2015 Conference Panelists

New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets Commissioner Richard A. Ball
On January 9, 2014 Governor Andrew M. Cuomo announced the nomination of Richard A. Ball as Commissioner of the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets. A native New Yorker, Commissioner Ball has made a living in agriculture his entire life. His inspiration to become a farmer came from his grandparents, who were lifelong dairy farmers. At 18 years old, Mr. Ball began his career in agriculture as a farm worker at a vegetable farm in Rhode Island. He later became operations manager of that same farm. After 20 years in Rhode Island, Mr. Ball moved back to the Empire State with an opportunity to become a farm owner. For the past 20 years, he has been the owner and operator of Schoharie Valley Farms in Schoharie, New York, which consists of 200 acres and produces a wide range of vegetable crops, small fruits and greenhouse crops. The farm serves both retail and wholesale consumers through an on-site farm market known as “The Carrot Barn,” and ships to brokers and restaurants in the local area as well as New York City. Mr. Ball has held a number of positions within agriculture and community organizations at the local, state and national level. Mr. Ball, his wife Shirley, and his three children are actively engaged in farming with a growing number of future farmers among the grandchildren.

Sanaz Arjomand, New York State Policy Intern, American Farmland Trust (AFT)
After graduating summa cum laude with a BA in political science, Sanaz Arjomand literally entered the sustainable food field working for two seasons as a farmer’s apprentice and two years as a school garden coordinator. As a graduate student of environmental policy and a policy intern at the American Farmland Trust New York office, Sanaz has the good fortune of joining her passions for advocacy and environmentally-conscious agriculture.

Contact: sarjomand@farmland.org

Fay Benson, Extension Educator, Cornell Cooperative Extension, New York Grazing Lands Coalition
Fay Benson was the Owner Operator of Benterra Dairy Farm, Groton New York. His 45 cow dairy transitioned to grazing in 1985, and to organic production in 1997. Fay was the first certified organic dairy in Central New York. In 2003 he started with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cortland County’s South Central New York Dairy Team. He has state wide responsibilities for dairy grazing, organic dairy production, and direct marketing opportunities for small dairies. Fay’s interest in soils began when he transitioned his farm to organic production and the required change in management to grow crops without synthetic fertilizers. Since coming to Cornell he has worked with the Cornell Soil Health Team to better understand the biological process in soil in order to grow crops while protecting the environment. He is currently overseeing a soil health education project funded by NRCS through a National Conservation Innovation Grant which brought a trailer and soil health demonstration tools to New York. The Soil Health Trailer Project will tour New York and demonstrate farm management practices that will increase the sequestration of carbon, slow water from excessive rainfall and reduce the synthetic inputs applied to soils which will help farmers remain viable.

Contact: afb3@cornell.edu
Bob Bernstein, Managing Director, Northeast Farm Access
Bob Bernstein, an experienced community-based development practitioner, has been connecting individuals and groups with land, public facilities and affordable housing for 40 years. Over this period, Bob has worked with multi-party initiatives, community land trusts, and individuals to develop and implement traditional and non-traditional legal and financing mechanisms for affordable land and housing. He brings this wealth of experience, perspective, and tenacity to Northeast Farm Access, LLC, a company he founded in 2013. At NEFA, Bob recruited a team of highly skilled professionals to help fulfill a common vision for a company that builds reciprocal relationships between experienced farmers and socially minded investors, while promoting working farms and growing good local food. Bob lives in New Hampshire, where he and his family tends Meadowsweet Farm—a 100-acre diversified biodynamic farm with two leaseholds, pending conservation easements, and a restored 220-year-old barn and farmouse.
Contact: bob@nefarmaccess.com

Jody Bolluyt, Farmer, Roxbury Farm
Jody Bolluyt is one of the owners and farmers at Roxbury Farm located in Kinderhook, New York. Roxbury Farm serves 1,100 families through Community Supported Agriculture shares in New York City, Westchester County, Columbia County, and the Capital District. Jody joined the farm in 2000 when Roxbury Farm re-located to Kinderhook. Since then, the farm has grown to 375 acres of land supporting 30 acres of vegetables, 30 acres of green manure crops, pasture for beef cows, sheep, and pigs, along with hay fields, woods, wetlands, and meadows along the Kinderhook Creek. Prior to joining Roxbury Farm, Jody worked on farms in Massachusetts and Iowa, and earned her degree in biology and botany from the University of Iowa. Jody serves on the board of NOFA-NY and Equity Trust, Inc.
Contact: jody@roxburyfarm.com

Nicci Cagan, Farm to School Consultant, From the Ground Up
Nicci Cagan is passionate about food-based education, children, and community. Nicci is a founding member of the Chefs’ Consortium, a Hudson Valley nonprofit dedicated to sharing the joys of local foods. She is also a consultant for the Farm to School program of the Rondout Valley Growers Association. As a chef, Nicci has cooked with her team for many notable food advocates and organizations, including Michael Pollan, Alice Waters, and Hawthorne Valley Farms. She is the Director of From the Ground Up, a volunteer organization that received a grant to study the viability of a Farm to School program in the Rondout Valley from the Local Economies Project of the New World Foundation. Nicci was a consultant in the development of the Hudson Valley Farm Hub. Nicci is currently developing, teaching and consulting on programs with Girls Inc. of Ulster and Duchess Counties and coaching the Rondout Valley School District team through a grant from the Northeast Farm to School Institute.
Contact: niccifromthegroundup@yahoo.com

