



**Agriculture
and Markets**



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FIRST NEW YORK STATE CERTIFIED FARMERS' MARKET MANAGER

Graduates New Online Course That Helps Grow New York's Farmers' Markets

***Nearly Four Dozen Market Managers Are Enrolled in the Course and Working
Toward Certification***

The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets and The Farmers' Market Federation of NY, in partnership with SUNY Cobleskill and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Broome County, developed the first ever Farmers' Market Managers Professional Certification Course in NY State: FMM PRO. Since the program was launched in March 2016, 44 market managers have enrolled in the course and are working their way toward certification. Today, the Department and Federation are celebrating the first graduate of the program, Reed Proper, who is excited to lead the Old Forge Farmers Market in the new year.

The Director of the Farmers Market Federation, Diane Eggert, said, "We're very excited to see market managers take advantage of the FMM Pro and the chance to professionalize the role of market managers, forging new partnerships, building customer relationships and providing greater opportunities for our state's farmers. Congratulations to Reed Proper from the Old Forge Farmers Market on his achievement as the first Certified Farmers Market Manager in New York State."

State Agriculture Commissioner Richard A. Ball said, "Our farmers' markets are not only a wonderful source of fresh produce and local agricultural goods but also education for consumers—a place for them to connect with the farmers who are supplying their food. By providing this valuable training to market managers, we're helping to provide the tools they need to successfully operate and grow their markets. The Department congratulates the program's first graduate, Reed, and encourages other market managers to pursue their certification."

SUNY Cobleskill Associate Professor, Agricultural Business Management Jason R. Evans, Ph.D. said, “The FMM Pro certificate program provides a tremendously valuable service to professionals in New York's direct-to-consumer food sector. Market managers can utilize the principles and best practices gleaned from this program to run better markets, which means more efficient and less costly marketing efforts for producers and better experiences for consumers that translate to strong demand.”

The goal of FMM Pro is to grow and professionalize New York’s farmers’ markets by providing expert training to those who run markets, making them certified market managers. New York State is now home to some 646 farmers’ markets, up nearly 35 percent from just five years ago.

Reed Proper, Old Forge Farmers Market Manager and the first graduate of the program, said, “I liked being able to complete the program at my own pace and at times that was convenient and also not having to leave home. And at 80 years old, it made me feel young at heart! With the knowledge gained from the farmers market managers certification program, I can create a more efficient market, have a greater nutritional assistance program for the local needy and have a better chance of qualifying for grants.”

The program, funded by Governor Cuomo’s FreshConnect Program, created New York State’s first ever market manager certification designation, which is formally recognized through the SUNY educational system and gives participants a credential they can use to garner support and enthusiasm for their markets. FMM PRO is a part of the Governor’s ongoing efforts to open new markets and increase opportunities for New York State agriculture producers.

FMM PRO’s curriculum includes 22 unique training modules on the topics of Nuts and Bolts of Managing Markets, Reaching Out to the Market Community, and Building Systems. Each module consists of a video-based lesson, additional resources, a homework assignment, and an online quiz. The lessons are hosted on Cornell University’s online learning platform, which allows students to move through the lessons at their own pace, and receive feedback from instructors as they complete each unit.

Program participants who complete the full curriculum will graduate and receive a certificate, earning the title of Certified Market Manager. Completing the course will help market managers better organize, administer, and promote their markets. More specifically, as an FMM PRO Certified Market Manager, graduates of the program will:

- Be fully knowledgeable in today’s best practices for managing farmers’ markets
- Learn tactics to expand and optimize their farmers’ market
- Be equipped to build successful relationships with farmers and shoppers
- Be able to use their certification to leverage funding and support for their market

To learn more and to register for FMM Pro: Farmers’ Market Managers Certification Program and become one of the first NYS Certified Farmers Market Managers, go to: <http://www.nyfarmersmarket.com/fmmpro>.

For more information on FMM Pro, visit <http://www.nyfarmersmarket.com/fmmpro> or contact deggert@nyfarmersmarket.com or lw257@cornell.edu.

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