



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Planting the Seeds for New York State's Future

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Senator Ritchie's Weekly Column

For many New Yorkers agriculture is not just their livelihood, it is a way of life. From food to employment opportunities, because agriculture is our state's leading industry, every person—one way or another—depends on our farmers and agribusiness owners.

While this success is something every New Yorker should be proud of, we cannot take it for granted. To help it to continue to remain a vital part of our state's economy, we need to continue to encourage new people—especially young people—to pursue careers in

agriculture and generate new ideas, strategies and technologies that will help it continue to grow.

That is why, back in 2014, I created a program called the 'New Farmers Grant Fund'. The idea was to make funding available to those who are just beginning their agricultural careers. This support helps them to purchase machinery, equipment, supplies and to cover other costs associated with running a farm or agribusiness.

I am thrilled to report that since 2014, the 'New Farmers Grant Fund' has provided nearly \$2.5 million to more than 65 farms across the state. In addition, I am even happier to let you know that New York State is now accepting applications for another round of funding. To apply, individuals must still be within their first 10 years of ownership and must have a minimum of \$10,000 in sales of products grown and raised on their farm.

This fund is just one example of how important it is to me—and all of New York State—to make sure our farmers and agribusinesses are getting the help they need to succeed and provide our residents with the farm fresh foods and locally made products they demand and deserve. In 2017, for the third straight year, I was successfully able to advocate for record state budget funding for agriculture totaling \$51 million. That's money to help support dozens programs farmers depend on, as well as launch new initiatives designed to strengthen the connection between consumers and local foods.

It is also proof that agriculture will continue to grow here in New York State and be the very industry that supports new ideas and people for generations to come. Now is the time to get involved. Full details and applications for my 'New Farmers Grant Fund' can be found by clicking [here](#). The deadline for submitting an application is January 26th, 2018.

