

New York State Assembly

Annual 2024 Report

**Committee on
Agriculture**



Speaker Carl E. Heastie
Donna A. Lupardo, Chair



DONNA A. LUPARDO
Member of Assembly
123rd District

THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

CHAIR
Committee on Agriculture

COMMITTEES
Economic Development, Job Creation,
Commerce and Industry
Higher Education
Rules
Transportation

**2024 ANNUAL REPORT
NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY
STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE**

December 15, 2024

Honorable Carl Heastie
Speaker of the Assembly
State Capitol, Room 349
Albany, NY 12248

Dear Speaker Heastie,

As Chair of the Assembly Standing Committee on Agriculture, I respectfully submit to you the 2024 Annual Report. I have outlined the Committee's significant legislation as well as the Committee's priorities for the upcoming 2025 Legislative Session.

New York is the leading agricultural state in the Northeast. Thanks to our farmers, New York has several products ranked in the top 3 nationwide, including beets, apples, maple syrup, cabbage, and milk.

New York's diverse Agriculture industry plays a vital role in our economy. According to a report by the Comptroller, our farmers grossed \$8.5 billion in income and contributed \$2.7 billion to New York's GDP in 2022. Research from Cornell University found that farming and related businesses directly supported 163,148 jobs in New York in 2019. Dairy is still the largest agricultural sector by dollar value of farm sales, accounting for 47%. According to the 2021-2022 New York Agricultural Statistics Annual Bulletin, the state produced over 15.5 billion pounds of milk in 2021. Additionally, the total production and sale of milk have been on the rise, showing increases in both categories from 2018 to 2021.

Throughout the 2024 Legislative Session, the Committee remained dedicated to promoting policies that would help New York's farms, food businesses, consumers, and animals. The Committee advanced legislation that passed both houses of the Legislature to ensure that farmers are not excluded from the benefits of the Agriculture District Law.

Animal protection laws are an important component of the Committee's work, and the Committee remains committed to animal welfare. This year, the committee reported legislation to protect horses from slaughter, as well as legislation to expand legal protections for companion animals.

While farming continues to face challenges, there are also opportunities for growth as consumers and businesses recognize the importance of having access to locally produced food. Important state programs such as, Nourish NY, grants to farmers markets, and others provide consumers with the opportunity to purchase fresh, nutritious, and locally grown foods. The State must be ready and willing to help farmers and their local communities through policies and programs. One of my primary goals as Chair is to make sure legislators from around the State continue to support our hardworking farmers who supply us with some of the best food and beverages in the world.

I would like to thank the members of the Agriculture Committee, the rest of my Assembly colleagues, and all the agriculture groups in the state for supporting our requests for funding in the budget and advancing legislation that is essential to the agricultural community. On behalf of the New York State Assembly's Committee on Agriculture, I thank you for your leadership and continued encouragement and support in addressing these important issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Donna A. Lupardo". The signature is written in black ink and is centered on the page.

Donna A. Lupardo
Chair,
Committee on Agriculture

Members

Donna Lupardo
Chair

MAJORITY

Aileen M. Gunther
Linda B. Rosenthal
Didi Barrett
Al Stirpe
Carrie Woerner
Billy Jones
Jaime R. Williams
Marianne Buttenschon
Anna R. Kelles
Amanda Septimo
Stefani Zinerman
Catalina Cruz
Brian A. Cunningham
Steven Raga

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Kenneth D. Blankenbush
Stephen Hawley
Michael J. Fitzpatrick
Brian D. Miller
Christopher S. Friend
John Lemondes

STAFF

Fletcher Whyland, Assistant Secretary for Program & Policy
Cameron A. Cupp, Principal Analyst
Payton Johnson, Executive Secretary
Amy Abbati, Committee Clerk

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I. Committee Jurisdiction

The Assembly Standing Committee on Agriculture is responsible for legislation that relates to the Agriculture and Markets Law, oversight of the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets and helping to craft the Department's budget. The Committee collaborates closely with institutions of higher education and other organizations to foster agriculture research and development through programs such as the New York State Veterinary Diagnostic Center at Cornell and the New York Farm Viability Institute. The Committee also works with farmers and their representatives to develop policies and programs to promote the State's agricultural products, support the growth of agricultural, food and beverage businesses, ensure a safe food supply including healthy livestock, preserve our State's farmland resources and protect the welfare of our companion animals.

As part of its legislative and oversight functions, the Committee on Agriculture investigates issues related to Agricultural District enhancements, food inspections and safety, farmland protection, farm product sales and marketing, agribusiness licensing and regulation, the humane treatment of companion animals, kosher laws, consumer protection and animal diseases.

Agricultural-related legislation is often considered by other Assembly Committees, such as the Committees on Ways and Means, Codes, Economic Development, Environmental Conservation, Labor, Consumer Affairs, and Energy, and the Committee provides input and counsel to those committees to make sure that agricultural interests are considered.

