



AGRICULTURE NEWS

New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets
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COUNCIL ON FOOD POLICY TO HOLD LISTENING SESSIONS **First Listening Session Scheduled for February 5, 2008 in Albany**

The New York State Council on Food Policy is planning a series of listening sessions to gain perspective from community members on several food policy issue areas and to seek opportunities to maximize collaboration among stakeholders.

Four key issue areas related to food policy have been identified to be examined during the listening sessions. They include, how to:

- Maximize participation in food and nutrition assistance programs;
- Strengthen the connection between local food products and consumers;
- Support efficient and profitable agricultural food production and food retail infrastructure; and
- Increase consumer awareness and knowledge about healthy eating and improve access to safe and nutritious foods.

The first Council on Food Policy listening session is schedule for February 5, 2008 from 2 pm to 4 pm in Hearing Room A of the Legislative Office Building in Albany. Subsequent sessions will take place across the State between February and May. Dates and locations of those listening sessions will be posted at www.agmkt.state.ny.us/eventcal.html.

All listening sessions are open to the public and will be an open microphone format. Anyone who wishes to participate will have five minutes to present their opinions and must also provide their comments in written format.

Reservations for the first session are required by February 1, 2008 by contacting Mary Ann Stockman at 518-485-7728 or maryann.stockman@agmkt.state.ny.us.

The mission of the Council is to coordinate state agriculture policy and make recommendations on developing food policy that will ensure the safe, fresh, nutritious and affordable food for all New Yorkers, especially low income residents, senior citizens and children. The Council will look at ways to increase sales of New York agricultural products to New York customers.

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NYS COUNCIL ON FOOD POLICY LISTENING SESSION
FEBRUARY 5, 2008 * 2:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M.
CAPITOL BUILDING; HEARING ROOM A
ALBANY

Presenter	Organization
1. Krys Cail	Member: Farmers' Market Federation; NY Farms! Board; Cornell Small Farms Program
2. Jim Trezise	NY Wine & Grape Foundation
3. Laura McDermott	NYS Berry Growers
4. Louise Frazier	Member: Honest Weight Food Co-op; Regional Farm & Food Project; NOFA -NY
5. Louise Maher-Johnson	Regional Farm & Food Project
6. Mark Dunlea	Hunger Action Network of NYS
7. Sheree (Cheryl) Cammer	Member: Sierra Club; Regional Farm & Food Project
8. Matthew Schueler	Capital District Community Gardens
9. Carin Upstill	Foundation for Healthy Living *
10. Mark Weinheim	Regional Food Bank *
11. Rebekah Rice	Wing Road Farm
12. Joan Locker	MS, RD **

* TBS – To Be Submitted

** Not in attendance; comments submitted by mail



Krys Cail
3110 DuBois Rd.
Ithaca, NY 14850

Presented at Listening Session,
NYS Council on Food Policy, Albany, 2/5/08.

The report issued December 1, 2007 outlines four Key Issue Areas and a number of “specific priorities to be explored” within each of those. These are solid and timely policy study suggestions that, taken as a group, show an appreciation of the possibilities of inter-disciplinary food systems policy development. The work is excellent, even though it was produced with limited staffing resources. Incorporating listening sessions into the work you are doing will help you to gather additional points of view, and I thank you for the opportunity to contribute mine. I note that there is not representation among the Council members of the DEC, or others specifically concerned with the environment. My focus will, therefore, be the intersection of environmental concerns with economic change and development.

My remarks will address the means of catalyzing the transitional development necessary to allow our farm and food sector to adapt to changing environmental considerations in our time, in which there is a better understanding of the dangers of global climate change, and the potential disruption of economic systems associated with the declining stocks—and increasing prices—of fossil fuels.

The resources necessary to reduce our carbon emissions rapidly enough to slow global climate change will be difficult to muster in our state and our country, where competing needs for funds and a slowing economy combine to reduce funding for research and development at a crucial time. The interest in biofuels development is already exerting some economic effect, with an upward pressure on the price of food. Taken along with the ever-increasing cost of oil, which makes up a large component of some retail food prices, the wisdom of ensuring food security by promoting more local buying is obvious. The NYS Council on Food Policy report proposes *some retooling of the food system that*

could address these challenges: fewer food-miles traveled, via developing and using more intra-state distribution channels. This has real potential to spur economic development, as well as feed hungry people, create farm-consumer connections and educate consumers about healthy eating.

I'd like to suggest that you *consider using an open-source development method in pursuing these timely goals, encouraging the growth of self-organizing components in the proposed redevelopment.* It would be easy to conclude that this is the type of program that the Council on Food Policy should embark on for purely practical reasons—as there is not a resource-base from which to launch redevelopment efforts, activities that support programs able to organize and grow on their own might seem expedient. I suggest this approach, however, because I believe that research on innovation—most notably the work of von Hippel of the Sloan School at MIT—documents the increase in innovation overall when the engagement of product-users is incorporated into the innovation process. Given the capacity-building potential of electronic communications networks, and a large number of public-service agencies and organizations networking within different parts of the emerging food systems, it is easy to see how both consumers and producers (and/or processors) could participate and contribute to innovation. Given the difficulty of the task of adjusting our food system—and maintaining NYS's food security—during a period of rapid technological change to cope with global climate change, the system that produces the best and most rapid innovation is needed.

In fact, the experience of enterprises, such as Community Supported Agriculture farms and Farmers' Markets, that combine experiential engagement of consumers with their food system as a component of the economic distribution of healthful fresh foods, has indicated that these places and institutions that bring consumers and producers together in this way are particularly attractive to participants, as well as being ideally structured to enable open-source type innovation. In many instances, the opportunity to learn about the production of food—how things grow—and, perhaps even have some small involvement in its

production, are additional product benefits realized by the consumer. Meanwhile, producers and processors are learning about consumer needs directly from customers, and honing their marketing programs in response.

