



Representative Louise M. Slaughter
Chairwoman, House Committee on Rules
Representing New York's 28th District

P R E S S R E L E A S E

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, October 17, 2008

Congresswoman Slaughter Presented With "Friend of Farm Bureau"

Award

Rochester, NY - Congresswoman Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY-28), Chair of the House Committee on Rules, today proudly accepted the "Friend of Farm Bureau" award from John Lincoln, President of the New York State Farm Bureau. Congresswoman Slaughter, a strong advocate for New York's agriculture industry, was presented with this award based on the merits of her voting record during the 110th Congress.

"Agriculture is one of the most important industries we have in Western New York," said Congresswoman Slaughter. **"Our farmers not only provide food for our tables but also serve as a cornerstone of our regional economy. I am proud to fight to protect and support this vital industry."**

"We're very pleased to present this national Farm Bureau award that recognizes the Congresswoman's voting record in support of agriculture," said **John Lincoln, President of the New York State Farm Bureau and member of the Board of the American Farm Bureau Federation.** "Her leadership role in the US House of Representatives, along with her strong interest in the future of New York agriculture, has enabled her to be a strong advocate for farmers. Both New York Farm Bureau and American Farm Bureau Federation thank her for her leadership and support."

The "Friend of Farm Bureau" award is presented at the end of each Congress to Members who have been nominated by their state Farm Bureaus and approved by the American Farm Bureau Board of Directors.

BACKGROUND

In June 2008, in the wake of a major hail and thunderstorm which wreaked immense crop damage to upstate New York, Congresswoman Slaughter authored a letter urging Department of Agriculture Secretary Ed Shafer to grant 23 New York counties "natural disaster designation" which allows the counties to be eligible for federal assistance to address the severe storm damage. All of Congresswoman Slaughter's colleagues who represent affected counties signed her letter. Secretary Shafer heeded this request and granted the 23 counties a disaster designation.

In May 2008, the House of Representatives, with Congresswoman Slaughter's strong support, passed the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, also known as the 2008 Farm bill (H.R. 6124).

The 2008 Farm Bill is the most significant and important change in U.S. agricultural policy since the Great Depression. This bill makes great strides toward addressing health and nutrition concerns and improving our agriculture policy by making historic investments in nutrition and food stamp programs while maintaining a strong safety net for America's farmers and ranchers.

Additionally, Congresswoman Slaughter worked to ensure that the Farm bill included investments in specialty crops to benefit the apple growers and wine and grape growers in Western New York. This is the first time an entire title of the Farm Bill has been designated to address specialty crops. The 2008 Farm Bill includes:

- \$466 million to enhance funding for "Specialty Crop Block Grants" that support local efforts to improve producers' ability to compete in the marketplace and provide consumers with a safe, abundant food supply.
- \$377 million to create a new Pest and Disease Program focused on combating invasive pests and disease, which cost the economy billions of dollars a year.
- \$230 million to establish the Specialty Crop Research Initiative to develop and disseminate science-based tools to address the needs of specific crops and their regions.

- \$200 million per year to maintain funding for the Market Access Program which increases the availability and viability of U.S. specialty crops in foreign markets.
- \$59 million to enhance critical trade assistance and market promotion tools that will grow international markets for specialty crops.
- Prioritize federal research activities for specialty crops.
- A requirement that the Department of Agriculture Secretary conduct a census of specialty crops to assist in the development and dissemination of specialty crop information.

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