

**Testimony to
Joint Legislative Hearing on
The Environment, Energy and Agriculture
From
New York State Association of Agricultural Fairs**

First, I want to thank the legislature and Governor Cuomo for your support in funding Fair Premiums in the 2014 Budget at the \$500,000. level. These dollars were a tremendous help in maintaining the youth programs at our county fairs.

One of the greatest experiences that our young people can have is participating in their county fair. For many it's an experience that stays with them for the rest of their lives as they learn about all aspects of their local agriculture and home community.

My primary reason for attending this hearing today is to encourage you to increase the premium dollars from the \$340,000 in the governors proposed 2015 budget to the \$500,000 of last years budget. These state premium dollars directly impact 4-H and FFA programs, and livestock clubs, allowing more young people to get involved in agriculture.

This past summer I had the opportunity to visit 22 of our county fairs. The one common thread that I found throughout the fair industry, regardless of size and scope of the fair, was the pride that these young people have in their exhibits and in their fairs. Helping our fairs survive is paramount to their ability to continue to provide this important experience for these young people. Unfortunately the only funds that many of our small fairs have to reward these young people with are from the state premium funds.

Although, many of these young exhibitors have the opportunity to show and exhibit at the State Fair there are thousands who would never have this experience were it not for their county fair. Your support in maintaining the premium dollars at \$500,000 will be a tremendous help to the young fair exhibitors across the state.

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Many of the county fairs across the state are also experiencing financial difficulties which makes maintaining their buildings and infrastructure challenging if not impossible.

For this reason the New York State Association of Agricultural Fairs is requesting an additional \$500,000 budget line in the Ag & Markets budget for capital expenses. This will be distributed to fairs for some of their basic fairgrounds needs, such as rest rooms and the related septic systems, new roofs on existing buildings, electrical improvements and other infrastructure maintenance and improvements.

County Fairs are a major contributor to the economy of their communities.

Included, here is a copy of the "Statewide Summary of Agricultural Fairs: Economic & Fiscal impacts". The total economic impact is over 6 million dollars, creating over 4000 full and part time jobs.

A budget line for capital expenses will help preserve the important community presence of the County Fairs. Based on assessment and needs, \$500,000 would provide up to \$50,000 for 10 fairs for pre-approved projects. This would be a huge enhancement to the infrastructure of these struggling fairs.

The pride that our New Yorkers have in their fairs and the part that they play in educating our urban counterpart is the driving force that keeps so many volunteers doing what they are doing. The pride that our young people have in their fairs and their strong desires to help continue this agriculture tradition is universal throughout the fair industry.

We are asking the State to find a way to help our fairs continue this great tradition.

Thank you for your consideration,

Respectfully submitted

NYSAAF legislative committee

R Harry Booth, chair

Mark St Jacques



Statewide Summary of Agricultural Fairs: Economic & Fiscal Impacts

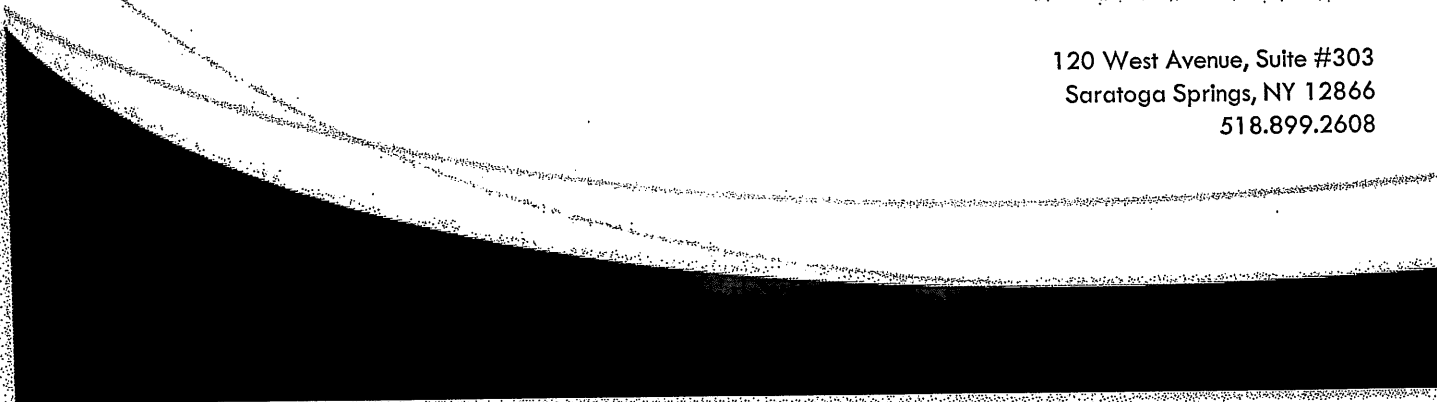
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SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Over the course of the past two years, Camoin Associates has completed four economic and fiscal impact analyses on the operations of fairgrounds in various parts of New York State (see list below). Following the completion of these individual studies, the New York State Association of Agricultural Fairs (NYSAAF) retained Camoin Associates to extrapolate the likely economic and fiscal impacts of other New York fairs on their host communities. The following is a brief summary of the findings of this general trends analysis. Attached to this summary is a list of agricultural fairs in NYS for which economic and fiscal impacts have been estimated using the methodology defined below.