From CSAs, to Farmers' Markets to wholesale public markets and community harvest preservation kitchens, the capacity for these kinds of locally-based mutual-benefit institutions to support the creation, incubation and growth of food-related enterprises goes without saying—enterprise and job creation are intrinsic components of their organizational design. Those institutions of this type that are the most powerful and the most innovating in operation are those that create more benefit for all participants in a market interaction than is required for their continuing operation—institutions that are not only self-organizing in form, but also self-feeding in operation. They typically include a mutually-beneficial specific goal such as, for instance, to preserve and improve farmland in a given area through careful stewardship. This goal is shared by both producers and consumers. The goal has the potential to help drive the continuing production of benefit in excess of that needed to operate the food-producing, food-processing, or food-distributing enterprise. The engagement in the process and subsequent production of additional benefit can lead to second-order institution-building, such as was the experience in the Madison, Wisconsin area. Community-supported agriculture farmers and consumers joined together in a larger organization there; that organization, the Madison Area Community Supported Agriculture Coalition, MACSAC, negotiated with the health insurance system, resulting in a \$200 per year rebate to consumers for CSA membership. Healthy lifestyles and family farming incentives introduced into the economy without additional government funding.

Sometimes, this high level of engagement results in a rapid pace of growth. This can certainly be seen in the growth of organic food as a component of retail food sales, or the rapid increase in the number and size of Farmers' Markets throughout the state, or the intensity of interest in “buy local” campaigns across the state. Sometimes this engagement may be more evident in an unwavering commitment to

place and heritage—a farm family that is flexible and innovative in working with other farmers in the area to maintain a profitable industry in the face of global competitive pressures. Sometimes it may even be the persistence and resurgence of an archetype—such as when a course named “Exploring the Small Farm Dream” is the single most-over-enrolled course in it’s Department at Cornell University.

Social learning and social movement can be inexorable once underway. But, all social movement is incubated somewhere, somehow—somebody has to be the first to try a new approach, innovate, and others need to hear about it if it is to spread. If the Council on Food Policy can use the leverage of state government operations to incubate self-organizing, innovative, self-sustaining institutions that shorten the length of the food chain, shrinking carbon emissions along the way, it will have gone a long way toward allowing the engagement of the citizenry to drive innovation and adaptation to a changing climate. If true food security—eliminating hunger for all—is a concurrent goal, the positive economic effect of innovation will be widely distributed throughout the population at large.

References:

The Madison Area Community Supported Agriculture Coalition

<http://www.macsac.org/>

Exploring the Small Farm Dream Course

<http://www.smallfarms.cornell.edu/pages/projects/studentresources.cfm>

Eric Von Hippel’s homepage

<http://web.mit.edu/evhippel/www/cvframe.htm>

Remarks by Jim Trezise
President, New York Wine & Grape Foundation
To the
Council on Food Policy
Albany, New York, February 5, 2008

Good afternoon. My name is Jim Trezise, and I am President of the New York Wine & Grape Foundation, a statewide not-for-profit organization representing our state's grape growers, wineries, and grape juice producers. We also work very closely with our colleagues in other sectors of the agriculture community, as I will describe.

Thank you for this opportunity to describe just four programs of the New York Wine & Grape Foundation which are designed to strengthen the connection between local food products and consumers. We strongly believe that there has been no better time than right now to connect New York food producers and consumers due to the increasing emphasis on local products, food safety concerns, and environmental sensitivity.

Our "New York Wines & Dines" program, now in its seventh year, is a month-long promotion each October in New York City which brings together New York wineries, food producers, restaurants, retailers and consumers. It essentially features New York wines with New York foods in New York restaurants for an entire month during the fall harvest season.

Our 2007 promotion included over 25 wineries, 75 top restaurants, and 20 retail stores which featured New York wines and foods to their customers. We support the program with a dedicated web site (www.newyorkwinesanddines.org) where you can find much more information, along with special tastings for the trade and consumers, a public relations campaign, and significant advertising. A follow-up survey of participants confirmed the effectiveness of the program in creating awareness that "New York" is far more than a great city—but also a great state, especially for the production of fine wines and foods.

The New York Wine & Grape Foundation is also a partner in the New York Wine & Culinary Center, along with Constellation Brands, the Rochester Institute of Technology and Wegmans food stores. The Center, located in Canandaigua at the northwest corner of the Finger Lakes region, is a new, world-class physical and electronic gateway to New York wines, foods, farmers, agri-tourism and culinary tourism. The Center conducts many types of producer-to-consumer connections including cooking classes for school children as well as adults, seminars on New York food and wine, special wine tastings, winemaker dinners, educational exhibits, and literature about food and farming. We have partnered with other commodity groups as well as New York Farm Bureau and the New York State Restaurant association to highlight New York as a great farm state with a broad diversity of high quality products. More information is available on the Center's web site (www.nywcc.com).

The third project is a 13-segment public television series titled "Taste of New York" that will air in April and be distributed nationally in high definition. The series is anchored at the New York Wine & Culinary Center, but includes segments from all regions of the state—Long Island, New York City, the Hudson Valley, the Capitol/Saratoga Region, North Country, the Finger Lakes, and the Niagara and Lake Erie regions. Each episode highlights the uniqueness of the region in terms of foods and wines, with visits to farms and interviews with farmers. In addition, each segment ends at the Center where Executive Chef Dan Martello and on-air host Susan Hunt create a dish with the regional ingredients, paired with regional wines. This is truly the "Taste of New York" co-produced by the New York Wine & Grape Foundation and WXXI public television in Rochester, and will be aired starting in April by New York public television stations as well as many in other states.

Finally, we are also producing a "Taste of New York" cookbook with recipes by chefs throughout the State using local ingredients and paired with New York wines. In addition to the recipes, the cookbook will include information about where New York consumers can "buy local".

