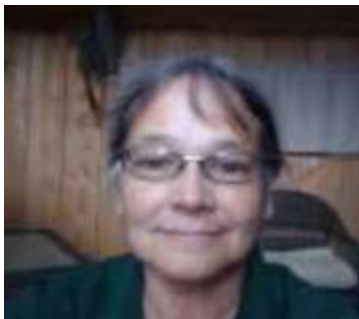


# 2023 DIRECTORS NEW YORK FARM VIABILITY INSTITUTE



**NYFVI.  
Meet the Board.**



Since its start in 2005, the New York Farm Viability Institute (NYFVI) has been led by volunteers, all active members of the farming community. Seven directors are nominated by Agricultural membership organizations and three are “at-large” members. The board relies on a network of farmers, organized into review panels, to evaluate proposals submitted to NYFVI’s competitive agricultural research and education grant program. These passionate individuals are committed to the advancement of agriculture and the use of scientific research to guide on-farm decisions to ensure the viability of New York’s farms.

## DAVE RYAN, CAZENOVIA



*Dave Ryan has served on the NYFVI board since 2018 and as its chair since 2021. He represents the NYS Nursery and Landscape Association.*



**N**ominated by the New York State Nursery and Landscape Association, Dave Ryan has served on the board since 2018 and is in his second year as its chair. He is passionate about innovation and growth for the agricultural community. He owns Rare Earth Nursery, a bare root shade tree nursery in Cazenovia.

Ryan built Rare Earth Nursery after decades of working with traditional soil-based growing methods. The innovative nursery uses the Missouri Gravel System which allows bare-root trees to be harvested and transplanted during the entire growing season. The more robust root systems minimize transplant shock and are well-suited for urban landscapes. The trees are also lighter and require less labor and equipment to move and plant. His nursery is run on solar power and it uses only drip irrigation to minimize wasteful run-off.

“As a grower, I’ve seen firsthand how transformative research to develop new production systems can be to an operation. Growers need new ideas and proven approaches to continue to evolve their farms. That’s why the work of NYFVI, to connect grower’s perspectives to ag research and education, is so important,” said Ryan.



NEW YORK STATE  
NURSERY AND LANDSCAPE  
ASSOCIATION, INC.

## TIM DRESSEL, NEW PALTZ

**T**im is a 4th generation Hudson Valley apple grower at Dressel Farms in New Paltz. The family farm grows apples primarily, along with small plantings of peaches, strawberries, blueberries, pears, plums, nectarines, wine grapes, pumpkins, and squash. The foundation of the business is wholesale marketing of their apples through a distributor to grocery stores. The farm stores and pack all its fruit. They also run a year-round retail store, press cider, and open for U-Pick strawberries in June and apples in September and October.

A 2007 graduate of Cornell University, Tim also owns Kettleborough Cider House and was a founding member of the New York Cider Association. He credits his experience as a research assistant, and the farm's involvement with the Hudson Valley Research Laboratory, with driving his interest in serving on the NYFVI board.

“By serving on the NYFVI board, I’ve been able to learn about other parts of New York agriculture and meet growers from across the State. I’m proud of the process and thoughtful approach the organization takes when making the tough choices about which proposals to fund,” said Dressel.



*Tim Dressel joined the board as an at-large member in 2020. He has served as its vice chair since 2021.*



## MARY JEANNE PACKER, GREENWICH



*Mary Jeanne Packer represents the Council of Agricultural Organizations on the NYFVI board. She is serving her second year as Secretary and Treasurer and her sixth year on the board.*



**T**he Empire State Council of Agricultural Organizations (CAO) nominated Mary Jeanne to serve on the NYFVI board in 2017, and she accepted the role of treasurer and secretary in 2021. Mary Jeanne is the founder and president of the State's only commercial-scale carding and spinning mill - Battenkill Fibers; and currently serves as the treasurer of the Empire Sheep Producers Association. Prior to her retirement in 2019, she was the Executive Director of the Christmas Tree Farmers Association of NY. She is also actively engaged with the NYS and international maple industries with her partner David Campbell and their family who own one of the state's largest maple operations, Mapleland Farms. Her wide-ranging expertise, coupled with degrees in engineering and communications from MIT and Syracuse University, offers a unique perspective to board discussions.

