AGRICULTURE NEWS
New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets
10B Airline Drive • Albany, New York 12235 • www.agmkt.state.ny.us

CONTACT:
Jessica Chittenden Ziehm
518-457-3136

FOR RELEASE:
Immediately, Wednesday
June 15, 2011

NYS COUNCIL ON FOOD POLICY TO MEET JUNE 29 IN ALBANY

The Governor's New York State Council on Food Policy will hold its annual summer meeting on Wednesday, June 29, 2011 in Room #250 (Blue Room) of the State Capitol Building, Albany.

The June 29th meeting, which will take place from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., is open to the public for observation. A public comment period will be held from 3:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Those wishing to attend and present comments must RSVP no later than June 27, 2011 by calling the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets at 518-485-7728 or emailing nyscfp@agmkt.state.ny.us. Public comments must be limited to 5 minutes and a hard copy of comments is required to be submitted to the Council at the time of presentation.

The New York State Council on Food Policy is tasked to establish new food policies for the State that will help ensure the availability of safe, fresh, nutritious and affordable food for all New Yorkers, and expanding agricultural food production. The Council's recommended State food policies focus on four key issues areas: maximizing participation in, and support for, food and nutrition assistance programs; strengthening the connection between local food products and consumers; supporting safe, efficient and profitable agricultural food production and food retail infrastructure; and fostering a culture of healthy and local eating for all New York State residents.

More information on the Council and its past recommendations to the Governor can be found at www.nyscfp.org.

###

AGRICULTURE NEWS
New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets
10B Airline Drive • Albany, New York 12235 • www.agmkt.state.ny.us

CONTACT:
Michael Moran
518-457-3136

FOR RELEASE:
Immediately,
October 31, 2011

NYS COUNCIL ON FOOD POLICY TO MEET NOV. 9 IN ORISKANY

The Governor's New York State Council on Food Policy will hold its annual fall meeting on Wednesday, Nov. 9, 2011 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in the Cornell Cooperative Extension Office, 121 Second Street Oriskany, New York.

The Council will discuss past and current state food policy recommendations for the Governor's consideration. The meeting is open to the public for observation. A public comment period will be held from 11:40 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. Those wishing to present comments must RSVP no later than November 7, 2011 by calling the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets at 518-485-7728 or emailing nyscfp@agriculture.ny.gov. Comments must be limited to five minutes and a hard copy of public comments is required to be submitted to the Council at the time of presentation.

The Council on Food Policy is tasked to establish new food policies for New York State that will help ensure the availability of safe, fresh, nutritious and affordable food for all New Yorkers, and expanding agricultural food production. The Council's recommended food policies focus on key issues areas: maximizing participation in food and nutrition assistance programs; strengthening the connection between local food products and consumers; supporting efficient and profitable agricultural food production and food retail infrastructure; and increasing consumer awareness and knowledge about healthy eating; and improving consumer access to safe and nutritious foods.

More information on the Council and its past recommendations to the Governor can be found at www.nyscfp.org.

###

NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL ON FOOD POLICY
Recommendations and Action Items 2007, 2008, 2009

Key: Rec (yr) -- 1(07) is the first recommendation from year 2007; &&& --- same Key Issue Area, new year

Key Issue Area 1: Maximize participation in, and support for, food and nutrition assistance programs

1 (07) Increase education about assistance programs and benefits using traditional and non-traditional outreach strategies such as in job placement offices, places of worship, schools, drug stores, and farmer's markets;

2 (07) Encourage increased collaboration among State agencies administering the programs by co-enrolling participants for benefits and/or making enrollment more user friendly;

3 (07) Create incentives to purchase nutritious food with food stamps;

4 (07) Explore options for ensuring that food assistance programs have adequate quality and stable quantities of resources needed to meet demands;

5 (07) Increase number of markets / outlets that are capable of receiving food stamps;

6 (07) Perform an assessment of methods to ease program participation in food and nutrition assistance programs and identify strategies to address the challenges.

&&&

1 (08) Increase public awareness of and education about assistance programs and benefits using traditional outreach strategies… Expand collaborative efforts with existing advocacy networks.

