



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

Fight Continues For Dairy Farmers

JAMES L. SEWARD May 20, 2010

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ONEONTA, 05/20/10 – State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I-Oneonta) today renewed his call for additional federal assistance for struggling upstate dairy farmers.

“Washington has provided the occasional quick fix, but the band-aid approach is not good enough to stop the bleeding,” said Senator Seward. **“Our farmers need a viable, long term solution that will reestablish our farming future in upstate New York.”**

Senator Seward, along with 15 of his senate colleagues, recently sent a letter to United States Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, pleading for help for New York's dairy farmers.

The letter details several strategies that could be implemented at the federal level to assist New York dairy farmers including:

- Develop alternative milk pricing mechanisms besides the Chicago Mercantile Exchange;

- Ensure that supply and demand are in balance;

- Increase participation on the USDA's Dairy Industry Advisory Committee;

- Raise the floor for dairy prices through an increase in the Dairy Price Support Program.

“Due to the current business landscape, operating a dairy farm in New York is simply unsustainable. High taxes, rising energy costs and mounting costs of production combined with historically low milk prices are driving farmers out of business,” Seward continued.

Over the past year Seward, a member of the senate agriculture committee, has taken several steps to assist upstate dairy farmers struggling with low milk prices, including:

- Requesting Governor Paterson release at least \$60 million in unclaimed American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) money to provide emergency relief;

- Calling on New York State Attorney General Cuomo to launch a full scale investigation into the dairy industry with particular attention toward possible violations of price gouging and/or anti competitive laws;

- Met with dairy farmers and agribusiness leaders several times to hear their plight first hand;

- Took part in a forum at the state capital to elicit testimony from dairy farmers across the state.

“Hard working dairy farmers shouldn't be forced out of business due to volatile milk prices. They support local feed and supply stores, are a source of employment and supply local milk, ice cream

and cheese plants. We cannot let this vital piece of our upstate economy collapse,” Seward concluded.

New York is the nation's third-largest dairy state, generating \$2.3 billion annually, over half of the state's total agricultural receipts. New York's 6,200 dairy farmers produce 1.4 billion gallons of milk annually. The average dairy farm in New York state is family owned and consists of 100 cows, producing an average of 19,303 pounds of milk per cow per year.