



**New York is agriculture.** Nearly a quarter of the state is covered in farms—our 7 million acres is more farmland than in all the New England states and New Jersey combined. And with more than 100,000 New Yorkers working on farms (in addition to hundreds of thousands employed in affiliated jobs, like food processing, packaging, trucking and distribution), agriculture is among the state’s largest employment engines. New York farmers also are leading producers of a wide range of products found in consumers’ pantries and on tables around the world. And the potential for growing New York’s leading industry is limitless.

The Senate’s Republican Majority has been proud to support New York’s family farmers and once again will be leading the conversation about the importance of agriculture to our economy, good health and future growth. “Growing Strong” is the Senate Majority’s 2018 agenda for strengthening farm families, increasing opportunity and creating new jobs on the farm with proposals to:

- **Expand markets**
- **Reduce production costs**
- **Invest in growing New York’s leading industry**

#### **CONTINUING HISTORIC SUPPORT FOR GROWING NY AGRICULTURE**

Since 2011, Republican Senate Majority-led efforts restored budget cuts, provided increased funding and created new initiatives that are helping farmers achieve new heights in production and efficiency. Budget restorations and new funding have totaled more than \$50 million since 2011, and set records three years in a row.

In 2018, the Senate Republican Majority will champion **full restoration of the nearly \$13 million in cuts proposed in the Executive Budget**—cuts to critical discovery, teaching and promotional programs that help farmers grow—and seek new funding for honeybee and

pollinator protection, promotion of emerging farm-made consumer products like hard cider and dairy, and support for farmers markets that directly connect consumers and farm producers. The Majority Conference believes that, as a major employer and vital engine of rural economies, agriculture deserves a guaranteed seat at the state’s economic development table, and will push to ensure that agriculture gets its share of economic development funding in the new State Budget.

### **A BUDGET THAT HELPS FARMERS GROW**

- Restore \$12.9 million in Executive Budget cuts and maintain record local assistance funding levels for essential promotion, marketing, research and education programs
- Double the farm wage credit to strengthen farmers’ bottom lines
- Increase funding and support for emerging sectors, like hard cider and craft brewing
- Provide funding for research and pollinator protection, including funds to promote pollinator-friendly plantings on local roadsides
- Restore and increase funding for programs that provide critical direct support to individual farmers, like Harvest NY and FarmNet
- Ensure that agriculture shares in state economic development investments to create new jobs on the farm, and in value-added manufacturing and production
- Provide \$5 million in capital for critically needed upgrades to outdated and obsolete buildings and equipment, as well as program funding to support America’s premier university for agricultural research and instruction, the Cornell College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS)
- Rebuild aging facilities at 50 local fairs around the state to improve customer comfort and experience with \$10 million capital investment

### **2018-19 EXECUTIVE BUDGET AGRICULTURE CUTS**

	<b>Change</b>
Ag. Child Development Program	(1,000,000)
Cornell Diagnostic Lab	(1,000,000)
Cornell Rabies	(560,000)
Cornell Farm Net (Farm Family Assistance)	(416,000)
Cornell Hops and Barley - Born, Bred and Brewed	(160,000)
Future Farmers of America (FFA)	(112,000)
Cornell Ag in the Classroom	(113,000)
Cornell Association of Ag Educators	(113,000)
Apple Growers Association	(544,000)
Wine & Grape Foundation	(307,000)
Farm Viability Institute	(1,500,000)
Local Fair Assistance	(160,000)
Pro-Dairy	(378,000)
North Country Farm-To-School	(300,000)
Maple Producers	(215,000)
Tractor Rollover Prevention	(250,000)
Apple R&D Advisory Board	(500,000)
Cornell Maple Research	(125,000)
Berry Growers Association	(60,000)
Cornell Berry Research	(260,000)
Christmas Tree Farmers	(125,000)

Corn & Soybean Growers Association	(75,000)
Cornell Honeybee Program	(50,000)
Cornell Onion Research	(50,000)
Cornell Vegetable Research	(100,000)
Suffolk Co Deer Fencing	(200,000)
Eastern Equine Encephalitis	(175,000)
Farm Viability Dairy Profit Teams	(220,000)
Genesee County Ag. Academy	(100,000)
Long Island Farm Bureau - Grown on Long Island	(100,000)
Island Harvest	(20,000)
North Country Low Cost Vaccines	(25,000)
Northern NY Ag Development - CCE Jefferson	(600,000)
Turfgrass Association	(150,000)
Wood Products Council	(100,000)
Farm-to-Seniors Program	(500,000)
Cornell Vets to Farms	(115,000)
North Country Ag Academy - St Law-Lewis BOCES	(200,000)
New York State Brewers	(10,000)
New York State Distillers Guild	(10,000)
New York State Cider Association	(10,000)
Farm to Table Trail	(50,000)
Cornell Sheep Farming	(10,000)
Farmer "Muck Boot" training camp	(100,000)
Seeds of Success School Gardens Program	(100,000)
Cornell Labor Specialist	(200,000)
Chautauqua Co Bee Keepers	(10,000)
EPF--Cornell Soil Health	(400,000)
EPF--Study of Incentives for Carbon Sequestering	(50,000)
Harvest NY	(600,000)
NY FarmNet	(400,000)
<b>TOTAL CUT</b>	<b>(12,928,000)</b>

### **REDUCE RED TAPE AND STRENGTHEN FARMERS' BOTTOM LINES**

A recent *New York Times* story reported that a single apple orchard must comply with 12,000 different regulations—and those are just federal rules! Farmers in New York are regulated by more than two dozen government agencies; compliance consumes countless hours and expenditures that directly impact farmers’ bottom lines. The Senate Republican Majority seeks to lower the cost of doing business by cutting red tape and lowering taxes to bring down production costs.

