

Washington, DC -- On Friday, May 23rd, U.S. Representative Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) will tour a dairy farm in Auburn and a vineyard and apple orchard in Geneva to speak with local farmers about the recently-passed Farm Bill, which includes key improvements to help dairy and specialty crop farmers.

Farm Bill Discussion with Finger Lakes Farmers

Time: 10:30am to 11:30am
Date: Friday, May 23rd
Location: O'Hara Dairy Farm
1290 Chamberlin Road, Auburn, NY 13021

Time: 1:00pm to 2:00pm
Date: Friday, May 23rd
Location: Ventosa Vineyards
3440 Route 96A, Geneva, NY 14456

Time: 2:30pm to 3:30pm
Date: Friday, May 23rd
Location: Red Jacket Orchards
957 Routes 5&20, Geneva, NY 14456

Last week, the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate passed bi-partisan legislation to reauthorize federal agricultural programs for the next five years (the Farm Bill). After working steadily to protect the interests of local farmers in reauthorization of the Farm Bill, Arcuri successfully expanded and improved the MILC program, the federal safety-net for local dairy farmers, and secured increased funding for specialty crop growers, including local vineyards and orchards.

Arcuri was able to secure a new provision for the MILC program that will take into account feed costs as a factor in triggering price support payments. Rising feed costs, fueled by skyrocketing energy costs, are a continuing strain on local dairy producers. The MILC program's new "feed

cost adjuster” will be based on the price of corn, hay alfalfa, and soybeans – main feed sources for local farmers. The Farm Bill raises the payment rate under the MILC program from 34 percent to 45 percent, greatly improving federal support for local farms during price fluctuations.

In addition to vital improvements in the MILC Program, fruit and vegetable producers have their own place in the Farm Bill for the first time and will benefit from more than \$1.3 billion for new programs. The bill authorizes \$466 million in mandatory funding for the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, which provides grants to states to support projects in research, marketing, education, pest and disease management, production, and food safety. The value of New York’s tree fruit and grape production totaled \$329 million in 2006.

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