



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael H. Ranzenhofer

## Ranzenhofer Backs Comprehensive Initiatives to Keep Agriculture as New York's Top Industry

SENATOR MICHAEL H. RANZENHOFER March 23, 2018

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Senator Michael H. Ranzenhofer today announced his support for the 2018 “Growing Strong” Plan. The “Growing Strong” plan will help strengthen agri-business and create new jobs in the agriculture industry by expanding markets, reducing production costs, and investing in the state’s leading industry.

“Family farms are a major contributor to our state and local economies. Implementing these initiatives will help the agriculture industry thrive and expand a workforce of more than 100,000 men and women. This new plan will help make it more affordable for New York’s 35,000 farms,” said Ranzenhofer.

The comprehensive legislative package of initiatives includes:

- **Examine burdensome regulations:** Direct state regulators to study existing state regulations that are harmful to farming, unnecessarily increase costs, and prevent farm success.
- **Repeal the Highway Use Tax** for farm-registered trucks, and exempt farmers from any proposal to add new “tolling” to enter New York City, as a way to bring more New York-grown products into the nation’s largest consumer market. New York is one of just four states that still imposes such a tax.
- **Help farmers invest in facilities and buy equipment:** S7851 provides a tax credit for dairy farmers to encourage investment in facilities and equipment that will allow them to take advantage of a growing demand for “value-added” dairy products, like flavored drinks, yogurts, and other products that can satisfy existing demand.
- **Help farmers by giving them access to IDAs:** S2388 authorizes industrial development agencies (IDAs) to provide technical and financial assistance to agricultural producers that grow, harvest, or produce agricultural products in this state.
- **Create a “Lifeline Dairy Energy Assistance Program”** for dairy farmers struggling with a prolonged slump in milk prices, directing \$10 million in existing NYSERDA funds to install high efficiency lighting, pumping and cooling equipment, and to promote investment in energy-producing biomass generators and digesters.
- **Expand agricultural P-Tech education programs** that help prepare students for increasing technology demands of farming careers, restore funding for Beginning Farmer Grants

that was cut from the Executive Budget, and increase support to establish new chapters of school-based FFA programs in response to growing interest in agriculture. In addition, the proposal expands opportunities for success in agriculture by creating a specialized education certificate to acknowledge student achievement and training in the field.

- **Encouraging more women to pursue farming careers:** S7843 authorizes the Department of Agriculture and Markets to conduct a study to identify obstacles and impediments that prevent more women from pursuing agricultural careers. Attracting new farmers to pursue farming careers in New York is critical, and continuing to focus the state's efforts on encouraging growing sectors of the agricultural economy, like women-owned farm businesses, is a very important step in that direction.

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