



FARMNET

ANNUAL REPORT

2022



Dyson
Cornell
SC Johnson College of Business

Cornell **CALS**
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Staff Awards



Above and Beyond Award

Kendra Janssen

The top staff award, given to the person who most exemplifies the Dyson School of Applied Economic's mission and values.



CALS Award for Outstanding Achievements in Extension and Outreach

NY FarmNet Office Staff

A team that has demonstrated leadership in developing a highly innovative and responsive extension and outreach program that addresses stakeholder needs.



Outstanding Achievement in Engagement Award

Dr. Wayne Knoblauch

Awarded to a faculty member who exemplifies excellence in Engagement, Extension, and Applied Learning.

Staff

Wayne Knoblauch
Faculty Director

Greg Mruk
Executive Director

Amelia Parseghian
Program Coordinator

Kendra Janssen
Office Administrator

Gabriel Gurley
Farm Business Management Specialist

Rachel Van Buren
Student Office Assistant



Advisory Board

Mollie Pulver, President

NBT Bank

Rick Zimmerman, Vice President

Zimmerman and Associates

Steve Hadcock, Secretary

Cornell Cooperative Extension

Ed Neal

Poverty Hills Farms

Tom Shephard

Dairy Farmers of America

Travis Hall

Clinical Psychologist

Wayne Knoblauch

NY FarmNet Faculty Director

Tim Sweeney

NYS Dept. of Ag & Markets

Chris Wolf

Director of Land Grant Affairs, Cornell University

JoBeth Rath

National AgrAbility Project Coord. for Goodwill

Tim Veazey

Lincoln Financial Advisors

John Liddington

USDA- Farm Loan Chief

Jeffrey Fetter

Scolaro, Fetter, Grizanti, McGough & King, P.C.

Andrew Gilbert

NY FarmNet Financial Consultant

Becky Wiseman

NY FarmNet Family Consultant

Consultants



Mary Ark, Karen Baase, Laurie Bedford, Barry Berghaus, Sheldon Brown, Ginny Carlberg, David Chamberlain, Ashley Colosi, Leon Dickinson, Conniejo Dicruttalo, Kendall Drexler, Kelly Dryja, Elaine Eaton, Judy Flint, Andy Gilbert, Jim Grace, Dewey Hakes, Huck Heintz, David Irish, Kristen Julian, Maureen Kiely, Jan Kirshenbaum, Ron Kuck, Jerry LeClar, Yrenilsa Lopez, Phillip Ludwig, Kim MacCrea, Christina Marsh, Sheila Marshman, Sarah McCumiskey, Teresa McMahan, Brenda O'Brien, Hailey Parker, Michael Robertson, Bruce Rohr, Rose Ryan, Franci Saunders, Karen Scanlon-Fish, Will Schonfeld, Jen Schwytzer, Lori Shipman, Melissa Thomas, John Thurgood, N. Tiapo, Joe Walsh, Ed Ward, Matt Wells, Jennifer Westerville, Becky Wiseman

**Judy celebrates 20 years
with NY FarmNet!**



Special acknowledgement goes to family consultant Judy Flint for 20 years of service. Her response when receiving her recognition sums it up well: "Farmers want to die on a tractor, I want to die on a FarmNet case!" Her dedication to her clients and candid feedback with everyone makes her an invaluable addition to the team.

NY FarmNet Welcomes New Executive Director, Greg Mruk

Greg has served as a financial consultant for NY FarmNet covering the lower Hudson Valley region since 2018. In October he made the transition to Executive Director. His professional career includes time as a County Supervisor for FSA, Senior Executive Vice President for a community bank, and an agricultural loan officer for a statewide bank. After he left banking, Greg shifted his focus to farming and operated a small market farm and ran a consulting business to assist farmers and small businesses. He served 13 years as a member and officer of the Board of Directors for a local hospital, and it was during this time that he became familiar with the challenges rural families have in accessing health care and mental health services.

