

## TRADE WINDS BLOW IN SYRACUSE

Typical of most Forums, the weather was stormy for the 187th annual gathering of the NYS Agricultural Society. But given the 2019 theme – “The Shifting Winds of Trade” – bad weather only added to the drama already caused by the Federal Government shutdown.

The Forum featured four experts who broke-down the trade debate, discussed emerging opportunities, and addressed how best to resolve conflict without disrupting markets. Global expert, Dr. Robert Thompson, Tom Sleight of the U.S. Grains Council, Bill Schreiber of O-AT-KA Milk Products and Kathryn Bamberger of Empire State Development set the table for discussion.

US trade policy has evolved dramatically from the 1930s to establish certain rules of the jungle, according to Dr. Robert Thompson, professor emeritus at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. With extensive work experience in more than 90 countries worldwide, Thompson quipped that President Donald Trump hasn’t read many of these as trade policy between once friendly partners and others is now under the microscope and threatened. “The winds of trade have been whipping us,” said Thompson, “but that’s nothing new. Moving forward, there are many factors that will dramatically alter US agricultural trade policy that will be out of the hands of local producers and government, such as dynamic changes in global consumption, urbanization, production practices, land utilization, and climate change.”

### Pay Attention

“We need to pay attention to what’s happening because trade creates opportunities for agriculture,” said Tom Sleight, president and chief executive officer of the U.S. Grains Council. “Markets for US agricultural goods are jeopardized as countries across the globe shop elsewhere, and exploratory conversations become inked deals potentially excluding the US. Standing still is not a winning strategy. Consider:



- 95.6% of global population lives outside the US
- 80% of future consumer spending will come from outside of the US
- 97% of population growth for the next 35 years will occur outside of the US

### Wisdom Born of Pain

Owned by Upstate Niagara Milk Cooperative and Dairy Farmers of America, O-AT-KA was created to simply and effectively clear excess milk from the marketplace and minimize the financial impact to its cooperative owners. “It’s a story that has been told time and time again throughout the dairy industry,” said Bill Schreiber, O-AT-KA CEO, “but particularly in the Northeast given our region’s reliance on Class I fluid markets. At O-AT-KA, we’ve learned that the best way to serve our member owners is not to focus on just processing milk, but to become irreplaceable to our

*continued on page 3*



From L to R: Keynote speaker Dr. Robert Thompson, Marc Smith and John Rusziewicz.

Check out our  
new logo!



Please visit our  
redesigned website at  
[nysagsociety.org](http://nysagsociety.org)

## CAN WE FEATURE YOUR PRODUCT AT THE 2020 FORUM?



Contact Peter Pamkowski at 518-221-5161 or [ppamkowski@gmail.com](mailto:ppamkowski@gmail.com) if you have interest in showcasing your food product(s) at the 2020 Annual Forum. In 2019, nearly 30 businesses contributed product to our morning and evening refreshments as well as lunch and dinner menus.



## SEE YOU IN SARATOGA!

Each summer, the NYS Ag Society Board travels to a different corner of the state to witness agriculture in action in local communities. All members are welcome. On July 8-9, our group will converge on Saratoga. We're off to the races! Stay tuned for more information.

For more information on the NYS Agricultural Society, Foundation or the 188th Annual Meeting & Forum, please contact Ann Shephard at 315-727-5449, [ann@nysagsociety.org](mailto:ann@nysagsociety.org)

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT — Judi Whittaker

The 2019 Forum was a great success. I hope we were able to bring everyone up to speed on the intricacies of current trade policy. It's hard to believe 2020 is just a few months away. As we begin planning for the next Forum, the program committee – under the leadership of Mark Modzeleski - is looking forward to providing another great session.

In the coming year I'm looking forward to changes in the FFA Chapter of the Year Award. Generously sponsored by the NYS Grange, we're increasing the opportunity for more diverse chapters across the state to be recognized for their outstanding work in local communities. This will not be based on National FFA criteria, but something much more attainable for new and established chapters across NYS.

Our many volunteers appreciate all who have attended the Forum in the past and hope to see many more of you at future meetings. Leveraging the significant history of the NYS Agricultural Society, I see a very bright future as I begin serving my term as president.



LEADNY Class 11 members gathered for a quick photo at the 2019 Forum. From L to R: Julie Berry, Shawn Bossard, Bethany Wallis, Judi Whittaker, Bruce Dehm, Ed Staehr.