- Identify programs that already have existing funding for education and outreach. Quantify the existing funding amounts and resources. Recommend ways of utilizing funds/resources for alternative or increased outreach that are compatible with and sensitive to expressed community needs.
- Prepare a user-friendly directory of existing State, federal and non-profit food and nutrition assistance programs for future public dissemination.
- Develop standard operating procedures and provide to the staff and volunteers in community-based organizations, at emergency feeding sites, farmers' markets, schools and other food and nutrition assistance programs.
- Identify institutional resources (public and private) that would assist with the implementation of items above.

2 (08) Increase collaboration and consistency among State agencies and not-for-profit organizations administering assistance programs by seeking ways to co-enroll participants for benefits and/or making the enrollment process more consumer-friendly.

- Explore all opportunities to eliminate finger-imaging from the food stamps application process.
- Explore all opportunities to allow phone interviews for food stamp application and shore up consistency in implementation.
- Explore all opportunities to simplify/streamline application forms. OTDA's *myBenefits* program should be capable of increasing data exchanges across agencies.
- Create a check list for financial assistance packages that can be adapted for all food insecure populations.

3 (08) Resources at Food Banks and Emergency Feeding Programs: Ensure that food assistance and emergency feeding programs have adequate quality (nutritional value) and stable quantities of resources needed to meet demands.

- Collate data that documents food security needs of NY residents.
- Based on data – recommend that a stable, consistent and guaranteed State funding source for emergency food assistance and feeding programs be in place for planning purposes.
- Explore options for increasing funding indexed to inflation for government funded emergency food programs.
- Explore options for providing funding and other support to food banks for the purchase of more fresh, local produce for distribution to residents.

4 (08) Food Assistance at Markets and Outlets: Increase the number of markets and outlets that are capable of receiving food stamps and other food assistance currency.

- Support and explore options to increase food assistance programs and efforts that provide incentives for clients to purchase healthy, local foods. Initiatives include: Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP); "Fresh Checks" coupon incentives at the farmers' market; promotion of universal portable electronic benefit transfer (EBT) technology at farmers' markets, grocery stores, farm stands and green carts; WIC Vegetable and Fruit Voucher

&&&

1 (09) Increase Public Awareness of Food and Nutrition Programs: Broaden support for outreach and public awareness efforts that connect individuals or families in need to assistance programs and benefits being offered by state agencies, non-profit, and community based organizations.

- Broaden support for programs that increase public awareness about and access to assistance. Programs include: Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance's (OTDA) *myBenefits;* United Way "211" Information and Referral System; and Nutrition Outreach and Education Program (NOEP)
- Explore options to advise Food Stamp/SNAP and WIC recipients of the increasing opportunities to use benefits for fresh food at farmers' markets.
- Promote anti-hunger outreach and awareness initiatives in hospitals and health care facilities, and specifically state-operated facilities.

2 (09) Facilitate Access to Food and Nutrition Benefits by Food Insecure Individuals: Encourage the continued development and expansion of Food Stamp Program/SNAP modernization efforts and policy modifications that can expand access and increase participation, including greater use of technology, identification of barriers to enrollment and the implementation of relevant federal waivers.

3 (09) Expand Food and Nutrition 'Electronic Benefit Transfer' Redemption Option. Urge the federal government to implement universal electronic benefit transfer (EBT) technology at fresh food markets and outlets, either legislatively or administratively.

Key Issue Area 2: Strengthen the connection between local food products and consumers

7 (07) Support initiatives in schools for healthy food choices: look to change consumption behavior of youth as well as introduce youth to food system dynamics (incorporate farm and/or food related topics into curriculum);

8 (07) Create avenues for local farmers to produce for state institutions and other food service programs (schools, universities, nursing homes);

9 (07) Address volume requirements on buying- promote aggregate selling/buying of produce;

10 (07) Research the feasibility of expanding local/community food security initiatives to the state level;

11 (07) Consider culture, age and geographic region of all consumers to best serve their needs.

&&&

5 (08) Institutional Purchasing: Create networking systems for New York farmers and producers to provide fresh, nutritious food products for state institutions and other food service programs that purchase mass quantities of food on a routine basis (for example: schools, universities, nursing homes, prisons, day care centers, emergency feeding programs and government facilities).

