



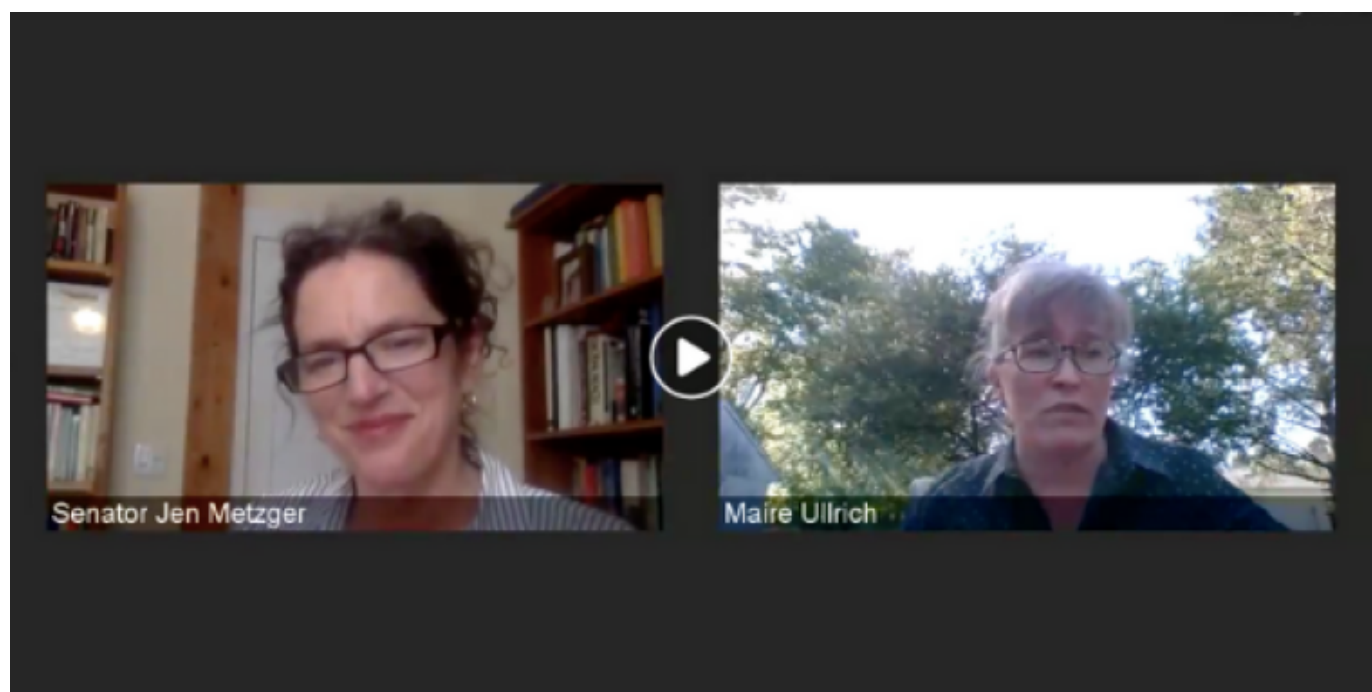
NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jen Metzger

Senator Metzger Discusses Impacts on Consumer Habits, Farms, and Food Supply during COVID-19 with Orange County Ag Expert Maire Ullrich

JEN METZGER May 23, 2020

| ISSUE: **COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS, CONSUMER HABITS, NEW YORK FARMS, FOOD SUPPLY**



Hudson Valley and Catskills, NY...State Senator Jen Metzger (SD-42) yesterday welcomed Maire Ullrich from Cornell Cooperative Extension Orange County (CCEOC) to her online series, **Community Conversations**, to discuss the effects of the pandemic and food supply disruptions on agriculture in the region. The conversation covered dairy's abrupt market shift, explaining in great detail how the industry's lack of production flexibility, from manufacturing to trucking distribution and refrigeration storage, contributed to milk

dumping throughout New York State.

Farmers affected by COVID-19 have dominated headlines in recent weeks, and Metzger, who chairs the Senate Agriculture Committee, revealed with Ullrich the ways farms have adapted to the crisis and the benefits of initiatives like the state's Nourish NY Program that support the purchase of New York farm products while at the same time address growing food insecurity. They also discussed Cornell Cooperative Extension of Orange County's Gleaning Program that is delivering food to agencies and families in Orange and Sullivan County communities through donations.

Senator Metzger and CCEOC's Ullrich also examined the change that occurred in many people's buying habits during the pandemic, with more people seeking out fresh local foods at farm stands and farmers' markets. "The renewed appreciation for the fresh, nutritious foods we produce in our region is a bright spot in this challenging time," **said Senator Metzger.** "One of the lessons of the pandemic is the need to strengthen our regional food systems to help reduce our vulnerability to disruptions in national supply chains while supporting local agriculture."

Maire Ullrich, Agricultural Program Leader from Cornell Cooperative Extension Orange County said, "The efficiency and profitability, and delicacy, of the food system has been highlighted by the disruptions that COVID has caused, and I appreciate Senator Metzger for elevating these necessary discussions. The relative flexibilities of local or small production/processing and transportation have been a benefit to New York growers and consumers demonstrating that producing and buying local is part of food security.

*Senator Metzger's **Community Conversations** series streams live on Thursdays at 5:00 PM on **her Facebook page**, engaging local experts in discussions on COVID-19 topics important to Hudson Valley and Catskill communities. **Next Thursday's episode** will focus on best practices for small businesses in the*

Mid-Hudson Valley and Catskills as they prepare for the phased reopening of the regional economy. Program guests include Lisa Berger, Director of the Ulster County Department of Economic Development, and Roberta Byron-Lockwood, President & CEO of the Sullivan Catskills Visitors Association.

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