## LEAD 17 TRAVELS TO KENYA AND BACK

**Katie Carpenter:** "I have washed the last of the red dirt out of my hair but these people, this experience, and the memories of Kenya will stay with me a lifetime. I am thankful for the LEAD NY program for so many reasons, but this study trip has truly been an incredible capstone for two years of leadership development and growth."

**Jeannette Kreher:**

"Everyone has a cell phone in Kenya. Money is transferred through MPesa (Mobile Money). MPesa is a means for money transfer, financing and microfinancing launched in 2007 by Vodafone for Safaricom and Vodacom, the largest mobile network operators in Kenya and Tanzania. There are MPesa shops everywhere like you would find a pharmacy or convenient store at every major US intersection."



NYS Ag Society board members Jeannette Kreher and Katie Carpenter travelled with LEADNY Class 17 to Kenya. From L to R: Jeannette, Katie, and Emmaline Long.

## Trade Winds (continued)

key customers. We do this by serving their needs and building strategic relationships less focused on price and more focused on a value proposition. This is wisdom born of pain.

"We need to help our customers be successful," said Schreiber, "and ask questions like how can we make their business better. How can we make it stronger? How can we help them grow? This approach is as relevant to international customers as our domestic partners. Given the amount of milk that is produced in the US today, the international marketplace is where our focus should be in the dairy industry. While O-AT-KA is a small player in the overall international marketplace, exports remain an important component of our business strategy."

Over the course of 60 years, O-AT-KA's business portfolio has grown to include filled milks, nutritional beverages, ethnic drinks, evaporated milks, diversified packaging options, coffee and energy drinks, retail butter, specialty beverages, and an assortment of dairy commodities. "We've had a strategic shift in our focus from 'selling what we can make', to 'making what we can sell,'" said Schreiber. "No business model lasts forever. We understand this. While we honor past successes, we know and understand that our focus will continue to develop and evolve. It is the nature of our business."

According to Schreiber, the way forward for Northeast processors will be:

- Continued strategic investment in infrastructure and assets
- Relationship building at a level that has eluded many US manufacturers and suppliers for decades
- A commitment to supplying export buyers with what they actually want, rather than settling for what we can make today

### NY is a Brand Name

According to Kathryn Bamberger, NYS producers/manufacturers/processors have a distinct advantage on the world stage: New York is already a brand name to potential customers. Kathryn is an international trade and investment specialist for Empire State Development whose top priority is job creation. "We help facilitate this through the efficient use of loans, grants, tax credits, real estate development, marketing and other forms of assistance," said Bamberger. "We want to provide a full menu of services to help companies connect to the world. This is a business of details, relationships and patience."



*Kathryn Bamberger is an international trade and investment specialist for Empire State Development, and concluded the 2019 Forum program outlining support for NYS businesses interested in developing international markets.*

## COMMISSIONER BALL DELIVERS STATE-OF-THE-STATE

The climax of the annual Forum is the presentation of the "State of the State" of agriculture address presented by Commissioner Richard Ball of the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets. "I'm glad to be at this family reunion," said Ball. "I'm the luckiest man on the planet to be part of the 1% of the population that's involved in agriculture and working for you in Albany. 2018 was a sobering year in terms of weather events, market upheavals, exports, unpredictable prices and the government shut-down. Despite these challenges, I'm excited by our opportunities. We have a lot going for us as we look for new and better means of continuing our longstanding traditions of farming and food and beverage production. New York agriculture remains the best there is, and I wouldn't want to be farming anywhere else. We have nearly 36,000 farms that are producing some of the best food in the world and feeding our



communities. New York is the 13th largest economy in the world. Think about that for a minute."

### Commissioner Talks Trade

"Forty-eight percent of what we produce in New York is exported," added Ball. "A great deal of attention has been directed toward China, and rightly so, but our trade with China is dwarfed by our trade volume with our two largest partners: Canada and Mexico. About 25 percent of fresh apple exports go to Mexico and nearly one-third of the total US apple crop is exported. New York alone exports 17 percent of our milk supply to Mexico. So we have a very real interest and a very real concern. Once these markets are lost, we could find ourselves in a place where our customers have gone elsewhere.

"But NY agriculture is strong, diverse and produces high quality products," said Ball. "Our governor is asking us to question everything, so we can develop and implement applicable and accurate programs and policies. I travel to every corner of the state, and everything I see inspires me."

