Association welcomes two new Board members

By Molly Golden
molly@nyapplecountry.com

We welcome Jonathan Chiaro as our newest District 2 Director, replacing outgoing Director Ken Migliorelli. Jonathan P. Chiaro, 41, received his associate’s degree in crop production and soil science from SUNY Cobleskill and a bachelor’s degree in business from SUNY Oneonta.

Chiaro has been involved in growing and packing fruit with his father since his youth, Yonder Farms is a third generation fruit farm that grows just more than 600 acres of apples and a small amount of pears, stone fruit, berries and vegetables. It is managed by his mother, Susan, father, Peter, and a great staff of employees.

They also operate Yonder Farms Fruit Distributors; a commercial packing house and storage facility located in Hudson. Yonder Farms Fruit Distributors has the capacity to pack over a half million bushels per season and not only packs their own fruit, but for other growers throughout the region. Jonathan and his wife Terry together have three children: Kaylee, 4, Cole, 2, and Cody, 1, and reside in Hudson in Columbia County.

Taking over the reins from outgoing Director Joe Porpiglia, III is Alisha Albiner of Milton, Ulster County.

In her biography to us Albiner wrote: "Hudson River Fruit Distributors was founded by my great grandfather and grandfather in 1963 and today I am proud to represent the fourth generation in our family business. Over the past 50 years we grew from our humble beginnings to become one of the largest East Coast apple grower/shipper/distributors.

"I knew I always wanted to work in my family business, so after college I sought out to find a job in the industry. I worked at FreshDirect, an online grocer based out of New York City, "At Hudson River Fruit, my job allows me to be involved in all aspects of the operation with a focus specifically on the administration side. I deal directly with new laws and rules pertaining to H2A workers, farm labor laws, agriculture tax issues, insurance, and crop protection. A big part of my responsibility has been to update and modernize our company. I have implemented many business efficiencies, enabling us to be more competitive in our industry and flourish in the changing markets.

See Board, Page 14

USDA announces apple bonus buy

New York Apple Association

Please see the announcement made by the U.S. Apple Association regarding a USDA/AMS bonus buy of apple products below. It has been a number of years since USDA has made a bonus buy of fresh apples and apple products. With present national apple holdings at record high levels, we are extremely pleased with this announcement.

The New York Apple Association played a significant role in the request for this buy, by encouraging the USApple Government Affairs Committee to make the ask, as well as providing important state production numbers to USDA to back up the request.

This announcement will not only impact fresh apple holdings but it will also impact apple sauce and other apple products. If you as a shipper/marketer choose not to participate in the USDA purchase program, removing 35 million lbs. of fresh apples is equivalent to 834,000 cartons that will not enter the domestic wholesale markets.

Here is the announcement: "USDA/AMS administrator Anne Alonso called USApple this morning to inform us that USApple’s request..."
Kroger expands in Indiana

The Associated Press

Kroger will build 11 new stores and expand or remodel 22 others in a $464.6 million central Indiana expansion that will create 3,440 permanent jobs, the retailer announced in April.

A four-year strategic plan for the nine-county Indianapolis area began quietly last year and includes building seven Kroger Marketplace stores in Fishers, Franklin and Indianapolis. Kroger Marketplaces are the Cincinnati-based retailer’s largest outlets at about 125,000 square feet and include cafes, baby stores and apparel shops. The seven stores are forecast to cost $141 million and create 1,530 jobs.

The company also plans to build four new stores averaging 75,000 square feet, expand five others and remodel 17, it said.

The chain also will build a regional training center in Indianapolis, remodel 22 pharmacies and open 16 new gas stations.

Kroger also said it will expand its Simple Truth natural and organic food remodeling 22 pharmacies and open 16 gas stations.

Amazon, Instacart up the stakes on grocery delivery

Stores Magazine

Competition in the grocery delivery wars to win the favor of consumers can still be a matter of life or death.

E-commerce represents less than 2 percent of the $500 billion in total food store sales. Its success to date is more theoretical than real and, despite its most ardent proponents — IBISWorld forecasts average annual growth of 12 percent for the online grocery industry through 2020 — it has yet to revolutionize people’s lives.

While the failures of Webvan, Kozmo and HomeGrocer in the early 2000s still haunt the halls of home grocery delivery, newer entrants like Instacart and AmazonFresh are making inroads with new and different delivery models.

Amazon uses proprietary warehouses and trucks to deliver its own stockpiles of grocery items, similar to the way it delivers other products. The company is a master of logistics and keeps overhead for AmazonFresh relatively low, according to industry observers, though the addition of perishables will increase costs.

In October, Amazon expanded service from its Seattle home base and several major West Coast metro areas to limited points in New York City, where it will compete with FreshDirect, which has been around since 2002 and is said to generate about $500 million in sales.

Amazon also is competing for New York customers with Instacart and Google, the latter of which doesn’t sell perishables at this point. That lowers Google’s operating costs, but puts it at somewhat of a competitive disadvantage.

Amazon Prime is already reaching 20 percent for the online grocery industry among its Prime members, with an average annual growth rate of 12 percent, could cover half of all U.S. households by 2020. “Study after study has shown Prime members to be Amazon’s best customers,” he says, noting that they spend nearly twice as much as other Amazon shoppers.

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Core Report® is published monthly by the New York Apple Association as a member service.

