

2015-J3014

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating the 50th Anniversary of Ontario Orchards in Oswego, New York

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize the achievements of those individuals and businesses which substantially contribute to the economic vitality of their communities and the entire Empire State; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Ontario Orchards in Oswego, New York; and

WHEREAS, For five decades, the Ouellette Family has owned and operated one of the most diverse enterprises in Central New York; and

WHEREAS, Back in 1952, when Dennis Ouellette was six years old, his parents, Dennis T. Ouellette and Estelle had a chicken and pig operation along with acres and acres of fruit trees in Sterling, New York, which took in the cool moist breezes from nearby Lake Ontario; and

WHEREAS, As a young boy, Dennis Ouellette remembers selling apples and strawberries on a roadside stand at State Routes 104 and 104A; and

WHEREAS, Realizing retail sales were more profitable than wholesaling and processing, the Ouellette family set up retail operations in Fulton, Watertown, Ogdensburg and across the road from the current store on Route 104; they then expanded into the Regional Market in Syracuse, and later, the farm extended its sales to Long Island, during the fall and Christmas seasons; and

WHEREAS, Dennis Ouellette met June Shattell at Hannibal High School, 50 years ago, and they were married in 1965; this was the beginning of their long-lasting marriage and business together; and

WHEREAS, From its inception, Dennis and June Ouellette offered more than just apples; they also produced other fruits and vegetables, as

well as Christmas trees; and

WHEREAS, While running the business with her husband, and raising their two daughters, June Ouellette earned her Bachelor's degree in Science from the State University of New York at Oswego; and

WHEREAS, In 1965, the old two story horse barn was converted into the present day store; Ontario Orchards not only sold its own fruit, vegetables and trees, but also brought produce from other local farmers; and

WHEREAS, Two farm workers, David and George, came to work on the farm on weekends and suggested to June Ouellette that she use the apple drops for apple pies; this is when she began making apple pies in her own kitchen, and delivering them to Ontario Orchards; subsequently, the Bakery was born; and

WHEREAS, Along with the Bakery, there was an expansion of the farm, farm market, cider mill and nursery, which was a direct result from an increase of customers; and

WHEREAS, Dennis and June Ouellette credit many of the new ideas at Ontario Orchards to their two daughters, Kathy and Laurie and their employees; what was the horse barn has become one of North America's most complete, family-owned farms and farm market in the country; and

WHEREAS, On their farm in Sterling, New York, the Ouellette's grow sweet corn, cucumbers, tomatoes, beans, squash, pumpkins, gourds and June's raspberries on 30 acres of land; in addition, they have 30 acres of Christmas trees, and 90 acres of apples; and

WHEREAS, This vital business has added a Fall Jamboree, U-Pick apples and pumpkin operations; this not only helped with profits, but brought people out to the Farm so they could see the whole operation and learn about where the food comes from; they have also encouraged Agri-Tourism and school trips to help educate people in the community; and

WHEREAS, While most farm markets are open only in the summer and fall when their crops are harvested, Ontario Orchards is open every day except for Christmas; and

WHEREAS, Moreover, Ontario Orchards also specializes in showcasing products made and grown in New York, which they ship year round, such as Canales sauces, Rudy's, Honey, Maple Syrup, Hinerwadel salt potatoes, Dinosaur Barbeque sauces, Bucks seasonings, Hofmann hotdogs and coneys, Grandma Brown's baked beans, and Crogan Bologna, as well as New York cheeses; and

WHEREAS, In the future, the Ouellettes plan on improving the facilities, work on upgrading and promoting New York State Products on their website, and growing the ever popular Fall Jamboree at their farm in Sterling; and

WHEREAS, Today, Dennis and June Ouellette's grandchildren, Taylor and Nichole, are now involved in Ontario Orchards, truly making it a multi-generational business; and

WHEREAS, It is with great pleasure that this Legislative Body acknowledges this exceptional business and its contributions to the local and State economies, fully confident that it will continue to enjoy the sparkling successes it has experienced thus far; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Ontario Orchards in Oswego, New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Ouellette Family.