



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

## **O'Mara named to Farm Bureau 'Circle of Friends' for commitment to New York's farm families**

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**Elmira, N.Y., December 11**—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,I,C-Big Flats) has been named to the 2014 [New York Farm Bureau "Circle of Friends"](#) -- an honorary organization formed in 1990 by the state's leading farm advocacy organization to recognize state legislators who strongly support agriculture.

The Farm Bureau represents more than 35,000 member farm families statewide.

"The selected lawmakers from both the Assembly and Senate were chosen for their commitment to the hard working farm families in New York. Each friend has demonstrated that they understand the importance of agriculture to the people of their legislative district, and how farming significantly impacts the economy of this great state," said Dean Norton, President of New York Farm Bureau.

O'Mara, a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, said, "I've always been proud to stand up for our local farmers and farm families, and for a regional and statewide agricultural industry that's been such a tremendous foundation of upstate New York's culture and economy. It's a vitally important industry across hundreds of communities and remains a fundamental building block of a strong future."

Area Assemblymen Joseph Giglio and Phil Palmesano were also named to the Circle of Friends.

O'Mara said that he was honored to receive the recognition for his consistent support of New York's No. 1 industry. He noted that the farm economy generates more than \$4 billion worth of annual economic activity statewide and provides a livelihood for hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers.

Two key provisions of a comprehensive [“Young Farmers NY” program](#) that O’Mara and his Senate colleagues unveiled earlier this year were enacted as part of the 2014-15 state budget and recently took effect: the New York State New Farmers Grant Fund, and the Young Farmers Loan Forgiveness Incentive Program. The “Young Farmers NY” strategy, which O’Mara co-sponsored, combined financial and educational initiatives and incentives aimed at keeping New York State’s leading industry competitive for the next generation.

O’Mara also serves as one of 10 members – five state senators, and five members of the Assembly – on the joint, bipartisan [Legislative Commission on the Development of Rural Resources](#). The commission, commonly known as the Rural Resources Commission, was established by the Legislature nearly three decades ago to examine the impact of rural communities and industries, especially agriculture, on the state economy and to develop programs and other initiatives to enhance and protect the state’s rural resources.