

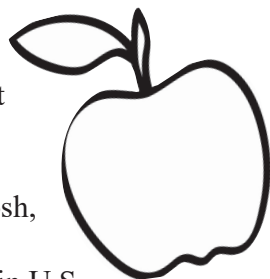
Intro to Agriculture



Agriculture, the science of growing plants and raising animals, is important to New York State. About 20% of the state's land area is used by 33,500 farms. The majority of these farms (98%) are family owned.

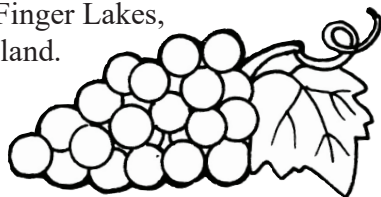
Milk is New York's leading agricultural product, ranking the state fifth in the United States for milk production and is the largest producer of yogurt, cottage cheese and sour cream.

New York ranks second in the nation for our production of apples. Our leading varieties are McIntosh, Empire, Red Delicious and Golden Delicious.



Grapes, for juice and wine, place New York third in U.S. production behind California and Washington. The four major grape producing areas are near Lake Erie, the Finger Lakes, the Hudson Valley and eastern Long Island.

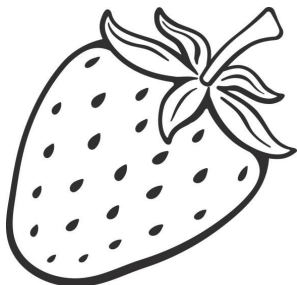
New York also ranks second in maple syrup production behind Vermont.



Farmers in New York grow many other crops and raise birds and animals too! Farming isn't just for land in the country. There is a growing number of farming opportunities in New York's cities.

For more about NYS agriculture be sure to read the following features:

- **Farming profiles**
- **An Agriculture Crossword Puzzle and Word Search**
- **An Easy Strawberry Recipe**
- **And a Kid-Friendly Activity!**



Newspaper Activity: Look through the newspaper (print or electronic) for stories, pictures or advertisements that show examples of New York State agriculture.

How many examples did your class find?

Agriculture Literacy

Meet The Biehlers

The Biehler farm started with hay growing but switched to strawberries for the spring of 1979. Best Berry Farm's largest crop is strawberries but they also grow blueberries and raspberries.

But don't let the name of the farm fool you, Jayne and Steve Biehler also grow vegetables, including tomatoes, beans, peas, peppers, squash, and sweet corn, several varieties of apples and flowers.

The 20-acre farm is a two-person operation and its berries are harvested by their customers. Best Berry Farm is open to the public from the second week in June with the beginning of the strawberry season and runs through September.

The farm stand also sells homemade jams and locally produced honey. In the fall, if you're lucky enough, you might also find homemade cookies and muffins!



Jayne Biehler of Best Berry Farm in a portrait painted by Robert Bode. Image provided.

Best Berry Farm is located in Rensselaer County at 1078 Best Road, East Greenbush, NY 12061. In season, the fields are open from 8 a.m. to noon daily if it is not raining and there is a supply of ripe berries for picking. It is advised to check the farm's Facebook page or call before going to the farm to check availability. Best Berry Farm can be reached at (518) 286-0607.



Fun Facts: New York state ranks eighth in the nation in strawberry production. Strawberries are often the first locally grown crop of the season. Picking strawberries is one of the most popular agricultural activities in upstate New York and 95% of the crop is sold this way. Strawberries are the only fruit with seeds on the outside. A berry has its seeds on the inside. Since the seeds are on the outside, strawberries aren't true berries, like blueberries or raspberries.

Newspaper Activity: Look through the newspaper (print or electronic) for stories, pictures or ads about agriculture. Did you find any examples of people growing plants or raising animals or working with nature?

Agriculture Literacy

Meet The Reeves

The Reeves Family has been farming in Baldwinsville, Onondaga County since the late 1800s.



Nolan, Brian, Karin and Mark Reeves. Photo provided.

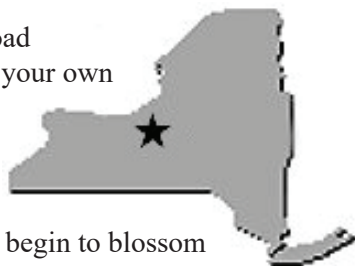
Currently, members of the fourth and fifth generations of the Reeves family work together to grow strawberries, blueberries and vegetables on 350 acres of the family's land.

