AGRICULTURE NEWS
New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets
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FOR RELEASE:
Immediately, Monday
April 21, 2008

COUNCIL ON FOOD POLICY TO HOLD LISTENING SESSION
Listening Session Scheduled for May 5, 2008 in Rochester

The New York State Council on Food Policy is holding a listening session in Rochester to gain perspective from community members on several food policy issue areas and to seek opportunities to maximize collaboration among stakeholders.

The listening session is scheduled for Monday, May 5, 2008 at Le Lemon Grass II, 285 North Union Street, Rochester in conjunction with the Rochester Public Market. The session will be held from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm.

The listening session is 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.

Comments should focus on how to strengthen the connection between local food products and consumers; supporting efficient and profitable agricultural food production and food retail infrastructure; and how to increase consumer awareness and knowledge about healthy eating and improve access to safe and nutritious foods.

Those wishing to participate are requested to RSVP by 5:00 pm May 4, 2008 to Mary Ann Stockman at 518-485-7728 or maryann.stockman@agmkt.state.ny.us.

The Council on Food Policy is hosting a series of listening sessions throughout the State. Sessions have been held in Albany, Syracuse, New York City and Binghamton thus far. Subsequent sessions will take place in Harlem and Long Island. Dates and locations of those listening sessions are posted at www.agmkt.state.ny.us/eventcal.html.

The New York State Council on Food Policy was created in 2007 to coordinate state agriculture policy and look at ways to increase sales of New York agricultural products to New York customers. The Council will also 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.

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NYS COUNCILON FOOD POLICY LISTENING SESSION
MAY 5, 2008; 1:00 P.M. – 3:00 P.M.

LE LEMON GRASS II
285 NORTH UNION STREET, ROCHESTER

Presenter	Organization
1. Jim Farr	Associate Director of Parks and Recreation; Rochester Public Market
2. Dan Peters	Springdale Farms
3. Patricia Van Lare	NYS Grange
4. Jim Kennedy	NYS Aquaculture
5. Ted Universal	NYS Aquaculture
6. Kate Mendenhall	Northeast Organic Farming Assoc. of New York
7. Tom Ferraro	FoodLink
8. David Haight	American Farmland Trust
9. Peter Landre	Cornell Cooperative Extension – Yates County
10. Jim Ochterski	Cornell Cooperative Extension – Ontario County
11. Mary Lee Bourbeau	Cornell Cooperative Extension – Wayne County
12. Rachel Pickering	Finger Lakes Health System Agency – Healthi Kids
13. Stephen Cook, MD, MPH	University of Rochester
14. Martha Goodsell	Small Farms Task Force
15. Chris Hartman	South Wedge Farmers' Market

ROCHESTER PUBLIC MARKET

http://www.nyfarmersmarket.com/regionwestmonroe.htm

Sponsor: City of Rochester
Location: 280 North Union Street, Rochester, NY
Times of Operation: Tuesday & Thursday, 6 AM to 1 PM
Saturday 5 AM to 3 PM, plus additional days for special events
Season: Year round
Contact: Jim Farr (585) 428-6866; (585) 303-5934
Department of Parks & Recreation - Assistant Director
400 Dewey Avenue
Rochester, NY 14613

Market Manager: Cindy DeCoste
Phone: 585-428-6907
Fax: 585-428-6021
E-mail: farrj@cityofrochester.gov
Website: www.cityofrochester.gov Click on Public Market

Rochester's 102 year old Public Market, located in the heart of Rochester. Bargains abound Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. Vendors offer their fresh foods, ethnic delicacies and specialty items. Special events throughout the year such as Sundays "Greatest Garage Sales Ever", and "Flower City Days" add to the flavor and excitement.

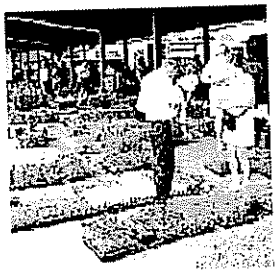
The Public Market is open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6:00 a.m. - 1 :00 p.m., and Saturdays from 5:00 a.m. to 3 p.m., year-round. The Market is open additional hours before and after holidays and on special occasions. **Current Schedule** of events and 'The Market Times' newsletter provide additional information about happenings at the market. 100th Anniversary Shirts and Market Bags are available at the Market Office. Public Market merchandise may be purchased from the Friends of the Market Veggie Valet stand next to the Information Kiosk at the market or by contacting the Friends at: www.marketfriends@rochester.rr.com. (FYI: Market merchandise is not available for purchase at the market office.)

The Best Bargains for Every Household In Town or Out Rochester's Public Market is a time-proven tradition within our community and an enjoyable year-round alternative to more modern establishments vending produce and goods. Corner stores and chain supermarkets are important conveniences of urban life, but the Public Market is a unique experience that transports you across 150 years of local commerce to the sights, sounds, smells and tastes of other days.

What's In It For Shoppers You'll find fresh fruit, meat, fish, poultry (live and prepared), eggs, dairy products, homebaked goods, seasonal produce, flowers, plants, jewelry, dry goods, paintings, crafts, specialty foods, ethnic delicacies, decorative items, curiosities and bargains, bargains, bargains.

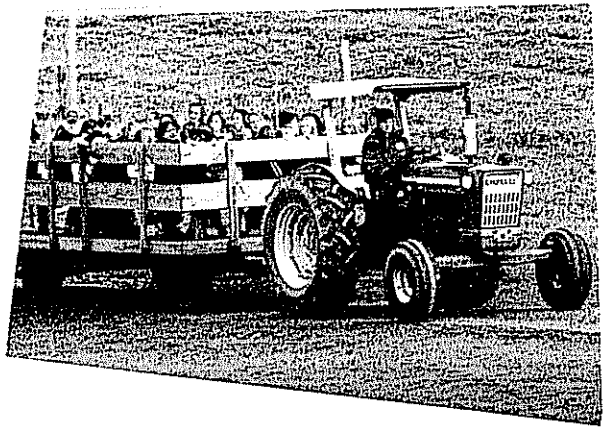
Our First Market The same exciting panorama of livestock, produce, crafts and dry goods that overwhelms a visitor today also greeted the first market goers in 1827 when the village of Rochester only had about 5,000 residents and the market was built partially over the river at the west end of the Main Street bridge. Later this unique resource was replaced by Centre Market, Rochester's first major civic undertaking, built on the river's east side between the Andrews Street bridge and the site of the present Sister Cities pedestrian bridge.

Today's Market The present public market opened at its site off North Union Street in 1905, and currently offers over 300 selling stalls both indoors and out. Summer, spring, fall or winter, you will find the season at its freshest, tastiest and most colorful at the public market. Today, the market combines the traditions of owner-operated family enterprises and healthful farm-fresh quality with the values of wholesale, shopping and the convenience of modern facilities.



A Good Market For Your Wares The Market offers merchants a central city location with a constant flow of enthusiastic customers who are there just to shop, to bargain and to buy. There are three sheds, two open-air and one enclosed. Open-air shed stalls are available on a seasonal basis and enclosed shed spaces are available on an annual basis. For specific rental rate information, call the Market Supervisor, Tuesday - Saturday from 7:00am to 1:00pm or during market hours.

Friends of the Market "Volunteer Opportunity" Please join the 'Friends of the Market' volunteers. Become a Public Market docent, host tours for school children and out-of-town guests. The 'Friends' meet the 2nd Tuesday of the month in the Public Market Office at 5:15pm. Please feel free to send an E-mail message with questions: marketfriends@rochester.rr.com. See you there!



...a Great Place for Families.

Kids will enjoy visiting with the farm's friendly barnyard animals or playing in the children's exploration garden. Take a short walk to the woodlot trails to watch the wildlife and search for animal tracks. Parents and grandparents can take a stroll through colorful gardens of flowers, herbs and vegetables created by our horticulturist.

And, everyone will be amazed at the farm's 60-cow dairy barn featuring the Northeast's only robotic milking system open for public viewing!

Admission is free to see most of our great attractions. Dairy barn tours are offered Monday through Saturday at 11:00 am and 2:00 pm. The cost is $3 for adults (ages 12-62), $2 for youth (3-11) and seniors (63+), and free for kids 2 and under. The dairy barn is closed on Sundays.

Hours & Admission

Springdale Farm is open:
Monday – Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
(Enter through Visitor Education Center)

Sunday, Noon to 4:00 p.m.
(Enter through gate near Farm House)

Last entrance to farm is 3:30 p.m.

Visit www.springdalefarm.org for a calendar of upcoming festivals and events.

Driving Directions

From the East:
Springdale Farm is just a 15-minute drive west from Rochester, New York. From NYS Thruway exit 45, take Route 490 West and exit at Route 531. Continue all the way until the end and turn left onto Washington Street (Rt.36). Turn right onto Colby Street. Springdale Farm is approximately one mile down the road on the right side.

From the West:
From NYS Thruway exit 47, take Route 490 East to exit 1 (Leroy/Brockport). Continue on Route 19N for approximately 10 miles and turn right onto Colby Street. Springdale Farm is three miles down the road on the left side.

Did you know? One year's growth of sheep fleece = 8 lbs. of wool.

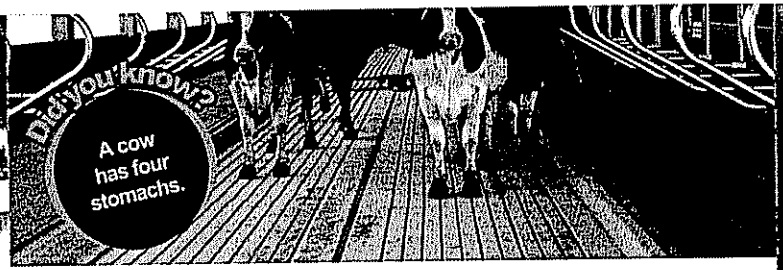
Springdale FARM
Where imaginations grow!

Tel/Fax: (585) 349-2090

700 Colby Street
Spencerport, NY 14559

Springdale FARM
Where imaginations grow!

Visitor's Guide



ngdale Farm...

here they live, every person depends on agriculture for
/ eat, the clothes they wear, and many of the materials
y day. Without agriculture there would be no food, paper,
dicine. At Springdale Farm, visitors learn first hand in
tive way how agriculture effects our everyday lives.

eing milked by a laser-guided robot in the dairy barn, or
through the various themed gardens. Depending on the
y the petting zoo with newborn animals like lambs and
ke a miniature horse-drawn carriage ride. Activities vary
he year so that there's always a new experience to enjoy!
re planning a school field trip, family outing, scout activity
arty, Springdale Farm is a fun place that people of all
visit!

arm is a 200-acre public demonstration farm that is
onroe County and operated by Heritage Christian Services,
vices agency that supports children and adults with
al disabilities. Named for a spring located between two
Springdale Farm has been an active farm since 1830.
ides unique demonstrations of modern agriculture and
is a day program site for adults with special needs who
e animals, maintain the grounds of the farm and welcome
),000 visitors each year.

...a Great Place for Students.

Thousands of schoolchildren tour Springdale Farm each year for a fun-filled, educational experience. Here, students:

- Discover the importance of farms as the source of the food we eat;
- Find out how technology has changed agriculture today;
- Learn about the many careers in agriculture;
- And explore the forest and pond ecosystems.

Each tour is designed to provide hands-on activities that meet New York State learning standards in Math, Science, English, Art and Social Studies.

Guided tours are one hour long and are offered year-round Monday through Friday at 10:00 am, 11:00 am, 1:00 pm and 2:00 pm. Special requests for 9:00 am and 12:00 pm tours may be accommodated. Cost is $5/person, minimum of 15 people. One chaperone is recommended for every 6 students.

Each teacher will receive a pre-tour packet that includes information about their visit and classroom activities, and a post-tour packet including a lesson plan for additional classroom exploration and a questionnaire to assess student learning.

...a Great Place for Scouts.

Springdale Farm is an excellent location for scout groups to explore agricultural and environmental topics that can be used to achieve merit badges as well as Eagle Scout community service projects.

...a Great Place for Birthdays.

Springdale Farm is the perfect location to host a child's party with animals, miniature horse-drawn carriage rides, tours of the robotic milking parlor and more!

There are a variety of birthday packages available. Please call the farm or visit our website for details.

...a Great Place for Volunteers.

There are numerous volunteer opportunities available at Springdale Farm to meet anyone's interests. Please contact us for details.

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Patricia VanLare

The New York State Grange

100 Grange Place Cortland, NY 12045	e-mail nysgrange@nysgrange.com	Phone 607-756-7553 Fax 607-756-7757

Grange Statement to Council on Food Policy

New York State Agriculture is a major contributor to the State's economy. The Grange firmly supports the family size farm, the backbone of agricultural production, although larger farms continue to have their impact on production and marketing.

Everyone must recognize that farmers are a part of the environment and will do their share to protect it. Good stewardship of the land is important for the success of the farmer.

Americans are fortunate to live in a nation with concerns about keeping food costs reasonable and affordable with high quality. Producers need to have a reasonable profit for their efforts to continue to produce our food.

We support legislation that will enhance rural revitalization, agribusiness development, and micro-enterprise funding; further supporting the creation of a rural revitalization program, and the economic development of farm related businesses.

The Grange supports a loan assistance grant program to help develop Agribusiness and set up basic business management training and technical assistance.

We support consumer awareness and knowledge about healthy eating and improve access to safe and nutritious foods. The Grange supports educational programs that provide and encourage eating a variety of nutritious foods in moderation and teaching the basic/interaction of calorie intake and energy expenditure.

We support such programs as Cooperative Working Together, which would help to balance supply of milk with demand, to help farmers receive a fair price for their milk.

Efficient and profitable agricultural food production is necessary to maintain the number of farmers and farms producing our food.

The agricultural industry makes vital contribution to the quality of life in our State by creating jobs, generating revenue, producing safe and wholesome products and allowing us to sustain open spaces and beautiful rural landscapes.

Jim Kennedy

FROM JIM KENNEDY
585 394-5890

A WHITE PAPER ON THE STATUS AND NEEDS OF LARGEMOUTH BASS CULTURE IN THE NORTH CENTRAL REGION

Prepared by

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Fisheries and Illinois Aquaculture Center
Southern Illinois University-Carbondale

for the

North Central Regional Aquaculture Center

Current Draft as of March 29, 2000

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INTRODUCTION AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE DOCUMENT

Largemouth bass (*Micropterus salmoides*) are the most sought-after freshwater sport fish in the United States. Largemouth bass are a member of the family Centrarchidae. Currently the genus *Micropterus* contains seven species. As part of the development of the new strategic plan, the North Central Regional Aquaculture Center (NCRAC) is trying to address the concern that the long-term focus of research goals and priorities may be lost because the NCRAC Board of Directors (Board) and the Industry Advisory Council memberships change over time. The Board in the June 1999 meeting directed that an updateable white paper be written on largemouth bass. The white paper is not an exhaustive literature review, but a working document that defines the current status of largemouth bass culture including the critical factors limiting the economic production in order to make recommendations for future research. Industry participation and peer reviews are critical components for the evolution of this document.

CURRENT STATUS OF THE INDUSTRY

MARKETS

Most largemouth bass are marketed live for sport fishing and for food fish. Young-of-the-year fingerlings and yearlings are sold for stocking into lakes for non-commercial sport fishing. Larger bass are also used in a small but growing catch and release pay fishing industry. These fish are placed in ponds at high densities and maintained on prepared food. Only very large trophy fish are allowed to be kept and then at a premium price. Adult largemouth bass are also sold live for food. Most of these fish are transported to large cities such as New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Toronto, San Francisco, etc., to supply the demand of the Asian community. At this time relatively few largemouth bass are sold in the food-fish industry in the form of a frozen or iced product.

Supply/Demand

Detailed statistics are not available on the number weight and dollar value of the largemouth bass produced in the United States. In 1997, a survey was conducted of state and federal hatcheries (R. Heidinger, unpublished data). Data obtained from each agency from either 1995 or 1996 indicated that approximately 21 million largemouth bass were stocked. Eighty-nine percent were stocked as fingerlings. It is not known how many largemouth bass are produced by the private sector; however, a survey of the Aquaculture Magazine Buyer's Guide '99 and Industry Directory (Aquaculture Magazine 1999) lists 103 hatcheries that produce largemouth bass. Twenty of these sources sell "market-size" fish. Many of these facilities are located in the North Central Region (NCR). It is likely that more largemouth bass are produced by the private sector than the public sector. One private aquaculturist takes four million eggs per year.

It is illegal to commercially harvest largemouth bass from any public lake or stream in the United States; however, in some bodies of water in Mexico it is legal to commercially harvest largemouth bass. From 1994-1997 Mexico has harvested an average of 2.4 million lb/yr of largemouth bass (FAO 1999). Many, if not most, of these fish are probably sold in the United States.

All 103 suppliers of largemouth bass listed in the Aquaculture Magazine Buyer's Guide '99 and Industry Directory (Aquaculture Magazine 1999) were sent a letter that explained the purpose of this white paper and requested information on what they felt were needed research areas. The majority did not respond. Additional phone contacts were made with known producers. In all, feedback was obtained from 20 private producers and managers of two state hatcheries. These aquaculturists were located in Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Texas, and France. The wholesale values of fingerling largemouth bass depend upon size, geographic location, and the number sold to the customer. Mean value from this survey for fingerlings sold in small lots, excluding the much higher values given for Maine, New York, and Pennsylvania are 1–2 in $0.35, 2–4 in $0.68, 4–6 in $0.94, 6–8 in $2.07, and 8–10 in $3.74. The sales price for large lots may be discounted 50%. Largemouth bass sold live to the Asian market sell for $3.00–$5.00/lb. Largemouth bass are being sold to the pay-fishing market for $6.00/lb.

A number of fish culturists indicated that they couldn't produce sufficient quantities of 8 in and larger largemouth bass to meet the demand. The demand for smaller fingerlings would increase if the natural resource agencies stopped producing largemouth bass. Many private state aquaculture associations have tried with little success to get their natural resource agency to phase out largemouth bass production. Tidwell et al. (In press) stated that the demand for largemouth bass greater than 1.0 lb has been identified to exceed 700,000 lb/yr with a value of over $3.00/lb live weight. Tidwell et al. (In press) made the following cost estimates; production estimates for an economic engineering approach were taken from research results at Kentucky State University. Cost estimates were based on numbers generated for a catfish production system composed of 4, 5-acre ponds under Kentucky conditions. Based on a stocker price of $0.50 per feed trained fingerling, a yield of 4,350 lb/acre, and a selling price of $3.00/lb (live sales) approximately $12,750/acre gross revenues are generated which allows a return of $6,623/acre above variable costs and $5,950 after operator labor. A break-even estimate under these assumptions would be $1.60/lb.

Until these higher yields have been routinely demonstrated for large ponds, it is recommended that cost estimates be based on 1,500–2,000 lb of production/acre.

LEGALITY

Some states require an aquaculture license to rear and sell fish, but others do not. In a few states, it is not legal to rear or sell largemouth bass for stocking. Also, there are a few states in which it is not legal to sell largemouth bass as food fish. Since regulations are continuously changing, one should check with the appropriate state regulatory agency before culturing or selling largemouth bass. There has been some resistance by "bass clubs" to the culture of largemouth bass for food.

BIOLOGY/AQUACULTURE TECHNOLOGY

The following discussion of largemouth bass culture techniques does not contain enough information for an inexperienced aquaculturist to economically produce this fish. Other suggested readings are Heidinger (1976), Heidinger (2000), Tidwell et al. (In press), and Williamson et al. (1993). In addition to a discussion of culture techniques for largemouth bass, these papers contain citations of literature that

go into much greater depth on many aspects of rearing largemouth bass. Readers interested in other aspects of largemouth bass culture such as water quality, pond construction, pond location, zooplankton production, prepared diets, etc. should consult Avault (1996), Piper et al. (1982), and Boyd (1990). In addition, producers should talk with their aquaculture extension specialist.

BIOLOGY

There are two recognized subspecies of largemouth bass: the northern largemouth bass, *Micropterus salmoides salmoides* and the southern Florida largemouth bass, *Micropterus salmoides floridanus*. The subspecies and their hybrids can be distinguished only by genetic testing. At the latitude of southern Illinois where ice cover occurs, pure non-selected Florida largemouth bass young-of-the-year usually winterkill in shallow ponds.

Like all members of the family Centrarcidae, largemouth bass are nest builders. The male will build a the solitary nest on any firm substrate usually in 1–4 ft of water depth. Spawning occurs at 65–86°F. The male guards the nest from predators and his movement over the eggs helps aerate them. Nests are usually at least 10 ft apart. Nests have been reported to contain eggs from more than one female, and a single female does not necessarily lay all of her eggs in the same nest. This has led some researchers to recommend stocking more males in the spawning pond than females. At 64–82°F eggs hatch in 55–49 hr. Male largemouth bass usually guard their schooling brood of fingerlings for 14–28 days. At 71°F it takes approximately five days for the gas bladder to inflate. Fry begin to eat after they become free swimming. Initially they feed on zooplankton. At 1–2 in total length, they eat primarily zooplankton and insects, but bass over 1.5 in will feed on fish, especially when they are crowded as in a culture situation. Because of their large mouth, cannibalistic tendency, and unwillingness to accept a prepared diet unless trained, they are more difficult to culture than channel catfish or rainbow trout.

CULTURE

It is interesting, but somewhat disconcerting, that various largemouth bass culture methods that work very well for some fish farmers do not seem to work at all for others, thus there is no single best method of production.

By far, most largemouth bass are spawned in ponds, but a few producers use large raceways. Fry are either left in the spawning ponds or moved to rearing ponds. In some cases the eggs are moved into a hatching facility. Fingerlings 2–4 in long can be raised at low densities on insects. If larger fish are desired, the 1–2 in fingerlings are trained to accept a prepared diet and then the trained fish are placed in rearing ponds.

Brood Stock

Largemouth bass brood stock are normally maintained in the hatchery. Genetic strains of largemouth bass have not been formally developed, although some hatcheries have maintained brood fish for ten generations or more. Sexual maturity is more dependent upon size than age. Attempts have been made to sex adult largemouth bass by looking at the shape of the scaleless area around the urogenital opening. The scaleless area tends to be more or less circular in males and more elliptical in females. This method frequently leads to misidentification of sex. Sexing of brood fish can be done in

the spring prior to spawning when the female has a distended abdomen, and a red swollen protruding vent. The males may be emitting milt. The most accurate way to sex largemouth bass is to insert a small tube into the vent and look for eggs or milt. Even though largemouth bass under a pound may be sexually mature, most culturists use 1.5–4 lb (3–5 year old) bass as brood fish. Larger fish are hard to handle and are usually replaced. Brood stock can be held in ponds at rates of 300–400 lb/acre (White 1988). Most producers maintain their brood fish on a combination of prepared diet and live forage fish. For good growth, adult largemouth bass are often fed a prepared diet of 3% of their body weight per day or what they will eat during a 10–15 min period. This is reduced to 1% during the cooler months. Most producers use 0.25–0.75 in diameter pellets. Feeds containing a minimum protein requirement of approximately 40% appear to be desirable for largemouth bass more than one year old (Anderson et al. 1981). Live forage fish may be particularly important during ice cover; however, forage fish can introduce disease organisms. Three pounds of forage fish per pound of bass is required for maintenance, and 10 or 11 pounds of forage fish per pound of largemouth bass is required for good growth. Pellet-fed largemouth bass seems to have at least as good gonad development and fecundity as prey-fed largemouth bass (Snow and Maxwell 1970, Rosenblum et al. 1991).

Brood stock is normally obtained from established largemouth bass producers. If offspring from these fish are going to be fed a prepared diet, then it is desirable to obtain brood stock that have been raised on a prepared diet for several generations. This will increase the number of fingerlings that will learn to take a prepared feed by 20–30%. In the NCR it is probably desirable to use brood stock that have originated from a local source, especially if the offspring are going to be sold for sport fish stocking of ponds and lakes.

Fry and Fingerling Production

The least intensive method of spawning largemouth bass is to place the adults into a fertilized pond free of other fish in the spring at densities of 10–40/acre. Fertilizing the pond with organic or inorganic fertilizer enhances zooplankton densities. After the largemouth bass eggs hatch, the adult bass may be left in the pond or removed. In 20–40 days the fingerlings will reach a length of 1.5–2.0 in. Production using this method is quite variable, ranging from a few hundred to 50,000 fish/acre.

In the more intensive fry-transfer method, largemouth bass brood fish are stocked into ponds free of predacious insects and other fish at densities of 40–100/acre. On average, with healthy adults, 100,000–200,000 fry/acre are produced. The fry will school for several weeks after hatching during which time they can be collected with small fine-mesh seines (cheesecloth), fry traps, or lift nets and moved to rearing ponds. To produce 1.5–2.0 in fingerlings, producers stock at 40,000–80,000 fry/acre. The number of fry can be estimated volumetrically (Swanson 1982).

To limit predacious insects in the rearing ponds and produce a good crop of zooplankton, the ponds are filled with water 10–20 days before stocking. Normally the ponds need to be fertilized with some combination of organic and inorganic fertilizer. Realistically, each producer of largemouth bass has to develop a fertilization regime that works well for his or her own unit. When the zooplankton is eliminated by the largemouth bass, they become very cannibalistic and large numbers of fish can be lost in just a couple of days. With good management, one can expect to harvest 75–80% of the stocked fry.

