



**NYS Joint Legislative Hearing on Agriculture  
January 27, 2020**

**New York Farm Viability Institute (NYFVI)**

Farm Viability's mission is to create and share knowledge to improve the economic viability of New York's farmers. We know that New York State shares our mission and are appreciative of the trust and confidence Governor Cuomo, the legislature and New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets have placed in our organization.

We thank Governor Cuomo for his broad support of valuable agriculture programs in the executive budget. As we all know, there is more work to be done. We must accelerate the pace of agricultural research and education to meet the demands of a changing marketplace.

Farm Viability's board and review panels have a strong track record of prioritizing critically important work for funding.

- Since 2005, we have invested over \$3.65 million in 41 projects that focused on practices to improve soil health such as cover crops, reduced till, more precise nutrient management, soil aeration, soil microbial additives, field data analysis and zone management, and adoption of Cornell's soil health test.
- We were the first organization in NY to fund research to control the invasive spotted wing drosophila and allium leaf miner pests.
- We funded pollinator research before there was a NYS Pollinator Protection Plan,
- In 2012 we began funding hops and malting barley work.
- We supported the development of Cornell's Adapt N Model through 3 development stages, beginning in 2008.
- In 2017 we supported research with Suffolk County Cooperative Extension to develop alternative practices to chlorpyrifos for cabbage maggot control.
- In 2017, we funded the development of a predictive model that uses farm's herd health records to identify cows for preventive treatment for mammary infection. It resulted in a 60% reduction in antimicrobial use in the demonstration farms without negatively affecting cow health or productivity in the next lactation. Now we are supporting the work of three projects to help 40 farms learn how to implement the practice. This work will result in 40,000 cows being managed with these protocols.

### *FVI—Our Core Competitive Program*

Over the years, Farm Viability has become increasingly active in connecting researchers outside of agriculture to the ag community to collaborate on proposals. Examples include connecting data analysts at SUNY Buffalo with Extension educators and agronomists at Cornell, connecting UV lighting experts at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute with farmers, as well as Cornell researchers and Extension Educators, and pushing for collaboration between the NEWA (Network for Environment and Weather Applications) and NYS MesoNet weather systems.

In the 2020 RFP we explicitly encouraged collaboration between institutions or academic specialty areas through a “Paired Proposal” option. This facilitates individuals with different skills and expertise to work together in solving larger and more complex agricultural challenges. In the current grant round we received four sets of paired proposals that our review panels are currently evaluating.

When our RFP closed on November 12<sup>th</sup>, the FVI competitive program, had received 56 proposals, from 25 different organizations, seeking just over \$5.5 million in funding for 2020. This is a significant increase from the 2019 grant cycle. Over 100 farmers serving on ten different review panels and the NYFVI board are currently scoring, commenting, discussing and ranking these proposals. Comments thus far indicate they are strong proposals on many critical topics.

### **That’s why NYFVI is respectfully requesting \$2.9 million for its 2020-2021 appropriation.**

We are confident in our ability for one simple reason: Every aspect of our program is designed to solicit and prioritize work that creates economic impact—and thus adoption—for NY farmers. From our outcomes-based funding model and scoring system to farmer review, our process is built to connect ag research and education dollars to work that farmers actively believe will help improve their bottom line.

The NYFVI board and farmer review panels are good at identifying the right work to fund. **Since 2005, 278 completed NYFVI projects have returned \$7.30 to the agriculture community for every dollar invested in a project.** As documented in the final reports submitted by the project leaders this includes reduced operating costs, increased revenue, and new capital investments. This return is just for those farms involved in the project and for only the duration of the project, it does not include future cash flows or broader adoption rates.

These numbers illustrate that the work we fund is clearly valuable to the ag community. It’s also important to highlight that we manage this work efficiently, and just like we encourage farmers to do, we are always striving for continuous improvement.

### *Supporting the Broader Community*

In addition to the FVI grant program, our portfolio includes the USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant projects that we administered on behalf of NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets. We currently have 21 Specialty Crop Block Grant projects under management.

In addition we partner with the New York Corn and Soybean Growers Association to administer their competitive corn research grant program and also manage educational funds for the NY Berry Growers Association.

A key factor in our ability to effectively manage so many programs is the NYFVI online application and project management database. This system is also used for our review process, allowing review panel members to read, score and comment on each proposal online.

