



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## RITCHIE: PROGRAMS TO HELP NEW FARMERS “DIG INTO” AG CAREERS NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

PATTY RITCHIE October 23, 2015

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Senate Agriculture Committee Chair Patty Ritchie is encouraging individuals interested in pursuing careers in farming to apply for two programs that can help them overcome challenges related to starting a new agribusiness and give them a greater chance of success as they work to lay the groundwork for their new venture.

The two programs available—which include a \$1 million “New Farmers Grant Fund” that will provide grants for the purchase of equipment, supplies as well as other necessities and a loan forgiveness program for new college graduates entering farming careers—are part of Senator Ritchie’s “Young Farmers NY” program, an initiative that’s working address the issue of an aging farming population by encouraging more young people to pursue agriculture careers. This year, Senator Ritchie fought for funding in the state budget to expand these important programs, which in 2014 assisted dozens of beginning farmers across New York State.

“Agriculture is one of New York’s leading industries, and if we want it to continue to grow, we need to make sure we’re laying the ground work for its future,” said Senator Ritchie.

“As Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee and someone who grew up on a family farm, I was pleased to advocate for the funding of these important programs, which will help ensure those interested in pursuing farming careers are able to afford the equipment, supplies and other things necessary for them to dig in and make their agribusiness successful.”

The following components of Senator Ritchie’s Young Farmers NY program are now accepting applications:

***New York State New Farmers Grant Fund:*** This \$1 million fund will provide grants of up to \$50,000 to eligible beginning farmers. Successful applicants may use funds to purchase farm equipment, supplies and other necessities or for the improvement or construction of farm buildings. Farmers in the first ten years of running a farm operation of 150 acres or less are encouraged to apply and must do so by January 22, 2016. [Click here to apply, and for more information.](#)

***New York State Young Farmers Loan Forgiveness Incentive Program:*** This program provides loan forgiveness awards to students who commit to farming careers after graduation from an approved New York State college or university and agree to operate a farm in New York State, on a full-time basis, for five years. The deadline to apply for the program is December 1, 2015. [Click here to apply, and for more information.](#)

The New Farmer Grant Fund and Young Farmers Loan Forgiveness Program represent just part of the work Senator Ritchie has done to protect the future of family farming by encouraging more people to enter agriculture careers. In addition to advocating for increased state budget funding for her Young Farmers NY program, she has also worked to reform the Estate Tax to help assist in the transition of family farms from one generation to the next.