



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

Seward Drives State Funding To Farm Safety Program

JAMES L. SEWARD May 9, 2013

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BOVINA CENTER, 05/09/13 – State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I-Oneonta) today announced that the 2013-2014 state budget includes, at his insistence, \$100,000 to protect New York farmers through continuation of the highly successful New York Rollover Protection System (ROPS) Rebate Program.

“New York farmers face countless daily challenges yet continue to deliver – providing us all with sustenance and fueling our state’s number one industry,” said Senator Seward. **“Making certain our farmers have proper safety equipment is crucial and that is why I have strongly supported the ROPS rebate program since its inception.”**

Funding for the ROPS rebate program, and other agricultural programs, was left out of the governor's budget proposal. Senator Seward, a member of the senate agriculture committee, led fellow upstate legislators in successfully fighting to reinstate the funding in the final state budget.

“Despite our state’s economic situation, you cannot put a price tag on the lives of our farmers. In the grand scheme of a \$135 billion dollar budget, the ROPS rebate program funding is a small expenditure, but it can mean the difference between life and death in the event of a tractor accident,” added Seward.

The New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health (NYCAMH) administers the ROPS program, now in its seventh year, which has outfitted over 1,100 tractors with the life-saving rollover protection.

“Our campaign has increased by ten-fold the number of farmers making their tractors safe by retrofitting them with rollover protection systems,” said Dr. John May, director of NYCAMH. “This is important because a farmer’s risk of dying on the job is eight times higher than that of the average American worker.”

Tractor overturns are the primary cause of these fatal and permanently crippling injuries. In the event of a rollover, the use of ROPS and a seatbelt reduces the risk of injury by 99 percent. Use of ROPS without a seatbelt is less effective, but still reduces serious injury by 70 percent. Tractors built after 1985 have built-in rollover protection, but many tractors in use today are older than that.

“We are grateful to Senator Seward and his colleagues in the state legislature for recognizing the need for this program and their continued support even in difficult financial times,” added Dr. May. “In our region we have been blessed with strong legislative concern for the well-being of New York farmers. This has helped make this life saving program an on-going reality.”

Senator Seward announced the state funding at Webcrest Farm owned by Edward and Donna Weber who utilized the ROPS rebate program to retrofit their 1962 John Deere tractor. “I am well aware of the risks associated with farming and firmly believe that safe practices are a must. NYCAMH’s efforts and the support from Senator Seward make it easier to safeguard against a tragic accident,” said Edward Weber.

“Two years ago, the New York Farm Bureau community was shattered when former Schoharie County Farm Bureau Vice President David Huse was killed when his tractor was hit by a car and rolled over on top of him,” said Duane Martin, president of the Delaware County Farm Bureau. “The Delaware, Greene, and Otsego County Farm Bureaus joined Schoharie County in a push to help provide full requested funding for the ROPS program for

NYCAMH. Senator Seward came to our aid, vigorously championing this program.”

“The ROPS program helps protect those who work the land and grow our food, fiber and fuel, and, in many cases, provides a safety net that wouldn’t otherwise be available. I am extremely thankful that Senator Seward and NYCAMH have recognized the importance of providing ROPS at a cost farmers can afford,” Martin added.

“This is a valuable investment in our farming future. I congratulate NYCAMH on their leadership in farm safety and stand ready to partner with them moving forward in protecting our New York farmers and ensuring agricultural productivity,” Seward concluded.

Farmers interested in more information should call toll-free 1-877-ROPS-R4U (1-877-767-7748) or check on-line at ropsr4u.com. The rebate amounts to 70 percent of the cost of purchasing and installing rollover protection on a tractor, a savings of up to \$865.

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Photo caption: Senator Seward visits Webcrest Farm in Bovina Center to announce \$100,000 in state funding for continuation of the ROPS rebate program. From left, Duane Martin, president of the Delaware County Farm Bureau, Senator James L. Seward, Donna Weber, Edward Weber, Dr. John May, director of NYCAMH.