When asked about her service on the NYFVI board of directors, Packer responded. "It's important for the many different facets of agriculture in NYS to have a voice in guiding top priority ag research projects. I'm happy to share my perspective on behalf of the several unique industries with which I'm deeply connected."

## AARON ALLEN, SCHAGTICOKE



*Aaron Allen, with Allenwaite Farms joined the NYFVI Dairy Review panel in 2018 and the NYFVI board in 2022. He was nominated by the PRO-DAIRY/NYFVI dairy committee.*

**N**ominated by the NYFVI Dairy Committee, Aaron Allen joined the board this past August. He is a 7th generation farmer at Allenwaite Farm in Washington County. Milk from Allenwaite Farm is sold to Dairy Farmers of America and supplies the New York City market.

The farm utilizes a carousel milking parlor and a computerized milking system that keeps track of each animal's daily production. The system also monitors milk temperatures to alert handlers of potential health issues with cows. More than 3,000 acres of land are dedicated to field crops, and the operation has around 40 employees.

Allen has been serving on the NYFVI dairy review panel since 2018, "I thought it was a good time to step up at NYFVI," he said. "I've found the review process for the proposals to be very informative. With so many new technologies being developed it is critical that farmers participate in the dialogue and ground truth these ideas."



## PAULINE DREXLER, POMPEY



*Pauline Drexler joined the NYFVI board in 2021 as an at-large member. She has served on the livestock and Christmas tree review panels since 2009.*

**P**auline Drexler and her husband, Ed, own Springside Farm in Fabius, NY. The diversified, small farm specializes in Christmas trees, pumpkins, and livestock, including sheep, alpacas, and guardian dogs. Agritourism complements the business offering events and experiences like a Santa Expedition, pancake breakfasts, corn mazes, summer day camps, and barn weddings.

Drexler joined the NYFVI board in 2021 after serving on livestock and Christmas tree review committees since 2009.

“I like to read the proposals; I think some of the ideas put forth are innovative and valuable,” said Drexler. “I am always interested in learning how my colleagues on the livestock review panel have evaluated the ideas.”



## MATT ECKHARDT, STEPHENTOWN



**M**att Eckhardt is the second generation of Eckhardt Farms to serve on the NYFVI board. He is a Certified Crop Advisor and develops Agricultural Environmental Management plans for other farms during the winter months. The family farm, Kinderhook Creek, located in Stephentown, is a large diversified operation known for its sweet corn.

Matt joined the NYFVI board in 2022 as a representative of the NY Corn and Soybean Growers Association after serving on review panels since 2019. Kinderhook has also served as a research site for several projects

“I’m pleased to serve on the NYFVI board of directors. I think the organization’s track record in selecting projects important to New York farmers is quite strong, and I look forward to being part of its leadership,” said Eckhardt. “Agricultural research is critical to creating the knowledge that farmers need to know what changes might work best for their operation.”

*Matt Eckhardt joined the NYFVI board in 2022 after serving on review panels since 2019.*

**NEW YORK CORN & SOYBEAN  
GROWERS ASSOCIATION**



## CHRIS KELDER, KERHONKSON



*Chris Kelder joined the NYFVI board in 2018 as the New York Farm Bureau representative.*



**N**ew York Farm Bureau nominated Chris to serve on the NYFVI board in 2018. Located in Ulster county, Kelder's farm is a diversified fruit and vegetable operation that offers a CSA membership and a U-Pick operation and farm store. The farm is known for its fall harvest celebrations with pick-your-own pumpkins, apples, a corn maze, and a tap room.

