



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Celebrate Dairy Month!

PATTY RITCHIE June 4, 2012

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From ice cream to yogurt, many of our favorite foods are dairy products. But these snacks didn't get to your kitchen without lots of hard work by New York State farmers.

June is National Dairy Month. Not only is it a time to celebrate the contributions of the agriculture industry, but also a time to thank our dairy farmers.

As your State Senator, protecting Central and Northern New York's agriculture industry has been one of my top priorities.

According to the most recent USDA Census of Agriculture, the market value of products sold by farms in Jefferson, Oswego and St. Lawrence Counties total nearly \$319 million per year.

The steps that we have taken together are only going to help that number increase. Since I have taken office, I have worked to help local farmers. In the spirit of National Dairy Month, let me outline some of the things we have accomplished for dairy farmers:

- Restored funding for Pro Dairy and the Farm Viability Institute
- Had New York State produced milk returned to coolers at the State Capitol lunchrooms that serve 40,000 workers and visitors every single day, and got the state to agree to find ways to put more New York-made products on the shelves
- Halted a plan to add a \$1.7 million milk tax on small and large New York State dairy farms
- Spoke out against new rules that made it harder for growing artisan cheese makers to sell their products at local farmers markets

But, there's evidence that the fight for our dairy farmers isn't over. Just recently there were reports that a surplus of milk with increased production costs is making things difficult for farmers. Officials say the situation is likely to get better in July.

As your State Senator, I promise to continue to fight for not only dairy farmers, but all farmers across the state. Together, we can ensure that our agriculture industry continues to grow and remain strong.