
Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”
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Howe Caverns, NY - Agricultural & Rural Relief

At Howe Caverns, Schoharie County, August 21, 1930

Agricultural Accomplishment and Rural Relief

The Government of the State of New York has become farm-minded. It is a simple but interesting fact that it was not until the appointment by me of the Agricultural Advisory Commission, before I was inaugurated, that any definite study of farm conditions or any definite program of relief and improvement of existing conditions had been undertaken in that generation.

Let us see some of the practical and definite results of that program.

First of all, the Agricultural Advisory Commission found that the tax burden in this State bore unfairly and unequally on the farmers of the State. The result was recommendations by the Governor, which the Legislature carried through, under which the burden of farm taxes was reduced approximately \$30,000,000 a year. That is a big sum and was worth fighting for.

This reduction was accomplished along two broad lines.

1. Relief to the agricultural sections from having to contribute to the building of State and County highways and highway bridges.

2. Additional contributions by the State towards the maintenance of town roads.

3. Additional State Aid for the one, two and three room school houses throughout the State.

4. The elimination of the Direct State Tax on real estate.

As a result of this not one cent of taxes which the farmer pays on his farm goes to Albany; all of it goes for purposes of local government.

The other part of this great program consists in increased appropriations by the State for what is best described as the functions of Government itself in improving agricultural conditions.

Here are some, but by no means all, of the outstanding new achievements.

During each of the past two years apportionment of appropriations to agricultural fairs has increased from \$250,000 to \$375,000.

This year the State has appropriated \$400,000 towards the restocking of accredited dairy herds, thus continuing the constant improvement in the milk standards.

During the past two years we have appropriated \$27,500 towards the Grape Law enforcement, and \$63,000 towards the dog damage indemnity.

In 1929 at the State Fair, the improvement of the Fair was continued by opening the Agricultural Museum building, which cost \$55,000, and the Women's building, which cost \$35,000. This April the Legislature gave me \$150,000 for a Boys' and Girls' building at the Fair. A record in construction speed was made and I am glad to announce that this building will be formally opened and dedicated by me at the Syracuse Fair on September 5th.

In line with the needs for additional support for the splendid educational work which the State is carrying on for young people interested in agriculture and forestry, we are equipping the new plant industry building at the Cornell Agricultural School, at a cost of \$400,000. We are building an agricultural economics building at a cost of \$100,000. We are building a new cow barn at a cost of \$30,000. We are buying another farm at a cost of \$60,000, and a splendid new classroom building is under way for the College of Home Economics, at a cost of \$985,000.

At the Syracuse State School of Forestry we are proceeding to erect a Forestry Science building, at a cost of \$600,000, and at the Geneva Experiment Station, we are putting up a new Horticultural building at a cost of \$285,000.

Finally, there are many other similar construction projects under way, such for instance as the new buildings for the egg-laying contests on Long Island and in Central and Western New York.

In actual research work a similar definite program is being pushed through. The College of Agriculture is investigating muck land problems, at a cost of \$53,400; potato diseases at a cost of \$34,500; the use of protein in dairy rations, at a cost of \$5,900; the city markets and cooperative marketing, at a cost of \$26,000; potato storage and seed stock, at a cost of \$18,000, and

the College is making a survey of rural government and a survey of the agricultural resources of the State, at a cost of \$34,000.

To the Veterinary College at Cornell last year and this year, we have given generous appropriations of \$92,000 for a new program of animal disease investigation.

One good example of the value of all this scientific work lies in the handling of the peach moth scourge. In many parts of the State the peach moth was destroying an exceedingly valuable crop. No antidote has been found to the ravages of these moths. A year ago last spring I asked the Legislature for an immediate appropriation and within three months a new species of wasp had been found which took special delight in eating up the peach moths. These wasps, which are harmless to human beings, have been propagated and distributed throughout the peach orchards of the State, and the result is that science has again triumphed over nature.