



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Ritchie Is Named Chair of Agriculture Committee

PATTY RITCHIE January 11, 2011

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Freshman Senator Also Lands Spots on Committees Key to Central and Northern New York communities

ALBANY—State Senator Patty Ritchie (R,C-Heuvelton) was named Tuesday as Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee, and was assigned to several other committees with critical oversight over issues that are key to her Central and Northern New York district.

"Agriculture is our state's Number One industry—and critically important to the economy, communities and families of Northern and Central New York," Senator Ritchie said. "It is a great honor for someone like me, who was born on a family farm and understands the important role that agriculture plays in our region, to have the opportunity to work with farmers to strengthen farming and our local economy during these trying times."

"Farming helped build Upstate, and can help revive our Upstate economy today. New York's farmers are among the most innovative and resourceful in the nation. But they are burdened by excessive regulation and mandates that stifle their ability to respond to changes in the marketplace.

“My priority will be to work hand in hand with the farmers of Oswego, Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties--as well as state officials and colleagues in the Senate and Assembly, including Ranking Republican Assemblyman Ken Blankenbush--to find ways to get government out of the way, help their businesses grow, create jobs, rebuild our local economies and serve as models to the rest of the nation.”

Senator Ritchie said that, in addition to mandate relief for farmers, she will work to protect critically important agriculture programs, and seek stronger ties between state agencies, universities, researchers and individual farmers to help make family farms profitable and successful.

“As a lifelong resident of Upstate New York, Senator Ritchie recognizes that agriculture continues to be the State’s most important industry, and that the health of our family farms is critical to strengthening the region’s economy. I am pleased to name Senator Ritchie as the chairwoman of the State Senate’s Committee on Agriculture, and look forward to her strong leadership on all agriculture-related issues,” Senate Majority Leader Dean G. Skelos said.

In addition to her appointment as Agriculture Committee Chair, Senator Ritchie also was named to serve on the following committees: Commerce, Economic Development and Small Business; Crime Victims, Crime and Corrections; Cultural Affairs and Tourism; Energy; Higher Education; Housing, and Local Governments.

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Facts About Farming.....in the 48th Senate District

* The 2007 USDA Census of Agriculture reported 2,854 farms in Oswego, Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties.

* While that number was 307 fewer than in 2002, the USDA reported that farm sales grew by 40 percent in both Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties, and 25 percent in Oswego County.

* Farms sales totaled \$318 million in crops, livestock and dairy products in 2007.

* The 48th Senate District's agricultural industry is highly varied, with Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties heavily involved in the dairy industry, and Oswego County among the leaders in vegetable sales.

St. Lawrence County

1 in land used for forage crops

3 in value of livestock products

3 in value of other crops and hay sales

3 in value of milk and dairy products sales

3 in the number of cattle and calves 69,512

4 in corn silage acres

Jefferson County

2 in production of other crops and hay

3 in land used for forage crops

4 in value of livestock products

4 in value of milk and dairy products

4 in the number of cattle and calves 63,535

6 in corn silage acres

Oswego County

1 in acres of onions

6 in vegetables, melons, potatoes and sweet potatoes

9 in cut Christmas trees

11 in hogs and pigs

14 in aquaculture

14 in vegetables harvested for sale