

# Leader Letter

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The latest agricultural policy news  
from New York Farm Bureau

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## STATE

### State Budget Won't Be On Time

Both the Senate and Assembly have returned to their districts for the scheduled holiday, which is slated to end on April 7. Barring a last-minute flurry of negotiations, New York will not meet its April 1 budget deadline. In the meantime, both houses have passed a bare bones, two-week budget extender that will begin on April 1. Before leaving town, each house passed their "one-house" budget resolutions and remain very far apart on how to balance the \$9.5 billion deficit. The resolutions map out negotiating positions for how the Senate and Assembly each plan on addressing the state budget. During the recess, staff will continue to try to hammer out a budget framework to keep the process moving forward. The provisions of the resolutions impacting agriculture are listed below, along with the budget numbers from last year and the Governor's proposed budget that was released in January for comparison.

### Dept. of Agriculture & Markets Budget

Program	2009-2010	Gov. 10-11 Budget	Senate	Assembly
Farm Viability Institute .....	\$3,242,000.....	\$0.....	\$3,000,000 .....	\$1,366,000
Farm Viability Reappropriations.....	N/A.....	Removed.....	Restored .....	Restored
Center for Dairy Excellence .....	\$376,000.....	\$0.....	\$200,000 .....	\$150,000
Wine & Grape Foundation .....	\$1,000,000.....	\$0.....	\$950,000 .....	\$713,000
IPM.....	\$800,000.....	\$0.....	\$800,000 .....	\$500,000
Local Fairs.....	\$453,000.....	\$0.....	\$453,000 .....	\$340,000
Northern NY Ag. Development Fund ...	\$300,000.....	\$0.....	\$300,000 .....	\$0
Maple Promotion.....	\$150,000.....	\$0.....	\$141,000 .....	\$75,000
Apple Promotion .....	\$400,000.....	\$0.....	\$100,000 .....	\$206,000
Ag in the Classroom.....	\$112,000.....	\$0.....	\$112,000 .....	\$25,000
Ag Educators.....	\$96,000.....	\$0.....	\$96,000 .....	\$0
Tractor Rollover Protection (ROPS) .....	\$0.....	\$0.....	\$94,000 .....	\$0

### Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) Budget

Program	2009-2010	Gov. 10-11 Budget	Senate	Assembly
Total .....	\$222 million.....	\$143 million.....	\$222 million .....	\$168 million
—Nonpoint Pollution Source and Abatement		\$14 million	TBA*	\$10,278,000
—Farmland Protection Program		\$10.5 million	TBA*	\$15,608,000
—Soil and Water Conservation Districts		\$3 million	TBA*	\$3 million
—Agricultural Plastics Recycling Program		\$450,000	TBA*	\$275,000
—Invasive Species		\$4.8 million	TBA*	\$4.8 million

\* Senate did not line out EPF categories in their budget resolution

### E-Lobby Now On State Budget

**Budget negotiations are ongoing and it is important that agriculture stand up for the provisions we would like to see in the final state budget.** There are more than a dozen letters at NYFB's E-Lobby Center now that urge the legislature to fund important programs for farmers and the food system. Go online now and take the time to send a few letters on topics that concern you while we still have the ability to influence the budget process. Visit [www.nyfb.org](http://www.nyfb.org) and click on the black E-Lobby box on the right-hand side of the homepage. Make a difference today!

### Dispose Of Old Chemicals Through Clean Sweep

The Spring 2010 CleanSweepNY collection of waste chemicals will be held for the counties of Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Hamilton, Saratoga, Warren and Washington in DEC's Region 5. Collections are held at NYS Department of Transportation locations in Plattsburg on May 4, in Elizabethtown on May 5 and in Hudson Falls on May 6. Pre-registration is required. Call 1-877-793-3769 or e-mail [info@cleansweepny.org](mailto:info@cleansweepny.org) for registration information or questions.

### Equine Business Seminar Announced

Morrisville College will be offering a full-day seminar called, "Spurring the Growth of Your Equine Business" on Saturday, April 24, 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Topics include start-up funding, financial recordkeeping and marketing. Register by April 2; \$25 includes lunch and materials. For more information, contact Professor Sheila Marshman at 315-684-6106 or email [MarshmSA@morrisville.edu](mailto:MarshmSA@morrisville.edu).

