



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Ritchie Bill to Boost Local Agriculture Signed Into Law

PATTY RITCHIE December 19, 2013

| ISSUE: **AGRICULTURE, ORGANIC FARMING, DAIRY, LIVESTOCK**



### **Measure Seeks to Increase Local Foods in State Facilities**

A bill sponsored by State Senator Patty Ritchie that seeks to use the tremendous buying power of state government to boost purchases of locally grown foods for use in state prisons, hospitals and other agencies has been signed into law by Governor Andrew Cuomo.

Under Senate Bill 4061, officials will be directed to create a list of competitively priced food products available for institutional sale, giving state agencies easy access to farm fresh products. State officials will also be required to regularly update their local food purchasing lists and measure state agencies' compliance with directives to expand purchases from local food sources.

“Eating local is a big trend right now—and it can mean big business for local farmers and food producers. This legislation builds upon that movement, seeking to use the purchasing power of state government to help farmers grow,” said Senator Ritchie, who chairs the Senate Agriculture Committee.

“Not only will this measure promote nutrition by putting more locally grown foods in our prisons, hospitals and other state facilities, it will also boost the bottom lines of our state’s hardworking farmers.”

Also known as the “Food Metrics Bill” the measure is widely supported by a broad array of groups, from farmers to environmentalists. The legislation was named a top priority by America’s Farmland Trust, a nationwide organization that promotes eating more local foods as a way to help preserve farmland, farm industry and open space. In addition, the New York League of Conservation Voters recognized Senator Ritchie for her sponsorship of the legislation.

This is just the latest effort by Senator Ritchie to support farmers and encourage people to buy local. She is also a sponsor of the “Buy from the Backyard Act” (S.978), which aims to boost local farming by requiring state agencies to purchase 20 percent of their food supplies from New York-based sources. In addition, Senator Ritchie also worked to put New York milk back in employee lunchrooms at the Capitol, which serve tens of thousands of state workers and visitors every day.