

## **LD 468**

### **AN Act to Address Food Insecurity by Helping Maine Residents Access Locally Produced Food**

**Penelope (Penny) Jordan**  
**(207) 671-5341**  
**pennyjordan@jordansfarm.com**

**21 Wells Road**  
**Cape Elizabeth, ME 04107**

Senator Talbot-Ross, Representative Pluecker, and members of the committee I am Penny Jordan, one of the owners of Jordan's Farm a 5<sup>th</sup> generation mixed vegetable farm in Cape Elizabeth and I am here to testify in support of LD 468. I present this position from the perspective of a grower and owner of a retail farmstand that accepts SNAP benefits. And a business that seeks to ensure our neighbors have access to Maine raised food.

At our farmstand at Jordan's Farm we started participating in SNAP over 10 years ago. Yes, there are people in Cape Elizabeth that need assistance from SNAP – seniors, single parents, dual income families. We also draw customers from neighboring communities.

We started participating in the Farm Fresh Rewards program several years ago, yes this benefits our farm, but the reason we participate is that we see this as one more way for people to have access to healthy food. And I will say that participants know how to stretch their dollars, and Farm Fresh Rewards helps them add even more to their shopping basket.

One story I will share is a long-time customer (woman in her early 80s) had just paid her property taxes and stopped by to say how challenging that was for her. I talked with her about various programs and suggested she talk to our Town Clerk, and that she look into SNAP benefits. She did not think she was qualified. She came back with a huge smile and said she qualified – we told her about the Farm Fresh Rewards program – and she now says choosing fresh produce is fun again, and she's eating healthier. This might not be a huge to you, but to this lovely lady it made her feel like she could enjoy the food she loves.

Another person said how the Farm Fresh Rewards program has helped her eat a more balanced and healthy diet (vegetable aren't cheap) – she lost weight and is no longer on a couple of her medications.

Jordan's Farm supports this program because we feel strongly that our neighbors deserve access to the same foods that others do. And we seek ways to help make that happen. Times are getting tougher for people and we need to work to ensure our neighbors are not hungry.

I know this is a tough time from a budget perspective – but imagine what it will be like for households across the state as they are impacted by federal policy. States will be required to do even more.

Thank you and I encourage you to vote ought to pass.