

# New York Cider Association Annual Meeting Reflects NYS Cider Boom

By **Total Food Service** - March 27, 2017

As an outcome of the powerful growth of hard cider production in New York State and Governor Cuomo's support for the Craft Beverage industry, the New York Cider Association (NYCA) held its second Annual General Meeting last month. The daylong meeting included presentations and workshops from New York State Department of Labor, Cornell University, Glynwood, and cider producers and apple growers from throughout the state.

The report from the New York Cider Association is clear: New York has more licensed cider makers than any other state, mirroring the economic and cultural significance of the apple industry in our region. There are over 80 cider producers in New York, with 29 Farm Cideries using crops grown exclusively in New York. This number has grown from eight in October of 2013, a growth rate of 262%. Six Farm Cideries operate Branch Offices where they can sell farm-produced wine, beer, spirits and cider by the bottle or by the glass. Additionally, there are more than twenty Farm Wineries and Breweries producing cider from New York apples and 23 large-scale Cideries, which are not tasked with using local fruit.

**State Liquor Authority Chairman Vincent Bradley said,** "For years, craft beverage manufacturing was virtually non-existent in New York until Governor Cuomo started to turn things around. There are now hundreds of producers across the State and more being added all the time. As a result, those businesses are driving tourism and economic growth in our communities, and with the support of groups like the New York Cider Association, they are continuing to grow and thrive."

A highlight of the meeting was the election of Jacob Lagoner, fifth generation fruit farmer and Embark Craft Ciderworks proprietor based in Williamson, NY, to the NYCA Board of Directors. Lagoner is joining the eight other members of the NYCA Board, which mirrors the diversity of geographic location, production volume and stylistic approach to cider that the Association embodies:

- NYCA President David DeFisher, Rootstock Ciderworks/DeFisher Fruit Farms, Williamson, NY
- NYCA Treasurer Scott Donovan, BlackBird Ciderworks, Barker, NY
- Karl duHoffmann, Orchard Hill Cider Mill, New Hampton, NY
- Sara Grady, Glynwood, Cold Spring, NY
- Ian Merwin, Black Diamond Cider, Trumansburg, NY
- Jonathan Oakes, SteamPunk Cider, Medina, NY
- Elizabeth Ryan, Hudson Valley Farmhouse Cider, Staatsburg, NY
- NYCA Vice President Dan Wilson, Slyboro Cider House, Granville, NY

**State Agriculture Commissioner Richard A. Ball said,** “Cider production is a natural fit for New York. We grow apples and other specialty crops as well as any other State in the nation, and our producers and growers are supported by a strong network of partners at both the State and local level. Through Governor Cuomo’s commitment to transform the craft beverage industry, the leadership of the New York Cider Association and the hard work of our innovative manufacturers, hard cider production is flourishing. I am confident it will only continue to grow.”

**NYCA President David DeFisher said,** “The most energizing aspect of being President of the NYCA is seeing the excitement that surrounds the cider category. From apple growers, to consumers, to the craft cider makers themselves, there is enthusiasm about our industry’s potential. In our first year of operation as an Association we have been able to help steer the growth of the cider industry in NYS to create jobs, spur tourism and develop the reputation of our region’s cider, and as a grower and maker, contributing to the emergence of a value-added aspect of the apple growing industry – one that will help sustain continued prosperity for future generations of fruit growers – is deeply satisfying.”

The meeting was held at NYCA Treasurer Scott Donovan’s Blackbird

Ciderworks in Barker, NY. The facility, set on the shore of Lake Ontario, has more than doubled its production since 2015.

**BlackBird Ciderworks owner Scott Donovan said**, “When BlackBird Cider Works was licensed in 2011 there were just a handful of hard cider producers in New York State and a small number of out of state producers. Today there are at least 80 cideries in New York State and over 600 in the United States. The consumer demand for ciders, particularly craft ciders, continues to grow at an astonishing rate. We’re looking forward to continued growth in the next 5 years.”

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*The New York Cider Association is a trade group incorporated in the summer of 2015 with the objective bringing together producers of fermented cider who work in New York State along with NYS apple growers and professionals working in industries associated with cider making. Coalition-building activities leading to the launch of the Association were envisioned and overseen as a project of Glynwood’s Hudson Valley Food program, steered by Glynwood VP of Programs Sara Grady and a group of visionary cider producers from throughout the state. The inaugural NYCA General Meeting was held in February 2016 in Walden, NY, at the Angry Orchard Innovation Cider House.*

*The organization’s mission is to support New York cider making industry in its vital role as an economic engine for agriculture, manufacturing, and tourism, to build a market for New York cider made from New York apples, to advocate for the New York cider industry through education, research, and communication, to promote New York State as a world class cider producing region and to support the work of regional cider alliances within New York State. Visit [their website](#) to learn more.*

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