



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

Seward Drives \$250k to Key Farm Safety Program

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MOHAWK, 09/13/17 – State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I/Ref-Oneonta) today helped open the CNY Farm Progress Show at Len-Lo Farms in Mohawk by announcing that the 2017-2018 state budget includes, at his insistence, \$250,000 to protect New York farmers through continuation of the highly successful New York Rollover Protection System (ROPS) Rebate Program.

“New York farmers face countless daily challenges yet continue to deliver – providing us all with sustenance and fueling our state’s number one industry,” said Senator Seward. **“Making certain our farmers have proper safety equipment is crucial and that is why I have strongly supported the ROPS rebate program since its inception.”**

Funding for the ROPS rebate program, and other agricultural programs, was left out of the governor’s budget proposal. Senator Seward, a long-standing member of the senate agriculture committee, led fellow upstate legislators in successfully fighting to reinstate the funding in the final state budget.

“You cannot put a price tag on the lives of our farmers. In the grand scheme of the overall state budget, the ROPS rebate program funding is a small expenditure, but it can mean the difference between life and death in the event of a tractor rollover. This year, as in the past, I fought hard to ensure this crucial funding was included in the final state budget,” added Seward.

The New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health (NYCAMH) administers the ROPS program, now in its eleventh year, and has outfitted over 1582 tractors in New York State with the life-saving rollover protection. The ROPS Rebate Program has now expanded nationally as other states follow New York’s successful blueprint. The National ROPS Rebate Program is administered by the Northeast Center for Occupational Health and Safety- Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (NEC).

Director of NYCAMH Julie Sorensen, Ph.D., MA, BA, said, “The ROPS program has expanded greatly since it was launched by NYCAMH in 2006 and Senator Seward’s consistent support is a prime reason for the program’s growth. Helping farmers do their job safely improves life on the farm and life for all.”

A farmer’s risk of dying on the job is eight times higher than that of the average American worker and tractor overturns are the primary cause. In the event of a rollover, the use of ROPS and a seatbelt reduces the risk of injury by 99 percent. Use of ROPS without a seatbelt is less effective, but still reduces serious injury by 70 percent. Tractors built after 1985 have built-in rollover protection, however, tractors are constructed to last and many older models are still in use today.

Herkimer County Farm Bureau President Fred Wheeler said, “The ROPS program is a valuable safety net for our farmers and is highly effective in preventing tractor overturn fatalities. I am extremely thankful that Senator Seward and NYCAMH have continued to champion this critical program.”

CNY Farm Progress Show President Dick Presky said, “The CNY Farm Progress Show is a showcase for all aspects of farming and agriculture, and safety is certainly a vital element. Senator Seward has always been there for our farmers and his work to fund the ROPS program is another example of his dedication. I would certainly encourage any farmer with an older tractor to take advantage of this key safety program.”

Farmers interested in more information should call toll-free 1-877-ROPS-R4U (1-877-767-7748) or check on-line at www.ropsr4u.com. The ROPS program will rebate 70 percent of the cost of purchasing and installing the roll bar system up to a maximum out of pocket cost of \$500. Should the out of pocket expense to a farmer be greater than \$500 then NYCAMH will increase the rebate to ensure that a farmer does not have to shoulder a higher expense.

“This is a valuable investment in our farming future. I congratulate NYCAMH on their leadership in farm safety and stand ready to partner with them moving forward in protecting our New York farmers and ensuring agricultural productivity,” Seward concluded.