

New York Agriculture – *Adapting to Changing Market Challenges*



Successful Strategies and Partnerships

*Laurie Griffen, Saratoga Sod Farm
for NYS Regional Councils Conference
Sept. 27, 2011*

What is *Agriculture*?



What REALLY is Agriculture?



Who benefits from a strong agricultural industry?

- **Consumers** (you and me) – abundant, cheap, local food
- **Communities** – agriculture is the backbone of many upstate, rural communities, provide open space, beautiful landscapes, quality of life
- **Environment** – farmers were the first environmentalists.
- **Economy** – productive farms not only fuel the economy, they do not require costly services

How are farms adapting?

Farmers are many things:

We learn how to adapt to changing market challenges

From Dairy to
Sod and Grain
Farming >>>>



Personal Change



Contributing Factors

- Generation Next
- Location, Location, Location
- Available Funding with supportive Lender



What is New York Agriculture?

- New York Agriculture has tremendous diversity (geography and products)
- Several agricultural products and crops rank high nationally
- 36,300 farms in New York State (7 million acres)
- 99% of New York farms are family owned
- Average farm size = 240 acres

Cash Value of NY farm products totaled \$4.7 billion in 2009

- Livestock = \$1.82 billion
- Field Crops = \$1.44 billion
- Vegetables = \$325 million
- Fruit = \$305 million
- Other (floriculture/horticulture, etc) = \$197 million >> Economic impact of \$6 Billion



New York Agriculture Ranks High Nationally

1st Cottage cheese production

2nd Apple, maple, pumpkin and sour
cream production

3rd Milk, grape, cabbage, corn silage
and cauliflower production

4th Pear, tart cherry, cucumber, snap
beans and squash production

5th Onion and sweet corn production





Why farm in New York?

- Favorable Weather
- Sufficient Water
- Proximity to people/markets
- Soil resources -availability of quality agricultural land
- Tradition

Challenges to farming in NY

- High labor and energy costs
- High taxes
- Political & regulatory uncertainty
- Uncertain economy, interest rates, funding
- Produce in a high cost state – priced in a global marketplace
- Animal welfare, labor, access to technology
- Applied research, education
- Weather/Climate change?

Opportunities for NY Agriculture

- Heightened awareness/interest in LOCAL FOOD
- New Dairy initiatives (Chobani yogurt, Upstate Farms, Alpina) grow milk supply by 15%
- Strong overseas markets (South Korea FTA)
- Niche/specialty markets
- Wine and farm distillates
- Hunts Point Terminal Marketplace
- Wholesale Farmers Marketplace
- NYC Partnering
- Agri-tainment

Strategies for Future Success

- ❑ Reduce cost of doing business in New York State
- ❑ Increase funding and support for applied research
- ❑ Access to new technologies
- ❑ Lessen the regulatory and paperwork burdens on farmers
- ❑ Support labor and immigration reform
- ❑ Build/improve rural infrastructure
- ❑ Expand market for New York products (NYC and beyond)

Successful Strategies and Partnerships

- Streamline processes; eliminate duplication and bureaucracy
- Increase funding and support for industry directed, applied research (i.e. NY Farm Viability Institute)
- Understand how a strong agricultural industry acts not only as an economic engine, but remains the backbone and fabric of much of New York State.
- Continue to invest in the future of New York agriculture

Keep an eye on the future -

- Remember that today's youth are tomorrow's leaders
- Continued funding for education and training remain paramount



Thank you!