

New York Agriculture

How many gallons of sap does it take to make a gallon of maple syrup?

What color are Holstein cows?

Who is the NY Secretary of Agriculture?

What is the name of NY's largest yogurt producer... and

What is the most popular ice cream flavor?

Are you smarter than a 5th grader? Hi, I'm Aidan Ainslie and I'm 10 years old and in 5th grade at Mt. Markham Middle School. I live on a dairy farm where we raise registered Holsteins and also grow other NY agricultural products. Milk and dairy products are New York State's largest agricultural product and I am happy to be a part of that! Even though there aren't many dairy farmers left compared to many years ago, we still produce a lot of milk and dairy products for everyone to enjoy!

This year my family and I tapped some of our maple trees and got to have some fresh maple syrup that was made from the sap. New York ranks second in maple production. Nothing beats having the real syrup on my pancakes instead of the fake kind! Our family also sells garden compost in the spring from composted manure made from our cows and the bedding. Gardeners love this fresh, rich compost. New York ranks 3rd in Nursery and greenhouse products. It seems funny that people have to buy compost that we take for granted, but not many people live on farms anymore, and they still like to garden and grow flowers and vegetables.

We also have a few chickens on our farm and I sell the eggs. In the summer I sell them at a local Farmers Market and I sold out so fast! People loved the farm fresh eggs. NY ranks 25th in the country for egg production. Our family also raises a few beef and pigs during the year. We not only use the meat for our family, but also raise extra for other families to purchase.

I now understand how important Agriculture is in New York State. In fact, NY Agriculture brings in over 5 billion dollars of business to our state every year! Although my family and I have a small farm, we raise many products that NY is known for. I am very lucky to live on a farm and understand where my food comes from, how it is grown and know the importance of Agriculture.

When I am at the local and county fairs in the summer, I enter my 4-H projects which include fresh vegetables, eggs and showing our dairy and swine projects. It is a great way to show others how we take care of our animals and the hard work we put into our farms. I like to answer questions and educate people that ask me silly questions, like "Does your cow bite?" I tell them she only has lower teeth so she won't really bite you.

They also have asked me if chocolate milk comes from brown cows! I tell them that all cows give white milk and we have to add the chocolate! There are a lot of people that don't understand agriculture or know where their food comes from, so I hope in a small way I can help educate them.

And by the way, it takes 40 gallons of sap to make a gallon of syrup. Holsteins are black and white or red and white. Richard Ball is the NY Secretary of Agriculture. Chobani is NY's largest yogurt producer and vanilla is the most popular ice cream flavor.

New York State is a great place to farm and raise a variety of agricultural products and I am glad I am a part of it!