



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kenneth P. LaValle

## Senator Ken LaValle: State Budget Assists Agriculture and Family Farming

KENNETH P. LAVALLE April 3, 2014

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April 3, 2014 – Senator Ken LaValle revealed that there is good news for agriculture and family farming in the NY State Budget. Senator LaValle said, “I am proud to represent one of the largest agricultural districts in New York. The local farming community faces many difficult challenges to continue the tradition of the industry on Long Island. The budget measures we approved will provide the next generation with the necessary tools to continue to ensure the farming remains viable.”

The budget provides the support necessary to strengthen this leading industry. It includes \$8 million in new budget funding, which is the highest level in six years. Farming programs and initiatives are provided for, in addition to research, education, and agriculture promotion. Senator LaValle added, “We were also able to include money for two other important programs - \$100,000 for “Grown on Long Island” and \$20,000 for “Island Harvest. These investments provide additional support for farm community and programs that benefit local residents.”

The Young Farmers NY Initiative is intended to encourage young farmers to take over from the previous generation by easing some of the hurdles family farms are facing. This year’s budget helps to ensure a more promising future for agriculture by fostering a smooth transfer of farmland to the next generation, preserving existing farmland, and helping young farmers overcome obstacles by giving them a greater opportunity for success.

Key agriculture and farming support includes:

- **Estate Tax Threshold Increase:** The budget increases the Estate Tax threshold from \$1 million to over \$5.25 million over a period of three years. This reform of the Estate Tax will encourage farm preservation from generation to generation.
- **Marketing New York Products:** This budget works to expand marketing of New York's products such as apples, berries, dairy, and maple by providing \$1.3 million for product promotion.
- **Beginning Farmer Innovation Grant Fund:** This new program provides \$615,000 for grants for beginning farmers. This money will encourage farming to continue in New York State, as well as help promote new farms to start up, and will be distributed on a competitive basis for the purpose of assisting innovative techniques and operations.
- **Young Farmers Loan Forgiveness Program:** This new program includes \$100,000 to help recent graduates ease the loan burden faced by new, young farmers.
- **Future Farmers of America:** This year's budget includes increased funding for the Future Farmers of America (FFA) by \$158,000 for a total of \$350,000.
- **Farming and Agriculture Research:** This budget provides \$3 million to Cornell Research and Extension, as well as \$3 million in education and research grants.
- **Farm Safety:** The budget provides \$1.6 million for farm safety such as tractor rollover protection grants.

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