- Develop an electronic database that will serve as a clearinghouse of producers, processors, associations, and consumers
- Explore and analyze existing storage, distribution, associations and "Market Maker" type models for replication. Consider bulk food drop-off/distribution centers such as Food Bank trucks picking up/delivering farm products (example: Foodlink, Rochester). Consider association models such as: Northeast Organic Farming Association, Apple Growers Association; Vegetable Growers Association; AgriMark, Upstate Farms, and Dairy Marketing Services. Explore back-loading and cold storage agreements with food retailers.
- Review, analyze, comment upon legislation that relates to increasing local food products to State institutions

6 (08) Local Foods in Schools: Support initiatives in schools that promote healthy, local food choices that improve overall child nutrition by changing consumption behavior of youth and that introduce youth to New York State food system dynamics.

- Compile, review and continue to promote existing State and local programs that introduce youth to food system dynamics.
- Employ the provision in The 2008 Farm Bill ("Title IV: Nutrition") that encourages purchasing local food products and allows school food service directors to specify geographic region for their fruits and vegetable purchases.

7 (08) Healthy School Environment: Ensure that children are receiving nutritious, well balanced meals in schools.

- Continue to support the Healthy Schools Act (HSA) (A.8642).
- Adopt scientifically based national standards for school meals when they become available.
- Increase state funding for school meal programs whenever possible. A suggested target is an increase of $0.15 per meal within three years (by State fiscal year April 2012).
- Consider provisions that could be added to proposed legislation. The "Local Farms-Healthy Kids Act" (SB 6483; enacted June 2008) from the State of Washington outlines policy that:
  - Eliminates low-cost bidding requirements for school purchases of State grown food and allows schools to adopt price preferences for local food;
  - Requires development of food procurement procedures for State entities to facilitate purchasing of State grown food;
  - Enhances the Farm-to-School Program by establishing 2.5 positions in the Department of Agriculture dedicated to increasing participation;
  - Establishes a farmer's market technology program that provides for wireless technology (EBT) at farmer's markets; and
  - Establishes Farm-to-Food Bank pilot programs.
- Seek to increase producer incentives for nutritious NY added-value foods ("grab and go" prepackaged foods) to be available such as apple slices in schools.
- Continue to pursue and expand participation in USDA federally funded programs such as the "Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program" (FF&VP) that increases access to nutritious foods for school children and encourages expanded nutrition education programs.

8 (08) Resources to Support Local Purchasing: Assemble, disseminate and encourage adoption/utilization of resources that will support purchasing and serving of fresh, nutritious, local products at schools.

- Assemble, disseminate encourage adoption/utilization of resources such as:
  - "Safe Handling Procedures" for school food service directors for fresh produce.
  - "Produce Specification Guide" with sizing standards for food service directors
  - "Directory" of regional producers and distributors will be developed for food service directors by the NY Farm-to-School Coordinating Committee.

- "Good Agricultural Practices" (GAP) and "Good Handling Practices" (GHP) will be formatted for producers that supply food to schools.
- "ServSafe" or similar protocol that heightens awareness and policies assuring that only healthy workers handle and prepare food for consumption

9 (08) Community Purchasing*:* Support leadership and infrastructure development of community food security programs and networks.

- Compile and categorize models of community food security initiatives and networks. Create state and regional directory thereof for public distribution (online). Promote regional and/or statewide replication of successful models. Encourage the adaptation or expansion of these programs to consumer organizations such as nutrition programs, restaurants and schools (such as "restaurant supported agriculture" and "school supported agriculture").

10 (08) Farmers' Markets: Encourage more permanent farmers' markets in more neighborhoods through access to funding sources; training in market and facilities management; coordinated efforts to increase producer participation in year round markets; and partnerships that increase consumer access to the markets. Increasing coordination between transportation authorities, market managers and/or underserved populations is a priority.

