



NEWS FROM NEW YORK FARM BUREAU

Contact: Steve Ammerman, Manager of Public Affairs

518-431-5643 (Office) 518-573-3617 (Cell), sammerman@nyfb.org

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NY FARM BUREAU STATEMENT ON LEGISLATIVE APPROVAL OF ONE-HOUSE BUDGET BILLS

Budget bills address Farm Bureau priorities, including support for research funding, a refundable tax credit for farm investment and budgetary backing of the "Farm to Food Bank Bill"

New York Farm Bureau would like to thank the leadership in the Senate and Assembly, especially the Agriculture Committee Chairs, Senator Patty Ritchie and Assemblyman Bill Magee, for making the state's family farms a priority in their respective budgets. Many of the funding lines have been restored to last year's levels, which will make a difference in the support and promotion of the state's diverse agricultural commodities. This includes funding multiple research projects that the agricultural community depends on to confront growing challenges that exist on farms.

The New York State Senate also stepped up to the plate to fund many of the priorities of New York Farm Bureau including a refundable investment tax credit to assist farms looking to reinvest in this down farm economy. The Senate Majority is also supportive of doubling the agricultural minimum wage tax credit which will help farms better manage labor costs while attempting to remain competitive with farms in other states that have significantly lower wage rates.

The Farm to Food Bank Bill also received budgetary support for the first time in both chambers' budgets. This is a big boost to the bill that has seen bi-partisan support the past two years only to have the Governor veto the bill, in part, because it was passed outside of the budget process. There is no excuse for the Governor to pull out his veto stamp again, and we encourage him to negotiate funding in the final budget to support the tax credit, as he promised. It will allow farmers to donate even more fresh food to their regional food banks and pantries.

The support of the "Farm to Food Bank Bill" comes on the heels of New York State farmers donating more than 13.2 million pounds of food in 2016. The number is the second highest for any state in the country. The total was announced last month at the American Farm Bureau Federation's Fusion Conference in Pittsburgh, PA. NYFB participates in Feeding America's Harvest for All Program. This record number for New York highlights the generosity of farmers in this state, and food donations will likely increase with the passage and signing of the "Farm to Food Bank Bill." The tax credit on 25% of the wholesale value of the food, up to \$5,000 annually, would help offset a portion of the costs of labor, packaging and transportation required to get more food from the fields to those in need.

“As the April 1 budget deadline approaches, we are hopeful these items will remain in the state’s final fiscal plan. The past year has been a difficult one for the state’s farmers. From higher labor costs to lower commodity prices, coupled with extreme weather woes, the additional support could not come at a more necessary time for the hard working farm families of New York,” said David Fisher, New York Farm Bureau President.

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New York Farm Bureau is the State’s largest agricultural lobbying/trade organization. Its members and the public know the organization as “The Voice of New York Agriculture.” New York Farm Bureau is dedicated to solving the economic and public policy issues challenging the agricultural community.