A much more intensive method is usually used to produce large fish. In order to produce high densities of 6–8 in or larger largemouth bass, most producers train the fingerlings to utilize a prepared diet. One to 1.5 inch fingerlings are moved from the rearing pond into circular tanks or rectangular raceways. Three to four hundred gallon tanks are stocked at densities of 10–40 fingerlings/gal (0.04–0.06 lb/gal). Snow (1968) used a moist pellet but largemouth bass have been trained on ground fish, fish eggs, freeze-dried krill, etc. Within 7–10 days, the fingerlings are switched to a high protein diet such as that used to raise salmon. To most efficiently train largemouth bass to accept a prepared diet, they are concentrated at water temperatures of 70–80°F, with oxygen levels of 6 ppm or more. The training food must be offered frequently. Automatic feeders are commercially available, but most producers hand feed every 5–10 min for at least part of the day. At least 50% of the largemouth bass should learn to accept the feed. If fingerlings from second or third-generation hatchery reared brood fish that have been trained to accept a prepared diet are used, then success should be in excess of 80%.

Unless the fingerlings are the same size, cannibalism can be a serious problem during training. Fingerlings may have to be graded several times during the training procedure to help prevent cannibalism; however, ideally one should start out with fingerlings of the same size. In order to produce fingerlings of the same size, some producers try to stock each rearing pond with fry that have hatched within 24 h of each other. Spawning boxes can be placed in raceways or ponds. The eggs are removed from the boxes and incubated in hatching trays or jars (Heidinger 2000). Only fry that hatch within a 24-h period are used to stock a rearing pond.

After the 1–2 in fingerlings are trained to accept a prepared diet, they are graded and separated from the cannibals and the non-feeders. The trained fish are stocked at rates of 15,000–20,000 bass/acre. Only 40–50% of the fingerlings will normally continue to feed on the prepared diet unless they are confined to one area of the pond for several weeks with a screen or net. In order to keep a higher percentage of the fish on the prepared diet, some producers concentrate the trained fingerlings at higher densities in small 0.5-acre ponds. These ponds must be aerated to maintain suitable oxygen levels. Mechanical feeders can be used to offer the food at hourly intervals.

In the southern portion of the NCR, the bass will reach 6–8 in by the end of their first year. Largemouth bass usually reach 0.75 lb by the end of their second year and 1.25–1.50 lb in their third year. Production levels of 1,500–2,000 lb/acre have been obtained.

Preliminary data indicates dress-out rates of 60% whole dress and 40% for the filets. Both values are similar to those obtained for catfish (Tidwell et al. In press).

Diseases and Pests

Pests and diseases of largemouth bass seem to be similar to those of other warm water fishes. Insects such as notonectids (back swimmers) can build up in a pond and kill large numbers of largemouth bass smaller than 1.5 in. Larger largemouth bass feed on these insects. Crayfish and bullfrog tadpoles can cause a problem when seining small largemouth bass. Chemicals that are not approved by the Food and Drug Administration for aquatic use on food fish have frequently controlled such pests. Pond management is probably the best way to control these pests.

Some producers have a tremendous problem with predation from fish-eating birds, such as cormorants and blue herons. The blackbird-grackle complex is skilled at taking small bass from un-screened raceways.

As with catfish, when stressed, largemouth bass are susceptible to bacterial infection of *Aremonas* and columnaris (*Cytophagas*, formally *Flexibacter*) and mortality can be very high, especially at water temperatures below 60°F. Tidwell et al. (In press) report that approximately 1,000 adult largemouth bass died in the Sante Cooper reservoir in South Carolina in 1995. Auburn University staff implicated an iridovirus. This is the first time that a virus has been implicated in killing Centracids.

Gill flukes (trematodes) and ciliated protozoans such as *Tricodina* and *Costia* can be treated with formalin and or salt. At this time there is no effective legal direct treatment for anchorworm (*Lernea*), *Ichthyophthirius*, bass tapeworm (*Proteocephalus*), or trematoda (grubs).

Water Quality, Handling, and Transport

Largemouth bass are similar to channel catfish in their tolerance of low dissolved oxygen and high un-ionized ammonia. They are more tolerant of high nitrite than are channel catfish (Tidwell et al. In press).

Healthy largemouth bass are no more difficult to handle than channel catfish. They can be hauled in aerated tanks at densities of 2 lb/gal of water for 24 h at 65°F. Largemouth bass tolerate a wide range of temperatures if acclimated but seem to be significantly stressed when handled below 40°F.

CRITICAL LIMITING FACTORS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

NUTRITION

Even though largemouth bass are being produced economically, the supply of large fish does not meet the demand. The bottleneck appears to be nutritional in nature. Very little nutritional research has been done on largemouth bass. Anderson et al. (1981) determined a protein requirement of 41% for 1–2 in fish. Pond reared second year largemouth bass up to 0.75 lb seemed to benefit from a 42–48% protein level. Their study, along with observations from many producers, has indicated a problem with pale, fatty livers and mortality. Over wintering mortality especially is thought to be a problem with nutrition of the feed.

A doctoral dissertation is being conducted at Southern Illinois University-Carbondale on the nutritional requirements of fingerling largemouth bass. Additional nutritional and feeding studies are needed, especially on larger bass. Since most large bass are sold alive, these studies should investigate artificial diets to maximize growth rate, and also consider how the diets and feeding regimes affect handling and hauling of the fish.

A related problem in the use of fingerlings reared for the sport fish stocking market involves the perception by some that largemouth bass reared on a prepared diet do not survive as well, especially over winter, as those reared on live forage. Relative mortality of the two groups of fingerlings needs to be documented.

PRODUCTION DENSITIES

After suitable diets are developed, feeding trials need to be conducted to determine the densities at which food-size largemouth bass can be routinely reared. Once these densities are determined, demonstration projects should be set up. This information is needed in order to predict profit margins.

MARKETING

Once the adult live food-fish market and the adult live sport fish market starts to become saturated, then fish will be available to develop the more traditional frozen and iced food fish market. At that time a market development plan will be needed.

DISEASES

As with all commercially raised fishes, more effort needs to be expended in getting chemicals approved for disease treatment. The role of the bass tapeworm in relation to mortality in adult largemouth bass needs to be better understood. Some effort should be made to document the existence, extent, and severity of the "Largemouth Bass Virus."

SPAWNING

Although largemouth bass are successfully spawned using a number of different methods, the degree of success is not consistent among producers. For example some producers very successfully use nest boxes. Others have tried this method and the bass do not spawn on them. For some producers, separating the males and females and delaying placing them together until after the temperature has stabilized works well. For others this method is a complete failure. Such inconsistency makes it difficult to advise new fish farmers. Sufficient research in this area needs to be done in order to understand why the outcome of these approaches is so variable.

TRAINING SUCCESS

Most established producers of largemouth bass are successful in training at least 75% of the fingerlings to feed on a prepared diet. Many still have a problem maintaining these fish on the prepared diet once they are placed in the rearing ponds. A technique needs to be developed that will insure that 90% or more of the trained fish continue to feed on the prepared diet.

PRIORITIZATION

A number of issues that limit the production of largemouth bass in the NCR have been identified. Clearly, determining an appropriate prepared diet and feeding regime is the most important issue. Priorities number 2 and 3 are of equal importance, but priorities 4 and 5 are not ranked.

(1) Develop appropriate feeds and feeding regimes
(2) Determine and demonstrate realistic production densities
(3) Improve the percentage of trained bass that stay on the prepared diet

(4) Develop the frozen and iced food fish market for largemouth bass
(5) Enhance better disease control including more approved drugs

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank all of the producers who contributed to this document and Joe Morris, Iowa State University, Ames; Dan Selock, Southern Illinois University-Carbondale; and LaDon Swann, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana for reviewing the document.

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New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
Division of Fish, Wildlife & Marine Resources
Bureau of Fisheries, 5th Floor
625 Broadway, Albany, New York 12233-4753
Phone: (518) 402-8920 • **FAX:** (518) 402-8925
Website: www.dec.state.ny.us

Erin M. Crotty
Commissioner

December 10, 2003

Mr. Thaddeus J. Universal
Coolwater Fish Farm
5636 Lakeville-Groveland Road
Geneseo, N.Y. 14454

Dear Black Bass Hatchery License Holder:

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (Department) is considering promulgating regulations that would allow for the sale of black bass (primarily largemouth and smallmouth bass) in New York for food purposes in the marketplace. Currently, black bass may only be sold by hatchery license holders. Because black bass are the most popular recreational sport fish in New York, we feel that safeguards need to be put in place, via regulation, so that only black bass raised in licensed aquaculture facilities may legally be sold.

Prior to moving forward with proposing changes in the New York State Code of Rules and Regulations, we are seeking input and feedback on the Department's proposal from current black bass hatchery license holders. Below are the provisions (*in italics*) of the regulations that the Department proposes:

Definitions. For purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

(a) "Black bass" are defined as any fish of the genus Micropterus and include species commonly known as smallmouth bass, largemouth bass, spotted bass, redeye bass, Guadalupe bass or Suwannee bass, and any hybrids of these species.

(b) "Whole black bass" are defined as black bass carcasses that are entire or that have been gutted or gilled, but not otherwise reduced.

(c) "Processed black bass" are defined as black bass carcasses that have been prepared for shipping or sale beyond gutting and gilling, including carcasses that have been filleted, skinned, boned, sliced, chopped, ground, smoked, dried, cured, cooked or combined with other foodstuffs.

Permits. Only black bass raised or imported under permit of the department may be sold or offered for sale in the state. The department, in its discretion, may issue permits to:

(a) persons operating fish hatcheries or aquaculture facilities within the state to propagate and raise black bass, and to transport, sell or offer for sale within the state black bass raised in their facilities: and

(b) persons operating fish hatcheries or aquaculture facilities outside of the state to

import, transport, sell or offer for sale within the state black bass raised in their facilities.

The department may add conditions to black bass hatchery or importation permits issued pursuant to this Part that it deems necessary to protect the aquatic resources of the state.

Black bass raised or imported by a hatchery facility under permit pursuant to this Part may be offered for sale, sold, possessed and transported within the state in any number and at any size provided that:

(a) All shipments of live or whole black bass shall be accompanied by a manifest providing the name and address of the consignee and consignor, the name and permit number of the originating hatchery, the date of shipment, the number and species of fish being shipped, and the point of destination;

(b) Any person other than the permit holder who offers live or whole black bass for sale shall maintain a copy of the shipping manifest described in subdivision (a) of this section while in possession of such fish;

(c) Each live or whole black bass transported or sold for food purposes shall bear a non-reusable, locking tag furnished and applied by the permit holder. Tags shall bear the permit number of the originating hatchery. Only tags of a type approved by the department shall be used for purposes of this section. The sale or offering for sale for food purposes of any untagged live or whole black bass is prohibited, and such fish shall be presumed to have been taken from the wild. Live black bass transported or sold for propagation or stocking purposes need not be tagged; and

(d) Processed carcasses of black bass may be transported, offered for sale, sold or possessed for sale purposes only when packed in a container on which is plainly marked the number and species of bass contained therein and the name, address and permit number of the originating hatchery.

Prohibitions. No person shall:

(a) import, transport, or sell hatchery reared black bass, except as specified in this Part.

(b) import, transport, or sell hatchery reared, whole, or live black bass that are not accompanied by a shipping manifest as described in this Part.

(c) import, transport, or sell hatchery reared, whole, or live black bass for food purposes that do not bear a tag applied by the hatchery permit holder pursuant to subdivision of this Part.

(d) attach a tag identifying a black bass as a hatchery reared fish if such bass was not raised under a valid black bass hatchery or importation permit issued by this Department.

(e) import, transport, or sell any processed carcasses of hatchery reared black bass that are not packed in a container labeled as described in this Part.

(f) fail to comply with any other requirements of this Part or any conditions of a black bass hatchery or black bass importation permit issued pursuant to this Part.

The proposed regulations pertaining to the raising and transportation of black bass in New York State are the same that currently exist for black bass raised for stocking purposes. The more stringent stipulations come into effect for those black bass that are raised for the food market.

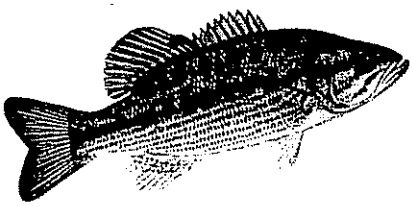
The Department welcomes feedback from you as to whether or not you can support such provisions, if the proposed regulations would be little or no consequence to your operations, or whether such regulations would be unduly burdensome. Please take the time to review the proposed regulations and provide me with any information that you feel may be helpful and

important for the Department to consider with regard to sale of black bass in New York State. So that the Department may forward with this proposal, we would appreciate your feedback by January 15, 2004. I may be contacted at the above address, by telephone 518-402-8920, by FAX 518-402-8925 or e-mail dxstang@gw.dec.state.ny.us . I look forward to your reply. Thanks.

Sincerely,

Douglas L. Stang
Chief
Bureau of Fisheries

Ted Universal



New York State Aquaculture Association

Ted Universal - President
5109 Booher Hill Road
Geneseo, NY 14454
Phone: 585 /243-3543
E-Mail: nysaquaculture@rochester.rr.com

May 5, 2008

Patrick Hooker
Chairperson
NYS Council on Food Policy

Good Afternoon, my name is Ted Universal, President of the NYS Aquaculture Association and owner of Coolwater Fish Farm in Geneseo, New York. My presentation today will center on three things: fish health inspections, the means by which aquaculture is regulated in our state and aquaculture legislation currently pending in the State legislature.

Fish health inspections have been conducted by the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) since 1995 for trout and 2007 for other fin fish. The objective was to monitor private fish hatchery production to prevent the spread of several contagious fish diseases discovered in our state. The vast majority of private hatcheries have passed health inspection requirements with only one testing positive for IPN (a relatively minor disease). The cost of the inspections was shared between hatchery owners and the DEC, with the DEC covering the majority of said costs. Once hatcheries passed inspection, the DEC would issue a Fish Health Certificate which is required in order to do business. In November 2007, DEC decided that it could no longer perform fish health inspections for private hatcheries and cancelled its program. (See letter attached) Hatchery owners however, were still required to comply with the DEC fish health regulations and now must shoulder the entire annual cost of the process which range from $3000 to $10,000 per hatchery. Adding to this dilemma, growers would have to send their fish out-of-state to get them inspected since no facilities exist within New York State to handle the job. In February, Jim Kennedy and I met with key legislators in Albany in an attempt to get a fish health inspection facility established at Cornell University. Although our meetings were cordial, no funding was allocated nor program established.

For most growers, the fish health certificate issued by DEC last year, is scheduled to expire in October. Many growers are being forced to reevaluate their businesses and make choices that are not in the best interests of the communities they serve. In your

information packets, I have included a sampling of letters from fish growers across the state. In their own words, they will explain how the high costs fish health inspections are affecting their businesses. In reacting to this pressure, some growers will down size, some will buy stock from out of state, while others will simply discontinue business altogether. All of these choices are bad for consumers and devastating to the Industry. It is our hope that the NYS Council on Food Policy will use its influence to establish a fish health inspections program at Cornell University so growers will have an affordable alternative to these deleterious choices.

For decades the DEC has regulated the aquaculture industry in our state. Under their management, the growth of aquaculture at every level has been impeded or stopped altogether. The sale of black bass and walleye pike are but two examples of the way DEC regulation has stymied progress and forced limited participation in an industry that other states have grown into major agricultural enterprises. The mission of the DEC is to protect and preserve the state's natural resources and environment, not the promotion of an agricultural industry. With the help of the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets the dairy, poultry, wine and tourism industries have flourished. Green markets are springing up all over the state. All these entities are encouraged and supported by Ag. & Markets professionals working to promote and market their quality products to eager consumers. Literally millions of dollars are being allocated for these and other worthwhile agricultural projects annually. Not one dollar has been allocated for the support and promotion of aquaculture however, for the past twenty years. It's time for a change. Aquaculture must come under the jurisdiction of the Dept. of Ag. and Markets in order for it to have any chance for growth in our state. The NYS Council on Food Policy, through its recommendations, can play a significant role in taking aquaculture out of the dark depths of the DEC closet and help foster its growth and prosperity with Ag & Markets.

These are but two issues adversely effecting the growth of aquaculture in our state. In order to be effective, a sweeping review and overhaul of the industry is required. Two pieces of legislation are currently pending in the state legislature that if approved, will provide a venue by which positive changes can be made and the full potential of the industry achieved. One, Senate bill 5680, introduced by Senator Young on April 25, 2007 and the other, Assembly bill A08771 introduced by Assemblyman Crouch on May 30, 2007 provide the basis by which legislators and growers can come together to reform regulations and policies to better serve the citizens of New York State. I have included copies of this material in your information packets. We strongly urge the NYS Council on Food Policy to recommend the swift approval of this legislation so that aquaculture can get down to business.

I, and the NYS Aquaculture Association, stand ready to assist the NYS Council on Food Policy and any other legislative group, in working for the successful completion of these projects so important to the survival of our state's aquaculture industry. Please feel free to call on me, if you need assistance or need more background on any issue regarding aquaculture.

Are there any questions? Thank you.

Respectfully submitted;

Ted Universal
President
New York State Aquaculture Association
5109 Booher Hill Road
Geneseo, New York 14454
585-243-3543
nysaquaculture@rochester.rr.com

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
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Bureau of Fisheries, 5th Floor
625 Broadway, Albany, New York 12233-4753
Phone: (518) 402-8890 • **FAX:** (518) 402-8925
Website: www.dec.state.ny.us

Alexander B. Grannis
Commissioner

November 13, 2007

Dear Licensee:

After reviewing the situation with staff, we have determined that DEC will no longer provide you with fish health inspections. For many of you, our staff have collected and analyzed trout and salmon samples for the presence of whirling disease spores for more than a decade. Beginning last Fall, these fish health inspection services were expanded to include examination for additional pathogens and examination of all species to be stocked into New York waters. Andy Noyes and his staff are currently conducting a second round of comprehensive inspections to meet the requirements of our current regulations, and, unless you bring uninspected fish onto your facility after this inspection, your fish will be certified through all or most of 2008 (depending upon the actual inspection date).

DEC will no longer offer you fish health inspections because we do not have the personnel or fiscal resources to adequately address the fish health needs of our own hatchery system and the needs of the entire private sector. The universe of individuals and businesses that must comply with our current fish health inspection requirements is much larger than the 40-50 entities that have licenses to rear and sell trout and salmon or black bass. Recognizing the demands we were putting on Andy Noyes and his staff, beginning last Fall we offered free collection and inspection to only hatchery licensees who held licenses prior to Fall 2006. New hatchery licensees had to provide for the required fish health inspections. Bait fish wholesalers, bait fish retailers, and fish growers that are not required to be licensed by DEC were also affected by our fish health inspection requirements; however, we do not provide fish health inspection services to them. Depending upon facility size and complexity, the cost of an inspection ranges from $400-$1,000 for supplies and up to 40 staff hours for collection and analyses. Understandably, everyone would like to have their fish inspected at no charge, but we cannot do that.

Regrettably, our action will increase the operating cost for many or most of you, as it did for bait fish wholesales and vendors, as well as for out-of-state businesses importing live fish for release into New York waters. From our perspective, the implementation of fish health inspection requirements was necessary to safe-guard the aquatic resources of New York State.

Sincerely,

Douglas Stang
Chief, Bureau of Fisheries

cc: P. Riexinger
P. Hulbert
A. Noyes

FHCR ID:
Department Use Only

State of New York
Department of Environmental Conservation
Fish Health Certification Report

[1]CASE# BD-07-66

[2]Business

Name: Coolwater Fish Farm
Owner/Manager: Ted Universal
Address: 5109 Booher Hill Rd
Town/City: Geneseo
State: NY | Zip: 14454
Phone: (585) 243 - 3543 | Fax: (
Permit or License #: NYS Bass # 18

[3]Testing Facility / Diagnostic Lab

Name: Rome Field Station
Owner/Manager: Andrew D. Noyes
Address: 8314 Fish Hatchery Rd
Town/City: Rome
State: NY | Zip: 13440
Phone: (315) 337 - 0910 | Fax: (315) 337 - 0988

[4] Wild Fish Sample - Water Body Source

Water Body: N/A | State: | County:

[5]Testing Results (ENTER: "Pos" if disease is found or "Neg" if disease is tested for but not found)

Species	Lot #	Sample Size	Salmonids And Other Species					Salmonids Only		
			VHS	BF	ERM	IPN	SVC	WD	BKD	IHN
Largemouth Bass	LMB66	40	Neg	Neg	Neg	Neg	Neg	.	.	.
Yellow Perch	YP66	50	Neg	Neg	Neg	Neg	Neg	.	.	.
Walleye	WAE66	20	Neg	Neg	Neg	Neg	Neg	.	.	.
Fathead Minnow	FHM66	50	Neg	Neg	Neg	Neg	Neg	.	.	.
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VHS – Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia
BF – Bacterial Furunculosis
ERM – Enteric Redmouth
IPN – Infectious Pancreatic Necrosis
SVC – Spring Viremia of Carp
WD – Whirling Disease
BKD – Bacterial Kidney Disease
IHN – Infectious Hematopoietic Necrosis

[6]Sample Collector Statement

I certify that my qualifications to make this collection are in accordance with Section 188.2 of the New York Code of Rules and Regulations. I further certify that the fish for this inspection were collected in accordance with the standard procedures identified in: American Fisheries Society Blue Book ☑ OIE Manual of Diagnostic Tests for Aquatic Animals ☑

NYS Dept of Environmental Conserv. | 8314 Fish Hatchery Rd, Rome, NY 13440 | 315-337-0910
Company/Agency Name | Address | Phone
Joanna Thompson | J. Thompson | Fish and Wildlife Tech I | 08 / 21 / 07
Collected By (please print) | Collector's Signature | Title | Collection Date

[7]Inspector's Statement

I certify that my qualifications to make this inspection are in accordance with Section 188.2 of the New York Code of Rules and Regulations. I further certify that the fish from the business above were diagnosed in accordance with the standard procedures identified in: American Fisheries Society Blue Book ☑ OIE Manual of Diagnostic Tests for Aquatic Animals ☑

NYS Dept of Environmental Conserv. | 8314 Fish Hatchery Rd, Rome, NY 13440 | 315-337-0910
Company/Agency Name | Address | Phone
Andrew D. Noyes | Pathologist 2 (Aquatic) | 10 / 2 / 07
Inspected By (please print) | Inspector's Signature | Title | Date

May 5, 2008

Patrick Hooker
Commssioner
NYS Ag. & Markets
Albany, New York

Dear Commissioner Hooker:

I am writing you regarding the fish health inspection regulations recently mandated by NYS DEC in November 2007. Having owned and operated George's Bait Farm in East Aurora, New York for more than 25 years, I find the cost of complying with these new mandates a death blow to my business and aquaculture in general throughout our state. In my case, it would cost me approximately $4000 annually to comply with the regulations. When added to the other costs of doing business in New York, these new costs would reduce profits to such a low level that remaining in business would be impossible. I have talked with other fish growers and they are feeling the same pressures. It is tragic that our own government would create such a negative climate for growing fish in our state that long established businesses would have to close and the communities they serve would no longer have the opportunity to purchase locally grown fish and bait.

The NYS DEC has already abdicated its responsibility for conducting cost effective fish health inspections for private hatcheries in New York, I'm hoping the Dept. of Ag & Markets will not do the same. If no positive action is taken by the State by October 1st, George's Bait Farm will no longer be in business.

Respectfully yours,

George Berbereux
George's Bait Farm
1980 Eastwood Road
East Aurora, New York 14052
716-652-5129

5-3-08

Patrick Hooker
Chairperson – NYS Council on Food Policy
Commissioner - Ag. & Markets

Dear Sir,

Please understand the cost of having health testing required by NY State will have a big impact on our fish business.
The cost is so high when done by private laboratories that we will not be able to continue our Business, as we have done these past 18 years. We are a small family run fish farm and just make ends meet without having this added burden the state is putting on us.

Please try to have the state cover the cost so we can continue doing business in NY.

Thank you,

John Fenton
Smith Creek Fish Farm
5249 Poplar Tree Rd.
Bliss, NY 14024
585-322-7703
smthcrek@yahoo.com

Canton Central School
99 State St.
Canton, NY 13617

May 5, 2008

Patrick Hooker
Chariperson – NYS Council on Food Policy
Commissioner- NYS Ag. & Markets
Albany, New York

Dear Mr. Commissioner:

I am the agriculture teacher and FFA advisor at Canton Central School. A large component of Canton's agriculture program is aquaculture. We raise nearly 5,000 rainbow and brook trout every year at the St. Lawrence County Cooperative Extension Farm as part of this curriculum.

