



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Ritchie Named to NY Farm Bureau “Circle of Friends”

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Receives Nod for Fourth Consecutive Year for Support of Agriculture Industry

In recognition of her strong support for our state's agriculture industry, State Senator Patty Ritchie was named to the New York Farm Bureau's "Circle of Friends" for the fourth consecutive year.

"As New York's leading industry, agriculture is vitally important to the economic success of our state. Not only that, but in many families, farming is a tradition, passed down from generation to generation," said Senator Ritchie, who chairs the Senate Agriculture Committee.

"As someone who grew up on a farm and the representative of a region that is largely rural, I am thrilled to once again receive this special recognition. As the 2015 Legislative Session approaches, I am looking forward to continuing to work closely with the Farm Bureau in an effort to further expand the industry and provide a boost to our hardworking farm families."

As Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee Senator Ritchie has led the charge to repeal costly mandates affecting farmers, restore budget cuts to programs utilized by those in the industry, launch new initiatives to protect the future of agriculture and cut red tape and to help ensure farming remains a viable profession in New York state.

This year, Senator Ritchie unveiled a program aimed at preserving our state's farming industry by encouraging more young people to seek careers in agriculture. Through "Young Farmers NY," an innovative new program designed to offer incentives to young and early stage farmers, those interested in pursuing careers in agriculture can receive assistance through grants and a loan incentive program. In addition, the program also includes reforms to the Estate Tax to help assist in the transition of family farms from one generation to the next as well as increased funding for in-school leadership programs such as Future Farmers of America.

Senator Ritchie has also been at the forefront of the "eating local" trend, supporting initiatives that encourage people to purchase food and products grown and produced close to home. In 2014, Senator Ritchie's legislation

to increase the amount of locally grown and produced foods purchased by state agencies was approved by both houses of the Legislature. The measure aims to use the purchasing power of state agencies and other levels of government to bolster the agricultural sector by providing an annual training program for small food and farm businesses interested in participating in the procurement process.

Recognizing the vital role that agriculture plays in our state's economy, Senator Ritchie used her role as chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee to turn around years of budget cuts to state programs that benefit farmers. In the most recent state budget, New York reaffirmed its commitment to agriculture by including record new funding for key farming programs as well as critical marketing, education and research initiatives.

The Farm Bureau presents its "Circle of Friends" awards each year based on legislators' records showing their support of New York Family Farms. Those who receive the recognition have demonstrated an understanding of the importance of agriculture in their legislative district, and how the industry impacts the economy and the future of New York State.