Let me conclude by thanking the Legislature and Governor for their support in making these programs possible. The public-private partnership between the State of New York and our industry has transformed the grape and wine industry from a looming economic catastrophe into the fastest growing industry in the agriculture and tourism sectors of the State economy. We are encouraged that Governor Spitzer has proposed \$50 million for upstate agricultural economic development, and respectfully suggest that the first investment be in a comprehensive strategic plan to ensure that those funds be used wisely to ensure long-term success of our vital agriculture industry.

The programs I have described broaden the base to other agricultural commodities and offer a promising return on investment for the State since they are directly connecting producers and consumers throughout New York State. We hope to continue and expand these programs in the future, and that we will have the budget to do so.

Thank you again for this opportunity.



New York State Berry Growers

Paul Baker, Executive Secretary

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www.nysbga.org

716-754-4414

716-807-6827 (cell)

Request for Support

The New York State Berry Growers is made up of both full time and part time farmers. They are distributed across the State in every county. Today they are expanding their interests to include not only the popular spring strawberries but also blueberries, blackberries and raspberries. These expansions have increased the opportunities for all New York residents to both enjoy and consume these nutritious treats of nature.

Strawberry production in New York was up 5 percent from 2006 to 4.60 million pounds, according to the very recent USDA National Agricultural Statistics report. The value of utilized production is estimated at \$7.59 million and New York ranks seventh in strawberry production nationally. Production of blueberries for the Empire State was at 2.50 million pounds. The 2007 crop is valued at \$3.37 million, a 21 percent increase from \$2.80 million in 2006. The combined value of New York's berry crop totaled \$11.0 million up from the \$10.3 million in 2006.

New York State berry growers are seeking financial assistance to accomplish two things to help grow this industry. First the growers would like to have a logo created that will become the face of this industry and will help consumers

identify berries that come from New York state producers. Berry Growers support the Dept of Ag and Markets 'Pride of New York' program and they wish to create a logo that signifies the finest from our berry patches. This logo would be displayed on farm markets or in supermarkets so residents would know they are purchasing local New York berries.

Secondly, NY berry growers recognize that today nearly all of our New York State residents have almost zero knowledge of our diverse products. They not only are not aware of these treats but most importantly they do not know when they are in season! It would be the intention of the NYS Berry Growers Association to create a consumer awareness campaign to educate the public as to the locations and time of year to find these treats.

The rural economy of New York is becoming more and more invested in Agri-tourism. By helping put a face and season to our products we feel there will be a positive spin off to other industries such as the wine trails and other roadside markets of the state. This resource would then be an economic stimulus to help boost the rural economy and encourage the consumption of one of nature's most healthy delights.

The NYS Berry Growers have requested sponsorship for these efforts in 2008 for a value of \$100,000. 100% of the funds we receive would be spent on logo creation and consumer awareness. The NYS Berry Growers would provide a full disclosure of the expenditure of funds that are granted.

Statement read by Laura McDermott, Berry Extension Support Specialist, Eastern NY. Her work, which is supported by a 2 year grant from the NY Farm Viability Institute, aims to help NYS berry growers increase production efficiency. The NYS Berry Growers Association and Cornell University Fruit Program provide administration, support and direction for this effort.

Statement for the NY Food Policy Council

Besides being active as a member of the Honest Weight Food Co-op, and chair of its Nutrition and Education Committee, the Regional Farm & Food Project, Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York/NOFA-NY, and a CSA shareholder, I stand before you today as a feisty 76 year old grandmother, born in the height of the depression, nourished mostly on farm fresh food all my life, both at home and in school.

Throughout all my years as a public school student, I enjoyed "penny" milk and school lunches prepared daily from farm fresh food in the cafeteria by cooks like Mrs. Buschon, our neighbor, who was our elementary school cafeteria cook. During WW II our family sat down to tasty, wholesome meals made with a variety of vegetables around the calendar from my grandmother's Victory garden, her chickens and eggs. Our basement shelves were stacked with a colorful array of glass packed jars she canned from her garden and nearby orchards---as well as her homemade root beer! After school I picked beans, tomatoes and other vegetables on nearby farms during harvest season, while the boys were off to war. My great grandmother presided over the butter and other rationed items at our family table.

So I have a good sense of who it is that got us through it all, answering the call to duty on the home front and who is in the forefront addressing today's crises. There is no mistaking that it is the people who are taking the lead in healthy sustainable agriculture for New York's future. Indeed they are swelling the ranks as participants in CSA farms, members of food co-ops, and shoppers at farmers markets, thereby preserving the local small farms and orchards of New York's countryside!

Along with them today a younger and well-educated generation is finding its way into working a myriad of small farms across the state, eagerly addressing the challenge of relocalization to meet the needs of their communities and nearby cities for wholesome local food in all 4 seasons---including storage root vegetables to warm us in winter. In order to sustain themselves and their families economically these small farmers are involved in value-added production---artisanal cheese, yogurt, honey, maple syrup, baked goods, lactic-acid fermented vegetables like sauerkraut and a variety of other preserved foods.

And they are making it with hard work, enthusiasm and without the subsidies that keep big agri-business and low prices afloat! Look to the small farmer to connect the community, its schoolchildren, parents and other folks to the farm; to provide fresh healthy foods for your target populations; and to keep more dollars circulating locally. Bring them your problems and they'll be among the first to help with solutions.

Look to organizations like our food co-op, which is open to the public as well as our 4000 members, providing access to safe and nutritious food to people from all walks of life. Through our newsletters, workshops, recipes in our large bulk food aisles, and collaborative public events, we are fervent in our efforts to raise consumer awareness about healthy eating---it is our mission and we work hard at it! We welcome your interest and offer our collaboration.

I leave you with a copy of my book that is "a Cook's Journal Around the Calendar with Local Garden Vegetables". I look forward to reports of your progress towards affordable fresh and healthy food accessible to everyone in the State of New York. Thank you for listening.

