

2 · October 2020 **Tractor Factor**

State issues pandemic guidelines for fall activities

By SYDNEY SCHAEFER

ALBANY - New guidelines for agritourism businesses across the state were announced by the governor this month, just in time for the start of the fall season.

The agritourism businesses, which include corn mazes, pick-your-own fruit and vegetable operations, hayrides and haunted houses, are considered by the state to be low-risk, outdoor arts and entertainment businesses. Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo announced, and are permitted to operate under New York Forward guidance.

"New York State's amazing outdoor attractions and recreational opportunities are a boon for families and communities during the fall season each year, and we want New Yorkers to be able to enjoy this time with their family responsibly and safely," Gov. Cuomo said in a prepared statement Tuesday. "The new guidance announced today will ensure that these businesses can open to the public, allowing families to enjoy their favorite fall activities while providing a boost for our farming communities and local economies."

Corn mazes, pick-your-

own fruit and vegetable operations and haunted houses are permitted in accordance with low-risk, outdoor arts and entertainment guidance, and it's required that these businesses operate at reduced capacity, face masks are worn at all times and social distancing is maintained between individuals and parties of peo-

Hayrides are permitted in accordance with the state's public transportation guidance, and it's required that face masks are worn at all times, social distancing is

maintained between individuals and parties of people and frequently touched surfaces are cleaned and sanitized between rides. Petting zoos are not permitted at this time.

"As one of the nation's top agricultural states, New York traditionally comes together in the fall to celebrate the harvest — from apples to grapes to pumpkins," said State Agriculture Commissioner Richard A. Ball. "This year, while things may not look exactly the same on your favorite farm, I am happy to say we can still celebrate agriculture's

bounty and the many fami- for the agricultural industry, ly-friendly activities that go with it."

The state Department of Agriculture and Markets has found at agriculture.ny.gov/ issued a full slate of guidelines coronavirus.

including guidance for farmers markets and food and beverage producers, which can be





The entrance to the corn maze at Abundant Life Community Church in Lowville. WATERTOWN DAILY TIMES





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USDA is tracking honeybee loss

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is collecting information about colony loss in the honey industry.

The Quarterly Colony Loss survey will be conducted through October. The survey collects information about colony inventory and loss from more than 400 producers with honey bee colonies in the northeastern United States.

"The information from these surveys directly impacts our region's beekeepers and honey producers,' said King Whetstone, director of the NASS Northeastern Regional Field Office, in a news release "Beekeepers and producers can use the survey results when making business plans and marketing decisions. Cooperative Extensions use the data to provide needed outreach and education and State Departments and Agencies of Agriculture use the information to set insurance values," added Whetstone.

Participants are asked to answer a variety of questions about their colonies. To ensure all survey participants have an opportunity to respond, NASS interviewers will contact producers who do not respond by mail or online to conduct telephone interviews.

NASS publishes only aggregate data, ensuring that no individual operation or producer can be identified.

Survey results will be published in the annual Honey Bee Colonies report to be released in August 2021. NASS reports are available online at www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/.

For information, call the NASS Northeastern Regional Field Office at (800) 498-1518.

Putting your garden to bed for winter



Taking the time to prepare your garden beds for the winter is just as important as prepping the soil in the spring.

By PAT BANKER

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Franklin County

Here in the North Country, our growing season is coming to its end. The first killing frosts have already hit the higher elevations, making it time to harvest all the tender plants and prepare vegetable garden beds for winter.

Taking the time to prepare your beds for the winter is just as important as prepping the soil in the spring. Where to begin?

Harvest everything that is still growing. That includes green tomatoes, winter and summer squash, herbs, and sunflower heads. Green tomatoes will ripen in a sunny window or in a paper bag. Remember to check them often to insure there is no spoilage.

Winter squash such as Hubbard, acorn,

pumpkin — yes, pumpkin is a squash — and butternut store well in a cool, dry place. The temperature needs to stay at 50-55 degrees F with low humidity. A cool, dark basement, away from any furnace or heat source, will work. Store on a shelf or a rack and never on the floor. Check often for any signs of spots or spoilage.

Harvest sunflower heads and place them in a paper bag. They will dry out so the seeds may be saved for the birds. Cut all herbs and either hang them to dry or prepare them by placing them in a dehydrator.