### **GROWING STRONG PLAN TO IMPROVE FARMERS’ BOTTOM LINES**

- Direct state regulators to study existing state regulations that are harmful to farming, unnecessarily increase costs and prevent farm success
- Repeal the ban on Internet sales for home processors, and allow them to make deliveries and sales to restaurants. Additionally, the Commissioner of Agriculture should conduct a long-overdue review of home processor rules that limit the types of products that home processors can make and sell, consistent with food safety requirements (S.7840)
- Allow breweries, cideries, distillers and wineries to cross-promote products (S.5853)

- Create a one-stop hotline for farmers seeking information on available state funding and resources to grow their businesses
- Clarify the authority of local IDA's to support producers and agriculture manufacturers (S.2388)
- Allow UTV registration for legal travel on roads from farm to field (S.7850)
- Provide a tax credit to food and beverage manufacturers who use New York grown grains, fruits and other farm products (S.7217)
- Launch an effort—"Maple One"—with an ambitious goal of overtaking Vermont as America's leading maple producer by issuing permits to allow farmers to tap maple trees on certain state-owned lands (S.7842)
- Create guidelines to promote pollinator protection alongside new development, along with other efforts to encourage bee-friendly, native perennial plantings on local roadsides to help reverse losses of bees and other insects critical to crop success (S.6339-A)
- Repeal the Highway Use Tax for farm-registered trucks, and exempt farmers from any proposal to add new "tolling" to enter NYC, as a way to bring more New York-grown products into the nation's largest consumer market. NY is one of just four states that still imposes a HUT
- Support initiatives to protect farmers who are at higher risk from Lyme and other diseases

### **SUPPORT DAIRY, NY'S LEADING FARM COMMODITY**

Dairy is NY's leading agricultural commodity. Almost 5,000 of New York's 35,000 family farms are dedicated to dairy production. Supporting dairy farming is essential to growing New York's agriculture economy.

### **REDUCING COSTS TO ENSURE DAIRY SUCCESS**

- Provide a tax credit for dairy farmers to encourage investment in facilities and equipment that will allow them to take advantage of growing demand for "value-added" dairy products, like flavored drinks, yogurts and other products that can satisfy existing, wide demand, such as in growing ethnic minority communities within the state (S.7851)
- Create a "Lifeline Dairy Energy Assistance Program" for dairy farmers struggling with a prolonged slump in milk prices, directing \$10 million in existing NYSERDA funds to install high efficiency lighting, pumping and cooling equipment, and to promote investment in energy-producing biomass generators and digesters. In addition to lowering farmers' costs and improving efficiency, these investments will help the state towards its goal of increased reliance on renewable energy
- Support the use and expansion of anaerobic digesters that provide clean energy from farm waste (S.7742)
- Provide a tax credit for craft brewers to encourage them to share their spent grains with dairy farmers to be used as cost-effective and nutritious feed

### **PLANTING SEEDS FOR THE FUTURE OF FARMING**

The future of family farming in New York—and across the country—depends on our ability to support a new generation of farmers to continue to grow and care for the land. In New York, the average farmer is now older than 57, and retiring farmers outnumber those joining the field.

The Senate's Republican Majority was the force behind creation of two highly successful initiatives, an agricultural student loan forgiveness program and the Beginning Farmer Grants program, that are helping young farmers put down roots in agriculture careers. In addition, the Senate Republican Majority has championed State Budget funding for agricultural education programs that have been repeatedly cut in the Executive Budget, including programs that are aimed at students from non-farm families who otherwise may never consider agricultural careers.

### **GROWING STRONG PLAN TO SECURE THE FUTURE OF FAMILY FARMING**

- Direct the Agriculture Commissioner to develop an online list of available state- and privately owned lands that could be sold or leased to beginning farmers through a NY Farmland Licensing Program (similar to a Massachusetts program)(S.7841)
- Recognizing a growing interest in farming among women, create a "Women in Farming" program to identify obstacles and impediments that prevent more women from pursuing agriculture careers. Since 2002, the number of women farmers in New York grew 14%, while the number of male-owned farms dropped 8% (S.7843)
- Expand agricultural P-Tech education programs that help prepare students for increasing technology demands of farming careers, restore funding for Beginning Farmer Grants that was cut from the Executive Budget, and increase support to establish new chapters of school-based FFA programs in response to growing interest in agriculture
- Set aside \$2 million in the Environmental Protection Fund to purchase "air rights" from farmers in areas where wind turbines could interfere with critical military training and operations, such as near Fort Drum, as a way to preserve farmland and open space (S.7817)
- Expand opportunities for success in agriculture by creating a special education certificate to acknowledge student achievement and training in the field

### **PROMOTING LOCAL FOODS AND GOOD NUTRITION**

Good food and good nutrition go hand in hand, and the Senate's Republican Majority has consistently supported initiatives that link consumers and local farmers as effective ways to increase marketing opportunities and promote better health. Examples include the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program, which provides federal and additional state dollars to low-income seniors to purchase fresh produce at area farmers markets, as well as funding to increase local products in school lunches.

### **GROWING STRONG PLAN FOR BETTER NUTRITION**

- Support efforts to recognize "New York" products, including creation of unique labels for products in every county of the state, complementing the Governor's proposal to highlight regional favorites
- Upgrade and modernize State agency websites to allow consumers to more easily search for local farmers markets
- Ensure that every farmers market is equipped to accept EBT benefits cards as a way to promote healthier eating for low-income families and seniors (S.3034)
- Expand the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program to make disabled veterans eligible for fresh produce benefits