



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

## Agriculture Industry Gets Big Boost In The State Budget

CATHARINE YOUNG April 1, 2015

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*Strengthens connections between local farmers and consumers*

ALBANY – Agriculture, a cornerstone industry in New York State and economic driver in the region, will receive strong support in this year’s state budget, according to Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I- Olean).

“Across our state and the nation, consumers are increasingly demanding food that is fresh, safe and grown locally. It has been another positive budget for Southern Tier and Livingston County farms, as a number of programs that help promote our area’s flourishing agriculture industry, boost our state’s economy, and ensure our local farms and wineries continue to have a positive economic impact, all received support,” Senator Young said.

A key component in this year’s budget was a technical amendment to the Real Property Manufacturers Tax Credit, which will ensure farms that lease their property from a related family member will continue to qualify for the benefit. This is particularly important for farms that have generational transfer plans in place, where a younger generation farmer leases land from an older generation. This benefit was intended when the law was first written last year. With this change, farms that have generational transfer plans will be certain of their eligibility for the program.

“The average age of a New York farmer is 57 years old, and this heightens the need for greater involvement from young people who can carry on this proud tradition. By providing this simple technical change, we will help family farms pass on to future generations and help those looking to launch a career in the farm industry begin their own operations,” said Senator Young.

Another key program receiving funding is NY FarmNet, which received \$1.1 million to continue their efforts to help family farms throughout New York State. The program provides free consultation services to farms for a wide range of issues including financial guidance, generational transfer, other family issues, and mental health concerns. This funding includes \$300,000 specifically directed to address mental health. Additionally, a new business planning program, administered through NY FarmNet program, will help beginning farmers get on their feet and ensure their future success.

The enacted budget also adds more than \$12 million in additional support for agriculture that was not included in the Executive Budget proposal. Among the programs for which the Senate Republican Conference restored funding in this year’s budget are the following:

- Farm Viability Institute - \$1.9 million;
- Wine and Grape Foundation - \$1.1 million;
- Taste NY - \$1.1 million;
- Beginning Farmers Grant Program - \$1 million;
- Cornell Pro Dairy - \$1 million;
- Apple Growers Association - \$750,000;
- Harvest NY - \$600,000;
- Future Farmers of America - \$392,000;
- Berry Growers Association - \$320,000;
- Tractor Rollover Prevention Program - \$250,000;
- Dairy Profit Teams at Farm Viability - \$220,000;
- Maple Producers Association - \$213,000;
- Hops and Barley Research at Cornell - \$200,000;
- Local Fairs - \$160,000;
- Christmas Tree Growers - \$125,000;
- Precision Agriculture Studies - \$110,000;
- Vegetable Growers Association - \$100,000; and
- Cornell Honeybee Research and Extension - \$50,000.

“The Senate’s ‘Grown in New York’ plan provided a comprehensive road map to our final budget and my Senate Republican Colleagues and I fought hard to ensure these important programs received the requisite support,” said Senator Young.