Economic impacts are measured by the number of jobs created in the host county's economy by the visitor spending associated with each fair. To capture the true impacts, we count only "new" spending, which we define as spending by visitors coming from outside the county where the fair is held. These visitors bring "new dollars" into the local economy which creates additional jobs and spending in a variety of ways. For example, they may spend money on lodging, restaurants, transportation, retail or other goods and services. Employees of those businesses may, in turn, spend a portion of their wages locally, creating additional economic impacts¹.

Fiscal impacts describe how the host community's government(s) is affected by the fair. Impacts are measured by the sales, hotel, and property tax revenue generated for the host community. In certain instances, other types of revenue are included in this figure.

The results of our economic and fiscal impact analyses on the four agricultural fairs in New York State are shown below and referred to by the name of the host county. Annual attendance at these fairs ranges from about 51,000 (Jefferson County Fair) to well over one million visitors (Erie County Fair). The associated sales, jobs and tax revenue are also shown.

Results from Previous Studies				
Fair	Attendance	Sales	Jobs	Tax Revenue
Jefferson	51,380	\$1,487,082	29	\$35,227
Washington	120,016	\$8,385,008	181	\$422,000
Dutchess	342,244	\$34,413,679	525	\$1,360,000
Erie	1,053,150	\$75,183,531	1,725	\$3,363,000

Source: Camoin Associates

This same information is plotted in three charts on the following pages.

¹ See a more comprehensive discussion of "new spending" and indirect impacts in any of our impact reports. All materials can be found at www.camoinassociates.com/fairs.aspx/

Please note that the attendance figures provided are for paid attendance only. Actual attendance is somewhat higher than the figures provided.

Estimated Economic & Fiscal Impacts of Select NYS Fairs				
Fair	Paid Attendance	Sales	Jobs	Tax Revenue
ALBANY (2 societies)	77,968	\$5,771,893	125	\$254,581
ALLEGANY	20,575	\$1,523,147	33	\$67,181
BROOME	19,938	\$1,475,990	32	\$65,102
CATTARAUGUS	41,400	\$3,064,801	66	\$135,179
CHAUTAUQUA	40,555	\$3,002,246	65	\$132,420
CHEMUNG	22,716	\$1,681,643	36	\$74,172
CHENANGO	11,800	\$873,542	19	\$38,529
AFTON	4,980	\$368,664	8	\$16,261
CLINTON	19,717	\$1,459,630	32	\$64,380
COLUMBIA	40,120	\$2,970,043	64	\$131,000
DELAWARE	77,014	\$5,701,269	123	\$251,466
ESSEX	8,244	\$610,295	13	\$26,918
FRANKLIN	41,873	\$3,099,816	67	\$136,724
GENESEE	7,996	\$591,936	13	\$26,109
HERKIMER	32,027	\$2,370,927	51	\$104,575
CALEDONIA	6,613	\$489,554	11	\$21,593
HEMLOCK LAKE	22,181	\$1,642,037	35	\$72,425
MADISON	6,965	\$515,612	11	\$22,742
MONROE	13,207	\$977,701	21	\$43,123
MONTGOMERY (2 societies)	24,851	\$1,839,695	40	\$81,143
NASSAU QUEENS SUFFOLK	5,931	\$439,066	9	\$19,366
BOONVILLE	20,204	\$1,495,682	32	\$65,970
ONTARIO	9,454	\$699,870	15	\$30,869
ORANGE	51,281	\$3,796,281	82	\$167,443
GOSHEN	5,900	\$436,771	9	\$19,265
OTSEGO	37,941	\$2,808,754	61	\$123,885
RENSSELAER (2 societies)	40,327	\$2,985,367	65	\$131,676
SARATOGA	37,486	\$2,775,051	60	\$122,399
COBLESKILL	61,000	\$4,515,769	98	\$199,177
STEUBEN	17,017	\$1,259,751	27	\$55,564
TIOGA	12,751	\$943,944	20	\$41,635
TRUMANSBURG	7,029	\$520,350	11	\$22,951
ULSTER	45,859	\$3,394,896	73	\$149,739
PALMYRA	51,350	\$3,801,389	82	\$167,668
YATES	7,353	\$544,335	12	\$24,009

Source: Camion Associates

2010 Attendance Data provided by NYSAAF

