

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

Too many farmers across Upstate New York are hanging on by a thread. Input costs are too high. Labor is too hard to find. Regulatory burdens are too onerous. Prices farmers receive for their products are too low. And all of that takes a huge toll not only on farmers' finances, but also on farmers' mental health and well-being. Meanwhile, large agricultural interests continue to get bigger and more profitable, squeezing out small farmers and hurting consumers.

In the upcoming Farm Bill, Congress should aim to provide subsidies and credits to small farmers, address the massive consolidation and monopolization that is squeezing out too many small farmers and consumers, and invest in healthcare and infrastructure in rural areas.

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?

As counsel on the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee, I worked on the comprehensive immigration reform bill that passed the Senate in 2013 but died in the House. I support that bill's amendments to the farmworker visa programs to help our farmers access the legal, dependable labor they need. If Congress is unable to move a comprehensive reform package, I would sponsor bipartisan stand-alone legislation to advance the bill's farmworker visa provisions. Among the provisions I would include are:

- Creating a new multi-year farmworker visa and applying it to all agriculture activities, including the dairy industry.
- Moving the farmworker visa program from the Labor Department to the Agriculture Department to leverage its expertise.
- Providing wage subsidies to any farmer operating in a state that requires payment of overtime wages above a 40 hour workweek.

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?

Market access is a huge challenge for so many farmers across Upstate New York, both because there are too few options to get to market and those that do exist are prohibitively expensive. Among the policy proposals I support to address these challenges are:

- Waiving tolls on roadways for farm vehicles and vehicles transporting food or agriculture products.
- Using funds from the recently enacted bipartisan infrastructure law to invest in rail transportation so it can be a more viable alternative to surface transportation for go-to-market access.
- Establishing regional food hubs to bring together local producers and local buyers, particularly institutional buyers, essentially creating accessible markets for both buyers and sellers.
- Creating a new class of CDLs for drivers carrying produce to market, thereby increasing the supply (and reducing the cost) of that transportation.

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?

With Upstate New York's farmers' margins as small as they are, investing in conservation practices and renewable energy can be a significant and sometimes insurmountable financial burden. That's a problem not only for farmers but also for the public, which benefits when farmers engage in best conservation practices (and forgoes those benefits when they don't).

That's why Congress must provide farmers direct financial assistance to reward farmers for undertaking these practices and making these investments. For example, I support a permanent increase in reimbursement rates for cover crops, and I support increased funding and support for the Cornell Cooperative Extension to bring the most innovative and high-tech practices to our local farmers. If we're asking farmers to undertake environmental practices in the public interest, then the public should shoulder the costs of those practices.