# WHAT CAN \$10,000 DO IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

1. Provide grow towers for local school districts.
2. Offer urban teenagers an agricultural job experience, exposure to leadership responsibilities and a taste for potential careers in agriculture and food.



Donors to the NYS Ag Society Foundation are supporting two projects in 2019 in rural Madison County and Brooklyn, NY. A total of 16 applications were received. Winners include:

## **Red Hook Initiative (RHI):** RED HOOK INITIATIVE

Funds will support the launch of a youth farm apprentices project for high school students from Red Hook, Brooklyn. Twenty-five youth will be employed on the 2.75-acre Red Hook Farm and 1-acre urban garden in the NYC Housing Authority Red Hook West Houses. This effort will expand RHI's mission which focuses on environmental sustainability, urban gardening, food justice, and nutrition and increases the amount and variety of locally grown, organic produce to low income Red Hook families.

## **Cornell Cooperative Extension of Madison County:** Cornell University Cooperative Extension

Located within either ag or biology classrooms in 10 Madison County school districts, grow towers will provide a foundation for a meaningful curriculum that focuses on crop production, biotechnology, and sustainability. Using aeroponics—the same technology NASA uses—Tower Gardens grow plants with only water and nutrients rather than dirt. Students will also visit a large-scale vegetable producer and Skype with a Cornell University plant scientist to provide a virtual tour of a plant breeding lab.

Please encourage an organization, school, FFA Chapter, 4H Club or other group you know to apply for a NYS Ag Society Foundation grant for 2020. Applications are due December 2019, and can be found online at [nysagsociety.org](http://nysagsociety.org).

## BAYER, INC. SUPPORTS 2019 AMBASSADOR CLASS



*Kent Taylor of Bayer, Inc. brought the 2019 Ambassador Class to center stage to discuss the need for quality industry leaders for the future. This is the second year that Bayer has supported the Ambassador program.*

In late 2018, Bayer, Inc. awarded the NYS Ag Society Foundation \$10,000 to exclusively sponsor the 2019 Ambassador Scholar class and to provide a secondary leadership development experience this summer.

In all, 15 Ambassadors were selected for the 2019 class, including nine students from SUNY Cobleskill and Cornell University. Six Ambassadors are newly hired by GrowNYC, Hudson Valley Fresh Dairy LLC, and Cornell Cooperative Extension. In addition to participating in the 2019 Forum paired with an industry mentor, Ambassadors attended a business meal etiquette and networking presentation, Cornell Agritech and LEADNY panel discussions, and an exclusive documentary showing of *Food Evolution* coordinated by the NE Agribusiness & Feed Alliance.

This is the second gift that Bayer has made to the Ambassador Scholar program. In 2017, Bayer was one of 23 donors who raised \$100,000 in six months to provide a permanent Ambassador endowment fund.



## FOUNDATION GAINING MOMENTUM THANKS TO DONORS

Once the NYS Agricultural Society Foundation was formed, there's been no stopping the momentum!

- One fund has become three
- \$100,000 in gifts has multiplied to \$300,000
- Friends, foundations and corporate sponsors like Bayer, Inc. have joined 70 original donors to grow the Foundation's reach

In 2012, the Foundation's mission was simple:

- Provide a tax-deductible vehicle for donors that could support great Forum speakers, fund special projects, and promote agricultural education and leadership development opportunities

**Seven years later, the Foundation has:**

1. Supported 43 Forum speakers and panelists from across the nation, region and state
2. Awarded \$40,000 to 20 grass-roots organizations located in urban, suburban and rural NY to maximize youth exposure to agriculture and careers
3. Sponsored 80 Ambassador Scholars – ranging from 18 to 25 years old - to attend the Annual Forum
4. Updated the NYS Ag Society website and funded improved Forum registration
5. Helped celebrate the 100th anniversary of FFA

The sky is the limit for what the Foundation can tackle with donor support. Immediate priorities include:

- Growing leadership development opportunities for Ambassador Scholars

- Leveraging donor dollars with industry partners to grow community grant-making

You can help!

- Contribute online at [nysagsociety.org](http://nysagsociety.org)
- Provide input to the Foundation's board of directors
- Encourage organizations that you are involved with to partner with the Foundation to pack a more powerful punch for agriculture in local communities

### NYS Ag Society Website Gets Reboot

*Thank You Foundation Donors for Your Support*

The NYS Ag Society website is a work horse. Consider:

- It hosts three organizations including the NYS Ag Society, NYS Ag Society Foundation and Daniel Parrish Witter Museum
- Enables on-line Forum registration and charitable giving to the NYS Ag Society Foundation
- Provides on-line applications for awards, Foundation grants, and Ambassador Scholars
- Communicates NYS ag facts
- Provides links to NYS Ag Society publications including past Cultivator issues and the Forum program book
- Is a storehouse for positive stories on NYS agriculture.

