

The New York State Assembly
Annual Report



**20
25**



**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

**2025 ANNUAL REPORT
NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY
STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE**

December 15, 2025

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 2025 Annual Report. I have outlined the Committee's significant legislation as well as the Committee's priorities for the upcoming 2026 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.

In the 2025 Legislative Session, the Agriculture Committee was steadfast in fulfilling its mission of supporting our food industries, local farm communities, and animal welfare. During this session, the Committee was especially focused on accessibility -- the Committee advanced legislation that includes milk products in the definition of surplus agricultural products for our Nourish New York Program and advanced legislation that would expand the FreshConnect program to ensure that fresh produce reaches our local supermarkets.

The Committee was also focused on supporting animal welfare. In the 2025 Legislative Session, the Committee advanced legislation that prevented collateral in pet purchasing contracts, as well as legislation that eased the process for donating to animal shelters.

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 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

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
Paula E. Kay
Tommy J. Schiavoni

MINORITY

Chris Tague, Ranking Member
Kenneth D. Blankenbush
Stephen Hawley
Michael J. Fitzpatrick
Brian D. Miller
John Lemondes
Jodi A. Giglio

STAFF

Fletcher Whyland, Assistant Secretary for Program & Policy
Cameron A. Cupp, Principal Analyst
Benjamin Levin, Committee Assistant
Julia Todaro, Executive Secretary
Amy Abbati, Committee Clerk

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. Committee Jurisdiction.....	3
II. 2025 Committee Accomplishments.....	
A. Support for New York’s Farms and Food Businesses.....	4
B. Department of Agriculture and Markets Regulatory Legislation.....	4
C. Animal Protection Legislation.....	5
D. Hearings and Round Tables.....	6
E. Agriculture Budget 2025-2026.....	7
III. 2026 Outlook.....	10
 APPENDICES	
APPENDIX A: SUMMARY OF ACTIONS ON ALL BILLS REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE DURING THE 2025 LEGISLATIVE SESSION.....	11
APPENDIX B: CHAPTER LIST FOR THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE FOR 2025.....	12

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. 2025 Committee Accomplishments

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

**1. Surplus Agricultural Products in Nourish New York Program
(Chapter 1 of the Laws of 2025 / A.414 Lupardo)**

This law clarifies that milk products are included in the definition of surplus agricultural products for the purpose of the Nourish New York Program.

**2. Cannabis Inclusion in Crop Definition
(Chapter 2 of the Laws of 2025 / A.417 Lupardo)**

This Chapter amendment expands the definition of crops to include cannabis and clarifies that illegal cannabis is not included. Additionally, it clarifies that cannabis farmers can claim tax benefits for the 2024 filing year.

**3. Syrup Processor Licensing Exemptions
(Chapter 424 of the Laws of 2025 / A.3599 Lupardo)**

This law exempts processors of syrup made from tree sap or honey from obtaining food processor licenses, as long as their establishments are sanitary.

**4. Expansion of FreshConnect Program
(A.4515 Hyndman – Reported to Ways & Means)**

This bill would direct the Department of Agriculture and Markets to expand the FreshConnect Program to include supermarkets.

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

**1. Native Plant and Seed Supply Program
(Chapter 89 of the Laws of 2025 / A.442 Kelles)**

This law amends the Native Plant Seed Supply, Development, and Enhancement Program by updating the definition of native plant seeds and requiring an updated list of eligible plant seeds.

**2. Therapeutic Agriculture Definition
(Veto Number 39 of 2025 / A.2185 Lupardo)**

This law provides a definition of therapeutic agriculture in the Agriculture and Markets Law.

**3. Native Plant Designation
(Chapter 702 of the Laws of 2025 / A.7964 Kelles)**

This law would establish a program that designates native plants as New York State grown and certified.

**4. Extension of Retail Food Establishment Authority
(Chapter 459 of the Laws of 2025 / A.8419 Conrad)**

This law extends the Department of Agriculture and Markets' oversight authority over food service establishments and retail food stores not overseen by the Department of Health.

