



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

TAXES, RED TAPE ARE TOP PRIORITIES OF NY's FARMERS

PATTY RITCHIE March 12, 2012

| ISSUE: **AGRICULTURE**

Agriculture Professionals Survey Results

Cutting needless red tape and lowering taxes are the top priorities of farmers in Oswego, Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties, according to a survey conducted by Senator Patty Ritchie, chair of the State Senate's Agriculture Committee.

Eighty-one percent of more than 100 farmers who responded to the survey chose reducing regulations and cutting taxes as top priorities, over increased assistance with marketing and research for farm products. And most said that their choice represented a change in priorities over the past year.

"Farming is our most heavily regulated industry, with more than two dozen different government agencies overseeing the day-to-day operations of our family farms, so it's no surprise that farmers in Central and Northern New York want to see some relief from needless red tape that often finds them spending more time filling out paperwork than focusing on their business," Senator Ritchie said.

"That's why I've made slashing red tape, along with reducing taxes and expenses for farmers, among my top priorities as Senate Agriculture Chair," Senator Ritchie said.

The survey also found overwhelming support for several of Senator Ritchie's legislative initiatives, including her "Let NY Farm Act," a comprehensive measure that seeks to cut red tape and ease the burden of government regulation on farmers, and is a top priority for the New York Farm Bureau.

Senator Ritchie is also the author of five new laws that cut red tape on farmers, and she has been working with local

farmers and state government officials on additional measures to help family farmers.

Among the survey's other findings:

- Farmers in Central and Northern New York are optimistic about the future of their businesses, with most expecting to grow in the coming year. No farmer who responded to the Senator's survey said he expected to shrink in coming months;
- Farmers overwhelmingly support continuing research, education and marketing programs that have traditionally been funded through the state budget. After years of funding cuts, Senator Ritchie led the fight last year to restore the programs to their previous levels, and is once again working to find funding to reverse proposed cuts this year;
- By a margin of more than two-to-one, farmers do not support a state Agriculture Department plan to create a new marketing assessment on dairy farmers, nor an Assembly plan to increase the minimum wage.
- Farmers did support, by a narrow margin, additional funding for workforce training for farm workers.

[Click here for more information about the survey.](#)