While their farm stand is open from early June through Labor Day, most of what is grown on

Reeves Farms is sold wholesale and distributed to grocery stores and markets across the region. Six family members work on the farm full time. However, during the peak growing season, they hire 70 to 90 additional workers to help harvest and get the ripe produce to market each day.

To take a virtual tour of Reeves Farms go online to <https://reevesfarms.com/our-story/> to watch their short video.

Reeves Farms is located at 1100 Reeves Road Baldwinsville, NY 13027 and the farm stand and pick your own fields can be found at 1220 W. Genesee Road, also in Baldwinsville.



Fun Fact: As a spring fruit, strawberries can be damaged by severely cold weather. After the plants begin to blossom or grow young fruit, if the temperature dips below freezing (less than 32°F) the fruit could die. To protect their strawberries, the Reeves put a mist of water on the plants which freezes at 32°F, preventing the plant from getting colder than that. The thin coating of ice actually saves the crop from the colder weather!

Newspaper Activity: Look through the newspaper (print or online, past or present) for stories or pictures about land use in your community. Can you find any with ties to agriculture? Did you find any reports involving the availability of fresh fruits and vegetables?

Agriculture Literacy

Meet The Abers

Abers Acres was started by Sue and John Abers in 1984 and their very first crop was strawberries! Sue grew up on a dairy farm and John always wanted to be a farmer.



Sue Abers, her nephew and niece Jack and Chelsea Constantino in the Abers Acres strawberry field. Photo provided by Sue Abers.

Instead of continuing in the dairy business, the Abers saw a need and established a fruit and vegetable farm in an area without any.

With the help of their grown son, Adam, the farm became a USDA-certified organic producer about 16 years ago.

Their strawberry crop generally is ready to be harvested by about Father's Day or the third week in June.

For strawberries to reach their peak flavor, the

best weather is a combination of cool nights and sunny warm days. Their fresh-picked strawberries are available at the farm stand, but families are welcome to pick their own and save money by paying by the pound.

In addition to strawberries, Abers Acres produces raspberries, blueberries, and vegetables, including potatoes, onions, sweet corn, and popcorn. In the winter, the Abers sell organically grown Christmas trees they grow on five acres of the property.

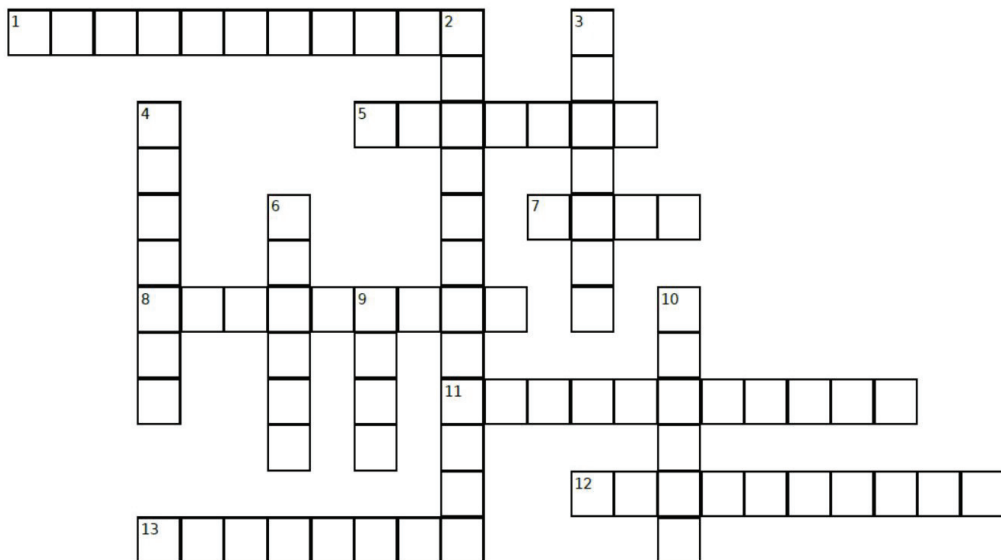
Abers Acres is located at 884 Route 394, Kennedy, NY 14747. For more information, go to their website at abersacres.com. Email them at info@abersacres.com. Their U Pick fields are located at 409 Grubb Hill Road, Kennedy. It is recommended you check which produce is available before you go.