Louise Frazier
63 Norwood Avenue
Albany NY 12208

Re~Localization Campaign: For the Public and the Planet

To: NYS Food Policy Council
Submitted by: Louise Maher-Johnson
Board, Regional Farm and Food Project
www.farmandfood.org Feb. 5, 2008

In a time of climate instability and general decline in public health related in good measure to highly processed, long distant food, there needs to be a stepped up effort by state officials to inform broadly about both public and planetary health. They are connected, and replacing our current global food economy with a re-localized food economy in New York is a viable means for improving both public and planetary health.

New York communities can be the models for communities everywhere to return to feeding themselves the basics, and thereby reduce the carbon emissions of food miles and the need to use risky food preservation techniques as irradiation, fumigation, and synthetic preservatives. Real preservation should be of the public health and also of local foods for winter meals.

We've had public service campaigns in the past, for *Fallout Shelters*, to *Stop Smoking*, for *Safe Sex*. Now we need a broad-reaching information campaign regarding *Re-localize Food, Eat Local or Everywhere a Garden*. By doing so, this Food Policy Council can increase the already keen public interest in supporting regional sustainable agriculture in New York.

Your work could be to heighten this existing movement by informing more widely about farm markets, CSAs, urban farms, community, school and home food gardens, food mobiles in our "food desert" urban or rural communities. The goal would be for all our residents to know what a CSA is and to become familiar, through ad campaign photos, with concepts like community food mobiles, and community food prep classes for our local in-season vegetables and food preservation techniques for winter eating. All residents have a public right to be informed about issues of health. A public service info campaign for Local Seasonal Food is much needed to counter the ads of Global Food Industrial Complex.

Heightened general consumer awareness comes first, but second should be outreach to the young, those most impacted by food-related health problems and by unhealthy climate instability. This can be done by hands-on, in-school gardens¹ or mini-farms, and by programs to mentor, and find farms for, young farmers. We won't meet the demand for re-localization of food unless we work with the younger generations. Again, an information campaign to school districts, PTAs, day care centers, camps, anywhere there are children, is the way to begin. Everyone's education and pleasure should relate to growing their own food and enjoying it in public cafeterias.

Re-localizing our food system in New York will not only be positive for health reasons, both public and planetary. It also makes sense for New Yorkers to protect themselves against expected higher food prices by going local in a big way. High food prices and food shortages are related to high global energy costs, global crop failures due to unstable climate (droughts, floods, pests, etc), and global food crops (grains, palm oil) grown for bio-fuels. So food security is best served also by re-localizing the staples of New York's menu.

Information for all, with special outreach to the young, is basic to accomplishing all the criteria of your Food Policy Council mandate.

Thank you,

¹ See Goff School Garden model at <http://www.championtrees.org/food/index.htm>

October 11, 2007

Agriculture and Market Commissioner Patrick Hooker
Chair, New York State Food Policy Council
10 Airline Drive
Albany NY 12235

Dear Commissioner Hooker:

We are excited that the New York State Food Policy Council will soon hold its first meeting. We believe that the Council can play a critical role in reducing hunger, promoting improved nutrition, and fostering sustainable agriculture systems.

Below are some suggestions for Council action in the new term.

We believe that a critical role for the Council is to help convene the multiple stakeholders in our food system, bringing together individuals and government agencies which do not typically work directly with each other nor are they asked to be involved when farm and agricultural policy is discussed. Such councils in other states have provided a mechanism to discuss emerging issues such as local foods, direct marketing, small and mid-sized farms and other "new agriculture" developments which fall outside traditional "farm" programs.

One step that should be taken short-term to involve more stakeholders is to establish advisory committee(s), ensuring that the diversity of the community food security movement in our state has a formal place in the Council's discussions. We believe it is important to bring in organizations and individuals who have a demonstrated track record of working on the interconnected issues of hunger, nutrition, and agriculture policy.

Additional mechanisms to obtain public input are to give organizations and individuals an opportunity to make short statements at the first council meetings, and to hold a series of regional listening tours / roundtables.

We suggest that the Council adopt the objectives for its work that were laid out in the Food Policy Council Legislation developed by Assemblymember Ortiz and Senator Young:

The significant reduction, as defined by specific numerical goals and timetables, and ultimate prevention of hunger and food insecurity by assuring that all citizens of New York state have access to high quality, safe, affordable, culturally-appropriate, and nutritious food, from local food producers whenever possible, through adequate purchasing power, including benefits provided by food assistance programs, and the necessary facilities to prepare food;

The adoption, by all New Yorkers, of a diet that promotes good health and prevents food- and diet-related diseases throughout their life spans, and includes, whenever possible, locally-produced foods;

Increased consumer and business demand for New York farm and food products;

A flourishing and profitable food-production system in New York State, which maximizes production of nutritious foods; preserves and protects open space and the environment; and, provides sufficient income for farm families and workers;

Economic viability for the state's food processing, marketing, and distribution industries that support the state's farms and food businesses; and,

Increased effectiveness of, and coordination among, federal, state, and local food, farm, and nutrition programs.

There is strong sentiment across the board in increasing the amount of locally grown food consumed by New York residents. We hope that the Council will both assess the extent to which this already occurs and establish a series of increasing goals for the state (e.g., 25%) as to the percentage of the state food supply that is locally grown. It would be helpful for the Council to document the barriers that would impede us from achieving an even higher goal. On a related issue, what can the state do to help train and support new farmers to meet the demands of local markets?

One barrier to increased consumption of locally grown food is distribution and transportation problems, particularly for smaller farmers. This also includes access to small scale food processing. What can the Council do to make it easier and more profitable for smaller farmers to diversify what they produce, which would assist in making more locally grown food available?

We look forward to the Council leadership in developing new state initiatives to reduce hunger in our state. As a society New York is too well off to continue to tolerate such high levels of food insecurity in our state. At the same time, we need to ensure that the food accessible to low-income consumers are high in nutrition values rather than calories.

