

Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Date: Thursday, December 11th, 2025

Time: 11:00-2:30pm

Location: In-person – Otesaga Resort Hotel, Cooperstown, NY
Virtual – Microsoft Teams

Chair: Bill Zittel

Co-Chair: Rich Stup

Facilitator: Dahlia Sheehan-Yassin

Virtual Attendees: Becky Wiseman, Pam Milkovich, Bill Zittel, Alicia Fletcher, Allison Appleton, Jim Shuford, Sharon Johnson, Steve Clark, Sue Ackerman

In-Person Attendees: Jim Bittner, Liz Callahan, Andy Carlson, Keith Clark, Rich Engelbrecht, Lisa Ford, Kitty Gelberg, Renee St. Jacques, Richard Stup, Elizabeth Wolters, Dan Zeh, Julie Sorensen, Pauline Boyer, Allison Flanagan, Conor Hammersley, Michael Heinle, Liane Hirabayashi, Christine Lalonde-Meade, Brian Quinn, Amanda Roome, Mitzi Sackett, Katrina Schwab-Tully, Erika Scott, Dahlia Sheehan-Yassin, Brittany Shultis

Absent: Richard Peterson, Jessica Garcia, Bruce Gibson, Victor Jones

Welcome & Opening Remarks

- Julie welcomed attendees and acknowledged virtual participation due to severe weather
- Bill Zittel thanked members for flexibility due to weather and confirmed quorum

Director's Report

- Summary for the past quarter was distributed prior to meeting
- Questions can be sent via email or raised during breaks

Recognition of Long-Term Board Members

- Honored members for decades of service and each were given a personalized, beautifully-crafted, wooden cutting board
 - Richard Engelbrecht (1995-2025)
 - G. Anders “Andy” Carlson (2001-2025)
 - Richard “Dick” Peterson (1991-2025)
 - Unable to attend; gift will be mailed
- Tribute to Pete Ten Eyck for his contributions and recent passing

NYCAMH Staff Updates

- Retirements: Sue Ackerman (Center Manager), Jim Carrabba (Sr. Ag Safety Educator) and Judy Graham (Occupational Health Nurse)
- New Roles: Liane Hirabayashi (Center Manager), Andy Johnson (Business Manager)
- New Staff: Michael Heinle (Research Assistant I), Katrina Schwab-Tully (Executive Assistant) and Brittany Shultis (Administrative Assistant)

Organizational Updates

- NYCAMH was awarded \$42,000 from the Lipinski Rural Initiatives Award from Farm Credit East for operations/projects
- Significant organizational changes noted; optimistic outlook for 2026

Board Business

- Motion passed to extend Bill Zittel as Chair and Rich Stup as Co-chair until June 2026 when this will be revisited again
- Board Composition Discussion: Current expertise areas include public health, agriculture, logging, emergency services, social work, dairy, orchards, and workforce development
- Identified Gaps: AI & technology in agriculture, financial services & insurance, controlled environment agriculture (greenhouses), fisheries & aquaculture, and the cannabis industry
- Board suggested to invite industry representatives to present routinely to the NYCAMH board (e.g. aquaculture, viniculture, cannabis/hemp production, etc.)

NYCAMH & Cornell Ag Workforce Development

Presenter: Rich Stup

- Collaboration has been on-going with NYCAMH and the Workforce Development Team
 - There have been focus groups on farms with farm employees & Spanish speaking workers
 - Preliminary Findings: workers are seeking hands-on training, opportunities for growth, cross-training, English classes, advancement opportunities, communication gaps and scheduling issues, financial stress & family separation impacts, emotional strain, and literacy issues
- Next steps include a broader survey in multiple languages; exploring ideas of tablet-assisted data collection to address literacy barriers

Marketing Updates

Presenter: Allison Flanagan

- Launch of the Heat Illness Prevention Guide (field-ready design)
- NYCAMH Commercial: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T14cwTHaHws>
- New ROPS Rebate Program Website: www.ropsr4u.org
 - Streamlined application process, resource hub, before/after tractor photo gallery, donation option added

- **Legislative Update:** Congressman Riley and Congressman Feenstra are co-sponsoring a bill to keep the National ROPS Rebate Funding program going. Funding authorization is to cover rebates and administration of the program.

Discussion: Creative Ways to Reach More Farmers/Loggers

- Sue: previously utilized local veterinarian's on farms in the area; went to state Veterinary meetings; brochures made handy at large feed dealers; checked in with local ER's to follow up with any farmers/farm related incidences
- Keith: lots of loggers are on social media (Facebook); check to see who is currently following our social media pages; discuss what kind of targeted messaging might work
- Michael's internal data work will be a great tool to use to help see areas where we are missing
- Provide links and share posts with Farm Net and similar organizations

Expanding Logging Safety & Health

Presenter: Mitzi Sackett

- PowerPoint Presentation: Logging for Life: A NYCAMH/NEC Wellness Approach
 - Study on Maine Loggers
 - Hypertension Risk Reduction/Healthier Lifestyle/Lifetime in the Woods
 - Created a sense of urgency using the data to highlight why risk-reducing & disease-management behaviors for hypertension are critical
 - 3 health topics for Logging for Life curriculum:
 - Hypertension
 - Musculoskeletal Disorders
 - Sleep Deprivation
 - Tips given to help control high blood pressure

Food Insecurity Impacts

Presenter: Mandy Roome

- PowerPoint Presentation: Food Insecurity Survey
- Farmers/Forestry workers struggling with heating, food, health insurance, equipment costs and more
- Research being done to find out what ways federal funding cuts and government shutdown has impacted workers although questions will not discuss this. Instead they will focus on what these issues currently look like for farmers, without mention of funding cuts and the shutdown.

Action Items

- Board members to confirm continued participation
- Share contacts for fisheries/aquaculture, controlled environment agriculture, etc.
- Staff to locate prior industry gap list and integrate new suggestions
- Prepare survey instrument for workforce needs assessment (target rollout: Summer-Fall 2026)

Next Meeting:

Thursday, March 12th, 2026
Otesaga Resort Hotel, Cooperstown, NY