



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## RITCHIE GATHERS FEEDBACK FROM FARMERS AT AG ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

PATTY RITCHIE February 19, 2016

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State Senator Patty Ritchie met recently in St. Lawrence County with members of her Agriculture Advisory Council, which is comprised of farmers and agriculture professionals from throughout Central and Northern New York, to hear their concerns and listen to their suggestions for what can be done to improve the state's leading industry.

“Making real progress when it comes to strengthening our agriculture industry and boosting the bottom lines of farmers across the state depends heavily on the feedback we’re able to gather from the farmers and agribusiness owners on the ground level,” said Senator Ritchie, who chairs the Senate Agriculture Committee.

“I’m excited to take the suggestions from members of my Agriculture Advisory Council back to Albany as we continue to work to create new opportunities and expand markets for our hardworking farmers.”

During the meeting, Senator Ritchie shared the Senate Agriculture Committee’s Annual Report, which highlights work done by the committee in 2015, including securing record budget funding for agriculture, efforts to make locally-grown foods more readily available for consumers and an expansion of initiatives that encourage young people to pursue careers in farming.

In addition, attendees also discussed priorities for the 2016 Legislative Session, including advocating for additional funding for key agriculture programs, as well as continuing to cut red tape for farmers.

Just last week, Senator Ritchie unveiled “Planting Seeds,” an initiative to support the agriculture industry in a number of ways, including restoring budget cuts and increasing funding for key agriculture programs, providing new tax and regulatory relief for farmers, supporting initiatives that promote food safety and creating new opportunities for young people, as well as veterans, who are interested in pursuing careers in farming.

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*Pictured in the above photo are the following:*

*Top row, from left to right: Allen Kelly, Jay Matteson, Dave Fisher, Eric Behling, Dr. Jack Zeh, Senator Ritchie, Kevin Acres and Ron Robbins*

*Bottom row, from left to right: Jon Greenwood, Mary Kelly, Keith Pierce and Phil Randazzo*