



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Senate Agriculture Committee Meets

PATTY RITCHIE January 19, 2012

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### **Issues Annual Report of 2011 Successes**

The State Senate's Agriculture Committee held its first meeting of the New Year Thursday, and released its Annual Report listing 2011's successes.

The Committee, chaired by State Senator Patty Ritchie, considered four bills, ranging from measures that would cut red tape on maple farmers, provide additional tax breaks for livestock farmers and help farmers obtain funding to control non-point water pollution.

“This year, I want to continue efforts to provide tax relief and cut red tape to let hardworking farmers grow,” Senator Ritchie said. “Gov. Cuomo’s new budget provides the best starting point in many years for accomplishing an agenda that will build on last year’s success, and help create new opportunities for farms and agriculture, which remains our biggest and most important industry.”

The Agriculture Committee’s Annual Report, which is required under Senate Rules to be filed at the end of each year, lists the panel’s efforts, including the passage of eight new laws and dozens of bills to help farmers, including, among others:

- restoring \$3.5 million in budget cuts to critical research, education and marketing programs, like the Farm Viability Institute, Pro-Dairy, and programs for maple, apple and onion farmers;
- promoting farm “amusements” like hay and corn mazes that help increase farm profits;
- cutting red tape for maple farmers, including passage of a bill that would exempt growers from overly strict laws intended for industrial polluters;
- expanding marketing opportunities for farmers by allowing the sale of “wine desserts;”
- helping New York farmers take advantage of the growing interest in equine and horse-boarding operations, and
- protecting farmers right to farm by helping to identify overly burdensome restrictions on farm operations imposed by some local governments.

A copy of the Senate Agriculture Committee’s 2011 Annual report is attached.