



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

HOW MUCH REGULATION DO WE NEED?

PATTY RITCHIE October 24, 2011

Whether you talk to farmers from Long Island, Western New York or Northern New York, they all ask whether it really makes sense for more than 22 different state and federal agencies to have a hand in regulating family farms.

Take pesticide regulations.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency currently regulates chemical companies which produce pesticides for the nation's farms. Before a company can sell a pesticide in the U.S., the manufacturer has to meet a battery of national scientific standards and tests to prove the chemical combination will not harm human or animal health or pollute the environment.

The U.S. EPA has the toughest standards in the world aimed at protecting the public's health and insuring that farms do not unintentionally poison their crops or fields or introduce dangerous chemicals into America's food supply.

So ask yourself.

Do we really need to have New York State taxpayers pay to conduct a second, duplicate review of new products before our own state's farmers can have access to new cutting edge pesticide technology?

New York State's farmers are forced to wait a year and sometimes as long as three years before they can protect their crops from insects with the same technology that their competitors in other states are already using. While they wait for New York State bureaucrats to duplicate the federal review, our family farms lose part of their crops, cutting into their already slim profit margins, making it tougher to compete in our increasingly global marketplace.

Last week, as the chair of the New York State Senate Agriculture Committee, I held forums in Western New York and Long Island to hear the views of farmers and agribusiness leaders on how we can make the Empire State a place where our farms can succeed.

I heard dozens of wonderful suggestions like ways to help wineries, dairy farmers, specialty producers and food manufacturers that I will use to develop my legislative agenda for my Senate Agriculture Committee. Many of them thanked me for coming to meet and visit with them in Western New York and Long Island, saying it was rare for the Senate's top farm advocate to tour their businesses and properties to see first hand the unique needs of their regions.

But like the speakers who spoke at my September North Country forum in Watertown, they shared many of the same concerns and issues, urging me to cut the unnecessary regulations that make New York State one of the worst places to operate a farm business in the nation.

They argued that if New York State is going to revitalize its economy, we need to bring common sense to Albany and reduce the senseless rules that hamstring our farm families and make it more difficult for them to grow their businesses and add jobs.

If you have an idea that could help your family farm or agricultural business, submit your idea at my website: www.ritchie.nysenate.gov.