March 15, the NYS Ag Society launched a new, secure look at [nysagsociety.org](http://nysagsociety.org). The redevelopment effort was sponsored by a generous gift from donors to the NYS Ag Society Foundation. You can also follow the NYS Ag Society on Instagram and FaceBook.

### NYS AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY FOUNDATION BOARD MEMBERS

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# RECOGNIZING AGRICULTURE'S FINEST AT 2019 FORUM

Forum lunch and dinner programs honored agriculture's promoters, journalists, cutting-edge producers, and legacy farms. "Each one of these awardees has contributed to our community and has a great story to tell," said Commissioner Ball.

## 2019 Century & Bicentennial Farm Awards:

Recognizing Eastern NY farms in 2019 that are in continuous operation for 100 years or more by the same family on the same land.

**Century Farm:** Hand Melon Farm of Greenwich, NY produces a signature sweet melon that was first trademarked in 1937. Today the operation is in the "hands" of the fourth and fifth generations who have focused exclusively on growing field crops and produce on their 425-acres, and operating two retail stands.

**Century Farm:** Owners of Dellavale Farm have created a dairy of excellence in Pattersonville, NY— Montgomery County. The fourth generation is promoting agriculture through other ventures, including Dellavale Farm Dwellings, which provides a farm-stay for urban families.

**Bicentennial Farm:** Danforth Jersey Farm was established in 1817. Founders were recognized for producing quality dairy products and livestock as early as 1893 at the Chicago World's Fair. Today the farm produces butter, yogurt, bottled milk, fresh and aged cheeses from their prized Jersey herd.

**Business of the Year:** Awarded to both a producer and an agribusiness, recognizing quality, leadership and innovation.

**Producer Category:** Located at the Brooklyn Naval Yard (recognized right), Brooklyn Grange operates the world's largest rooftop soil farms, located on two roofs in NYC. They grow over 50,000 pounds of produce per year and operate an apiary.

**Agribusiness Category:** Countryside Veterinary Clinic is the largest provider of veterinary services in northern NY, serving over 250 clients within Lewis, Oneida, Jefferson and St. Lawrence counties.



**Next Generation Farmer Award:** Recognizing a long-time producer and those new to the industry who are farming in new and vibrant ways.

**Rulfs Orchards:** Third generation sisters have created a year-round business which began as an orchard and traditional farm market. They have added a greenhouse, purchased a flower shop, and serve breakfast and lunch at their café located in Peru, NY—Clinton County.

**Wild Brute Winery:** Launched with just two barrels in 2013,

Justin Rechtenwald—owner of Wild Brute Winery—is a great example of the creative and independent spirit of the NYS wine industry. Given limited production capability, Rechtenwald opened a Hornell-based wine bar and New American eatery— The Brute—which showcases their wines as well as a wide variety of beers and wine from other NY labels.

**Distinguished Service Citation:** Recognizing an individual who has dedicated a lifetime of service, resulting in outstanding contributions to NY agriculture.

**Jim Allen:** Serving the apple industry for over four decades, Jim (far right) continues to make an impact for producers in 2019. For over 20 years he served with the NY Apple Association where he promoted NY apples in venues such as the NYC Marathon. Jim has worked hard to unite all producer groups from across the nation, chairing the US Apple Export Council three times.



**Farm Safety Awards:** The NYS Agricultural Society's Farm Safety program recognizes farm operators who have unique and successful farm safety programs for their employees.

**Pedersen Farms:** A diversified vegetable and grain farm based in Seneca Castle, NY, owners Rick and Laura Pedersen prioritize "safety first, work later" for their 42 employees. The operation produces a variety of vegetables, hops, and grains both organically and traditionally on approximately 1,500 acres.

**Hudson Valley Farm Hub (HVFH):** HVFB is a non-profit center operating on 1,255 acres in Hurley, NY. It's dedicated to professional farmer training, agricultural research, technology demonstration and service as an educational resource for advances in food and farming. The farm has 41 employees.