*Making the Money Go Further*

We have a long history of providing matching funds to researchers that enabled them to bring in millions more dollars to help address some of New York farmers’ most pressing challenges. Examples include: \$140,000 matching funds provided to Cornell’s Beginning Farmer Program to bring \$1.46 million in USDA beginning farm funds to New York, and \$65,000 to Brian Nault to qualify for a \$65,000 Foundation for Food and Agricultural Research grant to combat the invasive allium leaf miner.

We don’t stop there. We also work to find businesses interested in cost sharing to fund research or education projects. In the past we have received money from Pioneer Seed to fund precision agriculture projects with the NY Corn & Soybean Growers Association. Currently we are co-funding with Angry Orchard a \$150,000 Cornell project to further develop cider apple production in New York. In November, we announced a \$300,000 project that is co-funded with Love Beets USA. The work, focused on building a model for timing beet harvest, will be done as a collaborative effort between Cornell University and the Rochester Institute of Technology. We are currently in discussions with other companies about co-funding projects and are excited about these collaborations and the partnerships.

*Looking Forward*

Farm Viability is a thoughtful organization, built to last. We run an efficient operation with a strong mission, and a clear purpose: to connect ag research and education with the needs of New York farmers. To learn more about our accomplishments over the past year please click [here](#) to read our 2019 Annual Report. Or go to [www.nyfvi.org](http://www.nyfvi.org) and click on Publications.

On behalf of the NYFVI board of directors, I would like to thank the Senate and Assembly Agriculture Committees for their unwavering support. We look forward to continuing to serve New York agriculture.

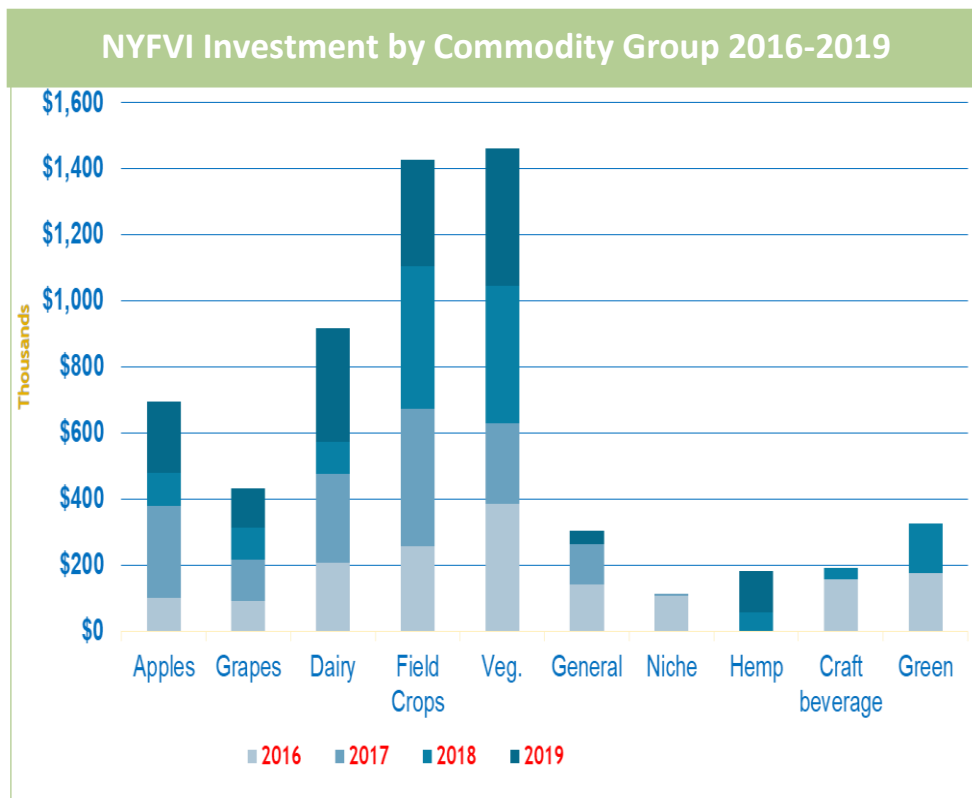
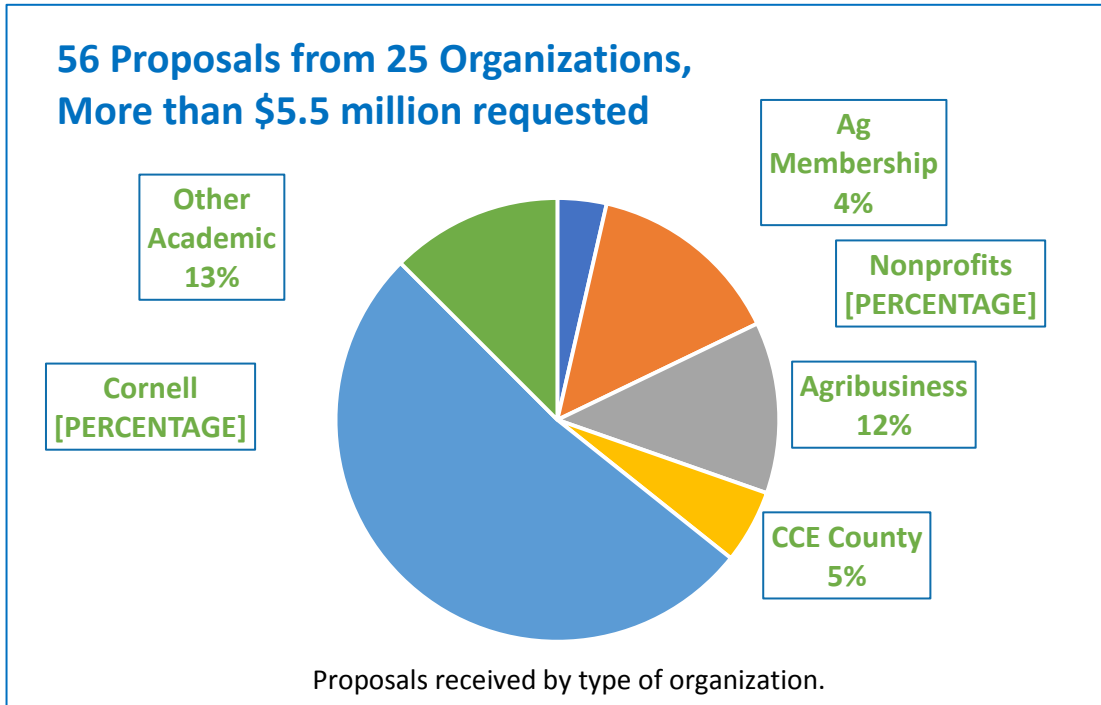
Thank you,