Anthony Carioto, President, Carioto Produce & Seafood
Carioto Produce was founded in 1929 by Augustine Carioto. Augustine purchased fruits and vegetables from Menands Regional Markets and sold them to mom and pop stores until the truck was empty each day. In 1991, Anthony Carioto and his brother Greg took the company helm. Based in Green Island, New York, the company is now Carioto Produce and Seafood and provides fresh fruits, vegetables and seafood to restaurants, food service, grocery stores, education and healthcare facilities in New York and New England.
Contact: anthony@cariotoproduce.com

Marissa Codey, Acting Director of Conservation Programs, Columbia Land Conservancy (CLC)
Marissa Codey developed CLC’s Farmer Landowner Match Program in 2009. Since then, the program has expanded to include 153 farmers and 154 landowners seeking land tenure arrangements and has assisted with 53 matches on roughly 1,700 acres—39 of these matches are on-going. Marissa offers assistance to farmers and farmland owners with farmland conservation and farmland access.
Contact: marissa@clctrust.org

Challey Comer, Chief of Staff, New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets
Challey Comer is a chief of staff at the New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets. In this role, she directs the Department’s New York City office leading initiatives aimed at enhancing upstate-downstate connections for farm and
food producers. Previously, Challey directed a technical assistance program to support farmland tenure, supported regional food infrastructure research, and managed a buy local campaign.

**Contact:** challey.comer@agriculture.ny.gov

**Jerry Cosgrove, Attorney/Consultant, Jerry Cosgrove Consulting Services**

Jerry Cosgrove combines a farming background, legal expertise and a long history of nonprofit experience and public service in his work. Currently, Jerry is affiliated with Ag-Visory, LLC and he consults on a range of agricultural, conservation, farm transfer and rural development issues. His clients include Equity Trust, Grow NYC, Hawthorne Valley Farm, Hudson Valley Agribusiness Development Corporation, the Western New York Land Conservancy and other individual farm businesses and farm families in the Hudson Valley. Jerry is able to assist both individuals and organizations in working through challenging farm transfer and farmland conservation issues by bringing a creative, problem-solving approach to every situation.

**Contact:** jcosgrov@nycap.rr.com

**Matthew and Juanita Critz, Owners, Critz Family Farms**

Husband and wife team Matthew and Juanita Critz own and operate Critz Farms, Inc. in Cazenovia, New York. They purchased the old dairy farm in 1985, and began transforming it into what is now an award-winning agri-tourism destination. Open to visitors from March through December, the farm grows apples, pumpkins, Christmas trees, blueberries and strawberries. In addition, Matthew and Juanita produce maple syrup and apple cider, and also operate a farm winery specializing in hard (fermented) cider production. Festival events and educational farm tours are offered throughout the year providing educational and fun farm experiences to over 50,000 visitors annually.

**Contact:** matthew@critzfarms.com, juanita@critzfarms.com

**Sally Dodge, Northeast Community Development Manager, Iroquois Valley Farms**

Sally Dodge is a long-time farmer, creative entrepreneur, successful business owner, and energetic environmental activist. Sally has been Northeast Community Development Manager for Iroquois Valley Farms since 2013, while continuing to manage her family's 350 acre farm in Pownal, Vermont, leasing it to several organic operators, including a 250 member CSA, an organic dairy farm, and an organic beef operation. Sally co-owns a flock of Katahdin sheep, and with her partners, manages them by the Holistic Management System. She is a former beefalo farmer, raising and marketing grass-fed beef before its importance to consumers became widely embraced. She is one of the pioneers of the locally-grown food movement, and created *Taste Vermont*, a bi-annual event in the '90s which promoted public awareness of specialty farmers in Vermont. Sally also served for 18 years as a trustee of the Vermont Land Trust, where she took part in helping the organization move toward supporting diversified farms and farm acquisition programs. She is a member of the board of directors of the Cleveland H. Dodge Foundation, and serves as their liaison to the Wildlife Conservation Society.

**Contact:** sallydodge@comcast.net

**Larry Eckhardt, Co-owner, Kinderhook Creek Farm; President, Capital Area Ag Consulting, Inc.**

Larry Eckhardt and his family own and operate a diversified vegetable/cash crop/beef cattle operation in the Rensselaer County town of Stephentown. Kinderhook Creek Farm, Inc. consists of approximately 1,200 acres of owned and rented land. The Eckhardt family, and many full and part-time employees, raise fresh market sweet corn, grain corn, soybeans, hay, small grains, and miscellaneous vegetables crops. Larry and Heather also own Capital Area Ag Consulting, Inc., a crop management consulting firm with over 50 active clients in the Capital Region and Western New England. Founded in 1983, the consulting business works with farmers/clients in many areas of crop management including fertility and pest management recommendations, nutrient utilization, manure/animal waste plans and crop rotations. Larry is actively involved in CAFO planning and CNMP/AWMP nutrient management planning systems. He is a certified crop advisor (CCA) and a voting member of the National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants (NAICC). Larry's present leadership roles include: Board of Directors of New York State Vegetable Growers Association, Board of Directors for LEAD-NY, Committee Member- Rensselaer County USDA/FSA, Rensselaer County Agriculture Program Committee for Cooperative Extension, Supervisor for the Town of Stephentown and Ordained Elder of Presbyterian Congregation of the Stephentown Federated Church.

