



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

## Vital Farm Safety Program Receives State Funding

JAMES L. SEWARD April 24, 2012

| ISSUE: **AGRICULTURE, BUDGET**



CORTLAND, 04/23/12 – State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I-Oneonta) today announced that the 2012-2013 state budget includes, at his insistence, \$100,000 to protect New York farmers through continuation of the highly successful New York Rollover Protection System (ROPS) Rebate Program.

**“Agriculture is our state’s number one industry. It is vital to our economy and our way of life,”** said Senator Seward. **“Ensuring our farmers have proper safety equipment is crucial and that is**

**why I have strongly supported the ROPS rebate program since its inception.”**

Funding for the ROPS rebate program, and other agricultural programs, was left out of the governor’s initial budget proposal. Senator Seward led fellow upstate legislators in fighting to have the funding included in the final state budget.

**“Despite our state’s economic situation, you cannot put a price tag on the lives of our farmers. In the grand scheme of a \$132 billion dollar budget, the ROPS rebate program funding is a small expenditure, but it can mean the difference between life and death in the event of a tractor accident,”** added Seward.

The New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health (NYCAMH) administers the ROPS program, now in its sixth year, which has outfitted over 1000 tractors with the life-saving rollover protection.

“Our campaign has increased by ten-fold the number of farmers making their tractors safe by retrofitting them with rollover protection systems,” said Dr. John May, director of NYCAMH. “This is important because a farmer’s risk of dying on the job is eight times higher than that of the average American worker.”

Tractor overturns are the primary cause of these fatal and permanently crippling injuries. In the event of a rollover, the use of ROPS and a seatbelt reduces the risk of injury by 99 percent. Use of ROPS without a seatbelt is less effective, but still reduces serious injury by 70 percent. Tractors built after 1985 have built-in rollover protection, but many tractors in use today are older than that.

“We are grateful to Senator Seward and his colleagues in the state legislature for recognizing the need for this program and their continued support even in difficult financial times,” added Dr. May. “In our region we have been blessed with strong legislative concern for the well-being of New York farmers. This has helped make this life saving program an on-going

reality.”

“I’ve learned a lot about farming from my dad, including the importance of safety,” said Mike Carroll of Cortland, a third-generation dairy farmer. Both Mike and his father Earl Carroll have utilized the ROPS rebate program to retrofit older tractors. “I am well aware of the risks associated with farming and want to do all I can to protect myself and anyone else who utilizes the tractors on our farm. While I have always practiced safe farming, knowing the rollover protection systems are in place provides additional security and peace of mind. I am extremely thankful that Senator Seward and NYCAMH have recognized the importance of providing ROPS at a cost farmers can afford.”

**“Farmers deal with countless challenges every day. Anything that can be done to ease their financial burden and enhance farm safety in the process has my strong support. I congratulate NYCAMH on their leadership in this field and stand ready to partner with them moving forward in keeping our New York farms safe and productive,”** Seward concluded.

Farmers interested in more information should call toll-free 1-877-ROPS-R4U (1-877-767-7748) or check on-line at [ropsr4u.com](http://ropsr4u.com). The rebate amounts to 70 percent of the cost of purchasing and installing rollover protection on a tractor, a savings of up to \$865.