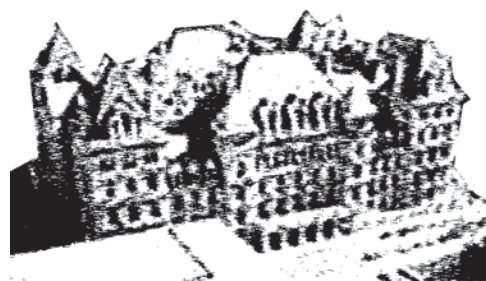


2006

Turfgrass Advocacy



New York State Turfgrass Association • February 1, 2006

Background

The New York Farm Viability Institute, Inc. (NYFVI) is an independent, non-profit organization that is led by farmers and dedicated to serving agricultural producers regardless of enterprise, size of business or location in New York. NYFVI fosters a vibrant agricultural/horticultural sector in New York by supporting applied research, education, information transfer, technology adoption and market analysis to reduce practical barriers to the success of farming enterprises.

The NYFVI was created in 2004 through funding received from a USDA grant to create the New York Ag Innovation Center at Cornell University. In 2005, the NYFVI received over 3 million dollars in state funding. Thus far, the Institute has yielded some amazing results – turning \$4 million in funding into expanded investments in excess of \$25 million in the NYS ag production sector. Over 200 new jobs have been created and many other measurable farm level impacts (increases in gross farm revenue, farm profits, environmental protection and enhancement, etc.) have been realized.

NYSTA Perspective

The NYFVI is important to the future of New York agriculture/horticulture. The unique structure and method of operation of the NYFVI makes it the perfect vehicle to increase the viability of New York's important agriculture sector. The board is comprised of active farmers from a broad range of commodity groups. The NYFVI has reached out to the ag industry through focus groups comprised of farmer/producers, researchers, and educators to identify common barriers to success. Then the Institute solicits grant requests that provide solutions to overcome these same barriers. Requests must demonstrate measurable farm level impacts, provide a mechanism to be shared by the rest of the industry, and include direct farmer involvement. This process ensures that all applied research, education, and technology transfer results in a positive for individual producers that can then be transferred to the whole industry for adoption and eventual benefit.

In 2005 the Institute received 75 proposals for a total of \$10,203,364 requested. The Institute funded a total of \$2,764,567 to projects in three grant areas: Applied Research Partnership Grants, Agricultural Innovation Grants, and Extension Innovation Grants. Over 20 individual grants were funded covering all commodities in NYS agriculture. For example Dr. Marty Petrovic received \$80,000 for the project Developing Accelerated Sod Production Methods. These projects will help strengthen and grow NY agriculture, keep farmland in production, and stimulate rural economic development based on ag innovation.

All agricultural production sectors in New York have specific challenges that limit growth. 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 and overcome. NYFVI provides support to all commodity sectors – dairy and livestock, our diverse nursery, turf, and greenhouse industries, and field crops, vegetables, and fruit sectors.

Recommendation

We recommend a state appropriation of 7.9 million in 2006-07 to support the New York Farm Viability Institute and to fund projects and programs that deal directly with barriers that affect New York agriculture and horticulture.