



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pamela Helming

## Senator Helming Tours Anaerobic Digester at Ontario County Dairy Farm

JONATHAN MONFILETTO - 315-568-9816 August 9, 2017



Senator Pamela A. Helming (R,C,I-Canandaigua) talks with Don Jensen, owner of Lawnhurst Farms in Stanley, in front of the milking parlor at his dairy farm. Senator Helming visited Lawnhurst Farms to see the anaerobic digester that the dairy farm uses to turn cow manure into clean energy and other products that the farm uses, such as fertilizer and bedding for the cows. The tour also included: Rick Zimmerman, of Zimmerman and Associates, representing the New York Cow Power Coalition; Peter Wright, of Cornell University's PRO-DAIRY Program; Scott Collins, of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of Rural

Development; and Jillian Kasow, of the New York State Legislative Commission on Rural Resources. Senator Helming is the Senate Chair of the Commission, which oversees issues related to farming and rural communities.

During the tour, Mr. Jensen explained to Senator Helming and the rest of the group that his farm chose to implement an anaerobic digester – one of 28 on-farm digesters across New York State – because of its environmental benefits, including reducing the emission of greenhouse gases from cow manure and increasing the farm’s energy efficiency with a self-sufficient power source. However, Mr. Jensen also spoke about the economic disadvantages of the digester: The cost to operate and maintain the digester is greater than the revenue he receives from selling surplus power to the grid. Senator Helming and the group discussed ways to help farmers benefit economically from digesters and encourage more farmers to implement them for the environmental friendliness and energy efficiency that they provide.

“As the Senate Chair of the Legislative Commission on Rural Resources – and a New York State Senator with a predominantly rural, agricultural district – I am focused on the environmental impacts of farming, and these anaerobic digesters are a terrific way to mitigate those effects and actually turn farming into something positive for the environment. However, I was concerned to learn that Don Jensen and farmers like him choose to implement these digesters because they make good environmental sense but struggle to make them economically viable. I hope that together we can work out a solution that gives farmers incentive to implement these digesters without raising electricity costs for consumers. Thank you to Don and Lawnhurst Farms for hosting us and to Rick, Peter, Scott, and Jill for joining us,” Senator Helming said.

*Senator Helming represents the 54<sup>th</sup> Senate District, which consists of Seneca and Wayne Counties, parts of Cayuga and Ontario Counties, and the towns of Lansing and Webster. For more information, please visit Senator Helming’s*

*website, or follow @SenatorHelming on Facebook or Twitter.*

*###*