President's Message

By Jim Allen  
jimallen@nyapplecountry.com

Last month, two of the nation’s leading grower publications offered two distinctively different front covers, telling two opposite stories. The New Orchard, Cleman Moutain, Yakima, known for its vibrant and awe-some photographs, pictures endless new posts waiting for new apple plantings. Rich dark soil with row after row of bright new wooden posts can be seen stretching across the valley to the base of the mountains. The inside caption reads, New Orchard Below Cleman Mountain, Tieton, Washington. It also says, no reproduction of display of photo without written permission. Otherwise I would print the two covers here.

The other publication, the American Fruit Grower, Meister Media, Ohio, depicts an Eastern wooden apple bin overflowing with a pyramid of apples. The bold headline reads “How Much is Too Much?” “Record Crops, New Varieties, Uncertain Markets, and the Future of Our Industry” is the secondary title. If a picture is worth a thousand words, then I should stop here. The Good Fruit Grower did not need to write about the picture or report on the image; the image speaks VOLUMES! The America Fruit Grower used the overlook their lead in story of the issue with a very informative and accurate assessment of current and future apple production in the U.S. The well written and fact filled article hit on a number of factors that are impacting the industry from volume, labor, exports, MRL’s and on and on! It is well worth the time to read it. Again, the pictures say it all. Good Luck.

Raw cider exclusion

For use in hard cider, vinegar and wine

ALBANY — In Article 17, of the New York State Department Of Agriculture Rules and Regulations that govern Adulteration, Packaging and Branding of Food and Food Products, under Section 214-n:

Treatment and Sale of Apple Cider

Any person who manufactures, processes, sells or exposes for sale apple cider shall implement an established process to treat such cider that will consistently produce, at a minimum a five log reduction for at least as long as the shelf life of the product when stored under normal and moderate abuse conditions in the pertinent pathogens

This section shall not apply to the sale of cider for use in production and manufacture of hard cider, vinegar and wine.

Any person who knowingly violates the provision of this section shall be subject to a civil penalty of up to one thousand dollars for the first violation and for any subsequent violation Selling raw, untreated cider to consumers, for consumption and not for processing, fermenting or distilling, is illegal in New York State.

In this edition, we publish two opposite stories...
Once again we were able to mount a convincing enough argument in Albany to have the NYS Legislature match our efforts and invest $500,000 in apple applied research. This money will be administered in conjunction with the funds we self assess from our marketing order. The ARDP Board will have the final decision as to how to direct the funds.

The question may arise when is enough money being spent to support the growth and competitive nature of the New York apple industry? My quick reply is do not worry we are far from there! In all matters of research we have to accept that our ability to discover new is constantly being challenged. One only has to remain within 20 miles of most of your farms to see my point. Today new orchard planting systems, new varieties, new methods of fruit thinning, new storage techniques and incredible packing systems have made everything new overnight. These similar changes are occurring across the nation and the globe. To remain competitive we must invest. No rather we must invest wisely. To do this we must first have research to help uncover the best practices. To invest in the wrong packing systems or varieties could be a large enough error to mark the end of a business.

Senator Bill NYS S1853, NYS Assembly Bill A6256

I recently made an effort to get the industry to test their ability to move some legislation in Albany that would have direct impact on their bottom line. To be honest the response was very minimal. As of this morning on the Senate bill including the author Senator Betty Little we only had seven senators willing to publicly step up to sponsor this bill. On the assembly side written by our longtime friend Bill Magee we only had five Assembly members willing to endorse this action.

You’re invited

Estate Planning Seminar

Your Key Planning Issues

Presented by Ron Sutton, J.D., LL.M., CTFA
Senior Vice President, KeyBank

- The need for advance planning, “What happens when you don’t plan!”
- Privacy & probate avoidance, the benefits of revocable trusts over wills.
- Asset titling
- Irrevocable trusts, asset protection & Medicaid
- Leaving a legacy
- Family business succession planning
- Living wills, healthcare proxy’s & HIPPA
- New York’s power of attorney law

Ron Sutton, J.D., LL.M., CTFA

What: Estate Planning Seminar
When: Wednesday, May 20, 2015
5:00 pm – 7:00 pm
Where: Genesee River Restaurant & Reception Center
134 N Main Street
Mt Morris, NY 14510
How: RSVP Michele Compo by 5/4 at 585-238-4160 or michele.compo@keybank.com
Light Refreshments. Seating is limited.

Key Private Bank

See Research, Page 14
See Bills, Page 16
State Budget supports agriculture

New York Farm Bureau

ALBANY – New York Farm Bureau released the following statement on the recently passed Fiscal Year 2016 New York budget.

“New York Farm Bureau applauds the work of lawmakers for securing an on-time budget that raises the level of support for agriculture in this state. The approved spending plan invests more than $70 million in important farm programs that touch every farmer. Our members would especially like to thank Governor Andrew Cuomo along with Senator Patty Ritchie and Assemblyman Bill Magee, the respective Agriculture Committee Chairs, for their continued support and recognition of the value of farming. This plan includes increased support for the Environmental Protection Fund. The program is responsible for enhancing water-quality projects, farmland protection and expanding conservation efforts that are taking place every day on farms across the state. In addition, the budget funds critical research for a variety of commodities including dairy, fruit, vegetables, honeybees and maple. We are also appreciative of money that supports new farmers, promotes the world-class products grown and made by our farms, and makes a substantial investment to upgrade services at the State Fairgrounds.

