



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR
Peter Oberacker

Senator Oberacker Highlights Importance of Farm Safety Funding

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COOPERSTOWN – 09/20/22 – Senator Peter Oberacker (R/C-Schenevus) today toured Bassett Healthcare Network’s New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health (NYCAMH) and joined officials in recognizing National Farm Safety Week and the importance of increased state funding to support safety on the farm.

“New York farmers face countless daily challenges yet continue to deliver – providing us all with fresh, locally grown food while fueling our state’s number one industry,” said Senator Peter Oberacker. **“Making certain our farmers have proper safety equipment is crucial and that is why I am a strong advocate for the programs administered by the New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health (NYCAMH).”**

As part of the 2022-23 state budget, NYCAMH's New York Rollover Protection System (ROPS) Rebate program received \$250,000, while its John May Farm Safety Fund received \$100,000.

“Continued ROPS funding is crucial – this program can mean the difference between life and death on the farm. New York State’s prioritization of this initiative to help protect the men and women who work the land is essential. Ongoing support for these vital programs will be a leading budget priority of mine in 2023,” added Senator Oberacker.

The ROPS Rebate Program has outfitted over 1,900 tractors in New York State with the life-saving rollover protection. The ROPS Rebate Program has now expanded nationally as other states follow New York's successful blueprint. The National ROPS Rebate Program is administered by NYCAMH's Northeast Center for Occupational Health and Safety – Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (NEC).

The John May Farm Safety Fund provides matching grants to small and medium-sized farms to make necessary safety improvements. The application process includes a full review by a NYCAMH farm safety specialist to determine hazards and offer solutions to reduce risk of injury.

Director of NEC and NYCAMH Julie Sorensen, Ph.D., MA, BA, said, “State support of the ROPS program and the relatively new John May Farm Safety Fund helps ensure that more farmers finish their work safely each day. As we strive to meet growing needs and educate others in Albany about the importance of these farm safety programs, Senator Oberacker’s advocacy is greatly appreciated. Helping farmers do their job safely improves life on the farm and life for all.”

A farmer’s risk of dying on the job is five times higher than that of the average American worker and tractor overturns are the primary cause. In the event of a rollover, the use of ROPS and a seatbelt reduces the risk of fatal and non-fatal injury by 99 percent. Use of ROPS without a seatbelt is less effective, but still reduces the risk of death or serious injury by 70 percent. Tractors built after 1985 have built-in rollover protection. However, tractors are constructed to last and many older models are still in use today.

“On behalf of Bassett Healthcare Network and NYCAMH, we are deeply grateful to Senator Oberacker for his steadfast commitment to supporting these critical programs and our agricultural community,” says Dr. Tommy Ibrahim, President and CEO of Bassett Healthcare

Network. “The wellbeing of our farm workers is vital to our communities across Central New York. They are the lifeline to our healthy food resources, supporting the health needs of millions. As we celebrate National Farm Safety Week, we are so proud of NYCAMH’s critical mission to keep farm workers safe and healthy and extend our gratitude to Senator Oberacker for his support.”

Along with saving lives, the ROPS Rebate Program also provides substantial cost savings to New York State. A recent report by the NEC and NYCAMH indicates that the total cost of the injuries averted from 2007-2017 was \$6,018,742 versus a total program cost of \$1,776,608. The one-time retrofit costs will continue to prevent injuries as long as the tractors are used, generating additional [projected] future savings of \$12,136,512, \$15,781,027, and \$18,924,818 if retrofitted tractors remain in operation 15, 20, or 25 years after their retrofit.

Farmers interested in more information on any of NYCAMH’s programs should check online at www.nycamh.org.

“NYCAMH’s farm safety programs serve as valuable investments in our farming future. I congratulate our local farm health and safety experts at NYCAMH on their leadership in this field and stand ready to partner with them moving forward in protecting our New York farmers and ensuring agricultural productivity,” Senator Oberacker concluded.