



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Helping Cows Beat the Heat

SENATOR PATTY RITCHIE August 10, 2018

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Senator Ritchie's Weekly Column

This summer has been one of the hottest, most humid, I can remember. While the extreme heat is forcing all of us to take some extra precautions, it is important we do not forget our animals—pets, and those responsible for producing the main ingredient for many of our farm fresh foods, milk.

With more than 55,000 dairy cows in Jefferson, St. Lawrence and Oswego counties, the quality of local milk is critical to making sure our tables have on them the very best milks,

cheeses, butters, yogurts and more. Unfortunately, as temperatures rise, so do the stress levels of dairy cows. A heat-stressed cow tends to stand more, eat less and drink more water. All of these reactions reduce milk production and quality. Fortunately, here in New York State, we have some of the smartest researchers in the country looking at ways to reduce that stress as much as possible.

The farmer-driven Northern New York Agricultural Development Program's Miner Institute, has been studying local farms and how cows react to hot temperatures. The Northern New York Agricultural Development Program provides research and technical assistance for farms across the region. This program is funded by the New York State Senate, and as chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee, I was proud to help secure \$600,000 in this year's state budget for it. This allows us to keep conducting these studies going and continue to get our hardworking farmers critical information when they need it. For more information on the study, you can visit the Northern New York Agricultural Development Program website at www.nnyagdev.org.

When studies like this help show that weather-related issues, such as heat-stress in cows, can cost our dairy industry \$1.5 billion a year, it becomes even more important to find ways to keep these research projects alive.

We all know how important it is for families across our region to not only have farm-fresh foods in their homes, but to know where those foods come from and the quality of the ingredients used to make them. That is why I will continue to do everything I can to help our state's entire agricultural industry grow into the very best it can be. To learn more about my initiatives to assist New York's hardworking farmers and other agribusinesses, please visit my website www.ritchie.nysenate.gov.