“Improving infrastructure and expanding rural broadband have also been top priorities for New York Farm Bureau, and we are pleased to see proper attention is being paid to them in the new budget. Safe roads and bridges are imperative for farmers to move machinery and product in an effective manner. This funding will also go a long way in ensuring that there is reliable internet all across New York. This is important for farmers to access timely information and take advantage of new technology that improves efficiency. “It is also important to note that another increase to the minimum wage was not included in the spending plan.

New York Farm Bureau members had strongly objected to the proposals because the increased labor costs would have come at a time when New York farms are already at a competitive disadvantage when compared to those in other agricultural states. We urge lawmakers to keep this in mind as the legislative session continues,” said Dean Norton, New York Farm Bureau President.

New York Farm Bureau is the state’s largest agricultural lobbying/trade organization. Its members and the public know the organization as “The Voice of New York Agriculture.” New York Farm Bureau is dedicated to solving the economic and public policy issues challenging the agricultural community.

Lake Ontario Fruit Tour set for June 17

Cornell Cooperative Extension

The 2015 CCE Lake Ontario Summer Fruit Tour in Western New York will be held significantly earlier than usual this year due to Dr. Robinson’s upcoming sabbatical.

It will be held on Wednesday, June 17, 2015. We offer three features this year: the fruit production technology and grower innovations in Wayne County. We are making plans now with Cornell University faculty, and the growers in the region for this show-and-tell day of networking with the fruit industry. Opportunities for reconnecting with old friends and forging new technical and business relationships will abound at this year’s summer tour.

This educational opportunity is expected to draw some 250 growers from across the state. The stops are still being finalized, but we’re looking for funding from the New York Farm Bureau, St. Lawrence County Farm Bureau, and the New York Agricultural Insurance Company to support this event.

For more information and access to the event, please visit USDA’s website, http://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/payment-eligibility/conservation_compliance/index.

Correction

We previously published this photo in the April issue; please note the photo is of Jim Allen and Wil Gunnison with Betty Little, R-45th District at the Farm Bureau Taste of NY legislative reception in Albany.

Conservation Compliance deadline June 1; forms needed to keep crop insurance

United Fresh Produce Assn.

In April, USDA released its interim final rule that implements the “conservation compliance” mandate in the new Farm Bill.

That rule formally establishes June 1st as the deadline for all producers to certify their compliance status with USDA. The following questions answered to some frequently asked questions regarding this new mandate:

Why is this change occurring? The Agricultural Act of 2014 (new Farm Bill) mandates that all producers purchasing federally-subsidized crop insurance must certify their compliance status with USDA. Producers must file FSA Form AD-1026 by that date with the Farm Service Agency. Producers must certify their status as well as that of any “affiliated parties” as determined by FSA. Forms can be mailed, faxed or provided in person.

Isn’t this requirement only for “annually-titled” commodities? All specialty crop producers that purchase crop insurance and want to continue receiving the federal premium subsidy must certify their status by June 1.

How do I certify my status? Producers must file FSA Form AD-1026 by that date with the Farm Service Agency. Producers must certify their status as well as that of any “affiliated parties” as determined by FSA. Forms can be mailed, faxed or provided in person.

What if I am not buying my crop insurance policy until much later in the year? Regardless of when you purchase your insurance, your form must be filed with USDA by the June 1st deadline. If it is not filed by that date, you will be ineligible for the premium subsidy and that may make the cost of an individual crop insurance policy increase substantially.


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Michigan Apple Committee sponsors Food Safety Education Day

By Jim Allen jimallen@nyapplecountry.com

Last month, the Michigan Apple Committee, under the leadership of executive Director Diane Smith, hosted a day-long seminar on food safety for apple packing facilities in Grand Rapids.

More than 65 people attended the seminar and registration was open to all apple packers from Michigan as well as surrounding states. Two packers from New York and one from Pennsylvania attended. Registration was open to any interested individuals in the industry.

The workshop focused on the recent Listeria outbreak found on both caramel apples and fresh apples at Bidart Brothers of Bakersfield, Calif., last December. Listeria was first found on the caramel apples in the marketplace and then traced back to the raw fresh apples and the packing facility that supplied the fruit to the candy apple manufacturer. This was the first such listeria finding ever reported on fresh whole apples.

The Michigan Apple Committee worked closely with Michigan State University Extension and MSU to put the program together. A number of noted MSU and Michigan Department of Agriculture staff, along with speakers from the private sector, presented information to the group.

Topics such as setting the stage for Caramel Apple Outbreak by Les Bourquin, MSU and followed by an in-depth report on Listeria by Dr. Elliot Ryser, MSU were given. Dr. Ryser is considered to be one of the nation’s leading authorities on Listeria Mynocytogenes.

Byron Beerbower of the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development talked in detail about the new FDA safety regulations on other regulatory requirements. Other presenters offered practical aspects of Listeria control in food facilities by cleaning and sanitation procedures, and spoke of sanitary design of food equipment in packing facilities.

Todd Sanders of the California Apple Commission and Julie Bancroft of the Pennsylvania Apple Program joined Mark Seetin of USApple and me (representing New York) at the seminar. All attendees will be able to access the information on line in the near future.

The objective is to help provide the fresh apple packing community with as much accurate and cutting edge information that they can use to help prevent future outbreaks for fresh apples.

The Bidart Brothers outbreak sent chills throughout the apple industry as well as it disrupted export of U.S. apples to such countries as India and the Philippines last February and March.

I would like to extend our thanks to Diane Smith, the MSU Extension and MSU for hosting this workshop and taking a proactive position on this potentially damaging issue. We appreciate being invited to attend.

