



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michelle Hinchey

## Senate and Assembly Agriculture Chairs Secure Historic Agriculture Budget to Bolster Support for New York Farmers

MICHELLE HINCHEY April 19, 2022

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**ALBANY, NY** – Historic funding levels for New York agriculture are included in the final enacted State Budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023. The two Legislative Agriculture Chairs, Senator Michelle Hinchey and Assemblymember Donna Lupardo secured over \$10 million above the Executive's original proposal for a total appropriation of more than \$52 million — the largest state budget appropriation for agriculture in recent history. This funding will

support important programs and initiatives that provide New York farmers with tax relief, research, marketing, financial, and other assistance.

**Senate Agriculture Chair Michelle Hinchey said,** “We have secured the highest Agriculture Budget in New York’s history, and it sends a clear message to farmers across our state: New York wants you to stay in business and continue producing for our communities. This is a formative moment for New York agriculture, and I’m proud that we have been able to deliver a state budget that will grow our farm economy through unprecedented tax support, new capital funding and key investments to help a new and diverse generation of farmers succeed.”

**Assembly Agriculture Chair Donna Lupardo said,** “There was a lot at stake in this year’s agriculture budget. Between COVID recovery, supply chain disruptions, and general farm anxiety, it was important for the state to show its commitment to NY agriculture. Having underfunded this sector for years, it's gratifying to see this trend turning around. I am very proud of what we were able to accomplish, working together with Governor Hochul, my fellow Ag Chair, Michelle Hinchey, our colleagues, and all of you. Foundational programs received funding, along with new capital, new tax breaks, and new initiatives. I expect this trend to continue, as more people recognize and value our farmers and the entire NY farm economy.”

Key investments secured by Hinchey and Lupardo include \$1 million for NY FarmNet, a Cornell-run program that provides critical mental health support and financial counseling for farmers, \$500,000 for the Cornell Small Farms Equitable Farm Futures Initiative, a statewide research and extension program that helps facilitate all phases of a farm’s business development with a focus on increasing diversity in agriculture, \$8.7 million for the

Cornell Diagnostics Lab, important to keeping New York's livestock and food supply safe, and \$10.3 million for the Agri-Business Child Development program (ABCD), which provides child care and social services to farmworker families.

Other investments include \$300,000 for the Cornell Hops Breeding and Research Program to help grow and develop signature New York hops varieties and support the state's craft brewing industry, \$500,000 for Farmland for a New Generation, which serves as a critical matchmaker between farmers seeking land and landowners wanting to keep their land in farming, \$401,000 to hire a bilingual Cornell Farm Labor Specialist who will work to communicate up-to-date information on state matters and resources with agricultural workers, \$1.85 million for New York Farm Viability Institute, a grantmaking organization that funds farmer-identified agricultural research and education projects, \$800,000 for Urban Farms and Community Garden Grants, and \$700,000 for Farmers Market Resiliency Grants.

Senator Hinchey and Assemblymember Lupardo worked to secure funding for several legacy programs and created nearly a dozen new initiatives to strengthen local food systems and make it easier for farmers to do business in New York, including the following:

- **Unprecedented Tax Credits for New York Farmers:**

- **Creating the Farm Employer Overtime Credit**, allowing farm employers to claim 118% of the cost of overtime hours worked.
- **Expanding the Investment Tax Credit** from 4% to 20% to help cover the cost of new farm items purchased.

- **Doubling the Farm Workforce Retention Tax Credit** from \$600 to \$1,200 per farm employee and extending it through 2026.
  
- **\$5 million Meat Processing Expansion Grants** to address the shortage of meat processing facilities through a new grant program that can be used to expand existing facilities or open new facilities. This will make it easier for small cattle and pork farmers to process their products and get affordable, local meat into grocery stores, strengthening New York's food supply chain and rural economies.
  
