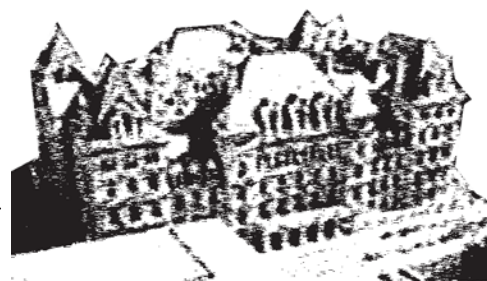


# Turfgrass Advocacy

2005



New York State Turfgrass Association • February 1, 2005

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## Background

The New York Farm Viability Institute (NYFVI) was established as a not-for-profit organization in 2003-2004 to provide a focal point for efforts to grow New York agriculture by addressing challenges with production, technological transfer, marketing and other issues which are barriers to success and profitability. NYFVI is a not-for-profit industry-controlled organization that seeks to focus effort on specific issues and problems that farmers/producers/horticulturists encounter that hinder or in some cases stop agricultural growth in New York State.

## NYSTA Perspective

The New York Farm Viability Institute is important to the future of New York agriculture/horticulture and to the next generation of farmers that we need to encourage and foster. Our agricultural and green industry producers face difficult challenges in a global economy. We must be able to compete against producers from throughout the world. New York has a sound agricultural sector, but it is critical that we support applied research and technology transfer on an on-going basis and that we target projects and programs that address the real issues that farmers are confronted with. The benefits of a strong agriculture industry include economic growth and jobs in rural areas, locally produced products for consumers and environmental benefits and open space. The work of the NYFVI will also help keep farmland in production and stimulate rural economic development based on agricultural innovation.

Organized as a not-for-profit, the NYFVI is currently overseeing 10 projects funded with \$993,000 provided under USDA Agricultural Innovation Center. NYFVI also supports other projects relating to the fruits, vegetable, nursery sectors with specialty crop funds from US Department of Agriculture and the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets.

The NYFVI has worked closely with the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets and their support and assistance has been invaluable. We are pleased that Commissioner Nathan Rudgers is serving on the NYFVI Board of Directors along with six private sector members. We have also received important on-going support from the Cornell College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. The 25 member-organizations of the Empire State Council of Agricultural Organizations support this important and exciting initiative to grow New York's agriculture, food and green industries.

All agricultural production sectors in New York have specific challenges that discourage growth in agriculture and the related industries. These challenges make production less economically viable and over time discourage production or make it unprofitable. Through applied research, adoption of new approaches and technology and in some cases market analysis and development, we believe that these barriers to agricultural growth can be addressed. NYFVI provides support to all commodity sectors – dairy and livestock, our diverse nursery, turfgrass and greenhouse industries, and our field crops, vegetables and fruit sectors.

## Recommendation

We recommend a state appropriation of \$5 million in 2005-2006 to support the New York Farm Viability Institute and to fund projects and programs that deal directly with barriers that affect New York agriculture.