

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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GROW-NY YOUTH COMPETITION WINNERS ANNOUNCED

New York Agriculture in the Classroom, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and New York FFA, hosted the first Youth Competition during this year's Grow-NY Food and Agriculture Business Competition. Nine youth participants presented their innovative business pitches to a panel of judges for a chance to win a \$2,000 prize to invest in their enterprise. Selected based on a competitive proposal process, the next generation of business developers, agriculture, food, and technology leaders engaged in this unique program. Twin brothers Ethan and Oren Welch of Marion, NY were named as winners for their booming business building apple bins for the apple growers in their region.

Along with the chance to give their pitch on the youth stage, selected students were able to attend the Grow-NY Summit to watch pitches from the top food and agriculture startups, listen to a series of themed panels discussing some of the biggest challenges and opportunities facing the food and agriculture industry in New York, and network with an array of startups, incubators, economic development agencies, and small business partners.

The featured youth competition judges included Ed Bizari, Entrepreneurial Fellow for the Centennial Center at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Jessica Henesy, Economic Development Program Specialist at the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, Bruno Xavier, Associate Director of the Cornell Food Venture Center, Cornell AgriTech, Derek Hill, New York FFA Director, and youth judge Paige Warren, New York FFA Vice President.

Derek Hill said of his judging experience, "It is empowering to see our youth taking such interest in the future of agriculture and growing their skills as entrepreneurs who will lead the next generation of agriculturalists."

More information about the Grow-NY Youth Competition can be found by visiting the New York Agriculture in the Classroom website at www.agclassroom.org/ny. New York Agriculture in the Classroom is a partnership of Cornell University, the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, New York State Education Department, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and New York Farm Bureau. New York Agriculture in the Classroom fosters an awareness, understanding, and appreciation of our food and fiber system.



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Grow-NY Youth Competition Winners

First Place- \$2,000

Ethan and Oren Welch, Grade 10
Welch Brother's Bin
Marion, New York

Second Place- \$1,000

James Eshelman, Grade 8
EIEIO Farm
Scio, New York

Third Place- \$500

Gordon Tibbitts, Grade 7
Tibbitts Bros. Farm Stand
Clinton, New York

**Fourth Place- \$250 value in training from the
Cornell Food Venture Center**

Silas Alvarez, Grade 8
Silas Sauce
Rochester, New York



Third place winner Gordon Tibbitts



Second place winner James Eshelman



First place winners Ethan and Oren Welch

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