- **\$250,000 Cornell CALS Pro-Dairy Climate Specialist** to hire a full time expert who will facilitate on-farm research focused on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and work with New York's dairy farmers to ensure they have the information they need to implement best practices to fight the climate crisis.
  
- **\$4 million Economically & Socially Disadvantaged Farmer Fund**, which provides grant funding to BIPOC and other historically marginalized populations to help begin or expand their agricultural businesses.
  
- **\$1 million to revive the New Farmers Grant Fund Program**, an important resource to help young and beginning farmers get their agricultural businesses off the ground. The program will make a new stream of funding available through the Urban Development Corporation to support smaller projects and allow construction on leased land.
  
- **\$100,000 John May Farmer Safety Fund**, which provides grants of up to \$5,000 to help farmers make needed on-farm safety improvements.

- **\$2 million for Double Up Food Bucks**, a healthy food incentive program that provides individuals and families who receive SNAP benefits with a dollar-to-dollar match, for the purchase of fruits and vegetables.
- **\$200,000 for the Young Farmer Loan Forgiveness Incentive Program**, which provides relief to qualified beginning farmers with student loan debt and will help put new farmers in a better financial position to invest in their business and acquire land.
- **\$5 Million Cornell CALS Climate Adaptive Research Farms Program**, for capital projects designed to implement sustainable farming practices, including managing climate adaptation, sequestering carbon, and reducing GHG emissions on New York State owned research farms.
- **\$150,000 Northeast Organic Farmers Association of New York**, to boost efforts to provide organic farming certification, education, and marketing for farmers, and connect consumers with access to local, certified-organic products.
- **\$5 million County Fair Improvement Grants** to support the revitalization of county fairs statewide with funding for building construction, repair and maintenance.

**New York Farm Bureau President David Fisher said,** "The New York State budget makes significant investments into agriculture and our state's diverse local food system, including needed funding for research and marketing to record support for environmental stewardship and farm-to-school programs. The expanded tax credits to help offset rising labor costs and support on-farm investment recognize some of the major challenges facing

agriculture, and New York Farm Bureau commends Senator Michelle Hinchey and Assembly Member Donna Lupardo for their hard work and dedication to secure record funding for New York agriculture. The investment will support not only our farm families, but the greater New York economy and food system that we all depend on.”

**Northeast Dairy Producers Association Chair John Dickinson said,** “The Senate, Assembly, and Governor’s investments in family dairy farms are critical to the stability and security of our state’s food supply, and we thank Agriculture Committee Chairs Senator Hinchey and Assemblywoman Lupardo for their strong advocacy efforts throughout budget negotiations. By supporting research and programs at Cornell University that inform best management practices and efficiencies on farms, we can continue providing nutritious milk and food to our neighbors while working to preserve our environment for generations to come. We welcome Governor Hochul and state leaders to our farms to discuss the need for continued investments in our workforce, infrastructure, and young farmers. These conversations are critical to the sustainability of our communities, school lunch programs, food banks, important programs like Nourish New York, and the future for farming in New York State.”

**NYS Vegetable Growers Association President Brian Reeves said,** “New York’s vegetable industry serves consumers locally, regionally, and nationally. We must remain economically competitive with growers throughout our country and the world. The agriculture programs within the State Budget, including support to Cornell University for research on vegetable diseases and invasive pests, are essential for maintaining an economically competitive industry. Governor Hochul, the Assembly and Senate leadership, most notably Assemblymember Lupardo and Senator Hinchey, worked together to deliver a budget that funds a number of agricultural priorities. We are appreciative of their efforts.”

**Northeast Agribusiness and Feed Alliance President Danielle Penney-Stroop said,** “The agribusiness community serves New York State farmers and we are appreciative of the leadership of Governor Hochul, the Senate and Assembly, particularly Agriculture Committee Chairs Michelle Hinchey and Donna Lupardo, for prioritizing agricultural programs in the State Budget. Appropriately investing in our Land Grant University, our State agriculture schools, and the essential agricultural programs, will help our industry address some significant challenges that lie ahead.”

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