

“Agriculture has always been one of our area’s strengths, and the renewed interest in local foods is creating new opportunities for our local economy.”

— Assemblywoman Donna A. Lupardo

ASSEMBLYWOMAN

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Greetings,

If there’s one thing we all have in common it’s the desire to eat good quality food that’s as fresh as possible. Fortunately, we’re working on a way to achieve that while building up an important sector of our own economy. Local agriculture has been undervalued in our area for a very long time, even though we were primarily a farming community long before IBM and Endicott-Johnson came to dominate the economy.

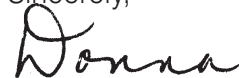
A couple of years ago, I asked Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) to develop a report on agriculture’s impact on the local economy. Many were surprised to learn how significant it really is. In recent years, economic planners have prioritized local foods in all of the regional competitions and many exciting projects are now underway.

At the state level, I’ve helped sponsor numerous bills designed to remove barriers that have held back the craft beverage industry, for example. I’ve also been successful at helping start a brand new crop for NYS with the first industrial hemp seeds going into the ground this year.

The goal is to support and promote all aspects of a vibrant local food economy. This includes bringing fresh products into our homes, schools, and restaurants; creating new manufacturing opportunities; and educating farmers, culinary students, and entrepreneurs.

I hope you find this newsletter a good source of information about the many exciting initiatives that are underway. Please support our local farmers and businesses.

Sincerely,



Donna A. Lupardo



New Crops for New York

Developing new crops is an important part of our economic strategy. Recently, hops has become an important new crop to serve the growing craft beverage industry; as more breweries continue to open their doors, there will be an increased need for hops, grains, and new malting houses. Broome County's four breweries are attracting a loyal following and are featured on the NY Beer Trail. Visit newyorkcraftbeer.com/beer-finder for more information.

Industrial hemp is another crop with enormous potential for farming, manufacturing, and pharmaceutical research. In 2014, I passed legislation establishing NY's Industrial Hemp Pilot Research Program allowing local farmers to partner with universities to study industrial hemp; Cornell University and Morrisville State College are the first two participants in the program and Binghamton University is also interested. Earlier this summer, I visited JD Farms in Eaton, NY to help plant NY's first hemp seeds in 80 years. New legislation I passed this year will expand the pilot program allowing the hemp that is grown to be marketed, processed, sold, and transported. This multi-use crop has enormous potential in Upstate, NY.



Assemblywoman Lupardo helps plant the state's first hemp seeds in 80 years

New Agricultural Training Center and Commercial Kitchen

A new Agriculture Development Center will be located at the historical Cutler House next to Broome County Cornell Cooperative Extension. I helped them secure a \$500,000 Assembly grant matching a \$500,000 grant from the state's Southern Tier Agricultural Industry Enhancement program. Other support is coming from the Hoyt and Ahearn Foundations and an investment from CCE as well.

The new facility will be home to classrooms, a commercial kitchen, and a new Taste NY market; all of which will be used to educate and train current and future food producers, helping them bring their products to market. The Center is next door to the year-round Farmers Market and will support a new generation of farmers and food entrepreneurs.



Rendering of the new Agriculture Development Center at CCE

Assemblywoman Lupardo and Commissioner of Agriculture and Markets Richard Ball view plans for new Agriculture Development Center



New Year-Round Farmers Market

The new Broome County Regional Farmers Market opened at CCE in June and offers local products year-round. Open on Saturdays, the market has easy access from I-88 and I-81, making it a perfect spot for residents and visitors. The availability of fresh products all year long will be a boost for producers and consumers alike. The market will also be open on Tuesdays from 4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. through the end of October.

Get a New Taste of NY

CCE, in partnership with The Greater Binghamton Chamber of Commerce, now operates the Taste NY store at The Gateway Information Center on 81 N as you enter NY from PA. The store has a rotating selection of New York products. The hours of operation are 8 a.m. – 7 p.m., seven days a week. Kaitlyn Sirna can help anyone interested in having their product featured at the Taste NY store. Contact: kaitlyn.sirna@cornell.edu



New SUNY Broome Culinary School at Carnegie Library



Rendering of new Culinary School at the historic Carnegie Library

SUNY Broome begins work soon transforming the old Carnegie Library in Downtown Binghamton into a state of the art Hospitality and Culinary School. I was able to secure \$5 million through the State Budget, matching County and private funds to help with the building's restoration. This will allow the library to be transformed so that students can gain the knowledge and skills necessary to enter the growing local food and beverage industry. With the increase in area restaurants, brew pubs, wineries, and other venues, these students are in high demand.

New Culinary Tourism Group: eatBING

Over the past 6 years, eatBING has launched a number of great events, such as Binghamton Restaurant Week, Wine and Tapas Tour, and Martini Walk, helping transform the area into a food and beverage destination. eatBING is now forming the Culinary Tourism Alliance (CTA), which promotes small, independent local businesses within a 15 miles radius of Downtown Binghamton that complement tourism; find out more at eatBING.com.

Cornell Cooperative Extension: An Invaluable Resource

According to CCE, "Broome County's diverse agricultural and horticulture industry encompasses over one-third of the county land mass with businesses in every town and municipality. Direct sales of local products generate \$30.7 million annually which translates into \$100 million community dollars as well as direct employment of 900 people and indirect support of community businesses." Visit ccebroomecounty.com for more information on their programs and services.

Here are just two:

Next Farm Trail in October

The Fall 2016 Open Farm Weekend will be **October 1st and 2nd, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.**, rain or shine. Check the CCE website with a map of all the participating farms.

Veterans Interested in New Careers

CCE, along with the Cornell Small Farms Program, is working with veterans interested in entering agriculture as a career. Local programs are being offered so that veterans can use their GI Bill benefits to train on farms with the promise of employment once training has finished. For more information contact Laura Biasillo at 607-584-5007.

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Convenient Farmers Markets

- **Broome County Regional Farmers Market:** 840 Upper Front St., Binghamton
Saturdays 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. **(year-round)**; Tuesdays 4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. **(through the end of October)***
- **Binghamton Westside Farmers Market:** Post 80, 76 Main St., Binghamton
Thursdays 11:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. **(through October)**
- **Downtown Binghamton Farmers Market:** Collier St. Binghamton
Tuesdays and Fridays 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. **(Tuesdays through September 27th; Fridays through October 28th)***
- **Vestal Farmers Market:** Vestal Library Parking Lot, Vestal Parkway
Wednesdays and Saturdays 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. **(through November 23rd)**
- **Endicott Farmers Market:** Endicott Visitor Center, 300 Lincoln Ave., Endicott
Thursdays 4:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. **(through mid-October)**
- **Highland Park Farmers Market:** Upper Highland Park, Hooper Rd., Endwell
Tuesdays 4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. **(through August 30th)**

To see if you are eligible for FreshConnect benefits visit:
freshconnect.ny.gov



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**Look inside to find
out how food and
farms are shaping
our local economy.**