

2022 NYFB Congressional Candidate Questionnaire



New York Farm Bureau · 159 Wolf Rd., Suite 300, Albany, NY 12205 · 1-800-342-4143 · <http://www.nyfb.org>

Election Day is rapidly approaching, and as New York's largest farm advocacy organization, New York Farm Bureau invites you to complete the enclosed agricultural issues survey and share your opinions regarding a number of farm and rural issues impacting the New York agricultural industry. As you are well aware, there are a number of important public policy issues confronting farmers and our members need a clear understanding of how candidates plan to address these issues.

Your responses to the survey questions will be printed in the October 2022 edition of our newspaper, *Grassroots*, a Farm Bureau publication sent to our membership, industry leaders, and local libraries, with a circulation of close to 21,000. In order to ensure that your survey response is included in the October issue, please respond by Friday, **September 9, 2022** and please keep your responses to a maximum of 150 words per question as space is limited. Anything beyond the 150-word limit will not be printed. As always, it should be noted that a failure to respond, by any of the candidates, will be noted in *Grassroots* as well.

Please return your responses along with a headshot to: lwilliams@nyfb.org

Should you have any questions regarding the survey or farm issues in general, please do not hesitate to contact Lauren Williams at (518) 588-6338 or lwilliams@nyfb.org.

1. What do you think is the largest issue facing farmers in this district? What solutions would you seek?

On Long Island, the cost of acreage is very high and can be a barrier for young farmers and those ready to expand. I am proud to have been on the forefront of initiatives to address the cost of farmland through landmark purchase of development rights that reduce the comparative value of acreage and allow our farming economy to continue to thrive. In addition, the temporary worker visa system must be fixed so that seasonal workers are able to once again fill job openings.

2. One of the biggest challenges for New York agriculture is having access to reliable, skilled labor when domestic workers cannot meet this need. Delays in the H-2A program have frustrated farmers and led to loss of crops and unknown legal status of current workers are all concerns that farmers have when it comes to a dependable workforce. How do you see Congress moving forward to address agricultural immigration in a bipartisan manner?

We must provide comprehensive reforms to our immigration system, and particularly temporary worker visa programs. Moreover, I would encourage the Dept. of Homeland Security and U.S. Department of Agriculture to work together to devise a plan that addresses this critically important

need so that farmers have a dependable workforce and can continue to produce and receive the benefits of the market so they can continue to survive and prosper.

3. Despite growing and raising diverse agricultural products in New York, farmers still face challenges in getting food from the rural areas of our farms to the suburban and urban locations of so many consumers. What would you do to help bridge this divide? What efforts would you take to ensure farmers are able to have reliable markets for their goods?

Fresh, local food is a key underpinning of a healthy community, and nevertheless American food production and distribution face constant threats. I'm proud to have received Sustainable Long Island's "Getting it Done" award for establishing a locally supported farmers market in an area of Southampton Town that is considered a food desert. Transportation to markets is a challenge for Long Island farmers and fishermen. I supported the County cap on the gas tax to reduce transportation costs. I welcome additional efforts to support reducing costs.

4. Farmers are known as stewards of the land, and agriculture plays a critical role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions through conservation practices and renewable energy. As Congress works to address climate change, how will you ensure that agriculture is part of the conversation?

Because agriculture plays a critical role in the Suffolk County economy, the voice of farmers needs to be heard on all policy issues impacting Long Island. As I have with other sectors of our economy, I would ensure that farmers are always welcome at the table for critical policy decisionmaking. Having all stakeholders at the table is essential to creating good policy. I would work to require that the U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency work collaboratively with farmers so that farming interests are not negatively affected by climate plans from Washington. As I have done at the Town level, I would also support legislation that helps promote solar and wind energy in agriculture to help develop sustainable approaches to farming.