

# 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](mailto: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](mailto:lwilliams@nyfb.org).

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

The largest issue I have heard from farmers in NY24 is the outsized influence that Big Ag has over everything from availability of land, availability of labor, what legislation is passed in D.C., to what crops are sown. The first solution that I will seek is ensuring farm bills, infrastructure bills, school bills are all required to have carve outs that specifically target family farms and rural areas rather than being overbroad so that large corporations eat the lion's share of the support.

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?

Migrant workers have become political pawns, used to rile up a certain segment of society. I will work to convince those in D.C. who are using laborers for political gain, that the safety and security of the United States hinges on the safety and security of our food production. I

will work to ensure that the H-2A program has the funding and staffing necessary to operate as it was intended.

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?

I will take a two prong approach to addressing this problem. First, we need to fix our trucker issue, by opening up CDL drivers restrictions for deliveries of perishable produce. Second, The Federal Farm to School program needs to be expanded and fully funded. Schools are open most of the year (some are all year) and have a need for at least two meals a day. There's no reason why local schools can't buy local products except that congress has turned a blind eye to our rural farmers. Oswego has a program that provides free bus rides to farmer's markets and the farmer's markets can now take SNAP payments. Implementing little endeavors like these nationally, can help bring farms back into focus as the foundation of America.

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 will work with farmers to implement green initiatives that don't bankrupt them. Agriculture is already a large part of the conversation, but big city politicians don't listen. Our farmers need Representatives in Congress that will fight to advance the ideas and solutions created by the farmers themselves. I will be the Representative that listens to, and never stops fighting for, the needs of the family farmer.