



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Assessing the Drought Damage: Ritchie Tours Local Farms, Hears Suggestions to Help Farmers Rebound from Hot, Dry Summer

PATTY RITCHIE August 17, 2016



Senate Agriculture Committee Chair Senator Patty Ritchie surveyed the damage caused by the recent drought, which has destroyed crops and increased costs for farmers, while on a tour Wednesday of farms in Jefferson County.

The tour—which included members of the Senator’s Agriculture Advisory Council, a group made up of farmers and agribusiness owners in Jefferson, Oswego and St. Lawrence Counties, as well as local lawmakers—featured stops at North Branch Farms in Belleville,

where irrigation methods are being used to mitigate the effects of drought and North Harbor Dairy, where the dry weather has severely damaged crops.

“Our region’s hardworking farmers have a very important job—and that’s producing the food that hungry people all over the world depend on,” said Senator Ritchie.

“We owe it to them to provide the support necessary so they can rebound from this devastating drought and continue to contribute to the growth of New York’s leading industry. Seeing the effects of the hot, dry weather firsthand and hearing from local farmers about how the state can potentially assist will be extremely helpful as I continue to look for ways to help them rebound.”

“In every line of work there are unknowns, and that could not be more true when it comes to farming, where we have to deal with one of the greatest unknowns—the weather,” said Jay Canzonier, owner of North Branch Farms in Belleville. “While we have taken steps to protect our crops against drought, there are so many other farmers who have been severely affected by the dry weather, and I can’t thank Senator Ritchie enough for taking an interest in the situation they have found themselves up against.”

“It goes without saying that rainfall is a fundamental part of any farming operation,” said Ron Robbins, owner of North Harbor Dairy in Sackets Harbor. “While we have seen some rain this week, it’s not nearly enough to undo the damage that has already been caused by the dry conditions. As we continue to hope for more wet weather, it’s good to know Senator Ritchie is looking out for us, and working to identify ways to support farmers as we work through this trying time.”

Following the tours, Senator Ritchie sat down with attendees to hear their suggestions for how the state can help them to recover from the season’s drought. During the meeting,

Senator Ritchie stated she plans to reach out to Governor Cuomo about the situation and hold a hearing where local farmers and agribusiness owners can share how the dry summer has impacted their operations.

*(Senator Ritchie is pictured in the above photo Farm Tour 1.jpg surveying drought damage at North Harbor Dairy with the farm's owner Ron Robbins, members of her Agriculture Advisory Council and local lawmakers.)*