"It's critical for farmers to be part of the discussion about research that is conducted on their behalf. By serving on the Farm Viability board, I've been able to share my perspective about the proposed solutions and how they might work on a farm of my size", said Kelder.





## JOHN MARTINI, PENN YAN



*John Martini with Anthony Road Wine Company in Penn Yan joined the NYFVI board as an at-large member in 2022. His vineyard has participated in numerous research projects over the years.*

**W**ine and juice grapes are essential to New York's agricultural economy. With the Anthony Road Wine Company, John Martini is the second grower to serve as an at-large member representing that industry.

Located in the Fingerlakes, the family vineyards are located near Cornell's Agritech facility. This has allowed the farm to participate in numerous research projects and see firsthand the benefits of agricultural research.

"The Anthony Road Wine Company has a long history of supporting agricultural research. I'm delighted to continue that tradition by serving on the NYFVI board," said Martini.



## JILL MACKENZIE, APPLETON



*Jill MacKenzie has represented the NY State Horticultural Society on the NYFVI board since 2017. Prior to her board service, she participated on the review panels..*



**T**he New York State Horticultural Society nominated Jill Mackenzie to the board in 2017. Before her board service, she was a member of the NYFVI review panel for several years. In addition to her hands-on experience as an apple grower, Jill has a master's degree in Horticulture from the University of Minnesota.

Jill and her husband, Mark Russell, own Two of Clubs Orchard in Appleton, New York. They are passionate about using proven techniques to grow their business profitably.

“From integrated pest management to crop load calculations, every aspect of our production has been supported by the knowledge that Farm Viability-funded projects have built. These projects have helped not only my farm but orchards across the state,” said Mackenzie. “That’s why I’ve been willing to serve on this organization’s board and review panels.”



## BRIAN REEVES, BALDWINSVILLE



*Brian Reeves serves as the representative for the NY Vegetable Growers Association, He joined the NYFVI Review Panels in 2015 and the NYFVI board in 2020.*

**B**rian Reeves, long-term president of the NYS Vegetable Growers Association, joined the NYFVI board in 2020. He has served on the vegetable review panel since 2015.

Brian is also president of a farmer-owned cooperative, Upstate Growers and Packers, and has been a tireless advocate for numerous agriculture initiatives. He is the owner, along with his family of Reeves Farms in Baldwinsville, Onondaga County. The operation sells fruit and vegetables through wholesale channels, at its farm stand, and through u-pick. About fifteen percent of their production is certified organic.

“There’s a lot of stakeholder pressure on the industry to change its practices, and I understand where the marketplace is going. What’s important is that we make the right changes and ensure that the practices that farms are encouraged to adopt are truly sustainable. The environment, economics, and human factors must all be considered. The Farm Viability program does a good job of focusing researchers on integrated solutions.”





## **NYFVI. It's time to get involved.**

***Because farmers know what ag needs to succeed.***

At the New York Farm Viability Institute, we believe that farmers know the problems they need solved and can determine if a potential solution could be adopted on their farm. That's why our competitive grant program relies on New York farmers to read and score the research proposals we receive.

Our board of directors, all farmers, takes the stewardship of the ag research dollars we receive from New York State seriously. They want the dollars to be used to develop the knowledge that **your farm** needs to succeed long into the future. By serving on one of our review panels, you can provide valuable insight into the proposals submitted and help direct the organization's limited resources to the projects you think are most important.

While the work is critically important, we try and make it as easy as possible for you to do. The review is done independently online and culminates in a single virtual meeting to discuss the proposals and their ranking. An NYFVI board member chairs each panel, and that individual relies on your input, and the board makes the final funding decisions. The FVI proposals are reviewed during the fourth quarter of each year, and the Specialty Crop Block Grant proposals are reviewed early in the first quarter.

**If you're interested in serving on a future review panel, please reach out to Aileen Randolph, [arandolph@nyfvi.org](mailto:arandolph@nyfvi.org). Or call 315-453-3823**



For more information, please visit [www.nyfvi.org](http://www.nyfvi.org)