With the DEC's newest mandate that all fish for stocking must be tested prior to being released into NYS freshwaters, we are looking at a substantial economic downfall to this unique, hands-on educational experience. Testing of the fish has been provided in the past by the NYS DEC Fish Laboratories in Rome. Beginning this fall, they will no longer provide these services. All facilities (regardless if they are educational or business), must pay to have their fish tested for the necessary diseases to become certified. The nearest facility that they are recommending producers to have testing done is in Maine. The cost associated with this testing may range from $2,000-$8,000 each year. I feel this ruling alone will have a huge impact on the aquaculture industry of NYS.

As you are well aware, our facility is for educational purposes only. We sell our stock in the spring to help defray the costs of purchasing fish eggs, fingerlings, feed, etc. There is no profit being made or to be made with our operation. With school budgets already tightening, we don't see how we can possibly continue our operation under such expensive expectations. Our facility is not only utilized by the Canton High School agriculture students, but is also viewed by hundreds of elementary children that visit the Extension Learning Farm each year.

I would truly appreciate your help in attempting to find an answer to this obstacle for our aquaculture program. I really hope to be able to continue to provide this innovative, hands-on experience to my high school students. I've attached some key items directly from the DEC website to assist in providing some background information. Please feel free to call (315-386-8561 ext. 367) or email (cwright@ccsdk12.org) me with any further questions or information. I look forward to working with you on finding a solution to keep the Canton Central School's Fish Farm in operation. Thank you for your time and consideration of this dilemma.

Sincerely,

Carol Wright
Agriculture Teacher
FFA Advisor
Canton Central School

May 5, 2008

Patrick Hooker
Chairperson-NYS Council on Food Policy
Commissioner-Depart. Of Ag. & Markets
Albany, New York

Dear Mr. Commissioner:

In as much as the disease rules that DEC has enacted, over the objections of the Aquaculture industry in New York, and the purpose of these regulations is to help stop the spread of VHS, which is a public benefit, I feel that the public should in some way pay for the costs of these inspections. There is no need for these inspections, other than the DEC has regulated them. No part of the Aquaculture industry in New York has had any responsibility for either the presence of or the spreading of VHS.

The same most likely can't be said of the wild harvest from the Great Lakes of wild bait minnows. Testing of minnows from the Great Lakes drainage has shown that most if not all test positive for VHS. To say that the DEC will not test anyone because they must treat are fish sellers equally is wrong. Wild fish = VHS and again no fish farm has tested positive for VHS and in most cases anything else. I urge the Legislators to do one of two things:

1) Encourage the DEC to continue doing inspections for fish farms. or
2) Find a method to pay some other organization to do the inspections.

For the DEC to say that they will not do the inspections anymore because the inspections are too expensive but fish farmers can pay is wrong. If a bloated state agency can't pay for the tests how can they arrogantly pass the costs to the fish farmers of New York. Many fish farmers are working on minimal profit and to pay upwards of $3000 per year, and possibly more, for a test that will put most out of business or possibly drive some into the underground trade where they will be "under the radar".

I am still amused that the New York State Barge Canal is still open for business as usual when VHS is so important and stopping it from spreading is causing fish farms to face disease inspections while the one thing in the state that connects most water drainages is totally ignored. I feel that the open barge canal is the best way to get VHS spread through out the state. Officials in the DEC have been quoted as saying "our research shows fish move slowly through the Barge Canal. Guess they never heard of the tortoise and the hare. Slow still gets you where you don't want VHS. Just look where VHS is popping up, most are along the Barge canal.

Please find a way to take the cost of inspections off of the backs of fish farmers in New York!
Sincerely,

Norman Soule
Director-Cold Spring Harbor Fish Hatchery
Down State VP -New York Aquaculture Association
1660 Route 25A
Cold Springs Haror, New York 11724
516-692-6768
normansoule@optonline.net

May 5, 2008

Patrick Hooker
Ag & Markets Commissioner.

Sir:

I operate a small Trout hatchery in Camillus NY and have for the last 36 years. The primary reason was to off set the property tax. Now I am being told that I will have to pay for all my own testing, which I am told will be in the thousands of dollars. Under these circumstances it would not be beneficial for me to continue my hatchery. Their would be a large number of pond owners that would not be able to stock fish in the Central New York region, if I were to close. These people have no other source for fish since the state does not sell to individuals. I would ask that you consider covering the testing cost and allow me to stay open and maintain a continuous flow of fish for all the pond owners in Central New York. Please feel free to contact me for anymore information.

Thank you for your consideration

Robert C Feyl.
Pine Valley Trout.
2412 Sands Rd.
Camillus NY
Email rfeyl@verizon.net
Telephone 315-833-9200.

4/25/08

NYS Food Council
Patrick Hooker
Commissioner of Ag. & Markets

Hi, my concern is this. Here at White Oak Farms we have operated a fish hatchery for over 30 years. We sell a few large mouth bass per year but no more than $100- $150 worth per year on average. Local pond owners we cater to in terms of stocking their ponds. Our water facilities were approved by the DEC years ago. However, there is no way we can pay for the pathogen testing demanded by the DEC i.e., the number of fish needed and the cost.

The bottom line is this: If farm ponds such as our have pathogens in the fish, where are the data?
Why has the DEC not shared the test data in large mouth bass with the hatcheries that sell them? If the data are negative, why has the DEC not allowed us to reopen and sell fish again to those who want to stock their ponds? I have received more calls in 2007 and so far in 2008 from potential buys of our large mouth bass than is past years. Is this because other hatcheries have been forced to shut down like we have because of the unreasonable demands by the DEC?

Note from----------

Weimar White
White Oaks Farms
11529 White Road
Canaseraga,N.Y. 14822
607-545-8627
weimer_white@earthlink.net

April 29, 2008

Re: Fish Health Inspections

To Whom It May Concern:

As the owner and operator of Eden Brook Aquaculture, a New York State Trout Hatchery I support the effort of the NYS Aquaculture Association's fish health inspection initiative at Cornell University. If New York State is to stay competitive in the aquaculture Industry, I believe NYS needs to lend its support to the various needs of the smaller aquaculture facilities in NYS. Also, because the disease inspections have been implemented to protect New York State waters and the local fish populations, it seems the State would have an interest in helping monitor fish health of both public and private stocks.

Sincerely,

Jon Wallach
President
Eden Brook Aquaculture, Inc.
1327 Cold Spring Road
Forestburgh, New York 12777
(845) 791-4345
yellowdog60@yahoo.com

April 29, 2008

Patrick Hooker
Commissioner
NYS Ag. & Markets
Albany, New York

Dear Mr. Commissioner:

In the past year or two the regulations in regard to fish rearing and delivery in the state of New York have changed
considerably. The added expense of testing for a variety of diseases is of great concern to all species of fish dealers in the entire region. I feel that there is a way that New York can aid the fisheries in the cost of this testing.
The added cost to the hatcheries of this testing may well be the final nail in the coffin of many dealers. I understand the budget restraints on the state are huge but it is probable that the loss of several of these businesses may be even more expensive to the economy in the long run. Even if the state is not willing to bear the entire cost of the testing
is it not feasible that a shared cost method could be adopted.

Respectfully

Gary Avery
AVERY TROUT HATCHERY
1759 St. Hwy 29A
GLOVERSVILLE NY 12078
518-725-1531
gavery@nycap.rr.com

:TRIEVE

BILL TEXT:

STATE OF NEW YORK

5680

2007-2008 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

April 25, 2007

Introduced by Sen. YOUNG -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Environmental Conservation

AN ACT to amend the environmental conservation law and the agriculture and markets law, in relation to the regulation of aquaculture; and to repeal section 11-1909 of the environmental conservation law relating thereto

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Section 11-1909 of the environmental conservation law is REPEALED.

§ 2. Paragraph a of subdivision 1 of section 11-1319 of the environmental conservation law, as amended by chapter 193 of the laws of 1992, is amended to read as follows:

a. This section governs possession, transportation and sale of all fish taken in waters of the state, including the marine and coastal district except (1) trout and black bass raised under permit from the department and identified as provided in section [~~11-1909~~] 96-z-41 of the agriculture and markets law, (2) fish taken from a farm fish pond licensed as provided in section 11-1911, and (3) fish taken from licensed fishing preserve waters as provided in section 11-1913.

§ 3. Subdivision 1 of section 11-1501 of the environmental conservation law, as amended by chapter 193 of the laws of 1992, is amended to read as follows:

1. This title 15 of the Fish and Wildlife Law and regulations adopted pursuant hereto do not apply to (a) the taking of fish by angling as permitted in title 13; (b) the taking of fish or the use of nets in the marine and coastal district as defined in section 13-0103, or in a trout or black bass hatchery operated under permit from the department as provided in section [~~11-1909~~] 96-z-41 of the agriculture and markets law, or in a farm fish pond licensed as provided in section 11-1911 or

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

LBD03324-01-7

in a fishing preserve licensed as provided in section 11-1913; (c) the sale or taking for sale of bait fish named in section 11-1315.

§ 4. The agriculture and markets law is amended by adding a new article 5-E to read as follows:

ARTICLE 5-E

REGULATION OF AQUACULTURE

Section 96-z-40. Legislative intent.

96-z-41. Private trout and black bass hatcheries.

96-z-42. Examination of regulatory policies.

96-z-43. Aquaculture task force.

§ 96-z-40. Legislative intent. The legislature finds and declares that aquaculture is among the fastest growing segments of the global agriculture markets, with New York's fish-farming industry supplying fish to a variety of markets, and that this body should seek ways to develop the fish-farming business as an alternative cash crop for farms across the state.

§ 96-z-41. Private trout and black bass hatcheries. 1. The department in its discretion may issue to any person a hatchery permit, valid during the calendar year of issue, to propagate, raise and sell trout. The department shall establish by order regulations governing the identification and transportation of trout raised under such a permit, other than by individual tagging, which are offered for sale, sold or transported.

2. The department in its discretion may issue to any person a hatchery permit, valid during the calendar year of issue, to propagate, raise and sell black bass. The department shall establish by order regulations governing the identification and transportation of black bass raised under such a permit, other than by individual tagging, which are offered for sale, sold or transported.

§ 96-z-42. Examination of regulatory policies. In order to achieve the goals set forth in section 96-z-40 of this article, the state shall examine available regulatory and policy changes that would improve the profitability of aquaculture in New York and adopt only policies that:

1. allow for the sale of live fish to domestic markets legally and safely;

2. are not overly burdensome to the operator of an aquaculture facility; and

3. do not require individual identification or tagging as a method of tracking domestically-raised fish.

§ 96-z-43. Aquaculture task force. 1. An aquaculture task force is hereby created to conduct the examination described in section 96-z-42 of this article and determine the viability of adopting a regulatory system with promotion and protection of the aquaculture industry as its goal for the state.

2. The task force shall consist of ten members, each to serve for a term of two years, to be appointed as follows: one shall be appointed by the temporary president of the senate and one by the minority leader of the senate; one shall be appointed by the speaker of the assembly and one by the minority leader of the assembly; and six shall be appointed by the governor. The appointees shall be broadly representative of the geographic areas of the state and include representatives of the aquaculture industry, ethnic population and local government and the public at large. No more than four appointees shall be legislators. Commissioners of the department and the department of environmental conservation shall be ex-officio members. The governor shall designate the chairman and vice chairman from among his appointees. Vacancies in the

membership of the commission and among its officers shall be filled in the manner provided for original appointments.

3. The task force may employ and at pleasure remove such personnel as it may deem necessary for the performance of its functions and fix their compensation within the amounts made available therefor.

4. The task force may meet within and without the state and shall hold public hearings, and shall have all the powers of a legislative committee pursuant to the legislative law.

5. The members of the task force shall receive no compensation for their services, but shall be allowed their actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties hereunder.

6. To the maximum extent feasible, the task force shall be entitled to request and receive and shall utilize and be provided with such facilities, resources, and data of any court, department, division, board, bureau, commission, or agency of the state or any political subdivision thereof as it may reasonably request to carry out properly its powers and duties hereunder.

7. The appointing authorities shall appoint the members of the sustainable development task force on or before ninety days after the effective date of this section and the task force shall convene its first meeting on or before sixty days thereafter.

8. The task force shall make a preliminary report to the governor and the legislature of its findings, conclusions, and recommendations by April first, two thousand eight and a final report of its findings, conclusions, and recommendations not later than December thirty-first, two thousand eight, and shall submit with its reports such legislative proposals as it deems necessary to implement its recommendations.

§ 5. This act shall take effect immediately.

New York State
ASSEMBLY
Sheldon Silver - Speaker

Sunday, March 9, 2008

Bill Text - A08771

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See Bill Summary

S T A T E O F N E W Y O R K

8771--A

2007-2008 Regular Sessions

I N A S S E M B L Y

May 30, 2007

Introduced by M. of A. CROUCH -- read once and referred to the Committee on Environmental Conservation -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

AN ACT to amend the environmental conservation law and the agriculture and markets law, in relation to the regulation of aquaculture; and to repeal section 11-1909 of the environmental conservation law relating thereto

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Section 11-1909 of the environmental conservation law is REPEALED.

S 2. Paragraph a of subdivision 1 of section 11-1319 of the environmental conservation law, as amended by chapter 193 of the laws of 1992, is amended to read as follows:

a. This section governs possession, transportation and sale of all fish taken in waters of the state, including the marine and coastal district except (1) trout and black bass raised under permit from the department and identified as provided in section {11-1909} 96-Z-41 OF THE AGRICULTURE AND MARKETS LAW, (2) fish taken from a farm fish pond licensed as provided in section 11-1911, and (3) fish taken from licensed fishing preserve waters as provided in section 11-1913.

S 3. Subdivision 1 of section 11-1501 of the environmental conservation law, as amended by chapter 193 of the laws of 1992, is amended to read as follows:

1. This title 15 of the Fish and Wildlife Law and regulations adopted pursuant hereto do not apply to (a) the taking of fish by angling as permitted in title 13; (b) the taking of fish or the use of nets in the marine and coastal district as defined in section 13-0103, or in a trout or black bass hatchery operated under permit from the department as provided in section {11-1909} 96-Z-41 OF THE AGRICULTURE AND MARKETS LAW, or in a farm fish pond licensed as provided in section 11-1911 or

EXPLANATION--Matter in ITALICS (underscored) is new; matter in brackets { } is old law to be omitted.

in a fishing preserve licensed as provided in section 11-1913; (c) the sale or taking for sale of bait fish named in section 11-1315.

S 4. The agriculture and markets law is amended by adding a new article 5-E to read as follows:

ARTICLE 5-E

REGULATION OF AQUACULTURE

SECTION 96-Z-40. LEGISLATIVE INTENT.
96-Z-41. PRIVATE TROUT AND BLACK BASS HATCHERIES.
96-Z-42. EXAMINATION OF REGULATORY POLICIES.
96-Z-43. AQUACULTURE TASK FORCE.

S 96-Z-40. LEGISLATIVE INTENT. THE LEGISLATURE FINDS AND DECLARES THAT AQUACULTURE IS AMONG THE FASTEST GROWING SEGMENTS OF THE GLOBAL AGRICULTURE MARKETS, WITH NEW YORK'S FISH-FARMING INDUSTRY SUPPLYING FISH TO A VARIETY OF MARKETS, AND THAT THIS BODY SHOULD SEEK WAYS TO DEVELOP THE FISH-FARMING BUSINESS AS AN ALTERNATIVE CASH CROP FOR FARMS ACROSS THE STATE.

S 96-Z-41. PRIVATE TROUT AND BLACK BASS HATCHERIES. 1. THE DEPARTMENT IN ITS DISCRETION MAY ISSUE TO ANY PERSON A HATCHERY PERMIT, VALID DURING THE CALENDAR YEAR OF ISSUE, TO PROPAGATE, RAISE AND SELL TROUT. THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ESTABLISH BY ORDER REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE IDENTIFICATION AND TRANSPORTATION OF TROUT RAISED UNDER SUCH A PERMIT, OTHER THAN BY INDIVIDUAL TAGGING, WHICH ARE OFFERED FOR SALE, SOLD OR TRANSPORTED.

2. THE DEPARTMENT IN ITS DISCRETION MAY ISSUE TO ANY PERSON A HATCHERY PERMIT, VALID DURING THE CALENDAR YEAR OF ISSUE, TO PROPAGATE, RAISE AND SELL BLACK BASS. THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ESTABLISH BY ORDER REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE IDENTIFICATION AND TRANSPORTATION OF BLACK BASS RAISED UNDER SUCH A PERMIT, OTHER THAN BY INDIVIDUAL TAGGING, WHICH ARE OFFERED FOR SALE, SOLD OR TRANSPORTED.

S 96-Z-42. EXAMINATION OF REGULATORY POLICIES. IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS SET FORTH IN SECTION 96-Z-40 OF THIS ARTICLE, THE STATE SHALL EXAMINE AVAILABLE REGULATORY AND POLICY CHANGES THAT WOULD IMPROVE THE PROFITABILITY OF AQUACULTURE IN NEW YORK AND ADOPT ONLY POLICIES THAT:

1. ALLOW FOR THE SALE OF LIVE FISH TO DOMESTIC MARKETS LEGALLY AND SAFELY;

2. ARE NOT OVERLY BURDENSOME TO THE OPERATOR OF AN AQUACULTURE FACILITY; AND

3. DO NOT REQUIRE INDIVIDUAL IDENTIFICATION OR TAGGING AS A METHOD OF TRACKING DOMESTICALLY-RAISED FISH.

S 96-Z-43. AQUACULTURE TASK FORCE. 1. AN AQUACULTURE TASK FORCE IS HEREBY CREATED TO CONDUCT THE EXAMINATION DESCRIBED IN SECTION 96-Z-42 OF THIS ARTICLE AND DETERMINE THE VIABILITY OF ADOPTING A REGULATORY SYSTEM WITH PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF THE AQUACULTURE INDUSTRY AS ITS GOAL FOR THE STATE.

2. THE TASK FORCE SHALL CONSIST OF TEN MEMBERS, EACH TO SERVE FOR A TERM OF TWO YEARS, TO BE APPOINTED AS FOLLOWS: ONE SHALL BE APPOINTED BY THE TEMPORARY PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE AND ONE BY THE MINORITY LEADER OF THE SENATE; ONE SHALL BE APPOINTED BY THE SPEAKER OF THE ASSEMBLY AND ONE BY THE MINORITY LEADER OF THE ASSEMBLY; AND SIX SHALL BE APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR. THE APPOINTEES SHALL BE BROADLY REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GEOGRAPHIC AREAS OF THE STATE AND INCLUDE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE AQUACULTURE INDUSTRY, ETHNIC POPULATION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND THE PUBLIC AT LARGE. NO MORE THAN FOUR APPOINTEES SHALL BE LEGISLATORS. COMMISSIONERS OF THE DEPARTMENT AND THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION SHALL BE EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS. THE GOVERNOR SHALL DESIGNATE THE CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN FROM AMONG HIS APPOINTEES. VACANCIES IN THE

MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMISSION AND AMONG ITS OFFICERS SHALL BE FILLED IN

THE MANNER PROVIDED FOR ORIGINAL APPOINTMENTS.

3. THE TASK FORCE MAY EMPLOY AND AT PLEASURE REMOVE SUCH PERSONNEL AS IT MAY DEEM NECESSARY FOR THE PERFORMANCE OF ITS FUNCTIONS AND FIX THEIR COMPENSATION WITHIN THE AMOUNTS MADE AVAILABLE THEREFOR.

4. THE TASK FORCE MAY MEET WITHIN AND WITHOUT THE STATE AND SHALL HOLD PUBLIC HEARINGS, AND SHALL HAVE ALL THE POWERS OF A LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE PURSUANT TO THE LEGISLATIVE LAW.

5. THE MEMBERS OF THE TASK FORCE SHALL RECEIVE NO COMPENSATION FOR THEIR SERVICES, BUT SHALL BE ALLOWED THEIR ACTUAL AND NECESSARY EXPENSES INCURRED IN THE PERFORMANCE OF THEIR DUTIES HEREUNDER.

6. TO THE MAXIMUM EXTENT FEASIBLE, THE TASK FORCE SHALL BE ENTITLED TO REQUEST AND RECEIVE AND SHALL UTILIZE AND BE PROVIDED WITH SUCH FACILITIES, RESOURCES, AND DATA OF ANY COURT, DEPARTMENT, DIVISION, BOARD, BUREAU, COMMISSION, OR AGENCY OF THE STATE OR ANY POLITICAL SUBDIVISION THEREOF AS IT MAY REASONABLY REQUEST TO CARRY OUT PROPERLY ITS POWERS AND DUTIES HEREUNDER.

7. THE APPOINTING AUTHORITIES SHALL APPOINT THE MEMBERS OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE ON OR BEFORE NINETY DAYS AFTER THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS SECTION AND THE TASK FORCE SHALL CONVENE ITS FIRST MEETING ON OR BEFORE SIXTY DAYS THEREAFTER.

8. THE TASK FORCE SHALL MAKE A PRELIMINARY REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR AND THE LEGISLATURE OF ITS FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY APRIL FIRST, TWO THOUSAND NINE AND A FINAL REPORT OF ITS FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS NOT LATER THAN DECEMBER THIRTY-FIRST, TWO THOUSAND NINE, AND SHALL SUBMIT WITH ITS REPORTS SUCH LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS AS IT DEEMS NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT ITS RECOMMENDATIONS.

S 5. This act shall take effect immediately.

Contact Webmaster

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New York State
ASSEMBLY
Sheldon Silver - Speaker

Sunday, March 9, 2008

Bill Summary - A08771

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A08771 Summary:

BILL NO A08771A

SAME AS No same as

SPONSOR Crouch

COSPNSR Burling, Bacalles, Raia, Townsend

MLTSPNSR Barclay, Duprey, Giglio, Hawley, McDonald, Molinaro, Oaks, Sayward

Rpld S11-1909, amd SS11-1319 & 11-1501, En Con L; add Art 5-E SS96-z-40 - 96-z-43, Ag & Mkts L

Provides for the regulation of aquaculture for the purpose of developing fish-farming businesses as an alternative cash crop for farms across the state and appoints a task force relating thereto.

A08771 Actions:

BILL NO A08771A

05/30/2007 referred to environmental conservation
11/16/2007 amend and recommit to environmental conservation
11/16/2007 print number 8771a
01/09/2008 referred to environmental conservation

A08771 Votes:

A08771 Memo:

BILL NUMBER:A8771A

TITLE OF BILL: An act to amend the environmental conservation law and the agriculture and markets law, in relation to the regulation of aquaculture; and to repeal section 11-1909 of the environmental conservation law relating thereto

PURPOSE OR GENERAL IDEA OF BILL:
To change the regulatory authority over farm raised fish from the

Department of Environmental Conservation to the Department of Agriculture and Markets in an effort to better regulate and promote this aspect of agriculture.

SUMMARY OF SPECIFIC PROVISIONS:
Section one repeals Section 14-1909 of the Environmental Conservation Law and adds a new section to the Agriculture and Markets Law authorizing the Department of Agriculture and Markets to regulate trout and black bass hatcheries.
Section two is the effective date.

JUSTIFICATION:
Agriculture is the number one industry in New York State, returning over $3 billion dollars to the farm economy, and agriculture products, such as domestically raised fish, are already included in that industry-wide value. According to the 2003-04 Annual Bulletin compiled by the Department of Agriculture and Markets, trout producers sold 224,000 pounds of trout valued at $797,000 in 2003, up 41% from the previous year, showing that farm raised fish is a growing sub-industry of agriculture in New York. There are dozens of private hatcheries in New York already and it has the potential for further growth if the industry is fostered through effective regulation.

PRIOR LEGISLATIVE HISTORY:
New bill.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:
None.

EFFECTIVE DATE:
Effective immediately.

Contact Webmaster

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STATUS:

A8771-A Crouch

Environmental Conservation Law

TITLE....Provides for the regulation of aquaculture for the purpose of developing fish-farming businesses as an alternative cash crop for farms across the state; repealer

05/30/07 referred to environmental conservation

11/16/07 amend and recommit to environmental conservation

11/16/07 print number 8771a

01/09/08 referred to environmental conservation

Kate Mendenhall

Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York, Inc.

P.O. Box 880 • Cobleskill, New York 12043-0880 • 607-652-NOFA
Fax: 607-652-2290 • Email: office@nofany.org
www.nofany.org

Testimony from the Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York before the New York State Food Policy Council

Thank you for this opportunity to address this Council. Connecting New York State citizens of all economic strata with locally grown organic food is one of the central purposes of the Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York. Our organization works to spread the hands-on know-how of organic farming and gardening through our conferences, workshops, farm tours, newsletters and research projects, and to promote the economic viability of family scale organic farms and related businesses in the state.

We recommend the following areas for consideration by the Food Policy Council:

Regulatory Reform

Our farmer members have encountered numerous instances of regulations that set up obstacles for smaller scale enterprises. There should be a thoroughgoing review of all NYS regulations with an eye to accommodating the special requirements and limited resources of smaller scale operations, while protecting the food safety needs of the public. Areas of particular concern to organic farmers and the people who form the core market for organic foods are: raw milk, small-scale dairies, small scale slaughter and packaging facilities for meat products, food safety on small scale fresh market vegetable farms, National Animal Identification System (NAIS) and how it is administered in NYS and the interface with the Federal government, and apple cider.

