



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pamela Helming

Senator Helming Hosts FarmNet Stress Management Seminar for Farmers

SENATOR PAM HELMING May 4, 2018

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GENEVA – Senator Pam Helming hosted the Recognizing and Managing Stress on the Farm seminar in conjunction with NY FarmNet and New York Farm Bureau on Thursday, April 19 at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station in Geneva. Senator Helming made opening remarks as the Senate Chair of the Legislative Commission on Rural Resources, providing an update on her successful efforts to advocate for local farmers in the state

budget. New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets Commissioner Richard Ball gave the keynote address at lunchtime, outlining several initiatives that the Department is undertaking to assist dairy markets and farmers during this difficult time.

More than 30 people attended the event, including a diverse mixture of farmers, agri-service providers, and agricultural support organizations, such as Cornell Cooperative Extension, the National AgrAbility Project, and USDA Farm Service Agency. The event included presentations by FarmNet Farm Family Consultant Erica Leubner, titled “Stressed?! What to Do About It,” and by FarmNet Business Planning Director Daniel Welch, titled “Managing the Farm Business in Challenging Times.” Representatives from NY FarmNet, New York State Agricultural Mediation Program, and New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health also came together for a roundtable discussion. The event is an important initiative for Senator Helming, who spearheaded increases in funding for NY FarmNet in the past two years, to enable the hiring of additional personal consultants.

“Agriculture is the leading industry here in the Wayne-Finger Lakes region. It drives a large portion of our economy, creates job opportunities, and puts food on our tables. Farmers, and the farming community at large, are truly the backbone of our communities. However, they face the usual challenges, such as the weather, as well as things that are out of their control, like falling milk and commodity prices and the changing global market. Farmers work 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and often bring their stress home with them. We need to support our farmers, farm families, and agri-service providers now more than ever, and we must give them the resources they need to not only make their farms as productive as possible but also improve their personal well-being and that of their families. I am so grateful to have collaborated with NY FarmNet and New York Farm Bureau on this important event, and I am thankful for all of the work that they do in our communities,” Senator Helming said.

Ed Staehr, Executive Director of NY FarmNet, said, "It was important to include all agricultural sectors in this event. Agri-service providers work routinely with farmers, and we were pleased to see a large number of agri-service professionals participate in the meeting. As a result of their participation, agri-service professionals are now equipped to better recognize the signs of stress in the farming community and, most importantly, know where to direct farmers for effective resources on stress management."

David Fisher, New York Farm Bureau President, said, "The down farm economy has created a stressful time for farmers across New York as they struggle to make ends meet. It is more important than ever that farmers understand help is out there to deal with any financial worries and anxiety they may be experiencing. New York Farm Bureau partnered with NY FarmNet and the Rural Resources Commission to host this important event at the Geneva Experiment Station, and we greatly appreciate Senator Pam Helming's support in these tough times."