Fun Fact: The Abers have a team of “working” dogs to protect the produce from deer and other wild animals. The four labs use a dog house with a lookout tower to watch the area and run and bark at any birds or animals that try to eat the crops, including the Christmas trees. The labs are safely penned up when visitors come to pick produce.

Newspaper Activity: Look through the newspaper (print or electronic) for stories, pictures or ads about families. Did you find any examples of families working together? What type(s) of work are they doing?

Agriculture Crossword



Use the clues below to fill in the agricultural words.

Across

1. Sweet blue or blackish berry that grows on a bush
5. The season when crops are gathered
7. To choose or select; to make a choice
8. Affected strongly or deeply, especially favorably
11. Getting the credit for acting and making decisions; reliable
12. Nickname for someone with a talent to grow plants, flowers or vegetables
13. Small rounded beetles often colored red with black spots

Down

2. Juicy edible red fruit of a low-growing plant with white flowers and runners
3. A job or task that is assigned or begun
4. Garden plants related to violets with velvety flowers
6. A worker who raises crops or animals
9. The loose surface material of the earth where plants grow
10. A slender creeping branch of a plant that roots at the end to form new plants

WORD BANK - Use these words to solve the puzzle:

BLUEBERRIES	HARVEST
FARMER	IMPRESSED
GREEN THUMB	LADYBUGS
	MISSION
	PANSIES

PICK
RESPONSIBLE
RUNNER
SOIL
STRAWBERRIES

For more vocabulary lists and puzzles go to www.myvocabulary.com

Agriculture Word Search

G I F I P A N S I E S C F H O
I L Y Y K Q J U Z O E F L R E
A M S U W X P I R N M O C E S
G S P T U N M B Z L G U X S G
R S E R R N Q L X Z Q X Y P H
I G J I E A Y U G G K W W O A
C R J N G S W E G S O I L N R
U E R N I F S B E D N M W S V
L E U U C H A E E W O I D I E
T N N N S W E R D R I S L B S
U T N P I C K R M H R S N L T
R H E O V J U I U E A I M E G
E U R B O H V E L Z R O E L Q
R M K Y H G Y S G M I N Y S N
P B L A D Y B U G S P D W W Z

Find and circle the agricultural words listed below:

AGRICULTURE
BLUEBERRIES
FARMER
GREEN THUMB
HARVEST

IMPRESSED
LADYBUGS
MISSION
PANSIES
PICK

RESPONSIBLE
RUNNER
SOIL
STRAWBERRIES

Newspaper Activity: Select a story from the newspaper (print or electronic) that is interesting to your class. Use the important words from the story to make a new word search or crossword puzzle. Give yourselves extra credit if the story has any connection to New York state agriculture.

For more about NYS agriculture go to newyork/agclassroom.org

Agriculture Literacy

Strawberry Nice Cream

Love ice cream but don't love all the sugar, fat, and calories? Give this Strawberry Nice Cream a try! The recipe makes 6 servings of about 1/3 cups each and is from www.californiastrawberries.com.



Ingredients:

3 bananas chopped in large pieces and frozen
2 cups California Strawberries chopped, divided
1 tsp vanilla extract

Instructions:

1. Combine bananas, 1 cup of California strawberries and the vanilla in a blender

container; blend until smooth.

2. Stir in remaining strawberry pieces and pour into a chilled 9x5x3 metal loaf pan. Cover with plastic wrap and freeze for two hours.

3. Remove from freezer, let sit for 10 minutes to soften enough to scoop and serve. Can also be enjoyed immediately after blending.

For more recipes visit your local farmers market or farm stands. Many farmers are willing to share recipes with their customers.

Newspaper Activity: Look through the local newspaper (print or online) and other sources for recipes that use fresh berries, fruit or vegetables, especially strawberries. Including several daily servings of vegetables & fruits as part of an overall healthy diet may lower the risk for heart disease and certain types of cancer.

Source: www.choosemyplate.gov