



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

## Young, Colleagues Launch "Grown In New York" to Support New York's Family Farms

CATHARINE YOUNG March 6, 2015

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*Package will ensure greater availability of products, increase farmer's ability to market goods, and develop the next generation of farmers*

ALBANY – With rising demand for fresh, local goods, the Senate will include the “Grown in New York” initiative in their one-house budget resolution. The program will provide funding

to key sectors of the state's agriculture industry.

By helping to develop the next generation of New York's young farmers, promoting the preservation and growth of farmland, and empowering farmers to reach more homes and families with their goods, the Senate aims to build on past successes.

"New York is the 'food state' because we produce so many products ranging from dairy to fruits and vegetables. Consumers are demanding food that is fresh, safe and grown locally. Marketing our homegrown agricultural products is not only great for consumers, but also strengthens our economy and family farms," said Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I-Olean).

"With the average age of a New York farmer being 57 years old, there is a tremendous need for greater involvement from young people who can carry on this proud tradition. By providing assistance to those looking to launch a career in the farm industry and support for aging farmers who hope to find like-minded stewards for their land, we can preserve and promote our vital agriculture industry."

In 2014, New York State's agriculture industry had a record year, with sales exceeding \$5.7 billion.

The “Grown in New York” initiative includes funding for a variety of key programs totaling over \$36 million. Included in the package is:

- \$10 million in agriculture and commodity-based research, marketing and education programs;
- \$10 million to upgrade Cornell’s Geneva Experiment Station, dedicated to researching plant diseases, improving agriculture practices, and increasing yields for continued farm success;
- \$1 million to establish the “Grown in New York” branding initiative, providing consumers with confidence they are buying local products, supporting family farms and small businesses, and making sure their purchasing power stays in the community;
- \$2.5 million in incentives to promote farm-to-school options, encouraging schools to choose more locally produced ingredients;
- \$1.8 million to provide state matching funds for income-eligible seniors who receive vouchers through the USDA’s Senior Farmers Market Nutrition program to encourage the purchase of locally grown fruits and vegetables;
- \$1 million for the expansion of Harvest NY, which provides hands-on and commodities-based expertise for family farmers, with an emphasis on identifying new export opportunities;
- \$5 million for NYSERDA to provide grants to farm-based clean energy projects, including the installation of solar and construction of new digesters;
- \$2 million to increase support for existing “Young Farmer” programs, including increased funding levels for the “Young Farmer Student Loan Forgiveness Program” and the removal of an arbitrary acreage cap on the Beginning Farmer Innovation Grant program;

- \$1 million for the creation of a Farm Bank, linking new farmers with public and private landowners to create better opportunities for those wishing to pursue a career in farming;
- \$200,000 to assist young farmers in developing effective business plans through Cornell's FarmNet program, which assists the smooth transfer of up to 75 farm businesses each year to new ownership;
- \$450,000 for the creation of the Cornell NYOneStop program, a comprehensive program to help farmers navigate regulations and gather information about programs and services;
- \$1 million to establish a revolving loan fund that would allow eligible beginning farmers to access start-up capital for the purchase of land and basic farm equipment;
- \$700,000 to support school-based agricultural education, including FFA and BOCES-based agricultural science education; and
- \$300,000 in matching grant funding for farmers to provide on-the-job training to aspiring farmers through their local Cornell Cooperative Extension.

“Having grown up on a third-generation dairy and crops farm in Livingston County, I know firsthand the struggles that confront our family farms each day. I join my colleagues in strongly supporting the inclusion of the “Grown in New York” program in this year’s state budget,” Senator Young said.

Full details for the “Grown in New York” initiative are in the attached document.