Farmers in the state need Fair Contract legislation. Few of the contracts between larger-scale buyers of organic foods stand up to even minimal standards of fairness, such as allowing farmers to share price information with others. When dealing with much larger commercial entities, farmers need the rights to form groups for negotiating better contracts, and to consult with legal council.

NYS needs a mechanism to support the prices paid to regional dairy farms, both conventional and organic, and to ensure that farmers receive a fair proportion of the retail price for their products.

To assure a safe food supply, NYS should recognize and address the problems for farmers related to genetically modified crops. Organic and other non-GMO farmers need support for seed labeling for genetically modified seeds sold in NYS, legal protection of organic and conventional farmers who find that they are limited in what they can grow because of adjacent fields of GMO crops, and the investigation of seed manufacturers whose claims about variety

traits do not materialize in the field. Citizens who want to avoid eating GMO foods because of safety concerns need clear labeling of all GMO ingredients.

Infrastructure development

To improve the economic viability of family-scale farms, we need to tackle state processing and distribution inadequacies that hold back farmers from bringing their products to markets. There is a lack of distribution services and small-scale processing facilities. Investment is needed in certified organic processing and slaughtering facilities, and indoor, year-round farmers' markets and cooperative farm stores.

Support for New Farmers

Not enough young people are going into farming in NYS to replace the aging farm population. To secure local food production for the future, the state needs to invest in new farmers. A portion of the funds committed to upstate economic development could be used for a revolving loan fund, providing low-interest loans and technical assistance to help young farmers or new farmers of any age, including recent immigrants, to acquire the resources they need to farm successfully, following the model of the revolving loan fund in Wayne County. The state could also pay off the college loans of college graduates who commit to farming in the state.

State Commitment to Local Purchasing

State institutions, such as cafeterias, hospitals, and prisons, should make a commitment to purchasing from NYS farms. The involvement of the Department of Agriculture and Markets in farm to school initiatives should be expanded.

The state should increase its financial contribution to the school lunch program with clauses requiring purchases from NYS farms while reducing regulatory hurdles facing schools interested in purchasing from them. Similarly, the state should increase its contribution to Farmers Market Nutrition Coupons, and Senior Farmers Market Coupons. NYS should replicate the Maine Senior Shares program, which provides $100 per senior to spend at a particular farm, a creative mini-community supported agriculture share for senior citizens.

Research and Development

The Department of Agriculture and Markets should use its influence and its research dollars and grant programs to direct Cornell University researchers and others to tackle some of the management problems facing northeast organic farmers.

Promotion and Public Education

Recent scientific studies demonstrate the nutritional superiority of organically produced foods. NYS should ensure that this information reaches the public so that citizens can make informed choices about how they spend their food dollars.

Organic farming methods use significantly less energy than conventional practices, particularly by the avoidance of nitrogen fertilizers. Organic farms also make a major contribution to the

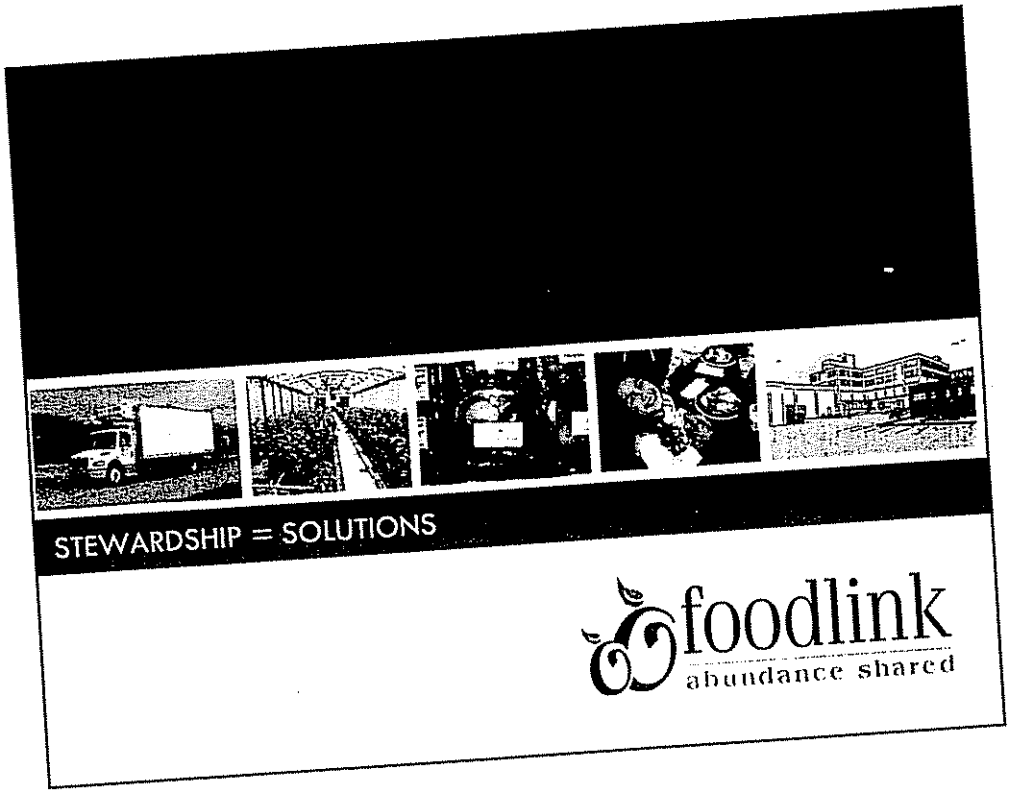
reduction of CO2 in the atmosphere by sequestering carbon in the soil. This information should be more readily available both to farmers and to citizens purchasing food.

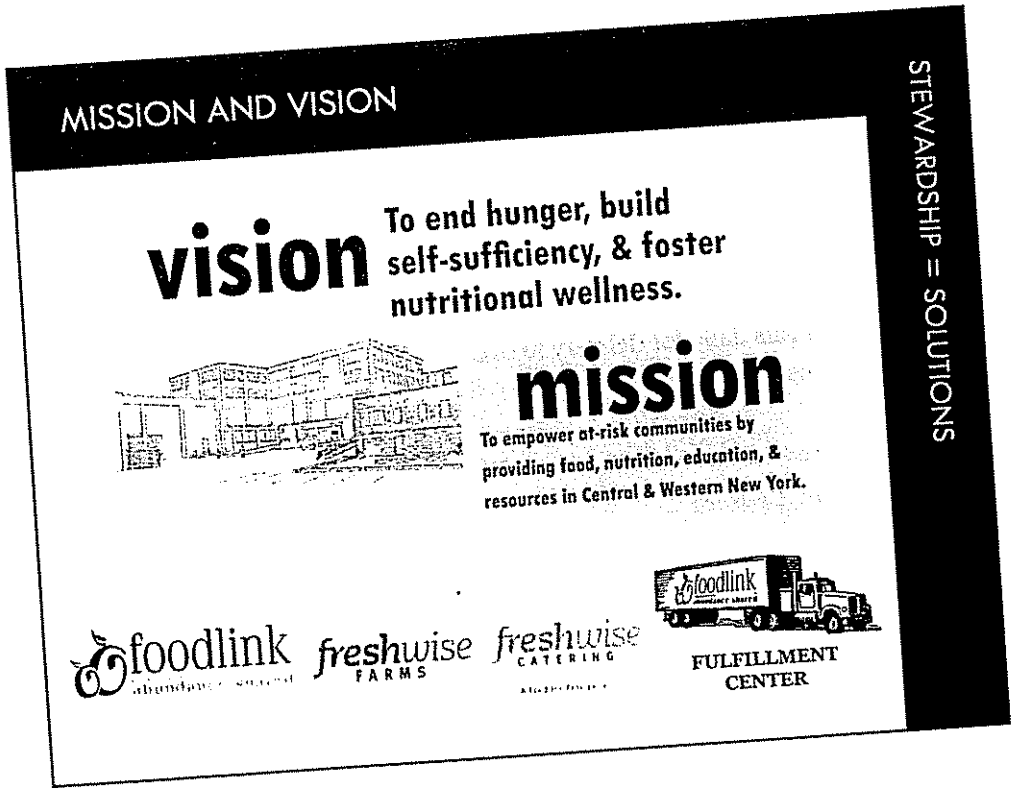
Action on Federal Policy

NYS should work with other like-minded states to gain more state flexibility in applying federal agricultural dollars to NYS agricultural issues. Federal regulations should be changed to allow the use of WIC coupons for organic products, and to expand innovative uses of Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) dollars to encourage the conversion of farms to organic management and more diversified production schemes directed at local markets.

Thank you for considering our positions in your deliberations. We believe that organic agriculture's methods hold the key to a truly sustainable and ecologically sound agricultural production system that will provide healthy and nutritious food to all the citizens of NYS.

TOM FERRARO


STEWARDSHIP = SOLUTIONS
foodlink
abundance shared


MISSION AND VISION
vision
To end hunger, build self-sufficiency, & foster nutritional wellness.
mission
To empower at-risk communities by providing food, nutrition, education, & resources in Central & Western New York.
foodlink
freshwise FARMS
freshwise CATERING
FULFILLMENT CENTER
STEWARDSHIP = SOLUTIONS

FOODLINK FOOD BANK OPERATION

STEWARDSHIP = SOLUTIONS

foodlink
abundance shared

America's Second Harvest
The Nation's Food Bank Network

Foodlink is the regional America's Second Harvest food bank, which rescues and redistributes over 7 million pounds of food annually to a network of 550 human service agencies in a 10-county area.

FOOD DONORS
manufacturers
food drives
growers
packers
processors
retailers
USDA

COMMUNITY AGENCIES
soup kitchens
food pantries
emergency shelters
kids cafes
daycare centers
senior programs
group homes

PEOPLE WE SERVE
children
senior citizens
working poor
single parent families
homeless
differently abled
newly unemployed
victims of disasters

COMMUNITY KITCHEN | FRESHWISE CATERING

freshwise
CATERING
A Foodlink Enterprise

Our fully equipped industrial kitchen raises the bar on institutional food, preparing over 2,000 hot, nutritious meals daily for delivery to over 35 program sites.

- Kids Cafe and Summer Meal Sites
- Vended Meal Contracts
- Special Event Catering

foodlink
abundance shared

www.freshwise.org | www.foodlinkny.org

FRESHWISE FARMS

STEWARDSHIP = SOLUTIONS

freshwise FARMS

Freshwise Farms, a hydroponic greenhouse, provides the highest quality, pesticide-free greens, year-round, which maximizes access to nutritious food in Rochester and beyond. Freshwise is a wholly owned subsidiary of Foodlink and all profits go to fighting hunger in our community Foundation.

foodlink abundance shared

FARMERS FULFILLMENT CENTER

FULFILLMENT CENTER

The Fulfillment Center provides the missing connection between local farmers and buyers by picking up locally grown produce to be sold in upstate markets, New York City, or beyond. By capitalizing on Foodlink's excess capacity, the Fulfillment Center maximizes the stewardship of assets to build health and wealth in our community.

Photos courtesy of: LR

Making dollars on the pound in a fresh market rather than pennies on the ton in a global market

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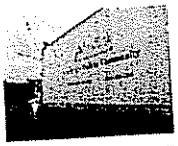
www.buyhereny.com | www.foodlinkny.org

CAPACITY, ASSETS, & INFRASTRUCTURE

STEWARDSHIP = SOLUTIONS



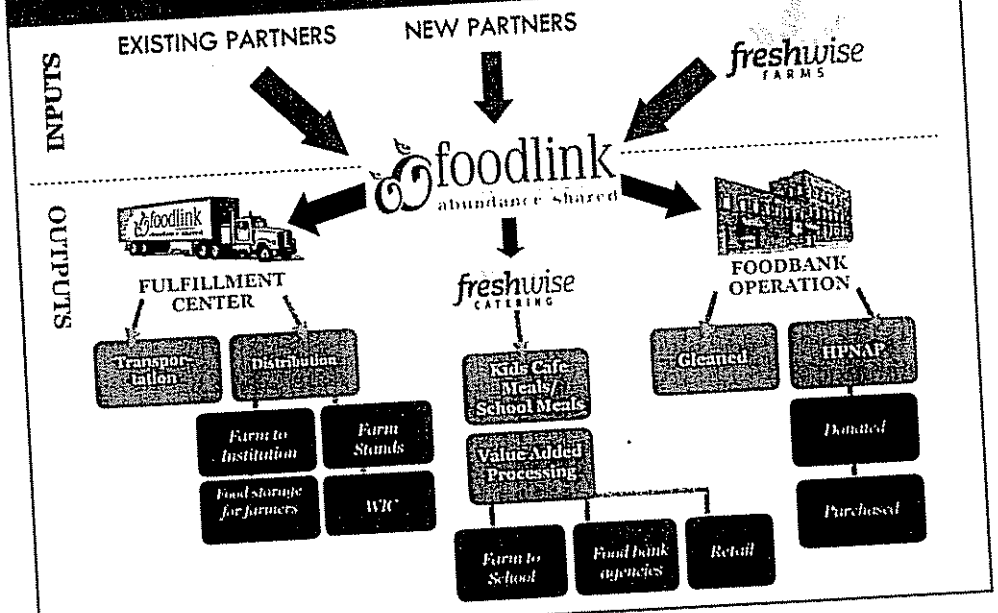
Excess Capacity

In the past, Foodlink's fleet of refrigerated trucks returned to its central warehousing facility empty after delivering donated food to our member agencies. These empty trucks passed numbers of farms in our ten counties that lack an efficient and economically viable way to get their product to local buyers.

Assets

- 100,000 sq. ft. warehouse with certified repacking facility
- 40,000 cubic feet of humidity controlled cooler space
- 32,000 cubic feet of freezer capacity
- Fleet of trucks with lift gates, including two 26-foot flatbed refrigerated trucks & a 53-foot refrigerated tractor trailer
- Computerized inventory control system
- E-commerce website capacity
- High functioning team familiar with the Upstate New York food system

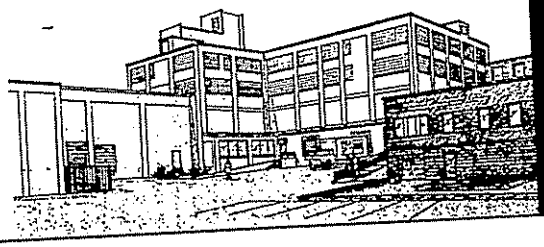
BUILDING THE LOCAL FOOD NETWORK



STEWARDSHIP = SOLUTIONS

We all benefit.

- Farmers get the best price for their crops.
- Consumers get access to fresh, local products.
- The community gets an increase in health and wealth.
- We all build our local food system and reduce our carbon footprint.



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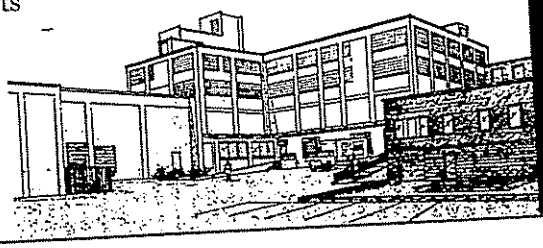
STEWARDSHIP = SOLUTIONS

Barriers

- Procurement and reimbursement policies interfere with using fresh and local
- Communities and institutions lack the infrastructure to transport and process

Opportunities

- Replicable model through food bank network
- Policy improvements



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STEWARDSHIP = SOLUTIONS

*Innovative, responsible **stewardship** of our capacity, assets, and infrastructure is the first step to finding **solutions** to these problems.*

To learn more about Foodlink, visit:
www.foodlinkny.org

To explore our social enterprise ventures:
www.freshwise.org

For the Farmers Fulfillment Center, visit:
www.buyhereny.com

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DAVID HAIGHT

May 5, 2008

Commissioner Patrick Hooker
New York State Food Policy Council
10B Airline Drive
Albany, New York 12283

Dear Commissioner Hooker and Members of the New York State Food Policy Council,

I am testifying on behalf of American Farmland Trust and our members in New York regarding the important work of the Food Policy Council. The strengthening of a home-grown food system in New York has the potential to bring significant benefits to all New Yorkers including:

- Improving the health of New Yorkers by increasing access to fresh, healthy fruits, vegetables, dairy and other farm products;
- Boosting the state's billion agricultural and food processing industries that generate more than $20 billion in economic impact annually;
- Enhancing the health of the state's environment by reducing "food miles" and helping mitigate the impacts of global climate change;
- Supporting farmers that provide clean water, wildlife habitat and other important environmental benefits.

New York farmers are well-positioned to provide many of the farm products needed and desired by other New Yorkers. New York is in the top five in the nation in the production of 24 different fruits, vegetables and dairy products. New York farmers annually sell more than $3.5 billion in farm products - including approximately $250 million in fruits, vegetables and farm products sold directly to consumers.

Strengthening and improving the sustainability of the food system in New York requires attention at multiple levels – from the farm level to the consumer. The Food Policy Council's 2007 Report acknowledges the need for an integrated approach that works to "1) maximize participation in food and nutrition assistance programs; 2) strengthen the connection between local food products and consumers; 3) support efficient and profitable agricultural food production and food retail infrastructure and 4) increase consumer awareness, healthy eating and improve access to safe and nutritious food.

The Role of Farmland in a Sustainable Food System

The foundation of a strong, sustainable food system in New York involves farmers producing fruits, vegetables, dairy and other farm products on high quality farmland. High-quality soils are an essential resource for successful farming operations around New York.

Affordable access to high quality land also helps New York's farmers compete with producers from other parts of the country and world. Farmers producing on high-quality soils have the greatest

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opportunities to change crops and production systems as markets change. New York has a strong natural resource base for farming with more than 7.5 million acres of land in agriculture.

However, development patterns are increasingly threatening this important resource. Approximately 26,000 acres of farmland are developed each year in New York. 3 areas of the state have been deemed as part of the Top 20 Most Threatened Farming Regions in the Country – the Hudson Valley, Finger Lakes/Lake Ontario Plain, and Long Island's East End. Frequently, farms with the greatest potential to sell farm products directly to consumers are under the greatest threat of development as they often are located on higher quality soils in close proximity to urban populations.

Scattered development patterns have broader effects beyond the conversion of a specific farm field. Fragmentation of farming communities brings conflict with new homeowners unfamiliar with the noises, smells, and activities of neighboring farm businesses. Such development also drives up land prices for farmers and eliminates opportunities for future farmers as productive farmland is lost forever.

I offer the following suggestions as strategies for supporting an efficient and profitable agricultural food production system in New York and improving the long-term sustainability of the state's food system:

Keep Productive Farmland Affordable and Available for Farmers

New York's Farmland Protection Program has provided over $144 million in grants to protect over 50,000 acres of farmland in 26 counties. In 2008, New York had the 5th best-funded state farmland protection program in the nation. These are important accomplishments that insure farmland will be permanently available for producing food and other farm products.

However, substantially more work is needed to insure that productive farmland is available for agriculture. New York has the 3rd lowest acreage of protected farmland and the lowest percentage of farmland protected in an 11-state region of the Northeast. Since 1996, more than $500 million in applications to the Farmland Protection Program have been rejected –largely due to inadequate state funding. These rejected projects represent lost opportunities to protect a resource that is critical for enhancing and sustaining New York's food system.

Suggestions for consideration by the Food Policy Council include:

- Strengthen investments in New York's Farmland Protection Program. Each year, more farmers and communities apply for funding from the Farmland Protection Program. In 2007, there were approximately $129 million in pending farmland protection projects from every corner of New York. This incredible interest was more than 4 times greater than the $30 million available in the state's Environmental Protection Fund for the Farmland Protection Program.
- Boost local and state capacity to develop and complete farmland protection projects. Projects funded by the Farmland Protection Program have frequently required 3 to 5 years to be completed. Progress is being made in shortening this timeline but additional investment is needed in staffing at the Department of Agriculture and Markets and among non-profit land trusts involved in state-funded farmland protection projects.

- Support the establishment of a new Working Farmland Tax Credit to temporarily protect millions of acres of farmland while providing needed property tax relief to thousands of New Yorkers. Senator Young and Assemblyman Magee have introduced legislation (S. 5685 and A. 8181) that would create this new credit that would help insure the protection of almost 4 million acres of farmland as the foundation of a vibrant food system in New York.
- Support research on farmland conversion in New York and the implications for farm profitability and food production in the state. More current and detailed information is needed to help understand the changes occurring in New York's landscape and the implications for farms and food production.
- Support research on the impacts of New York's Farmland Protection Program on New York farmers, local efforts to support agriculture and New York's food system.
- Evaluate opportunities to enhance New York's Farmland Protection Program and address unmet farmland protection needs. Farmers and communities have expressed a need for more tools to keep protected farmland affordable for farmers, reduce the time required to protect farms facing extreme conversion threats and protect farms that are locally important. Research programs like Maryland's Critical Farms Program, Vermont's Community Farms Program and Massachusetts' Option to Purchase at Agriculture Value and consider their applicability in New York.

Strengthen Partnerships With Local Governments

The future of farming and the food system in New York depends in part on the ability of local communities to plan for a future that includes an important role for agriculture. New York State must work with villages, cities, towns and counties to treat farmland and farm businesses as essential infrastructure for a healthy community. Similar to public water or sewer systems, farms provide a basic community function – generating food and farm products.

As a "home rule" state, local governments control most land use decisions. These decisions, made by town, village and city boards in thousands of communities, have a significant impact on farms as well as food processing, distribution and marketing. Villages and cities have an impact on farms as they are frequently the home to farmers markets and other food distribution outlets. As noted in an article titled "Growers' Gamble: Are Cities Missing a Bet by Giving Short Shrift to Farmers Markets" in the March 2008 edition of *Planning* magazine:

> Many cities lack any policy that addresses the long-term security of the markets' tenure at a particular site, and farmers markets are often left to operate under the radar without permits or appropriate zoning…Cities can provide organizational support for the markets, help streamline the permitting process, provide guidance with health regulations, incorporate farmers markets within broader food access policies, secure permanent sites and mediate impacts such as parking…'Cities are walking a tight rope between embracing the markets – and supporting them as much as possible – and not regulating or bureaucratizing them so that they become encumbered in terms of their development and creativity…'

New York has a strong history of partnerships between state and local governments in support of agriculture and farmland protection. Since 1992, the Farmland Protection Program has provided grants to counties for the development of local agricultural and farmland protection plans. Recent changes to the Article 25AAA of the state Agriculture and Markets law have enabled towns to receive such grant funding and counties to receive funding to update their local plans.

Suggestions for consideration by the Food Policy Council include:

- Continue to invest in town and county government efforts to develop and update agricultural and farmland protection plans. These plans can provide direction to local action in support of local farms, food production and farmland protection.
- Provide technical assistance to villages, cities and towns to understand the importance of enabling local food production, distribution and marketing and ways they can support such efforts. Such assistance is greatly needed as land use regulations in New York are frequently overseen by volunteer boards with limited access to professional advice regarding planning and agriculture.
- Evaluate opportunities to reward local governments that have developed local plans in support of agriculture and farmland protection. New York should consider giving priority in state funding to towns with state-approved agricultural and farmland protection plans or counties with approved agricultural and farmland protection plans that are less than 10 years old. For example, the Department of Environmental Conservation has indicated they will be updating regulations to integrate smart growth criteria in the ranking formula for the state Clean Water Revolving Loan Fund. Priority could be given to towns or counties with approved agricultural and farmland protection plans as a demonstration of a local commitment to smart growth as well as agriculture and food production.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the important work of the New York Food Policy Council. I look forward to working with you to advance these ideas and strengthen a home-grown food system in New York.

Sincerely,

David Haight
New York Director

Peter Landre

Council on Food Policy Listening Session
May 5, 2008
Rochester, NY

Peter Landre, Executive Director
Cornell University Cooperative Extension Yates County

Thank you for this opportunity to provide input to the Council on important food policy issues in New York State. I, along w/ Jim Ochterski from Ontario County and Mary Lee Bourbeau from Wayne County, would like to provide you information about some of Cornell Cooperative Extension's statewide and local efforts that relate to the four key issues identified by the Council.

With support from the Office of the Director, CCE formed a statewide Local Food Working Group to develop and implement strategies to strengthen and effectively communicate CCE's role in community-based food systems in NYS.

One of the first products of this group are a set of "snap-shot" maps of CCE Local Food Project activity in all counties in NYS. There are five maps in your packet with a glossary describing each one. For example, Map 5, illustrates Marketing Local Products, and includes activities that help to create new markets for local products and educating consumers about how they can access local goods. These include activities such as developing farmers markets, creating and distributing marketing brochures and websites in cooperation with tourism agencies, and workshops for producers to build marketing skills of individual farmers.

A specific example from Yates County in the heart of the Finger Lakes is the ***Guide to Yates County Fresh Produce (copies included)***. The guide was produced using a NYSDAM marketing grant to publish and distribute 10,000 copies in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce, Keuka and Seneca Lake Wine Trails, produce stands and hotels in the area with the intent of connecting consumers to producers and increase the economic/tourism activity in the county. The guide not only provides listings and maps of where to buy local produce, wines, meats, etc, but also includes recipes and nutrition information on how and why to use local products. The wineries love the guide because customers often ask where they can buy other farm products while in the area and this guide helps to connect their customers to other farms.