- Add bus stops on an existing line near a market; and/or encouraging new markets to locate near existing intermodal mass transportation hubs in food deserts. Evaluate the mass transportation plan surrounding farmers' markets.
- Increased collaboration opportunities in conjunction with state and non-profit entities: The Farmers' Market Federation provides training for market managers in a wide variety of subjects to improve a market's management capacity. The Small Business Administration can be helpful in the business and financial planning for year round markets. Facilities management training and mentoring programs are often available through non-profit organizations.
- Advise/help farmers interested in making changes in their production planning and systems to enable them to produce some products year round.
- Identify ways to increase use of electronic benefit transfer (EBT) cards and WIC checks in farmers' markets.
- Engage a demographer, or use existing resources to access information and techniques useful to market site decisions such as census and mapping data
- Consider supporting the expansion of viable non-permanent market options that penetrate into underserved areas

&&&

4 (09) Support Community and School-Based Food Security Initiatives: Support initiatives that empower individuals to meet food supply needs and nutritional goals, while developing fundamental agriculture skills. Include: community gardening; school gardens and Farm to School initiatives.

5 (09) Define 'Local Food' and Set Procurement Goals of Local Food: It is recommended that the state facilitate the increase of local food procurement at state agencies and state-owned and supported institutions, facilities, and other state-supported meal programs by promoting procurement goals of local food at such agencies, institutions, facilities and programs.

- Accept the definition of 'local food' to mean food products that are grown and/or processed by New York citizens or businesses located within the borders of New York State. 'Regional food' refers to any food product that is raised, produced, and distributed in the locality or region in which the final product is marketed, so that the total distance that the product is transported is less than 400 miles from the origin of the product. - Recognize that minimizing the time and the distance that both the fresh food travels and the consumers travel can help reduce environmental pollution and increase nutritional benefits.
- Set a goal that by 2020, 20 *(or more)* percent of all food and food products purchased by state agencies and state–owned facilities shall be local food products when feasible. This includes facilities for persons with mental health and developmental disabilities, correctional facilities, and public universities.
- Support and encourage the goal that by 2020, 10 *(or more)* percent of food and food products purchased by entities funded in part or in whole by state dollars and which spend more than $25,000 per year on food or food products for its students, residents, or clients shall be local food when feasible. This includes, but is not limited to: public schools, child care facilities, after-school programs, nursing homes and hospitals.

- Establish that when a state contract for purchase of food or food products is to be awarded to the lowest responsible bidder, an otherwise qualified bidder who will fulfill the contract through the use of locally produced agricultural products may be given preference over other bidders. This is provided that the cost included in the bid of locally produced agricultural products is not more than 10 percent greater than the cost included in a bid that is not for locally produced agricultural products.
- Support the development of 1) a system for state agencies and state-owned facilities that purchase food and food products to identify the percentage of locally produced agricultural products purchased throughout the fiscal year; and 2) track and report locally produced agricultural products purchased on an annual basis.
- Encourage state 'Requests for Applications' (RFAs) to include bonus points to applicants that include 'buying local' initiatives.

6 (09) Promote Healthy School Environments: Support initiatives that promote healthy lifestyles and food system awareness, and ensure that children receive nutritious well-balanced meals while at school.

- Explore the ability to increase state contribution to school meals reimbursements by 15 cents per meal within three years. Protect the existing state contribution to Child Nutrition Programs from any further cuts.
- Promote the implementation of the Institute of Medicine (IOM) nutritional standards for school meals within current regulations as is feasible. Recognize that comprehensive implementation of the nutritional standards in schools will need to be phased in over time.
- Support the collaborative efforts of the New York State Farm to School Program and the National Farm to School Program to modify the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh program. It is proposed that a revised focus of this program be on purchasing local products.
- Take a proactive role to establish 'Breakfast in the Classroom' programs. Support and encourage school to establish alternative methods of serving breakfast such as offering "Grab and Go" breakfast products, extending the time for offering breakfast and universal breakfast.

