



New York State Senator John Bonacic

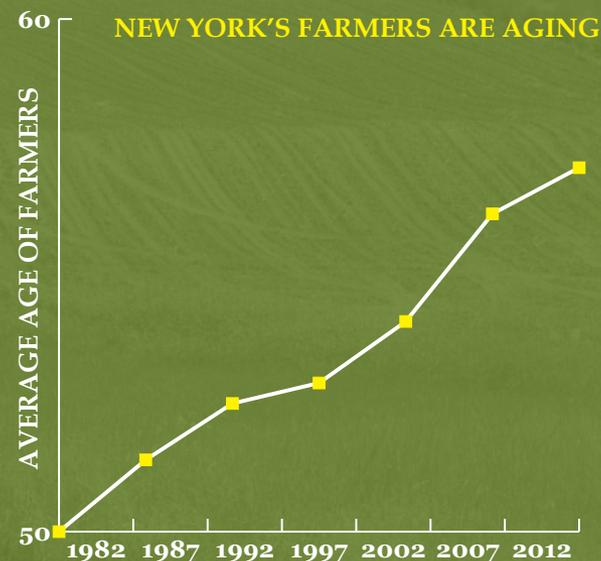


*While farming has changed dramatically since the early 1900s, family farms remain the backbone of New York's \$5.4 billion agricultural economy.*

*But life on the family farm is changing too, as evidenced by the rising age of New York's family farmers.*

*The average age of a farmer in New York is 57.1 years. For every farmer under the age of 35 in New York, there are now two aged 65 and older.*

*Our aging farmer population has been identified as a major threat to the future of family farming. We need to take steps now to attract more young people to farming, and continue to support family farming for the next generations.*



Source: USDA Census of Agriculture

# Why Farming Matters

The value of farming to New York's economy continues to grow, from \$2.4 billion in 1982, to more than \$5.4 billion today.

The increase is due to better technology that has allowed farms to become more efficient, and the introduction of new markets and products, from wine, craft beverages, maple, honey, fruit and berries, to staple products including dairy and livestock.

Growing consumer interest in food origins, freshness, local farms, and craft products promises continued strong growth in New York agriculture.





## Senate Republican Conference Support for Agriculture

*\$11 million in restored budget cuts and new funding for farm programs*

- 2% farmland tax assessment cap
- State agency "Buy Local" initiative
- Craft brewery and distillery laws
- Cutting red tape on farmers

## New York's State Senate Supports Family Farms

The Senate Republican Conference has been leading the way in support for New York's family farms.

In three years, funding for critical research, marketing and agricultural education programs increased by \$11 million. This new commitment to agriculture followed years of State Budget cuts that reduced funding nearly 90 percent.

It's one reason why the New York Farm Bureau continues to recognize members of the Senate Republican Conference with its annual Circle of Friends award.



# Young Farmers NY

The U.S. Agriculture Secretary has set a goal of attracting 100,000 new farmers over five years. The Senate Republican Conference supports this goal with the introduction of Young Farmers NY, a series of initiatives designed to encourage more young people to pursue careers in agriculture and preserve family farming for future generations.

Young Farmers NY is based on successful programs in other states, as well as innovative new ideas.





# Farm Ownership

The single largest obstacle to next generation farmers is the cost of land and equipment. Young Farmers NY plan addresses this in several ways:

## **Young Farmers NY Farm Preservation Tax Credit**

Up to 10 percent of the sale or rental price, allowing retiring farmers a more equitable return on their lifelong investment, and lowering the cost of farmland for beginning farmers.

## **Young Farmers NY Revolving Loan Fund**

\$5 million fund for start-up loans for land and equipment purchases.

## **Young Farmers NY Innovation Grants**

A \$1 million competitive grant fund with up to \$50,000 awarded to new farmers toward the purchase of land, equipment and supplies.

## **Farm Savings Accounts**

Special tax-free savings accounts, similar to college savings funds, that can be used for farm land and equipment purchases.

## **Estate tax reform**

Expansion of the Estate Tax exemption, as proposed in the Executive Budget, and previously endorsed by the Senate, will help keep farms in the family for future generations.

# Education

Modern farming relies on applied technology that is both complex and costly. The training required to become a modern, successful farmer can take years, and many thousands of dollars. Young Farmers NY includes support for aspiring new farmers.





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### **Young Farmers NY Apprenticeship Program**

Administered by area BOCES to provide hands-on training for new farmers under the oversight of experienced farmers.

### **Young Farmers NY Loan Forgiveness Program**

Provides up to \$10,000 per year for students who successfully complete degree programs in agriculture, and commit to careers in farming.

### **Funding for Agriculture Education**

The Senate has led the way in restoring budget cuts and increasing funding for agriculture programs. Young Farmers NY seeks to increase funding for school-based FFA to \$350,000.

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## Senator John Bonacic

### **District Office:**

201 Dolson Avenue, Suite F  
Middletown, NY 10940  
(845) 344-3311

### **Albany Office:**

LOB, Room 509  
Albany, NY 12247  
(518) 455-3181

**Email:** [Bonacic@nysenate.gov](mailto:Bonacic@nysenate.gov)

**Website:** [Bonacic.nysenate.gov](http://Bonacic.nysenate.gov)

