



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Agriculture's Success Fuels New York State Economy

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### Senator Ritchie's Weekly Column

More and more each day, we see just how much agriculture impacts our lives. As Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee, I take great pride in the work the Committee does each year to support and strengthen New York's family farms.

In 2017, my colleagues and I continued to make great strides towards these goals—securing record state funding for key programs, increasing our efforts to make locally-grown foods

more readily available for consumers, helping promote New York's booming, farm-based craft beverage industry and continuing to encourage young people to pursue careers in farming.

These are just a few of the achievements outlined in the Senate Committee on Agriculture's 2017 Annual Report, which is now available by clicking the link above or by calling (315) 782-3418.

The report, called "Growing New York Agriculture," is highlighted by the fact that, for the third straight year, the Agriculture Committee helped to secure record State Budget funding, totaling \$51 million. That included more than \$10 million in proposed budget cuts in the Executive Budget that were restored by the State Senate for a wide range of farm programs. Since 2011, more than \$60 million in proposed Executive Budget cuts have been restored, or added to the budget, for agriculture-based programs. In all, Agriculture Committee members introduced more than 40 bills related to supporting the industry.

Some of the actions we are most proud of include a new law backed by the Committee that authorizes the creation of a New York State Young Farmers Advisory Board, a fourth round of the 'New Farmers Grant Fund', the introduction of 'F.A.R.M.' camp and new funding for FFA programs.

In addition, as we look towards 2018 and beyond, the committee recently hosted a special hearing in Albany to solicit ideas from nearly 20 farmers and industry representatives on finding new ways to help grow New York Agriculture further. Information gathered from the hearing will be used to shape future actions and create legislation to strengthen the agriculture industry.

In the coming months, I look forward to the Committee continuing its efforts to promote agricultural success and strengthen connections between farmers and consumers.