



2022 Governor's Candidate Agricultural Issue Survey Responses from Governor Kathy Hochul

1) Due to the land requirements for most types of agriculture, farms are typically located in more rural areas of the state. Given that a great number of New York lawmakers represent urban and suburban districts that may not have agricultural operations within their borders, how do you plan to help educate and influence urban/suburban representative's votes on legislation that impacts agriculture?

New York's farms are important to the State's economy and feed people all over the state. Nourish NY is a shining example of how we can connect farmers and food with people in need. Legislative support for the program was unanimous. I signed the program into State law and provided \$50 million to continue this critical initiative, a great example of how we can all rally around important ideas to boost our agricultural economy.

I was honored to receive the 4-H Distinguished Alumni Medallion from the National 4-H Council while visiting our State Fair. I actually gave my first public speech as a 4-H'er at the Erie County Fair when I was 10. From there, I built confidence and valuable life skills that I still draw from to this day, which I will use to make sure that agriculture is recognized for its important role here in New York.

2) It is no secret that the farm economy continues to struggle, with sky rocketing diesel and fertilizer costs, labor, both in New York and across the nation. What steps would you take to support farmers to help them continue to produce food to feed the residents of this state?

First off, there is no nobler profession or purpose than to feed people. We must be successful in meeting our citizens' basic needs, and ensuring access to food for all New Yorkers is essential for our society to function properly. I really want to thank the Farm Bureau and your members for what they do!

I proposed, and the Legislature adopted, three new tax credits in this year's budget to directly address the rising costs of labor and to support farm investments here in New York. I doubled and extended the Farm Workforce Retention Credit to help address labor costs. I provided a new Overtime Tax Credit to offset the costs associated with overtime. Finally, I raised the Investment Tax Credit from four percent to 20 percent of qualified investment expenses on farms.

3) New York farmers depend on the use of a wide range of pesticides to protect their crops from insect damage and disease. Do you support efforts to restrict farm access to such products? How would you ensure the continued safe use on farms?

My very first Executive Budget addressed this question. I doubled the funding for the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Program at Cornell to help develop more tools for farmers to be able to produce food. IPM is about developing ways to manage pests in ways that minimize environmental, health and economic risks. New York should be leading the country in developing these approaches and I am confident that with these additional resources, combined with our State's Land Grant expertise and leadership, we will develop more tools for farmers to deal with pests and diseases in cost effective ways that reflect the most current and cutting-edge science possible.

4) Farmers rely a great deal on the land-grant research and extension activities of Cornell University, as well as the State Colleges specializing in agriculture such as Cobleskill and Morrisville. How do you envision this system continuing in the future for the provision of practical research and extension activities to farmers and the general public and educating future generations of farmers and agribusiness leaders?

We have some wonderful universities here in New York that are educating our young people to be part of tomorrow's leaders in business who will make strong contributions to society. We have the best land grant university in the country here in Cornell's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, and a correspondingly strong Cooperative Extension Program.

More than that, we need young people to be active and engaged in learning about agriculture, in addition to developing their skills. We need to continue to foster agriscience education programming in high school and below. We need to continue to grow our FFA chapters and encourage agriscience educators to engage with young people. This is an area of particular interest for me, and I'm going to continue to support opportunities for youth engagement, such as FFA and 4-H.

5) New York farms rely upon smaller, targeted programs in the Agriculture and Markets section of the state budget to promote and market New York products, perform applied research for innovation and to work with farmers under stress. These programs have been and continue to be acutely vulnerable to state budget reductions. What are your views on providing appropriate budget funding for these programs?

This year's State Budget makes historic investments in agriculture and food production right here in New York. We recognize the importance of research and marketing activities for agriculture, as we committed \$52.9 million to various local assistance programs that provide specialized agricultural technical assistance, industry promotion, research, education, and

workforce support. Funding for maple marketing, Christmas tree promotion, vegetable research, apple marketing, among other initiatives, are all vital priorities and we were able to make sure they received support.

On top of this support, the Environmental Protection Fund provided increases in Farmland Protection, Agricultural Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Projects, significantly expanded funding for Climate Resilient Farms to \$16.75 million, doubled the IPM program, and increased funding for Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

We are proud to have addressed these funding priorities while still providing a fiscally responsible and balanced budget.

6) Transitioning to renewable energy sources is a large goal for New York State's Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act. Although implementing large projects, such as solar, furthers the state's climate goals, and presents financial opportunities for landowners, it produces challenges to farmers who need land to grow crops and raise livestock. How do you plan to balance the opportunities found in solar installation and thus renewable energy while also protecting agricultural farmland and our greater agricultural food system?

First off, solar is just one part of our renewable energy and climate change efforts. It is important to develop solar, along with other renewables, and to do so while we build out our electric grid to be able to handle this increased capacity. However, more to the question, solar installations can impact valuable farmland if not strategically located. This was a topic during one of my farm roundtable sessions at David Fisher's farm in Madrid.

Commissioner Ball recently convened a Farmland Protection Working Group to recommend strategies and facilitate input from municipalities on ways to minimize adverse impacts on agriculture. The group is continuing its work and I'm looking forward to hearing their thoughts. I am confident that we will find the right balance between investing in renewable energy while maintaining adequate farmland.