7 (09) Support Direct Marketing Initiatives and Food System Networking

- Conduct research about strategies that connect consumers with farmers who direct market their products (i.e. farmers' markets) that will work in rural, suburban and urban communities and with a broad base of consumers within each community. Such strategies may include various means of transportation, outreach and incentive programs.
- Continue training for both farmers and markets in production strategies and business planning that will extend the season, making New York State grown products available to consumers on a year-round basis.
- Promote food system networking. Encourage and support agency, independent and/or community-based networking (online or other) that aim to connect local food producers to consumers and markets, that facilitate wholesale and/or aggregate purchasing.

Key Issue Area 3: Support safe, efficient and profitable food production and food retail infrastructure

12 (07) Encourage local products procurement preference when possible;

13 (07) Foster partnerships with grocers to drive local preference;

14 (07) Improve marketing, promotion of nutritious products- research models of market development and behavioral economics;

15 (07) Perform an assessment of obstacles and methods for easing business development in NY;

16 (07) Address obstacles of marketing retail food products in target areas (urban and rural) such as transportation / delivery issues and lack of access to grocery stores / supermarkets

17 (07) Explore possibilities to increase regional food processing infrastructure;

18 (07) Seek opportunities to maximize utilization of incubator programs and cooperatives.

&&&

11 (08) Buy Local: Expand "buy local" partnerships within the food industry to meet demand for local preference such as the Pride of NY program and other regional efforts.

- Expand producer affiliation with the Pride of NY program through expanding membership; track participation through measurement of farmer participants.
- Create a synergy between the Pride of NY and the buy local movement through marketing plans, private industry initiatives, and greater ties to the I Love NY program.
- Provide increased training and education for supermarket personnel to better promote and communicate the goals of the Pride of NY program.
- Explore options to include and increase wholesale distributors associations with the Pride of NY program.

12 (08) NYS Food Industry: Address ways to improve production, distribution and marketing of, and increase demand for New York State food products.

- Support sustainable production strategies and research that help farmers remain competitive and viable such as organic, integrated pest management (IPM), and nutrient management programs.
- Work with buyers and producers to identify opportunities to grow and market a greater diversity of crops that take advantage of a growing and diverse consumer population.
- Increase demand for local food by encouraging Buy Local policies at state-run institutions such as schools, hospitals, senior centers and prisons.
- Provide farmer, food processor, and farm and food workers educational opportunities, technical assistance and financial assistance to enable them to perform "best practices" as they pertain to food safety measures as is now being required by some distributors and retailers; include education regarding worker safety measures.
- Work with identified federal funding sources to encourage the adoption of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certification among the farm community
- Clearly identify industry needs. Perform inventory and analysis of facilities that include, but are not limited to: cold storage facilities; grower cooperatives; processing facilities; distribution centers; food-related micro-enterprises and/or incubator kitchens.
    - Support retail initiatives such as Healthy Bodegas, Green Carts, and infrastructure initiatives such as the revitalization of Hunt's Point Terminal Market, NYC Wholesale Farmers' Market for the restaurant/small scale retailer's trade, and regional markets.
    - Research innovative/alternative food distribution models such as trains, barges and the Food Bank distribution/storage infrastructure to gauge appropriateness for small, medium and large farm operations
    - Consider initiatives such as: Vermont Agency of Agriculture's mobile quick-freezing unit that allows farmers to freeze up to 600 pounds of berries and produce a minute, thus extending the marketing period and reducing waste.
    - Support continued development of initiatives that package produce ("grab and go" fruits and vegetables) for children's consumption in school and daycare such as apple slices, carrot coins and grapes.
- Utilize GIS mapping technology and census data to enable farmers to more effectively target markets and develop more efficient distribution models.
- Identify existing grant programs such as: USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant Funds; Farm Viability Institute Grants; NYS ESDC Agriculture Development Funds; and NYSERDA which are most important for addressing needs identified above. For example, NYSERDA can assist in the prescribing and funding of energy efficient standards for both facilities and distribution systems.

13 (08) Positive Business Climate: Keep a positive business climate in New York by addressing obstacles to and methods for easing food and agriculture business development in New York State such as: tax and regulatory issues; land and energy input costs; and labor needs.

- Support comprehensive immigration reform that includes overhaul of the guest worker program (H-2a) and incorporates key features of the Ag Jobs Bill such as earned adjustment to legal status for experienced agricultural workers and a solution to the dairy agriculture labor issues.

