



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George Winner

## Dairy Crisis

GEORGE WINNER October 20, 2009

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I joined several of my upstate colleagues at the Capitol to conduct a public hearing on what I believe is one of the most critical issues facing our state today: the dairy crisis.

It's been a whirlwind of a political year at the Capitol – and it continues to be with the state facing a deep-rooted and serious budget deficit heading into 2010 – but we cannot let the powers-that-be in New York government lose sight of the overriding importance of doing anything and everything to save New York dairy farmers on the brink of collapse.

As a longtime upstate New York legislator, there's no work that's more important.

It's the reason that throughout the past year, I've joined many of my upstate legislative colleagues to urge state leaders to be ready with a response and, in fact, to call for the reauthorization of a successful 2007 initiative that provided direct, immediate assistance to struggling New York dairy farmers. It would be an immediate recognition of the importance of the upstate dairy industry as an economic engine.

But if the current crisis, which is becoming widely acknowledged as the worst since the Great Depression, doesn't stand as a wake-up call, what will?

I continue to believe that New York government has the opportunity to take some additional, necessary short-term actions that would make the difference for some farmers, and we should. Then we need to work like we've never worked before to stabilize the industry for the long haul.