Collect leaves and organic yard materials to start a compost pile. Composted cow, chicken or horse manure may be added to the pile to help speed the break-

See GARDEN 4



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Maple project leader to speak at virtual workshop



the results of re-tapping research via a free Cornell Maple Program virtual workshop at 7 p.m. Nov. 24. FILE PHOTO

The Northern New York Agricultural Development Program has published the second-year results of research into whether re-tapping maple trees in one sap season increases single-season syrup production.

Uihlein Maple Research Forest Director Adam D. Wild will share the results of the re-tapping research via a free Cornell Maple Program virtual workshop at 7 p.m. Nov. 24.

Changing weather patterns are causing maple producers in Northern New York to seek information on the best time to tap trees for maximum production

Research conducted outside of Northern New York has indicated that tapping for early sap run and re-tapping later in the maple season could potentially increase syrup production yields

tap profit.

The farmer-driven NNY-ADP-funded trials in 2019-2020 tested that opportunity under

by at least 20 percent or \$6 per Northern New York conditions and regionality played a role in the results.

"Our timing-of-tapping re-

See MAPLE T7



Uihlein Maple Research Forest Director Adam D. Wild will share

Garden

From 3

down of the materials.

Pull up or cut all healthy plant materials and place them in the compost pile. Discard all weeds. If the garden plant was diseased, place material in a plastic bag and dispose of in the trash. Many plant diseases will survive even in the best kept compost pile.

Mulch beds after some killing frosts. Sometimes too much mulch can keep the soil from freezing and killing any pests or diseases that may be present.

Fall is also a great time to plant garlic. Given the proper amount of fertilizer, garlic will winter well and grow rapidly in the spring. Choose garlic bulbs that are suited for our area and not bulbs that are purchased at a grocery store. Loosen the soil, fertilize, and plant from about the time of the first fall frost to early November. Fall plantings usually produce more garlic

After all that, dream about planting in the spring.





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Manure is not a dirty word

NY DAIRY: Farmers find the sweet spot in waste management

From New York Animal Agriculture Coalition

There there are cows, there is manure. Regardless of farm size, dairy farmers must carefully manage what goes in and out of their herd to keep their businesses successfully operating.

Cow manure is high in nutrients and organic manner which are beneficial to growing crops for feed and soil improvement. Finding the correct balance of storage and field application to minimize the impact on the environment is everyone's goal.

While national milk production per cow continues to climb, the associated environmental impact has declined greatly since World War II. In more than 60 years, the U.S. dairy industry has learned to produce a gallon of milk using 90 percent less land and 65 percent less water. Manure output has also been reduced by 76 percent and the carbon footprint by 63 percent.

New York farmers are leaning on science and new technology to ensure future gains.



SYDNEY SCHAEFER/WATERTOWN DAILY TIMES

Curbing manure & food waste emissions

Thomas Matthews grew up on a family dairy farm in the shadow of Philadelphia, Pa. The operation caters to a city audience intent on seeing live animals, eating homemade ice cream and bringing home a pumpkin or two.

"Whether you have 30 or 3,000 cows, people like farms, but not the smell," said Matthews. "It's hard to have your cake and eat it too. Manure is part of the cycle, like rain. It has great organic value to ensure soil health."

Matthews is raising his own

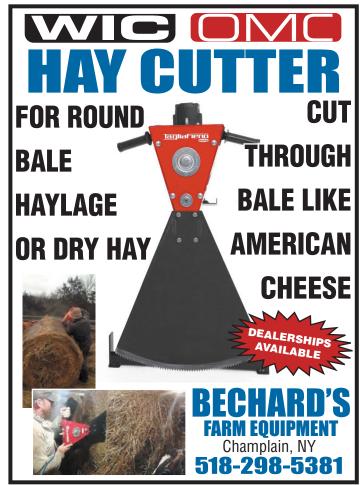
family of four daughters at Noblehurst Farms of Linwood. This seven-generation dairy has a long history of experimenting with manure management systems to keep animals clean 24/7, 365 days a year. Projects have included long term storage, energy generation, and producing manure byproducts. The farm has also participated in field trials on preferred field application methods. The end game is to make manure more valuable, sustainable, and manageable.