**Contact:** kcfcaac@taconic.net
Ben Flanner, Head Farmer, President, Brooklyn Grange Rooftop Farms
Ben Flanner is a trained industrial engineer with a background in business and marketing. In 2009 Ben co-founded Eagle Street Rooftop Farms, the first rooftop farm in New York, and is widely recognized as a leader in rooftop urban agriculture. His expertise in systems optimization and unwavering drive to increase efficiencies across the farm are balanced by his passion for sharing his knowledge, and the keen desire to help raise urban agriculture as an industry to a higher level. Ben is currently developing sustainable energy technology fueled by friendly, mid-western charm and the elongated “A” in the Wisconsin accent.
Contact: ben@brooklyngrangefarm.com

Nathan Forster, Territory Lead - NYC Metro, Regional Access
Joining Regional Access in January of this year, Nathan Forster is passionate about building a vibrant regional food system in New York State that supports the consumer demands of the Tri-State Region. He has four years of experience working with entrepreneurial farmers, processors, and distributors in New York City and upstate New York. Before returning to Brooklyn, Nathan lived and worked in the Central New York and Catskills regions where he worked directly with farmers and technical assistance organizations.
Contact: nathan@regionalaccess.net

Todd Fowler, Food Service Director, Bloomfield and Canandaigua School Districts; Chair, New York School Nutrition Association State Public Policy & Legislation Committee
Todd Fowler has over 35 years of food service experience from restaurant manager to executive chef, with the last 20 in child nutrition. In recent years he’s become involved in the business side of school food service, New York’s Farm to School initiative, and the public policy and legislative arena. Focused on child nutrition and promoting local farm products and the skills to use them, his goal is to increase consumption of fruits, vegetables and whole grains for their impact on child health (and everyone else), as well as grow local economies. Todd’s current collaborations include: Finger Lakes Farm to Cafeteria Project, New York Farm to School Coordinating Committee, Farm to Institution New York State (FINYS), Northeast Regional Steering Committee of the National Farm to School Network, and New York State School Nutrition Association.
Contact: tfowler@bloomfieldcsd.org

Olivia Fuller, New York Program and Outreach Assistant, American Farmland Trust (AFT)
Olivia Fuller works to coordinate the outreach and communication efforts for American Farmland Trust’s New York programs. Growing up on a small dairy farm in upstate New York instilled a permanent appreciation for the land, and a passion for the people who farm it. This sentiment followed her throughout her life. She earned a B.A. in communications while working for a nonprofit that organizes community gardens and food access programs. Olivia was deeply involved with Squash Hunger, a program that worked with farmers to donate surplus produce from their fields and orchards for local food pantries. Before joining American Farmland Trust, Olivia worked for a digital marketing agency creating content for websites, infographics, social media and more. Combining her marketing experience with her love for a good story, Olivia helps American Farmland Trust’s New York team to communicate the agricultural needs of New York, from keeping farmers on the land to creating new market opportunities for farmers through purchases from colleges and other institutional buyers.
Contact: ofuller@farmland.org

Daniel R. Garodnick, Council Member, New York City Council
Dan Garodnick has served as City Council Member since 2005. Dan was born and raised in Stuyvesant Town/Peter Cooper Village, and in 2006 Dan foresaw that the sale of the property would put affordable, middle-class housing at risk in New York City, and initiated an unprecedented, multi-billion dollar bid on behalf of 25,000 tenants to buy the property. As another sale became imminent, Dan organized over 50 elected officials from across New York to form the Coalition Against Predatory Equity, who together ensured the commitment of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac not to lend to buyers motivated to run out middle-class tenants by destabilizing affordable units. Dan has since authored some of the most important legislation to pass the Council in the past several years, including the Tenant Protection Act, giving tenants an opportunity to sue for harassment; the City’s first Green Energy Code, to reduce carbon emissions from
buildings; and the expansion of the Transit Benefits Program, allowing employees to purchase Metrocards using pre-taxed earnings and save about $433 every year and heralded as “a business regulation that makes sense.”

Contact: garodnick@council.nyc.gov

Mike Ghia, Vermont Field Agent, Land for Good
Mike Ghia works both for Land for Good and also as a farm business planner for University of Vermont Extension and the Vermont Farm Viability Program. Mike works with farmers on farm business planning, farm succession and transfer, and farmland access and tenure. Through Land For Good, he has been working over the last year and half on a research project to assess farmland investor models in the Northeast.

Contact: mike@landforgood.org

Faith Gilbert, Farmer, Letterbox Farm Collective
Faith Gilbert manages the herbs, greens, flowers and greenhouses at Letterbox Farm Collective, and works one-on-one with their chef clients. She is a fourth-year farmer, researcher and organizer. In 2014, she researched and wrote Cooperative Farming, a how-to handbook on farming collaborative farm ventures. Faith and her fellow farmers utilized an agricultural conservation easement and creative community financing to help them secure access to and ownership of the land on which they are now farming.

Contact: faith.e.gilbert@gmail.com

Christopher Goeken, Director of Public Policy & Government Relations, New York League of Conservation Voters (NYLCV)
Christopher Goeken leads NYLCV’s policy advocacy efforts throughout the State of New York, mobilizing advocates, meeting with elected officials and their staff, and providing policy analysis. Christopher also leads the NYLCV Education Fund team in formulating policy agendas for state, county, city and town governments. Those agendas provide detailed policy recommendations to government officials, and also serve as an accountability tool that sets the bar and monitors government’s progress in meeting environmental goals.

Contact: cgoeken@nylcv.org

Christina Grace, Co-Coordinator, Farm to Institution New York State (FINYS)
Christina Mitchell Grace is co-coordinator of the Farm to Institution New York State (FINYS) initiative, a program of American Farmland Trust. In this role she helps tackle systemic barriers to increasing the volume of food produced in New York served in public and private institutions, including colleges, schools, hospitals, emergency food providers and senior centers. Her firm, Foodprint Group, is a farm to food waste consultancy dedicated to building sustainable and healthy food infrastructure. Christina lives in Brooklyn, New York where she is raising her two daughters to cook and eat locally.

