



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

A Firsthand Look at the Future of Farming: Ritchie Hosts FFA Members in Albany

PATTY RITCHIE February 7, 2017



Senate Agriculture Committee Chair Senator Patty Ritchie welcomed students representing Future Farmers of America (FFA) chapters from across the state, including those in Central and Northern New York, to Albany Tuesday to share what she is doing to strengthen agriculture, as well as to hear from members about what they're learning today that will help protect the future of the industry.

Among those in attendance were FFA members from a number of local school districts, including South Jefferson, Carthage, Gouverneur and Belleville Henderson. Over 50 students from more than a dozen FFA organizations across the state joined Senator Ritchie for the first Senate Agriculture Committee meeting of the year, where they had the opportunity to speak about their involvement in FFA and how the organization has helped them to not only learn about farming, but also how to build leadership skills and become involved in their communities. Among the students speaking was Paige Thorne, who represented the Carthage Central School District's FFA.

"As someone who grew up on a family farm, I can attest that farming is a tough job—that's why I find it so admirable that the young people who visited today have decided to be part of New York's leading industry," said Senator Ritchie.

"Through their involvement with FFA, students aren't just learning about farming—they're also learning important life skills. These are students who set examples for others to follow, know the importance of teamwork, strive to make a difference in their schools and their communities and encourage their peers to reach new heights."

In addition, students were also recognized on the Senate floor during the day's session with an official Resolution, recognizing them for their achievements and naming February 18th to 25th "FFA Week in the State of New York."

Students also manned tables throughout the day in the concourse of Albany's Empire State Plaza, where they answered questions, handed out samples and helped to educate visitors, legislators and staff about the work being done by FFA to strengthen New York's agriculture industry.

In recent years, Senator Ritchie has made it a priority to support young people interested in agriculture, successfully advocating for a total of \$2.7 million for agricultural education

programs, including an increase of \$658,000 to support a growing number of FFA chapters across the state.