Cornell University
Cooperative Extension

Local Food Projects

February 25, 2008

A Project of the CCE Local Food Working Group, with financial support from the Office of the Director, Cornell Cooperative Extension Administration.

The Local Food Working Group is charged by the Director of CCE to *develop and implement strategies to strengthen and effectively communicate Cornell Cooperative Extension's role in creating, supporting and sustaining community-based food systems in New York State.*

Glossary of Terms

Group Buying and Selling Efforts (Map 1)

Group Buying and Selling efforts share the goal of increasing opportunities for consumers to acquire high-quality, nutritious, locally grown food products by working cooperatively to obtain food in higher volumes and then re-distribute it to individuals, families and institutions. Food cooperatives are worker- or customer-owned businesses that provide food items of the highest quality and best value to their members. Co-ops can take the shape of retail stores or buying clubs. CCE has also played an important role in many communities across the state by educating consumers, including limited-resource families, and producers about the potential benefits to both farmers and customers of group buying and selling approaches.

Farm to Table Efforts (Map 2)

Farm to Table efforts are initiatives that create new markets for the high-quality products of local farmers. CCE educators organize and facilitate opportunities for producers to work with schools, food service companies, chefs and restaurants and other institutions to find creative solutions to the challenge of increasing the quantity of New York agriculture products found on school lunch and local restaurant menus and in other institutional settings.

Value-Added Initiatives (Map 3)

Value-Added initiatives include efforts that increase the economic value and consumer appeal of an agricultural commodity. These efforts include increasing the knowledge and appeal of local farmers and their products through farm trail maps, resources and regional marketing efforts as well as providing training and support to efforts designed to increase local options for processing locally-produced food into products and packaging that meets the expectations of consumers and retailers.

New Business Development (Map 4)

CCE county educators and regional teams are highly involved in efforts to educate, support and provide business planning education to new agricultural producers. These efforts are critically important in order to maintain profitability of existing farms and support new producers in their early start-up phase. The goal of developing sustainable community-based food systems will require increasing the number of farms, supporting farm profitability through business planning and enhancing marketing savvy.

Marketing Local Products (Map 5)

CCE is playing a major role in the local food movement, creating new markets for local products and educating consumers about how they can access local goods. Across the state, extension educators support the development of farmers markets, create marketing brochures and websites in cooperation with tourism, producer and economic development organizations and offer workshops to build the marketing skills of individual farmers.

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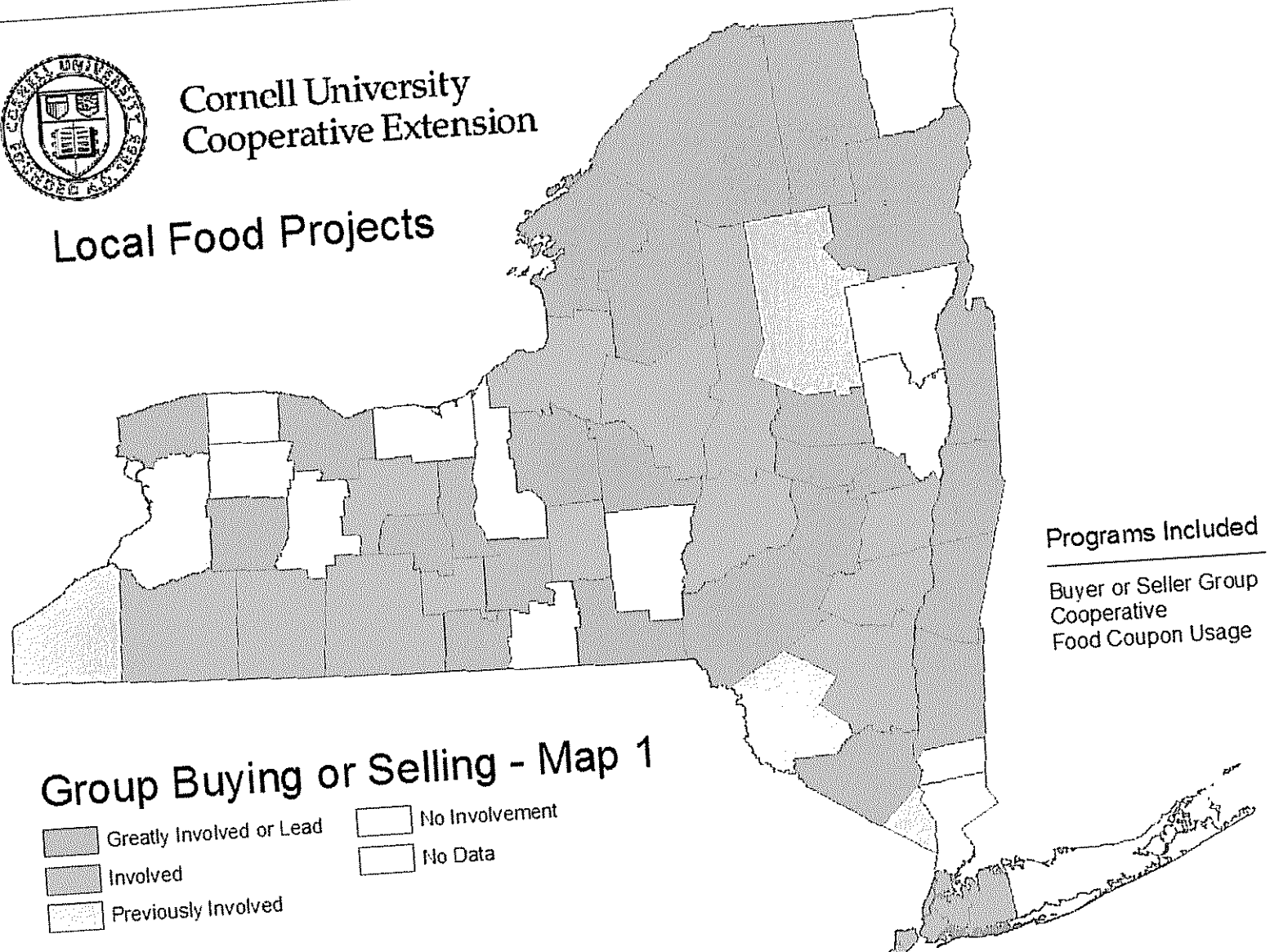
Cooperative Extension

Local Food Projects



Programs Included

Buyer or Seller Group
Cooperative
Food Coupon Usage

Group Buying or Selling - Map 1

- Greatly Involved or Lead
- Involved
- Previously Involved
- No Involvement
- No Data

Source: Local Food Project Survey, CCE, January, 2008
Project funding provided through the Director of Cornell Cooperative Extension

Cornell University
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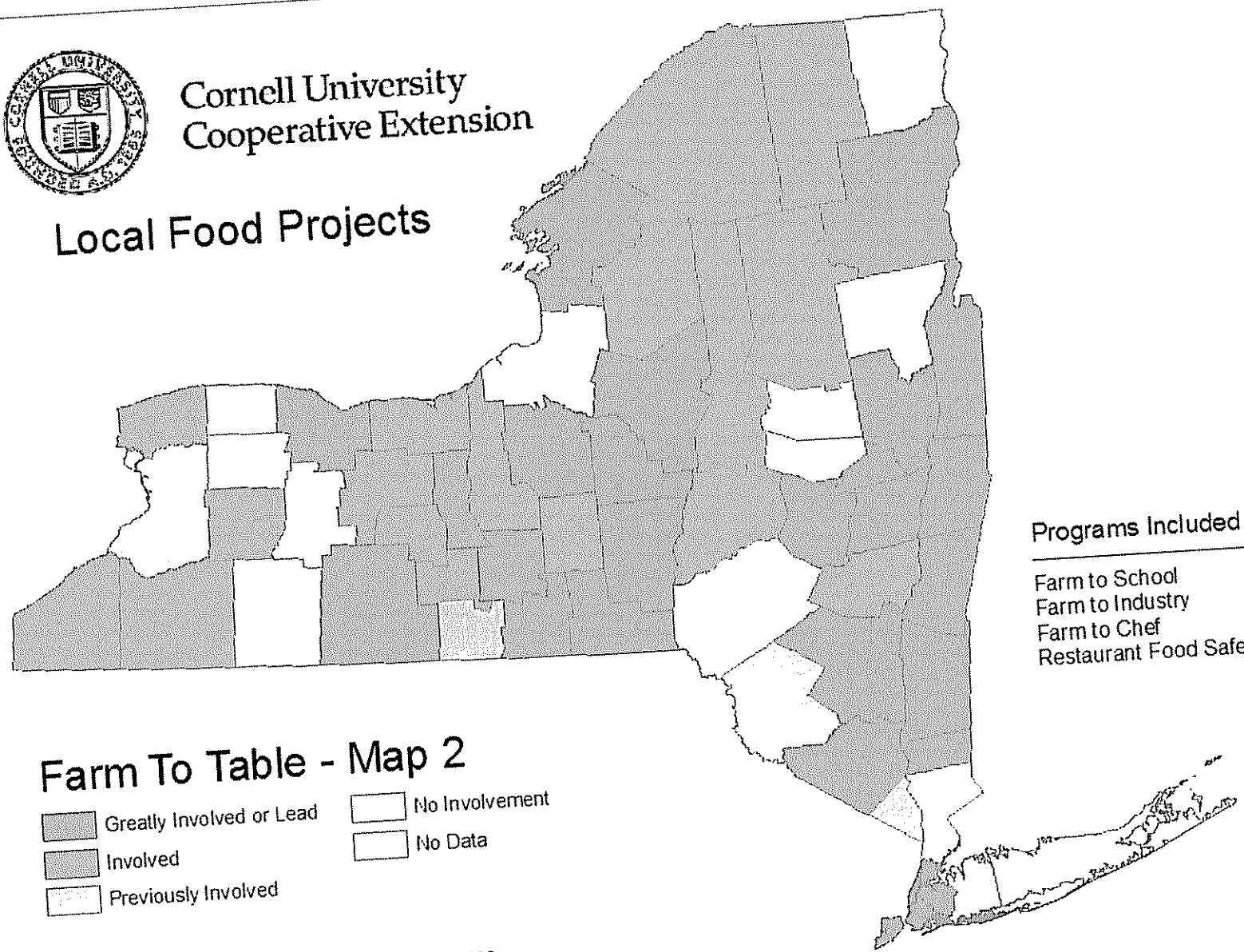
Local Food Projects



Programs Included

Farm to School
Farm to Industry
Farm to Chef
Restaurant Food Safety

Farm To Table - Map 2

- Greatly Involved or Lead
- Involved
- Previously Involved
- No Involvement
- No Data

Source: Local Food Project Survey, CCE, January, 2008
Project funding provided through the Director of Cornell Cooperative Extension

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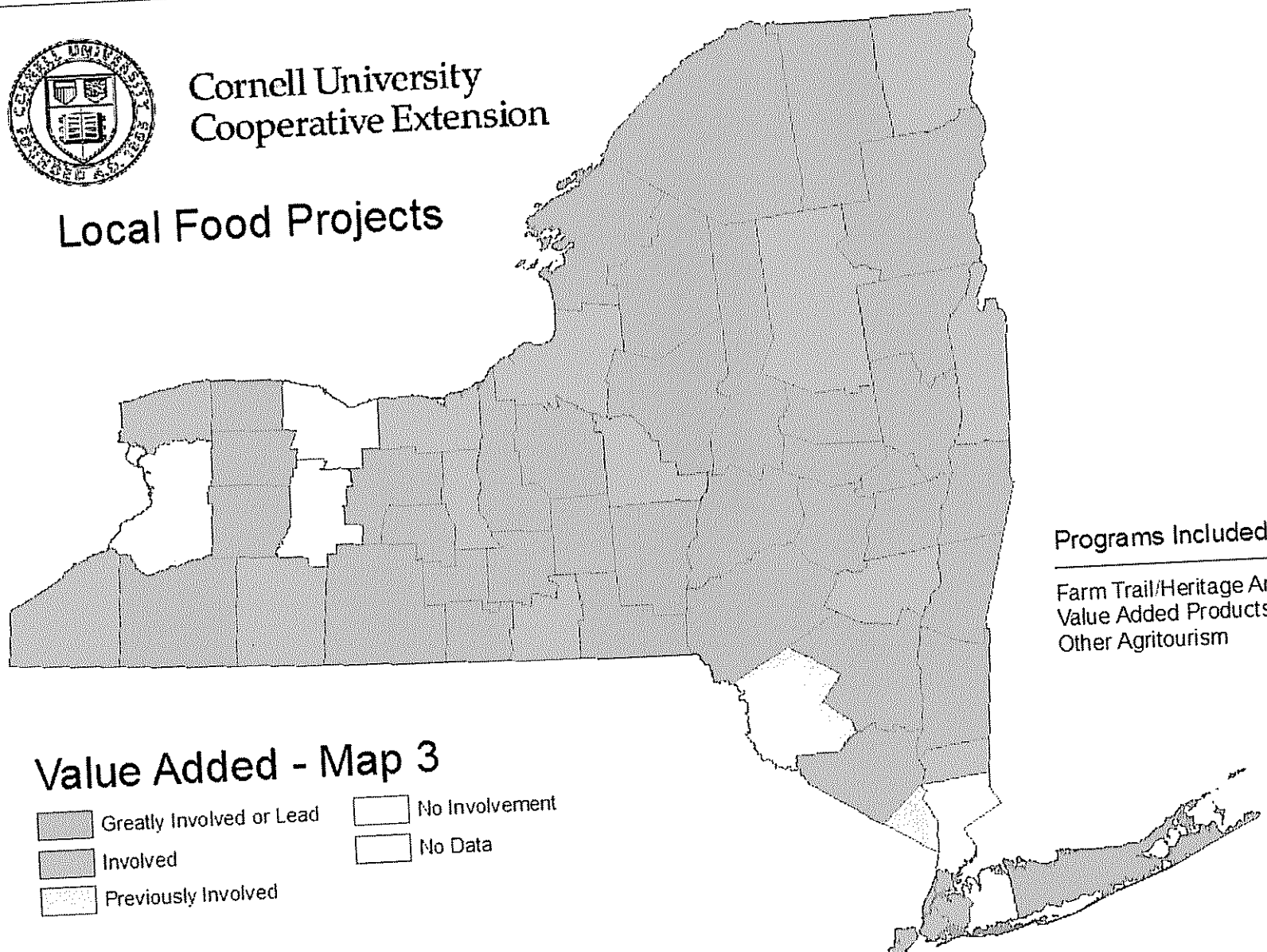
Local Food Projects



Programs Included

Farm Trail/Heritage Area
Value Added Products
Other Agritourism

Value Added - Map 3

- Greatly Involved or Lead
- Involved
- Previously Involved
- No Involvement
- No Data

Source: Local Food Project Survey. CCE. January. 2008
Project funding provided through the Director of Cornell Cooperative Extension

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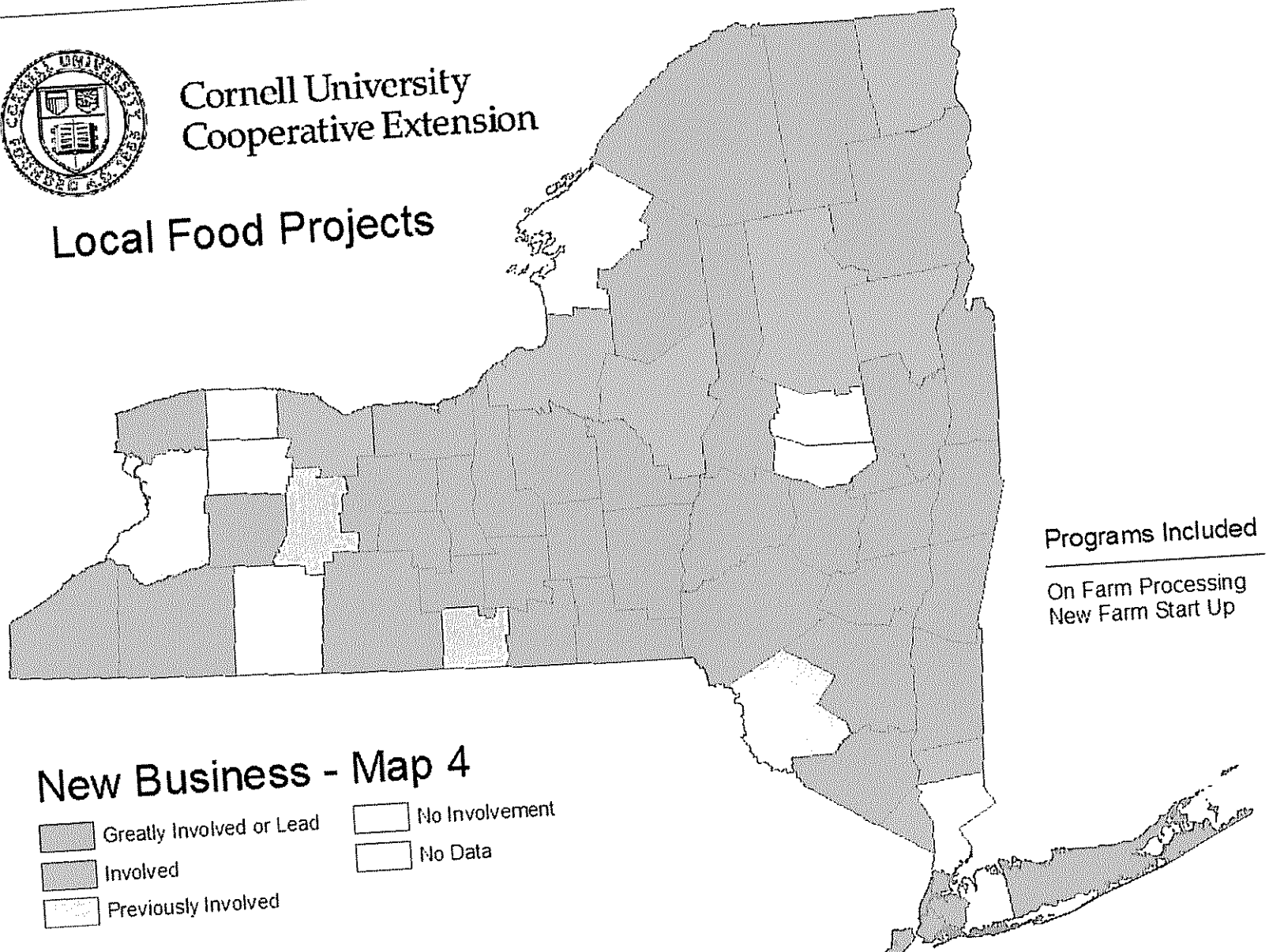
Local Food Projects



New Business - Map 4

- Greatly Involved or Lead
- Involved
- Previously Involved
- No Involvement
- No Data

Programs Included

On Farm Processing
New Farm Start Up

Source: Local Food Project Survey, CCE, January 2008
Project funding provided through the Director of Cornell Cooperative Extension

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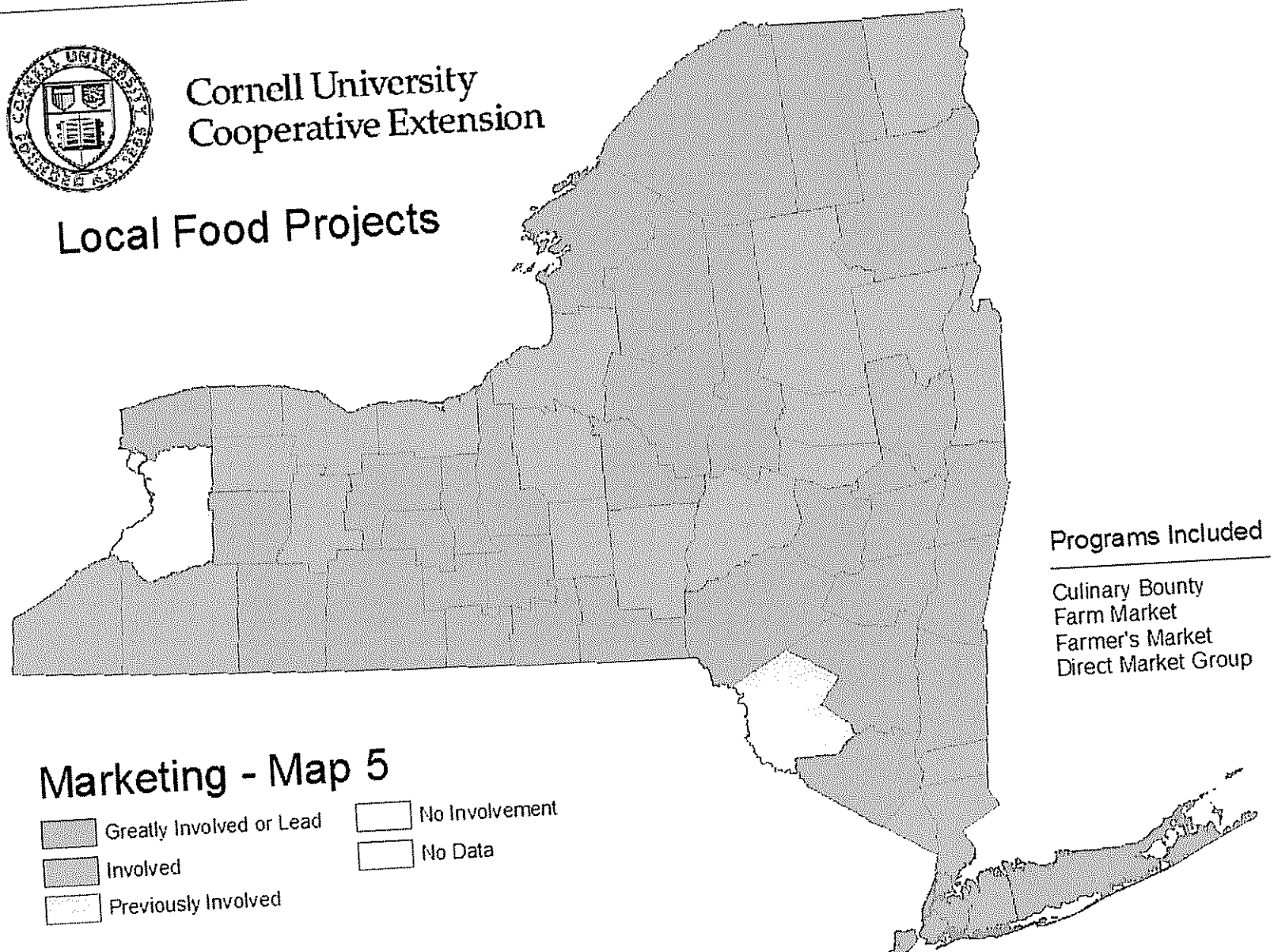
Cooperative Extension

Local Food Projects



Programs Included

Culinary Bounty
Farm Market
Farmer's Market
Direct Market Group

Marketing - Map 5

- Greatly Involved or Lead
- Involved
- Previously Involved
- No Involvement
- No Data

Source: Local Food Project Survey, CCE, January 2008
Project funding provided through the Director of Cornell Cooperative Extension

GUIDE TO YATES COUNTY FRESH PRODUCE

Presented by:

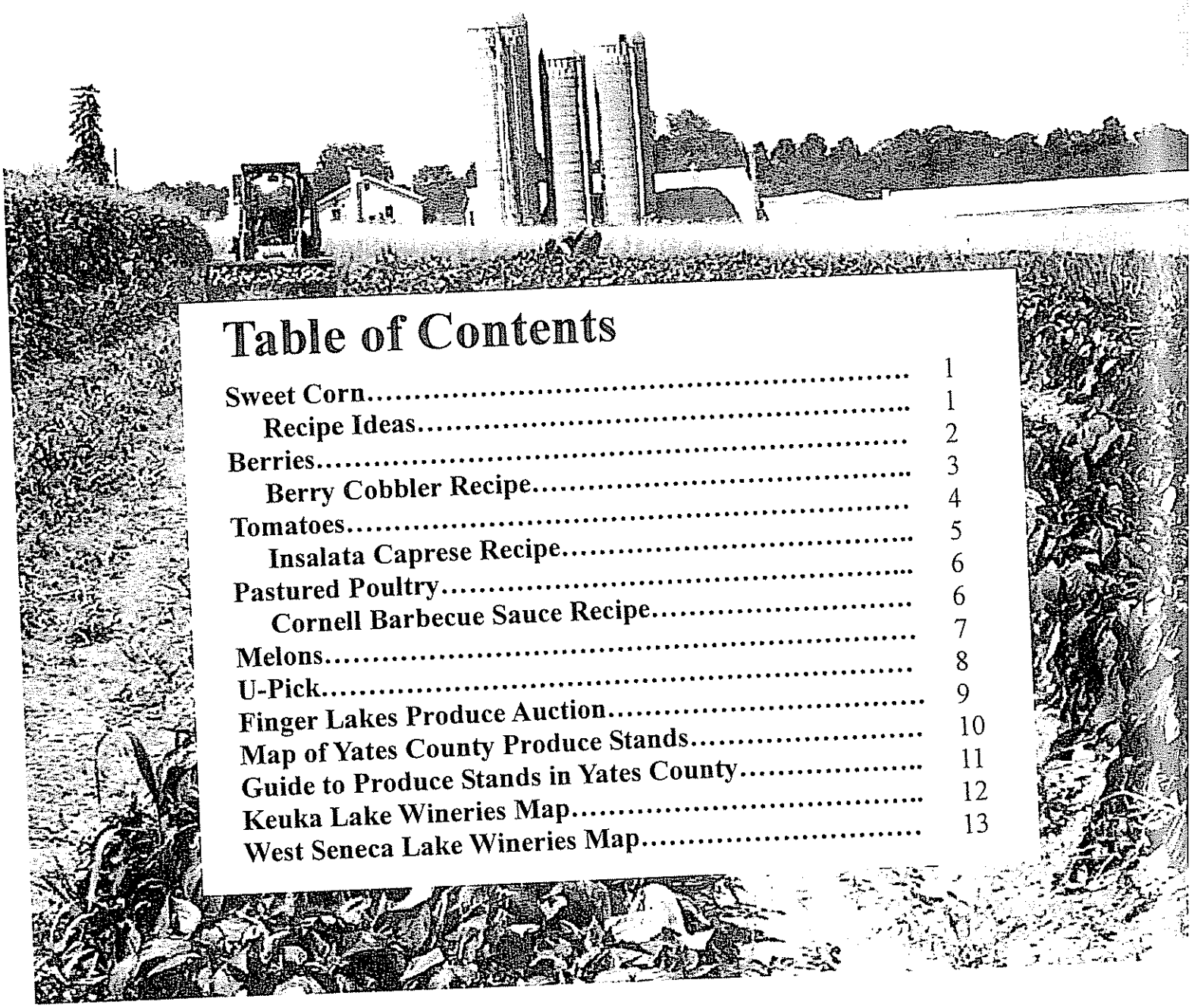
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Yates County

Yates County Ag. and Farmland Protection Board

The Bounty of Yates County...

