



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Agriculture, Family Farming Will Grow WITH Senate Budget Plan

PATTY RITCHIE March 16, 2014

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Ritchie 'Young Farmer' Plan, Record Ag Funding Wins Bipartisan Support Senator Ritchie's "Young Farmers NY" plan to secure the future of family farming and encourage more young people to pursue careers in agriculture won bipartisan approval today as part of the Senate's state budget plan that also included nearly \$9 million in new investments in programs to help farmers grow. That amount is the largest increase in support for agricultural research, marketing and education programs in at least six years. Senator Ritchie's Young Farmers NY plan was modeled on successful programs in other states that are bringing young people back to agriculture. "To keep farms growing from generation to generation, we need to break down some of the barriers to young farmers, such as the high cost of farmland and equipment, education and red tape," said Senator Ritchie, who chairs the Senate's Agriculture Committee. "Approval of my Young Farmers plan by the Senate is a step toward ensuring that family farmers will continue to feed New Yorkers into the future." Young Farmers NY included a number of provisions intended to ease the passage of farms across generations, as well as help beginning farmers start their own successful farm businesses, including: · a \$5 million revolving loan fund to help beginning farmers purchase land and equipment, and tax credits to encourage retiring farmers to sell their business to another farmer, instead of a developer; · \$1 million in innovation grants to provide start-up funding for novice farmers · Farm Savings Accounts to encourage families to save for the purchase of a first farm; · An apprentice program for beginning farmers, administered by local BOCES; · Student loan

forgiveness; · Increased funding for high school based ag education. In addition to embracing the Young Farmers plan, the Senate also approved increased funding for agricultural programs, as well as funding for new initiatives. The \$9 million in added funding is a significant increase, and continues Senator Ritchie's efforts to reverse years of cuts that occurred before she joined the Senate, and which devastated many programs that farmers relied on to improve their bottom line and help their businesses grow. The \$9 million in added funding is a significant increase, and continues Senator Ritchie's efforts to reverse years of cuts that occurred before she joined the Senate, and which devastated many programs that farmers relied on to improve their bottom line and help their businesses grow. "These programs provide research and marketing assistance to farmers to help make their businesses more profitable and sustainable. New York's farm community is poised for tremendous growth, and we all have an interest in ensuring its success. That's why these programs and funding are so critical," Senator Ritchie said. The new and additional funding contained in the Senate budget plan includes: Apple Growers Association \$544,000 Dairy Profit Teams at Farm Viability Institute \$220,000 Farm Viability Institute \$1.1 million Genesee Agriculture Academy \$100,000 Island Harvest \$20,000 Turfgrass Association \$150,000 Wine and Grape Foundation \$287,000 Tractor Rollover Prevention program \$150,000 Rabies programs at Cornell \$460,000 Cornell Animal Health Diagnostic Center \$1.15 million Berry Growers Association \$320,000 Corn and Soybean Growers Association \$75,000 Honeybee research at Cornell \$50,000 Hops and Barley Research at Cornell \$160,000 Cornell Maple Research \$105,000 EEE program \$175,000 FFA \$158,000 Horticulture Society \$500,000 Local Fair assistance \$160,000 Low-cost vaccine program \$25,000 Maple Producers Association \$150,000 Northern NY Agriculture Development \$600,000 Onion Growers Association \$50,000 Vegetable Growers Association \$100,000 Farm Net \$516,000 Wood Products Council \$100,000 Christmas Tree Growers \$120,000 Harvest NY \$1 million