



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## FIGHTING FOR FUNDS THAT KEEP OUR FOOD SAFE: SENATOR RITCHIE'S WEEKLY COLUMN

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Remember the last time you bit into a strawberry, or enjoyed the sweet taste of fresh raspberries? Odds are, when you did, you weren't worrying about whether they were free from insects or plant diseases—and that's something that we have researchers at Cornell University to thank for. Each and every day, researchers at the college are working to make sure the foods we eat are safe and free from anything that might harm us.

Recently, I was pleased to host Dr. Kathryn Boor, Dean of the Cornell University's School of Agriculture and Life Sciences and Dr. Lorin Warnick, Interim Dean of the Veterinary School at Cornell University at the first Senate Agriculture Committee meeting of 2016. During their visit, Dr. Boor and Dr. Warnick talked about the college's work in the areas of food safety, disease management and protecting the future of agriculture in New York State.

At the meeting, our guests brought to light new challenges facing the agriculture industry, including Salmonella Dublin, a bacterial infection that's an emerging problem in New York dairy herds that can pose a very serious health risk. When it comes to threats like this, Cornell is continually at the forefront, finding ways to protect consumers—and agribusiness owners—from harm. That's why my colleagues and I have made it a priority to fight for state budget funding that supports their efforts.

In recent years, we've successfully advocated for close to \$1 million in increased funding for nearly a dozen vitally important research programs run by Cornell. For example, the college's Avian Disease Program is working to prevent avian disease or "bird flu," as it's commonly known. Other programs, like Cornell's Integrated Pest Management Program, are helping farmers safely deal with pests, including insects, weeds and plant diseases. In addition, the college's research in the areas of honeybees and maple is helping farmers by providing them with the insights they need to weather changes—and challenges—in their industries.

As my colleagues and I continue to work to negotiate a state budget, it's information like the firsthand knowledge presented recently by Cornell that will help us make a stronger case for protecting funding that's so vital to New York's leading industry, and to these programs that have a proven track record of helping farmers grow.

Whether you're a farmer or simply someone who enjoys locally grown and produced fruits, vegetables and other items, the innovative research conducted by Cornell is vitally

important to our health and safety. To learn more about the work done by the college, or watch a video of our recent meeting, [click here](#). You can also check out the Senate Committee on Agriculture's Annual Report, which details our achievements of the past year, [here](#).