



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

# **Federal Farm Assistance Step In The Right Direction**

James L. Seward

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ONEONTA, 10/02/09 – State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I-Oneonta) today applauded anticipated federal funding aimed at assisting struggling dairy farmers and renewed his call for additional long term solutions.

**“The federal funding provides a quick infusion of cash that will help farmers with the ongoing milk price crisis,”** said Senator Seward. **“Now we need to continue to work toward a viable, long term solution that will**

**reestablish our farming future in upstate New York.”**

House and Senate negotiators this week agreed to include \$350 million in federal aid to the dairy industry -- \$290 million in direct payments to farmers. Final approval of the budget amendment is expected next week.

**“This aid is a positive first step, but it is only a step,”** Seward continued. **“Fundamental changes in the federal milk pricing system are needed in order to protect our small family dairy farms and help them thrive for generations to come.”**

In recent months Seward has taken several steps to assist upstate dairy farmers struggling with low milk prices, including:

- o Requesting Governor Paterson release at least \$60 million in unclaimed American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) money to provide emergency relief;
- o Calling on New York State Attorney General Cuomo to launch a full scale investigation into the dairy industry with particular attention toward possible violations of price gouging and/or anti competitive laws;
- o Met with dairy farmers and agribusiness leaders several times to hear their plight first hand.

**“Repairing New York’s number one industry, agriculture, will pay dividends across our upstate economic landscape. We need to keep the pressure on both Washington and Albany so our farmers can breathe easier and continue their time honored work of providing our nation with food and protecting our land,”** Seward concluded.

Seward and Assemblyman Pete Lopez (R/C/I – Schoharie) will host a farming rally on Tuesday, October 6th in Cobleskill. Agricultural experts, dairy farmers and business and community leaders are scheduled to attend the event starting at 1:30 p.m. at the Schoharie County Fairgrounds.