



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Lawmakers team to help 'frosted' growers

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June 4, 2012

ISSUE:

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State Senators Patty Ritchie and Hugh T. Farley joined with Assemblymen Jim Tedisco, George Amedore and Pete Lopez to announce new legislation, the “Family Farmers and Apple Growers Relief Act,” to help apple growers and farmers who have lost a significant amount of their crops due to the extreme weather state area has experienced this year.

At the beginning of the 2012 growing season, New York farmers experienced widespread damage and loss to their crops as a result of an extremely rare and severe frost.

Preliminary damage estimates indicate that New York has experienced one of the worst statewide, multi-crop losses ever witnessed in the State. Cornell’s Lake Erie Regional Research Laboratory has estimated crop losses for grapes at 40 percent-50 percent, cherries at 100 percent, peaches at 90 percent, and apples at 50 percent.

While the level of crop loss varies based on the region of the state, elevation, and the crop's stage of growth, there is no doubt that there is a high probability that many farmers will face severe economic losses.

New York is the second largest apple-producing state in the nation and the state's 694 family apple farms employ 10,000 people and support another 7,500 jobs indirectly that depend on a robust apple crop, according to the New York Apple Association. The apple industry's economic impact on the state's economy is valued at \$233 million.

The "Family Farmers and Apple Growers Relief Act" would establish a specialized tax credit for the 2012 tax year that will allow a farmer to claim 35 percent of their crop losses.

"The wild weather we've experienced over the past year has taken a big bite out of the big apple of New York's economy: our family farmers and apple growers. Our 'Family Farmers and Apple Growers Relief Act' sends the message that our state government has the backs of our family farmers who are small businesses that are creating and supporting jobs across New York State," said Tedisco.

"Farmers are such hard-working people, but their efforts can be undermined by the unpredictable weather," said Senator Farley. "Farmers are major contributors to our economy, and they help preserve the land and open space. New York State needs to work with our farmers and assist them during difficult times."

"Because of this year's rare frost, farmers in New York state experienced one of the worst multi-crop losses ever," said Senator Ritchie. "This legislation will help farmers who have been hurt by the frost get back up on their feet financially. At the same time, it will ensure that the farming industry—one of New York's largest and most important industries--continues to grow."