Some issues that have been suggested by anti-hunger advocates are: state funding to help bodegas/convenience stores expand their refrigeration for more fresh fruits and vegetables in their stores (other states have done this); reviewing existing government procurement rules to make it easier to obtain locally grown, nutritional food; developing a user-friendly, cross-agency system (both online and on paper) for New Yorkers to apply jointly for food stamps, WIC, school meals, etc); and, providing increased resources to low-income consumers to utilize farmers markets and food stamps (e.g., California doubles the value of food stamps used at such outlets).

These programs would also benefit from increased interagency cooperation (e.g., WIC, Seniors and Farmers Markets). Increased interagency cooperation would particularly benefit the efforts to increase the use of locally grown produce in schools (i.e., Farm to School).

One issue that we had hoped the Governor and legislative leaders would have resolved by now is passage of the Healthy Schools Act. This would provide significant opportunities to improve the nutritional well-being of our children, including improving the nutritional quality of the meals served while promoting locally grown fruit and vegetables. This issue seems tailor made for leadership by the Food Policy Council.

Certainly the issue of how to develop more sources of fresh fruit and vegetables in inner city (and even rural) communities is an important one.

The Executive Order establishing the Council requires “a written report on the first day of December each year on: (a) the activities of the Council during the preceding year; (b) recommended food policies for the State; (c) recommended changes to the strategic plan; (d) an account of the progress made in achieving the goals of the Council; and (e) actions which are necessary to implement the recommendations of the Council and effectuate the purposes of this Order.”

While we realize that this is a very short time frame for 2007, we believe that transparency is critical in the work of the Council and that the key parts of the reports, such as the recommendation food policies and strategic plan, be shared before their submission for public input and comment. We believe that recommendations included in the 5 Year Plan developed by the prior Food Policy Council under Governor Cuomo would be an excellent starting point.

We look forward to working with the Council to achieve the goal of food security in New York. We hope that the Council will create a strong and diverse advisory committee and take other opportunities such as regional round tables to maximize public input. We recommend that the Council use both the 5 Year Plan develop during Governor Cuomo’s tenure and the legislation by Assemblymember Ortiz and Senator Young as starting points to guide its work.

Sincerely,

Mark Dunlea
Hunger Action Network of NYS
518 434-7371 xt 1

Fern Gale Estrow
The FGE Food and Nutrition Team
212/691-5154

Krys Cail
Sherry Alpern
NY Farms!

Hank Herrera
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Marty Broccoli
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Ed Fowler
Neighbors Together (Brooklyn)

Joel Berg
NYC Coalition Against Hunger

Rebecca Sparks
NYC Nutrition Education Network

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Keri Gans, MS, RD, CDN
NYS Dietetic Association

Anna Dawson
NY Small Scale Food Processors Association

Hank Herrera
NY Sustainable Agriculture Working Group

Terri Scofield
NY Universal Living Wage Warriors

Elizabeth Henderson
Northeast Organic Farming Association of NY

Hillary Baum
Public Market Partners / Baum Forum

Billie Best
Regional Farm & Food Project (Cap. Dist.)

Dan Miner
Sierra Club NYC

Sr. Barbara Lenninger
Thorpe Family Residence Inc (Bronx)

Doreen Wohl
Westside Campaign Against Hunger
The Church of St. Paul and St. Andrew, United
Methodist



QUESTION

To: Listening Session of the NYS Council on Food Policy

From: Cheryl Cammer

2/5/08

1a. Fresh produce is off the table for many people living on low incomes. Having lacked fresh produce for generations, many have neither the desire for it, nor the know-how to prepare it. Many small programs are trying, but this is a tough nut to crack. How can these barriers be overcome?

1 b. Once the desire and know-how are there, low income people may want to buy food economically through CSAs (Community Supported Agriculture). Might any of these options be viable:

Provide seed money for revolving loan funds so it will not fall apart after a few years

Give an added subsidy if people use their food stamps at a CSA.

Make it easier for all farmers to accept food stamps. The \$1,000 portable EBT card swiping machines provided by NYS to farmers markets are great, but out of reach for all farmers!

1 c. And, finally, how can all consumers more easily find information on CSAs? For example, could CSAs, now listed as a farm product in the farms directory on the NYS Ag and Markets website, have their own webpage, as the farmers markets do, and be updated yearly?



Matthew Schueler's presentation to the New York State Council on Food policy on behalf of Capital District Community Gardens 1/5/08

I am grateful that the Council on Food Policy has started its work by having a series of listening sessions. As you travel around the State you will find many individuals and grassroots organizations at work on the four key issues the Council has identified. Many model programs already exist on the local level that can be highly effective if applied statewide.

The organization I belong to, Capital District Community Gardens (CDCG), works with a mainly low-income urban population. On the surface I understand why you are interested in **maximizing participation in food and nutrition assistance programs**, but I wonder if we shouldn't direct our energies in a different way. Instead of maximizing participation, shouldn't we instead be concentrating on reducing the need for these programs? Or perhaps, changing the ways the programs are applied? What if the effort spent increasing participation was directed at giving more people the means to grow their own food? There are thousands of acres of abandoned land ^{ACROSS} in the cities of the State, much of it located in the neighborhoods most in need of food assistance. Supporting urban farming and community gardens gives people a chance to help themselves – to fresh, healthy, inexpensive food; to meaningful out-of-doors physical activity, and to the myriad benefits that come from stronger community. Increasing participation in food programs ignores a huge part of the problem facing the urban and rural poor. Access to food stamps does not imply access to healthy food. Obesity is a greater threat to impoverished New Yorkers than is starvation. What our food programs may need more than expansion is an adaptation to the reality of the moment. Our food policy is killing more people with empty calories than by withholding meals.

Our organization recognizes that Community gardening is one way to **strengthen the connection between local food products and consumers** because the producers are the consumers. Gardeners through their work become more aware of vegetable quality, variety, and seasonality. They are more likely to supplement their garden's output with product from other farmers and to show year-round improvement in their diets. Up until now the local foods movement has been led primarily by wealthy consumers seeking healthy, flavorful, high quality food. For the movement to continue to grow and benefit all of New York's farmers and consumers, a wider segment of the population needs to become involved.