**NYS FFA Chapter of the Year:** Founded nationally in 1925, FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of high school students by developing their potential for leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education. The NYS Agricultural Society recognizes a NY chapter annually that exemplifies excellence in all categories.

**Pioneer Central School FFA, Yorkshire, NY:** With approximately 100 active members, Pioneer FFA is active in local, state and national events. Pioneer is one of the largest geographical school districts in NYS covering approximately 250 square miles in parts of Erie, Wyoming, Cattaraugus and Allegany counties.

## THANK YOU RETIRING VOLUNTEERS



### Ag Promotion Awards:

Recognizes individuals and groups for their efforts to improve the understanding of agriculture in NYS.

**Wayne County Apple Tasting Tour:** Operating in New York's largest apple producing county, this partner-based program drives visitors to the region in October and educates consumers about apples.

**Jeff Katris:** Jeff (left) is the communications director at Indian Creek Farm and has

attracted thousands of customers to the 40-acre Ithaca farm with his "playful perspectives and fanciful tales." His creative talents entertain and educate consumers young and old alike.

**Cap Creal Journalism Awards:** Named for farmer, Ag Society member and NYS Assemblyman Harold "Cap" Creal, the Cap Creal Journalism Awards were created to inspire positive coverage of NYS agriculture.

**Printed News Story:** Paul Post, *The Saratogian*, "Analysts Sour on U.S. Milk System"

**Printed Feature Story:** Corey Kilgannon, *The New York Times*, "When the Death of a Family Farm Leads to Suicide"

**Printed Editorial:** Bob Confer, *Lockport Union-Sun Journal*, "The Deadly Stress of Farming"

**Audio/Video News Clip:** Dennis Webster, WJTN-WWSE, *Farm Bureau Radio Show*: "Grape Summit"

**Blogs/Online Feature:** Jason Detzel CCE Livestock, "Are the Cows Cold?"

**Photograph:** Julie Lewis, *The Daily Star*, "Fowl Play" (right)



### Encourage an Application

NYS agriculture is vast and diverse. Each year, we only scratch the surface of industry innovators, promoters, and journalists who are doing good work in the field. Help the NYS Agricultural Society acknowledge your neighbors, mentors, collaborators and partners by nominating them for one of eight awards we present annually. For more information, go to [nysagsociety.org](http://nysagsociety.org). Also on our website is a complete listing of past winners.



Members of the NYS Ag Society Board include bottom row: Elizabeth Claypoole, Judi Whittaker, Anthony Colangelo. Middle row: Jeannette Kreher, Hans Kunze, Katie Carpenter, Sandra Prokop, Ehle Shachter, Natalie Wrege, Chris Kelder. Top row: Craig Yunker (Cornell Trustee), Peter Pamkowski (Forum Site & Menu Coordinator), Barb Hanselman, Mark Modzeleski, Beth Keene, Dick Church (Distinguished Service Chair), Bruce Dehm, Daren Phillips. Missing: Miquela Hanselman, Mary Beth LaMay, John Noble (Cornell Trustee), Melissa Osgood, Tim Veazey, Nancy Weber, Chris Whipple, Rick Zimmerman.

**Thank you to Beth Claypoole and Bruce Dehm** for their many years of service and leadership to the NYS Agricultural Society. For the past four years, Beth has served as VP and President. Bruce Dehm has served as Treasurer and will be succeeded by Anthony Colangelo.

## WELCOME NEW DIRECTORS

Originally from NYC, **Anthony Colangelo** transitioned from Wall Street to WNY to work with dairy farmers at Dehm Associates, LLC. He received a BS in finance and marketing from Marist College. Participating in Class 17 of LEAD NY, Anthony volunteers on the board of CCE of Monroe County. He has a passion for getting young people excited about the diverse career opportunities in agriculture.



**Natalee Wrege** received a BS in environmental biology with a focus on aquatics, fisheries and geology at SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry. She participated as an Ambassador Scholar in 2015 and 2016, and joins the NYS Agricultural Society Board as the Ambassador Representative for 2019-2020. Natalee is the manager of aquatic animals at the Paleontological Research Institution and its two public venues including the Museum of the Earth and Cayuga Nature Center located in Ithaca, NY.



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For more information on how your organization can support the 2020 Annual Meeting & Forum scheduled for January 9th, please contact Ann Shephard at 315-727-5449 or [ann@nysagsociety.org](mailto:ann@nysagsociety.org). The Holiday Inn has been purchased by Wyndam.