Taste of New York, NY Cider Association sponsor ciders of New York two-city tour

By Jim Allen jimallen@nyapplecountry.com

In March, the Taste of NY and the New York Cider Association sponsored a two city tour in Rochester and Buffalo.

Both events were held at two popular local pubs and featured New York Hard Ciders.

Local cider makers proudly displayed and sampled their unique hard ciders.

Many flavors and different blends were offered that included hopped ciders, fruit and maple flavored, ice hard cider and of course good old traditional hard cider.

Attending the event were:

- Eve’s Cidery; Steampunk/Leonard Oaks; 1911 Hard Cider; BlackBird Cider Works; Harvest Moon Cidery; South Hill Cider; Cider Creek Hard Cider; Root Stock Ciderworks; Blue Toad Hard Cider; Hazlitt’s Cider Tree; Chateau Buffalo.
Western water worries

By Jim Allen
jimallen@nyapplecountry.com

California water issues or specifically the lack of water, has been dominating the press recently.

Here on the East Coast, we are constantly being reminded of the dire situation that California is now experiencing because of serious drought that has now reached epic proportions and being classified as the worse drought in the history of the state and country.

It has been reported that quite possibly non-California residents are more informed of the seriousness of the drought than Californians are, and that residents choose to deny the predictions rather than react to them. Just recently, the Brown administration has finally taken steps to restrict and conserve public use of water. Residents in disbelief of course are balking.

But it’s not only California that is under a water shortage. Worries in Washington state continue to mount as nearly half of the state is now under a state of emergency because of water shortages. The governor, in March, declared a drought emergency in 11 water sheds that serve the Wenatchee, Yakima, Walla Walla and Olympia Peninsula regions. The principal reason for the shortage is the less than normal snow pack in the mountains. Snow pack in the mountains has gone from 50 percent of normal, down to 11 percent as the snow melts.

The major apple growing regions are certainly under pressure from a lack of water. The Colombian River Basin area looks to be in the best shape for most of the season, but late season shortages are predicted. Both Yakima and Wenatchee are now in worse shape where the basins are now less than 50 percent of normal.

Last year, the state experienced some of the worse forest fires in history because of the unusual dryness.

As apple growers, you all know the importance of water for productive crops. Unlike our rain soaked orchards in the East, Washington has to rely on irrigation and deal with water rights. Irrigation is not only used for apple growth and tree health, but in the summer months it is highly used to combat sunburn and fruit condition issues from the intense heat. All of these factors certainly impact production and quality of fruit. Any disruption of these practices can cause serious fruit damage and storage issues later on.

We all complain about rainy days, wet weekends, muddy orchards and lawns, and sometimes it does get excessive; but I guess if you have to pick your poison, then let it be wetter than dryer.

Cider bill making progress

U.S. Apple Association

The Cider Act passed the Senate Finance Committee in early February.

The legislation, authored by Sen. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y., would adjust the tax treatment of hard cider to provide cider makers much needed flexibility to produce ciders better tuned to consumers’ tastes.

Under current federal law, the outdated definition of hard apple and pear cider only allows for up to 7 percent alcohol by volume before it is taxed as wine, and only a certain level of carbonation before it is subject to the champagne tax.

While the changes would apply across the board to both large and small cider makers, smaller craft cider operators will especially benefit. Cider makers who rely on their own apples, or locally grown apples have had to deal with the problem of variation in apple sugar content from season to season, making it difficult to precisely control the alcohol level to 7 percent or less.

Similar legislation has been introduced in the House by Rep. Earl Blumenauer, D-Ore., but there is no indication when it will be acted on.

The House and Senate legislation have been endorsed by the New York Apple Association and U.S. Apple Association. While most believe the bill is most likely to be wrapped into a larger tax reform package than passed by itself, it is still important to draw attention to the issue and urge more members to support the effort.

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Rimon® is a highly effective, broad-spectrum insecticide with unique ovicidal and larvicidal activity. When applied at petal fall, Rimon helps to control overwintering obliquebanded leafroller (OBLR) larvae, codling moth (CM) and Oriental fruit moth (OFM) eggs and young larvae. Rimon has a new and unique chemistry that fits well in IPM programs as another resistance management tool.

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To learn more, please contact:
Jay Anglie, Technical Sales Representative
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ACS1967-1581-5
I recently read a story in the Capital Press from Oregon about the western hop industry and how states beyond the Northwest are growing hops because of possible shortfalls.

The story starts out in Yakima, Washington, with “the continuing growth of the craft beer industry is squeezing the U.S. hop industry and it is driving increased plantings in the premier hop growing areas, the Pacific Northwest.” The story goes on to say that the craft beer industry is projecting a 20 percent growth and the means more hops.

For the New York craft beer category, that means more New York grown hops thanks to the new craft beer licensing criteria that requires New York hops. At these current trends and increased demand, a shortage of hops is predicted as soon as 2018. The other huge factor that may contribute to this shortage is a lack of water! In this paper “Western Water Worries” calls out the extreme water issues in the West and hop production could also be affected. Hops use three gallons of water per day per plant!

73 percent of U.S. hop production comes from 30,000 acres in the state of Washington, with Yakima being the top region. Yakima is now under a water shortage emergency. In the U.S., Wisconsin and New York are huge hop producing areas in the early 1860s. Of course in those days every city had a number of breweries and local hops were in demand.

A severe outbreak of mildew in the 1880s caused the industry to pull up their stakes and move west. With no means to control mildew, growers went out of business.

