



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Hugh T. Farley

NYS Legislators Led By Farley, Tedisco, Amedore, Lopez and Senate Agriculture Chair Ritchie Call for “Family Farmers and Apple Growers Relief Act”

HUGH T. FARLEY June 3, 2012

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State Senator Hugh T. Farley (R, C, I - Schenectady), Assemblyman Jim Tedisco (R,C,I-Schenectady-Saratoga), Assemblyman George Amedore (R,C,I-Rotterdam) and Assemblyman Pete Lopez (R,C,I-Schoharie) today joined with Senate Agriculture Chair Patty Ritchie (R,C-Oswegatchie) and farmers to announce new legislation, the “*Family Farmers and Apple

Growers Relief Act*” to help apple growers and farmers who have lost a significant amount of their crops due to the extreme weather state area has experienced this year.

At the beginning of the 2012 growing season, New York farmers experienced widespread damage and loss to their crops as a result of an extremely rare and severe frost.

Preliminary damage estimates indicate that New York has experienced one of the worst statewide, multi-crop losses ever witnessed in the State. Cornell’s Lake Erie Regional Research Laboratory has estimated crop losses for grapes at 40 percent-50 percent, cherries at 100 percent, peaches at 90 percent, and apples at 50 percent. While the level of crop loss varies based on the region of the state, elevation, and the crop’s stage of growth, there is no doubt that there is a high probability that many farmers will face severe economic losses.

New York is the second largest apple-producing state in the nation and the state’s 694 family apple farms employ 10,000 people and support another 7,500 jobs indirectly that depend on a robust apple crop, according to the New York Apple Association <<http://www.nyapplecountry.com/fastfacts.htm>>. The apple industry’s economic impact on the state’s economy is valued at \$233 million <<http://www.cce.cornell.edu/Pages/Default.aspx>>.

The “Family Farmers and Apple Growers Relief Act” would establish a specialized tax credit for the 2012 tax year that will allow a farmer to claim 35 percent of their crop losses.

“The wild weather we’ve experienced over the past year has taken a big bite out of the big apple of New York’s economy: our family farmers and apple growers. Our ‘Family Farmers and Apple Growers Relief Act’ sends the message that our state government has the backs of our family farmers who are small businesses that are creating and supporting jobs across New York State,” said Tedisco, former Minority Leader and current Assistant Minority Whip.

“Farmers are such hard-working people, but their efforts can be undermined by the unpredictable weather,” said Senator Farley. “Farmers are major contributors to our economy, and they help preserve the land and open space. New York State needs to work with our farmers and assist them during difficult times.”

“Because of this year’s rare frost, farmers in New York state experienced one of the worst multi-crop losses ever,” said Senator Ritchie. “This legislation will help farmers who have been hurt by the frost get back up on their feet financially. At the same time, it will ensure that the farming industry—one of New York’s largest and most important industries-- continues to grow.”

“New York State agriculture is one of the more significant engines driving our economy. With so many livelihoods dependent on these goods, particular the fruit crop, we cannot allow one catastrophic year to decimate the entire industry. Making these resources available to growers will be a tremendous aid during this difficult time and ensure the longevity of New York's fruit producers,” said Amedore.

“Our family farms are a high priority,” said Assemblyman Pete Lopez who serves on the Assembly Food, Farm and Nutrition Task Force. “This spring's weather pattern has put our fruit growers particularly at risk. I'm committed to doing everything possible to help them overcome this hurdle.”

“Clifton Park's heritage is deeply rooted in agriculture and farming remains a thriving industry in town today,” Clifton Park Town Supervisor Phil Barrett said. “This is a common sense proposal that will support working farmers during this challenging time. I fully support legislation to provide tax relief to our local farms.”

“Apple farmers are very dependent on the weather for a good crop. When the weather fails them, they have no control over it. Two out of three years with crop failure from frost can be quite devastating,” said Isabel Prescott, owner of Riverview Orchards in Clifton Park, which has lost about 75 percent of its apple crop due to the wild weather.

“Growing up on and continuing to be part of a 5th generation family farm, we are thankful for Assemblyman Tedisco and Senator Farley's leadership to put forth a bill that brings meaningful help for our farmers in New York State. The continued economic downturn of the past few years, the unusual hurricane season last fall and the unseasonably warm weather this winter and spring have put many of our farms in financial peril. People who enjoy eating locally grown produce and seeing open spaces should support this bill. Our farms are important to the vitality, the sustainability and the character of our local communities. We cannot take it for granted that they will always be there. We all need to support them,” said Craig Hayner, Halfmoon Town Councilman and owner of Hayner Family Farm in Halfmoon.

“While farmers have certainly been hard hit by last year's floods and this year's freeze events, there will be lots of local product available for consumers to purchase in grocery stores and on U-pick operations this fall. Now, it's more important than ever to support local farmers, and our organization of family farmers greatly appreciates this tool of an added tax credit to help in recovery efforts,” said Dean Norton, President of New York Farm Bureau.

“Many businesses, especially the vitally important agri-business industry, were hurt tremendously by the tropical storms in the fall of 2011. It is critically important that the State take necessary and effective action to help these businesses. I applaud both members of the Senate and Assembly that have made this a legislative priority and look forward to seeing this issue through and providing the relief that is needed,” said Mike Durant, State Director of NFIB.

“We certainly appreciate all the help and assistance from the Legislature to apple growers to ease the pain that they might endure this year,” said Jim Allen, President of the New York Apple Association.

“The concern showed by Senator Farley and Assemblyman Tedisco for our local produce farms and orchards is much appreciated,” says Pete Bardunias, President/CEO of the Chamber of Southern Saratoga County based in Clifton Park. “These family owned, independent businesses are vital to not only our food supply but the vibrancy of our communities. Agriculture remains the #1 industry in Saratoga County even with the dawn of Tech Valley, fueled greatly by these multi-generation enterprises often dating back to the early days of our nation.”