



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

## **Seward Celebrates Agriculture and Literacy**

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March 26, 2009

ATHENS, 03/26/09 - State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I-Oneonta) attended Agriculture Literacy Day at Edward J. Arthur Elementary School in Athens today.

Senator Seward read to Michelle Whiting's second grade class from the book, "The Empire State Investigator: The Applesauce Bandit." The book was donated to the school by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Greene County.

"Combining agriculture and literacy is a great way to deliver two important messages to students," said Seward. "Through the power of reading, students are able to learn about and appreciate where their food comes from."

Crystal Lee Skoda, community educator with the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Greene County, was also in attendance. She discussed nutrition and also highlighted local apple orchards.

"Agriculture is so important to the upstate economy and our way of life. Educating young people on this topic is vital to our future sustainability," concluded Seward.

Agriculture Literacy Day in New York is sponsored and coordinated by New York Ag in the Classroom, which is a partnership of the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, Cornell University, New York State Education Department, and New York Farm Bureau. Ag in the Classroom works with cooperative extension educators, teachers, Farm Bureau members, and others throughout the State to foster an awareness, understanding and appreciation of agriculture and the total food and fiber system.

New York agriculture encompasses 25 percent of the state's landscape and generated \$4.5 billion for our economy last year. Currently, New York State has 7.5 million acres of farmland with more than 34,000 farms.