David Grusenmeyer  
Executive Director, NYFVI Board

**New York Farm Viability Institute Board of Directors and Advisors**

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**Addendum**



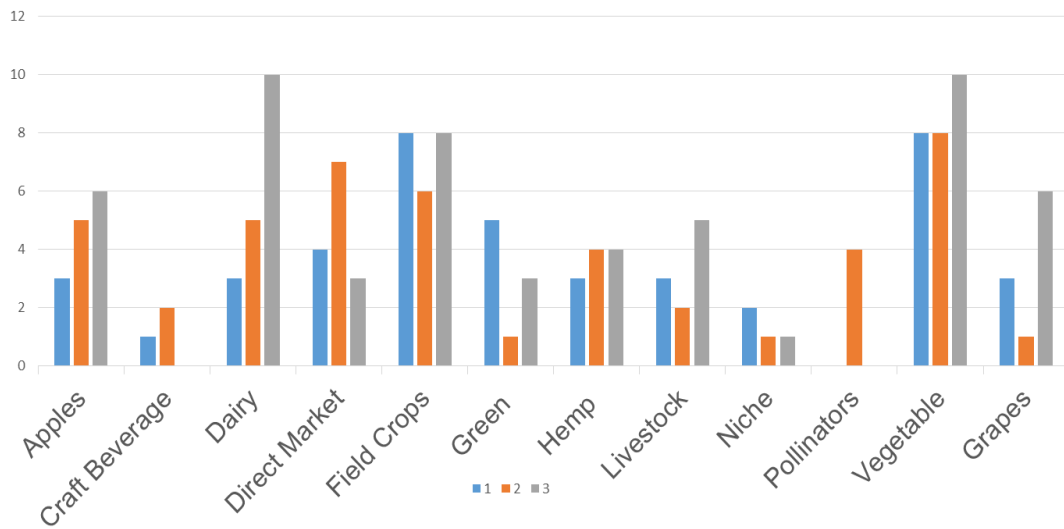
Investment by Commodity Group showing how funds were allocated over the last several years within the FVI grant program.

## Economic Impact



Economic impact from 278 completed projects since 2005.

## FVI Proposals Received by Commodity, 2018, 2019, 2020



## Proposals Received and \$ Funding Requested 2015-2020