Contact: christina@foodprintgroup.com

David Haight, New York State Director, American Farmland Trust (AFT)
Since joining American Farmland Trust (AFT) in 2001, David Haight has worked with more than 20 local governments to establish agricultural economic development and farmland protection plans. He aids state and federal legislators as they work on agricultural and land conservation legislation and has helped coordinate projects that have permanently protected more than 4,000 acres of New York farmland. David helped to author AFT’s Guide to Local Planning for Agriculture in New York and New York Agricultural Landowner Guide to Tax, Conservation, and Management Programs. His previous work experience includes evaluating the fiscal impact of land conservation for the Vermont Land Trust and work as an outdoor educator in New York's Catskill Mountains. David holds a B.A. in environmental studies and political science from Binghamton University, and an M.S. in natural resources planning from the University of Vermont. He also graduated from New York’s LEAD program and serves on the Land Trust Alliance New York Advisory Committee.

Contact: dhaight@farmland.org
John v.H. Halsey, President, Peconic Land Trust
John v.H. Halsey is president and founder of the Peconic Land Trust, a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization dedicated to conserving Long Island’s working farms, natural lands, and heritage. Since it was founded in 1983, the Peconic Land Trust has protected over 11,000 acres in concert with landowners, communities, municipalities, and partner organizations. John serves on the boards of the North American Land Trust, Nassau Land Trust, South Fork Land Foundation, and the Southampton Youth Association. He is a member of the Land Trust Alliance New York Advisory Board and board member emeritus of the Long Island Community Foundation. In 2014, John was honored by the Land Trust Alliance New York Advisory Board for outstanding leadership, spirit of innovation and generous support of New York’s land conservation community, and continues in his distinguished work through today.
Contact: jhalsey@peconiclandtrust.org

Chris Hartman, President, Headwater Food Hub
Chris Hartman is president and founder of Headwater Food Hub, upstate New York’s award-winning Food Hub focused on local, organic, farm-fresh foods. Headwater Food Hub actively manages the supply chain logistics, aggregation, distribution, and sales of local, sustainable, source-identified, top-quality foods from their network of partner farms and from local food producers in and around Rochester New York. Chris has worked as a farmer, a farmers’ market manager, an educator and an entrepreneur towards the goal of creating a sustainable, regional food system in upstate New York.
Contact: chris@headwaterfoodhub.com

Molly Hartman, Senior Advisor for Food Policy, New York City Office of the Mayor
Molly Hartman is a senior advisor for food policy in the Office of the Mayor, where she works to advance the administration’s agenda to improve food security, increase access to healthy food, and further build a more sustainable and just food system. Prior to serving in the Mayor's office, Molly was the director of the FRESH program at New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC), an initiative to encourage the development of supermarkets in low-income neighborhoods. She has also worked at Prevention Institute, a public health organization in Oakland, California and at a community development financial institution in New York City. Molly earned her master's in public policy from the University of Southern California and her B.A. from the College of Social Studies at Wesleyan University.
Contact: mhartman@hhspartner.nyc.gov

Mike Hoffman, Executive Director, Cornell Institute for Climate Change and Agriculture
Mike Hoffman is the executive director of the Cornell Institute for Climate Change and Agriculture (CICCA), which was created to help raise the profile of the challenges posed by a rapidly warming climate and to help those who grow our food adapt to the changing conditions as well as reduce their carbon footprint. As executive director of CICCA, Mike provides visionary leadership, communicates to a wide range of audiences the challenges and opportunities that come with a changing climate, and builds partnerships among public and private organizations. Previous positions he has held at Cornell include director of the Cornell University Agricultural Experiment Station, associate dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, associate director of Cornell Cooperative Extension, and director of the New York State Integrated Pest Management Program. He is a professor in the Department of Entomology and maintains a research program focused on management of pests of vegetable crops. He received his bachelor’s degree from the University Wisconsin, his master’s from the University of Arizona and his doctorate from the University of California, Davis.
Contact: mph3@cornell.edu

Casey Holzworth, Regional Natural Resource Steward, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation: Saratoga-Capital District and Thousand Islands Regions
Casey Holzworth earned his bachelor’s degree in animal behavior from Bucknell University and did his master’s work in the Biodiversity, Conservation and Policy program at the University at Albany. Casey has worked at the county level as a technician with the Warren County Soil and Water Conservation District as well as at the state level as a biologist with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Casey currently works as the Regional Natural Resource Steward for the Saratoga-Capital District and Thousand Islands regions of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation. In this capacity, he is responsible for a broad range of environmental and sustainability issues in over 60 state parks, historic sites, and other park facilities across 13 counties in upstate New York. As part of his
Casey is currently working to update the agricultural leases offered by state parks to incorporate diversified farming and grazing systems in addition to hay and row crop production.

Contact: casey.holzworth@parks.ny.gov

Jacob Israelow, Founder, Dirt Capital Partners
Jacob Israelow founded Dirt Capital Partners in 2013 to channel private investment in support of farmland access, conservation and long-term land security for sustainable farmers in the Northeast. He presently serves as Board Treasurer of the National Young Farmers Coalition and on American Farmland Trust’s New York Council. Jacob is also a co-founder of Sovereign Cider, a farm-to-tap cidery producing premium hard ciders from 100% New York State apples, and a Board Director at Farm to Table Copackers in Kingston, New York.

