



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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## Buy Local...and Invest in Central New York

DAVID J. VALESKY August 7, 2009

| ISSUE: **AGRICULTURE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ARTS AND CULTURE**

Buying locally grown foods has become somewhat of a trend in the past few years. Bestsellers have been written, new words—localvore—have been coined, and people across the nation want to be connected to where their food comes from.

This is no trend in Central New York—it is a way of life. Our broad agricultural base gives us, as consumers, an opportunity that many don't have—the opportunity to buy local. Products are readily available at local grocery stores, farmers' markets and roadside stands, and we happily buy them because they taste good and we know where they came from.

There are several other benefits to consider when buying local.

Every quart of strawberries, every ear of corn, and every pound of string beans you buy are a direct investment in the local economy. In addition to supporting your local grocery store or farmers' market, your investment has an immediate and positive effect on your neighbor down the road, helps to keep local farms viable, and keeps New York State's number one industry—agriculture—going strong.

Buying local relates to more than just raw products. Many restaurants in the area, like the Copper Turret in Morrisville, Circa in Cazenovia, the Poolville Country Store in Poolville and

the Colgate Inn in Hamilton, have committed to using as many locally grown ingredients as possible, and letting you know what products are used and where they came from.

Buying local also has environmental benefits. Currently, the average food product travels 1,500 miles--about the distance between Syracuse and Cancun, Mexico--before it hits your plate, which requires a lot of fossil fuel. Buying apples from Lafayette (less than 20 miles) instead of those shipped from China (more than 6,000 miles) takes a fraction of the fuel for transport.

August 17-23 is Madison County's second annual Buy Local Week, which spotlights the many different agricultural products available in local markets. During this week, Central New Yorkers will have the opportunity, through some special events, to tour farms and sample local foods.

Though Buy Local Week gives us a chance to talk about local products, I believe every week should be Buy Local Week in Central New York. Choosing food that comes from New York State is something we should all consider as we buy our groceries or visit farmers' markets during the course of the entire year.

After all, wouldn't you rather eat a baked potato that began its journey to your table in Canastota instead of going through customs?

For more information about Buy Local Week and a schedule of events, visit

[www.madisoncountyagriculture.com](http://www.madisoncountyagriculture.com).