



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Senate Adds Two More Pieces to ‘Young Farmers’ Plan

PATTY RITCHIE June 19, 2014

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Strengthens \$1 Million Program to Attract Next Generation of Family Farmers

State Senator Patty Ritchie today announced final passage of two more pieces of her innovative, \$1 million “Young Farmers NY” program, which aims to draw more young people into agriculture careers.

One of the measures would create a revolving loan program to provide startup funds for agriculture novices (S.6880-A). The money could be used to purchase land and equipment. The second (S.5377-A), seeks to identify available land—including surplus state lands—that might be ideal for new farmers.

Both bills previously passed the Assembly, where they are sponsored by Central New York Assemblyman Bill Magee, who chairs that house’s Agriculture Committee. They will now go to the Governor for his signature.

“As New York’s farm community ages, it’s been more and more difficult to attract young people to the profession,” said Senator Ritchie, who chairs the Senate Agriculture Committee.

“Ask any farmer and they will tell you—it’s a tough business. ‘Young Farmers NY’ helps make it easier to start and grow a successful business, by giving young people the necessary resources to get off the ground.”

The US Secretary of Agriculture has set a goal of recruiting 100,000 new farmers across the country to replace those who are retiring. The average age of farm operators in New York is 57, and is expected to continue to increase unless steps are taken to reverse this trend.

Senator Ritchie’s “Young Farmers NY” initiative has been widely hailed by agriculture leaders as a way to help save family farming, the backbone of New York’s \$5 billion agriculture industry.

In addition to these new measures, “Young Farmers NY” also includes new farmer innovation grants, college loan forgiveness for graduates who commit to farming careers, increased funding for the in-school, agriculture leadership–focused FFA program, and repeal of the Estate Tax for thousands of small businesses, including farms. That latter provision will make it easier for families to pass on their farm business to the next generation.

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