



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

## Local Farmer Named to Statewide Agriculture Board

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***Senator Kennedy Recommended Appointment of Bill Zittel to be Voice for WNY Farmers on state Agricultural Health and Safety Advisory Board***

HAMBURG, N.Y. – William “Bill” Zittel of Amos Zittel and Sons, Inc. has been named to a statewide agriculture advisory board at the recommendation of Senator Timothy M. Kennedy, ranking member of the Senate Agriculture Committee. Kennedy joined Zittel, the Zittel family, local growers and produce sellers to announce the appointment Thursday at Zittel’s Country Market.

The Senate Democratic Conference gets an appointment to the Agricultural Health and Safety Advisory Board, which helps guide the work of the New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health. The Conference looked to Senator Kennedy to name a qualified candidate. Kennedy identified Zittel for the appointment because of the many contributions that Amos Zittel and Sons, Inc. have made in the Western New York community over the generations that they’ve been growing vegetables in

the Eden Valley.

The New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health (NYCAMH) focuses on enhancing agricultural and rural health by preventing and treating occupational injury and illness. The Advisory Board provides considerable input and feedback – notably from a farmer’s perspective – regarding the work and research of NYCAMH.

“Working in the agriculture industry takes hard work, dedication and a lot of sweat. My family has taken pride in doing this work for over 100 years in the Eden Valley,” Zittel said. “I am excited to have this opportunity to be a voice for Western New York farmers on this statewide advisory board and honored to help advise NYCAMH on their research and programming goals. I thank Senator Kennedy for connecting me with this opportunity and Minority Leader Sampson for accepting his recommendation for my appointment.”

“For generations, hardworking farmers like the Zittel family have been fighting through Western New York’s historically unpredictable weather conditions to help feed our community,” said Senator Kennedy, who was recently named to the New York Farm Bureau’s ‘Circle of Friends’. “Considering the importance of agriculture to our regional and statewide economy, achieving the vision of safer farms and stronger agricultural communities is a valuable pursuit both in economic and public health terms. As the fourth generation tending to his family’s farm business, Bill Zittel will be a prominent voice for our region’s agriculture community as a member of the Agricultural Health and Safety Advisory Board. I was proud to have the opportunity to recommend his appointment.”

“I’m excited to have Bill Zittel joining our advisory board,” said NYCAMH Director John May, MD. “The N.Y. Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health aims to enhance the health and well-being of rural people by reducing occupational illness and injury. This is particularly important with farmers, who face rates of injury and death on the job that are far higher than the average American worker. Having someone with Bill Zittel’s expertise and experience in farming is truly a bonus for us. He is particularly well-suited to provide us with valuable insights into the agricultural experience in Western New York.”

As a new member from Western New York, Zittel will improve the geographic diversity of the advisory board – which is mostly made up of Upstate New Yorkers

but lacking in representatives from the farther western points of the state.

At the announcement, the local agriculture community showed wide support for the appointment of Zittel. Area farmers, local agriculture advocates, produce sellers and distributors, among others, expressed approval for Senator Kennedy's recommendation of Zittel for appointment to the advisory board post.

Attendees included Eden Valley Growers, Inc. representatives, General Manager Gary Balone and Sales & Operations Manager David Walczak; David Phillips of Phillips Family Farm; Paul Laing, president of Laing-Gro Fertilizers, Inc.; Theresa Jackson, director of consumer affairs at Wegmans Buffalo Division; Rick Martinowicz, produce manager at Wegmans McKinley Store; Rick Wright, produce specialist at Tops Markets; Robert Mercurio, president and CEO of James Desiderio, Inc.; and Kim Johnson of the Family & Consumer Science Department at Frontier High School which is working on a program called "School Lunch - A New Frontier"

More information about the New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health is available at <http://www.nycamh.com>.