



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Senate Agriculture Committee Approves New Commissioner

PATTY RITCHIE May 6, 2014

| ISSUE: **AGRICULTURE, ORGANIC FARMING, DAIRY, LIVESTOCK**



The State Senate Agriculture Committee Tuesday approved Richard Ball—a native New Yorker and longtime farmer—as the new Commissioner of Agriculture and Markets.

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE CONFIRMATION PROCEEDINGS \(TRT 01:04\)](#)

“I first had opportunity to meet Richard during the recovery efforts following Hurricane Irene, when he was gracious enough to let me survey the damage sustained at his farm and offered suggestions for how to best help farmers rebound from their losses,” said Senator Patty Ritchie, who chairs the Agriculture Committee.

“I learned then agriculture and helping his fellow farmers succeed are Richard’s passions. I’d like to thank the Governor for making such an excellent appointment to this post and I’m looking forward to working alongside the new Commissioner to help our state’s largest industry continue to grow.”

A native New Yorker who is currently a resident of Schoharie County, Ball is a longtime farmer. He is the owner and operator of Schoharie Valley Farms, a 200 acre farm that produces a wide range of vegetable crops, fruits and greenhouse crops. In addition, he serves customers through an onsite farm market, known as the “Carrot Barn.”

At Thursday’s Senate Agriculture Meeting, Ball addressed those in attendance and spoke of his desire to create new opportunities for farmers. He expressed concern about the aging farming population and praised Senator Ritchie’s “Young Farmers NY” plan, a \$1 million initiative aimed at helping more young people enter agriculture careers through grants, student loan forgiveness, increased funding for the in-school FFA program and changes to the Estate Tax which will make it easier for families to pass down farms to the next generation. In addition, Ball’s comments also focused on connecting upstate farmers with the nation’s largest consumer marketplace, New York City.

The full Senate is expected to vote on Richard Ball’s nomination later today.