



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Ritchie: Senate Budget Includes Record Funding for Agriculture

PATTY RITCHIE March 11, 2015

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Restores Cuts, Includes Full Support for Senator's 'Grown in NY' Plan

State Senator Patty Ritchie today announced that the Senate's 2015-16 Budget Plan includes record funding for agriculture programs, including full support for her landmark "Grown in New York" plan that links consumers and local farms and preserves the future of family farming in the state.

The Senate's budget plan (S.4203) increases support for agriculture by more than \$20 million above the Governor's proposal. Included is additional funding for programs that have proven critical to the success of farmers in Central and Northern New York, including restoration of funding cuts to the well-regarded Farm Viability Institute and the Northern New York Agriculture Development Program, as well as for research and promotion of key farm products, from apples to dairy, maple syrup to onions.

The restorations and new funding are more than five times the amount included in the Assembly's agriculture plan (A.6003), which only restored about half of the cuts in the Executive Budget.

"New York's farmers work hard to produce some of the best quality and most delicious foods and food products anywhere, and agriculture is the backbone of our region's and the state's economy," said Senator Ritchie, who chairs the Senate's Agriculture Committee.

"It's our most important industry, and that's why the state Senate is working just as hard to make agriculture and family farming key priorities in this year's budget, including support for record ag funding and our ambitious new Grown in New York initiative to help farmers grow."

Grown in New York includes a number of components, from a new model branding program for New York-grown products, to creation of transportation "hubs" to help farmers get their products into new markets, support for increasing export of farm products and more. It also includes additional funding and support for energy efficiency and other grants and programs that are outside the Agriculture Budget.

[CLICK HERE](#) for full details on Grown in New York.

The Senate's budget also includes new funding to expand the Senate's "Young Farmers" initiative, a 2014 program designed by Senator Ritchie, to encourage new careers in agriculture and to address a looming crisis facing agriculture, namely, the increasing age of farmers and the difficulties farmers face transferring their businesses to the next generation.

The budget restorations and new funding included in the Senate's budget plan represent a new record, after major budget cuts in 2008 decimated a number of key programs.

Attached is a list of programs that are funded, and shows Senate additions and total amounts under the Senate plan, which is expected to be passed this week. A final budget is due April 1.