



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George Amedore

## Senator Amedore Announces “Grown in New York” Initiative to Strengthen New York’s Agriculture Industry

GEORGE A. AMEDORE, JR. March 5, 2015

| ISSUE: **AGRICULTURE**



Senator George Amedore today announced the creation of the “Grown in New York” initiative, put forth by the Senate Republican Conference, to help meet demands for locally grown food and provide much needed support and assistance for local farmers and rural communities.

“Agriculture is such an important industry to New York, and particularly in the 46<sup>th</sup> Senate District, where there are almost 2,100 farms that play a vital part in our local economy,” said

Senator Amedore. “It is critically important to do all we can to help our farms succeed so we can revitalize the economy of our rural communities and build a stronger, healthier New York.”

The 2015 Grown in New York plan would:

### **Help Farmers Expand Their Markets**

- > \$1.75 million would be allocated to create up to five local transportation cooperatives where farmers can arrange to move their products to New York City and other major populated areas; and
- > \$250,000 in New York State Thruway Toll rebate aid would help lower the transportation cost of these goods.

### **Continue to Fund Vital Agriculture Research, Marketing and Education Programs**

- > The Senate will propose \$10 million in budget funding for agriculture programs; and
- > An additional \$10 million would support the long-overdue upgrades to Cornell’s world-leading Geneva Experiment Station, where applied research is solving problems ranging from plant disease to improved agriculture practices, increasing yields and ensuring farm success.

### **Expand Young and New Farmer Initiatives**

- > \$1 million would be allocated to the Beginning Farmer Innovation grants, and the arbitrary acreage cap that was previously required by this program would also be removed;
- > To meet growing interest, there would be a \$1 million increase to the Young Farmer Student Loan Forgiveness Program. This program would also be expanded to include agriculture educators as well as farm operators;
- > \$700,000 would be given to support school-based agriculture education, including Future Farmers of America and BOCES-based agricultural science education;
- > \$300,000 in matching grant funding for farmers would provide on-the-job training to aspiring farmers through the Cornell Cooperating Farm Apprenticeship;

>\$1 million would aid in the creation of a Farm Bank, which would link new farmers with public and private land owners to create better opportunities for new farmers; and

> A \$1 million revolving loan fund would be created to assist eligible beginning farmers finance land and buy basic farm equipment.

### **Create a Grown in New York Brand**

> \$1 million in funding would create a Grown in New York marketing brand to help consumers identify NY-grown and farm-made products that contain at least 75 percent local ingredients.

### **Reach Consumers of All Ages**

> \$1.8 million would expand the USDA's Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program to reach more senior consumers across the state.

### **Get Produce From The Farm and Into Schools**

>While the Executive Budget proposal only includes a \$250,000 appropriation, the Senate's proposal includes a \$2.5 million financial incentive to encourage schools to choose locally produced, healthy food choices.

### **Expand Cornell's Harvest NY Program**

> \$1 million of funding would aid the statewide expansion of Cornell University's successful Harvest NY program. It provides hands-on and commodities-based expertise to assist family farmers, with an emphasis on identifying new export opportunities and growing New York's meat industry.

### **Focus on Clean Energy**

> \$5 million in New York State Energy Research and Development Authority grants would direct additional clean energy resources to farm-based projects, including the installation of solar technology and construction of new digesters.

### **FarmNet Farm Business Transition Program**

> \$200,000 in funding would create a new Farm Business Transition Program, operated through Cornell's FarmNet, to assist the smooth transfer of up to 75 farm businesses each year to new ownership.

### **Cornell NYOneStop Program**

> \$450,000 would create the first comprehensive program to help farmers navigate regulations and find information about programs and services that can grow their businesses.

###