- Encourage initiatives for new and beginning farmers; and the expansion/growth opportunities for established farmers seeking new added value and expanded agricultural operations.
- Maintain existing tax credit programs for farmers and seek changes to the Empire State Development Corporation programs that will ensure agriculture is fully eligible for all economic development and small business assistance using metrics that recognize the full range of benefits that agriculture provides and eliminate unnecessary paperwork.
- Identify duplicative federal, State, and local inspection processes.
- Maintain full support for agricultural districts program, which is critical for the preservation of farmland and farms in New York. Increase farmland protection funding and planning assistance, to meet demand and fully integrate farmland protection into the State's Smart Growth efforts and the NYS Open Space Conservation Plan.
- Compile information regarding agricultural programs and institutions, particularly business planning and financing entities, and ensure that such information is readily accessible on websites.

14 (08) Marketing Obstacles: Address obstacles to marketing nutritious food products in underserved areas (urban and rural) such as transportation/distribution issues, and lack of consumer access to grocery stores and supermarkets.

- Produce or obtain a resource that provides a manageable description of the spectrum of food retail in NYS such as: supermarkets, food cooperatives, farmers' markets, community supported agriculture, Healthy Bodega, and Green Cart initiatives.
- Through consultation with industry representatives and others, provide standard definitions of the terms used to describe food retail entities and related terminology such as: grocery stores, supermarket, and food desert.
- Review the recommendations of public and private initiatives such as the NYS Environmental Justice Interagency Task Force, Economic Security Cabinet, Smart Growth Cabinet, Organic Advisory Task Force that are working on similar issues simultaneously. Assess the role that CFP can play to implement concurring recommendations and facilitate discussion with the key stakeholders.
- Consider efficacy of proposals that may alleviate the decline in neighborhood grocery stores that result in limited access to affordable, nutritious foods including, but are not limited to:
    - Incentives for small retailers *(defined here as: less than 2,000 sq ft; or less than 8 workers)* to carry local, nutritious foods and for farmers to sell to small retailers located in underserved areas;
    - Tax breaks or funding for refrigeration used for nutritious foods in stores located in underserved areas; and
    - Economic development opportunities for food retailers such as a revolving loan fund for grocery store development and retention in identified food deserts.

15 (08) Food Production Capacity: Explore ways to increase utilization of existing food production capacity regionally.

- Support infrastructure to allow farm products to be preserved for year round sales. Infrastructure to be considered include, but are not limited to: processing and packaging facilities, community and incubator kitchens and mobile livestock slaughterhouses.
- Identify current food processing infrastructure both for wholesale and small scale production, and ensure that food processors are afforded assistance/access to all appropriate ESDC programs.
- Collect and disseminate information on regional/community food shed network efforts (growing, processing, distributing, and marketing capacities). Help facilitate these efforts when possible.
- Identify and pursue collaboration opportunities with community based organizations or grassroots initiatives that may secure independent funding and are already actively pursuing concurrent goals.

&&&

8 (09) Promote Locally Grown and Produced Food Products: Strive for consistent consumer messages that convey the increased nutritional, economic, ecological, social and food safety benefits of purchasing local products.

- Support initiatives that elevate the presence of the Pride of New York program.
- Evaluate the marketing potential of using 'food miles' or 'foodprint' information in retail outlets to inform consumers about the distance foods have travelled and the economic and environmental importance of reducing food miles by purchasing local products.

- Designate a 'Buy Local' week New York State - when individuals, families, restaurants, institutions and markets are encouraged to celebrate and promote the benefits of fresh, nutritious agricultural food products, agricultural land as a natural resource, and local farmers.

