



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

State Agrees to Put N.y. Milk in Employee Lunchrooms

PATTY RITCHIE August 19, 2011

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At Senator's Request, State Will Also Look at Boosting Sales of Other NY-Grown Foods

State Senator Patty Ritchie announced that the state has agreed to put New York milk back in its employee lunchrooms, which serve tens of thousands of state workers and visitors every day, and also look to boost the sales of other New York-grown products.

Senator Ritchie, who made the announcement as she prepared to embark on a tour of a Madrid dairy farm Friday, said the move will open a broad new market for New York farmers, and also help showcase quality dairy and other farm products that are produced by New York farmers.

"New York farm products, from milk and cheese, to vegetables and meats, are second to none in flavor and quality, and there can be no better place to showcase these fine products than in cafeterias and restaurants in our State Capitol that serve tens of thousands of employees and visitors every single day," Senator Ritchie said. "I want to thank OGS Commissioner RoAnn Destito for her response to my request, and for recognizing the potential to help New York's dairy and other farmers, promote New York products, and help support New York farms."

Increasing outlets for the sale of New York dairy products would especially benefit farmers in Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties, which are part of the largest milk producing region of the state, while farmers in Oswego County and Central New York could benefit from new markets for onions, sweet corn, and other products.

Senator Ritchie had written to Commissioner Destito last month after noticing that lunchrooms attached to the government office complex in Albany were serving milk that was processed in Texas. OGS operates 23 lunchrooms in the capital, and serves 40,000 employees and visitors every day, Senator Ritchie pointed out, creating a huge potential market for New York products.

The state is currently preparing to sign new contracts for food services at its sprawling capital complex.

Destito, a former Central New York Assemblywoman who served on that house's Agriculture Committee, responded quickly that the state would move to put New York milk on the shelves and, further, would include provisions in a pending food service contract to require even more New York products.

"In reviewing our standard contract language regarding a reference for purchase of New York State products, we have determined it should be broadened to require the purchase of locally grown products as well," Commissioner Destito wrote, thanking the Senator for raising the issue.

Senator Ritchie's letter is part of a broader effort to encourage more food service outlets to use New York-made products. Last month, she also wrote to executives of the Subway fast food chain, urging them to replace Colorado-produced milk with New York products.

Copies of the correspondence between Senator Ritchie and Commissioner Destito can be found at: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/62640777/OGS-milk-letter> and <http://www.scribd.com/doc/62640774/OGS-reply-re-milk-at-ESP>.