**5. Increase Collection Limit of Produce Security Fund
(Chapter 460 of the Laws of 2025 / A.8420 Ramos)**

This law increases the Agriculture Produce Security Fund collection limit.

C. Animal Protection Legislation

**1. Preventing Collateral in Pet Purchase Contracts
(Chapter 507 of the Laws of 2025 / A.1672-A Rosenthal)**

This law would clarify that no contract offered to a prospective pet owner through an online format may include a provision that allows the animal being purchased to be repossessed as collateral.

**2. Voluntary Support for Municipal Animal Shelters
(Chapter 420 of the Laws of 2025 / A.4910 Simone)**

This law includes a space on license applications for a voluntary donation towards municipal animal pounds or shelters.

**3. Aggravated Cruelty to Companion Animals
(A.2019 Rosenthal – Reported to Codes)**

This bill would amend existing law on aggravated cruelty to animals by removing the requirement that the injury caused was serious.

D. Hearings and Round Tables

Public Hearing on Emerging Farmers

On October 28, 2025, the Assembly Standing Committee on Agriculture held a public hearing to examine the measures that the Legislature has taken to address the concerns of an aging farmer population and the next generation's difficulty in starting their careers. The State has funded numerous programs that have assisted aspiring farmers in entering the farming industry, though difficulties remain. The Committee heard testimony from farmers throughout the state who shared their experience in entering the farming industry and shed light on the barriers in transferring existing farmland to emerging farmers.

E. Agriculture Budget 2025-2026

In the SFY 2025-2026 Department of Agriculture and Markets budget, the Legislature provided \$61.6 million for local assistance and \$209 million for State operations. Funding for capital projects totaled \$91.6 million, an increase of \$10 million over the executive.

The Legislature demonstrated a commitment to farmer development at all stages by creating and funding three new programs in youth and workforce development, as well as an agrivoltaics study. The final budget fully restored or increased funding for farm infrastructure initiatives and viability programs such as tractor rollover protection, the John May Safety Fund, as well as local fairs. A comprehensive breakdown of the Department of Agriculture and Markets budget can be found in the chart on page 8.

Agriculture and Markets (Local Assistance) Enacted Budget 2025-26			
Cornell Diagnostic Lab		Farm Viability	
"Core" Diagnostic Lab	\$8,970,000	NY Farm Viability Institute	\$2,150,000
Cornell R&D		NY Berry Growers	\$61,000
Berry Research	\$263,000	NY Corn and Soybean Growers Association	\$125,000
Honeybee Research	\$152,000	NYS Wine & Grape Foundation	\$1,225,000
Maple Research	\$151,000	NYS Christmas Tree Farmers	\$126,000
Onion Research	\$71,000	NYS Apple Growers Assoc.	\$1,241,500
Vegetable Research	\$126,000	NYS Maple Producers	\$251,000
Cornell Hard Cider Research	\$202,000	Apple R&D	\$505,000
Cornell Concord Grape Research	\$252,000	Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship	\$200,000
Hops Breeding Research	\$300,000	Northern NY Ag Development	\$300,000
Malting Barley	\$353,000	Harvest New York	\$600,000
Golden Nematode	\$63,000	Electronic Benefits Transfer	\$139,000
Agrivoltaics Study	\$500,000	Farm-To-School	\$1,508,000
Integrated Pest Management/Bioeconomy	\$4,250,000	Hop Growers of New York	\$100,000
Ruminant Center	\$375,000	Hudson Valley Agribusiness Development Corporation	\$200,000
Cornell Education and Outreach		Grow NYC 21 Food Access Sites	\$850,000
Ag- in- the- Classroom	\$500,000	Ag Child Care (Migrant)	\$10,410,000
Future Farmers of America	\$1,000,000	Local Fairs	\$550,000
Association of Agricultural Educators	\$500,000	Empire Sheep Producers	\$250,000
CCE Dutchess County	\$50,000	Local Fair Promotion	\$2,000,000
CCE Bridging the Upstate Downstate Food Network Divide	\$50,000	John May Safety Fund	\$300,000
Cornell University 4H	\$250,000	CNY Lyme and Tick-Borne Disease Alliance	\$50,000
Farm Family Assistance	\$1,000,000	Training and Recruitment of Food and Agricultural Workers	\$1,000,000
Pro-Dairy Program	\$1,463,000	On Farm Health and Safety MIB Hospital	\$1,250,000
NYCAM/Cornell Workforce Development	\$75,000	Pitney Meadows Community Farm	\$50,000
Farm Labor Specialist	\$702,000	Comfort Food Community	\$50,000
Dairy Profit Teams	\$374,000	Volunteers Improving Neighborhood Environment	\$75,000
Urban Agricultural Education	\$250,000	Farmland Protection	
Equitable Farm Futures Initiative	\$500,000	Farmland for a New Generation	\$700,000
NYS Brewers Association	\$100,000	Programs for Underserved Farmers	
NYS Cider Association	\$108,750	NYC Urban Ag	\$250,000
NYS Distillers Guild	\$100,000	Black Farmers United of NYS	\$200,000
Cornell Pro-Livestock	\$250,000	Harvest NY	\$600,000
Cornell University Small Farms	\$500,000	Pace University Pro Bono Legal Services	\$225,000

