



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## RITCHIE BRINGS ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY AGRICULTURE EXPERTS TOGETHER FOR “FOOD HUB” MEETING

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Senate Agriculture Committee Chair Patty Ritchie Monday hosted a meeting of agriculture experts to discuss the establishment of a “food hub” in the region that will help better connect farmers with consumers throughout the state who are increasingly looking to eat healthy, locally grown and produced foods.

Made possible through \$1 million in the state budget secured by Senator Ritchie, the planned Upstate New York food hub will give farmers and agribusiness owners an opportunity to bring products to a central location where they then can be transported to major cities throughout the state, including New York City.

“Whether it’s in a ‘farm to table’ restaurant or at a special section of the grocery store, across our region and state are so many signs that consumers are looking to increase their consumption of foods that are grown or produced locally,” said Senator Ritchie.

“This meeting is one of the first steps to getting a food hub—which will help our region’s farmers and agribusiness owners more easily get their goods to different parts of our state—off the ground. By giving other parts of New York a taste of Upstate, we’ll not only be helping a greater number of people consume healthy foods, we will also provide an economic boost to our local farmers.”

Monday’s meeting continues Senator Ritchie’s effort to strengthen the connection between farmers and consumers, as well as bolster New York’s agriculture industry. Last month, Senator Ritchie brought together farmers and agribusiness owners from Oswego and Jefferson Counties for a similar meeting in Watertown.

In addition, this year, Senator Ritchie led the way to help secure record state funding for agriculture and programs that are vitally important to farmers. She has also continued to work to expand her “Young Farmers” program, an initiative created in 2014 that aims to address New York’s aging farmer population by encouraging more young people to enter careers in agriculture through grants, a loan forgiveness program and other incentives.