On a personal note, I grew up in Waterville, N.Y., which is in the Oneida-Madison county area. My Dad’s potato farm was originally an hops farm and had two falling down Hop Dry Houses. Agriculture boomed in the 1800s in that area because of Hop growing.

I see a number of similarities in hop and apple production, and certainly that is backed up in Yakima where growers saw a shortage and got together and put poles and longer string, along with our fertile soils and AMPLE rain may just be the ticket to expand New York hop production. Much of the equipment and other items would be the same; and since we can grow the best apples, I think we could grow the best hops.

If you happen to be a craft beer fancier, or a hard cider connoisseur you know that hops are important for beer and are also finding their way into hard cider.

Barring a National Prohibition Act (seriously?) or a 180 degree switch in rainfall and snowpack patterns in the west (not likely) hop demand can only increase.

Undocumented sources say that New York is approaching the 300 acre mark in hop production.

As you look ahead at your operations and your plans to expand, replant or diversify, maybe getting all “hopped up” might be an option?
USApple article wins award

The U.S. Apple Association recently took home a first place communications award at the National Agri-Marketing Association (NAMA) Conference in Kansas City. The recognition for USApple was a first in the category of Persuasive Writing and was awarded for an article Brannen wrote entitled, “Apple Soup—Better Than Snert!”

Brannen first pitched and then penned the article, which focuses on unique apple applications in soup and is geared toward a foodservice audience like chefs and food educators who are interested in how restaurants prepare ingredients in distinctive, creative ways.

Brannen attended the International Food Editorial Council Conference a few weeks before writing the article. During meetings there, she talked with the magazine editor about how an apple soup article would be interesting. She and Harvest PR then set up and interviewed three chefs, and Brannen interwove the chefs’ advice into the winning piece.

The U.S. Apple Association/Harvest PR won five regional first place awards that qualified for nationals. The four other categories and programs for which USApple was a finalist include:
- Producer Funded PR Campaign: 28 Days of Apples
- News Release – Consumer Media: “Crunch, Crunch, Gooaal!”
- Internet Website – Education Focus: AppletizeMe
- Social Media: 28 Days of Apples

The winning article, which ran in CAFÉ’s Gold Medal Classroom in January, 2014, can be found online at: http://www.cafemeetingplace.com/gmc/features/item/966-apple-soup-better-than-snert

National Agri-Marketing Association’s The Best of NAMA awards program honors the best work in agricultural communications each year. Last year USApple took home an unprecedented three first place wins and a merit (second place) award.

We want your good news!

Does your farm/business have any special news you would like us to share? Please let us know by emailing us your information and/or press release and photos to: molly@nyapplecountry.com We will make every effort to get your good news posted to our Facebook page www.facebook.com/nyapples We also would love to fill our Pinterest page www.pinterest.com/nyapplecountry/ with your favorite recipes, crafts and photos of such. Please continue to use our special events section at www.nyapplecountry.com/find/events/submit for your event listings.
The program will focus on research and grower education projects that will create new partnerships, increase efficiencies, reduce costs, foster innovation and enhance the long-term viability of specialty crop agriculture businesses across the State.

“The Specialty Crop Block Grant program is a valuable resource available to help farmers improve their practices, enhance operations and remain competitive,” Ball said. “We look forward to seeing comprehensive project proposals that address the key needs of our farmers and provide innovative solutions to further grow the industry.”

The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, in partnership with the New York Farm Viability Institute, is soliciting proposals for projects focused on research and grower education. The NYFVI will evaluate the proposals and submit its recommendations to the Department for inclusion in the agency’s application to the USDA.

“The Farm Viability Institute has a great system already in place to solicit and evaluate agriculture research project proposals,” NYFVI Chairman Jim Bittner said. “We are pleased to partner with the Department of Agriculture and Markets in delivering the Specialty Crop Block Grant program.

Funding is being provided through the Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004 (amended under the federal 2014 Farm Bill), which authorizes the USDA to provide state assistance for specialty crop competitiveness programs.

To apply for the Specialty Crop Block Grant program, please visit NYFVI’s online application system at nyfvi.org. Eligible applicants include not-for-profit organizations, not-for-profit educational institutions, and state, local and Indian tribal governments. Applications are due May 26, 2015. Projects must be completed within two years from the award date. Awards are expected to be announced in June 2015.
Contest seeks recipes

New York Apple Association

Last year they helped us name our New York Apple mascot; now “Katie Crunch” wants the New York School's favorite recipes to fill the new school recipe section of www.nyapplecountry.com.

This new school foodservce contest is up and running from May 1 through June 5, for members of the New York School Nutrition Association, who graciously distributes the contest electronically to its membership for us.

Each school, K-12, has a chance to win FREE New York apples with each recipe and photo they submit of a recipe utilizing New York apples.

Last year's contest was a great success and we look forward to sharing the result of this contest with you in July!
Media relations 101: make it work for you
By Julia Stewart
julia@nyapplecountry.com

Apples have already been in the headlines on several occasions this year, with more stories tallying in the bad news column than the good news one so far. That has kept your NY AA spokespeople busy writing talking points to help us promote and protect our state’s apple industry.

Interacting with the media – whether newspapers, television, radio, and now online – can be tricky, so here are a few insights and tips from our pros.

Myth busters, media style
First, let’s bust some myths you likely have about interacting with the media:

• MYTH: You must talk to any reporter who contacts you.
• TRUTH: If the story is going to be negative, then don’t associate your company’s good name with it – in that case, politely refer the reporter to NYAA. (For example: “The NYAA staff can talk to you about that much better than I can, they will give you what you need.”)

