

Agriculture remains the number one industry in New York State - employing 12 percent of the workforce and generating over \$3.6 billion in economic activity each year. I will fight to protect the interests of New York's over 37,000 farmers in the Farm Bill reauthorization process.

In order to effectively fight for local farmers' interests, I have listened and learned from the agricultural community. Since taking the oath of office in January, my staff and I have had numerous meetings with folks from the agriculture community. With each meeting, I'm able to better understand what we need to fight for and how best to fight for it.

In addition, I hosted Agricultural Roundtables in Herkimer and Cayuga counties where I brought together local dairy farmers, organic and vegetable farmers, and representatives from diverse governmental, business, and educational agriculture organizations to discuss the specific needs of our local agricultural community. I have heard from local farmers on topics ranging from renewable energy sources to immigration, dairy interests to specialty crop programs. [Read More](#), [M](#)  
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I have cosponsored three critical pieces of legislation on behalf of New York's farmers.

The Equitable Agriculture Today for a Healthy America (EAT Healthy) Act would increase access for Specialty Crops, an often overlooked but important part of agriculture in the 24th district, to valuable export markets, funding for the school breakfast and lunch programs, investment in specialty crop research, and access to conservation programs for specialty crop growers. This bill would support New York's tree fruit and grape production, which totaled \$329 million in 2006. Our state ranks third in the nation for wine and grape production. New York ranks second nationally in apple production. [Read More](#)

The second bill would assist local dairy farmers. Dairy is the largest segment of agriculture in New York, with approximately 6,800 farms across the state, and New York ranks third in milk production nationwide. I strongly support extending the MILC program because I know local dairy farmers depend on federal support when prices are volatile. H.R. 1538 would continue the MILC program at the original level of 45% of the difference between the \$16.94 per hundredweight trigger prices and the Class I price in Boston, double current cap payments to 4.8 million pounds, and introduce a new price floor of \$15.58 for the Federal Marketing Order

System and index that price floor to inflation.

The Healthy Farms, Foods and Fuels Act would double the working lands conservation fund, provide grants and loans for farmers and cooperatives to build biorefineries, expand farmers market programs, and make the Conservation Security Program available to more farmers.