

For Immediate Release:

June 26, 2015

Contact: Steve Ammerman, NYFB Manager of Public Affairs
518-431-5643 (Office) 518-573-3617 (Cell), sammerman@nyfb.org

NY Farm Bureau Statement on Successful 2015 Legislative Session

As lawmakers concluded the 2015 legislative session in Albany, New York Farm Bureau is pleased that it was successful in fulfilling a number of public policy priorities for its members. In the end, both the Senate and Assembly passed numerous bills that will support the rich diversity of agriculture in this state. They also held other bills at bay that would have harmed the economic vitality of this important industry to rural New York.

Counted among the many positive accomplishments this year:

- New reduced registration fees for agricultural use trailers (similar to the reduced ag plate fees for trucks)
- The requirement and development of materials for the training of law enforcement officers on animal cruelty laws
- A new state tax credit, up to \$5,000/year, for farmers who donate food to food banks
- A new fund to provide grants and low-interest loans to dairy farms for energy efficiency improvements
- A tax credit for 75% of tolls paid on the NYS Thruway for farm vehicles
- Protections when siting utility transmission lines to better allow landowners to be involved in the process and avoid the taking of land by eminent domain
- Renewing the 2% property tax cap
- Extending the STAR property tax relief program to farm dwellings owned by an LLC
- A new construction program providing grants, loans and loan guarantees for year-round farmers markets
- A new program to enhance access to viable agricultural land for new and beginning farmers and develop an inventory of state-owned real property that may be viable for farming
- Requiring the Department of Agriculture and Markets to establish a federal food safety compliance assistance program to help farmers comply with federal food safety regulations

In addition, New York Farm Bureau led the charge in its opposition to another hike in the minimum wage. It also opposed the omnibus farmworker labor bill and mandatory GMO labeling. Each of these would significantly affect the economic competitiveness for farms and ultimately the availability and costs of local food to consumers.

“These successes could not have been achieved without the members of this farmer-driven organization. Our farmers set the public policy agenda each year and then follow that up with a commitment to meet with their lawmakers and advocate for and against legislation that will impact their livelihood. I would also like to thank Senator Patty Ritchie and Assemblyman Bill

Magee, the respective Agriculture Committee Chairs, for their dedication and hard work for the state's farmers. New York Farm Bureau is the largest agricultural organization in the state and the outcomes of this session underscores its importance," said Dean Norton, New York Farm Bureau President.

New York Farm Bureau will continue to advocate for these bills as they move on to the Governor's desk for his approval.

-30-

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.