Cornell University Hemp Development	\$1,000,000	Minorities in Ag, Natural Resources	\$50,000
Taste NY	\$5,800,000	Beginning Farmers	\$1,000,000
Grow NY	\$2,020,000	Economically/Socially Disadvantaged Farmers	\$1,000,000
Northeast Organic Farming Association	\$200,000	Total \$61,587,250	
Cannabis Association of NY	\$100,000		
Cannabis Farmers Alliance	\$100,000		

III. 2026 Outlook

In 2025, 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 2025 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Final Action	Assembly Bills	Senate Bills	Total Bills
<u>BILLS REPORTED FAVORABLE TO:</u>			
Codes	7	0	7
Judiciary	0	0	0
Ways & Means	7	0	7
Rules	3	0	3
Floor	0	0	0
Total	17	0	17
<u>COMMITTEE ACTION</u>			
Bills Held for Consideration	5	0	5
Bills Defeated in Committee	0	0	0
Bills Having Enacting Clauses Stricken	0	0	0
<u>BILLS REMAINING IN COMMITTEE</u>	107	19	126
<u>BILLS HAVING COMMITTEE REFERENCE CHANGED</u>	1	0	1
TOTAL NUMBER OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD	5		

APPENDIX B
NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE CHAPTERS

Assembly Bill #	Sponsor	Description
A.414	Lupardo	Chapter 1 of the Laws of 2025 clarifies that milk products are included in the definition of surplus agricultural products for the purpose of the Nourish New York Program.
A.417	Lupardo	Chapter 2 of the Laws of 2025 expands the definition of crops to include legal cannabis and clarifies that cannabis farmers can claim tax benefits for the 2024 filing year.
A.442	Kelles	Chapter 89 of the Laws of 2025 amends the Native Plant Seed Supply, Development, and Enhancement Program by updating the definition of native plant seeds and requiring an updated list of eligible plant seeds.
A.1672-A	Rosenthal	Chapter 507 of the Laws of 2025 clarifies that no contract offered to a prospective pet owner through an online format may include a provision that allows the animal being purchased to be repossessed as collateral.
A.3599	Lupardo	Chapter 424 of the Laws of 2025 exempts processors of syrup made from tree sap or honey from obtaining food processor licenses, as long as their establishments are sanitary.
A.4910	Simone	Chapter 420 of the Laws of 2025 includes a space on license applications for a voluntary donation towards municipal animal pounds or shelters.
A.7964	Kelles	Chapter 702 of the Laws of 2025 establishes a program that designates native plants as New York State grown and certified.
A.8419	Conrad	Chapter 459 of the Laws of 2025 extends the Department of Agriculture and Markets' oversight authority over food service establishments and retail food stores not overseen by the Department of Health.
A.8420	Ramos	Chapter 460 of the Laws of 2025 increases the Agriculture Produce Security Fund collection limit.