



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Ritchie Hosts 'Growing New York Agriculture' Hearing in Albany

BRIAN DWYER December 12, 2017

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Agriculture leaders shared insights into how New York State can support the growth of its leading industry at a public hearing hosted Tuesday by New York State Senate Agriculture Committee Chair Senator Patty Ritchie.

During the hearing, Senator Ritchie—as well as Senate Agriculture Committee Member Senator Patrick Gallivan—heard testimony from key stakeholders from nearly two dozen

agricultural organizations and businesses. The Senate Agriculture Committee will use the information discussed Tuesday to advocate for new policies, initiatives and funding that will directly help growers and producers across the Empire State.

“Agriculture is New York State’s leading industry, and if we want it to remain as such, we need to make sure we are tapping into the insights and ideas that those on the front line have for helping it to grow,” said Senator Ritchie. “I would like to thank those who participated in this hearing and look forward to putting the ideas they shared for supporting farmers and strengthening agriculture into motion.”

“As we prepare for a new Legislative session, it’s important that we hear from farmers and others in the agriculture industry about the challenges they face and how the state can best support them,” Senator Gallivan said. “New York’s economy depends on a strong agricultural industry and I appreciate the input we received from those who testified at Tuesday’s hearing.”

At the hearing, those who delivered testimony—including representatives of key groups such as the New York Farm Bureau, Cornell College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, FFA, NY Maple Producers, Cornell Center for Dairy Excellence, the Northern New York Agricultural Development Program, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Jefferson County and the New York Farm Viability Institute, among others—shared details on challenges faced by those in the industry and ideas for supporting its future success. Several of the challenges discussed were low milk prices, adapting to changing weather and attracting new people to the profession, among others.

In addition, those testifying also thanked the Senate Agriculture Committee for its efforts in recent years to restore and increase funding for vitally important programs. In 2017, for the third straight year, the new state budget included record funding for agriculture.

Included in the spending plan was \$51 million—which included \$10 million in restored cuts made in the Executive Budget proposal—that is helping to support dozens of programs farmers depend on, as well as to launch new initiatives designed to strengthen the connection between consumers and local foods.

A full video of Tuesday's hearing can be found by clicking [here](#).