Greg grew up in New York State. He is a graduate of UMass Amherst with a B.S in Agricultural Economics and St. Michaels College with an M.S. in Administration. He paid his way through college working on a 400-cow dairy. After graduating from UMass in 1985, Greg moved to northern Vermont and for 30 years lived and worked in the Champlain Valley region. This area is very dairy and maple centric, and it was here that he really learned the challenges for farm families in running a successful farm operation and the toll it can take on the family.

Currently, Greg and his wife Dawn farm layers, broilers, and replacement pullets and operate a maple sugaring operation in Dutchess County. He is the market manager for the Millbrook Farmers Market, and recently wrapped up a position as a consultant for Hudson Valley Ag Development Corp in their Incubator Without Walls program. Dawn recently retired after 30 years as a special education teacher and remains his right-hand on the farm. They have five children and one grandchild. Greg will be splitting his time between the NY FarmNet office at Cornell University in Ithaca, and his farm in Millbrook. He can be reached at gem245@cornell.edu.

Thank You and Best Wishes to Kate Downes

Kate recently took a new position with Seven Valleys Health Coalition as a Project Coordinator. We wish her well in her new role and thank her for her contributions to NY FarmNet over the past six years.



Farmer's Stories

Unbroken Acres

Interview with Anastassia Zabirova, Sullivan County

Tell us about your farm. Unbroken Acres is a working non profit farm. Founded in 2020 it will be going into its third year of operation. The area under cultivation is almost 2 acres, producing flowers, vegetables, and soon to be fruit. I have a self serve stand stocked during the week with fresh produce for the community. A lot of groups come through to learn more about farming.

Why did you call NY FarmNet? NY FarmNet was recommended to me by another farmer in NY when I was ready to start building a farm.

How did NY FarmNet help? Joe and Elaine, NY FarmNet consultants, have been extremely helpful in developing the farm from the beginning.

We had regular meetings to plan out the farm from essentially the ground up; from finding funding, to site development, crop planning, and beyond. NY FarmNet has been an excellent resource with their depth of knowledge. I am really grateful for their support right from the start.

Why is NY FarmNet a good resource for farmers? NY FarmNet is a great resource because it doesn't make you feel like you've got to bounce around ideas or concepts on your own. I look forward to my meetings with my consultants because they have helped vastly in developing Unbroken Acres to where it is today, and its steps towards the future in sustainable agriculture.

What would you tell someone who might be interested in going into farming? To get ready for a wild, beautiful ride! Also, be sure to call NY FarmNet.



Farmer's Stories

Stable Hooves and Hands

Interview with Jennifer Nichols, Chenango County

Tell us about your farm. I started my farm with my mom in 2011, and since then it has continued to expand and grow. Stable Hooves and Hands had a very difficult start but with resilience and determination the table is starting to turn. We rescue horses from neglect and work with individuals with disabilities. I foster children and also work with Day Habilitation facilities. Stable Hooves and Hands provides people of all disabilities the ability to connect with horses. All activities are being designed to enhance self-esteem, promote stress reduction, foster language and communication, and create connections between human and animal. Participants in the program send letters of appreciation expressing how the program helps them to deal with emotions, increase their passion to learn, and sets them up to handle real life situations in a constructive way.



The stable's most recent rescue is Sparrow. The crew is working on cleaning him up.

Why did you call NY FarmNet? I called for property help. I was facing eviction and needed help navigating the process. I was desperate for help because I had to re-home many horses as I faced the uncertain and turbulent future.

How did NY FarmNet help? I didn't have credit to obtain a loan when I first called NY FarmNet. They provided resources and information on how to build credit. They guided me financially and emotionally, provided ideas, and were dedicated to helping the farm. I am grateful that NY FarmNet stood beside me during such difficult times.

Why is NY FarmNet a good resource for farmers? It's an amazing program. I would be at a loss otherwise. I don't know business and finances but NY FarmNet helped in that arena. NY FarmNet is an absolute blessing to have.

