



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

## Griffo Says Agriculture Incentives Will Keep NY Farms Strong

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO March 6, 2013

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(Albany) - Growing the state's agriculture industry and helping New York's family farms prosper is the goal of the "Grown in New York" plan, unveiled by Senator Joseph A. Griffo (R-C-IP, Rome) and Senate Republicans to strengthen the state's \$5.2 billion agriculture industry by expanding markets for New York-grown products, improving the bottom lines of family

farms, and investing in the future of farming.

“Our family farmers and ranchers help feed New York and the nation, and their continued success will be a major boon to our state’s agriculture industry and to our economic recovery,” said Griffo. “When we support Empire State products, we’re supporting the state’s economy. And when New York’s economy grows, we all benefit. We’re encouraging all New Yorkers to join us in eating local and buying New York-grown products.”

New York Farm Bureau President Dean Norton said: "NY Farm Bureau has long held to the proven belief that when you grow New York's farms, you grow New York's economy. The efforts put forth today by Senate Republican Leader Skelos, Senate Agriculture Committee Chair Ritchie and their conference colleagues will do just that. We appreciate their hard work to lower the high cost of farming to help ensure the next generation of farmers can continue the time-honored tradition of providing healthy, local food to the people of this state and the world.”

The Senate’s Grown in New York plan would:

- Reduce taxes on farmers;
- Eliminate the burdensome 18-a energy tax surcharge;
- Curtail red tape and outdated regulations;
- Improve farmers’ access to customers by expanding farmers markets and food hubs;
- Put more New York-grown products in schools and government facilities;
- Encourage the growth of New York’s maple and wine industries;
- Put idled farmland back in production; and
- Improve farm safety.

### **JOBS AND PROGRESS – GROWN IN NEW YORK**

#### ***Senate Republican Plan for a Stronger Agriculture Economy***

#### **Strengthening Family Farms by Reducing Taxes on Farmers**

- Two-percent property tax cap for farms; and
  
- Reduce energy costs on farms by rejecting the Governor’s effort to extend the 18-a energy tax, and restoring the 18-a assessment back to its pre-2009 level.

#### **Helping New York Farmers Expand Their Markets, Boost Productivity, Increase Profitability**

- *Dairy*: Support the Governor’s review of a state regulation that limits the size of some dairy farms;

- *Maple:* Support legislation to cut burdensome regulations and expand opportunities for maple producers;
- *Farmers Markets:* Urge state Department of Agriculture and Markets to commit additional resources to updating its database of New York farm markets, and make information more easily available to the public;
- *Food Hubs:* Support the Governor’s plan to create new “food hubs” located in growing regions of the state to facilitate access to New York City markets;
- *"Buy from the Backyard:"* Support this program that sets a goal of at least 20 percent of food purchases by state and local government agencies to include locally produced items;
- *Remove Tariffs:* Encourage our federal delegation, as well as Canadian officials to remove a severe tariff that restricts New York wines from being imported into Ontario;
- *Farm Breweries:* Support increased funding to assist farmers in adding new crops like malt and hops for use in New York’s burgeoning small batch and locally produced beer breweries;
- *Biofuel Crops:* Support tax incentives for farmers to produce and use alternative, crop-based fuels; and

- *Rescue Abandoned Farmland*: Provide incentives to return forest and abandoned fields to active farm producing.

### **Keeping Farms in the Family**

- Increase Estate Tax Threshold for farms from \$1 million to \$5 million;
- Create Farm Savings Accounts for young people to purchase farms and to help farmers cover unexpected expenses and losses related to farming; and
- Support continued funding of farming education and enrichment programs such as Future Farmers of America and 4H.

### **Removing Obstacles to Success and Cutting Red Tape for Farmers**

- Cut needless red tape for farmers, who are subject to regulation by more than 20 different federal, state and local agencies. Duplicative red tape prevents farmers from spending more time working in their fields.

### **Investing in the Future of Farming**

- Seek additional budgetary support for: maple promotion, the Farm Viability Institute, dairy profits teams that help farmers improve efficiency, and funds to help berry and apple growers recover from damage from storms and invasive species.

### **Dine: Pride of New York**

- This bill would expand the current "Pride of New York" program by creating the "Dine: Pride of New York" program, allowing restaurants serving food and food products produced in New York State access to promotional materials in order to increase their exposure to consumers and promote the sale of locally grown food.

## **Protecting Farmers from Tractor Rollovers**

- The Senate is proposing to restore funding for the Tractor Rollover Program that provides help to New York farmers to purchase and retrofit tractors with rollover protective structures (ROPS). The program rebates 70 percent of the cost of purchasing and installing the ROPS, up to \$765. Tractor accidents are the number one cause of fatalities on the farm.

## **Support for Dairy Producers**

- New York does not set the price of milk that our dairy farmers produce, and the Senators stressed the critical need for the federal government to maintain strong support for key federal programs, such as the Dairy Production Margin Protection Program and Dairy Market Stabilization, to stabilize the milk pricing system and to support a strong dairy industry.