Contact: jacob@dirtpartners.com

Mark James, Membership and Leadership Development Specialist, Cortland and Onondaga, New York Farm Bureau
Mark James is the membership and leadership development specialist for the New York Farm Bureau. His office is based in Auburn, New York. A native of Madbury, New Hampshire, Mark grew up on a small family farm where he and his family raised sheep, ornamental plants, Christmas trees and a small market garden. Mark was active in 4-H at the local, state and national levels serving as president of his local 4-H Club and earning national honors in bicycle safety as well as participating in the National 4-H Citizenship Short Course in Washington, DC. Mark received a bachelor of science degree in agricultural education from the University of New Hampshire in 1984 and minored in plant and animal science. Mark began his Farm Bureau career in 1989 serving as program coordinator for the Maine Farm Bureau. He had responsibilities with county Farm Bureau’s for the entire state of Maine. Mark joined the staff of the New York Farm Bureau in 1994 as Executive Director of the Finger Lakes Office. As Executive Director, Mark was directly responsible for four county Farm Bureaus in the Finger Lakes Region and provided support for two additional counties. Mark’s duties included issue advocacy and leadership development for volunteer Farm Bureau members. Mark began his new position on April 1, 2009 and is responsible for membership and leadership development programs statewide. In April of 2002, Mark received the Industry Award from the New York Wine and Grape Foundation for his support of the wine and grape industry. Mark, his wife Cathy and daughter Emily reside in Seneca Falls.

Contact: mjames@nyfb.org

Barbara Johnston, Senior Planner, AICP, LEED ND, LaBella Associates
Barbara Johnston is a senior planner with LaBella Associates, a full-service planning, architecture and engineering firm based in Rochester, New York with offices in Buffalo, Syracuse, Ithaca and Corning. Barbara has prepared agricultural and farmland protection plans for municipalities throughout Central and Western New York. Her planning process focuses on outreach and engagement of farmers and other stakeholders, identifying strategic farmland protection areas, and recommending practical approaches suitable for implementation by local governments. As part of a team led by American Farmland Trust, she was responsible for the preparation of GIS-based resource and prioritization mapping for the Erie County Agricultural & Farmland Protection Plan update.

Contact: bjohnston@labellapc.com

Matt Joyce, Executive Chef, PRIME at the Plaza
Matt Joyce, executive chef for PRIME at the Plaza, joined the Prime Business Dining team in 2014. He began his career in Hospitality at the Beverwyck (Northeast Health-Sodexho) while attending the University at Albany. He quickly found a passion for the craft and the hard work rewarding. After pursuing his culinary degree from Schenectady County Community College in 2002, Matt has held chef positions at Scrimshaw at the Desmond, Normanside Country Club, and Hidden Cafe. Having experience in all facets of the food service industry: health care, hotel, private club, and independently owned, Matt has developed a strong guest service objective—“treat everyone like they are your mother.” Matt feels that it is important to purchase locally and makes it a point to attend a farmers market or two on the weekends!

Contact: mattj@mazzonehospitality.com
David Kay, Senior Extension Associate, Community and Region Development Institute (CaRDI) at Cornell University
David Kay is a senior extension associate with CaRDI. He provides leadership for CaRDI programming in the areas of energy, land use, and community development. David’s work on land use involves research, outreach, and training efforts that attempt to build community-based decision making capacity and to help weave local policy into a regionally coherent fabric. David serves on the boards of several city, town, county and New York State not-for-profit or government organizations concerned with sustainability and municipal land use planning. He holds an M.S. from Cornell and a B.A. from the University of California.
Contact: dlk2@cornell.edu

Walt Kiernan, Partner and General Manager, Walt’s Dairy
Walt Kiernan is a fourth generation dairy farmer, who manages Walt’s Dairy, LLC located in Copake, New York along with multiple other family members. Walt’s family will be using an agricultural conservation easement as part of their farm’s succession plan to ensure that the family farm will stay intact, and they will be including additional restrictions in their easement to help ensure the land will remain permanently affordable and in the hands of farmers. The farm is set against the back drop of the Taconic State Park, and sells its milk through Hudson Valley Fresh, a regional dairy cooperative. Walt graduated from SUNY Cobleskill with a four-year degree in agricultural engineering.
Contact: walter.kiernan@yahoo.com

Marie Krenzer, Krenzer Farms
Marie V. Krenzer lives in Scottsville, NY; a not-so rural suburb of Rochester, with her husband David, their four children and two cats. Farm-raised in the same Finger Lakes/Western New York region she now resides; Marie enjoys co-managing the family farm, being a mom, an award-winning writer, church volunteer and an advocate for agriculture.
Contact: mvkrenzer@gmail.com

John Larson, Executive Director of Programs, American Farmland Trust
John Larson joined American Farmland Trust (AFT) as executive director of programs in April of 2015, having previously served as the chief executive officer of the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) since 2011. John worked directly with Washington State conservation district associations for 6 years as the executive director of the Washington Association of Conservation Districts (WACD), and several years as president of the Washington Association of District Employees (WADE). Prior to his roles with conservation district associations, he served as manager of the Conservation Districts Partnership—a consortium of four central Washington State conservation districts—and district manager for the Othello Conservation District. John has a passion for natural resources and the outdoors, and is an avid fly fisherman and mountain biker. Before his nearly 20 years with conservation districts, he owned and operated his family's irrigated farm in Royal City, Washington. Before moving to the Washington, D.C. area, John was a lifetime resident of Washington State. He is an alumnus of Washington State University, where he studied agricultural economics. John and his wife, Shanon, have two grown children, Tyler and Cassie.
Contact: jlarson@farmland.org

Linda LaViolette, Director of Farmers’ Markets, Strategic Business Development, Empire State Development
Linda LaViolette is director of farmers’ markets, strategic business development at the Empire State Development agency. She is a member of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo’s New York State Council on Food Policy, the NYS Anti-Hunger Task Force, the NYC-NYS Regional Food Hubs Task Force and the Pride of NY Advisory Council. Linda directs the Governor’s Fresh Connects Program, an initiative which increases access to fresh and wholesome food in underserved communities while providing direct marketing opportunities for New York farmers. Over the course of her career, she has worked as an advocate for Federal Child Nutrition Programs and was a founding member of WhyHunger with Harry Chapin and Bill Ayers. She was adjunct professor of food and nutrition at City University of New York’s LaGuardia College. Linda has a B.A. in environmental sciences from SUNY Stony Brook and an M.S. in nutrition and public health from Teachers College, Columbia University.
Contact: Linda.LaViolette@esd.ny.gov
Jim Liebow, **Food Service Director**, Brockport Central School District; **Chair**, New York State Farm to School

