

PRESS RELEASE

July 12, 2018

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Sullivan Catskills Farmers Markets Launch Summer Event: SPEND TEN

SULLIVAN COUNTY, NY— Now through August 11, the public is invited to join in the Spend Ten Market Challenge! All participants need to do is pledge to spend ten minutes and ten dollars at a local Sullivan Catskills Farmers' Market this summer. Last year, over 550 people took the pledge. This year, the goal is 600 pledges. There are three ways to pledge:

- 1) Visit www.homegrownwithheart.com/spendten2018 and fill out the pledge form. Visitors can also see 10 reasons – backed by studies and statistics – to spend ten at the farmers' market.
- 2) “Like” the video pinned to the top of the campaign’s Facebook page: www.facebook.com/sullivancatskillsfarmersmarkets
- 3) In person at a farmers' market. Look for the market manager. If the market does not have an on-site manager, use one of the above methods.

TOP TEN REASONS TO SPEND TEN:

1. More Value | Take the challenge, see for yourself!

It's time to clear up the myth that farmers' market food costs more. During peak produce season (July through September), you'll find that fruits and vegetables are the same in price or even lower. Those who receive SNAP/EBT benefits can enjoy even more value: they'll receive \$4 in FreshConnect checks for every \$10 they spend at the farmers' market.

If you see produce that's a few cents more at the farmers' market, it's worth it. In fact, nearly 3 out of 4 Sullivan Catskills Farmers' Market shoppers agree or strongly agree: “I get a good value for my money.”

(SOURCE: 398 Sullivan Catskills Farmers' Markets shoppers surveyed in 2016.)

2. More Freshness | Harvested locally, not 1,494 miles away.

When you buy fruits and vegetables at the farmers' market, you're enjoying produce that was harvested within days – maybe hours – and traveled just a few miles. Compare that to the national average that

produce travels: 1,494 miles. Buying local means better tasting food and reduces the amount of carbon emissions going into our atmosphere.

For Joan, a regular shopper at the Rock Hill Farmers' Market, freshness is important: "I like knowing my food didn't go on a truck and travel 1,000 miles and sit in the back of a store before getting to me."

(SOURCE: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/leopold_pubspapers/130/)

3. More Flavor | 97% of Catskills shoppers agree: farmers' market food is fresher and tastes better!

Take the ultimate taste test. Try a locally grown tomato versus one commercially grown out of state. You'll be shocked (in a good way). Local produce doesn't just pack more flavor, it's more nutritious. When produce sits in a warehouse for days or weeks, it can lose nutritional value.

(SOURCE: 398 Sullivan Catskills Farmers' Markets shoppers surveyed in 2016.)

(SOURCE: http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/7_benefits_of_eating_local_foods)

4. More Variety | Discover more than fruits and veggies.

Find more variety at the farmers' market, beyond fruits and vegetables: Award-winning hard cider made from local foraged apples and found in NYC's top restaurants (The Cidery's Aaron Burr Cider). Maple syrup tapped from our own Catskills' maple trees (Winterton Farms). Humanely raised pork, beef, and chicken (Majestic Farms). These are just a few examples of the ultimate variety waiting for you.

5. More Impact | Buying local pumps 3.7 times more money in our community

For local farmers, agriculture is their livelihood. Like any local retailer, they have to invest in employees, materials, and services to run their business. That's why spending ten locally, matters. For every \$10 you spend, our farmers invest \$5 back into the local economy – chain stores invest about \$1. Imagine: If all 77,000+ Sullivan County residents spent \$10 just once this summer, that would send \$370,000 back into our economy!

[SOURCE: <https://www.amiba.net/resources/studies-recommended-reading/local-premium/>]

[SOURCE (2010 Census):

<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/sullivancountynewyork/PST045216>)]

6. More Fun | It's more than a shopping trip... it's an event.

You can't enjoy live music and kid's story time at the grocery store. But you can at the farmers' market. Farmers' markets are more than places to buy food. It's a chance to enjoy a vibrant social scene, connect with neighbors (including farmers), and learn about what's going on in the community. A regular shopper at the Barryville Farmers' Market praised the area with Adirondack chairs and an umbrella: "It's a nice area to sit and chat with neighbors – it's a real civic space."

[SOURCE: 398 Sullivan Catskills Farmers' Markets shoppers surveyed in 2016.]

7. More Health | 94% of market shoppers believe farmers' markets help them eat healthier.

It's easier to eat more fruits and vegetables when they taste better! That may be one reason why almost every Catskills Farmers' Market shopper believes markets positively impact their health. Plus, farmers' markets provide free recipe ideas and tips, making it simple to cook up healthy meals.

Monticello resident Greg shared the struggle many face: "It's hard to eat healthy! I work nights and typically get food from the drive thru on the way home because I'm pretty tired." Last June, Greg

stopped by the Monticello Farmers' Market for the first time. "I think it's awesome. I'm excited to bring home these carrots to my daughter – carrots are her favorite. I will be back."

[SOURCE: 398 Sullivan Catskills Farmers' Markets shoppers surveyed in 2016.]

8. More Quality | Farmers' market food meets rigorous food safety standards.

Did you know that local meat is subject to the same USDA inspections as meat you find at the grocery store? You can eat local with confidence knowing your food was grown and produced by your neighbors who want your family to enjoy the highest quality food.

[SOURCE: <https://www.agriculture.ny.gov/FS/industry/04circs/Art5BsaleofmeatCIR914.pdf>]

9. More Connection | 9 out of 10 market shoppers like meeting the farmers who grow their food.

When food is locally grown, the farmer is known – and that's a good thing! Farmers love sharing recipes, prep tips, and facts about what they grow. Ask them anything and you'll see why 92% of shoppers agree that meeting farmers is a special part of the farmers' market experience. For many, shopping at the farmers' market and learning about farmers' work is eye-opening. One shopper at the Callicoon Farmers' Market noted that market shopping has "changed the way our family, and every other family we know, eats and thinks about food".

[SOURCE: 398 Sullivan Catskills Farmers' Markets shoppers surveyed in 2016.]

10. More Heart | Help our local farmers earn 90 cents on the dollar – not 17 cents!

When you buy food at a chain grocery store, the farmer only receives 17 cents on the dollar. At the farmers' market, it's AT LEAST 90 cents. Show your heart for homegrown – and your local farmers, and #SpendTen!

[SOURCE: <https://nfu.org/farmers-share/>]

More information and opportunities for Sullivan Catskills Farmers' Markets are online at www.homegrownwithheart.com and www.facebook.com/sullivancatskillsfarmersmarkets. Promotions and events for the Sullivan Catskills Farmers' Markets are organized by Sullivan County Government, Cornell Cooperative Extension Sullivan County, and markets in Sullivan County. Each farmers' market is independently operated.

In 2015, Sullivan County was awarded a Farmers' Market Promotion Project grant from the USDA. Funds were used to launch a research-based marketing campaign to improve the market. The first step was to benchmark established farmers market performance in 2016, implement strategies in 2017, and then measure the results.

- 78% of vendors reported an increase in sales
- Over half of shoppers increased the frequency of their visits
- Market attendance in July and August grew by 63%
- Promotions and campaigns reached 82% of shoppers
- 3x more benefits recipients shopping at markets

The campaign focused on launching cooking demos, interactive events, educational resources, recipes, and more. These efforts resulted in an overall boost in customer visits and spending at the market. In 2018, the markets continue to work together to launch collaborative events like Spend Ten, Senior Weekend, and National Farmers' Market Week.