

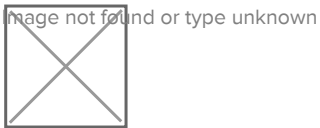


NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

Senator Young Named to Serve on Seven Senate Committees; Announces Initiatives and Goals for 2007 Legislative Session

CATHARINE YOUNG February 14, 2007



State Senator Cathy Young (R,I,C-Olean) has been re-appointed Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee.

"Agriculture still is the number one industry in our state and I am working to strengthen our farms. We are blessed with a rich variety of agriculture, ranging from wine and grapes to dairy, maple, apple and vegetables. There are exciting opportunities to grow the industry," Senator Young said.

The outlook for New York agriculture indicates both promise and problems.

"Agri-tourism and biofuels have great potential to build economic prosperity," Senator Young said. "At the same time, farms are faced with serious challenges. Low milk prices are plaguing our dairy farmers, and short and long terms solutions need to be found."

"Agri-tourism projects are an exciting new development in our state's storied history. The food, agriculture, and tourism industries are leading sectors in New York State's economy. They also compliment each other, and when combined, offer significant opportunities for industry and community enrichment and growth in nearly every region of the State," Senator Young said.

Food and agricultural tourism generates income, creates jobs, provides economic diversification and stabilization, and attracts tourists and the dollars they spend. From a social and cultural standpoint, food and agricultural tourism can help preserve rural lifestyles, increase awareness and appreciation for rural and agricultural heritage, increase a sense of community pride, and raise awareness of rural and agricultural issues. Environmentally, food and agricultural tourism often contributes to better agricultural environmental management, protection of farmland, restoration of agricultural heritage sites, and greater and better use of farmland, forests, and other agricultural resources.

The use and production of biofuels also offers unique possibilities of economic upswing for New York.

"Demand for ethanol and biodiesel in our part of the country is expected to grow beyond one billion gallons over the next two years," Senator Young said. "We have the opportunity to position New York to become a major player in the biofuels industry becoming the first large scale producer of biofuels in the east."

Perhaps the largest obstacle on the immediate horizon for New York agriculture is the current predicament dairy farmers face.

High fuel and feed costs, labor shortages and flooding have created a "perfect storm" scenario for many producers. The price dairy farmers currently receive per hundredweight

for their milk is alarmingly close to what they received as much as twenty years ago. Such prices are determined by what many consider a complex, cumbersome and outdated price control system administered by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Some dairy economists project a small price upswing in the coming year, yet prices remain significantly low while costs associated with running a farm continue to escalate.

To address this problem, Senator Young is currently holding public hearings throughout the state to learn what can be done, both short and long term, to help dairy producers remain viable in the face of such extraordinary conditions.

In addition to her appointment as Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee, Senator Young was also appointed to serve on the following Senate Standing Committees: Environmental Conservation; Health; Higher Education; Housing, Construction & Community Development; Insurance; and Mental Health & Developmental Disabilities.