II. 2024 Committee Accomplishments

A. Support for New York's Farms and Food Businesses

**1. Agricultural Assessments for Cannabis Farmers
(Chapter 605 of the Laws of 2024 / A.1234 Lupardo)**

This Chapter clarifies that cannabis farmers qualify for consideration for an agriculture assessment.

**2. Agrivoltaics Research Program
(Chapter 73 of the Laws of 2024 / A.8496 Kelles)**

This Chapter clarifies that Cornell's agrivoltaics research program will be funded by appropriations made to the program and that the State may allocate future funds to this program.

**3. Beginning Farmers Advisory Board
(Chapter 230 of the Laws of 2024 / A.7020-A Lupardo)**

This Chapter creates the beginning farmer advisory board.

**4. Native Seed Program
(Chapter 630 of the Laws of 2024 / A.9043 Kelles)**

This Chapter creates a new program to increase the availability of native plant seeds in New York.

**5. Nourish NY Milk Procurement
(Chapter 632 of the Laws of 2024 / A.9259 Lupardo)**

This Chapter clarifies that whole milk, 2% milk, and other farm produced beverages are included in the definition of "surplus agricultural products" for the purpose of the Nourish NY program.

**6. Protecting Cider Producers
(Chapter 231 of the Laws of 2024 / A.10199 / Lupardo)**

This law allows producers of New York State labeled cider to seek determinations for crop loss if at least 30% of their crop was destroyed by extreme weather.

B. Department of Agriculture and Markets Administrative, Regulatory and Reporting Legislation

1. Live Slaughter Market Ban (Chapter 181 of the Laws of 2024 / A.9254 Weprin)

This law extends the Chapter 135 of the Laws of 2020, which bans live slaughter markets within 1500 feet of a residential building in New York City for an additional four years.

2. Domestic Animal Health Permits (Chapter 256 of the Laws of 2024 / A.10110 Lupardo)

This law requires individuals or entities who rescue domestic animals, cattle, swine, horses, cervids (deer), camelids, sheep, or goats to hold a domestic animal health permit.

C. Animal Protection Legislation

1. Racehorse and Livestock Auction Signage (Chapter 617 of the Laws of 2024 / A.6947-A Pretlow)

This Chapter requires signage be posted at every racehorse and livestock auction that notifies patrons that selling or buying a retrieved racehorse for slaughter is illegal and that selling or buying a horse to slaughter for the purpose of human or animal consumption is also illegal. This chapter also requires that the Department of Agriculture and Markets make a good faith effort to have an agent present at every auction.

D. Hearings and Round Tables

Public Hearing on Dairy, Seafood, and Emerging Crops and Products

On November 13, 2024, the Assembly Standing Committee on Agriculture held a public hearing to examine measures in the State Fiscal Year 2024-25 enacted budget that address current and developing needs in agriculture with a specific focus on dairy and seafood, along with emerging crops and products. Significant investments have been made in the dairy and budding aquaculture industries in New York State, but challenges remain. The Committee reviewed and received feedback on the cultivation of specialty and emerging crops and products such as hops, barley for malting, and industrial hemp for fiber and grain.

E. Agriculture Budget 2024-2025

In the SFY 2024-2025 Department of Agriculture and Markets budget, the Legislature provided \$60.3 million for local assistance, an \$11.4 million increase over the executive, and \$185 million for State operations. Funding for capital projects totaled \$90.1 million.

The Legislature demonstrated its interest in promoting and protecting agriculture by adding funding for programs related to marketing, research, education and support for farmers. The final budget fully restored or increased funding for programs such as Cornell's Diagnostic Veterinary Lab, Farmworker Child Care, Farm Viability Institute, Cornell College of Agriculture and Life Sciences research, producer associations marketing efforts, urban agricultural education, and farmland protection technical assistance. (Chart on pg. 8)

