



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

## Senator Young Secures \$45,000 for “Ag In The Classroom” Programs for Allegany and Livingston Counties

CATHARINE YOUNG September 10, 2018

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OLEAN – Senator Catharine Young (R, C, I - 57th District), secured \$20,000 for the Cornell Cooperative Extension in Allegany County and \$25,000 for the Cooperative Extension in Livingston County to support Agriculture in the Classroom programs.

The grant-in-aid, or “bullet aid” funding was approved during the 2018-2019 state budget process, and was finalized at the end of the 2018 Legislative Session. The grants will support

an ongoing program in Livingston County and start an Agriculture in the Classroom program in Allegany County.

“The hands-on learning experience children gain in the Agriculture in the Classroom program is invaluable,” Senator Young said. “It directly increases their agriculture knowledge and literacy.”

Senator Young said agriculture is one of New York State’s biggest industries and it is the leading industry in the 57<sup>th</sup> District.

“Sadly, many people never consider the impact agriculture has on their lives,” she said.

“Agriculture is one of our state’s top industries, with 35,000 farms and a workforce that’s over 100,000 strong, generating an economic impact of more than \$5.4 billion.”

Mark Wittmeyer, Youth Development Team Leader of the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Livingston County, said the funding will allow the Cooperative Extension to continue educating students in every school district in Livingston County within the 57<sup>th</sup> Senate District.

“Cornell Cooperative Extension of Livingston County is very appreciative of Senator Young for securing the 2018/2019 Agriculture in the Classroom grant,” he said. “Teaching youth, especially at a young age, about the facts of where their food comes from, the importance of agriculture as an industry, and the need for a diverse agricultural workforce is critical to the sustainability of agriculture today and tomorrow.”

Laura K. Hunsberger, Executive Director of the Cooperative Extension of Allegany County, thanked Senator Young and said the funding will kick-start the Agriculture in the Classroom program in Allegany County.

“We are very excited for the opportunities that this funding will bring to Allegany County,” she said. “Currently, we have only been able to participate in Ag Literacy Week where volunteers read a book with an agricultural theme to second graders. This funding will allow us to hire a part-time educator to go into Allegany County public school classrooms and share curricula especially developed to work with the teachers’ existing programming. Coupled with our new Farm-to-School program, we are anticipating a real jump in our young peoples’ understanding of where their food comes from and how their food choices can impact their local community.”

Agriculture in the Classroom teaches awareness, understanding and appreciation of where the food we eat comes from by helping educators, students and communities learn about and engage with the agriculture industry.

Senator Young said teaching young people about the importance of agriculture not only helps them appreciate the food they eat and the products they buy, but it also teaches them the importance of protecting the environment to sustain healthy agriculture.

“Programs like this are vital to our youth and their need to understand the agriculture industry that surrounds them,” she said. “Supporting the Agriculture in the Classroom program is an investment in the future. Anything that benefits agriculture in the Empire State, benefits us all.”