



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Senate and Assembly Announce Agreement on Ag Funding

PATTY RITCHIE March 24, 2011

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*Both houses restore funds for programs 'key to the future of family farms'*

State Senate Agriculture Committee Chair Patty Ritchie and Assembly Agriculture Committee Chair William Magee announced today a budget agreement that fully funds critical farm research, education and assistance programs aimed at helping family farmers and strengthening rural New York's farm economy.

The Joint Budget Subcommittee, comprising negotiators from both the Senate and Assembly, agreed on a total of \$17.329 million to support local farm programs, including restoring funds for important programs that help make farming more profitable and successful for hardworking farm families.

The total amount is a slight increase from a preliminary agreement announced just one week ago, and \$3.5 million more than proposed by the Governor in his Executive Budget last month, and particularly benefits programs that impact farmers in Central and Northern New York. The governor's budget had cut agricultural funding, eliminating funding for almost two dozen local programs, and replacing them with a single competitive grant program that totaled just \$1.2 million.

"I am very pleased that we have been able to work together on a bipartisan basis to insure that our farmers and New York's agribusiness community is treated fairly as we try to jump start the upstate economy," Senator Ritchie said. "I want to thank Assemblyman Magee for his leadership in helping to restore funding to ensure that our family farms have the tools they need to succeed and grow."

"I am pleased that we were able to work together to provide more funding for these valuable agricultural programs," Assemblyman Magee said. "The competitive grant program, which we agreed to reject, would have been disastrous for the agricultural community."

"I am hopeful that the Share NY Food initiative, which we accepted, will help farmers find new outlets for their products, and I will also help to expand access to Farmers' Markets in underserved areas," Assemblyman Magee said. "I am looking forward to working with Sen. Ritchie in the future to assure that agriculture in this state remains viable."

"We are extremely pleased that funding for critical agricultural programs has been restored during on-going negotiations over the final 2011-2012 state budget," said Dean Norton, president of the New York Farm Bureau. "While farmers, by nature, are used to doing more with less, there are certain farm programs that we depend upon that were facing extinction."

"New York Farm Bureau is grateful for the leadership and support from Senator Patty Ritchie and Assemblyman Bill Magee, our respective Senate and Assembly Agriculture Committee Chairs, for investing in New York's farm families," Mr. Norton said.

The joint committee agreed to restore:

- \$822,000 for Pro Dairy, which was scheduled to end on March 31.
- \$1,221,000 for Farm Viability Institute
- \$300,000 for North Country Agriculture

- \$100,000 for Maple Producers
- \$500,000 for Integrated Pest Management
- \$150,000 for Cornell Rabies Program
- \$100,000 for Tractor Rollover Program
- \$80,000 for Ag in the Classroom
- \$206,000 for the Apple Association
- \$66,000 for Association of Ag Teachers
- \$384,000 for Farm Family Assistance (Farm Net)
- \$150,000 for the Center for Dairy Excellence
- \$192,000 for Future Farmers of America
- \$62,000 for Golden Nematode Program
- \$128,000 for NYS Seed Lab
- \$713,000 for Wine and Grape Foundation
- \$340,000 for Local Fair Promotion
- \$100,000 for Long Island rabies