Family farms are the essence of Yates County. From wineries to produce stands and pastured poultry, these small farms produce a variety of quality products for your family. The success of these farms keeps Yates County beautiful and bucolic. Vineyards stretch from Seneca to Canandaigua Lakes. Dairy farms and grain silos dot the landscape. Farm stands overflow with produce and fresh baked goods. It's no wonder that agriculture is the number one industry in Yates County. Agriculture supports the county's other major industry: tourism. Keeping farmland open and viable is essential to our community. As a consumer, you are a vital part of this equation. Buying local farm products keeps Yates County growing.

This publication was funded by an Agri-Tourism Grant awarded by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets.



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SWEET CORN

Recipe Ideas

Grilled Corn on the Cob

Option 1:

Do not husk the corn. Place the ears directly on the grill. Cook until the husks are dark brown, turning regularly.

Option 2:

Husk the corn. Wrap the ears in aluminum foil, and place them directly on the grill. Cook to taste, turning regularly.

Note:

Many people soak their corn prior to grilling. This results in an ear that is more steamed than roasted.

Other Recipe Ideas

- Cut the kernels off the cob for use in soup, stir fries, or corn bread.
- Boil ears for 3 to 4 minutes, then serve. To bring out the corn's sweetness, add a pinch of sugar to the water.
- Use sweet corn in salads, casseroles, and other dishes.

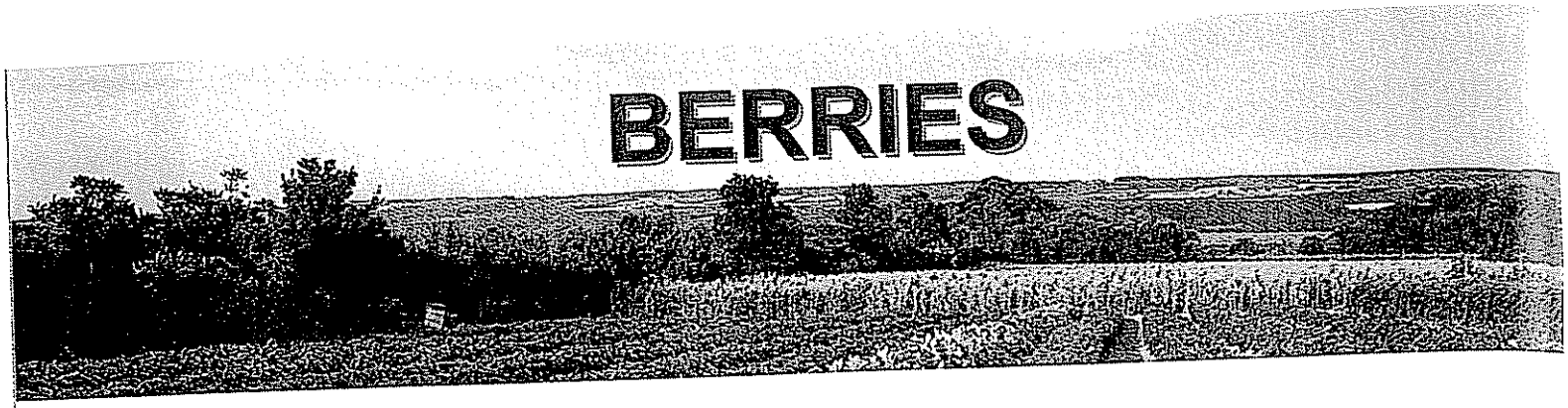
Is there any vegetable that shouts summer like sweet corn? Yates County farmers work hard to have corn ready for market as early as July 4th.

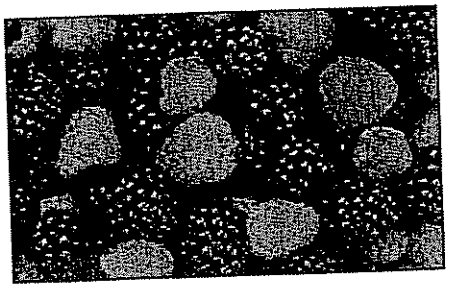
Many of the new sweet corn varieties are sugar-enhanced types. They have higher sugar contents than old-fashioned types and tend to last longer. The newest "supersweet" types contain very high sugar contents. They hold their sweetness through both shipping and storage. The variety names alone will make your mouth water: Delectable, Bodacious, Sweet Rhythm…

Ask for different sweet corns at your local farm stand, and taste the variety offered by Yates County farmers.

Did You Know? At its peak, sweet corn contains 5 to 14% sugar. A serving contains about one quarter of the recommended Daily Value (DV) of folic acid. In addition, it has small amounts of vitamin C, magnesium, phosphorus, and thiamin. Sweet corn is a moderate source of fiber and starch... This is a treat that never grows old, so pick some up for your family today!

BERRIES





How sweet to be in Yates County. Strawberries, the most popular of all berries, are harvested beginning in early June. Look for blackberries, blueberries, and raspberries in August. Some Yates County growers are experimenting with berries in greenhouses. Now, fresh raspberries in May is a reality!

Nutrition

Many berries have benefits that go beyond taste. Cranberries, blackberries, raspberries and strawberries contain ellagic acid, a natural substance that may help prevent certain types of cancer. Ellagic acid is found in a variety of products, including fresh berries, frozen berries, and jams.

Strawberries contain more vitamin C than most fruits. A half cup contains 42 milligrams, about 70% of the recommended Daily Value. In fact, strawberries have 60% more vitamin C than an equal measure of grapefruit. Additionally, strawberries are low in calories, high in fiber, and a source of potassium. By all accounts, they're a great summer snack!

In addition to strawberries, Yates County farmers grow dozens of acres of blueberries. These healthy fruits also contain vitamin C. A half cup provides 15% of the recommended Daily Value. Anthocyanin, the pigment that gives blueberries their color, combines with flavonoids and acts as an antioxidant. In fact, blueberries are among the foods highest in antioxidants. Finally, they are a natural laxative and contain a substance used to treat urinary tract infections.

Selection

When picked at the peak of ripeness, berries taste great. At the same time, they are also very fragile. To ensure that your berries are both flavorful and intact, buy direct from the farmer. Yates County growers pick at the peak of ripeness.

The most flavorful strawberries are bright red. White-tipped strawberries may be firm, but they are also less ripe. Select fruits that are fully red and have healthy green caps. Strawberries without caps are prone to shriveling.

Raspberries and blackberries are extremely perishable. They deteriorate quickly after harvest. To ensure freshness, look for bright color. In addition, choose containers that do not have juice in the bottom.

Blueberries are much less fragile than other berries. They may appear blue or black, depending on the variety and environmental conditions. The blueberries' skins should not be torn. As with all berries, do not eat fruits that are moldy or shriveled. To maintain quality, minimize handling before usage. Finally, remove all stems and caps prior to eating.

Berry Cobbler

Ingredients

- 3 cups of berries
  (a single type or combination of blueberries, strawberries, raspberries, and blackberries)
- 1/2 cup of sugar
- 2 teaspoons of fresh lemon juice
- 1 3/4 cups of all-purpose flour
- Pinch of salt
- 1 teaspoon of baking powder
- 2 tablespoons of butter or margarine
- 2/3 cup of milk
- 1 egg, well beaten

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Grease a large (1.5 quart) casserole-type baking dish.

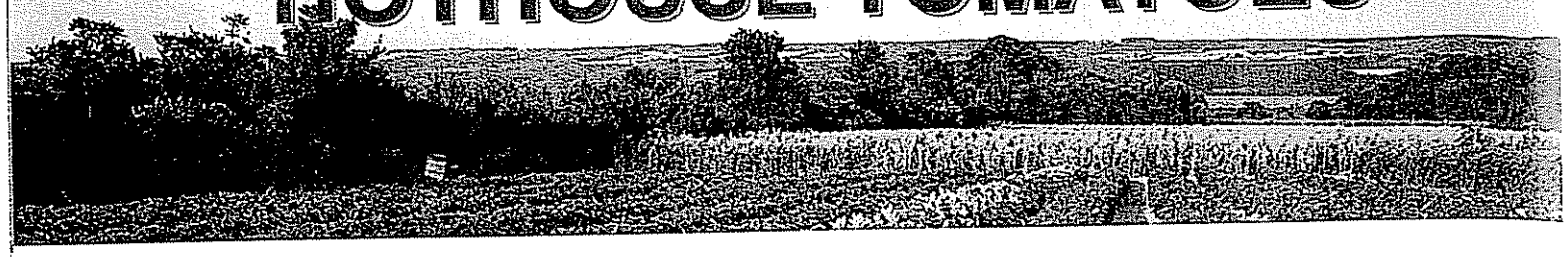
2. Combine berries, sugar, and lemon juice in a bowl. Toss well to combine ingredients, then spoon into the baking dish.

3. In another bowl, combine the flour, salt, and baking powder. Work the butter or margarine in until the mixture is in coarse crumbs. Lightly beat the egg and milk together. Stir this into the dry mixture to form a smooth dough.

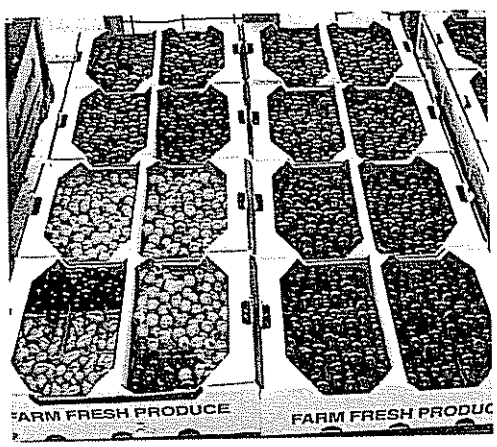
4. Spoon portions of the dough over the berries, pressing slightly to cover as much as possible.

5. Bake 35 to 40 minutes or until the cobbler is light brown.

HOTHOUSE TOMATOES



Many recoil in displeasure at the mention of "greenhouse tomatoes." The image conjured is of large glass houses, far away in the Netherlands or Canada, shipping hard, green, unflavorful fruit to supermarkets. However, here in Yates County, greenhouse tomatoes mean flavor! Local farmers grow plants directly in the soil, planting as early as January. The greenhouses serve only to warm the environment. Consequently, these tomatoes taste as good as garden tomatoes in August. They are grown in native soil and picked at the peak of ripeness. The best part is that fresh tomatoes are available as early as April! These tomatoes are grown without chemical pesticides and can be found at numerous farm stands in the county.



Nutrition

Tomatoes don't just taste great, they're good for your health. Tomatoes are an excellent source of beta-carotene. They are also a source of disease-fighting lycopene, vitamin C, and fiber. Lycopene is one of several newly-discovered compounds called phytochemicals. These may protect against certain forms of cancer and heart disease. Tomatoes provide substantial amounts of vitamins A and C as well as potassium and iron. Why wait to enjoy these benefits? Pick some up at your local farm stand today!

In addition to full-sized tomatoes, Yates County growers produce the smaller cherry and plum tomatoes. These are great for pasta sauces. In addition, you may use them on your salads, burgers, and sandwiches. Grill them on kebabs. Sautée them and toss into pastas. No matter what your preference, there is a cherry or plum tomato for every occasion!

Tomato Storage

Store tomatoes at room temperature, refrigerating only those that are overripe (temperatures below 55°F slow ripening). To ripen green tomatoes, place on a rack so that fruits are not touching and set in a warm location (65-70°F) away from sunlight. To slow ripening of green tomatoes, store in a cooler location (50 – 55°F).

Insalata Caprese

This classic salad from the island of Capri (just off Italy's southern coast near Naples), only relies on four perfect ingredients: vine-ripened tomatoes, fresh mozzarella cheese, bright green basil, and fruity olive oil. Use only the most ripe tomatoes, as their juices mix with the olive oil to make the dressing. It is important that the oil be of the highest quality, because the difference between an average and exceptional one will be evident.

Ingredients:

8 ripe tomatoes, sliced
1 pound fresh mozzarella cheese, thinly sliced
1/2 cup fresh basil leaves
1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
1/2 teaspoon salt (preferably sea salt)
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground pepper

Directions:

On a platter, alternate slices of tomato and mozzarella cheese. Garnish generously with basil leaves, tucking some underneath the tomatoes. Drizzle the olive oil over all, then sprinkle with salt and pepper. Serve immediately. Serves four to six.

Adapted from the Williams-Sonoma Collection Series *Salad* by Georgeanne Brennan (Simon & Schuster, 2001).

What do consumers think of pasture-raised poultry? "Juicy!" "Tender!" "Flavorful!" Why not try some for yourself? Yates County farmers raise chickens in grassy pastures where the birds forage in sunshine. The result is quality meat with old-fashioned flavor. These chickens can be purchased directly from the farmer, so you know where your meal came from. What greater pleasure than barbecued chicken, salt potatoes, and sweet corn washed down with a glass of Riesling–all fresh from Yates County!

Buying Chickens from the Farm

Most farmers raise pastured poultry based on orders from their customers. This helps them plan how many chicks to raise and slaughter. Contact farmers in the spring to let them know that you are interested in their product. They will likely give you a variety of pick-up dates spread across the pasture season. After you've placed your order with the farmer, be ready to get your birds on pick-up day. They will have been fresh slaughtered that morning, so you will need a cooler with ice and plastic bags to transport your meat home. Some farmers are willing to store your birds until it's convenient for you to pick them up. These are kept in a freezer for an additional cost. When ordering, ask the farmer if he raises turkeys. You could make pastured turkey a Thanksgiving tradition!

The following Yates county farms have pastured poultry for sale. Please note that most farms do not conduct business on Sundays.

Nelson and Erla Horning
(585) 526-6967
250 Lovejoy Road
Penn Yan, New York 14527

Betsy Jensen
(315) 536-8281
603 State Route 14A
Penn Yan, New York 14527

David and Kathy LaBarr
(607) 243-8755
3101 State Route 14
Himrod, New York 14842

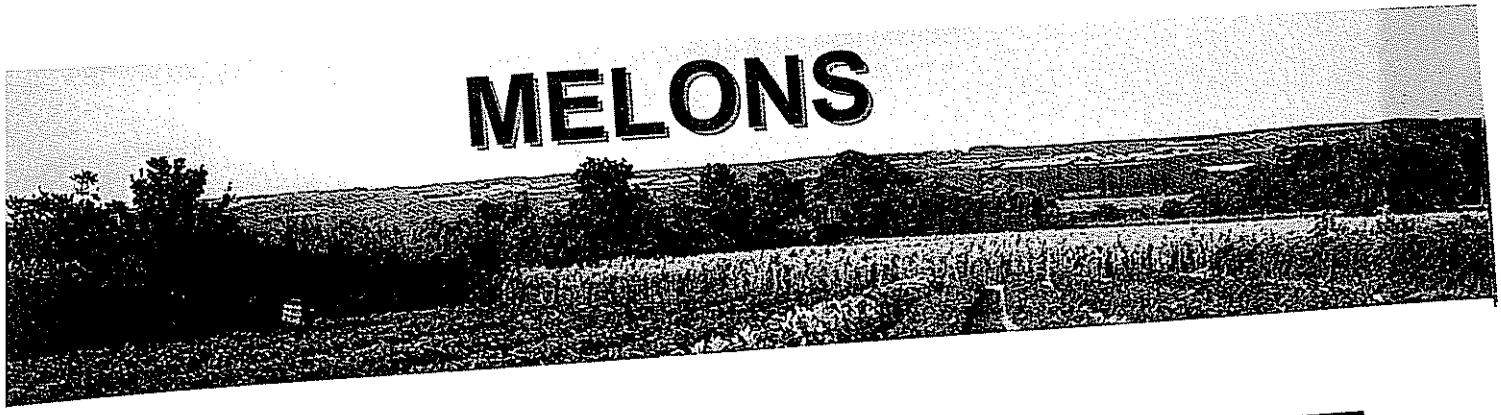
Klaas and Mary-Howell Martens
(315) 536-9879
1443 Ridge Road
Penn Yan, New York 14527

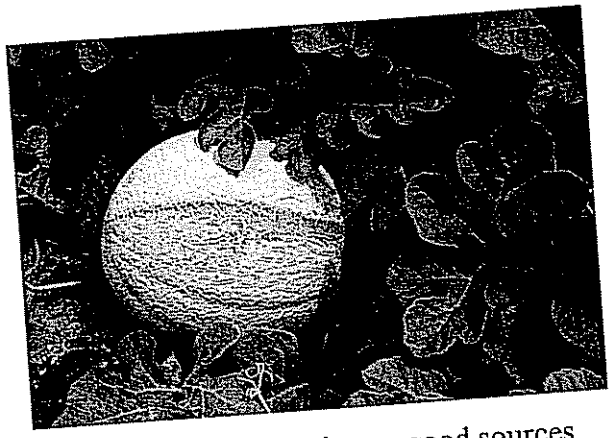
Are you wondering how to prepare your pastured poultry? Here's a Finger Lakes tradition - **Cornell Barbecue Sauce:**

1 cup oil
1 pint cider vinegar
3 tablespoons salt
1 tablespoon poultry seasoning
1 teaspoon pepper
1 egg

Beat the egg, then add the oil and beat again. Add the other ingredients and stir. Baste this mixture onto your roasting chicken and enjoy!

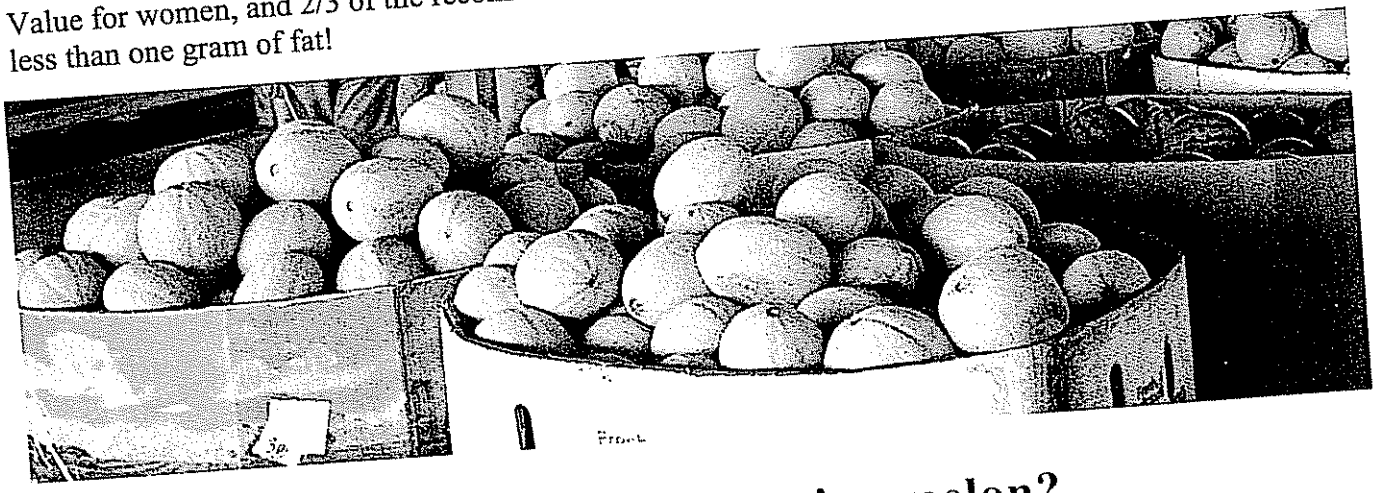
MELONS





Muskmelons, cantaloupes, watermelons… You name it, we grow it, right here in Yates County. You can be sure to find a melon for your taste at one of our many local farm stands. Abundant sunshine and fertile soil combine with hard-working growers to bring these summertime favorites to the table. Why not give one a try? With varieties like Sugar Baby, Yellow Doll, and Moon and Stars, you can't go wrong!

Melons are not only sweet and refreshing, they are also highly nutritious. The fruits are good sources of potassium and vitamin C, and the ones with orange flesh contain high amounts of beta-carotene. Cantaloupe (muskmelon) is the most nutritious of the melons. It has three times more vitamin C, ten times more beta-carotene, and a third more potassium than most other melons. Two-thirds of a cup of cubed cantaloupe provides 3224 IU of vitamin A. That represents 3/4 of the recommended Daily Value for women, and 2/3 of the recommended Daily Value for men. Incredibly, all of this comes with less than one gram of fat!



How do you pick a ripe melon?

Muskmelons or cantaloupes should be tan or gold under their netting. Honeydews should be velvety and creamy yellow. For most melons, the blossom end should be fragrant and give slightly to pressure. Watermelons have a waxy look and a yellow patch on the belly. Melons will soften if left unrefrigerated, but will not become sweeter.

The rind should be free of cracks, soft spots, and bruises. A slight softness (though still firm) is often a sign of ripeness.

U-PICK

Picking your own fruits and vegetables can be a fun and educational activity for the whole family. Farms that offer pick-your-own produce are popular with home canners looking for volume. Yates County offers a variety of "u-pick" options, from blueberries to broccoli.

U-Pick Produce of Yates County

Sugar Shack Blueberry Farm 824 East Swamp Road Penn Yan (585) 526-5442	Located in the heart of the Finger Lakes, Sugar Shack Farm offers 28 acres of blueberries and red raspberries. Visitors may pick their own or purchase pre-picked quantities. In addition, Sugar Shack offers a variety of maple products. Children are welcome and picnic sites are available; open July through Dec.	From Penn Yan, take Route 14A north to Benton Center. Take Havens Corners Road west for 4 miles. Take a right on E. Swamp Road.
Tomion's Farm Market 200 Route 14A Penn Yan (585) 526-5400	Tomion's Farm Market offers u-pick rhubarb, strawberries, red raspberries, tomatoes, and peppers. In addition, they have fresh picked asparagus, rhubarb, strawberries, potatoes, onions, squash, tomatoes, pumpkins, and cabbage. Tomion's also offers gift items, baked goods, and light lunches. Open year round.	From Penn Yan, take State Route 14A north for 5 miles. From the north, Tomion's is 8 miles south of Geneva.
Fulkrod's Produce 1435 Havens Corners Road Penn Yan (315) 536-0238	Fulkrod's Produce offers u-pick tomatoes, sweet corn, peppers, and other vegetables. In addition, they have fresh picked produce, apples, grapes, pumpkins, melons, potatoes, and other tree fruit. Open July through May. Please call to find out what's in season.	From Penn Yan, take Route 14A north to Benton Center. Take Havens Corners Road east for 3.25 miles.
Henderson's U-Pick Produce 1799 Himrod Road Penn Yan (315) 536-8848	Pick your own in the field or select from produce at the roadside stand: sweet corn, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, and beets. Eggs and other produce available at the roadside stand. Open Monday through Saturday. Best to call ahead for produce availability.	From Penn Yan, take East Main Street/Himrod Road 1 mile.
Wager's Cider Mill 256 East Main Street Penn Yan (315) 536-6640	Wager's cider mill offers picked apples, other tree fruit, and both Concord and Niagara grapes. Watch cider being pressed. Enjoy their famous cider doughnuts and fresh pressed grape juice. Open August through December.	From Penn Yan, Wager's Cider Mill is located at the east end of Main Street on the left.
Apple Barrel Orchards 2673 Sand Hill Road Penn Yan (315) 536-2744	Apple Barrel Orchards offers u-pick apples and grapes. They have a number of apple varieties and offer an array of apple products. Open September through May. Call to find out which varieties are in season. Email: applewag@hotmail.com	Located at the corner of Sand Hill Road and County House Road.
Henderson's Produce 2741 State Route 14A Penn Yan (315) 536-4958	Henderson's Produce offers fresh-picked apples and melons. In addition, they offer u-pick vegetables, sweet corn, tomatoes, and pumpkins. Open August through November.	From Penn Yan, 1.2 miles south on Route 14A.
Pendleton Farms 639 State Route 247 Rushville (585) 554-6634	Pendleton Farms is a commercial wine and juice grape producer. They welcome customers to pick their own grapes for juice, jam, or winemaking. Open September and October.	From Rushville, drive 2 miles south of the traffic light on Route 247.
Roads End Farm 362 Smith Road Dundee (607) 243-5234	Roads End Farm offers u-pick berries and organic fruits, vegetables, and garlic. They have been NOFA-NY certified since 1988. Open June through October. Please call to find out what's in season.	From Geneva, drive 20 miles south on Route 14. Right on Old Route 14. Roads End Farm on right.