Organizations working with large, concentrated inner-city populations can provide farmers with a big enough market to make selling local foods at lower prices economically viable. Already, gleaning and emergency food projects, such as Capital District Community Gardens' Squash Hunger program, connect at risk people with quality local food. These programs make it possible for growers to donate surplus product that they are unable to bring to market. Certainly we could imagine additional ways to not only reduce the waste of unsold produce, but also to ensure that farmers get paid for more

of the food they grow. There are a number of interesting experiments along these lines already in existence around the state.

Our organization is very interested in **increasing consumer awareness and knowledge about healthy eating and improving access to safe and nutritious foods**. Some inner city neighborhoods in the Capital Region have poverty rates ten times those of surrounding suburbs; they are further burdened by a lack of full service grocery stores. Candy, cigarettes and alcohol are easy to find there, but what fresh foods are available are sold at inflated prices. Getting to a supermarket may require expensive cab rides, where passengers are often charged an additional dollar for each grocery bag they carry back home. For this reason CDCG used a grant from the Health Department to launch The Veggie Mobile in April 2007. The Veggie Mobile is a produce aisle on wheels that delivers fresh food directly into underserved neighborhoods and sells it at wholesale prices. In addition to 3 market days in Albany, Schenectady, and Troy, one day is used to run the Taste and Take program. This program offers people the chance to taste simple, healthy dishes and then bring home a free bag of produce containing the items in the prepared dish. Veggie Mobile produce is bought at the Menands Market. For our customers, price is a higher priority than locality, but local produce, when affordable is sold on The Veggie Mobile during the growing season. Customers will ask what is local when they begin to shop and have showed a willingness to pay slightly higher prices for local foods. E.J. Krans, who manages The Veggie Mobile, is making agreements with local farmers now, to buy crops directly from them for next summer's Taste and Take program. It's possible for him to make these arrangements, because he needs to buy hundreds of units of a particular item. These arrangements made for Taste and Take will certainly impact how much local food is on the Veggie Mobile during market days as well.

I think the Veggie Mobile is a good example of how each one of your key points of discussion affects the others. Much of the **support of efficient and profitable agricultural food production and food retail infrastructure** will come as a response to a burgeoning demand for local food. I know there are bottlenecks that exist in the current system that can be addressed by retailers and farmers. However, the new societal and economic pressures that have made the Food Policy Council a necessity, suggest that the best answers might not be the most obvious ones or the ones that come from the most obvious people. I encourage the Council as it moves forward to recognize the role young people and urban farmers can play in these discussions. They can provide a new source of creativity and unexpected solutions to problems related to food security, food justice, and the local food economy.

Rebekah Rice ✓

Strengthen the connection between local food and consumers

February 5, 2008

I am here as an organic farmer and gardener with 44 years of experience growing food for my family, for my neighbors, for restaurants and for grocery stores. It is my cherished hope that New York state can strengthen the connection between local food and consumers, even become food self sufficient statewide, as we respond to the substantial challenges due to global climate change.

I had the privilege last week to serve as the moderator for a very special event right here in the legislature, an event that considered the impacts of climate change on farming and the food supply here in New York state. This event was co-sponsored by three organizations I am pleased to be associated with—NOFANY (Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York), RFFP (Regional Farm Food Project), and the Honest Weight Food Co-op. For this event, questions posed by legislators, farmers and citizens were responded to by a panel of five organic farmers from around the state and by two scientists including Nobel prize laureate Cynthia Rosenzweig from NASA Goddard Institute.

I'd like to share some of what I learned from Dr. Rosenzweig and from my fellow farmers that day. Climate change has already had an effect on our food supply (the effects will continue to increase in our lifetimes). Dairy and beef farmers reported increased stress for their cattle in response to more extreme heat, more extended drought, and more flooding when the long awaited rains make up for lost volume (stress leads to a reduction in the amount of milk produced, as well as to illness in the cattle). Muddy fields lead to foot rot—which is especially difficult for organic dairy and beef farmers to treat. Vegetable farmers reported the need to add irrigation to fields that had not previously required irrigation prior to the recent extended droughts (and I would add: New York has been fortunate indeed in this regard compared to other regions of the United States). Insect pests which didn't overwinter in New York have begun to, resulting in increased crop damage from pests we associate with southern states. Some vegetable farmers have experienced substantial losses due to flooding. A vegetable grower described their flooded greenhouses, subsequently moved at great expense to higher ground; a grain farmer described the loss of their field of kidney beans to a flood so substantial that a rowboat floated on 3 feet of water.

Are these farmers giving up? No, they are not. Instead, they are hoping that more land be devoted to small farms in New York, that a larger percentage of our food needs be grown locally, that a new group of young farmers be supported through innovative programs designed to help them learn techniques for growing food in a changing climate. They hope for local grain mills, for mobile livestock processing units to process meat on site, for certified kitchens in every region. For the health of the planet, they hope we'll stop shipping food great distances, using up fossil fuel to transport food which could have been grown right here in New York. For the health of the planet, they hope more farmers will become organic growers. (This is because organic practices have been proven to sequester more carbon in our soil than do chemical practices—which would be sufficient reason to prefer organic practices even if you were to be unconvinced of the superior flavor and nutrition of locally raised organic produce.)

So much more could be said about what we need to do to strengthen the connections between local food and consumers. Home gardens, school gardens, community gardens, community supported agriculture, farmers markets—all these allow eaters to understand how glorious food can be when it's fresh, local, organic, and grown by people they have met. None of these solutions will happen without education and support.

