





Growing New York Agriculture

NEW YORK STATE SENATE MAJORITY CONFERENCE

Senator Patty Ritchie, Chair, Senate Agriculture Committee

The state of agriculture in New York is strong, and with this plan, the Senate aims to build and preserve our state's leading industry.

-  \$5.4 billion in sales
-  35,500 farms
-  100,000 employees
-  1 bright future

Reversing budget cuts

For the sixth year in a row, the Executive Budget includes **deep reductions** in programs designed to give New York farmers a leading edge over other states to grow our agriculture industry. Since 2011, the Senate has been the undisputed leader in restoring **more than \$55 million** in funding cuts and investments in cutting edge research administered by world-leading agriculture scientists at Cornell University, supporting education of the next generation of family farmers, improving environmental stewardship and protecting plant, animal and public health, including rabies prevention. This year, the Senate is once again seeking to **restore \$12 million in funding cuts** for these vital programs.

Investing in our farm workforce

New York's farmers need a strong and steady workforce both to meet existing consumer demands and expand into new markets that help the industry grow. Just as in other industries, farmers benefit from investments to stabilize and grow the workforce. The Senate supports **doubling the existing farm wage credit** to \$500 this year per eligible employee, and to \$1,200, when fully effective, to support continued workforce expansion, protect and create jobs.

Farming for the next generation



Across the U.S., agriculture faces its largest threat from the gradual aging of its farmers—and New York is not immune to the challenge. With the average farmer now more than 58 years old, the Senate is leading efforts to draw a new generation of ag pioneers, expanding programs in

schools and communities, like FFA and BOCES-based agriculture academies, and new farmer student loan forgiveness and Beginning Farmer grant programs that are helping dozens of new farmers dig into agriculture careers.

In 2017, the Senate will advance additional educational initiatives to help secure farming's future, including:

- Appointing a **Young Farmers Advisory Council** in the Department of Agriculture and Markets to draw on experiences and vision of next generation ag professionals in creating state farm policy;
- Expansion of **Pathways in Technology (P-Tech)** agriculture programs, creating opportunities for high school students to achieve credits toward college study in agriculture;
- New farmer “boot camp:” funding a series of **Future Agriculture Readiness Marketing (F.A.R.M.) Camps** to teach skills that help new and aspiring young farmers achieve success;
- Creation of a **“Seeds of Success” award** to promote and recognize school gardens and gardening programs across the state; and
- Expanding FFA to help prepare young New Yorkers to become **leaders in agriculture** and in life.

From The Ground Up

Helping Farmers Grow

When farmers grow, New York's economy grows, too. The Senate's Republican Majority Conference is committed to strengthening family farming and the communities and small businesses that agriculture supports.

- **Drought relief** – The lack of rain in parts of Northern, Central and Western New York caused severe crop losses in 2016, and forced farmers to absorb extra costs for weaker yields they did harvest. The Senate supports special grants for farmers who were most severely impacted by the drought and will work to dedicate new resources to help farms become more resilient in the face of changing weather.
- **One-stop farming assistance** – The Senate supports creation of a one-stop resource for farmers and ag professionals for assistance and answers on job training, compliance, marketing and more.
- **Ask the experts** – The Senate Supports providing farmers with access to a Cornell-based specialist to help farmers with their questions about employment laws and regulations.
- **Expanding opportunities through new markets** – Organic and specialty farm products are two areas where New York farmers can excel, and the Senate supports investments that help farmers meet certification requirements so that they can command premium prices for their products.

Connecting to New Markets

Eating “local” is more than a trend; it's helping to promote better nutrition and good health. The Senate supports initiatives that boost the connections between consumers and local food/farms.



- **Farm to School/School to you** – Removing obstacles that make it more difficult for schools to contract with local farmers to bring more fresh, local food onto students' lunch plates, and encouraging direct purchase of fruits and vegetables from school gardens through local farmers markets is a Senate priority.
- **Senior nutrition** – A program that provides special coupons for **free, fresh produce** at area farmers markets will once again be expanded to allow 120,000 low-income New York seniors to “eat local.”
- **Putting local on the map** – The Senate supports creation of an online “**Farm-to-Table Trail**” map that directs consumers to local food and beverage options, as well as a more robust farmers market website with up-to-date listings and information about hundreds of events in communities all across the state.

SUPPORT FOR COUNTY FAIRS



In communities across New York, **summer time is Fair Time**, and 49 county fairs provide a chance for New Yorkers to learn about agriculture and farm families in their area. Once again, the Senate is supporting additional investments in county fair facilities so that the summertime family fun and entertainment that's been enjoyed by generations of New Yorkers will continue far into the future.



Growing New York Ag from the Ground Up

Senate Majority Agriculture Highlights

Farm Wage Credit Expansion	\$60 million
Restore Budget Funding Cuts	\$12 million
County Fairs Capital	\$10 million
Drought Relief	\$3 million
Farm-to-Seniors	\$1.8 million
Ag Education P-Tech	\$1 million
Beginning Farmer Grants (Round 4)	\$1 million
Cornell Farm Employment Advisor	\$500,000
Certified Organic	\$450,000
Ag Academies:	\$300,000
F.A.R.M Boot Camp	\$250,000
Seeds of Success School Garden Program	\$200,000
Farm-to-Table Trail	\$100,000