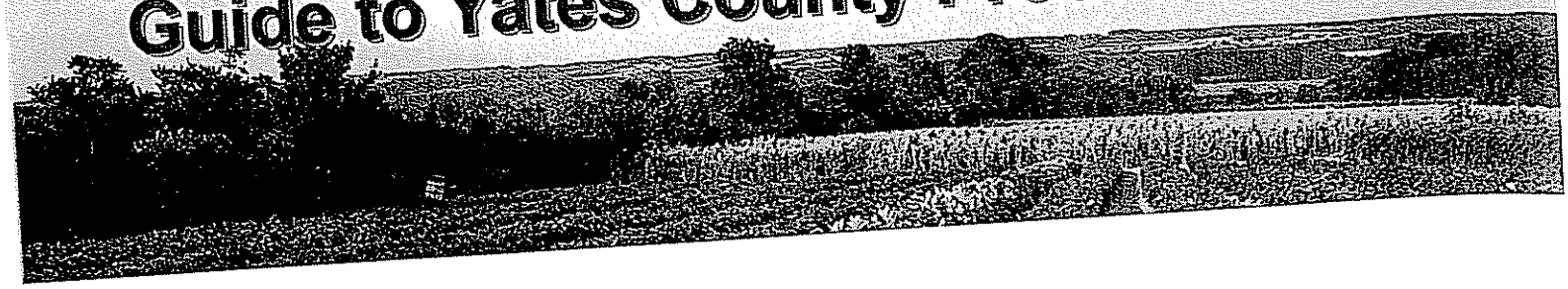
FINGER LAKES PRODUCE AUCTION

The Finger Lakes Produce Auction is one of the best places to buy produce in Yates County. A farmer-owned cooperative, the auction was founded in 2000. Since its founding, the produce auction has grown substantially each year. Hundreds of local farmers utilize it. During the growing season, visitors may encounter a variety of products that include tomatoes, tree fruits, beans, squash, pumpkins, melons, onions, grapes, cut flowers, potted plants, and more. On certain days, special auctions are held. Products during these auctions may include quilts, small animals, building supplies, or even farm equipment.

No matter what you're looking for, the Finger Lakes Produce Auction has something for everyone. Just north of the Windmill Farm and Craft Market, it is located on Route 14A south of Penn Yan. The auction opens for the season in May. Produce is auctioned on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and special auctions are held most Saturdays.

For more information, or to find out what's in season, call the Finger Lakes Produce Auction at (315) 536-8446. Information may be found on their website at http://www.pirrunginc.com/FLPA.htm.

Guide to Yates County Produce Stands



Yates County

Guide to Produce Stands in Yates County

Penn Yan area

#	Farm Name	Address
1	Tomion's Farm Market	200 State Route 14A
2	David Garman	294 State Route 14A
3	Benton Produce	765 State Route 14A
4	Adam N. Hoover	1197 State Route 14A
5	Henderson's Produce	2741 State Route 14A
6	Windy Acres Farm	4172 State Route 14A
7	Lovejoy Produce	250 Lovejoy Road
8	Fulkrod's Produce	1435 Havens Corners Road
9	Ben Shirk	1690 Havens Corners Road
10	Zimmerman's Homegrown Produce	2629 Havens Corners Road
11	Hoover's Greenhouse	2568 Baldwin Road
12	Hilltop Produce	2650 State Route 364
13	Benton Valley Orchard	2304 Simonsen Road
14	Henderson's U-Pick Produce	1799 Himrod Road
15	Seneca View Greenhouse & Produce	2456 State Route 14
16	Sauder's Produce and Supplies	2511 Welker Road
17	Pine Ridge Farm	4031 Old Bath Road
18	G & F Produce	4114 Old Bath Road
19	Apple Barrel Orchards	2673 Sand Hill Road
20	Indian Pines Farm Market	2218 State Route 54A
21	Barbara Nielsen	946 Voak Road
22	Lowell Horst	1445 Voak Road
23	Leid's Nursery	1500 Flat Street
24	Weaver Shirk	772 Pre-Emption Rd.
25	Lilyea Farms	1320 Pre-Emption Rd.
26	Sugar Shack Blueberry Farm	824 East Swamp Road

Dundee area

#	Farm Name	Address
27	Indian Run Farm	639 South Glenora Road
28	Dragonwood Ranch/ Luke Farms Produce	5522 State Route 14A
29	Fulkerson Winery	5576 State Route 14
30	Moon Valley Plant Co.	5664 State Route 14
31	Glenora Farms	340 Dundee-Glenora Road
32	Crystal Valley Produce and Greenhouse	1719 State Route 230
33	Scenic View Farms	1718 Ellis Road

Branchport area

#	Farm Name	Address
34	Katie Wheeler's Farm Market	3640 Route 54A
35	Jim Bedient's Blueberry Patch	3955 Stever Road
36	Italy Hill Honey	2115 Pulteney Road

Other areas

#	Farm Name	Address
37	Jack Tomion	50 Tomion Road Stanley, New York
38	Lester Hoover	4090 Voorhees Road Middlesex, New York
39	Misty Vale Farm	441 State Route 245 Rushville, New York
40	David and Kathy LaBarr	3101 State Route 14 Himrod, New York
41	Crawford Niche Farm	241 Pre-Emption Rd. Bellona, New York

Windmill Farm and Craft Market - Route 14A, mid way between Penn Yan and Dundee; Open Saturdays, late April to December, 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM

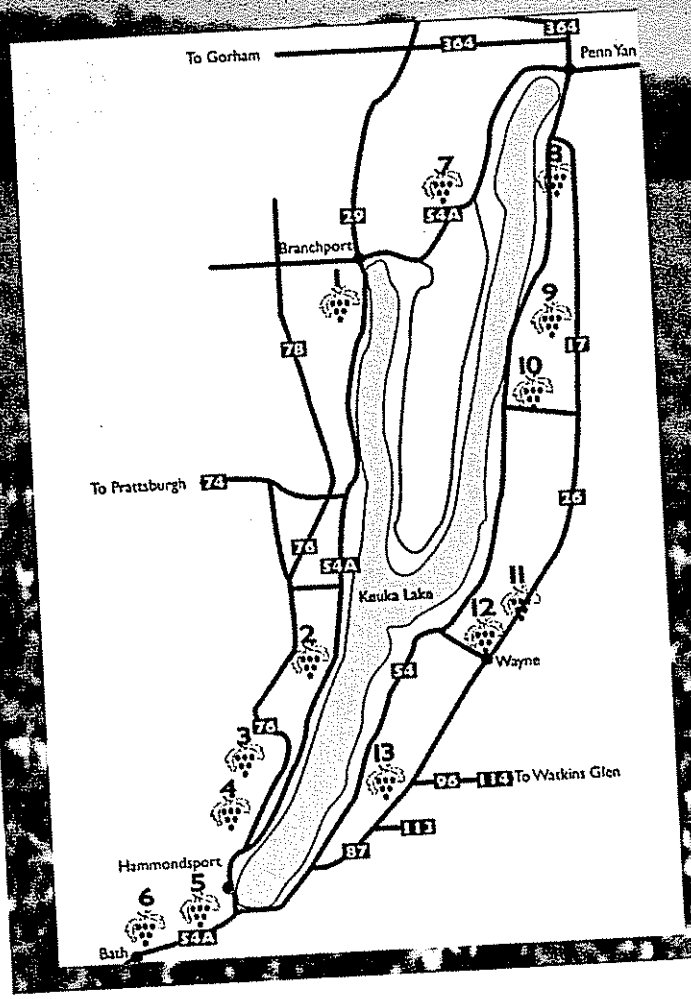
Yates Cooperative Farm and Craft Market - East Main Street in the village of Penn Yan; Saturdays, mid May to mid October, 7:30 AM to 12:00 PM

YATES COUNTY WINE

Yates County Wine: the Perfect Pairing for Yates County Produce!

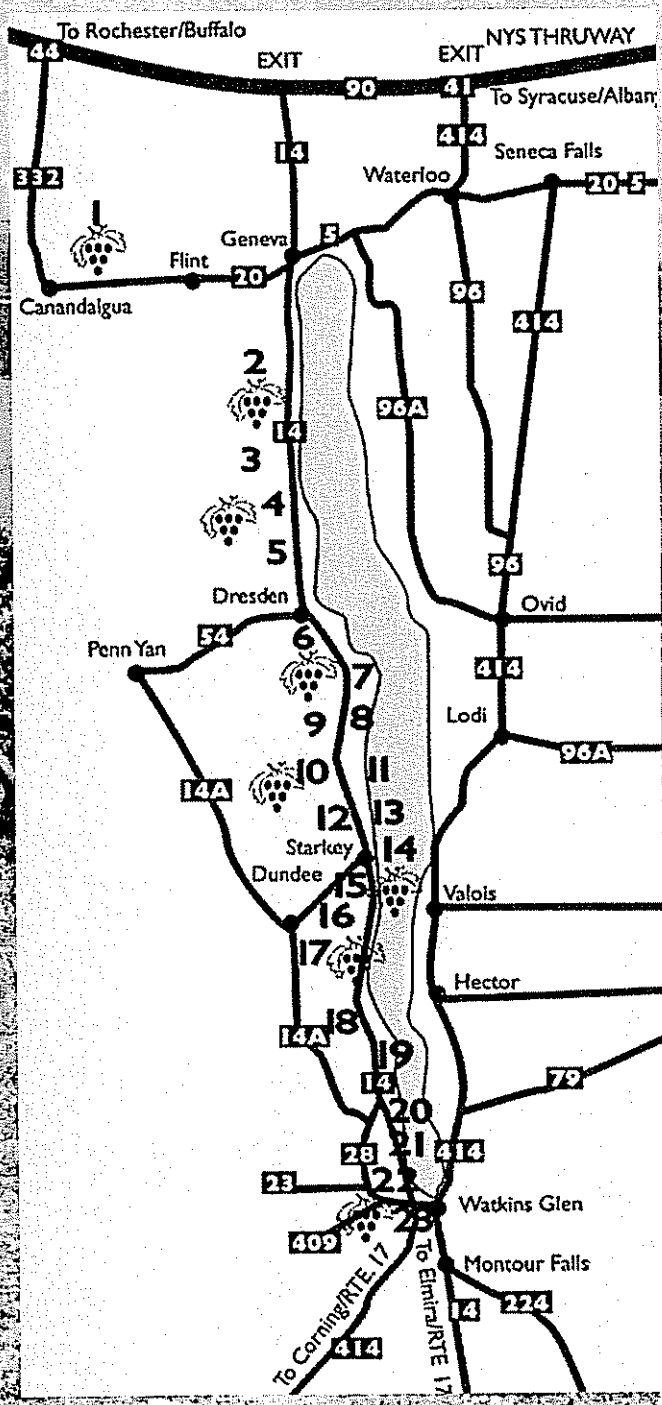
Did you know that more wine grapes are grown in Yates County than in any other county east of the Rocky Mountains? It's true, and the abundance of wineries testifies to the quality of the soils along Canandaigua, Keuka, and Seneca Lakes. Each of these lakes has its own "wine trail," a route that takes visitors from winery to winery. Special events are common along the trails. They are held regularly and sport a variety of themes. Visit www.uncorkny.com for information about events and wine opportunities in Yates County.

Keuka Lake Wineries



1. Hunt Country Vineyards
2. Dr. Frank's Vinifera Wine Cellars
2. Chateau Frank
3. Heron Hill Winery
4. Bully Hill Vineyards
5. Pleasant Valley Wine Company
6. Chateau Renaissance Wine Cellars
7. Yates Cellars Winery
8. Keuka Spring Vineyards
9. Rooster Hill Vineyards
10. Barrington Cellars
11. Crooked Lake Winery
11. Keuka Overlook Wine Cellars
12. McGregor Vineyard Winery
13. Ravines Wine Cellars

West Seneca Lake Wineries



1. [illegible]
2. Billsboro Winery
3. [illegible] Vineyards
4. Seneca Shores Wine Cellars
5. Anthony Road Wine Company
6. Prejean Winery
7. Torrey Ridge Winery
8. Miles Wine Cellars
9. Fox Ridge Estates Meadery and Winery
10. Four Chimneys Farm Winery
11. Hermann J. Wiemer Vineyard
12. Woodbury Vineyards
13. Villa Bellangelo
14. Highland Cellars
15. Glenora Wine Cellars
16. Fulkerson Winery
17. Rock Stream Vineyards
18. Arcadian Estate Winery
19. Lakewood Vineyards
20. Casera Wine
21. Castel Grisch Winery
22. [illegible] Harbor Wine Center
23. [illegible] D'Esperance

GUIDE TO YATES COUNTY FRESH PRODUCE

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Yates County
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Penn Yan, NY 14527

Jim Ochterski

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www.cce.cornell.edu/ontario

Date: May 5, 2008

To: Patrick Hooker, Chair, New York State Council on Food Policy

From: Jim Ochterski, Agriculture and Natural Resources Issues Leader, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ontario County

Re: Strengthening distribution networks to connect local food products and institutional customers
[Written comments submitted May 5, 2008 at the New York State Council on Food Policy listening session in Rochester, NY]

The NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets has developed several successful programs and initiatives to increase commerce between individual farmers and individual citizens. Examples include support for farm market development and enhancement, the Pride of New York program, and the widespread circulation of press releases and public policy initiatives to bring NY citizens and farmers together.

In the Finger Lakes region, there are now many ways for residents and visitors to learn about, and obtain local food products:

- Local food guides
- Agritourism venues
- Roadside stands and weekly farm markets
- Community-supported Agriculture (CSA) projects
- Produce auctions
- Location-specific labeling
- Festivals, fairs, and special events

Direct-to-consumer sales are labor-intensive, and at risk of being cost-inefficient. Quantities per customer tend to be small and variable, with significant labor costs, display infrastructure and other indirect costs, and a significant risk of theft and shrinkage.

Institutional purchasing, such as by schools, hospitals, office cafeterias, correctional facilities, and universities, can offer a more consistent revenue strategy for farmers and serve the intent to provide local food to local consumers, on a larger scale. Unfortunately, New York's public policies do not encourage local distribution networks nor encourage publicly funded institutions to favor local sources for farm product purchasing.

The New York State Council on Food Policy can strengthen the connection between local food products and consumers by helping regional communities develop <u>local institutional food distribution networks</u>. Locations suitable for such networks can be found in the Finger Lakes and the metropolitan Rochester, NY area, where high densities of institutions and high-yielding farms to supply their food needs are within reasonable distance - 30 miles or less.

The biggest challenge in establishing a local food distribution network is the scale. Quantities are typically too small to attract private distribution companies, but too large to serve the existing farmer-to-consumer commerce options. These quantities often fall between small-scale wholesale and bulk retail. For example, a hospital might be interested in obtaining a 3-week supply of local farm-fresh strawberries, but neither the hospital nor the strawberry farmer may be able to bear the added cost of getting the produce from the farm directly to the hospital on a regular basis, logistically nor financially.

Local meat product sales to local institutions is currently confounded by convoluted interpretations of public policies regarding wholesale distribution or retail sale to non-end users. Many livestock farmers are simply unable to sell their products to restaurants, office cafeterias, and universities due to prohibitions in state-level policies and permit requirements. The New York State Council on Food Policy should review policies and laws that regulate local meat sales to institutions and bring them into greater alignment with the Council's objectives.

Local farm product sales to local institutions benefit the agriculture sector and the individual institutions. The farm operator should be able to realize a bulk retail price and higher profits. The institution can achieve their socio-environmental goals, obtain a higher-quality product, without significant increases in food costs. Additionally, the money in such commerce supports community self-reliance as it circulates locally, rather than flowing outside of New York State.

There are several public policy options to encourage the development of local food distribution networks. Among these are:

1) Establish local bulk food distribution centers as public-private partnership with state institutions (e.g. SUNY colleges, NYSDAM district office buildings, DOT facilities, Food Bank management entities).

2) Utilize existing public transportation resources to link local farms with local institutions.

3) Review and amend policies to improve the ability of local livestock farmers to sell directly to institutions.

4) Identify and emulate institutional marketing programs for small- and mid-sized farms in other states.

5) Recommend food policies for New York's public and private institutions including local purchasing goals and nutrition promotion standards.

Mary Lee Bourbeau

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Prepared for the May 5, 2008 Listening Session of the NYS Council on Food Policy in Rochester, NY

Hello. My name is Mary Lee Bourbeau and I am the Nutrition and Consumer Science Team Coordinator with Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) of Wayne County. I am grateful for this opportunity to share insights on how using an ecological framework to address challenging food and consumer issues related to healthy eating can be helpful at the county level. I have worked in my current capacity for two years so much of what I describe has a future orientation.

The ecological approach is best described as a fully integrated system including individual, family, neighborhood, organizations plus economic influences and the natural environment. Interventions are tailored to one or more of these components.

CCE of Wayne County uses an integrated educational approach in working with adults and youth across three program areas: nutrition, youth development and agriculture. Examples include Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) and Eat Smart NY (ESNY). For over 30 years, these programs have accumulated knowledge and expertise in how to work with families in ways that have proven to be effective in improving skills in food resource management, healthy food choices and food safety. With ongoing research and training provided by land grant universities, including Cornell University, front line educators are kept well grounded in research base knowledge and practices. In turn, front line educators and managers inform faculty of challenges and best practices learned from direct experience with low-income families.

It is from this strong base that I have seen and been part of how CCE of Wayne County has been able to integrate programming beyond the individual and family to organization and community. In the last 1 ½ years we have been working in partnership with the NYS Department of Health (NYS DOH) to address the issue of childhood obesity through environmental changes. This five year effort is called Eat Well Play Hard Community Project (EWPH). Through an extensive community assessment of Wayne County we were challenged to determine the factors and influences that do not support children and families in making healthy food choices and engaging in physical activity. In the process we built on existing partnerships and identified local leaders new to us.

One partnership includes NYS's largest apple grower and packer: Fowler Farms. Through Eat Well Play Hard Community Projects we approached them for a possible project with local schools. After a tour of their facility in Wolcott we understood their interest in marketing "mini-apples" they call teasers to schools. The North Rose-Wolcott school food service director, who is committed to increasing the fresh produce available to children, contacted Fowler Farm and initiated a pilot project offering mini-apples on the lunch line. She was thrilled to report to the EWPH Coalition in Wayne County that elementary age children are eating significantly more apples than before with less waste. During a meeting with Wayne County school food service directors to plan for Harvest Week next fall, they planned a tour of Fowler Farms in April. As a result, several other school districts in Wayne County are now working with Fowler Farm to secure a distributor for mini-apples. It does not make financial sense for the farm to distribute directly to schools nor for the schools to pick up at the farms. One thing is clear, there is demand for this locally produced product and schools are motivated to address and overcome the barriers to providing mini-apples to school children.

My second example involves young children and early childhood organizations. Directors and teachers in universal pre-K programs, pre-schools and child care centers in Wayne County are demonstrating

strong interest in working with us to address how to change the practices and policies in their centers to prevent childhood obesity. Through EWPH, the NYS DOH provided training to us in a research based project called NAP SACC (Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care). It includes an initial assessment, goal setting tool, training modules for teachers and staff and post-assessment to be done six months after the initial intervention. We are supplementing NAP SACC with a curriculum called "Color Me Healthy," developed at North Carolina State for teachers of 3 to 5 year olds, one that front line nutrition educators use in ESNY and EFNEP programs. To date 40 early childhood educators representing seven centers have participated, impacting over 200 young children. This is promising and satisfying work that allows us to work with children in the context of early childhood settings. We are continuing our work with these and other centers.

A third example is the "Future Fruit and Vegetable Leader Training" designed to encourage farm and non-farm teens to go into commercial agriculture. This is a three year pilot project funded by Cornell University that begins this summer.

We continue to expand and refine an integrated approach to meet current and emerging challenges of food and consumer issues. CCE is in a strategic position to continue this work based on the ecological model.

Thank you again for this opportunity to speak with you.

RACHEL PICKERING

Council on Food Policy Listening Session
Remarks by Rachel Pickering, Associate for Community Engagement
Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency & HEALTHi Kids Project
Rochester - May 5, 2008

Good Afternoon, my name is Rachel Pickering and I am the Associate for Community Engagement for Preventing Childhood Obesity and Overweight for the Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency – the FLHSA. My role with the FLHSA is to assist in the direction of our anti-obesity HEALTHi Kids Project. We believe community health can be improved by promoting Healthy Eating and Active Living Through policy and practice Initiatives for Kids – hence, the name for our project. I would like to open my remarks by thanking the Council on Food Policy for holding this listening session today and advocating for public input, maximizing collaborations, and supporting state and local activities to improve the health of New York's children and their families.

As you know, the Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency was once part of a thriving network of State-funded community health planning agencies that supported government policymakers and providers by examining cost, quality, access, and capacity. In the mid 1990's, as competition prevailed in health care, this philosophical change ended state funding for regional health planning. Although this year's state budget restored funding for health planning, the FLHSA is the ONLY remaining, fully-functioning, independent, COMMUNITY BASED, and COMMUNITY ORIENTED health planning entity in New York State and serves the Finger Lakes 9-county region.

The Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency and the HEALTHi Kids Policy Team are strong advocates for increasing the awareness of obesity and focusing on non-biased, data-driven policies and initiatives to increase the awareness and knowledge of healthy eating and improved access to safe and nutritious foods in our communities and especially in our schools. The rise in childhood obesity is a complex issue that crosses social, environmental and policy contexts and necessitates significant community change.

The HEALTHi Kids Policy Team strongly stands behind wellness initiatives in schools for healthy food choices and changing the consumption behavior in youth. As we all are aware, children spend nearly 1/3 of their day in school and many eat several meals a day there. We must recognize the important role that schools play in establishing and maintaining a healthy lifestyle, just as they do in learning. Regulations establishing nutritional and dietary standards for foods and beverages sold, served, or offered, needs to happen. All food and beverages sold or served to students in school should be healthful and meet an accepted nutritional content standard. However many foods now sold in school cafeterias, vending machines, and school fundraisers are typically high in calories and low in nutritional value.

We recommend the elimination of the sale of food in schools that compete with the national school breakfast and lunch programs. Mandate the development and execution of nutritional standards so all food sold on school grounds is consistent with a set of standards. Schools, school districts, and state educational agencies need to ensure that all meals served or sold in schools are in compliance with the dietary guidelines for Americans.

Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency
1150 University Avenue • Rochester, New York • 14607-1647
585.461.3520 • www.FLHSA.org

Additionally schools should focus on improving food quality in the school meal programs. Increasing the availability of whole grain foods, low-fat milk, and fresh local produce would not only be more helpful for participating students but has the potential to attract greater participation. The current structure in the policies and practices of food purchasing/bidding should be examined for improvements that would encourage students to consume nutritious foods and beverages and eliminate the policy red tape of Food Service Directors. Coordinated changes in the classroom curriculum, school health services and afterschool programs all offer the potential to advance obesity prevention efforts.

I recently came across a study by Community and Rural Development Institute, Department of Development and Sociology, Cornell University... Research & Policy Brief Series, February 2007: *Childhood Obesity, Do New Yorkers Support Policies to Reduce It?* The data of this study come from the 2006 Empire State Poll, a survey of 800 NYS residents conducted annually by Cornell University's Survey Research Institute. Almost 2/3 of respondents, 63.4% think the government should ban candy, chips, and soda from schools. Results from this study suggest that policies aimed at addressing food sold in schools could receive the most support from the public. Interestingly when respondents were polled about their willingness to pay higher taxes to reduce childhood obesity the results were mixed. However of those surveyed the average New York State resident is willing to pay $47.25 in higher taxes each year to reduce youth obesity. All together this translates into a total willingness to pay of adult NYS residents of $692.3 million per year. This far more than what NYS would save in lower health care costs, by halving youth obesity which implies that New Yorkers value a reduction of childhood obesity on its own merit.

