

CHAIR
Labor
COMMITTEES
Cities
Consumer Protection
Corporations, Authorities and
Commissions
Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Parks and
Recreation
Transportation

NEW YORK
STATE
SENATE



JESSICA RAMOS
SENATOR, 13TH DISTRICT

□ **ALBANY OFFICE:**
946 Legislative Office Bldg.
Albany, NY 12247
Phone: (518) 455-2529

□ **DISTRICT OFFICE:**
32-37 Junction Blvd.
East Elmhurst, NY 11369
Phone: (718) 205-3881

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 8, 2020

zmejia@nysenate.gov

Media contact: Zameena Mejia
718-205-3881,

**For Second Straight Weekend, Sen. Ramos Coordinates More Than 30,000 Pounds of
Donated Food from NYS Farms For COVID-19 Hunger Relief**
*Farms To Receive Economic Relief Through New \$25 Million State
Nourish NY Program*

East Elmhurst, NY — State Senator Jessica Ramos (D-Queens) announced today that farms across upstate New York donated 33,000 pounds of fresh milk and produce for hundreds of hungry New York City families in need. This effort follows last week’s successful food giveaway, and will continue through the coming month.

Critically, Ramos also secured a partnership with Food Bank of New York City and local food pantry Elmcors to utilize the State’s new \$25 million Nourish New York program, which in turn provides economic relief to the food producers donating their resources by giving food pantries statewide the money to pay the farms.

Tote bags of food were distributed today, May 8 at 4 p.m. at Senator Ramos’ district Senate office in East Elmhurst, Queens, with lines stretching for blocks. In addition to food Senator Ramos secured at Elmcors, she also secured food allocations to be distributed at other local food pantries including at First Baptist Church, St. Leo’s Church, Corona Christian church, Young Urban Moms, and a few other local partners. A hot meal distribution will also take place on Saturday, May 9 at 11 a.m. , also at Senator Ramos’ office, until food runs out. This is a weekly event taking place on Fridays and Saturdays.

“This crisis has taken a devastating toll on our district and making sure no neighbor of ours goes hungry is one of my top priorities. Equally as important to me is that our farms are also able to survive through this crisis and be able to afford food on their own plates. That’s why this

upstate-downstate partnership is so crucial to us, and now, with our partners at Food Bank of New York City and ElmcOR, we can utilize the amazing resources provided by Nourish New York to ensure our state's agricultural field can continue to thrive in the wake of this pandemic," said State Senator Jessica Ramos.

Many areas in Senate District 13 neighborhoods — Elmhurst, East Elmhurst, Jackson Heights, Corona and parts of Woodside and Astoria — are considered food deserts, making it difficult to obtain fresh meals. Few local food pantries remain open as residents fall ill with COVID-19. As the chair of the New York State Senate Labor Committee, Senator Ramos has also prioritized calling on the State to provide economic relief to local food producers affected by COVID-19 shutdowns.

The following donations were provided to ElmcOR thanks to the partnership between Senator Ramos and a number of New York State farms:

- 5,600 pounds of yogurt , Upstate Farms (Buffalo, NY)
- 800 gallons of milk, Dairy Farmers of America (Syracuse, NY)
- 6,200 pounds of apples, Crist Brothers Orchard (Walden, NY)
- 8,000 pounds cabbage, Torrey Farms (Elba, NY)
- 6,000 pounds of potatoes, Torrey Farms (Elba, NY)
- 240 pounds of onions, Torrey Farms (Elba, NY)

On Thursday, May 7, a truck packed with vegetables and yogurt left Western New York, stopped in the Albany area to pick up milk, stopped in the Hudson Valley to pick up apples and arrived in Queens on Friday, May 8.

"Events like this one at the Food Bank of New York City are making a critical connection between our families, our food banks, and our farmers," said **State Agriculture Commissioner Richard Ball**. "We're proud that Governor Cuomo's Nourish NY initiative is bringing New York products to those who need them most during this challenging time, while supporting our farmers and producers."

"Bringing food directly to communities and families is one of the most important and effective things we can do right now, with so many of our neighbors struggling and turning to pantries like this one for the first time in their lives," said **Leslie Gordon, President and CEO of Food Bank For New York City**. "Thank you to Senator Ramos and her team for supporting community food distributions, and Governor Cuomo and our state leadership for the essential investment in the Nourish NY initiative which is providing a much-needed boost throughout the food supply chain and ultimately helping more New Yorkers get access to food."

“Elmcor has been providing food to our community for over 50 years and we are proud to stand with Senator Ramos to serve residents in need of assistance now more than ever during this crisis,” said **Saeeda Lesley Dunston, Executive Director at Elmcor Youth and Services Activities, Inc.** “Thank you to Senator Ramos and her team for their continued support.”

“Normally, each week, our trucks load up and take our products up and down the east coast to market, but this pandemic has changed how we operate. Having the opportunity to put our team, our resources and most importantly our produce to use to make sure others have food to eat in this time of great need is extremely gratifying,” said **Maureen Torrey of Torrey Farms in Elba.**

“When people think of New York, they think of the apple,” said **Joy Crist, of Crist Brothers Orchards in Walden.** “Sending apples from our orchard to help other New Yorkers in need was so important to us. In this time of uncertainty, we hope that these locally grown apples represent not only nutritional value, but more importantly the support we send to those on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic.”

"The launch of the Nourish New York Initiative will connect nutritious dairy products from upstate farms to NY families in need. Our New York dairy farmers are essential and have continued to produce high quality milk, despite the COVID-19 pandemic impacts on their businesses. This effort brings hope to our farmers in these unprecedented times. This Nourish New York Initiative through Senator Ramos' leadership is a step to bridging the gap between producer and consumer while also supporting the very infrastructure which provides food for all consumers across the state " said **John Dickinson, of Ideal Dairy, NEDPA Chair and member of Dairy Farmers of America (DFA).** NEDPA is a farmer led organization that represents family farms throughout New York State that produce about half of the state's milk and Dairy Farmers of America is a national dairy cooperative supporting more than 13,000 dairy farm families across the country.

“Upstate, downstate, in the end we're all New Yorkers and we'll do whatever we can to help one another out in times of crisis. I'm proud of the farming community for coming together to deliver healthy nutritious New York grown products to our neighbors in need,” said **Brian Reeves, president of the New York State Vegetable Farmers Association.** “Thank you to Governor Cuomo for creating Nourish New York and thank you to Senator Ramos for her service to her community.”

“Food security matters, and it is imperative that we do our part to make sure New Yorkers in every corner of this state have access to healthy, nutritious food. Our state's farmers have a proud tradition of being national leaders in food donation efforts, and we commend Senator

Ramos for continuing to build on the relationships with the entire agricultural community for the benefit of the people in her district. As long as there is a need, New York’s farmers are there to help make sure no one goes hungry,” said **David Fisher, New York Farm Bureau President.**

Senator Ramos’ upstate partnerships are further bolstered by working with local businesses, community-based organizations, nonprofits and centers — including Home Depot, Together We Can Resource Center, the COVID Care Neighbor Network, Trade Fair — which assisted with logistics, food and PPE donations.

About Nourish New York: Amid an unprecedented surge in demand for food assistance across New York State, Governor Andrew Cuomo recently announced that the state is providing \$25 million from a special public health emergency fund for food banks and other supplemental food providers impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Nourish New York initiative aims to reroute New York’s surplus agricultural products to the people in need of food assistance through New York’s network of food banks. The Nourish New York program also provides economic relief for the state’s food producers.

###