On the other hand if the story is positive and it makes sense to attach your business to it, then grab the spotlight with both hands.

• MYTH: You must answer a reporter’s questions.
• TRUTH: You conduct an interview to deliver your messages. This is an offensive game, not a defensive one.

• MYTH: You shouldn’t say “I don’t know.”
• TRUTH: You’re an expert on apples – you are (likely) not a microbiologist, geneticist, epidemiologist, or other -ist. If you don’t know how to answer a question, just say so. Don’t guess or speculate.

Now that you are empowered and reassured by the knowledge that you are in the driver’s seat, if/when you do choose to talk to a reporter, here are some dos and don’ts.

The paramount “do” is to speak to your target audience: consumers, not the reporter. That means keeping in mind that they are uncomfortable about some of our practices, such as pesticide use. They don’t want to hear that you’re using pesticides safely; they want to hear that you are watching out for their health and safety, and are serving them the same fruit you served your family first.

Positive media coverage can be a powerful tool for reaching consumers. A good news article is the equivalent of a third-party endorsement, which speaks to consumers more than advertising. Choose your interview opportunities carefully to ensure they will work for you, not against you. Refer everything else to NYAA.

Dos and Don’ts

Do:
• Schedule the interview: “I’m busy right now/I want to collect my thoughts, can I call you back at…?”
• Screen: Request the interview topic, ask for questions in advance, get the reporter’s contacts and deadline, and inquire when the story will publish/air.
• Seek advice: Contact NYAA for guidance if you want it, you are not alone.
• Research: Google the reporter and the outlet, so you know what to expect.
• Plan: Jot down and prioritize the key messages you want to convey, and practice delivering them different ways.
• Prepare: Be ready for the toughest possible questions you’ll likely get.
• Deliver: During the interview, bridge from the reporter’s questions to your key messages. (“What I know is…”, “Let’s look at it more broadly…”, “Yes/no, and…”)
• Keep it simple: Use short sentences and memorable language (aka “soundbites”).

Don’t:
• Speak ill of others: Don’t disparage competitors, or question others’ motives. Speak from your perspective.
• Speculate: Adding to a controversy will hurt, not help.
• Use industry jargon: Speak in consumer-friendly language.
• Run on: Deliver your key messages, then stop talking.
• Say “no comment”: There is always a way to bridge to a key message.
• Speak off the record: Assume your every word will be reported.

Media interviews: Dos and Don’ts
New York Apple Association

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Presented by Ron Sutton, J.D., LL.M., CTFA Senior Vice President, KeyBank

• The need for advance planning, “What happens when you don’t plan!”
• Privacy & probate avoidance, the benefits of revocable trusts over wills.
• Asset titling
• Irrevocable trusts, asset protection & Medicaid
• Leaving a legacy
• Family business succession planning
• Living wills, healthcare proxy’s & HIPPA
• New York’s power of attorney law
USDA announces importation of fresh apples from China

USDA

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service published a final rule amending the fruits and vegetables regulations to allow the importation of fresh apples (Malus pumila) from China into the continental United States.

This final rule is the culmination of decades of hard work by USDA staff and further builds on the trade relationship USDA has established with our Chinese counterparts.

Earlier this year, USDA officials reached an agreement with our Chinese counterparts to allow the importation of all U.S.-grown apples to the Chinese market, which will be effective May 22, 2015. Under that agreement, the apple industry estimates that, within two years, exports to China will reach five million bushels annually, a value of nearly $100 million a year. This achievement also has the potential to expand many U.S. fresh apple exports, which were valued at more than $1 billion in 2013, by approximately 10 percent.

In making the determination that apples can be safely imported to the United States from China APHIS completed a risk analysis in 2013. The risk analysis determined that apples could safely be imported from China into the continental United States under certain conditions, including being produced in accordance with a systems approach.

The systems approach requirements will include: production by a grower who is part of a certification program administered by the National Plant Protection Organization (NPPO) of China; pre-harvest NPPO inspection; issuance of a phytosanitary certificate; importation in commercial consignments only; sealed boxes; and location of apples in a cold storage facility while awaiting export to the continental United States.

Additionally, apples from areas in China where the Oriental fruit fly is known to exist must also be treated with fumigation and refrigeration, and all Chinese apples must be accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate with an additional declaration stating that all conditions for the importation of the apples have been met and that the consignment of apples has been inspected and found free of quarantine pests.

APHIS will continue to monitor and audit China’s implementation of the systems approach.

The final rule will be effective May 26. The rule is on display here: https://federalregister.gov/2015-09508.pdf.

Find quality, affordable health insurance for farms at NY State of Health

NYS Department of Health

Nothing says New York like apples, and the state’s apple growers are important employers in regions from Long Island to Western New York. For apple growers who want to make sure their employees have access to health care, NY State of Health, the Official Health Plan Marketplace is the place to go.

Like “an apple a day,” good health insurance is a vital part of staying healthy. In addition to providing a safety net should you or your employees get injured or become ill, all plans offered on NY State of Health cover preventive care, like routine doctor visits and screenings, at no cost.

More than 2.1 million New Yorkers are enrolled in comprehensive affordable health insurance through NY State of Health’s Individual Marketplace and over 5,700 small businesses have found flexible affordable insurance through the Small Business Marketplace. Individuals must live in New York, be U.S. citizens, nationals or lawfully present immigrants.

