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*Cornell Cooperative Extension in Clinton and Essex Counties recognized Jay Ward for his leadership in expanding the farmers sales tax exemption and for his long time support of 4-H programs. Pictured with Jay is Martha Bachman, President of the Cornell Cooperative Extension, Clinton*

## Jay Ward Receives Certificate of Appreciation from Cornell Cooperative Extension

*by Beth Spaugh, Extension Educator*

Sidney "Jay" Ward III was recognized at the annual meeting of Cornell Cooperative Extension in Clinton County last month. Jay and Ward Lumber Company have been strong supporters of Cooperative Extension and programs in the North Country for decades. Recently, Jay was instrumental in getting the State of New York Sales Tax Exemption for Farmers greatly expanded. This exemption will mean significant savings for farmers throughout New York State as they purchase items and materials needed in their agricultural business. Martha Bachman, President of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Clinton County presented Jay with a Certificate of Appreciation for the strong support he and the Ward Lumber Company have provided to both Cornell Cooperative Extension and the agricultural community.

Jay's leadership in expanding the farmers sales tax exemption is an example of how the farming community can "look outside the box" for allies. Originally, I was surprised to learn that Jay, a lumberman, had been very instrumental at the state level

in getting the Farmer Sales Tax Exemption expanded. I didn't believe that Ward Lumber had enough farm business to be interested in farmer's sales tax exemptions and its impacts. I doubted that it would affect their business profitability significantly. However, when I heard Jay explain why he got involved it made sense, but it was also was a good illustration of how we can team up with others to identify common causes.

Jay is President of the Ward Lumber Company. When his managers expressed frustration about training new cashiers to understand which items were exempt and which items were taxable, Jay suggested that Ward Lumber Company should try to get the Farmer's Sales Tax Exemption expanded to ease the training problem. He contacted The Northeastern Retail Lumber Association, of which Ward Lumber Company is a member, and explained the situation. The NRLA teamed up with NY Farm Bureau and together advocated an expansion of the proposed sale's tax exemptions.

This got me wondering how many other opportunities we are missing because we focus on our needs rather than on others' needs. Agriculture is greatly "outnumbered." We will need more partnerships like this in the future. When I heard Jay's explanation of his motivation it really hit me that there are probably many other opportunities out there. We just have to "open our eyes" and go after them.

We can't afford to assume that there is nothing we can do or that others will do. For instance, many of you are concerned about traffic on the roads you must travel. When NYSDOT Commissioner Joseph Boardman was at the Maple Tour, I asked him if there was any funding source to build underpasses (where feasible) for farm equipment or for pastured cows. He said that underpasses could be included in road rebuilding. The key is to know when the state road by your farm is going to be worked on and to get in on the planning stages so your underpass is included in the bidding process.

So let's keep our eyes and ears open for opportunities.



