



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael H. Ranzenhofer

Ranzenhofer Backs 'Grown in New York' Plan

MICHAEL H. RANZENHOFER March 10, 2015

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New commitment will help strengthen agriculture industry

State Senator Michael H. Ranzenhofer, member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, announced his support today for the “Grown in New York” initiative to help meet consumers’ demands for locally-grown food, support local farmers in their efforts to provide quality, fresh food, and strengthen rural communities.

"Family farms all across Genesee County are a major contributor to New York's \$5 billion agriculture industry. The initiatives proposed as part of the Grown in New York plan will help to grow our family farms and their employees by delivering more healthy, fresh food to our tables," said Ranzenhofer.

The 2015 Grown in New York plan includes:

Helping Farmers Expand Markets: \$1.75 million would be allocated to create up to five local transportation cooperatives where farmers can arrange to move their products to New York City and other major populated areas; and \$250,000 in New York State Thruway Toll rebate aid would help lower the transportation costs.

Continuing to Fund Vital Agriculture Research, Marketing and Education Programs: The Senate will propose \$10 million in funding for agriculture programs; and an additional \$10 million would support the long-overdue upgrades to Cornell's world-leading Geneva Experiment Station, where applied research is solving problems ranging from plant disease to improved agriculture practices, increasing yields and ensuring farm success.

Creating a Grown in New York Brand: \$1 million in funding would create a Grown in New York marketing brand to help consumers identify NY-grown and farm-made products that

contain at least 75 percent local ingredients.

Expanding Cornell's Harvest NY Program: \$1 million of funding would aid the statewide expansion of Cornell University's successful Harvest NY program. It provides hands-on and commodities-based expertise to assist family farmers, with an emphasis on identifying new export opportunities and growing New York's meat industry.

Expanding Young, New Farmer Initiatives:

- \$1 million would be allocated to the Beginning Farmer Innovation grants, and the arbitrary acreage cap that was previously required by this program would also be removed;
- To meet growing interest, there would be a \$1 million increase to the Young Farmer Student Loan Forgiveness Program. This program would also be expanded to include agriculture educators, as well as farm operators;
- \$700,000 would be given to support school-based agriculture education, including Future Farmers of America and BOCES-based agricultural science education;
- \$300,000 in matching grant funding for farmers would provide on-the-job training to aspiring farmers through the Cornell Cooperating Farm Apprenticeship;
- \$1 million would aid in the creation of a Farm Bank, which would link new farmers with public and private land owners to create better opportunities for new farmers; and
- \$1 million revolving loan fund would be created to assist eligible beginning farmers finance land and buy basic farm equipment.

Reaching Consumers of All Ages: \$1.8 million would expand the USDA's Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program to reach more seniors.

Getting Produce from the Farm and into Schools: While the Executive Budget proposal only includes a \$250,000 appropriation, the Senate's proposal includes a \$2.5 million financial incentive to encourage schools to choose locally produced, healthy food choices.

Focusing on Clean Energy: \$5 million in New York State Energy Research and Development grants would direct additional clean energy resources to farm-based projects, including the installation of solar technology and construction of new digesters.

FarmNet Farm Business Transition Program: \$200,000 in funding would create a new Farm Business Transition Program, operated through Cornell's FarmNet, to assist the smooth transfer of up to 75 farm businesses each year to new ownership.

Cornell NYOneStop Program: \$450,000 would create the first comprehensive program to help farmers navigate regulations and find information about programs and services that can grow their businesses.

New York is home to 36,000 family farms that contribute to the state's more than \$5.7 billion agriculture industry. The Grown in New York initiative will be included in the Senate's one house budget resolution. The full report is attached.

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