



Agriculture is one of the top industries in the Hudson Valley that is a powerful driver of our local economies. Over 1,500 farms in Dutchess, Orange, Putnam and Westchester counties employ thousands of people in the Hudson Valley.

The NY-18 Agriculture Advisory Committee is made up of dozens of members of the agriculture community from across all four counties in the 18th Congressional District. Although committee members are from many different sectors, the advisory committee has focused on ways to improve opportunities for the Hudson Valley as Congress considers the next Farm Bill including:

Supporting Specialty Crops

Specialty crops generate nearly \$1.4 billion for New York's economy each year, making up one-third of New York's agriculture industry. In the Hudson Valley, diversification of crops is at an all-time high and specialty crop farmers need to have more protection.



Specifically, New York's specialty crop farmers need an insurance plan that works for the diverse, small, family owned family farms of the Hudson Valley. Legislation like Rep. Maloney's The Creating Reliability for Our Producers (CROP) Act will help encourage the development of better insurance plans for our producers.

In addition, programs like the Specialty Crop Research Initiative and the Specialty Crop Block Grant Programs continue to strengthen all aspects of Hudson Valley agriculture and help to ensure long-term viability of specialty crops.

Increasing Access to Credit

Family farms are small businesses and many are looking to increase access to credit in order to survive in the wake of disaster or even to expand their business. Both the Farm Services Agency (FSA) loan program and USDA Business and Industry Guaranteed Loan Program should be modernized and streamlined to ensure lending is flexible and accessible.

Beginning farmers often lack the capital, land, training opportunities and the scale of operation required to make profits. Congress should examine ways to reduce barriers, such as credit and land access issues, for new agriculture entrepreneurs.

Expanding Distribution of Locally-Grown Food

Many farmers are looking at expanding to new markets at local grocery stores or farmers markets in order to distribute fresh goods, from fruits and vegetables to dairy and meat products, to nearby families and local communities.



The next Farm Bill should look at strengthening programs that address production and distribution needs while assisting communities' access and afford fresh, nutritious food.

Reducing Government Regulations



Many of the farms across the district face too many burdensome government regulations. As Congress considers the Farm Bill, Congress should look at reducing extensive and duplicative paperwork that delays progress across farms.

Rep. Maloney listens to farmers' concerns about regulation at a Town Hall meeting in February 2013

Protecting Conservation Programs

Historically, New York loses 10 times more farmland to development than it protects each year yet research shows how investments in land conservation and open space boost property values, support local businesses, help agriculture, save taxpayer dollars, and protect public health. Many of the conservation public-private partnerships protect the rich agricultural history of the Hudson Valley, and it's important that a Farm Bill invests in these programs.

"Agriculture in the Hudson Valley region is a remarkable natural and economic resource. The Hudson Valley and NYC's foodshed is home to over 5,000 family farms, comprising over 700,000 acres across 11 counties, yet only 11 percent have been conserved to date. Only through a focused and strategic effort backed by the Farm Bill's Agricultural Land Easement Programs can we address this challenge and secure our future."

- Steve Rosenberg, Senior Vice President, Scenic Hudson, Inc.

