



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Ritchie Praises Nyc Plan to 'Buy Local'

PATTY RITCHIE June 12, 2012

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### **Might of Big Apple Purchasing Power Would Be Boon to Upstate Farmers**

State Senator Patty Ritchie today praised New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg and City Council Speaker Christine Quinn for their plan to bring more local—i.e., New York-made—foods to Big Apple schools, prisons and employee lunch rooms.

Senator Ritchie, chair of the Senate's Agriculture Committee, said the plan would expose a wide swath of downstate consumers to the diversity and quality of farm products from Upstate New York, and provide a major boost to the state's agriculture economy, and she offered to help promote the effort through legislation, and by helping to connect agencies with suppliers.

"Buying regionally grown foods and farm products, such as fruits and vegetables, meats and dairy products, will not only promote good health for New Yorkers by bringing more fresh, nutritious and quality products within reach of consumers, it's also a celebration of the wide variety of nutritious and tasteful products that 30,000 New York farmers—from Eastern Long Island to the Canadian border—strive to produce every day," Senator Ritchie said.

“Accessing the largest consumer marketplace in the nation—the New York City metropolitan area—is key to the growth and success of our vital agriculture sector, which remains New York’s largest industry, and the foundation of the economies of so many communities across our diverse state, like those I represent,” Senator Ritchie said.

\*\*\* [READ SENATOR RITCHIE'S LETTER TO THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL SPEAKER](#) \*\*\*

The city’s effort mirrors steps that Senator Ritchie is taking to help Upstate farmers expand their market and boost their bottom line.

Last year, Senator Ritchie convinced Governor Cuomo’s Commissioner of General Services to return New York-made milk to lunchrooms at the state capital that serve 40,000 employees and visitors every day. The eateries were selling milk produced in Colorado but now offer products from Upstate dairy farms, including some in Central and Northern New York.

The Commissioner also committed to finding ways to include more New York farm products in prepared and packaged foods offered for sale in state buildings.

In addition, Senator Ritchie is a cosponsor of the “Buy From The Backyard Act” (S.2468), introduced by the Senate’s Deputy Majority Leader, Thomas W. Libous, that would require state agencies, including prisons and hospitals, to purchase 20 percent of their food from New York growers and producers.

The city’s plan requires 10 percent of purchases be made from local sources, and both plans include provisions to ensure competitive pricing, to protect taxpayers. The city says it is second only to the US military in food purchases.

[Read Senator Ritchie's letter to Mayor Bloomberg and City Council Speaker Quinn by clicking here.](#)