Information provided to the Marketplace is not shared and the Marketplace has assistants that speak many different languages. And, no matter what a person’s status, they may still be able to get emergency Medicaid or health coverage for their children through Child Health Plus through the Marketplace.

**What is the Small Business Marketplace?**

Apple growers with 50 or fewer eligible employees can offer employees health insurance coverage through the NY State of Health Small Business Marketplace. Employers can select from a variety of health and dental plans while setting contribution levels that make sense for their business.

Tax credits may be available for eligible businesses with 25 or fewer employees. If you offer more than one plan, the Small Business Marketplace will compile all of the costs for you into one monthly bill, making administration simple. In 2016, the Small Business Marketplace will open up to businesses with 100 or fewer eligible employees.

**What is the Individual Marketplace?**

The NY State of Health Individual Marketplace is where individuals and families can shop for low-cost, quality health plans. Many plan choices from brand-name companies are offered. Nearly three-quarters of people who have enrolled in the Individual Marketplace receive financial help paying for health insurance. Individuals can also enroll in Medicaid through the Marketplace if they qualify.

The Marketplace is here to help

Brokers and in-person assistors are available to guide small growers and employers through the enrollment process, help them find the right health insurance based on their unique needs and work with them to figure out if they can get financial assistance to reduce the cost of coverage.

**Bill would require E-Verify for all employers**

NumbersUSA

Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, introduced a bill in April that would mandate the use of E-Verify by all employers. The Accountability Through Electronic Verification Act of 2015, S. 1052, would permanently authorize and require employers to use the Internet-based system that assists employers in determining the eligibility of employees to work in the United States.

“E-Verify has already proven to be a cost-free, successful tool for the companies that volunteer to use it,” Grassley said in a release.

“The program assists businesses that want to comply with immigration laws, safeguards opportunities for legal workers, and helps to reduce incentives for illegal entry into the United States. Enhancing it and making it a staple in every workplace will help in holding businesses accountable.”

The Accountability Through Electronic Verification Act of 2015 does the following:

- Permanently reauthorizes the E-Verify program that was created in 1996.
- Makes the program mandatory for all employers within one year of date of enactment, requires federal contractors and agencies to use the program immediately, and directs “critical employers,” as identified by the Secretary of Homeland Security, to use the system within 30 days of designation.
- Increases penalties for employers who illegally hire undocumented workers.
- Reduces the liability that employers face if they participate in E-Verify when it involves the wrongful termination of an individual.
- Allows employers to use E-Verify before a person is hired.
- Requires employers to terminate the employment of those found unauthorized to work due to a check through E-Verify.
- Helps ensure that the Social Security Administration catches multiple uses of Social Security numbers by requiring them to develop algorithms to detect anomalies.
- Establishes a demonstration project in a rural area or area without internet capabilities to assist small businesses in complying with the participation requirement.

Help is available online, in person in the community and by phone. Assistance is available in multiple languages.

For more information, visit nystateofhealth.ny.gov or call the Customer Service Center at 1-855-355-5777.

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Spring cleaning time
By Susan Sarlund

Like turning over your own closet when spring arrives, it’s spring-cleaning time in the produce department as well. With less volume of apples coming out of York at this time of year and prices on western apples at their lowest level in five years, retailers shift their focus and display space to Washington apples.

In addition, on a daily basis you can also see how there is less overall retail space for the apple category to make room for the stalwarts this time of year: cherries also

Board
Continued from Page 1

“I understand the importance of young professionals getting involved in legislation. In 2011, I attended the U.S. Apple Association in Washington, D.C., with my aunt (also in the business but based out of Vermont), to represent the Vermont Tree Fruit Growers Association in their fight to support the H-2A program. This was a truly eye-opening experience as I got to see firsthand how legislation can directly affect our business. 'In 2014 I was elected to go join the Young Apple Leader Conference in Washington, where we lobbied for more agricultural

Buy
Continued from Page 1

for a bonus buy of fresh apples and processed products was just approved by Secretary Vilsack.

"This purchase includes 34.9 million pounds of fresh apples and 16.1 million pounds of processed apple products, and is the largest apple bonus buy in history. The estimated dollar value of the purchase is $48.3 million; all of that growth of roughly 1.5 million in processed apple products that the USDA has bought so far this year through the regular purchase programs.

"Coming on the heels of what was likely the largest apple crop in U.S. history, this USDA purchase is welcome support. "I would like to continue to be involved in these important topics that directly affect our business."

Returning to the NYAA board for their second terms are Kaari Stannard of Fish Creek Orchards in District 6, Chris Hance of Chance Farms of Fish Creek Orchards in District 1, and John Boozman, R-Ark.; David Perdue, R-Ga.; Corker, R-Tenn.; Tom Cotton, R-Ark.; and Jeff Sessions, R-Ala.

His initiative and hard work on this bonus buy are appreciated.

USApple thanks the NYAA leadership for their prompt and critically needed response in support of the bonus buy request,” Seetin said. “USDA estimates that the Purchase Announcement soliciting offers to sell will be published within a month. USApple will continue to coordinate closely with AMS Fruit and Vegetable Program staff and keep our members informed of any new developments.”

Calendar

JUNE 3
London Produce Show
London, England

JUNE 9-10
United Fresh
Chicago

JUNE 18-19
NYAA Board of Directors Mtg.
Lake Placid

AUGUST 20-21
Apple Crop Outlook
and Marketing Conf.
The Ritz Carlton
Chicago

E-Verify
Continued from Page 1

u Amends the criminal code to make clear that defendants who possess or otherwise use identity information not their own without lawful authority and in the commission of another felony is still punishable for aggravated identity fraud, regardless of the defendant’s ‘knowledge’ of the victim.

