



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Ritchie: State Budget Features \$54.4 Million in Funding for Agriculture

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Senator Patty Ritchie, Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee, is announcing that—for a fourth straight year—the New York State Budget includes record funding for agriculture. Included in the spending plan is \$54.4 million dollars for New York’s leading industry, nearly \$20 million of which is the addition of funding or the restoration of cuts made in the Executive Budget and Assembly proposals.

“New York’s hardworking farmers have very difficult, demanding jobs,” said Senator Ritchie. “Through this critical funding, we are demonstrating that we support their efforts to grow and produce the fresh foods we depend on, and that we recognize how important they are to the success of New York’s leading industry. I am excited to see how the new state budget further strengthens New York agriculture today—and in the future.”

The 2018-2019 budget includes funding for innovative programs created by Senator Ritchie, including a second round of the “Seeds of Success” program, which helps schools create or expand an agricultural curriculum to encourage students to consider careers in agriculture.

It also funds—for a fifth year—Senator Ritchie’s “Beginning Farmers” grant program that assists new farms with grants of up to \$50,000 to help with the purchase of land, buildings, tools and other farming necessities.

Other highlights of the 2017-2018 state budget include:

- Increased funding to further boost New York State’s Craft Brewing Industry, including Cornell University’s Hops and Barley, Born, Bred and Brewed Program, the New York Brewers, the New York State Distillers Guild, the New York State Hard Cider Association and Cornell University’s Hard Cider Research program;
- Funding for a new farm-to-school program, building on Senator Ritchie's efforts to grow markets for local farmers by increasing the amount of locally produced foods in school lunches;

- The restoration of funding for programs that are critical to helping dairy farms with education, research, marketing, profitability and sustainability, including FarmNet, which works with family farms on business analysis, farming with family, retirement planning and personal well-being. In addition funding has been awarded to a number of Cornell University-based programs such as its Diagnostic Lab, its Quality Milk and Cattle Health Assurance programs, and new funding has been created for Cornell's Salmonella Dublin program to help farmers diagnose and contain the deadly disease, which impacts dairy herds. Funding has also been restored to programs such as Northern New York Ag Development, PRO-DAIRY and the Farm Viability Dairy Profit teams, which work with farms to develop profitability and sustainability strategies;
- Increased funding for Cornell's Honeybee program;
- Increased and/or restored funding for New York State producers including the Wine and Grape Foundation, the Apple Growers Association, Maple Producers, berry growers, Christmas tree growers and more;
- The restoration of funding for vital programs designed to support agriculture education, including the North Country Ag Academy at St. Lawrence-Lewis BOCES and FFA;
- Restored funding for Tractor Rollover Protection Program, which helps equip tractors with an important piece of safety equipment that helps reduce the risk of injury in the

event of a tractor overturn; and

- The restoration of funding to continue fighting diseases such as EEE and rabies.

Since becoming Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee in 2011, Senator Ritchie has been successful in her efforts to secure more than \$79 million dollars in restored budget cuts and new funding to help the more than 35,000 farms across New York State.