



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Ritchie WINS Fight to Reverse Cuts in Ag Budget

PATTY RITCHIE March 27, 2012

| ISSUE: **AGRICULTURE**

| COMMITTEE: **AGRICULTURE**

No Tax-Hike Budget Also Means No New Fee on Hardworking Dairy Farmers

State Senator Patty Ritchie today announced agreement with the Assembly to reverse all the proposed cuts to key agriculture programs in the new state budget.

It's the second year in a row that Senator Ritchie, who chairs the Senate's Agriculture Committee, succeeded in stopping cuts to agriculture, which already suffered a 70 percent reduction in state funding over the prior three years.

"Even as we work hard to cut state spending, it was critical to support funding for programs that help strengthen agriculture, our leading industry that helps create jobs and support local economies," Senator Ritchie said.

"As Senate Agriculture Chair, I am proud to have led the way, and stopped what had been years of cuts to these programs, many of which faced outright extinction in the last two budgets. Now, farmers and farm families will be able to continue to benefit from these programs, and the valuable research, education and marketing functions that they perform."

In their list of budget priorities, both the Senate and Assembly sought to restore full funding for only the New York Farm Viability Institute and New York Maple Producers. The Senate, led by Senator Ritchie, sought full restorations for nine agriculture-related programs.

Under an agreement announced with the state Assembly, the new budget will restore the funding for the following:

- Farm Viability Institute, \$821,000 restored, for total funding of \$1.221 million;
- Farm Net (Farm Family Assistance), \$100,000 increase to reflect increased demand for services resulting from last year's devastating floods, for a total of \$484,000;
- Northern NY Agriculture Development, \$200,000 increased funding and full restoration, total \$500,000;
- Tractor Rollover Prevention (ROPs), \$100,000 restored;
- Cornell rabies prevention (covers Western, Central and Northern NYS), \$100,000 restored;
- Long Island rabies, \$100,000 restored;
- Maple Producers, \$100,000 restored;
- Cornell Integrated Pest management, \$400,000 restored.

The budget will not include a request for a new research and marketing fee on dairy farmers. Dairy farmers in Oswego, Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties overwhelmingly rejected such a fee in a recent survey by Senator Ritchie.