

New Resource available at Cooperstown Farmers' Market

[Cooperstown, NY] – The Cooperstown Farmers' Market, a program of Otsego 2000, has FreshConnect Emergency Response checks available to anyone who identifies as food insecure, or who meets certain income levels. The New York State program provides \$20 each week in vouchers to spend on SNAP-eligible food from the Market, including produce, meat, eggs, cheese, bread, and pantry staples.

The program runs through the end of December (or while supplies last, whichever is sooner), and FreshConnect checks must be redeemed in 2025. The last Cooperstown Farmers' Market in 2025 is December 27. The Market, which is located at 101 Main Street in Pioneer Alley in Cooperstown, is open Saturdays year-round from 9 am to 2 pm. There will also be a special Holiday Farmers' Market on Tuesday, December 23 from 4 pm to 7 pm.

This new program is just one of several food access initiatives available at the Cooperstown Farmers' Market. The Market accepts SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), and through two partnerships, a \$20 SNAP spend is matched by the Cooperstown Lions Club SNAP Match program, and also by New York Field and Fork Network's Double Up Food Bucks program.

"We say \$20 equals \$60 because a \$20 SNAP spend results in \$60 worth of local food from the Market," says Peg Odell, program and communications manager at Otsego 2000. "Now with the new emergency FreshConnect checks, \$20 can equal \$80." She said that people do not need to be signed up for SNAP or spend SNAP at the Market to receive the FreshConnect checks. Anyone interested in getting the checks should come by the Farmers' Market on Saturdays and ask for the Market Manager.

Otsego 2000 also partners with the Cooperstown Food Pantry, which gives their clients \$40 in vouchers to spend at the Farmers' Market each month.

"All these programs help neighbors in need buy more local food, provide local farmers with more income, and keep more money in the local economy," said Odell. "We are on track this year to have more than \$40,000 in local food provided through these food-access initiatives."

Farmers Market Federation of New York Executive Director Jack Riffle said, "Farmers' markets, farmers, and New Yorkers who rely on food assistance programs are grateful for Governor Hochul's emergency expansion of the FreshConnect program. As a Federation, we were left scrambling to support markets and shoppers during the federal government's shutdown and the uncertainty around SNAP benefit distribution. The FreshConnect Emergency Response Checks will make a meaningful difference for shoppers in need of food assistance, helping them access nutritious food while also supporting New York farmers' bottom lines."

The Cooperstown Farmers' Market was started in 1991 and now features a roster of 42 weekly and rotating farmers, makers, artisans, and bakers, all located within 50 miles of Cooperstown. For more information see www.cooperstownfarmersmarket.org or call Otsego 2000, 607/547-8881. ➡