

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?

New York's farmers, producers, and ranchers help provide the American people with the safest, most abundant and most affordable food supply in the world. The burdens placed on agriculture in recent years however, including workforce challenges, additional regulations, extreme weather, the COVID-19 pandemic, and much more, has made things so much harder for family farms. I think we need to address this confluence of issues head on, and in a bipartisan way. I outline the solutions I support further in my answers below, but this includes support for legislation to fix our broken H-2A system and help solve workforce challenges, bipartisan legislation to bring farmers to the table on climate change discussion, creating new markets for New York's agricultural products through both federal school meal programs and trade, and much more.

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?

I am hopeful that the passage of the bipartisan Farm Workforce Modernization Act in the House has helped break the logjam and finally brought Democrats, Republicans, and the

agricultural industry to the table to find a workforce solution for our nation's farmers. This legislation, while not perfect, would create a workforce solution for America's agriculture industry, finally open up the H-2A program to dairy farmers, and help fix our broken immigration system by creating a path to legal status for farmworkers. I strongly support continued negotiations around this legislation, including ongoing bipartisan discussions in the Senate to pass H-2A reform, and will be a voice in Congress for commonsense solutions.

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?

As we approach the upcoming Farm Bill and Child Nutrition Reauthorization, Congress needs to work in a bipartisan manner to help create opportunities for farmers to connect with consumers in urban and suburban areas. One area where we can and must make progress is with federal school meal programs. School districts should be reimbursed at higher rates if they source agricultural products locally, helping local farmers get their products in schools. We also need to return the full menu of dairy products to schools, including flavored and unflavored whole fluid milk, to make sure kids get the healthy nutrients they need.

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?

I have heard directly from farmers in the district who are facing the disastrous effects of climate change first hand, especially more extreme weather. First, we must stand up to radical voices in the environmental community calling for an end to animal agriculture. We must also ensure that efforts towards environmental reform also provide new economic opportunities for farmers. I support legislation like the Growing Climate Solutions Act, a bipartisan bill to make it easier for farmers, ranchers, and foresters to participate in carbon markets. I also support efforts in the next Farm Bill to incentivize greener new farming technologies and practices, from cover crops to digesters to water-efficient irrigation systems, we need to support actions that lead to cleaner environmental output.