



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Senator Ritchie Reacts to New Cheese Rule: 'It Stinks'

PATTY RITCHIE July 1, 2011

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State Senator Patty Ritchie today said that New York consumers who care about fresh, local food should be holding their noses at a move by state bureaucrats to require many farmers markets to sell only plastic-wrapped cheese.

The state Department of Agriculture and Markets is banning the age-old practice by cheese mongers of selling fresh sliced cheese, unless they take costly steps like installing specialized sinks with hot water at outdoor farmers markets.

"We're working hard to promote farmers markets, and fresh, locally grown foods to help farmers, help our local economies and create jobs," said Senator Ritchie. "But rules like this will make it harder for farmers, and turn away customers who won't be able to get what they want."

The move comes as the result of the agency applying "food processing" regulations to farmers markets. Senator Ritchie said she will introduce legislation to specifically exempt farmers markets from those rules.

In the meantime, Senator Ritchie is urging the department to reconsider its interpretation of the rule.