GrowNYC's FARMroots provides aspiring and established farmers with business technical assistance and training designed to ensure the long-term viability of farms and farmland.

Public Hearings on the Farmworker Fair Labor Practices Act
by Jack Hornickel

For the last decade, the New York State legislature has considered the Farmworker Fair Labor Practices Act, a sweeping overhaul of state labor law that would afford farm employees with now-standard labor rights: time-and-a-half overtime, collective bargaining, unemployment, disability, and Paid Family Leave. The bill would also provide other farm-specific protections. Because the legislature has historically been divided by political party, the FFLPA never saw a great deal of traction. Now, with the Democratic majority in both chambers, the FFLPA is in the spotlight.

State Senators Jen Metzger, Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee, and Jessica Ramos, Chair of the Senate Labor Committee, will be holding a series of 3 public hearings on the FFLPA. Information is below. Registration, for attendance and testimony, is required.

Thursday 4/25/19 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM
SUNY Morrisville – 9 Skyline Dr, Morrisville, NY 13408
Registration: bumpus@nysenate.gov or 315-478-8745

Friday 4/26/19 2:30 PM – 5:30 PM
Suffolk County Legislature – 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, NY 11787
Registration: 631-360-3356

Thursday 5/2/19 1:00 PM – 5:00 PM
SUNY Sullivan – 112 College Rd, Loch Sheldrake, NY 12759
Registration: metzger@nysenate.gov or 845-344-3311

Like most politics these days, the FFLPA has become a divisive issue, a moral barometer. Advocates of the FFLPA cite the racist origins of farm labor exceptionalism, the necessity for equity and dignity among all labor, and the examples of gross violations of labor law on certain farms. Opponents note the high cost of labor among New York farm employers, the depressed regional farm economy, and the demands of seasonality that make the FFLPA untenable.

GrowNYC has conducted surveys, research, and outreach over the years and found that both positions are correct: the FFLPA acts boldly to correct the historical inequity of farm labor, but in a...
manner that risks unsustainable damage to the state farm economy. More important than either “side” being “correct,” GrowNYC wants to make sure that an honest conversation, including the voices of all stakeholders, is made available for these renewed FFLPA considerations.

For any farmer or farmworker interested in attending the public hearings, whether to give testimony or just learn more, GrowNYC will happily provide support by sharing research, performing financial analysis, drafting stories of personal impact, and translating between English and Spanish.

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**Best of Both Worlds / Lo mejor de ambos mundos**

by Amy Wu

Gaudencia Gonzalez, a Greenmarket farmer from El Mimomex Farm, has a strong interest in attending agriculture workshops off the farm.

However, as a native Spanish speaker, she has been held back, since the majority of workshops are in English and most agriculture events and conferences do not provide interpretation.

Gonzalez’s interest piqued again after attending a growers event organized by Cornell Cooperative Extension Eastern NY Commercial Horticulture that offered interpretation by a group that included the Hudson Valley Farm Hub’s Language Justice team.

Read more here.

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**NYS Climate Resilient Farming Grants Available**

Here at GrowNYC, FARMroots is committed to protecting the environment, both in the city and upstate on Greenmarket farms. We recognize that the relationship between agriculture and climate change is more than complicated, and that conservation practices are often seen as an expense.

Now in its fourth year, the [NYS Climate Resilient Farming Grant Program](#) offers funding for farmers to mitigate their greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to increased precipitation and extreme weather events. The program is administered by NYS Dept of Agriculture & Markets, with the grants moving through county Soil & Water Conservation Districts. The program typically funds cover cropping; riparian buffers; construction of reservoirs; wetland remediation; prescribed grazing; and manure storage facilities.

If your farm is interested in implementing any of these practices, please contact FARMroots for more information and assistance.

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**Resources**

**Conference/ Grants**

June 7-9, [Chestnut Growers](#)

**Webinars/Classes**

April 29, [Crop-Costing Tools](#)

**Workshop/Courses**

April 28, Introduction to
Funds available to remove unwanted Concord vineyard, and use land for other Ag purposes. Read more [here](#).

IRS waives estimated tax penalty for farmers. Read more [here](#).

The FDA extends FSMA’s Produce Safety Rule compliance deadlines for “agricultural water” to 1/26/22. Read more [here](#).

A windbreak bibliography available online through the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Support GrowNYC

**FARMroots** is a program of GrowNYC, a 501(c)3 environmental nonprofit organization.

When you donate to GrowNYC you support FARMroots, neighborhood Greenmarkets, small family farms, food access programs, community gardens, recycling and hands-on education programs for youth.

[Please donate to GrowNYC today.](#)