

5.21.2020

As New York Forward unfolds and our state begins a planned phased reopening, the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak continues to disrupt our daily lives. While this public health crisis evolves and shifts daily, we will continue to adhere to the guidance and regulations provided by the New York State Health Department.

In making the informed and difficult decisions regarding upcoming agricultural education events and programming, our utmost responsibility remains to be the health and safety of our students. As educational professionals, we all have a shared responsibility to our chaperones, stakeholders, state staff and community supporters. In light of the decisions made by the National FFA Organization and for clarity of operational intentions, the following very difficult decisions have been made.

**As of 5/21/2020, New York Agricultural Education and FFA have made additional difficult decisions to cancel all State Finals for Career and Leadership Development Events for the 2020 year.**

We have based this decision on the following critical factors:

- Our concern for student and community health and safety
- The closing of New York's K-12 public schools and Universities to in-person learning through the remainder of the school year
- Uncertainty as to when group gatherings can safely resume while adhering to social distancing guidelines
- The uncertainty of the status of the New York State Fair
- Equitable access to virtual events, contest integrity, and the execution of quality contests
- National FFA has canceled all LDE/CDE's for the 2020 year
- The Big E will not be holding any in-person contests in 2020

While we understand that this cancellation is disruptive and disappointing, this decision was made in the best interest of everyone involved. This cancellation includes all Career and Leadership Development Events that are typically held at the New York State FFA Convention, Empire Farm Days, and the New York State Fair.

In an effort to still deliver on the promise of leadership development and career success opportunities to students, we are exploring ways to coordinate learning experiences and engage students with exhibition only activities throughout the summer. More information will be available as these options are discussed and developed.

As the situation changes on an almost daily basis at the moment, we want to ensure our teachers are well-informed as it relates to our FFA and NYAAE programming throughout the next few weeks and months. Please refer to our [COVID-19](#) page for up-to-date information and the following **FAQ pages and Cancellation Statements** with specific details on upcoming teacher and student conferences, events, trainings and student leadership programming.

Please click on each event below for more information:

- [NYS FFA Convention/LDE & CDE Invitational-\*Cancelled\*](#)
- [Incentive Grant Program- \*Updated\*](#)

- June 22-24, NYAAE Conference- *Virtual Event*
- 2020 FFA Summer Camp-*Cancelled*- Register for Camp in Box!
- 2020 NYS Fair CDE's- *Cancelled*

New York Agricultural education is composed of many extraordinary teachers, innovative student leaders, and stakeholders who have shaped the future of agriculture in our state. Our students, teachers, and programs have weathered many storms that have affected agriculture and education. Throughout this particular storm, our community has continued to demonstrate resilience and solidarity as we have pushed forward and continued to serve our students and communities. It's this type of leadership, and student-centered approach that makes New York Agricultural Education one of the premier education delivery systems that will continue to provide a sustainable future for agriculture now and beyond the current pandemic.

We want to end by expressing our sincere gratitude for your ongoing efforts to guide and provide leadership to your students, now when they need it most. We are proud to walk alongside you during this critical time as we engage our students and enrich their lives as future agriculturalists.

Please continue to offer support and care to each other, take good care of yourself and cherish your loved ones as we all navigate this truly challenging moment.

Should you have any immediate concerns, please contact us. We will get through this together.

With kind regards,

Shari Lighthall, Director, NYS Agricultural Education Outreach  
Derek Hill, NY FFA Director  
Gleason Walley, NYS FFA/NYAAE Governing Board Chair  
Paul Perry, State Convention Committee Chair  
Karen Labombard, NYS FFA/NYAAE Governing Board President Elect