Jim Liebow has been the food service director at Brockport Central School District since 2009. In that time, he launched a Farm to School program that brings multiple apple varieties, potatoes, onions, tomatoes, broccoli, cauliflower, butternut squash, red peppers, cabbage, string beans and even honey to his schools. Jim is the chair for the Farm to School Committee for the New York School Nutrition Association (NYSNA) and also chairs the New York Farm to School Coordinating Committee. He is a member of the Farm to Institution New York State (FINYS) Leadership team and represents New York as the state lead for the National Farm to School Network. Jim networks with the other five New England states in an effort to share successful models to each other. Jim’s previous experience at St. John Fisher College with Bon Appetit Management Company helped further his passion for buying local and he enjoyed a great relationship with multiple farmers in the Rochester area that he still utilizes today in his work.

**Contact:** james.liebow@bcs1.org

Timothy MacTurk, **District Manager, Onsite Service Solutions**, University at Albany Dining Services, Sodexo Education

As Sodexo district manager at University at Albany, Tim oversees the dining department that includes 5 all you care to eat facilities, 9 retail outlets, concessions at Bob Ford Field and SEFCU Arena and catering operations. He is committed to sustainability initiatives including increasing local purchases from New York State. Tim holds a bachelor’s degree in restaurant and foodservice management from Syracuse University.

**Contact:** Timothy.Macturk@sodexo.com

Will Malcolm, **Healthy Places Manager**, Capital Roots

Will Malcolm is the Healthy Places manager at Capital Roots (formerly Capital District Community Gardens) in Troy, New York. He supervises all the food access programming for the organization including two mobile markets, (The Veggie Mobile® and Sprout), Healthy Stores, Healthy Retail, the Virtual Veggie Mobile online marketplace and VeggieRx. Beyond these integrated programs, Will also works with local municipalities across the Capital Region to increase Complete Streets projects and positive transportation policy development. Will is an alumnus of SUNY Oneonta and the University at Albany.

**Contact:** healthyplaces@capitalroots.org

Mary Ellen Mallia, **Director of Environmental Sustainability**, University at Albany

As director of environmental sustainability, Mary Ellen Mallia supports the University at Albany's sustainability efforts, including its "UAlbany Green Scene" initiative, environmental education, and policies. She works to advance strategic planning initiatives related to campus environmental issues and also works with various academic departments and student groups to develop, implement, and coordinate environmental initiatives, such as UAlbany's recycling and energy conservation programs. Mary Ellen holds a doctorate in ecological economics from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

**Contact:** mmallia@albany.edu

John McDowell, **President**, Rockland Farm Alliance

John McDowell is an award-winning musician, composer, farmer, and president of Rockland Farm Alliance. He grew up in Champaign, Illinois and worked long summer days in the corn and soybean fields on farms as a teenager in the summer months. Throughout his career as a professional musician he continued his connection with agriculture by visiting and helping out on farms. After moving to Rockland County, he and his wife revived Camp Hill Farm in Pomona and started the first CSA in the county. In 2007, John formed Rockland Farm Alliance, which has received strong support from the Rockland community and governmental officials to facilitate local sustainable agriculture in Rockland County. John has been the catalyst for major policy decisions in support of local agriculture including getting stronger language in the Rockland County Comprehensive Plan to support local agriculture, initiating the 2014 NYS Suburban Ag Bill which passed unanimously in both houses of the state legislature, and developing a no-cost farm lease model which has been called “cutting edge” by Hudson River Valley Greenway.

**Contact:** john@rocklandfarm.org
Mary Murphy, Writer/Storyteller
Mary Murphy is a writer and teller of stories. She has performed at the National Storytelling Festival, the Hawaii Storytelling Festival, the Clever Gretchen Folklore Conference, the Philadelphia Fringe Festival, Companions on the Sacred Journey, the Rockland County Storytelling Festival, the Dance Flurry in Saratoga Springs, the Riverway Storytelling Festival, the Clearwater Festival, and the Three Apples Storytelling Festival. Her stories have been published in *Give a Listen: Stories of Storytelling in School, The Solstice Evergreen: The History, Folklore, and Origins of the Christmas Tree, Women Celebrate: The Gift in Every Moment, The Artful Mind,* and *Sacred Journey*. She has a CD entitled *murphy stew*.
Contact: mary.leo@gmail.com

Robert Nied, Acting Executive Director, Center for Sustainable Rural Communities
Robert Nied, a life-long community activist, has been involved in the environmental and social justice movements since the late 1960’s. He was a co-founder of Schoharie Valley Watch, a local non-profit, and stewarded the growth of that organization (now called the Center for Sustainable Rural Communities) into a regionally recognized and influential organization working to support vibrant, sustainable rural communities in Albany, Delaware, Montgomery, Otsego, Schenectady and Schoharie counties of upstate New York as well as southern New England. The Center works to encourage environmentally-compatible economic development as well as rural access to arts and technology. The Center has also been a leader in the fight against hydraulic fracturing and the impacts of natural gas infrastructure on rural communities and environments.
Contact: rnied@niedgroup.com

Chris O’Blenness, Livestock Operations Manager, Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture
Chris is responsible for the care of the livestock at the Stone Barns Center, as well as the experimental grazing project in cooperation with Rockefeller State Park Preserve at Rockwood Hall, a 150-acre park on the banks of the Hudson River. For this project, he uses sheep to manage the open fields and goats to combat invasive vine species introduced as landscape plants in the late 19th century.
Contact: chriso@stonebarnscenter.org