I think the real burden is not that we now have double the funds but how to select the most important research with the ‘limited’ funds and time we have to face the global challenges that most certainly lie ahead. I am so very pleased to see that the New York legislators understand that this is a very prudent and wise investment in the New York economy.

I hope the industry can connect the dots and see that this is all possible because we have worked together to illustrate the value of keeping the fruit industry current. Growers do have a voice and we will continue to articulate your needs in the future. It is refreshing to report a positive story line coming from government. Now we need to learn how to harness our various needs towards a positive end.

As NumbersUSA has reported in the past, E-Verify users have had an overwhelmingly positive experience when using the system. According to a survey of users, 92 percent of users found E-Verify to be effective, 89 percent found it to be highly accurate, and 97 percent of users reported using E-Verify for all new hires.


Research
Continued from Page 4

By Susan Sarlund

California stone fruit, berries, and cherries from the West

With CA stone fruit expected in stores in the next 10 to 20 days and Northwest cherries also ahead of schedule, this trend will continue; and it will be interesting to see how that category performs. In response to a declining market, stone fruit growers pulled out up to 30 percent of their acreage and shifted that valuable real estate to other crops.

So far, this has proven a successful change with more manageable supplies and better markets creating what has been dubbed the ‘new normal’.

As reported in the most recent issue of The Produce News, Maurice Cameron, global sales of The Flavor Tree Fruit Co. in Hanford, CA, agreed that it should be “a nice crop of all three fruits”—peaches, plums and nectarines—with some varieties at the tail end of the season being in short supply. “I think we will have a nice market that will look a lot like last year.”

I don’t know about you, but I miss the availability of fresh tasting New York apples in my local stores. The alternative WA varietals just don’t deliver the same taste.

In fact, I’m finding they provide less and less taste.

Here’s to hoping our new crop for 2015/16 is experiencing good weather and getting ready to bloom. As this happens, we are out planning with retailers on how to pull these apples through the register come September.

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U.S. apples make belated return to China

By Dr. Desmond O’Rourke

The U.S. apple industry heaved a sigh of relief when all varieties of U.S. apples were admitted to China in early 2015 under an agreement between the U.S. Department of Agriculture and its Chinese counterpart. The previous, two decades old, agreement only allowed Red Delicious and Golden Delicious varieties to be sold in China. Even that permission had been withdrawn in 2012 on phytosanitary pretexts. Most analysts admit that the real reason for the 2012 ban was China’s desire to use the leverage to gain access for Chinese fresh apples to the U.S. market. That was achieved as part of the current agreement.

U.S. negotiators have followed a flawed strategy for opening foreign markets since the early 1980s when Washington State pursued access for its Red Delicious apples to the Japanese market. At that time, Red Delicious accounted for 70 percent of Washington State production and virtually all of its exports. That share is now below 30 percent and falling, and the state exports a wide array of attractive varieties. However, the principle was established of negotiating access on a variety by variety basis, even though there is little scientific basis for such an approach. The approach offered the importing country multiple excuses to delay market opening.

Under the World Trade Organization rules, to which both the United States and China subscribe, trade barriers should be evaluated in terms of sound science and objective risk analysis. However, most countries choose to ignore their WTO obligations when it serves domestic interests. In turn, the WTO has become a toothless tiger in policing its own rules.

China is unlikely to make much inroads in the U.S. market since its major export variety, Fuji, now sells at higher prices than U.S. Fujis. For this reason, U.S. exporters are cautious about making major commitments in the Chinese market until security of access is guaranteed.

Bills

Continued from Page 4

we were not willing to push these bills! I applaud each of you that made an effort. Here is what I see as a couple of lessons to be gleamed from this effort. First and most clearly we have to educate the industry how to request change in Albany and Washington. I suspect many of you felt this was a good bill but simply did not know how to reach out to your elected to voice your concerns. To fail to do so only guarantees the failure of these bills. Looking to the future we must learn how to mobilize efforts to pass positive legislation.

These efforts can be initiated by your respective organizations such as Agriculture Affiliates or NYS Horticulture Society. To have these then proceed to any level of success it will require grass roots action. Bills do not get to a vote unless the base pushing them out of committee and onto the floor for a vote. We will need to work on this in the future if we ever wish to pass positive legislation in Albany and Washington.

The second disturbing message I received was reasons from legislators why they would not sponsor. One Assemblyman said he could not do so because his district had been reconfigured. Before he would have sponsored when he had a large Agriculture base in his district. Now his area was much more urban and he did not want to encourage growers to hire foreign workers when so many people in his district were out of work. So his theory was to keep all of the obstacles in place to discourage agriculture employers.

What he failed to consider was that by doing so he was making it harder to harvest the crops that his voters required to have jobs in the local packing houses. His voters were always welcome to be a part of the harvest workforce. The fact is they have historically refused to do so. This self serving short sighted attitude is why we are seeing business owners totally untrusting of elected legislators. They too often can not see beyond their personal return and vote to do what will encourage growth beyond the very limiting walls of their districts.

Albany will be closing down in late June. I doubt we will see any floor vote from either house in 2015. We need to realize that it was our inability to push our agenda that we failed. The industry will be paying the $1 per hour extra cost for each hour we employ H2a workers here in New York. We can accept this or we can learn and grow from this. Only time will answer which way we wish to travel.