



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## ADVOCATING FOR AG: RITCHIE NAMED TO NY FARM BUREAU'S "CIRCLE OF FRIENDS," RECEIVES NY FARMNET'S 2015 "FARM FAMILY ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR" AWARD

PATTY RITCHIE November 13, 2015

| ISSUE: **AGRICULTURE**



In recognition of her strong support for New York's agriculture industry and its hardworking farmers, State Senator Patty Ritchie has been recognized by two of the state's leading agriculture groups; New York Farm Bureau and NY FarmNet.

For the fifth year in a row, Senator Ritchie has been named to the New York Farm Bureau's "Circle of Friends," a designation given to legislators who 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.

In addition, Senator Ritchie was also recently named NY FarmNet's "Farm Family Advocate of the Year" in recognition of her unwavering support of NY FarmNet and its mission to help the state's farm families. In recent years, Senator Ritchie has advocated for funding to help the organization continue to provide services that are key to agriculture professionals, such as business planning assistance and support for those looking to transfer their farm from one generation to the next.

"Growing up on a family farm, I have seen firsthand how hard our farmers work to put fresh foods on the tables of people here in New York State and beyond—and that's what inspires me to fight so hard for our farm families," said Senator Ritchie, who chairs the Senate's Agriculture Committee.

"I'm humbled to be recognized by New York Farm Bureau and NY FarmNet for my efforts related to agriculture, and am looking forward to continuing to fight for our state's leading industry—and those who are helping it to grow—during the upcoming legislative session."

As Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee, Senator Ritchie has worked in recent years to support New York's agriculture industry by fighting back against proposed cuts to key agriculture programs, spearheading initiatives that help connect consumers with more locally grown foods and protecting the future of the industry by encouraging more people to enter careers in farming.

This year, Senator Ritchie advocated for passage of a state budget that included record support for agriculture, including a \$12 million addition to the Governor's original plan and restorations in funding to 33 different programs. In addition, the spending plan also included an expansion of Senator Ritchie's "Young Farmers" program, which seeks to address the issue of New York's aging farmer population by providing young people with incentives and support to help them "dig into" agriculture careers.

Senator Ritchie has also continued to advocate for initiatives related to the "farm to fork" movement. Included in the most recent state budget was funding for her "Grown in New York" plan, which aims to strengthen connections between farmers and consumers increasingly looking to buy locally produced foods. A portion of these funds will be used to establish a "food hub," which will give farmers and agribusiness owners an opportunity to bring products to a central location where they can then be transported to major cities throughout our state, including New York City.