



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

## Senate Democratic Conference Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Senator Tkaczyk & Senator Stavisky Tour Upstate Farms

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS October 9, 2013

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Ulster County, NY - Recognizing the importance of the agriculture sector to the New York economy, Democratic Conference Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Senator Cecilia Tkaczyk and Senator Toby-Ann Stavisky toured various Ulster County farms. Senator Tkaczyk helped organize this event to better demonstrate how vital agriculture is for the local and statewide economy and for legislators to gain a deeper appreciation of the challenges facing small family farms.

“The agriculture industry generates over \$30 billion annually for New York, and is vital to our state’s economic strength and prosperity,” Democratic Conference Leader Andrea Stewart Cousins said. “Farm tours like this one organized by Senator Tkaczyk provide legislators with a deeper understanding of this critical industry. Fostering greater bonds between upstate farms and downstate consumers will help grow the state economy, encourage New Yorkers to eat healthier, and put more of our neighbors back to work.”

The farm visits and information presentations were organized by Senator Cecilia Tkaczyk and the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County to demonstrate how the local, regional and statewide economy relies on the agriculture industry. Generating over \$30 billion for the New York economy annually, the agriculture industry is the backbone for many communities across the state. Ensuring that legislators from throughout New York State possess a deeper appreciation of how essential the agriculture sector is to the statewide economy will help remove barriers to future growth, and ensure state government addresses the challenges facing farmers.

Senator Cecilia Tkaczyk said, “Here in Ulster County alone, farmers annually produce over \$65 million in products and put more than \$53 million back into the local and state economy. As a third generation family farmer, I understand that agriculture is vital to our state’s continued growth and prosperity. I am proud to work with Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and Senator Stavisky today and look forward to working with them in the future to grow New York’s agricultural sector.”

Senator Toby Ann Stavisky said, “I would like to thank Senator Cecilia Tkaczyk and Senate Democratic Conference Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins for organizing this farm tour of Ulster County. This is the perfect time of year to see in-person the thriving agricultural economy that’s providing fresh, organic local produce to homes and restaurants. It’s also an excellent example of how upstate and downstate economies can support each other and

grow together. Along with my colleagues in the state Senate I am determined to continue this growth that's good for our economy, good for public health and good for the environment. I'm proud to represent John Bowne High School, which has an agricultural program with more than 500 students and is known throughout the state for its excellence."

Lydia Reidy, Executive Director of Cornell Cooperative Extension Ulster County, said, "Farmers in Ulster County and the Hudson Valley region are supported by Cornell Cooperative Extension educators and researchers who help them manage pests and diseases, assess and implement new production systems, and identify new markets and value added opportunities. We are celebrating the 100th anniversary of Cooperative Extension in Ulster County this year and always been a partnership of local, state and federal government and we hope that it will continue for at least another 100 years. We thank Senator Cecilia Tkaczyk for raising awareness of local farms in the State Legislature and are thrilled that Senate Democratic Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and Senator Toby Stavisky joined us to help grow the local and statewide agriculture-related economy."

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**Wilklow Orchards:** Operated by one family for six generations since 1855, Wilklow Orchards is a "pick you own" apple orchard featuring a farm stand and handcrafted products like homemade caramel apples, home crafts and decorations, soup mixes, recipe books, and old-fashioned candies. The orchard features fresh apple cider and farm fresh fruits and vegetables, baked goods, apple cider doughnuts, and apple and pumpkin picking. For more information about Wilklow Orchards, please visit: <http://www.wilkloworchards.com/>.

**Hepworth Farms:** Based in Milton, New York, Hepworth Farms produces more than 350 varieties of NOFA certified organic fruits, vegetables, and herbs on 200 acres. The farms have been operated by seven generations of the Hepworth family and friends since 1818. A major supplier of Baldor Specialty Foods, Hepworth Farms products are delivered directly to consumers' kitchens, and feature over 30 types of eggplant, 90 types of tomatoes, and 60 types of peppers, as well as corn, kale, cucumbers, and many other organic and specialty crops. Hepworth Farms is committed to certified organic farming, but recognizes the

potential of GMO foods to make affordable, high-quality produce available to more people as suppliers aim to reach rising demand. For more information about Hepworth Farms, please visit: <http://hepworthfarms.com/>.

**Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County:** Since 1913, Cornell Cooperative Extension Ulster County (CCEUC) continues to use research based knowledge through their partnership with Cornell University to assist the residents of Ulster County. CCEUC offers resources, tools and education through on-going community programming in efforts to improve the lives of a broad and diverse county population. Program areas include Agriculture, Horticulture, 4-H Youth Development, Family and Consumer Science and Environmental programs. CCEUC works to extend the educational resources of Cornell University, the Land Grant university system and other educational institutions, to the people of Ulster County to foster economic, social and environmental improvement of its individuals, families and communities. For more information about the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County, please visit: <http://www.cceulster.org/>.

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