



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

## Application process underway for next round of 'New Farmers Grant Fund': O'Mara praises ongoing investment in next generation of farmers

THOMAS F. O'MARA October 21, 2016

| ISSUE: **FARMERS**



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**Elmira, N.Y., October 21**—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) today said that the application process is underway for the next round of state grants that will be awarded under New York's "New Farmers Grant Fund."

The fund was first proposed three years ago as part of the Senate Republican Majority's ongoing "Grown in New York" agricultural development strategy, which O'Mara has co-sponsored. Grants provided through the fund seek to help diversity and increase the profitability of early-stage farmers. Over the past two years, approximately \$1.4 million has been awarded to assist 41 farms statewide undertake expansion projects and take other steps to strengthen their profitability.

"These ongoing initiatives and investments to assist, encourage and spark the success of New York's next generation of farmers are critical to help keep our regional and statewide agricultural economies among the strongest and best in the nation," said O'Mara, a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee and the joint, bipartisan Commission on Rural Resources.

In June, O'Mara said that two local farms were among 25 early-stage New York State agribusinesses which shared \$743,000 in grants as part of the second round of funding under the New Farmers Grant Fund. Local farms awarded grants were: Plowbreak Farm (Schuyler County, \$21,404) and Van Noble Farm (Tompkins County, \$40,362).

The fund is administered by Empire State Development (ESD) together with the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets. According to ESD, applications submitted are scored competitively based on specific criteria including project readiness. Grants can be utilized for project costs including expansion of production, farm building construction, equipment and seed purchases, or efficiency upgrades.

O'Mara said that the 2016-17 state budget included an additional \$1 million to support a third round of funding under the New Farmers Grant Fund. More information and applications for Round 3 can be found online through the Empire State Development (ESD) website at:

<http://esd.ny.gov/BusinessPrograms/NewFarmersGrantFund.html>.

The deadline for submitting Round 3 applications is January 27, 2017 and the awards will be announced next spring.