What would you tell someone who might be interested in going into farming? You need to be a "jack of all trades". It's not a simple trade to enter. Be careful with the journey and always get everything in writing. Have faith, if it's meant to be it will work out.

Farmer's Stories

Conrad Dairy Farms

Interview with Joe Conrad, Wyoming County

Tell us about your farm. Conrad Dairy Farm has been in the family for 102 years. My grandparents, Ed and Anna, started the farm in March of 1919. Each generation added something to the Conrad Farm that added to its legacy. The farm transitioned to me from my father, Earl, and as of September 2022, my son Nathan has taken it over. Nathan hopes to add robots in the near future. Another legacy in the making!

Why did you call NY FarmNet? I had worked with NY FarmNet in the past. They always had good advice so I decided to call them back when I needed additional help to get through tough times. It's nice to know that someone will help the little farmer.

How did NY FarmNet help? NY FarmNet provides more than a consultant. They became a friend. They helped me make decisions through hard times and were there to celebrate my successes. Whether it was business and financial questions, or personal family issues, NY FarmNet was always willing to listen. Teresa and Ginny, my NY FarmNet consultants, have good ears and have been awesome.

Why is NY FarmNet a good resource for farmers? NY FarmNet helped me with my borders. Borders? Yes, borders. My borders needed to be defined - in other words my boundaries. NY FarmNet helped me establish boundaries and helped with self care. They showed the importance of taking care of myself so that I could take care of the farm and my family.

What would you tell someone who might be interested in going into farming? NY FarmNet has people willing to help you make decisions, guide you, and be there for you. Farming is a way of life you can't just walk away from it.



Scan this QR code to learn more about Joe's story!



Mental Health First Aid Course Series Launched with Success

The USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) announced in 2021 an investment of nearly \$25 million for 50 grants supporting Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN) State Department of Agriculture (SDA) projects. NY FarmNet and New York State Agricultural Mediation Program (NYSAMP) received \$500,000 to support this work in the Empire State. The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets is supporting both organizations with this project.

Beginning in July, NY FarmNet launched a statewide campaign of free, full day Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) trainings. The MHFA curriculum destigmatizes and increases awareness of mental health challenges. Through collaborations with Cornell Cooperative Extension offices, ten MHFA courses were taught throughout NYS. Three Talk Saves Lives courses were also taught, covering the general scope of suicide, research on prevention, and how people can fight it in their own communities. These efforts will continue into 2023.

Find the 2023 line up of free courses by scanning the QR code
or visiting <https://www.nyfarmnet.org/trainings>



Mental Health First Aid in the News...

