



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Senate Passes Legislation to Support Family Farms

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Agriculture remains one of the top industries in New York State, and there is more demand than ever for fresh, locally-grown products both at home and in restaurants.

We need to make sure that New York's 36,000 family farms are kept in the family and remain an integral part of our state's future.

I am pleased to report that I recently supported legislation that was approved in the State Senate aimed to help keep the state's agricultural industry booming.

The Senate gave final passage to Senate Bill 1824, which would provide new and beginning farmers with enhanced access to viable agricultural land. It would also direct the state Commissioner of the Office of

General Services to work with the Commissioner of Agriculture and Markets to develop an inventory of state-owned real property that may be viable for farming and that could be of interest to farmers.

The Senate also gave final passage to Senate Bill 3441, which will create the Urban and Regional Farmers' Market Facilities Construction Program to help with the planning and development of urban and regional farmers' market facilities. Farmers' markets benefit consumers by allowing them to buy fresh produce and items directly from farmers while also helping to bring people into local businesses within the cities.

In addition to these two measures, which will now be forwarded to the Governor, the Senate also passed bills that would do the following:

- Establish a beginning farmer revolving loan fund program to attract young people to farming;
- Create a Farm Investment Fund to provide grants to farmers for the purposes of updating and improving their farm and farm practices;
- Establish a Food Safety Compliance Program to assist farmers in complying with changes in federal food safety regulations;
- Establish a revolving loan program to provide farmers throughout New York State with low interest loans so they can upgrade their electricity to three-phase power; and
- Expand a tax exemption for agricultural and horticultural structures and buildings to include commercial equine operations.

The New York farming industry has a substantial impact on the overall economic health and well-being of the state, and these measures will help ensure that this industry will continue to thrive.