Ruth Pino, Food Service Director, Saranac Lake Central School District, Adirondack Farm to School
A culinary arts instructor at Paul Smiths College from 1996-2014, Ruth returned to school in early 2000 to earn a bachelor’s degree in nutrition. As part of her registered dietician internship, she assisted the Saranac Lake School District in the development of their wellness policy; and in 2010 became the district’s food service manager. Alongside this position, Ruth and a group of like-minded individuals started the Adirondack Farm to School Initiative which was awarded a USDA Farm to School Planning grant in the fall of 2014.
Contact: pinorut@slcs.org

Sandra Prokop, Co-Owner, Crossbrook Farm
Sandra Prokop is the owner/operator/partner of Crossbrook Farm, LLC in Middleburgh, New York, a family dairy farm operated by Sandie, her husband, Richard, and son, Jon. In operation since 1968, Crossbrook Farm currently has a milking herd of 400, and farms 1,000 acres of owned and rented cropland growing corn, alfalfa and other haylage mixes. Sandie was born in New York City and raised in Westchester County, but feels her true home and place is agriculture, and agricultural education is her passion. In addition to her roles on the family farm, Sandie is the managing director for the New York Farm Bureau Foundation for Agricultural Education, and a program specialist/assistant organization director for New York Farm Bureau. Sandie is extremely active in many organizations within the agricultural industry and in her community, resulting in national recognition through an “American Dairy Leadership Award” in 1997.
Contact: sprokop@nyfb.org

Holly Rippon-Butler, Land Access Campaign Manager, National Young Farmers Coalition
Holly is the land access campaign manager with the National Young Farmers Coalition, where she works with policy makers and land trusts to increase land access for the next generation of farmers. She has co-authored a guidebook for farmers designed to explain the process of partnering with a land trust to access land and helped organize a national
training for land trusts on innovative conservation tools that help protect farmland affordability for farmers. In addition to her work with NYFC, she farms with her parents on their third-generation dairy and beef farm in upstate New York. Prior to joining NYFC, Holly worked with the American Farmland Trust and the Agricultural Stewardship Association in New York.

**Contact:** holly@youngfarmers.org

**Joshua Rockwood, Owner, West Wind Acres**

**Contact:** josh@westwindacres.com

**Steve Rosenberg, Executive Director, The Scenic Hudson Land Trust, Inc.**

Steve Rosenberg is executive director of the Scenic Hudson Land Trust and senior vice president of Scenic Hudson, Inc. Scenic Hudson has conserved 35,000 acres of natural, scenic and agricultural land, including more than 95 family farms, and has created more than three dozen parks and preserves along the Hudson River as part of its campaign to “Save the Land That Matters Most.” Steve authored and is leading Scenic Hudson’s campaign to implement the first-of-its-kind “NYC-Hudson Valley Foodshed Conservation Plan.” Steve serves on the national board of the Land Trust Alliance. He has a law degree from George Washington University law school and received his B.A. from Northwestern University.

**Contact:** srosenberg@scenichudson.org

**Jessica Sargent, Director, Conservation Economics, The Trust for Public Land (TPL)**

Jessica Sargent is the director of conservation economics for The Trust for Public Land. As The Trust for Public Land's lead economist, Jessica runs TPL's Conservation Economics program which conducts research on the economic benefits of parks and land conservation at the local, regional, state, and national levels. Since 2007 she has overseen more than 20 economic benefits of land conservation studies. Prior to joining TPL, Jessica spent five years working for Industrial Economics, Incorporated where she conducted analyses of the costs and benefits of proposed environmental and natural resources policies, program evaluation, and natural resource damage assessment for various state, federal, and international agencies. Jessica holds an M.S. in ecology and environmental sciences and a B.S. in natural resources from the University of Maine.

**Contact:** Jessica.Sargent@tpl.org

**Steven Shaffer, Consultant, Environmental Consulting for Agriculture**

After more than thirty-three years at the California Department of Food and Agriculture, Steve Shaffer retired in August 2008 as the director of the Office of Agriculture and Environmental Stewardship. Steve is now an independent consultant providing services to agricultural and environmental clients interested in improving the economic and environmental performance of agricultural systems, from small farms to state-wide and national organizations. Steve works with clients to provide solutions to a variety of problems and opportunities that benefit the triple bottom line - people, planet and profit. His current project areas include climate change mitigation and adaptation, improving and expanding implementation of beneficial management practices, sustainability metrics for production agriculture, emerging technology deployment, and collaborative policy development. Steve also serves as the consultant to American Farmland Trust in California for environmental stewardship.

**Contact:** steven.shaffer@sbcglobal.net

**Lisa Stanton, Stanton Farms**

Lisa Stanton is a 7th grade special education teacher in Middleburgh, New York. Lisa married into a dairy farm family 22 years ago and has two children, ages 16 and 19. Stanton’s children love the farm, and she has been blessed to raise them on a farm. When not in school, Stanton spends a great deal of time on her farm, and loves to educate others about dairy farming.

