

New York Farm Bureau

# 2017 STATE PRIORITIES







## Circle of Friends Award

New York Farm Bureau is a grassroots organization that does not endorse candidates. In order to recognize our legislative supporters, we have a Circle of Friends program that is awarded at the end of every legislative session. This award is given to state legislators who have a superior voting record on issues of importance to New York agriculture.

While the Circle of Friends award is not an official endorsement, it allows Farm Bureau to publicly thank specific legislators for their dedication and hard work on behalf of agriculture. During each session, New York Farm Bureau's Public Policy Division issues position statements on various bills relating to agricultural issues and our state policy.

The Circle of Friends award is distributed on the basis of a legislator's voting record and sponsorship of bills that Farm Bureau has either supported or opposed throughout the course of the legislative session. Only bills of statewide importance to farmers will be included within the Circle of Friends program.

New York Farm Bureau announces award recipients at the end of each year and presents the award to legislators at our annual Lobby Day in Albany.

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## A Message from the NYFB President

New York farmers are the most innovative, resourceful and efficient group of people I know. Every day, the fruits of their labor feed millions of people across the state, country, and around the world. Our proximity to the largest market in the country, New York City, combined with our abundant natural and academic resources, makes New York State a great place to farm.

However, it is quickly becoming hard to see how New York farmers will continue to stay in business in such a difficult business environment. The opportunity for successful transfer to the next generation on many family farms has become more difficult because of state government. Our state's agricultural community is buckling under low commodity prices, minimum wage hikes, excessive taxes, severe overregulation and rising input costs.

We cannot stand idly by as New York farms struggle to compete with food products being shipped in from across the country and around the world. We must work together to come up with thoughtful, sustainable solutions to make sure that New York food is produced by New York farmers.

By making New York's business climate farm friendly once again we will ensure that New York farmers are able to provide financial stability for their families and continue to invest in their businesses. New York farmers have invested generations of equity in their businesses, and they deserve a state government that is willing to do the same.

New York Farm Bureau looks forward to partnering with you on legislation and a state budget that will support our diverse family farms and rural communities.

Best wishes,

David Fisher  
President



# 2017 State Priority Issues

## **I. Oppose unworkable farm labor mandates, while making much needed updates and reforms to New York State labor laws and regulations and providing assistance with farm compliance**

- a. Oppose the omnibus farmworker labor bill and components thereof*
- b. Update housing allowances, tie them to costs in the community and allow them to be calculated as part of employee wages*
- c. Allow employees to pay their own utilities when provided housing by farm employers*
- d. Allow farm employees to request exemption from mandatory lunch breaks during the work day*
- e. Allow rent for housing provided to year-round employees by the farm to be deducted from paychecks, as long as both parties agree in writing*
- f. Provide funding for an agricultural workforce specialist at Cornell University*

## **II. Enact a Refundable Investment Tax Credit for farmers**

*This initiative would incentivize farm investment to meet the needs of global competition in a period of very low commodity prices and weather-related crop losses.*

## **III. Double the minimum wage tax credit for farmers starting in 2017**

*Increasing the agricultural minimum wage tax credit will help offset increased labor costs on farms and help them better compete with farms in neighboring states.*



## 2017 State Priority Issues

**IV. Support for funding for critical food safety, animal health and agricultural promotion and economic development programs in the Agriculture and Markets' budget**

**V. Support for funding of Environmental Protection Fund programs that provide cost-sharing of critical farm water quality and farmland protection projects that allow farms to reinvest in their farm businesses**

*a. Agricultural Nonpoint Source Pollution and Abatement Program*

*b. Quality Assurance/Quality Control funding for CAFO planners*

**VI. Provide and implement an institutional preference for New York-grown food for state institutional purchasing**

*This change would help increase markets, and hopefully prices, for New York farms across all commodity groups.*

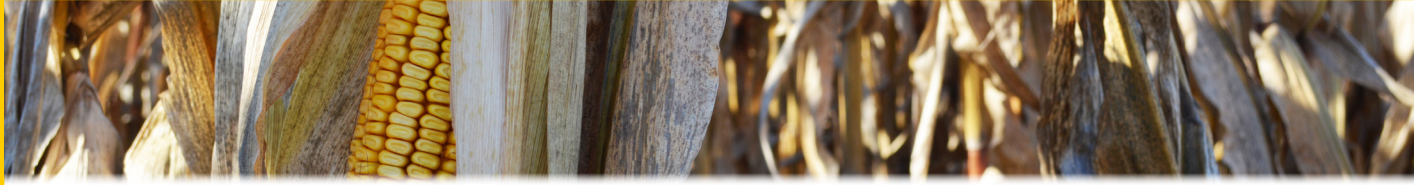
**VII. Support reform of New York's inherent risk laws**

*New York is one of the very few states that does not have such protections for equine and agritourism businesses. This legislation will protect the liability of equine and agritourism operations in cases when there is no negligence on behalf of the farmer.*

**VIII. Support a state tax credit for donations of locally grown food by farmers to food banks**

*This legislation would help farmers defray the costs of picking, packing and transporting their donated product to food banks and allow more locally-produced food to be shared with those in need.*





There is **35,500** farms in  
New York State and **7,200,000** acres of  
farmland.

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The value of agricultural production in  
New York State in 2015 was \$5.33 billion.

*In 2014 it was \$6.3 billion.*

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### New York's National Rankings

1<sup>st</sup> cottage cheese, sour cream

2<sup>nd</sup> apples, cabbage, snap beans, maple syrup

3<sup>rd</sup> grapes, cauliflower, milk cows, total Italian cheese

4<sup>th</sup> corn for silage, tart cherries, pears, milk production,  
total cheese

5<sup>th</sup> onions, squash, sweet corn, calves



## Top Cash Receipts in New York

1. Dairy Products, Milk
2. Cattle and Calves
3. Corn
4. Apples
5. Poultry and Eggs

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## Farmers Pay More for Labor

Year	Northeast Ag Labor Wage Rates	NYS Minimum Wage
<b><u>2011</u></b>	\$11.20/hour	\$7.25/hour
<b><u>2012</u></b>	\$11.43/hour	\$7.25/hour
<b><u>2013</u></b>	\$11.97/hour	\$8.00/hour
<b><u>2014</u></b>	\$12.15/hour	\$8.75/hour
<b><u>2015</u></b>	\$12.63/hour	\$9.00/hour



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