2013 NO FARMS NO FOOD® RALLY

BUY LOCAL · SAVE FARMLAND · SPREAD THE WORD

March 13, 2013, 10:00 to 4:00, Third Floor Terrace, Legislative Office Building, Albany, NY

Priority #1: Protect Farmland From Development

New York is a farm state that has been rapidly losing its farms to development. Almost 450,000 acres of farmland have been developed in New York since the 1980s – an area equal to approximately 4,500 median-sized farms in New York.

For almost 20 years, the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) has been New York's dedicated funding source for state programs committed to protecting water, land and air. These programs include several programs, such as the Farmland Protection Program and Agricultural Nonpoint Source Program that help farmers protect their land from being lost to real estate development and enhance water quality.

The EPF is currently the sole source of funding for the state's Farmland Protection Program. Since 1996, the program has awarded over \$173 million to permanently protect over 300 farms encompassing 72,000 acres of farmland. Farmers frequently use these funds to reinvest in their farms by purchasing additional farmland or equipment, constructing new farm buildings or facilitating the transfer of the farm to a new generation.

In 2010, the Farmland Protection Program had existing commitments to protect 61 farms with an estimated cost of \$70 million. By the end of 2012, the existing commitments have been reduced to 28 projects valued at \$26.6 million and the program is poised to initiate new projects in 2013 for the first time since 2008.

Recommended Actions:

- √ Support the \$153 million for the EPF in Governor Cuomo's 2013-14 Executive Budget Proposal.
- $\sqrt{}$ Support the \$13 million proposed from the EPF for the Farmland Protection Program.
- √ Encourage the Department of Agriculture and Markets to allocate \$300,000 to \$500,000 from the Farmland Protection Program for Agricultural and Farmland Protection Planning Grants.
- $\sqrt{}$ Work with the Department of Agriculture and Markets to prepare to solicit new applications for the Farmland Protection Program in 2013-14.

Priority #2: Encourage State Agencies to Buy Food Grown in New York

Public and private institutions - such as colleges, hospitals, schools, emergency food providers and others – annually feed millions of New Yorkers. Greater institutional purchasing of food grown in New York offers substantial economic development opportunities for farmers and food businesses as well as opportunities to enhance the health of the constituencies served by such institutions.

A recent report by the New York Academy of Medicine documented that state agencies feed millions of New Yorkers through hunger relief programs, school and university meal programs, workplace cafeterias, hospitals, nursing homes and correctional facilities, including:

- 44 million visitors to state parks run by the Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation
- 3 million recipients of emergency food provided by the Department of Health
- 1.8 million enrolled public school students supervised by the Department of Education

- 710,546 people served through other programs at the Department of Health
- 290,000 inpatients at state-supported hospitals
- 323,705 people served by programs at the Office for the Aging, Office of Mental Health, Administration for Children's Services, Department of Corrections and Community Supervision and Office for People with Developmental Disabilities
- 293,424 state employees
- 221,686 students enrolled at the State University of New York

For more than 20 years, the State of New York has taken steps to encourage that food purchased by state agencies be produced in New York when competitively available. The New York State Council on Food Policy has recommended that 20 percent of all food purchased by state agencies and state-owned facilities should be purchased from New York when feasible by 2020. In 2011, Governor Cuomo reissued Executive Order #39, Establishing State Policies for the Promotion of Sustainable Local Farms and the Protection of Agriculture Lands to encourage greater purchasing of food produced in New York by state agencies. The New York City Council adopted an ordinance later that year to require city agencies to report annually on the origin of food purchased by city agencies. This legislation resulted in the 'New York City Food Metrics Report' released in 2012 that reported that \$30 million of the \$148 million spent on food by the New York City Department of Education was purchased from New York.

Recommended Actions:

- ✓ Support language included in the Public Protection and General Government Section Part P of Article VII of Governor Cuomo's 2013-14 Executive Budget Proposal that would enable state agencies to purchase up to \$200,000 of food produced in New York without a formal competitive bid process.
- ✓ Support legislation or administrative action to direct the Office of General Services and Department of Agriculture and Markets to develop guidelines for state agencies to increase purchasing of New York farm products; require successful bidders for state food contracts to provide the type, dollar value and geographic origin of food provided under the contract and annually report to the Governor and State Legislature on food purchasing by state agencies.

Priority #3: Aid a New Generation of Farmers in Securing Farmland

The transition of farms to a new generation is a substantial challenge for New York as 26% of the state's farmers are over 65 but only 5% are under 35. One of the biggest challenges facing new farmers is finding productive farmland that is affordable.

The State of New York can help new farmers by making long-term commitments to use state-owned farmland for farming, with special consideration for beginning farmers. For example, the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision manages 13 sites that had previously been used as part of its Agri-Business Program that have been leased to farmers. Other states, including New Jersey and Connecticut, have taken steps to facilitate leasing of state-owned farmland.

Recommended Actions:

✓ Support legislation or administrative action to direct the Office of General Services and Department of Agriculture and Markets to 1) work with other state agencies to conduct a review of state-owned land to identify properties that could feasibly be made available for agriculture; 2) provide guidance to state agencies regarding leases and bid processes to encourage long-term agricultural use of such land, with special considerations for beginning farmers and 3) report to the Governor and State Legislature about the availability of state-owned suitable for

agriculture, steps taken to make such land available for farming and beginning farmers and recommendations for ensuring that state-owned farmland is protected if it is being sold.