



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Raising a Glass of Milk to Our Hardworking Farmers

SENATOR PATTY RITCHIE June 1, 2018

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### Senator Ritchie's Weekly Column

Every day, farmers are in barns, fields and yes, even offices, working to see that people here in New York State and beyond have fresh, nutritious food and drink. Not only do our hardworking farmers put food on our tables, their efforts also help to support the strength of our state's leading industry, agriculture.

June is "National Dairy Month," a time to honor the contributions of the dairy industry to our country. Originally started in 1937 as "National Milk Month" as a way to promote drinking milk, observances have grown into an annual tradition that help to celebrate our state's dairy farms and all the fresh, nutritious foods and drinks they produce.

As someone who grew up on a family farm, I know how hard farmers across the state, especially those in the dairy industry, work to ensure they have success and help their neighbors and communities. That is why, as Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee, I continue to prioritize the needs of our state's 35,000 family farms. It is critical to us all that they get the resources they need to succeed.

Recently, I was proud to advocate for record funding—for the fourth straight year—totaling \$54.4 million for agriculture in our state budget. This supports a wide range of programs to help our farmers succeed, grow and stay safe on the job. Among the initiatives receiving funding are those to support dairy farms, improve marketing and encourage young people to get involved in agriculture.

Another way we can help our farmers succeed is by making more people aware of the important work they do. On June 6<sup>th</sup>, I will be joining Assembly Agriculture Committee Chair Assemblyman Bill Magee to host our annual “Agriculture Day” at the State Capitol. The event—which features a special focus on our dairy industry—will include interactive displays and samples of fresh food and drink produced by hardworking farmers, craft beverages and more.

Our farmers work incredibly hard to grow and produce the foods we depend on. I hope that during the month of June—and the rest of the year—you will join me in supporting them.