

March 29, 2010

The Geneva Area Chamber of Commerce urges our Senators and Assemblymen to carefully consider the cuts in important agricultural programs that were proposed in the executive budget. The restoration of funds as proposed in the Senate version is critical to the continuing operation of these programs.

The **New York State Agricultural Experiment Station (NYSAES)** has been a vital, constructive member of the Geneva community for 128 years. Over the decades, NYSAES applied research and extension programs have improved the profitability of fruit, vegetable and turf growers, food processors and wineries across the state. Funding for this work and the infrastructure to support the faculty and staff who carry it out comes through the State University of New York and the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (NYSDAM), as well as a variety of private, state and federally supported granting organizations and agencies.

In addition to major cuts in SUNY support, the proposed New York State Executive Budget for FY2011 *eliminates* all NYSDAM funding for infrastructure at NYSAES. This line item in the state budget has been in place since 1994 and has provided the only state support for Station infrastructure at levels ranging from \$300,000 to \$600,000 annually. NYSDAM funding for other major organizations that fund research and extension programs at the Experiment Station in Geneva, including the **New York Wine and Grape Foundation** and the **New York Farm Viability Institute** has also been *eliminated* in the FY2011 executive budget proposal. Finally, NYSDAM funding for **New York State Integrated Pest Management**, another major research and extension program supporting agriculture and located in Geneva is *eliminated* in the executive proposal.

While the Chamber recognizes the critical need to reduce state spending in significant ways, the combined impact of eliminating the programs noted above seems to us to fall disproportionately on upstate New York and New York State agriculture generally and our community in particular. In our view, the costs in lost jobs (24 at IPM, potentially 10 more at NYSAES), lost federal and private sector grants that have been leveraged with state support in the past and the prospect of losing talented scientists, who are contributing members of our community, to other states, constitute losses that are greater than the benefits of eliminating state expenditures on these priorities.

While we realize that budget cuts are necessary, and we could accept reductions to an appropriate level, we urge the Assembly and Senate to restore funding for these important programs to reasonable, if reduced levels, in the FY2011 budget.