

Nutrition News - July 2021



Local Farmers Markets and Your Nutrition

A Farmers Market is defined under New York State law as a place where farmers can sell their agricultural products directly to the general public at a fixed location. These products typically include fruits and vegetables, meat, fish, poultry, dairy products, and grains.

Farmers Market that register with the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (agriculture.ny.gov) may participate in the Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP), Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP), and Farmers Market Coupon redemption. See the box on the back of this newsletter for more information.

When You Visit the Market

When you go to a Farmers Market, you will often find opportunities to buy at prices comparable to grocery stores - sometimes even lower. The upsides to shopping at our farmers markets are plentiful.

Locally grown food is fresher, tastier and more nutritious. Fruits and vegetables raised locally do not need wax coatings, preservatives or chemical ripening agents, because you can eat them right after harvest. Industrially-farmed plants are bred for uniform appearance, long shelf life, and to survive industrial food processing. A Dutchess County blueberry harvested this month is clearly superior to an industrial blueberry shipped here from the other end of the earth in February.

Local growers respond to the needs of their customers, and grow high-quality products and interesting varieties. Locally grown foods can be

more nutritious because they are picked closer to their peak of ripeness and do not lose nutrients due to long travel or storage time. The food in a typical supermarket was often trucked or even flown vast distances: 1,500 miles on average. The food at your farmer's market, on the other hand, may have been carried there that same morning from the field on the same property as the market.

Buying from our local farmers helps local farms survive and helps create a thriving local economy, supporting local families. Local farms provide jobs and attract tourists, re-circulating dollars back into our local economy. Local farms enhance and beautify our landscape, and protect our open space.

Locally-produced cheeses have repeatedly won international culinary awards. That's not going to happen with a plastic-wrapped slice of artificially-colored "cheese food product" which, legally speaking, isn't cheese at all.

Local farms can even keep our taxes in check. According to several American Farmland Trust studies, farms contribute more in taxes than they need in services. After all, a dairy cow will never require a 911 call, except in those rare instances when one escapes from her farm.

And local farms have had a definite positive impact on the larger businesses of agriculture, supermarkets, and restaurants. Even the largest fast-food chains have been phasing out artificial ingredients, often in favor of higher quality local farm and dairy products. They're responding to demand from consumers like you.

On the back page you'll find out how the Farmers Market Nutrition Program can help you improve your nutrition while helping local farms at the same time.

Dutchess County Office for the Aging • 114 Delafield St., Poughkeepsie NY 12601
845-486-2555 • toll free 866-486-2555 • www.dutchessny.gov/aging

Todd N. Tancredi
Director, Office for the Aging

Nimesh Bhargava, MS, RD, CDN
Nutrition Services Coordinator

Marcus J. Molinaro
County Executive

More About Farmers Market Coupons

The purpose of the Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) is to promote improved nutrition through increased consumption of locally-grown, fresh fruits and vegetables. It is also intended to expand sales at farmers markets.

The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets collaborates in administering the program with the New York State Department of Health, the New York State Office for the Aging, and Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Farmers must sign up annually with the manager of the program(s) in which they plan to participate. There is no fee to the farmer for participation.

SFMNP-eligible seniors must be at least 60 years of age and be receiving benefits through Social Security, public assistance, SNAP, HEAP, or Section 8 housing; or earn less than \$1,986 per month for a single senior, \$2,686 for a couple, or \$3,386 per month for a three person household.

In past years, distribution of coupon booklets was limited to one per household; this year, each qualifying older adult in a household is eligible to receive a booklet.

We expect the booklets will be ready for distribution to qualifying seniors by early August.

Eligible recipients must personally sign the Statement of Eligibility Form to receive SFMNP checks. *Checks cannot be mailed* to eligible older adults. Proxies may not pick-up and sign for checks. A valid Power of Attorney (POA) may sign for checks and pick up books for an eligible older adult. POA must bring proof of their being someone's POA. While the client must sign in person for the booklet, a caregiver or family member, or another person, may shop at the farmers market for them using their coupons.

Coupons can be used until November 30th, or whenever a participating market closes for the season, whichever comes earlier.

For more information on participation in the program and how to redeem SFMNP checks, please contact the Dutchess County Office for the Aging at 845-486-2555.

Dutchess County Office for the Aging

Marcus J. Molinaro - County Executive

Todd N. Tancredi - Director, Office for the Aging

Nimesh Bhargava - Nutrition Services Coordinator

Dutchess County Office for the Aging
114 Delafield St., Poughkeepsie NY 12601

(845) 486-2555 / toll free (866) 486-2555

Web: www.dutchessny.gov/aging
Email: ofa@dutchessny.gov

The Dutchess County Office for the Aging is funded under Title III of the U.S. Older Americans Act, the New York State Office for the Aging, and the county of Dutchess.

Office for the Aging FREE

Drive-Thru Summer Senior Picnics

Space is limited - Reservations are required

Call 845-486-2555

Seating is available at most picnic venues, for those who'd like to stay after picking up their to-go meal

Unwanted/outdated medication dropoff available, courtesy of Dutchess County Sheriff's Office, Dutchess County STOP-DWI and Dutchess County Medical Reserve Corps

Full schedule at dutchessny.gov/OFAPicnics

Presented with support from
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