily Freeman Newspaper ([Drive-thru Safari Coming to the Ulster County Fairgrounds](#)).

This article was written by Jenny Lang of the UCAS with help from Tara Kleinhans of CCEUC.