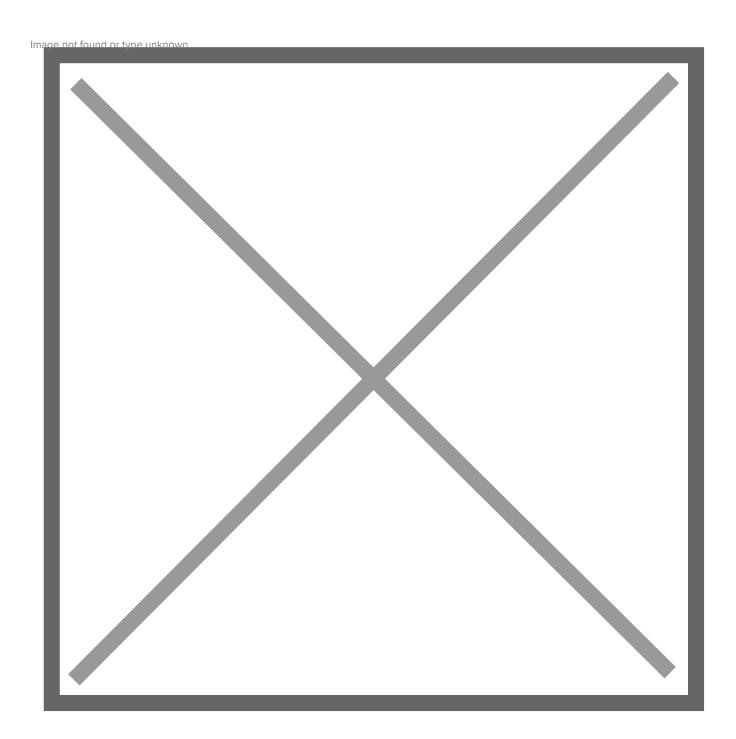


Ritchie to Help 2,500 Seniors Get Access to Healthy, Farm-Fresh Foods at Local Farmers Markets

BRIAN DWYER June 1, 2018

ISSUE: SENIORS, FARMERS, HEALTHY FOOD



State Senator Patty Ritchie is once again ensuring more seniors have access to healthy, farmfresh fruits and vegetables by helping them become eligible to receive free coupons that can be redeemed at local farmers markets. This year, thanks to funding secured by Senator Ritchie, 2,500 local seniors will be able to benefit from the program.

"Farmers markets are a great way to showcase our area's fresh, healthy foods and more," said

Senator Ritchie, who serves as Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee. "These coupons

ensure our seniors are getting the nutrition they need, while providing another market for

our hardworking farmers. Expanding this program to reach even more seniors is the perfect

example of a win-win for our communities."

Senator Ritchie secured \$500,000 in this year's state budget to expand the "Senior Farmers"

Market Nutrition" program, which provides free, \$20 coupon booklets to seniors aged 60 and

over who are living on a fixed income. The coupons can be redeemed for fresh fruits and

vegetables at local farmers markets.

Since its inception four years ago, the "Senior Farmers Market Nutrition" program, and its

expansion thanks to Senator Ritchie, has supported nearly 10,000 seniors throughout

Jefferson, Oswego and St. Lawrence Counties. In addition, it provides a boost in sales for the

farmers growing the foods, benefitting local economies.

The monthly income eligibility limits for receiving coupons are as follows:

Household of one: \$1,872/month

Household of two: \$2,538/month

Household of three: \$3,204/month

Coupons are now available in Jefferson and St. Lawrence County. For more information how

to receive coupons, seniors must contact their local Office for the Aging:

Jefferson County: (315) 785-3191

St. Lawrence County: (315) 386-4730

Oswego County will have coupons available later this month.

The expansion of this program is part of the 2018-19 state budget, which saw record support for agriculture—totaling \$54.4 million—to boost dozens of programs farmers depend on, as well as launched new initiatives designed to strengthen the connection between consumers and local foods.