

# Greene County Agricultural Society, Inc.

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P.O. Box 84 ~ Greenville, NY 12083  
[www.thegreencountyyouthfair.com](http://www.thegreencountyyouthfair.com)

Dated: April 2019

Prepared by President Alex Johnk and Board Member Andrea Macko

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## **Our Mission**

The Greene County Agricultural Society, Inc. is responsible for organizing the annual Youth Fair and furthering agricultural education within the community.

## **What We Do**

Held for four days each July, the Greene County Youth Fair is one of the last free fairs in the U.S. The fair honors the accomplishments of local youth who will keep our agricultural legacy alive for years to come.

We are part of the New York State Association of Agricultural Fairs, whose goal is to promote agriculture, horticulture and domestic arts. All members of the Greene County Agricultural Society are volunteers, and no one receives a paycheck.

The Greene County Agricultural Society meets on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Greenville Public Library Community Room. Meetings are open to the public.

## **2019 Directors**

**President Alex Johnk • Vice President Andrea Macko**

**Treasurer Janet Partridge • Secretary Patty Ross**

Directors: Carl Kohrs, Alice Zabel, Donna VanOrden, Cindy Shanley, Rebecca

Johnk, Fawn Landry, Kathy Schlenker, Diane Lewis, Linda Tripp, Terry McGee-Ward, Karen Pautz, Jessie Shields, Shelby Minshell, Laurie Jennings, Melissa Feltman, Ed Ross, Haley Zurawel

## **Why Ag Education?**

*Agriculture is one of New York State's top industries. In fact, New York's farm economy generates more than \$4 billion each year.*

**As our population continues to shift to a more urban and technology-based demographic, it is the responsibility of Agricultural Societies to educate the public on the importance of food production and its future.**

*Many families come to the fair for the music, rides, fireworks and, of course, the food, and leave with a newfound knowledge of agriculture. Fairs and livestock shows are the original flagship for agriculture promotion in our society, and events like the Greene County Youth Fair help the children of today become the experts of tomorrow.*

**Fair kids go on to become not only farmers, but pursue careers in veterinary medicine, engineering, education, public service and many other agricultural careers. Equally as important, because agriculture is one of our state's top industries, young adults have the opportunity to pursue these types of careers without being forced to leave New York State. We are also seeing young adults return and volunteer on the board.**

## **Quick Facts:**

### **Greene County, Youth and New York's Farm Economy**

- Of Greene County's roughly 48,000 residents, approximately 17 percent (8,160) are under the age of 18.<sup>1</sup>
- Greene County has a median household income of \$49,864.<sup>1</sup>
- Approximately 11 percent of Greene County residents live below the poverty level.<sup>1</sup>
- 37.5 percent of Greene County children qualify for free or reduced-price meals in their school district.<sup>2</sup>
- In 2018 approximately 125 local youth exhibited at the Greene County Youth Fair
- An estimated 20,000 people attend the Greene County Youth Fair each year.
  
- Greene county produces over \$22 Million in Agricultural products annually 2012 and \$19.7 million in 2017
  
- over 35,000 acres in Greene county is used for agriculture

**We are still analyzing the results of the 2017 agriculture census.**

**New York is a leading agricultural state, worth \$6.36 billion in 2015. Below is the latest data available, provided by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service, the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets and Farm Credit East.**

**In 2014 there were 35,537 farms in New York State and 7,183,576 acres in farmland.**

**Dairy and milk production accounts for nearly 26,000 jobs in New York State. Grain and oilseed farming employs nearly 15,500. Veggie and melon farming is responsible for 7,750 jobs. All sectors of agriculture in New York State is responsible for 197,745 jobs.**

#### **New York's National Ranking in 2015**

- 1st— yogurt, cottage cheese, sour cream
- 2nd— apples, cabbage, snap peas, maple syrup
- 3rd— dairy cows, milk production, grapes
- 4th— squash, pears, calves
- 5th— tart cherries, onions, corn silage, sweet corn

#### **Cash receipts by commodity in 2015 was:**

- Livestock--\$3.3 billion (dairy, cattle, hogs, poultry, etc.)
- Field Crops--\$887 million (hay, soybeans, wheat, etc.)
- Vegetables--\$344 million (cabbage, sweet corn, onions, etc.)
- Fruit--\$361 million (apples, grapes, strawberries, etc.)
- Other--\$637 million (floriculture, Christmas trees, maple, etc.)

#### **New York's Farm Economy**

Employee compensation --\$427 million  
Energy costs --\$343 million  
Property taxes --\$236 million  
Maintenance & repairs --\$188 million  
Marketing & transportation --\$133 million

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau

<sup>2</sup> Council on Children and Families, Kids' Wellbeing Indicators Clearinghouse

## **History of the Greene County Youth Fair**

Alfred Partridge, leader of the Ashland Blue Ribbon 4-H Club, organized a 4-H Club Fair at the Sutton Hollow School in Ashland in 1949 to give his club members an opportunity to display their projects before family, friends and the community. From this small beginning, the youth fair has developed into the showcase it is today.