Spectrum Coverage



Podcast

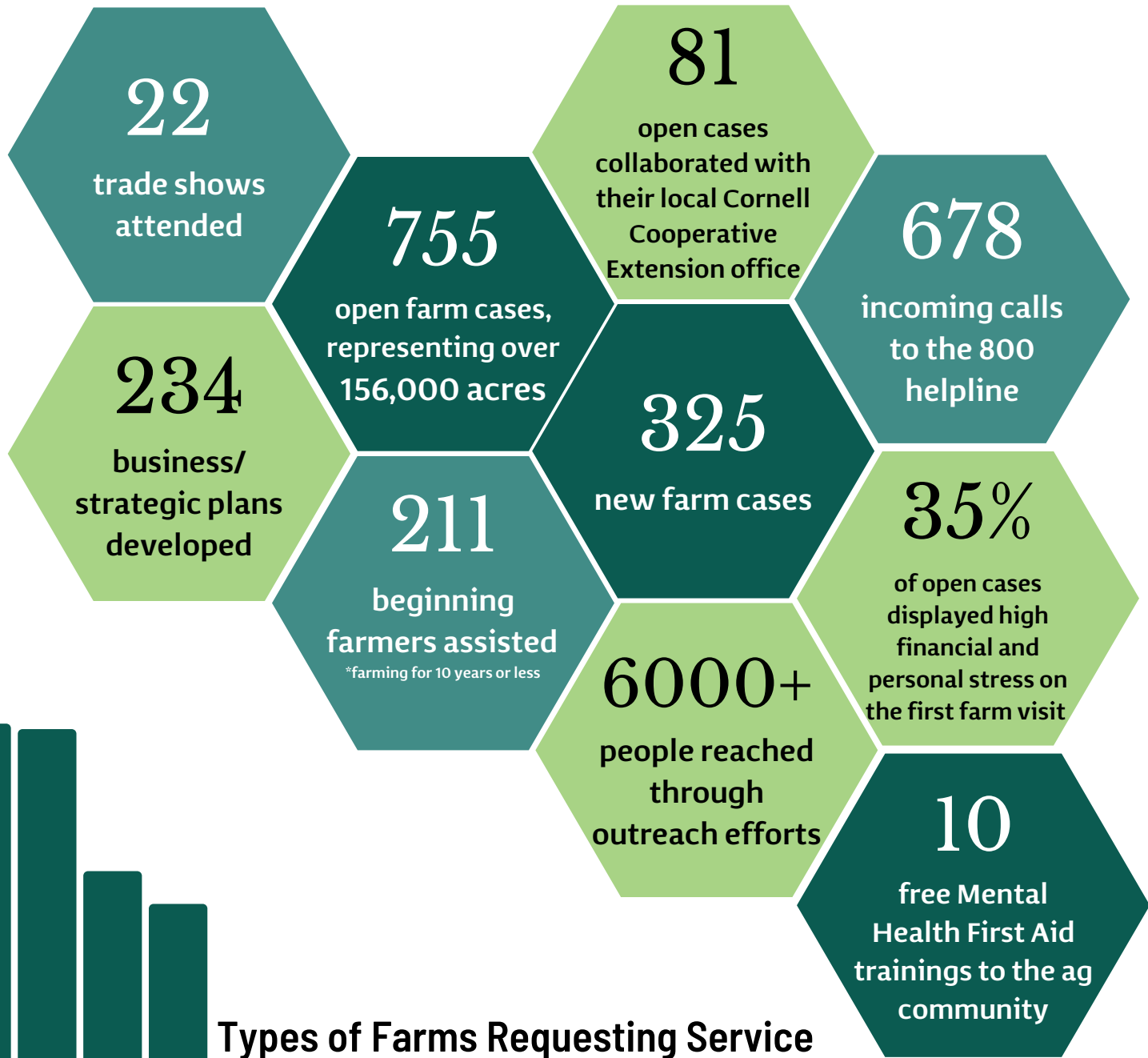


Radio Interview



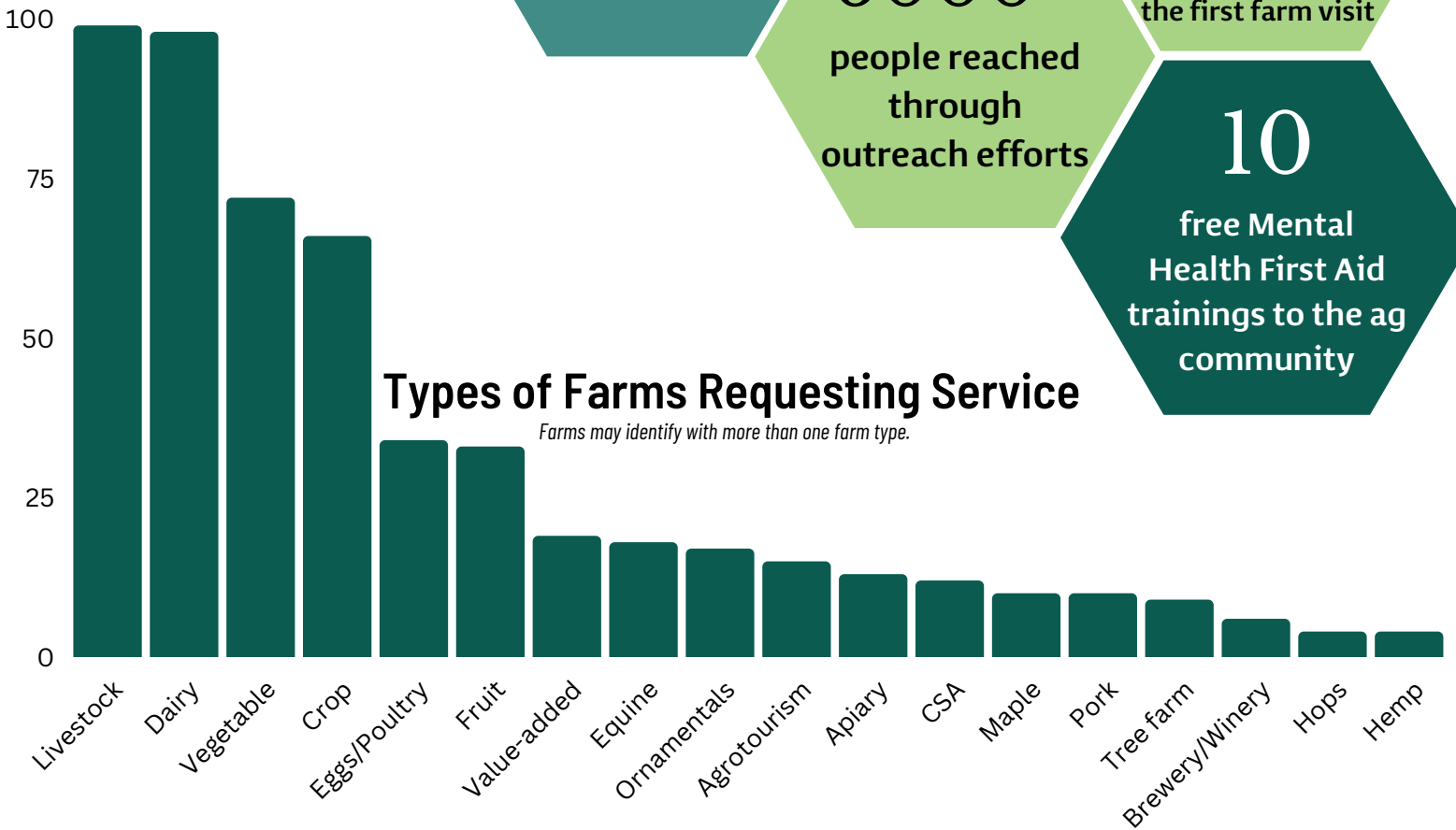
OUTCOMES from

15 December 2021 - 14 December 2022



Types of Farms Requesting Service

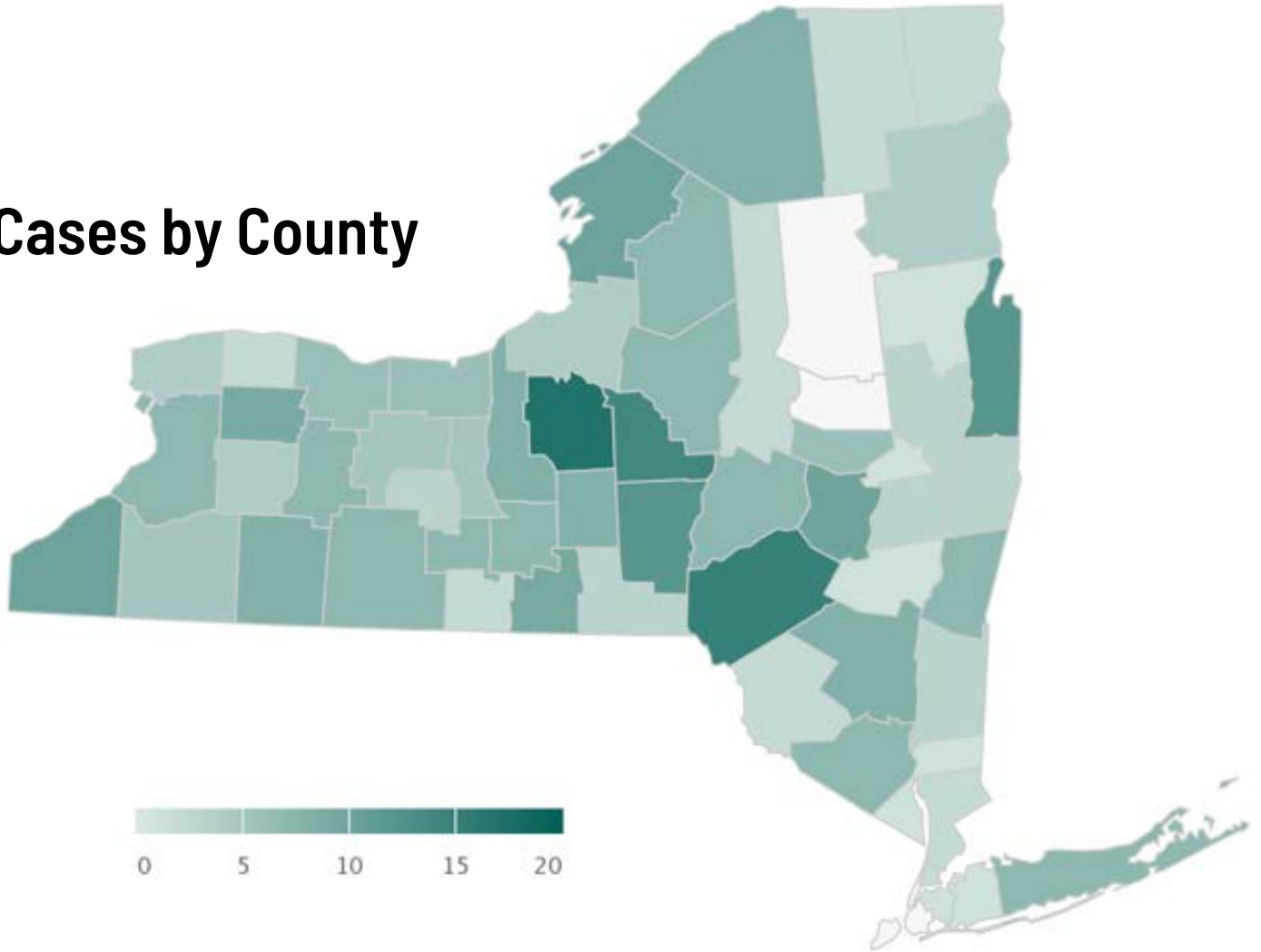
Farms may identify with more than one farm type.



OUTCOMES from

15 December 2021 - 14 December 2022

New Cases by County



NY FARMNET CONSULTANT TRAININGS ARE SPONSORED BY COMMUNITY BANK N.A., FARM CREDIT EAST, NBT BANK, AND TOMPKINS TRUST/BANK OF CASTILE THANKS TO THEIR CONTINUED DEDICATION TO NEW YORK'S AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY. THESE FOUR BANKS HAVE PLEDGED \$5,000 EACH YEAR FOR A PERIOD OF FIVE YEARS – TOTALING \$100,000, TO SUPPORT THE NY FARMNET CONNEMAN CONSULTANT TRAINING FUND. THIS ALLOWS PRIMARY FUNDING TO NY FARMNET FROM NYS TO GO DIRECTLY TO CASEWORK WITH FARM CLIENTS.





NY FarmNet Mission: We help New York farms navigate transition, opportunity, and challenge. We accomplish our mission through educational programming and holistic consulting that addresses financial, family, and social stress.

Thank you for your continued support of



Thank you to our primary funders:



**Office of
Mental Health**



**Agriculture
and Markets**