**Contact:** stanton@midtel.net
Julie Stein, Vice President, NYC Economic Development Corporation
Julie Stein is a vice president at the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCECDC) where she works on the city's public wholesale and retail food markets, leading strategic planning related to food industry growth opportunities, market facility modernization, regional food distribution and resiliency. Her portfolio also includes industrial, commercial and residential real estate development projects.
Contact: jstein@edc.nyc

Jeff Ten Eyck, New York Agricultural Stewardship Specialist, American Farmland Trust (AFT)
Jeff Ten Eyck is the New York agricultural stewardship specialist for American Farmland Trust (AFT), where he helps New York farmers adopt farming practices to protect water quality, respond to climate change, and achieve the environmental benefits that come from well-managed farmland. Prior to joining AFT, he worked for the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets providing technical assistance and training to Soil and Water Conservation Districts and leadership for New York’s Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) Program. AEM is a statewide program to assist farmers in maintaining the economic viability of their farm operations while addressing environmental impacts from farms. Jeff also served in several capacities with the Onondaga, Cortland and Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation Districts, including helping to develop and manage a comprehensive agricultural conservation program to protect Skaneateles Lake and maintain the quality of the unfiltered drinking water supply for the City of Syracuse.
Contact: jteneyck@farmland.org

Laura Ten Eyck, Senior New York Project & Outreach Manager, American Farmland Trust (AFT)
Laura Ten Eyck works with farmers and communities in eastern New York, with a special focus on efforts to protect farmland in the Hudson River Valley. She has been a New York representative for American Farmland Trust since 2009, serving before that as a freelance writer for American Farmland magazine and then as a field consultant working with towns to develop agriculture and farmland protection plans. She believes many of the world’s problems can be solved by protecting farmland, and she and her family permanently protected their farm with an agricultural conservation easement through New York's Farmland Protection Program in 2003. Laura lives on the family farm, which includes an apple orchard and pick-your-own farm market, where she worked previously as general manager. Prior to that, she was a freelance journalist and reporter for a small town weekly newspaper. She earned a B.F.A. in creative writing from Emerson College.
Contact: lteneyck@farmland.org

Peter Ten Eyck, President, Indian Ladder Farms
Peter Ten Eyck is the president of Indian Ladder Farms Inc. an apple orchard, storage, cider mill and retail farm market located two miles west of Voorheesville, New York. He is a graduate of Cornell University and lives on the farm with his wife Rose-Marie, a professor at the University at Albany. He is the 10th generation of the family living in the Capital District and the farm is in its 96th year of growing pears, blueberries, and raspberries as well as over 40 varieties of apples. Besides his farming duties he is a director of the New York State Farm Bureau Foundation, The New York Center for Agriculture and Medicine, and New York’s Apple Research and Development Board. He served many years as a delegate to the New York Council of Agricultural Organizations. Peter is a past president of the New York State Horticultural Society, a former member and chairman of the Advisory Council of the New York State College of Agriculture and Life Science at Cornell as well as a director of the New York State Agricultural Society.
Contact: peter@indianladderfarms.com

Larry Van De Valk, PhD, Executive Director and Senior Extension Associate, LEAD New York, Cornell University
Larry Van De Valk is executive director of the Empire State Food and Agricultural Leadership Institute, or LEAD New York, a two-year leadership development program for adult professionals in the food, agricultural and natural resource industries. Larry is also a senior extension associate in the Community and Regional Development Institute (CaRDI), part of the Department of Development Sociology at the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell University. Larry earned a PhD in adult and extension education, an M.A. in teaching and a B.S. in agricultural & biological engineering, all from Cornell, as well as an A.A.S. in forestry from Paul Smiths College. He has published several articles in refereed journals, and his research interests are in the areas of leadership development theory, program evaluation, and the
social capital building effect of leadership development initiatives. Larry is the recipient of the State University of New York Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Professional Service and the International Association of Programs for Agricultural Leaders Outstanding Leadership Program Director Award.

Contact: lJV4@cornell.edu

Cari Watkins-Bates, Assistant Land Conservation Director, Scenic Hudson, Inc.
Cari Watkins-Bates is the assistant land conservation director with Scenic Hudson. In addition to managing often-complex, multiparty PDR projects that have conserved thousands of acres of agricultural land in the Hudson Valley, she has been integral in developing policy and framework necessary for managing individual projects. Cari has an M.A. in energy and environmental analysis from Boston University. Prior to joining Scenic Hudson in 2004, she was with the Nature Conservancy’s Nevada Field Office.

Contact: cwatkins@scenichudson.org

Judy Wright, Agriculture Resource Educator, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County
Judy Wright is an agriculture resource educator with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County. Her early extension work focused on developing educational programs for farmers in Cayuga County and serving as a member of a four county agricultural team delivering production and management programs on field crop production. In 2000, Judy concluded her tenure with CCE Cayuga County as its executive director to consult with New York municipalities and land owners on farmland protection. She had an active contract with American Farmland Trust until April 2013 when she returned full time to CCE Cayuga County as the Dairy Resource Educator. Also during 2000 to 2013, Judy served several short term assignments as interim executive director for the CCE system in Cayuga, Seneca and Monroe counties.

Contact: jlw24@cornell.edu

Jessica Ziehm, Executive Director, New York Animal Agriculture Coalition
Jessica Ziehm (pronounced “zim”) is a lifelong advocate of agriculture. Jessica grew up on a dairy farm in eastern New York and has worked in various roles and capacities in the ag industry. She has marketed livestock feed for Cargill, promoted milk in the Southeast through the dairy check-off program, worked on member publications for the New York Farm Bureau, and served as the sole spokesperson for the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets for twelve years, working under four governors and four commissioners. With a dairy farmer husband and a young family at home, Jessica switched gears in 2012 and is now working as the executive director of the New York Animal Agriculture Coalition, a group that is dedicated to enhancing the public’s awareness and understanding of modern animal agriculture. In this role, Jessica has initiated the popular Dairy Cow Birthing Center at the New York State Fair that this year brought together more than 300 dairy industry volunteers and attracted over 200,000 fairgoers to learn about New York’s evolving dairy industry while awaiting the birth of a baby calf. Jessica thoroughly enjoys her role with NYAAC as she is able to embrace her creativity and passion for the dairy industry by empowering farmers to tell their story and enticing consumers to learn about the industry she loves and lives.

Contact: jaz67@cornell.edu