Agriculture and Markets (Local Assistance) Enacted Budget 2024-2025			
Cornell Diagnostic Lab		Farm Viability	
"Core" Diagnostic Lab	\$8,751,000	Farm Viability Institute	\$2,150,000
Cornell R&D		NYS Wine & Grape Foundation	\$1,225,000
Berry Research	\$263,000	NYS Christmas Tree Farmers	\$126,000
Honeybee Research	\$152,000	NYS Apple Growers Assoc.	\$1,241,500
Maple Research	\$151,000	NYS Maple Producers	\$251,000
Onion Research	\$71,000	Apple R&D	\$505,000
Vegetable Research	\$126,000	Turfgrass Industry	\$200,000
Cornell Hard Cider Research	\$202,000	Northern NY Ag Development	\$300,000
Cornell Concord Grape Research	\$252,000	Harvest New York	\$600,000
Hops Breeding Research	\$300,000	Electronic Benefits Transfer	\$139,000
Malting Barley	\$353,000	Farm-To-School	\$1,508,000
Golden Nematode	\$63,000	Hop Growers of New York	\$100,000
Cornell Education and Outreach		Ag Child Care (Migrant)	\$10,410,000
Ag- in- the- Classroom	\$500,000	Local Fairs	\$500,000
Future Farmers of America	\$1,250,000	Tractor Rollover Protection	\$250,000
Agricultural Educators	\$500,000	Empire Sheep Producers	\$60,000
		Local Fair Promotion	2,000,000
		John May Safety Fund	100,000
Farm Family Assistance	\$1,000,000	Farmland Protection	
Pro-Dairy Program	\$1,463,000	Farmland for a New Generation	\$700,000
Farm Labor Specialist	\$702,000	Programs for Underserved Farmers	
Dairy Profit Teams	\$374,000	NYC Urban Ag	\$250,000
Urban Agricultural Education	\$250,000	Black Farmers United of NYS	\$200,000
Equitable Farm Futures Initiative	\$500,000	Beginning Farmers	\$1,000,000
NYS Brewers Association	100,000		
NYS Cider Association	100,000	Cornell Small Farms Equitable Farm Futures	500,000
NYS Distillers Guild	100,000	Pace University Pro Bono Legal Services	225,000
Cornell Pro-Livestock	250,000	Minorities in Ag, Natural Resources	50,000
Cornell University Small Farms	500,000	Farmers Market Resiliency Grant	700,000
Cornell University Hemp Development	1,000,000	Urban Farms and Community Gardens Grant	2,325,000
Taste NY	5,750,000	Economically and Socially Disadvantaged Farmers	1,000,000
Grow NY	2,020,000	Beginning Farmers	1,000,000
Grow NYC 21 Food Access Sites	750,000	Economically/Socially Disadvantaged Farmers	\$1,000,000
Northeast Organic Farming Association	200,000		
Cannabis Association of NY	100,000		
Cannabis Growers	100,000		
Total	\$60,312,000		

III. 2025 Outlook

In 2024, the Standing Committee on Agriculture continued to work to provide state financial support and reduce administrative burdens for farmers and other businesses; foster research to help farmers boost productivity; assist food businesses; protect agricultural land; and protect pets and their owners. In the coming year, the Committee expects to continue to address issues of concern to farmers and related business owners, consumers, and animal advocates. The Committee will work to help assure that our farmers can succeed under difficult economic and changing climate conditions and capitalize on marketplace opportunities.

APPENDIX A
SUMMARY OF ACTIONS ON ALL BILLS
REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
DURING THE 2024 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Final Action	Assembly Bills	Senate Bills	Total Bills
<u>BILLS REPORTED FAVORABLE TO:</u>			
Codes	5	0	5
Judiciary	0	0	0
Ways & Means	9	0	9
Rules	6	0	6
Floor	1	0	1
Total	21	0	21
<u>COMMITTEE ACTION</u>			
Bills Held for Consideration	3	0	3
Bills Defeated in Committee	0	0	0
Bills Having Enacting Clauses Stricken	3	0	3
<u>BILLS REMAINING IN COMMITTEE</u>	102	14	116
<u>BILLS HAVING COMMITTEE REFERENCE CHANGED</u>	0	0	
TOTAL NUMBER OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD	5		

APPENDIX B
NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE CHAPTERS

Assembly Bill #	Sponsor	Description
A.1234	Lupardo	Chapter 605 of the Laws of 2024 clarifies that cannabis farmers are covered by right to farm laws and qualify for consideration for an agriculture assessment.
A.6947-A	Pretlow	Chapter 617 of the Laws of 2024 requires signage be posted at animal auctions and requires that the Department of Agriculture and Markets make an effort to have an agent presence at those auctions.
A.7020-A	Lupardo	Chapter 230 of the Laws of 2024 creates the beginning farmer advisory board.
A.8496	Kelles	Chapter 73 of the Laws of 2024 makes clarification regarding state funding of Cornell University's Agrivoltaics research program and sets forth a sunset date.
A.9043	Kelles	Chapter 630 of the Laws of 2024 creates a new program aimed at increasing the availability of native plant seeds in New York.
A.9254	Weprin	Chapter 181 of the Laws of 2024 extends a provision of law that pertains to the licensing of live slaughter markets.
A.9259	Lupardo	Chapter 632 of the Laws of 2024 clarifies that whole milk, 2% milk, and other farm produced beverages are included in the definition of "surplus agricultural products" for the purpose of the Nourish NY program.
A.10110	Lupardo	Chapter 256 of the Laws of 2024 requires individuals or entities who rescue domestic animals, cattle, swine, horses, cervids (deer), camelids, sheep, or goats to hold a domestic animal health permit.
A.10199	Rules (Lupardo)	Chapter 231 of the Laws of 2024 allows producers of New York State labeled cider to seek determinations for crop loss in certain circumstances.