



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Senate Forums to Focus on Challenges to Farmers in Western, Southern N.y.

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### **Senator Ritchie Looking to Shape Farm Agenda for 2012**

State Senator Patty Ritchie and the Senate Agriculture Committee are hosting two additional “Agriculture Business Forums” this week in Livingston and Suffolk Counties to gain insights and ideas to help strengthen New York’s farm economy and create jobs.

The forums are the second and third in a series that will help set the legislative agenda on agricultural issues for the session that begins in January.

“New York’s agricultural economy is strong, and poised for even more growth,” said Senator Ritchie, who is the chair of the Agriculture Committee. “My forums are helping to identify hurdles to that growth, and finding solutions that will help farmers and small business leaders to take advantage of new ideas, markets and opportunities.”

The forums will bring together owners of large and small farms, farm product suppliers, manufacturers, academics and leading agricultural experts from the region and across the state to discuss current challenges and share ideas.

Many of these will be used to draft legislation that aims to cut red tape or provide incentives to help farms and farm businesses grow.

“New York’s farmers are producing award winning wines, cheeses, dairy products, fruits and vegetables that are second to none in quality and variety,” said Senator Patrick M. Gallivan, who is co-sponsoring the Livingston County event.

“These products, in turn, are delivered to grocers and manufacturers who turn them into products that are sold around the globe, providing incomes for our farmers and jobs for thousands of employees on the farm, in manufacturing plants, shipping and retail. These are jobs we need, and we need to protect them, as well as help to make the industry stronger so we can create more jobs,” said Senator Gallivan.

“Long Island has a rich agricultural history that is still present today in hundreds of small family vegetable and specialty farms, to world-renowned wineries,” said Senator Kenneth LaValle. “But they face unique challenges from encroaching development, high costs of doing business and excessive government regulation. I look forward to hearing some of their ideas to help ease the burden of doing business and helping to preserve our farm heritage and grow these businesses.”

The first forum was held in Watertown earlier this month. The next Agriculture Business Forums are scheduled to take place:

Tuesday, Oct. 18, 1:00 PM

Livingston County Government, 6 Court Street, Geneseo

Thursday, Oct. 20, 1:00 PM

Riverhead Town Hall, 200 Howell Ave., Riverhead

Senator Ritchie also is encouraging family farmers and agricultural businesses to submit their ideas and comments at a special form on her website: [www.ritchie.nysenate.gov](http://www.ritchie.nysenate.gov).