



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pamela Helming

Sen. Helming Learns About Agriculture Operations at Wayne County Farms

JONATHAN MONFILETTO - 315-568-9816 August 11, 2017



Senator Pamela A. Helming (R,C,I-Canandaigua) recently visited three Wayne County farm operations to learn more about the products that each farm produces and how each farm works as well as to get to know the farmers. Gary Orbaker, of Orbaker's Fruit Farm in Williamson, led the tour that included stops at Lagoner Farms in Williamson, Orbaker's Fruit Farm, and Lake Breeze Fruit Farms in Sodus. Along with New York Farm Bureau Field Advisor Skip Jensen, Wayne County Farm Bureau President Zack DeBadts, and other Farm Bureau representatives, the tour also included a meeting with farmers to talk about issues

that concern them.

“Agriculture is the biggest industry in the 54th District and one of my main priorities as a New York State Senator. As well as producing our food, farms support our families and communities, create jobs, and boost our local and state economy, so they reach virtually every aspect of our daily lives whether we realize it or not. I really enjoyed seeing these three farms – Lagoner Farms, Orbaker’s Fruit Farm, and Lake Breeze Fruit Farm – meeting these farmers, and seeing what they do up close. This tour helped add a personal touch to my agenda for agriculture in the Finger Lakes region and throughout New York. Thank you to Gary Orbaker and the Wayne County Farm Bureau for organizing and leading this tour,” Senator Helming said.

“The Wayne County Farm Bureau wants to thank Senator Helming for taking the time out of her busy schedule and visiting these three farms to see what Wayne County has to offer in terms of agriculture. We know Senator Helming cares about agriculture throughout her district and around New York State and makes it one of her priorities. We really appreciate all of her support,” New York Farm Bureau Field Advisor Skip Jensen said.

“I am glad that Senator Helming took the time to tour some of our Wayne County farms and agribusinesses. Wayne County agriculture has been blessed with great representation in the State Legislature in the past. It is refreshing to know that Senator Helming intends to keep that streak going. As President of the Wayne County Farm Bureau, I feel that we are in good hands with Senator Helming as our State Senator,” Wayne County Farm Bureau President Zack DeBadts said.

Senator Helming also spent time speaking with Dulce Gelina, whose family owns DeMay Labor, a Williamson-based farm labor contractor that provides labor for farmers, food processors, and other groups in the northeastern United States. Together, they talked about

labor issues and regulatory burdens such as unemployment mandates that hinder the agriculture industry.

“The meeting I attended with Senator Helming was an assuring attempt by one of our promising politicians to address the very important matters that the farmers in New York State face in today’s business world. I just hope she can help us, and I am willing to give her assistance in these matters,” Dulce Gelina said.

At Lagoner Farms, Senator Helming visited Embark Craft Cider Works, the Williamson farm’s on-site cidery and taproom, as well as the bakery where the farm sells a variety of homemade baked goods, including its signature fudge, and the flower shop that meets various needs for special occasions. Owner Jacob Lagoner told Senator Helming that he would like to see cideries grow as an industry because there are not as many of them compared to the number of wineries, breweries, and distilleries throughout the Finger Lakes region. Embark Craft produces several kinds of cider, including blueberry peach and strawberry rhubarb. The cidery uses steel tanks made by Geneva-based Vance Metal Fabricators, which Senator Helming also visited recently.

“The Finger Lakes region is already well known for its various wineries and, in recent years, its breweries and distilleries. Like Jacob Lagoner, I would love to see cideries as a whole expand and complement these other aspects of our beverage industry throughout the region. I will do whatever I can to support them, as well as the entire agriculture industry, however and whenever I can,” Senator Helming said.

At Orbaker’s Fruit Farm, Senator Helming checked out the cherry orchard at the Williamson farm that also grows apples and peaches. She watched the cherry harvester in action as it shook cherries off a tree, and she also visited the on-site farm stand and the area where the farm packages its cherries for distribution.

“It was great that Senator Helming was able to visit Wayne County and see three existing fruit farms, each doing something a little different with their crops. It was interesting that on this particular day we were mechanically harvesting our sour cherries, as well as handpicking them, so she was able to see all of that up close. It was something that was important to me and important for her to view as something that farmers do with fruit crops or any other crops that they grow,” Gary Orbaker said.

“Wayne County remains the top apple-growing county in New York State, and it is also known for its farms that grow and produce other fruits. Orbaker Farms was a great example of this aspect of the agriculture industry. It was interesting to see not only how these fruit crops are grown but how they are harvested as well,” Senator Helming said.

At Lake Breeze Fruit Farm, Senator Helming learned about how the Sodus farm, owned by Zack DeBadts and his father, Bob, delivers all of its cherries to Cheribundi, the Geneva-based producer of different types of cherry juices. She also toured the Sodus operation’s cold storage units that it uses to store its cherries and other fruits. A year-old apple looked, felt, and tasted just like new after being kept in the cold storage.

“Senator Helming got to watch local cherries get harvested by a farmer in Williamson and follow them to our handling facility in Sodus, where they were received and barreled then sent to a local freezer in Wolcott. Those frozen cherries will be turned into Cherribundi cherry juice, which is produced right in Geneva, also in the 54th Senate District. The Senator was blown away when she learned that the cherries never left the district until they were headed to the consumer,” Zack DeBadts said.

“I love hearing about local businesses supporting one another, so it was great to hear about the partnership between Lake Breeze Fruit Farm and Cheribundi. It is terrific to highlight that business is actually booming in New York State, especially within the agriculture

industry. The advances in agriculture technology, especially with the cold storage unit as an example, are simply astounding and truly help the industry continue to be successful," Senator Helming said.

Senator Helming represents the 54th 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.

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