Given the herd size of Noblehurst, New York State mandates a manure management plan that includes best management practices.

"We consider it a privilege to farm" said Matthews. "We continue to look for greener and safer methods that minimize community impact and rejuvenate soils. Our ultimate goal is to be a nutrient harvester."

This concept boils down to basic recycling. Like separating and reusing glass, plastics and metals,

See MANURE 6





Manure

From 5

Noblehurst strives to recycle important nutrients from manure like nitrogen and phosphorus. These elements are required for healthy plant and animal growth, but too much is not a good thing for animals or the environment. Constant monitoring helps the farm close the loop on nutrient losses and improve overall animal feeding and cropping decisions.

The average cow produces 17 gallons of manure daily. At Noblehurst, newly installed presses capture organic matter that can be used for bedding or garden compost. High-quality liquid fertilizer is recovered for use on farm fields. Liquid waste is also incorporated with 500 tons of unwanted food scraps per month sourced from local universities, schools, restaurants, and Wegmans Food Markets to fuel an anaerobic digester. The biogas produced can generate enough electricity to light up 300 homes. In New York, food makes up 18 percent of our municipal solid waste stream, and 21 percent of the material that goes into landfills is food, which breaks down and releases methane.

To control the timing of when manure is applied based on weather conditions and crop needs, Noblehurst has constructed a series of engineered, remote storage sites.

"No site is a cookie-cutter from the last," said Matthews. "Our team of engineers, contractors and farm staff look at 30 different variables to construct the best design that will flow and work easily for the location. Ag engineering is a lot like military engineering for the multiple issues we have to address." Their newest storage site resembles a giant envelope. A thick covering of plastic serves as a bottom and top liner to prevent leaching and the influx of two to four million gallons of rainwater from entering the system. The emission of gases such as ammonia and methane are also controlled.

Noblehurst works hard to maintain soil fertility and improve overall soil health. Manure management is critical to this effort. According to Thomas, Noblehurst uses a third party to help manage these objectives.

"We keep detailed records of each field and conduct soil sampling regularly to know where and when we can spread manure on our fields," said Thomas. "Good soil health is evident when you can put a shovel into the ground and see fluffy soil with lots of worms, bugs and other living organisms. It's exciting to study that microbiology and understand how to manage it better."

Women in Agriculture webinar delivers inspiring, powerful messages

Jefferson County Economic Development

WATERTOWN — An inspiring and powerful set of messages were delivered by Allyson Jones-Brimmer, Ashley Willits and Casey Porter on Sept. 24 during the Women in Agriculture webinar as part of the Jefferson County Economic Development farmers luncheon webinar series.

Host Jay Matteson, Jefferson County's Agricultural Coordinator, interviewed the three women about their experiences, challenges and opportunities they faced as they prepared and started into their agricultural careers.

Some of the feedback responses from the webinar received already indicate it was compelling to hear about ways to bring more young people into agricultural careers.

shared their thoughts on what to do when gender, racial, sexual orientation and other biases are encountered and the challenging barriers such as workforce issues our state and federal governments are placing on farming.

These three young women had a lot to share in 60 short minutes.

You can watch the webinar by going to https://youtu.be/bY3gF_HCvEQ.

The next farmers luncheon webinar is set for noon Oct. 22 and will focus on the growth of plant-based meat and beverage substitutes presented by Cheryl Mitchell, Ph.D., senior vice president of ingredient manufacturing at Steuben Foods in Elma, Erie County.

Visit www.agricultu-

The participants also reevents.com for more information.











Maple

From 4

search was done in Lake Placid's northern forest environment which traditionally experiences extremely cold winters, deep snowpack, and a maple season that starts later than maple-producing areas to the south," Wild said. "In those southern areas where heavy sap flow starts in January followed by intermittent freeze-thaw cycles re-tapping provided more of a benefit than we saw in our trials in the Northern New York-type maple-producing region.

"Although re-tapping by adding a second dropline with a new spout here produced an average of 23 percent more syrup per tap, once time and material were factored into the economic equation, there was a loss of 73 cents per tap," he said. "Although droplines and T-fittings could be used for a few seasons, there is still added labor time and droplines must be capped off completely to prevent vacuum loss.'

