



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David J. Valesky

## Senate Passes Valesky Legislation to Bring Local Food to Senior Facilities

DAVID J. VALESKY May 7, 2013

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ALBANY, NY – The New York State Senate passed legislation today, sponsored by Senator David J. Valesky (D-Oneida), that will help bring local farm products to senior centers and other institutions for the aging. The legislation ([S.2149](#)) establishes a farm-to-senior program to promote the purchase of New York farm products by organizations that serve seniors, such as Social Adult Day Programs, County Area Agencies for the Aging and Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities.

“Opening up new markets to New York farmers by connecting them with customers who look for fresh, nutritious food makes sense economically,” Senator Valesky said. “By providing farmers, farm organizations and businesses that market farm products with information on how to reach senior centers and other aging institutions we can create opportunities for both groups.”

The legislation builds upon the success of the existing farm-to-school program, which connects schools with local food producers, by facilitating a working relationship between the Department of Agriculture and Markets and Office for the Aging for the purchase and promotion of New York agricultural products. Senior centers and other aging institutions are a huge potential market for New York farm products because, currently, only a small percentage of the food served comes from local farms. Increasing senior centers’ purchases of locally produced food would boost sales at a time when farmers struggle with low profits. It would also provide urban, suburban and rural seniors with improved access to fresh, local nutritious foods.

“The Farm to Senior program would not only provide a new opportunity for New York’s farmers to access additional markets to sell the great things they grow, but it would also increase access to healthy, local food for our state’s senior citizens. We appreciate Senator Valesky’s effort to connect consumers with the hard working family farms in New York,” said Julie Suarez, New York Farm Bureau Public Policy Director.

“AARP stands in strong support of the farm-to-senior bill, and we thank Senator Valesky for his leadership in helping older New Yorkers achieve better access to healthy foods from local farms,” said Beth Finkel, State Director for AARP in New York. “This legislation is a four-way win: it encourages a healthy diet, reduces risk of disease, promotes more effective management of chronic health issues and helps local farmers.”

In addition, the legislation creates a promotional event, New York Golden Harvest: Seniors Week, to promote New York agriculture and foods to seniors at senior centers, farms, farmers’ markets and other aging institutions.

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