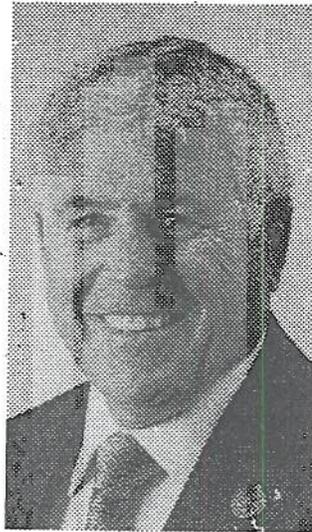


# How Far We've Come

By Darrel J. Aubertine

Commissioner, NYS Department Of Agriculture & Markets



I am not unique in that I'm a seventh generation farmer here in New York and I've also personally known six generations of Aubertines, from my great grandparents to my granddaughter. Agriculture has come a long way during this time. One of my earliest memories is of the sun going down on my great grandfather Walter Aubertine's farm in Cape Vincent during the mid to late 1950's. Out in the distance he stood, stooking grain behind a binder.

Last fall, my cousin Lyle bought a new combine for the same 10 acre field my great grandfather farmed. What used to take my great grandfather 3 days to do now takes my cousin about an hour. This combine is really a modern marvel. It's equipped with

GIS mapping that literally tells Lyle the lay of the land through what's commonly known as "precision agriculture." It lets Lyle know how to get the most out of his land and water use on the farm and has greatly enhanced his overall operations. Today, pesticide applications are more precisely matched to the exact genetics of crops. As a result, much less pesticide is used than in the past. This also ensures a much safer food and water supply.

When I was young, 1,100 pound cows were the norm. They were fed dry oats and grain with molasses. Today, 1,400-1,600 pound cows are basically fed like Olympic athletes and production yields are double what they were back in the 1950s.

I know that my great grandfather would be astounded by these innovations. These types of technologies were highlighted at the New York Farm Show, which took place at the Great New York State Fairgrounds in late February. All the latest innovations were on display for consumers to see – such as touch screens, GIS mapping, and satellite radio. Corn planters themselves run close to \$250,000 now.

Research and development continues to change New York agriculture for the

better. With new innovations, we are meeting market demands while improving efficiency and helping the new New York work for agriculture.

There are seven million acres of farmland across New York and nearly 20 million mouths to feed. Innovations in agriculture help us ensure that our abundant farmland yields the most for both farmers and consumers. We have increased yield while reducing waste, epitomizing the efficiency that farming is all about. I think my great grandfather would be proud of just how far we've come.



**CHAPTER OF THE YEAR—Belleville Henderson Central School FFA was awarded 2012 Chapter of the Year at the New York Ag Society Meeting in January. Pictured, Top Row L-R: Jake Allen, Erik Shelmidine, Nichole Race, and Leann Green, New York State FFA Secretary. Front Row L-R: Mr. Darrel Aubertine, Commissioner of Agriculture for New York State, Paige Levandowski, New York State FFA Vice President, Samantha Furman, Jazmine Ferguson, Miss Tedra McDougal, Belleville Henderson FFA Advisor, and Mr. Stephen Coye, President of the New York State Grange (sponsor of the award).**