## NATIONAL

### President Signs Landmark Health Care Bill

The Affordable Health Care for America Act, which will enact sweeping changes to the nation's health care system, was signed by the President on March 23. This landmark bill passed the House by a vote of 219-212. The Senate passed the bill earlier in December with a party-line vote. Republicans and some conservative Democrats voted against the measure in the House. Additional changes are to be made to the health care reform package when the Senate will take up final revisions to the health care measure under the parliamentary procedure known as reconciliation. Senate Republicans have vowed to block reconciliation in an effort to derail the Democrats' historic policy achievement. NYFB is currently analyzing the new health care reform law and will provide a summary on [www.NYFB.org](http://www.NYFB.org) as soon as it is available. In the meantime, we remain concerned about the costs of this bill, but there are several items that will help with part-time

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and seasonal workers. The requirement to provide coverage for employees—and that’s for businesses with over 50 people—is only for full-time employees who work more than 30 hours a week. There’s also relief in the bill for those who hire seasonal workers who work on a farm or in a business less than 120 days per year.

## Dairy Antitrust Hearing In Batavia

Christine A. Varney, Assistant Attorney General from the Department of Justice's (DOJ) Antitrust Division, and Senator Chuck Schumer held a meeting to hear from the dairy community regarding potential anticompetitive practices in the dairy industry on Monday, March 29. Specific areas of focus included excessive market concentration, marketplace transparency and vertical integration in the dairy industry. NYFB testimony on this issue can be viewed at [www.nyfb.org](http://www.nyfb.org) under Legislative Affairs, [Testimony/Comments](#).

## Aubertine Writes President On Trade Issues

State Senator Darrel Aubertine recently sent a letter to President Barack Obama regarding trade talks between the U.S. and New Zealand. Aubertine cautioned the President not to allow free access to the U.S. market for meat and milk. “Granting greater access to our markets for these food products will further devastate struggling dairy and livestock industries, and in turn, further impact our national economy, especially in New York,” he wrote. He cited that New Zealand has set itself up for an agricultural trade surplus with as many dairy and beef cows as the nation’s population and four times as many sheep as people.

## USDA Dairy Committee Meets

The first meeting of USDA’s newly established Dairy Industry Advisory Committee will be held April 13-15 in Washington, D.C. The Committee was chartered to review farm milk price volatility and dairy farmer profitability and will make recommendations to Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack on how USDA can best address these issues to meet the dairy industry's needs, both short and long-term. Bill Young of AFBF and Dr. Andy Novakovic of Cornell’s Dairy Economics program both sit on the committee. Find more information at [www.fsa.usda.gov/diac](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/diac).

## Food Safety Legislation Needs Amendment

The FDA Food Safety Modernization Act, S.510, may be taken up by the full Senate for a vote in the near future. This legislation would increase government oversight of the food sector by expanding FDA authority for mandatory recalls, increasing inspection rates and requiring all facilities to have a food safety plan. NYFB is looking for an amendment, that among other things, would include producer indemnification in case of a wrongful food safety recall, as was experienced by the tomato industry in 2008. Please E-Lobby Senators Chuck Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand on this issue at [www.nyfb.org](http://www.nyfb.org) before it is taken up for a vote by the full U.S. Senate.

## Complete Your Census Forms Today

Census forms were delivered to every New York residence in March. Accurate data reflecting changes in our rural and farm communities are crucial in apportioning seats in the U.S. House of Representatives and deciding how more than \$400 billion per year is allocated for projects like new hospitals, schools, emergency services and transportation infrastructure. Please take the time to fill out your census survey in writing or online at [2010.census.gov](http://2010.census.gov).

## **NEW YORK FARM BUREAU STATE BILL WATCH**

**\*\*The following bills have been passed by one house and are now being considered in the other.\*\***

All bill memos issued by NYFB can be viewed in their entirety at [www.nyfb.org](http://www.nyfb.org) under Legislative Affairs.

**A. 601 Cahill—Agriculture Opinions:** This legislation would enable local government officials to request a non-binding opinion from the Commissioner of Ag & Markets before a municipality considers adopting a local ordinance that may impact agriculture. **NYFB supports. Referred to Senate Agriculture.**

**S. 2420 Young—Confidentiality:** This legislation would provide that certain information pertaining to registration and identification of premises and animals, which is collected and maintained by the Dept. of Agriculture and Markets, is to remain confidential. **NYFB supports. Referred to Assembly Agriculture.**

**S. 6317-A Aubertine—Maple Products:** This bill would expand the definition of agricultural commodity to include pure maple products produced from maple sap. **NYFB supports. Referred to Assembly Agriculture.**

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