Mobilizing communities to address childhood obesity will necessitate changes in both the social and built environments and will also require concerted efforts by many partners including citizen groups, community organizations, public-health agencies, businesses, and governments. Interventions need to be culturally appropriate and targeted to reach those ethnic minority groups and low-income households that are a greater risk for obesity. We also recognize that parents or primary caregivers are the policy advocates at home and should be a focal point of any policy decision-making process. Preventing childhood obesity is a collective responsibility, individual, family, community, corporate and governmental commitments. The key will be to implement changes for this issue from many directions and at multiple levels and through collaborations with and between many sectors.

In closing, I would like to again thank the NYS Council on Food Policy for providing the opportunity to speak with you. Your commitment to maximizing collaborations and engaging the NYS community into a conversation about how we can get our kids to be more healthy and active is one that we support and stand behind.

Thank you for your time.

FLHSA
The community health fulcrum.

Healthy Eating and Active Living THrough policy and practice Initiatives for Kids (HEALTHI KIDS) Policy Team Charter

Purpose: The purpose of the FLHSA's work to advance policy and practice solutions to prevent childhood obesity/overweight is to:

- achieve multiple effective public policy and practice changes at the local and/or state level to prevent childhood obesity/overweight;
- establish the infrastructure for continued effective public policy change regarding childhood obesity/overweight by building relationships among key constituents, and
- develop generalized knowledge and information distribution about the consequences and causes of obesity and opportunities for prevention.

Mounting evidence documents the extraordinary toll on human health resulting from the worsening epidemic of obesity among children and adolescents. The Greater Rochester Health Foundation (GRHF) has committed to significant, long term investments, focused on the prevention of overweight and obesity in Monroe County, beginning with children. As part of its ten-year Strategic Plan, drawing on experience from other health promotion efforts, most notably smoking reduction and seat belt use, the GRHF has committed to community-based and community-supported policy and environmental changes can have a powerful effect on behavior change at the population level. The FLHSA's work to advance policy and practice solutions will use community health planning as a tool for priority setting, community engagement and advocacy to create change commensurate with the health care needs of Monroe County's children.

Accountability:

Fran Weisberg	Executive Director	Seeks End Point Approval
Sarah Trafton, JD	Associate Executive Director	Oversight
Wade Norwood	Director of Community Engagement	Lead Staff
TBD	Community Organizer	Staff
Consultants	Kathy Lewis Dr. Jeff Kaczorowski	Policy Development & Research

Policy Planning and Development

Means: Policy Team

Purpose: Provides a broad community mechanism for examining public policies/practices aimed at promoting, in childhood, healthy eating and active living behaviors; for developing broad-based community participation and buy-in in the process of developing such policies/practices; and for recommending priorities for public policy/practice change that will measurably impact the prevalence of childhood obesity/overweight.

Texas Obesity Policy Portfolio—REVISED SHORT LIST 4-22-08

Policy Options	Federal/State	Media	Schools	Faith-Based Organizations	City/County	Worksites	Healthcare	Evidence	Level of Effectiveness
Healthy Food Policies									
C/F. Eliminate the sale of food in schools that compete with the national school breakfast and lunch programs. Mandate the development and execution of nutritional standards so all food sold on school campuses is consistent with a set of standards.	X		X		X			Students who participate in these programs have more access to key nutrients due to the nutritional constraints. Students who have access to a la carte, snack bar and vending machine items eat fewer fruits and vegetables than those who do not.[SS]	Promising
E. Mandate the development and execution of nutritional standards for preschools and daycares so that food and drinks available comply with Dietary Guidelines for America or equivalent standards	X				X			Older students who have greater access to unhealthy foods consume less fruits and vegetables than those who do not have access to unhealthy food.[SS]	Promising
G. Provide incentives for grocery stores and farmers' markets to locate in underserved areas.	X				X			Due to the fact that there are fewer grocery stores in low-come communities, there are fewer opportunities to by healthy food. Fewer number of places to buy healthy food leads to poor dietary quality, but locating better retailers in underserved areas can increate fruit and vegetable consumption. ss	Promising
Recreation Policies									
H/J/M. Create new walking and biking trails, parks and recreation facilities and improve the safety of and access to, and promotion of existing facilities (including after-hours access to schools and recreational facilities).	X		X		X	X		The creation of and improved access to recreational facilities increases physical activity. Access to such facilities positively correlates with activity and negatively correlates with being overweight.[SS, CCG]	Effective

Evidence Legend: S (School) FS (Federal/State) CCG (City and County Government) W (Worksite) H (Healthcare) M (Media) FB (Faith-based organization) SS (All sections and settings)

Effective policy options: A policy option or the environmental change the policy is meant to bring about was tested on one or more well-designed scientific studies and found to affect nutrition and/or physical activity behavior.

Promising policy options: The rational supporting the policy option or the specific policy approach was tested in one or more well-designed scientific studies and results of effectiveness are ongoing. Policy options, which are potentially great ideas, but are untested or are shown to not have definitive results.

Breastfeeding Policies									
N. Create policies that are compliant with the UNICEF/WHO baby-friendly hospital guidelines	X				X		X	The implementation of these guidelines that are outlined in the nine steps provided by United Nations Children's Fund/World Health Organization increases breastfeeding initiation rates.[SS]	Effective
Industry Policies									
P/Q. Prominently post nutritional information for food sold in restaurants and other community sites where children eat away from home.	X				X	X	X	Providing nutritional information affects food selection.[SS]	Promising
Wellness Policies									
T. Mandate or provide incentives to health insurance companies and HMO's to include preventive services related to nutrition.	X					X	X	Behavioral counseling provided by a trained healthcare provider in primary care is effective in changing eating behaviors. Also, combined nutritional and physical activity counseling may produce weight loss in obese patients.[SS]	Promising
Education Policies									
V/W. Require the physical education curriculum to provide moderate to intense physical activity daily for all K-6 students	X		X		X			Increasing the amount of time that students spend on physical activity while in PE classes can increase physical activity and fitness levels. Increasing the amount of time students spend in PE classes can have a positive effect on physical activity and negative effects on being overweight.[SS]	Effective
X. Mandate that elementary schoolchildren be provided at least 30 minutes of recess during the school day.	X		X		X			Elementary schoolchildren spend at least some of their recess time in moderate to vigorous physical activity.[SS]	Promising
Y. Work with caregivers to initiate appropriate after-school care exercise/activity program.	X		X	X	X			Placing requirements in after-school care settings can help overcome sedentary behaviors.[SS]	Promising

Evidence Legend: S (School) FS (Federal/State) CCG (City and County Government) W (Worksite) H (Healthcare) M (Media) FB (Faith-based organization) SS (All sections and settings)

Effective policy options: A policy option or the environmental change the policy is meant to bring about was tested on one or more well-designed scientific studies and found to affect nutrition and/or physical activity behavior.

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FLHSA
The community health fulcrum.

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Functions:

- Developing the strategic plan and monitoring its execution
- Identifying public policy priorities and priorities for influencing food industry practices and expanding physical activity/recreation opportunities
- Coordinating community advocacy efforts and engaging in community/constituency mobilization efforts
- Building relationships with other policymakers and business leaders
- Supporting community/constituency communications, identifying communications opportunities and assisting in meetings with community organizations

Membership:

Co-chairs: To be named
Members: To be named

Member Roles

- Mobilize constituency(ies) to advance public policy priorities
- Meaningfully inform policy recommendations and approaches
- Act as a champion for policy/practice change effort within natural constituency and/or organization
- Communicate with constituents

Major Deliverables at 12 Months

- Develop prioritized policy/practice change strategic plan with broad-based community participation and buy-in as evidenced by grassroots connections to 250-375 parents/families and organizations representing diverse backgrounds and interests;
- Implement three community advocacy efforts to achieve policy or practice change.

Community Benefits

- Allows a carefully planned approach to efficient community mobilization about childhood obesity policies
- Ensures balanced representation on the Policy Team of people from various community perspectives
- Enables efficient and effective linkages to community partners and resources

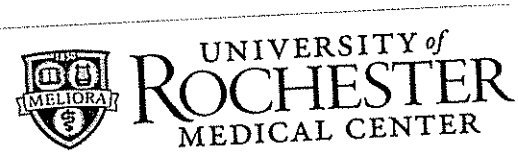
Critical Success Factors

- Regular, active and effective participation by all Policy Team members
- Consistently bringing useful input from natural constituencies/organizations to Policy Team
- Evidence of mobilization of constituencies
- Staff and consultant resources/expertise capable of required analyses

Meeting Agenda and Minutes

- Meeting agenda and related materials distributed to all members at least 5 days in advance of meetings
- Meeting minutes and related materials distributed to all members

Stephen Cook



Council on Food Policy Listening Session
Remarks by Dr. Stephen Cook, MD, MPH
Golisano Children's Hospital at Strong and the University of Rochester Medical Center
Rochester - May 5, 2008

Good Afternoon, my name is Dr. Stephen Cook, MD, MPH. I work as a pediatrician at the Golisano Children's Hospital at Strong and the University of Rochester Medical Center. I see and care for children and families in our pediatric practices of over 10,000 patients at the hospital. I help teach and train, medical student, resident physicians, nursing students and dietetic interns from Cornell University. I also serve on the Rochester Board for the American Heart Association, and have served on the board of directors for the Cornell Cooperative of Monroe County. I do research and community health work around obesity, nutrition and physical activity for children and families in this region.

I see the impact of overweight and obesity as a health consequence in our patients everyday, where over 18% of our patients are obese, and an another 12% overweight. I see the outcome of obesity as not an individual disease or personal disease, but an environmental and social one to a much greater degree. After all, did a third of parents and children choose to become obese 20 years ago? I work with the HEALTHi Kids project directed by the Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency and support this project to improve community health by promoting Healthy Eating and Active Living Through policy and practice Initiatives for Kids.

Childhood obesity, on a national level has quadrupled since the 1970's. Today 1 in 4 children in New York is obese, through NYS WIC data, although no true measure of the burden of overweight and obesity among children and adolescents in NYS is unknown. Childhood Obesity is associated with serious health problems including hypertension, obstructive sleep apnea, asthma, and type 2 Diabetes, a condition until recently was seen only in adults. Obesity in childhood increases the risk for death and disability from heart disease and cancer in adulthood. Further childhood obesity is associated with academic problems and low self-esteem.

A little known fact is that while obese children and adolescent are likely over nourished from the excess calories they take in for what the expend, obese youth are many times malnourished from the standpoint of essential vitamins and nutrients. Research from the Department of Pediatrics at the U of R has shown obese youth actually had higher rates of iron deficiency and anemia than normal weight peers.

The actions around food policy in this state is not only to help increase awareness and access to healthier foods and food options, but also to limit the unhealthy food items that are competing with those healthier options from our state agriculture community.

A next major focus of the council needs to go beyond the point of increasing consumer awareness and knowledge about health eating. The point of improved access is far more essential than can be appreciated. Geographic data show the protective effects of close/proximal access to supermarkets and public markets against the prevalence of obesity. Research conducted by the U of R, that was conducted in this community, show that poor, urban adults have the knowledge on, and understand the importance of improved nutrition and physical activity. At the same time, these interviewees report it is the access such opportunities that is the major barrier to adults/families from adopting healthier lifestyles.

In closing, I would like to again thank the NYS Council on Food Policy for providing the opportunity to speak with you. Your commitment to maximizing collaborations and engaging the NYS community into a conversation about how we can get our kids to be more healthy and active is one that we support and stand behind.

Thank you.
Stephen Cook, MD, MPH
stephen_cook@urmc.rochester.edu

Specific points:

- Obese kids are malnourished and often deficient in essential vitamins and minerals.
- Environmental access, in terms of proximity to health food markets and limiting excess exposure to fast food outlets and un-healthy food items.
- Schools have the capability to improve eating and nutrition by food options they offer but are hampered by financial distractions of unhealthy and competing ala cart foods and vending.
- The issue of obesity and poor access to nutritious foods has the same face as the issues of health care disparities and the underserved children and families across this state.

MARTHA GOODSELL

Dear Commissioner Hooker and Other Members of the NYS Council on Food Policy,

Today I am here to address the needs of small-scale and direct-market livestock farmers focusing specifically on the issue of livestock processing, which through ongoing USDA-inspected plant closings and other factors has reached the level of a crisis for numerous NY farmers. As the Commissioner is aware, I along with numerous others, have been pushing to have these needs addressed for a long time. Last fall Dr. Tatiana Stanton and I were asked to submit a proposal for Cornell Small Farm funding. With this mini-grant a work team was formed which evaluated the difficulties these farmers and processors face and developed suggestions for New York State to assist these farmers. I'd like to share with you the broad themes that have emerged from our numerous conversations, meetings and surveys addressing ways that New York State can assist this growing but frustrated agricultural sector.

1. There is a need for more workers in the slaughtering and processing industry. From inspectors at the federal and state level to individuals on the packing room floor, there is a shortage of labor, especially in New York. We recommend the following:
   - Thoroughly evaluate the reason for the chronic shortage of USDA and NYSDAM FSIS inspectors. Aggressively recruit additional inspectors.
   - Create a BOCES meat cutting program for students at the high school level.
   - Establish and support SUNY meat science programs. Ensure that at least one SUNY school is operational at all times. (In the near future, Cornell and Cobleskill may be closed at same time).
   - Allow processors to be trained under "agricultural training programs" with the designated funds.

2. There is a need for New York to provide technical assistance and general outreach. We recommend the following:
   - Expand staff at NYSDAM and create a designated meat program, include both training and Q&A Assistance positions.
   - Compile an updated list of slaughterhouses and processors. Put in map form. Put both versions on NYSDAM website. (We have the list complied but need your cooperation to post the data.)
   - Assist plants that wish to transfer from custom to USDA inspection with the process. Provide transition directives, expeditors, and/or create a "How to Transition" manual.
   - Assist with HACCP and SOP planning, implementation and operation.
   - Develop free or low-cost user-friendly software program that facilitates the process and captures the required HACCP data.
   - Create HACCP alternatives for small and very small plants. Consider end product testing.

3. There is a need for funding as FSA, IDA/LDC and conventional loans are often not available. We suggest:
   - Public funds be provided in the form of subsidies, grants or revolving loan funds for plant expansion, renovation or transition.
   - Requesting the USDA to expand Rural Development programs so that they can be used by processing industries.
   - Consider creating tax credits for investment (infrastructure development) in local food systems.
   - Create a list of funding sources available for infrastructure development and make it available.

4. There are barriers to moving product to markets. We recommend New York:
   - Allow products from state inspected facilities to cross state lines if the final destination remains instate. Farmers can not travel to Green Markets through PA or NJ.
   - Allow product (in particular, 5-A processed chickens) to be shipped UPS if going from upstate downstate, despite the fact that it might cross state lines in doing so to reach its final destination.
   - Allow boxed meat to travel with produce in a single refrigerated truck.

5. There are regulations that need clarification.

- Clarify dentition. The teeth on grass fed animals wear faster than animals on other feeds, and age affidavits are not being accepted, despite the ruling that the paperwork should supercede dentition (teeth aging) on these animals. Backbones of animals near, but under, 30 months of age are being removed needlessly. These animals need the 30 months to finish on grass.
- Clarify shared animal ownership and the legality of livestock CSAs. As an owner sharing in the profits and losses of an animal, custom processing should be allowed, the same as would be true for other animal owners.

6. There are regulations that need to be created or expanded. We request the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets join with others to lobby at the federal level in support of NY farmers and processors to:

- Scrap the one-size-fits-all model for rule making and establish rules based on size, through put, or on risk-assessment.
- Broaden custom slaughter exemption to include the sale of retail cuts to on-farm end-user customers.
- Expand field harvest provisions to other species.
- Allow for mobile USDA slaughter.
- Expand mobile USDA processing.
- Allow EBT purchases of meat at farmer's markets.
- End ethanol support and other market distorting programs which have increased the price of livestock feed and reduced the value of our product.

7. NY Markets are impacted by very large national and global food businesses. New York can assist their farmers and producers in this global market place by taking the following actions:

- Establish a "Buy NY FIRST" campaign.
- Request full disclosure of meat recalls and release all details to the public.
- Scrutinize imported products to the same degree as domestic products.
- Enforce collection of the penalties on recalls and fines on illegally imported product.
- Use penalties and fines to fund local infrastructure development.

8. Finally, and most importantly, reinstate the New York State Meat Inspection Program or at least conduct a feasibility study to determine whether state inspection is feasible and if it is the best option to serve the growing NY small farmer and direct-marketing livestock industry.

Over the past fifty years, our local farm and food system infrastructure has been all but destroyed, especially in the area of livestock farming, because of the shift away from small-scale to industrial-scale production, processing, and distribution. But consumer demand is turning the tide. Concerns over food safety, animal welfare, environmental health and general sustainability have spurred consumers to buying local. New York farmers could be well positioned to fill the needs of food safety, food security, community health, and economic prosperity for all of New York, if it not for the disassembled infrastructure, and the barriers of scale which prohibit our success.

Time is of the essence. These recommendations need to be taken seriously. To support New York's small scale and direct-market livestock farmers and contribute to the growing buy-local momentum the State must act immediately. We are available to discuss with you any of these recommendations in greater detail.

On behalf of the NY Small Farm Work Team on Livestock Processing, thank you for listening and thank you in advance for acting upon the recommendations we have provided.

Sincerely,

Martha Goodsell
NY Small Farm Work Team on Livestock Processing, Team Co-Leader

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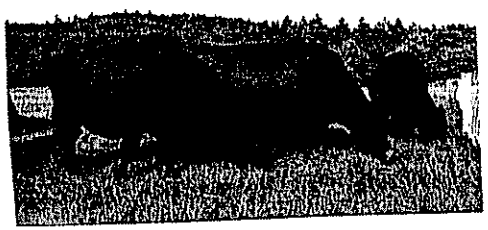
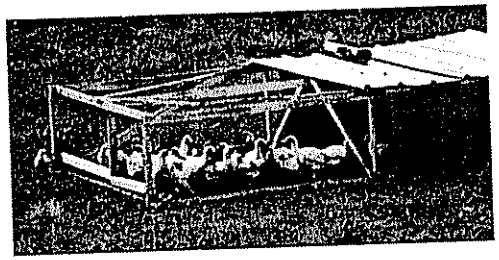
Why a State-wide Work Team on Livestock Processing?

1. To improve both communication and understanding among livestock farmers, small scale processors, and regulatory agencies
2. To publicize current livestock processing resources and assemble additional resources as needed
3. To identify current challenges in livestock processing, address possible solutions and opportunities for NYS farmers and processors, and create a statewide work plan for action





Developing a Plan of Action

As a first step the Work Team is seeking input from farmers, processors, and relevant agencies through outreach at conferences and a new list serve, LivestockProcessing-L.

With input from stakeholders, we will come to a consensus on some of the major regulatory barriers facing small scale livestock farmers and create a plan of action to improve processing infrastructures and regulations for NYS livestock farmers.

Toward this end, we will also solicit input from representatives of regulatory agencies and legislative bodies.

LivestockProcessing-L

To stay informed about slaughter and processing issues and share your own views, we urge you to join our list serve forum.

Benefits include:

- Sharing processing resources
- Discussing barriers to effective processing and potential solutions
- Publicizing regional efforts to improve or expand slaughter and processing facilities
- Disseminating news and Action Alerts pertaining to livestock slaughter and small scale processing of animal products

To join the list serve, send an email to **LivestockProcessing-L-request@cornell.edu** leaving the subject line blank. The body of the message should be a single word:
Join
Please include your full name and email address in the "From:" line.

Let us know how we can help by answering these questions...

1. Are there slaughter, processing and/or regulatory problems that make it difficult for you, or the farmers you work with, to get product to market? Tell us your specific issues and ideas for resolving them.
2. Currently 28 states have a state meat inspection program. NY is not one of them. The opportunity to allow state inspected meats to cross state lines is being considered for inclusion in the new Farm Bill. How do you see this change impacting your business and that of other NY livestock farmers?
3. Slaughter and processing regulations and their legal interpretations can sometimes be complex and confusing. Has this been your experience and has it affected your ability or confidence to market your products? Provide us specific examples and suggestions.

Send replies to: SFWT on Livestock Processing, Rm 114 Morrison Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853 or TLS7@cornell.edu

Work Team Members:

- Dr. Tatiana Stanton, Cornell University Animal Science/Farmer
- Tracy Frisch, Farm Advocate/Journalist
- Martha Goodsell, NY Farms!/Farmer
- Dr. James Hayes, Sapbush Hollow Farm
- Marty Broccoli, CCE Oneida County
- Lisa Engelbert, NOFA-NY/Farmer
- Tom Gallagher, CCE Albany County
- Kathleen Harris, Northeast Livestock Processing Service Company/Farmer
- Jim McLaughlin, Farmer
- Audrey Reith, CCE Orange County
- Ed Roggen, Small Scale Processor/Farmer
- Eric Shelley, Meat Processor and Manager, SUNY Cobleskill Meats Lab
- Denny Shaw, Cornell University Meats Lab/Farmer
- Kirby Selkirk, NY Farm Bureau/Farmer

New York Small Farms Work Team on Livestock Processing Issues

A new state-wide work team to assist livestock farmers and small processors with livestock processing issues

Funded in part by the Cornell Small Farms Program

CHRIS HARTMAN

Neighborhood-Based Farmers Markets

The South Wedge Farmers' Market and The Westside Farmers Market
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The South Wedge Farmers' Market and The Westside Farmers' Market are working to create holistic and synergistic solutions to interrelated community health issues with individual, social, ecologic, and economic components. We see our model of producer-only, principled neighborhood-based farmers' markets as an important piece of a framework of support for local farms and as very effective tools to increase the availability, access, and affordability of healthful foods for urban residents, dramatically enhance the social activity of our neighborhood communities, and build grassroots approaches to economic development.

Urban residents increasingly confront issues associated with access to fresh and nutritious foods, connections to local agriculture, neighborhood-based social activity, localized efforts of economic development, and general neighborhood health status. At the same time, essential to the sustainability of small, ecologically sound farms, and the rural communities they are part of, is a viable market wherein agricultural products can receive a fair price and farmers are able to make living wages. These needs provide the context for a common solution: an effective, organized strategy to connect local, ecologically sound farms to a viable urban marketplace in a way that enhances food availability and security, public events, community arts, social capital, neighborhood based economic development, and general neighborhood health status.

In 2007, a group of community residents, local farmers, and professionals in the field of agriculture and food came together to create The South Wedge Farmers' Market (SWFM), situated in an urban neighborhood in Rochester. Through this partnership and leadership, SWFM has established itself as an extremely successful market for both farmers and community residents, and has modeled one approach to the above-mentioned strategy. This small, principled farmers' market far exceeded the expectations of the participating farmers, its customers, and the organizing group. It produced more than $100,000 in sales for the16 selected farms and food producers, a wonderful shopping and social experience for an average of 700 neighborhood residents on Thursday evenings throughout the season, a venue for local businesses to connect with the community, a place for local musicians and artists to perform and display, and a genuine connection between Rochester and its surrounding rural and agricultural communities.

Our current project represents the expanding vision of this effort to include the organization, establishment, and running of another neighborhood-based farmers' market in Rochester, The Westside Farmers' Market in the southwest community of Rochester. Such a project builds off of our developed relationships with area farmers, our conversations with neighborhood leaders in Rochester, and the conviction that this model

has a significant contribution to make to the sustainability and quality of life for both rural and urban communities.

Additionally we are incubating numerous innovations associated with the farmers markets such as direct delivery, meals to take home, farmers' markets as distribution hubs, a Community Supported Market project involving a workplace-based delivery membership program, youth engagement, satellite stands out in surrounding neighborhoods, and many other activities aimed at the profitability of the market for participating farms and the impact of the market within urban neighborhoods.

I mention all of this because we believe that farmers' markets have great potential for both the support of local, sustainable agriculture as well efforts of public health and urban revitalization. This is also the rational behind some of the policy we hope to support.

Although there are many possible areas of conversation here we want to just mention three:

First, programs that work to support, promote, and fund farmers' markets like ours are efforts that leverage significant, existing investment of both time and money and go a long way to directly support regional agriculture and access issues for consumers. We specifically support the grant programs directly or indirectly from USDA that support farmers' markets and we would encourage the enhancement of such programs as far as total moneys allocated and their accessibility to efforts like ours that currently operate as all volunteer projects with limited capacity to apply and oversee major grant programs.

Second, both of our markets accept Food Stamp Benefits and we have a central EBT Wireless terminal with most of our vendors participating in the program. We believe that farmers' markets are a significant community resource for low income families in regards to nutritional health and access to fresh, healthy foods. Programs like NY Fresh Checks that double the first five dollars someone spends on food stamps not only directly impacts the health of low income families and puts good, local food on their table, it also provides our market with some very convincing incentives to enhance our outreach and education by bring many more people to the market giving them the necessary experience to really consider the market as something that makes sense for them. We support the increased funding of such initiatives.

And Third, although we do not have any answers just yet ourselves, we find ourselves within the created confusion around food labeling, organic certification, and others, and we are working to provide clear and honest information to consumers that want to be able to make "good" decisions. Without going into the lengthy debate around this issue we support the consideration of the differentiation of small family farmers practicing organic principles from cooperate, industrial organics and perhaps more regionality represented within labeling.