Thank you,

Rebekah Rice
Wing Road Farm

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KEY TO FUTURE FOOD AND CLIMATE:

RE-LOCALIZATION, NOT GLOBALIZATION

“The real black gold is not oil; it’s rich, dark, organic soil. Soil that can feed the world, region by region,” comments Louise Maher-Johnson of Honest Weight Food Co-op, organizer of New York Farming and Climate Instability forum on January 30th in Albany’s legislature building. “Let’s put the skids on our warming, unstable climate and on our long distance, unhealthy food—let’s eat our way to a long term sustainable future by growing wheat and oats again in New York, by producing all our own food staples, and by eating seasonally.

The Regional Organic Farm Solution

Steve Gilman, Saratoga vegetable farmer and Interstate Policy Coordinator for Northeast Organic Farming Association, declares that studies show “organic agriculture is best suited to deal with global energy and climate change issues in the food system. Not only does it use up to 50% less energy to produce an equal amount of food, it also exhibits a principal capacity to mitigate global warming by removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and sequestering it in soil organic matter.”

The Rodale Institute’s research manager, Dr. Paul Hepperly, agrees that organic farm practices are important to reducing CO2 emissions. He says that Rodale’s 28 year long Farming Trials “show that i) compost, ii) winter cover cropping and iii) organic no till farming are instrumental in increasing carbon sequestration on farmland. Results suggest integration of these practices will far exceed the carbon sequestration of any one practice done alone. Farmland has not previously played a significant role in managing greenhouse gases, but the integrated implementation of these best farm practices has great potential to mitigate this problem.”

Hepperly continues, “We have demonstrated winter cover crops can sequester up to 1,000 lbs of Carbon per acre each year which can expand the water holding capacity of the soil by 5,000 additional gallons per acre for each year the biological covers are utilized. This effectively drought-proofs the soil and buffers crop plants from the wild climate fluctuations associated with global warming from greenhouse gases.”

Research on the benefits of regional organic agriculture abounds, but Louise Frazier, nutrition culinary specialist and member of Honest Weight Food Co-op, points out, “There is no mistaking that it is the people who are taking the lead in sustainable agriculture for New York’s future. Indeed they are swelling the ranks as participants in CSA farms, members of

food co-ops, and shoppers at farmers markets, thereby preserving the local small farms and orchards of New York's countryside! “

Food Prices

Due to fast rising grain commodity prices and grain shortages related to the sharp demand for food-based ethanol, New York organic grain farmer and retail distributor, Mary Howell Martens, explains “The extraordinarily high cost of grain this winter is seriously affecting the ability of dairy farmers to purchase feed. Their cutting back on feed will result in lower milk production. This may then cause higher milk prices for the consumer.”

Assemblyman Felix Ortiz of Brooklyn, whose bill requiring an 80% reduction in CO2 emissions by 2050, has no companion bill by a Republican senator, emphasizes that “climate change IS HAPPENING, and we need to address it with appropriate legislative action to ensure that New York has affordable food available to all.”

Farmers Need to Adapt

According to Dr. Cynthia Rosenzweig, Nobel Laureate of NASA and Columbia University's Goddard Institute of Space Studies, and keynote speaker at this forum, “We have entered the solution phase for the climate change issue, and agriculture in New York State has a leading role to play.”

Regional Farm and Food Project's board member Billie Best concurs. “Since farming is an entirely weather-related industry, it is on the frontline of climate change. But it is also key to mitigating climate impacts if farmers can adapt successfully.

Cortland organic dairy farmer Kathie Arnold explains, “The specter of more extreme weather events due to climate instability is troubling. Periods of extended drought and heavier rain events will require farmers to adapt practices and variety selections as a response to altering growing conditions. As New York State comes to have a more Mid-Atlantic climate, parasites and pests that did not survive our cold winters of the past will become increasingly problematic.”

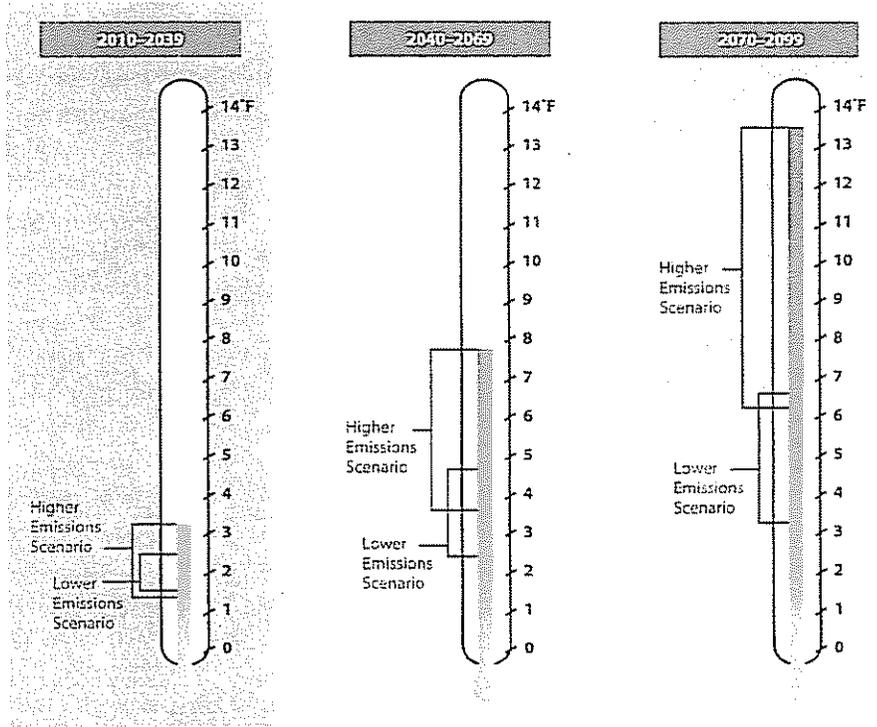
Bill MacKentley of St Lawrence Nurseries in Potsdam, who as a tree breeder must closely observe winters to ensure the plants' hardiness, has records going back for over a century. “Climate here in northern New York has been changing and this change is accelerating, he says. “We've observed less overall cold and less intense winter cold, and fewer periods of consecutive cold days. We have watched the movements of pests northward, and seen the dreaded Japanese beetle march into St Lawrence County in the last ten years.” Commenting on needed adaptations for farmers, MacKentley explains, “Higher summer temperatures dry up organic matter in soil. So soil needs to be healthy and chemical-free to start with and we need healthy organic farm systems in place.”

