



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Cornell Agricultural Experiment Station Vital to Our Region

MICHAEL F. NOZZOLIO January 2, 2015

From the vineyards around our lakes, to the wheat fields awaiting harvest, to the potato fields in our region's rich muck soil, to our dairy farms and fruit apple orchards, agriculture is unquestionably the backbone of our economy.

Virtually every business, family and individual in our region, directly or indirectly, depends on agriculture, the single largest job producing enterprise in New York State.

That is why we so are fortunate here in the Finger Lakes to be home to one of the world's top agricultural research centers. Cornell University's New York State Agricultural Experiment Station in Geneva is renowned for its success in helping farmers grow great crops, and entrepreneurs start new businesses that in turn create and retain jobs in New York.

Along with the Agricultural and Food Technology Park, which is adjacent to the Experiment Station, these two facilities are integral in making our region a world-wide leader in agribusiness, food science and biotechnology.

Instrumental to the progress and achievement at the Agricultural Experiment Station, has been its Director, Dr. Tom Burr. Dr. Burr is an esteemed research professor at Cornell University, with over 37 years in the academic and research fields. He is known as a leader in

research on bacterial-plant interactions, and his guidance of the Agricultural Experiment Station has greatly contributed to agriculture, not only in our region and our state, but around the world.

It has been my honor to work with Dr. Burr on many projects to improve the Agricultural Research Station during his time as Director. Among our efforts, we were able to recently secure funding for the Finger Lakes Viticulture Center, which is home to the Finger Lakes Community College's groundbreaking Viticulture and Wine Technology Program. This program is the only one of its kind in the Northeast, and is located at the Cornell Agricultural Technology Park. The Viticulture Center will support efforts to expand the local wine and tourism industry and create well paying jobs for people from all across the Finger Lakes region. The Center will include a world-class winemaking lab, grape crushing pad, rooms for storing and aging wine, classroom space, and a teaching vineyard.

In addition, working with Dr. Burr and the Experiment Station, I was proud to secure a \$4.7 million dollar grant to fully modernize the network of greenhouses at the Barton Laboratory, on the grounds of the Agriculture Experiment Station. These state of the art greenhouses will provide enhanced research opportunities throughout the year, resulting in greater productivity and ability to answer questions that have a direct impact on the prosperity of New York agriculture.

Another key member of the team at the Agricultural Experiment Station is Dr. Susan Brown. Dr. Brown's research has led to creation of new apple varieties, as well as other fruit varieties that have had a positive impact on the agriculture industry throughout the world. It was a privilege for me to recognize Dr. Susan Brown, at the 2014 New York State Senate Women of Distinction Ceremony, for her knowledge, skills and expertise as a scientist, as well as her extraordinary work at the Station.

As we move into the New Year, Dr. Burr will be stepping down as the Director, after many years of dedicated service. He will be replaced by Dr. Brown, who will lead the Agricultural Experiment Station into 2015 and beyond. It is my desire to extend my thanks to Dr. Burr for his years of successful leadership and my congratulations to Dr. Brown upon her appointment.

Whether it's the apple farmer in Wayne County who is selling new apple varieties developed at the Cornell Experiment Station, the Seneca County winemaker who further refined their knowledge at the Finger Lakes Viticulture Center, or the stay at home mom in Cayuga County who started her own small scale food processing business with the help of the Food Venture Center, the growth of the Ag Tech Park and Cornell Experiment Station is instrumental to the job growth and economic vitality of the entire Finger Lakes Region. Thanks to the efforts of Dr. Burr and Dr. Brown, the Experiment Station will continue to grow and have a tremendous positive impact on our communities.