



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## This Summer, Eat Farmers Market Fresh

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### Senator Ritchie's Weekly Column

More vitamins and minerals, protection against diseases such as heart disease and cancer, a lower number on the scale and freshness that is second to none—these are just some of the benefits of eating fruits, vegetables and other foods found at your local farmers market.

As summer approaches, farmers markets across Central and Northern New York prepare for their season. We're lucky in our region, not only to have so many different markets but also such a wide variety of foods—everything from sweet corn and crisp carrots to flavorful cheeses and freshly baked bread.

Every year, I make it easy for people who are looking to eat fresh—and local—to find markets near them with my “Farmers Market Guide.” It lists markets, locations and times throughout Jefferson, Oswego and St. Lawrence Counties and can be found on my website. You can also call (315) 782-3418 to have a copy sent to you.

As Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee, I’m also working to support the hardworking farmers who make getting fresh food on your table possible. This year, I continued to make it a priority to restore cuts to agriculture and as a result, included in the newly-enacted State Budget is a record \$8.5 million in increased agriculture support aimed at helping farmers as well as key programs that allow this vital industry to grow.

In addition, the State Budget also put into motion my \$1 million Young Farmers NY initiative, which focuses on helping more young people enter agriculture careers through grants, student loan forgiveness, increased funding for the FFA program and changes to the Estate Tax, which will make it easier for families to pass down farms to the next generation.

You can support our farmers too. It’s as easy as visiting your local farmers market and taking advantage of the fresh fruits, vegetables and other offerings. For more information on farmers markets in your area, don’t forget to check out my Farmers Market Guide.