



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Ritchie: \$51 Million In State Budget For Agriculture

PATTY RITCHIE April 13, 2017



For the third straight year, State Senator Patty Ritchie is announcing the new state budget includes record funding for agriculture. Included in the spending plan is \$51 million—which includes \$10 million in restored cuts made in the Executive Budget proposal—that will help support dozens of programs farmers depend on, as well as launch new initiatives designed to strengthen the connection between consumers and local foods.

“As Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee, I am thrilled that once again this year the state budget includes record funding for New York’s leading industry,” said Senator Ritchie.

“Our state’s farmers have extremely demanding—and important—jobs. This vital support will ensure they have the ability to succeed, and at the same time, encourage the next generation of farmers to follow in their footsteps.”

The 2017-2018 state budget includes funding for new, innovative programs that were spearheaded by Senator Ritchie to bolster agriculture across the state. One such program is a new “F.A.R.M. Camp,” or Future Agriculture Readiness Marketing Camp. Offered once yearly to a select group of successful farmer-applicants, this camp will expose selectees to several of the best agriculture programs in the state. Each participant will have access to information and tools to help develop their businesses. An exclusive group of graduates from the program will also be granted additional aid in the form of grant funds to help them make their marketing plan a reality.

In an effort to encourage younger people to take up careers in agriculture, the state budget also includes special funding to establish a “Seeds of Success” award. This new program will help showcase school gardens across the Empire State.

The new spending plan also includes \$1 million for a fourth round of the “Beginning Farmers” grants, which were created by Senator Ritchie to encourage young people to pursue careers in farming. Through the program, successful applicants receive up to \$50,000 in funding to assist with the purchase of land, buildings, tools and more farming necessities.

Other highlights of the 2017-2018 state budget include:

- Restoration of vital funding for numerous agriculture programs designed to support education, marketing, research and more, including New York State Maple Producers, Tractor Rollover Protection, FarmNet, Apple Growers Association and dozens of others.

-New state funding for New York Brewers, Distillers Guild and Cider Association;

-Continued support St. Lawrence County's North Country Agriculture Academy, which helps to expose young people to future careers in farming;

-Funding for school-based FFA programs, with help students learn vital agriculture and leadership skills; and

-Funding to establish a "Farm-to-Table Trail," which will help consumers more easily locate local food and drink, as well as boost the bottom lines of farmers.

Since becoming Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee in 2011, Senate Ritchie has successfully secured more than \$60 million in restored budget cuts and new funding to help the more than 35,000 farms across the state thrive.

A complete list of farm programs funded in the 2017-2018 state budget can be viewed by clicking the PDF file above.