Alfred's club held its second fair in 1950 at the Sutton Hollow School. The next year, the fair was in Jewett and other 4-H Club members in the area joined in.

From 1952-1956, the 4-H Club Fair, as it was then known, was held at the VFW Hall on Route 23 near Windham.

In 1954 the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets recognized the fair as an agricultural fair and donated \$5,000 annually to be given in premium money to the exhibitors. Another \$500 was appropriated by the Greene County Board of Supervisors. By this time, the fair was officially called the Greene County Youth Fair and open to all youth who lived or attended school in Greene County.

By 1957 the fair had expanded to two dairy tents, a poultry and rabbit tent, and a sheep and goat tent. A new home was found at the Durham Central School, currently the Durham Elementary School, on Route 145. In addition to the tent space outside, there was ample space in the school for food and clothing exhibits, vegetables, flowers, entomology, arts and crafts.

During the late 1960s, a trade tent was added by the local merchants, as was a horse show, and the fair became a three-day event.

The Greene County Youth Fair stayed at the Durham School for 38 years, with the exception of 1973 when, due to alterations at the school, the fair was held at the Durham Town Building on Route 81.

In the fall of 1995 a committee was formed to find a new home for the fair, which by that time was in its 41st year. The Town of Cairo was more than willing to offer the use of Angelo Canna Town Park as a location centrally located in the county, and a new chapter in the fair's history began.

The fair was extended to a four-day event in 2001 and that same year Senator John Bonacic helped obtain a grant for a new public address system at the fair.

In 2002 the youth fair had a new attraction. An agricultural tent, bustling with activities to educate and entertain visitors of all ages. Part of the tent was filled with youth displays and agriculture, as well as forestry and conservation displays for adults.

In 2003 the Greene County Agricultural Society was incorporated for the purpose of running the fair.

It is impossible to know how many young people have been involved in exhibiting and participating in the Greene County Youth Fair over the years. There are statistics indicating more than 2,000 exhibits had been made numerous years.

So, Alfred Partridge's dream of a youth fair dedicated to the talents and interests of all of the youth of Greene County has come true. He worked many years for this project, but he would be the first to acknowledge all of the willing people who worked side-by-side with him. The list is endless.

Today, the fair attracts more than 20,000 people and is one of the only fairs in New York State to offer free admission and entertainment. The Greene County Youth Fair remains a celebration of the talents of local youth, enabling them to strive for higher goals and receive support from family, friends and their community.

## **Today's Greene County Youth Fair**

A priority of the Greene County Agricultural Society has been and always will be to keep admission to the Greene County Youth Fair free for all ages.

Today's Youth Fair offers a wide variety of entertainment, attractions, music, rides, food, vendors, fireworks, fire department and police displays, a talent show, classic car show, educational displays and so much more. Of course, the focus of the fair will always be agriculture, but as society – and kid's interests – change, we need to get creative about how we attract them to the fair and ultimately expose them to agriculture.

The 2018 fair, scheduled for July 25-28<sup>th</sup> at Cairo's Angelo Canna Town Park, will offer a wide variety of entertainment and educational exhibits, including magic shows, animal demonstrations, a comedic dog show, singing and dancing groups, exotic animals and much more. The theme this year is Hawaiian luau.

## **The Future of the Greene County Youth Fair**

It has been said, quite simply, "If you ate today, thank a farmer."

Unquestionably, the agricultural industry has changed enormously from the time our nation was founded. Technology, population shifts, nutritional awareness and even social change such as the industrial revolution has played an enormous role in how food is produced today. And it will continue to change.

By 2050 – only 34 short years away – the agricultural sector is going to face enormous challenges in order to feed the 9.6 billion people that the United Nations predicts will inhabit the planet. Feeding this many people will require a food production increase of 70 percent. Who will be the farmers, scientists and agribusiness leaders working to ensure the world is fed three decades from now? The youth of today.

Greene county has lost numerous dairy farms in the last few years and as of right now there is only 4 farms in the county shipping milk. There is a huge disconnect from the general public and farmers. Fewer people know where their food is coming from and how it got to the supermarket shelves. The Greene County Youth Fair helps to open educational lines of communication so fair-goers can get a sense of how agriculture plays a vital role in the local economy. Currently the average age of a farmer in Greene county is 55 years old. This means that organizations like the Greene County Agricultural Society need to continue its mission to educate and encourage local children and teens to be involved in agriculture. We are fortunate to have locally involved partners in this mission, such as 4-H and Future Farmers of America. But we must constantly continue to find new, creative and unique ways to attract youth and families – and generate funds to do so.

Going forward, the Agricultural Society recognizes that one of the keys to generating new ideas is to encourage participation from new people. Our meetings are open to the public and we welcome new members.

Any questions may be directed to [greenecountyagsociety@gmail.com](mailto:greenecountyagsociety@gmail.com)

The 2019 fair is July 25-28 at Angelo Canna Town Park in Cairo. See you at the fair!