



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## RITCHIE SECURES \$50,000 TO BUILD A STRONGER FUTURE FOR FARMING IN THE NORTH COUNTRY

PATTY RITCHIE February 18, 2016

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In an effort to train our region's future farmers, State Senator Patty Ritchie has announced she has secured \$50,000 to help purchase tractor that will be part of St. Lawrence-Lewis BOCES' new Agricultural Studies Academy (ASA).

Opening in fall of 2016, the new ASA is a partnership between BOCES and Cornell Cooperative Extension of St. Lawrence County. In addition to securing funding to help

purchase the tractor, Senator Ritchie is pushing to include additional funding in the State Budget for the ASA through her “Planting Seeds” initiative, which was unveiled last week.

“Agriculture is a way of life here in the North Country and if we’re going to make sure it continues to be, we must invest resources in training our next generation of farmers,” said Senator Ritchie, who chairs the Senate Agriculture Committee.

“I’ve been focused in recent years on recruiting young people to join the ranks of our hardworking farmers and I’m pleased to provide this funding, which will help to ensure students taking part in the ASA get the hands on experience they need to contribute to New York’s leading industry.”

“Senator Ritchie has always been a strong supporter of our BOCES programs, and understands the value of agricultural education in the North Country,” said St. Lawrence-Lewis BOCES District Superintendent Thomas Burns. “We are grateful to the Senator for her continued investment in our students.”

A one-year program open to incoming high school seniors, the ASA will offer a core curriculum—that is being developed with input from the local farming community—focused on a variety of agricultural sectors. The program will be hosted at the Extension Learning Farm in Canton, a facility owned and operated by Cornell Cooperative Extension of St. Lawrence County, and students who are part of the program will be required to participate in a Supervised Agricultural Experience, as well as complete service leadership projects.

Funding secured by Senator Ritchie to support the ASA program continues her efforts to encourage more young people to consider careers in agriculture. Most recently, Senator Ritchie unveiled “Planting Seeds,” a plan to support New York’s family farms and boost the

overall agriculture economy. Included in the plan is support for her “Young Farmers” initiative, which encourages interest in agriculture through grants and other incentives, as well as investments in agriculture education.

For more information about the Agricultural Studies Academy, [click here](#).