



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

Ortt Announces Farm-to-Seniors Initiative Underway

ROBERT G. ORTT July 16, 2015

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Program Allows Seniors to Access Fresh Produce From Local Farmers Markets for Free

Senator Rob Ortt (R,C,I – North Tonawanda) today announced coupon booklets are available for low-income Niagara County seniors to buy fresh fruits, vegetables and other products at local Farmers Markets. The Farm-to-Seniors initiative promotes nutrition and healthy eating while also supporting the local farming and business community. A total of \$2 million was included in this year's state budget to support the initiative across New York.

"The Farm-to-Seniors initiative allows seniors in need to save money while strengthening the bottom lines of our local farmers," said **Senator Ortt**. "It's a great way to provide seniors with

healthy choices about what they're eating, and connects them to locally grown food. As a result, dozens of seniors will live longer and healthier lives without the worry of being able to afford nutritious foods on a low income."

The coupon booklets are valued at \$20 each, and must be used at open-air markets throughout the state. Eligible seniors must be 60 years of age or older with monthly incomes of \$1,815 or less for an individual, or \$2,456 or less for a couple. Booklets are offered on a first come, first served basis, and are available at the Niagara County Office for the Aging in Lockport.

Niagara County Office for the Aging Director Ken Genewick said, "While this program encourages seniors to eat locally grown fruits and vegetables at a Farmers Market in their neighborhood, it also allows them to meet and mingle with other community members. In addition, the Farm-to-Seniors initiative aims to increase the number of seniors regularly buying and eating farm-fresh produce after studies showed only one in three seniors actually do."

As part of the Senate's "Grown in New York" program, the Farm-to-Seniors initiative builds upon the current Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program, operated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The \$2 million in state funding allows 110,000 low-income seniors to access the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program statewide.