

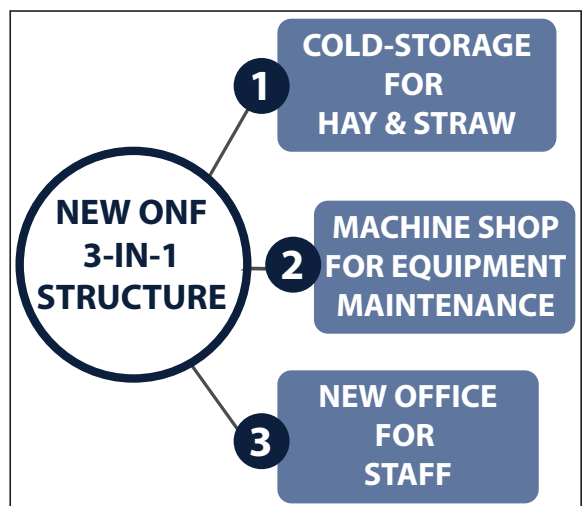
ONEIDA NATION FARM CONTINUES TO REBUILD



Aerial photo of Oneida Nation Farm in 2023.



Aerial photo of Oneida Nation Farm in its original state before fire and storm damage.



By Mia Charnon

Kalihwisaks/Creative Services

The Oneida Nation Farm (ONF) continues to rebuild after a heavy windstorm and tornado on June 15, 2022, and a fire two weeks before, devastated the farm resulting in substantial damage. Multiple farm buildings sustained damage including the primary feeding silo, shelter barn, hay shed, and grain bin facilities. It was estimated the damages would cost \$500,000 to repair.

Jumping forward to today, the ONF tore down the damaged structures built in the 1970s and will be adding a 3-in-1 structure housing a cold-storage area for hay and straw, a machine shop for equipment maintenance, and a new office for staff. Insurance claims covered most of the costs of farm equaling to \$150,000 for the grain bin, \$150,000 for repairs to

the existing cattle barn, \$150,000 for site cleanup, and \$75,000 for miscellaneous damage. Thankfully, no machinery was lost in the storm and there were no injuries or deaths to any staff or livestock.

After the devastation, it was unclear if the farm had the ability to keep up with the demand for their products. However, Tom Swiecichowski, ONF Manager, explained how they satisfied demand for the community resource programs and employee sales, "Although demand for both beef and bison steadily increased, we were able to get product to Oneida food distribution, Oneida food pantry, Anna John Nursing Home, Oneida Hotel, Oneida School System, and the Feeding America Elder Food Box program. Employee beef sales have also been steady, and ONF has used American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

funds to cover beef processing for Oneida Nation Members, which has concluded." Since then, ONF has sold 69 head of beef to 276 Oneida Members, a success as their mission is to get more Oneida Nation Farm beef into the community at an affordable price. ONF has also been working with the Soil Health Demonstration Site (SHED) project to assist the farm in searching for better ways to increase their yields and revenue. This initiative has also aided ONF in creating a more cognitive approach to cover-crops and long-term soil health for the betterment of the land and environment.

ONF is looking to include more advertising on updated beef and bison prices and is currently booking orders into February and March 2024