An additional outcome of the NNY project emphasized the importance of preserving tap hole cleanliness as a best management practice. The data showed that increasing sanitary practices in the sugarbush to limit microbe growth within any tap holes drilled well before the season starts is warranted.

"Everyone should consider implementing practices, such as the use of check-valve spouts, new droplines, or cleaning, to preserve tap hole sanitation and achieve optimal sap production," Wild said.

The Northern New York maple industry has grown from a \$3.25 million annual industry in 2008 to an estimated \$10-12 million industry with room yet to grow in 2021.

To register for the six-program Cornell maple virtual series, go to www.cornellmaple.com.

The re-tapping report is posted at www.nnyagdev.org.

Funding for the Northern New York Agricultural Development Program is supported by the New York State Legislature and administered by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets. Visit www. nnyagdev.org for more informa-

Despite COVID, 4-H'ers keep busy



Online cooking lessons were among the activities that kept members of the **Chateaugay Adventurers 4-H Club busy despite restrictions** on activities because of the **COVID-19 pandemic.** Submitted photo

By AINSLEY CRAWFORD

Chateaugay Adventurers 4-H Club

The Chateaugay Adventurers 4-H Club has been very busy over the course of this summer. Even though we have been apart, we still have been working hard on making sure we make the best of this year.

Starting in June and ending in July, Chef Cathy Hohmeyer of the Lake Clear Lodge in Lake Clear provided free online cooking lessons to local 4-H youth via Zoom. According to her online bio, "Chef Cathy has been interested in nutrition and was cooking for her family as long as she can remember. Her lifelong pursuit has led her to study many diets and a lot of nutritional information

energetic "blueprint." She has been cooking professionally for her restaurant for over 30 years."

We started out making our very own salad dressing—vinaigrette. We added some vinegar, oil, and some mustard. Depending on what flavor you want, you can add different ingredients.

The next week, we made a puff pastry apple strudel. We peeled the apples and cut them up. We put some cinnamon,

leading to studying the human butter and nutmeg on the apples. We then mixed it together and smoothed out our puff pastry, then plopped the apples into the middle of the puff pastry, cut the sides, braided it and put it in the oven. It was delicious.

> The Chateaugay Adventurers then made wild yeast starter for sourdough English muffins. Some of us were able to do it. Some of us could not because

> > See 4-H 8





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4-H

From 7

we use air conditioners. But our leader shared hers so we were able to make English muffins. They are better than the store-bought ones for sure. We also made crepes that were really good and were an excellent addition to learning how to cook.

At the end of July we rented out 4-H Camp Overlook for a weekend. Each family got a cabin. We did a couple of crafts over our stay, such as alcohol ink tiles taught by Drew Crawford, a T-shirt reusable bag taught by Kelsea Riley, a camp bucket, and we tie-dyed pillow cases. We used our bucket to sit at the campfire that night.

Each Adventurer that did polar bear both mornings got a polar bear patch. The water was freezing but we wanted to get that awesome patch. Each night we gathered around the fire, enjoyed some s'mores and played flashlight tag.

Pat Banker taught the group

all about wild edibles. We learned that most of us loved wood sorrel. Did you know that the 4-H "clover" is actually wood sorrel? We didn't either until Pat taught us. We were super lucky to be able to go to camp this summer, even if it was only for a weekend.

In the wonderful month of August, we did 4-H'er Kelsea Riley's community service project, cleaning the Bigelow Cemetery. We raked and cleaned until the cemetery was clean again.

Also in August, we had our 4-H fair judging stations. Some 4-H leaders helped judge this past year's projects and handed out ribbons. The judges came to us in Chateaugay. Thank you to those people once again. We were all so excited and thankful that they were willing to do this for us. And thank you again for our 4-H Together Wherever T-shirts and treats!

September rolled around and we did 4-H'er John

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Decosse's community service project, cleaning the Brayton Hollow cemetery. We found multiple grave markers buried under grass, which we made sure that we uncovered so that

they could be seen.

We are looking forward to fall time and figuring out what projects we can safely do. We hope all of the other groups are doing well.



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