



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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## An Important Step Toward Saving Farmers

PATTY RITCHIE May 5, 2017



When most people think of dangerous jobs, farming probably does not immediately come to mind. However, the fatality rate for farmers is 800 percent higher than all other American workers, with the leading cause of death on a farm being tractor rollover incidents.

In the past few years, I have been proud to have secured \$1.2 million in funding, including \$250,000 in the new state budget, for a program that helps to protect farmers from tractor rollover incidents. In the last two years, nine farmers have died in tractor rollovers.

As Senate Agriculture Committee Chair, I have worked to ensure the continuation of the Rollover Protective Structure (ROPS) Rebate Program, which equips tractors with special safety equipment to avoid tractor overturns. ROPS has reduced the risk of injury by up to 99 percent in the event of a tractor overturn.

The 10-year-old program, operated by the New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health, has outfitted more than 1,500 tractors across the state. However, nearly half of the tractors on New York's 35,000 farms, and a majority of those over 20 years old, have no safety equipment and pose a great risk of tractor instability.

Unfortunately, many farmers think they are exempt from this risk and the high cost of ROPS kits (\$800 to \$2,500) are two factors why farmers do not have them. The benefit of this program also rests in the savings to the state farming community and its insurers of \$12 million.

As the 2017 Legislative Session continues, I will be working to support this essential program, as well as other programs that will not only protect of our state's hard working farmers, but will help them grow their operations for years to come. For more information the ROPS Rebate Program, visit my website at [www.ritchie.nysenate.gov](http://www.ritchie.nysenate.gov).