Climate Change in the Northeast

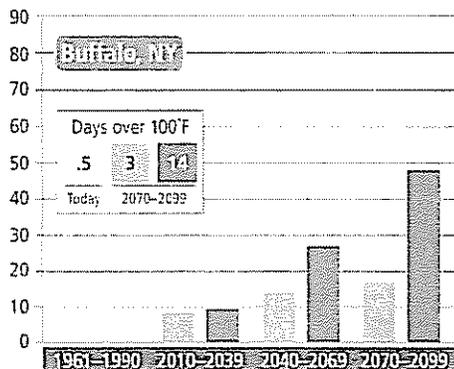
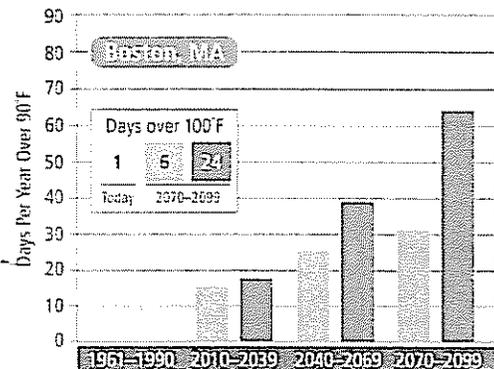
Dramatic Summer Temperature Rise And "Migrating" State if "Business-As-Usual"

(Higher Emissions=BAU)

Source: Union of Concerned Scientists in collaboration with independent scientists as Dr. David Wolfe, Cornell see www.climatechoices.org see www.climateandfarming.org

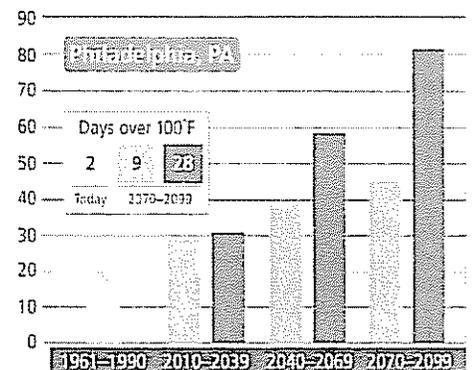
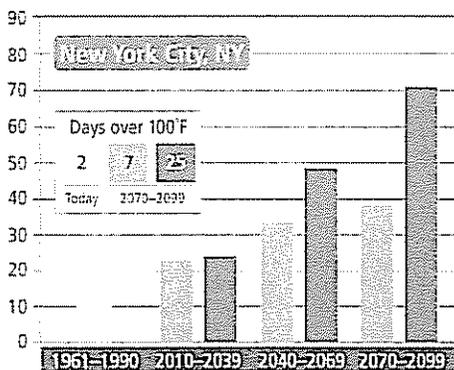
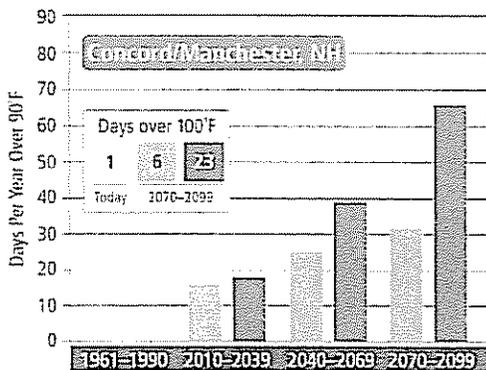


The Northeast is already experiencing rising temperatures, with dramatic warming expected later this century if our heat-trapping emissions continue to increase unabated. How high temperatures rise depends on the emissions choices we make next, in the Northeast and globally. These thermometers show projected increases in regional average summer temperatures for three time periods: early-, mid-, and late-twenty-first century. Temperature ranges reflect the results of three different state-of-the-art climate models.



of Summer Days Above 90° and 100° F

□ lower emissions ■ higher emissions



Nearly 14 million people live in the bustling urban centers of the Northeast—and everyone feels the heat when summer temperatures soar into the 90s. Amplified by the urban heat island effect, the number of days over 90°F is projected to increase over the course of the century until, by the end of the century, some cities could experience nearly an entire summer of above 90°F daytime heat. Projections also show a dramatic increase in the currently small number of blistering days over 100°F (shown in boxes). The good news is that reducing our emissions today will help lower the number of dangerously hot days significantly. Projections represent the average of three climate models.

Subject: FW: NYS product labeling question

-----Original Message-----

From: JoanorHall@aol.com [mailto:JoanorHall@aol.com]

Sent: Sunday, February 10, 2008 11:44 AM

To: Mary Ann Stockman

Subject: COUNCIL ON FOOD POLICY TO HOLD LISTENING SESSION

I am a retired R.D., unable to get to meetings, but still interested. I do facilitate, as a volunteer, food and nutrition classes for seniors at a local Y. I have always been interested in supporting local foods, farmers; markets, etc.

I don't know if this is the correct forum for one of my concerns, but I will try.

The food labeling regulations ("nutrition facts") under the FDA applies only to items involved in Interstate Commerce. If something is produced in NY (i.e. baked goods), and sold in NY, it does not have to have a nutrition facts label. I would like very much to see this changed! Consumers, especially with the obesity epidemic, trans fat issues, other issues, need to be able to see on the label what it is that they are buying!

Thank you.

Joan Locker, MS, RD

Who's never won? Biggest Grammy Award surprises of all time on AOL Music.

<<http://music.aol.com/grammys/pictures/never-won-a-grammy?>

NCID=aolcmp00300000002548>

4/9/2008