

# Food For Thought . . .

## Facts about Farmers, Food & Agriculture in New York State

### JOIN THE FIGHT! PROTECT NEW YORK'S FARMS

Now more than ever, New York State's farm families need our attention.

Over the past 30 years, the number of farms in New York State has dropped from more than 48,000 in 1980, to just 36,352 in 2007. Extremely low milk prices, volatility in the credit market and foreign competition have since driven hundreds more out of business.

To put that in perspective: Every day over the past three decades in New York State, at least one farm has gone out of business—more than 400 every year.

Every day over the past thirty years, a family farm has stopped milking cows, stopped growing fruits and vegetables, stopped raising animals, and stopped contributing to our local and state economy.

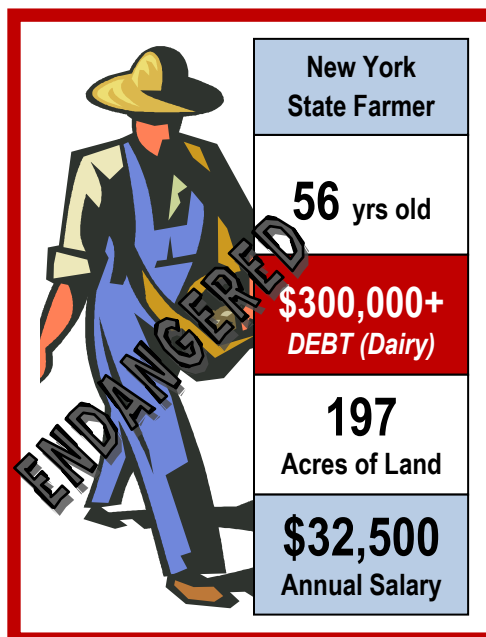
Enough is enough.

This decline has taken its toll on Upstate New York's rural communities. For too long, agriculture has been forgotten in discussions of economic development and taken for granted.

Join the New York State Senate Agriculture Committee in the fight to protect the working families who put food on our plates every day.

Show your support for paying farmers a fair price for their milk, improving our local farmers' markets, promoting New York products, and preserving the ability of our farms to stay in business.

To get involved, call **1-518-455-2761** or Join the Fight at: [www.nysenate.gov/committee/agriculture](http://www.nysenate.gov/committee/agriculture).



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# NEW YORK STATE SENATE Agriculture Committee



## What Do Farmers, Farming and Agriculture Have to Do with Me?

The simplest answer to that question is another question: **Do you eat?**

Of course you do. We all do. But how often do we think about where the food we eat comes from?

- **How often do you think about where your fast food hamburger came from?** *Is this domestic or foreign beef? How far did it have to travel before I bought it? Was the farmer required to adhere to important environmental regulations like those we have in New York?*



- **How often do you think about the people who picked the apples you snack on, or the apples that went into your juice?** *Were my apples picked in New York by workers who are protected by strict housing and labor laws, were they picked in another state, or were they picked in China without adequate safety, labor or environmental standards? Do the countries we import apples from—China, Poland, or Turkey—limit how much pesticide or say what kind of chemicals are used on the fruit I'm eating?*

- **How often do you think about the milk you give your children or that slice of cheese on your sandwich?** *How much of what I spend goes to the farmer? My milk was produced locally, right? Does every country, or even every state, produce their milk to the same standards as New York, where a farmer's milk is always tested to make sure it has no harmful bacteria or antibiotics?*



## Farms=Economic Development

In addition to providing healthy, wholesome and fresh food for you and your family, farms in New York State create and support jobs in our communities.

According to the US Department of Agriculture, New York's farmers sold more than \$4.48 billion in produce in 2007. These sales are significant, but the ripple effect into the community and the overall state economy goes much further than just the sale of agricultural products.

Every dollar brought in by the sale of farm products turns over about three times in the community. Economic analysis done by Cornell

University has shown that for every job created in dairy production, almost two more are created elsewhere in the dairy system. For New York—the number three dairy state in the nation, this translates to an enormous economic impact. For every dollar spent, another 81 cents goes into the community.

All told, agriculture in New York State supports hundreds of thousands of jobs, in just about every sector of New York State's economy, including tourism, banking, retail, wholesale, machine sales, wineries, feed stores, housing and real estate.