9 (09) Improve the Production, Distribution, and Marketing Aspects of the Food Industry

- Support sustainable production strategies and research that help farmers remain competitive and viable such as organic, integrated pest management (IPM), season extension technologies, and nutrient management programs.
- Consider implications of a warming climate and how New York agriculture can best adapt to these changes, including evaluation of new crop varieties, assessment of impacts of severe weather events, and adequate preparation for the arrival of new pests.
- Support the re-development of, the vital Hunts Point Terminal Produce Market as the major source of fresh produce for the New York City metropolitan region.
- Continue to support the development of the Wholesale Farmers' Market at Hunts Point
- Support initiatives that add both economic and nutritional value to New York State agricultural products through the development of new products. This includes processing and packaging initiatives that help make fresh foods more accessible and convenient.
    - Encourage New York food processors and facilities, and specifically those that receive state economic development assistance, to incorporate New York grown or produced food products.
    - Encourage food processors to use the FDA healthy food labeling guidelines (April 2008).

10 (09) Support a Positive Business Climate for the Agricultural and Food Industries: The State should act as a catalyst to the development and sustainability of the broad spectrum of the food and agriculture industry, including our large producers.

- Support agricultural economic development by finalizing the regulations and guidelines for the Upstate Agricultural Economic Development Fund and authorizing funding of up to $30 million in state fiscal year 2010-2011.
- Provide increased incentives for businesses including start-up financing; assistance for infrastructure; and assistance with administrative burdens that may impede growth such as labor, water, sewer, energy, zoning, taxes and other regulatory issues.
- Broaden eligibility of state economic development programs and tax incentives to ensure that farms and added value processing businesses can qualify.
- Ensure that state incentives for business development are linked to appropriate social, economic and environmental goals.
- Form a sub-committee or focus group to explore the role the creation of quality/good jobs would have throughout New York State's food system and the economy
- Strongly urge the Federal government to re-structure the current dairy pricing system with a long-term plan that will stabilize and support pricing in a manner that reflects the true significance of the Northeast dairy industry
- Strongly urge the Federal government to pass Comprehensive Immigration Reform.

Key Issue Area 4: Foster a culture of healthy and local eating for all New York State residents

Previously titled: Increase consumer awareness and knowledge about healthy eating; improve consumer access to safe and nutritious food

19 (07) Increase awareness of obesity and diet related diseases- focus on professionally recommended, data-driven prevention initiatives;

20 (07) Increase consumer awareness of food ingredients, nutritional value, processing and allergens through labeling and other forms of consumer outreach;

21 (07) Provide farmer / producer education opportunities about "best practices";

22 (07) Continue to educate consumers of where their food comes from and nutritional value thereof.

&&&

16 (08) Prevent and reduce obesity and diet related diseases by using professionally recommended, evidence-based prevention initiatives that focus on cultural and environmental change.

- Collect and evaluate existing programs that educate children and the public about healthy eating, accessing nutritious foods, nutrition education and healthy food preparation
- Recommend increased federal, state and private support and funding for programs
- Encourage collaboration between parallel programs.
- Promote manufacturing and marketing of affordable, nutritious quick and easy to prepare food items.
- Encourage the adoption of evidence-based guidelines establishing nutritional and dietary standards for food and beverages sold, served and offered in schools, childcare, and after school programs.

17 (08) Consumer Outreach: Increase consumer knowledge of the nutritional value of food through consumer outreach. Increase promotion of nutritious products through consistent, unified messages.

- Inventory and assess what and where consumer outreach is taking place; where gaps exist; and what is making a successful impact. Including, but not limited to: educational posters/maps in bus stops, trains, billboards; low-fat milk initiatives; demonstrations at farmers' markets; emergency food programs; grocery stores that illustrate menu-planning ideas, healthy cooking tips, and farmers' market locations; and inclusion of cultural diversity in healthy food messaging.
- Review social marketing tools such as messaging tactics and terminology used in public health and retail initiatives.
    - Evaluate how health focused initiatives stack up against the commercial promotion of non-nutritious foods.
    - Recommend consistent, positive messaging tactics and terminology that reinforce healthy eating habits and consumption of nutritious foods for all ages.
- Evaluate the impact of health focused initiatives such as, but not limited to menu labeling.
- Increase access to healthy food through retail interface with consumers.

&&&

11 (09) Proactively Address the Issue of Obesity and Diet-related Diseases: Prevent and reduce obesity and diet-related diseases by using professionally recommended, evidence-based prevention initiatives and education that focus on cultural and environmental change.

- Expand eligibility to USDA's SNAP - Ed Nutritional Education program to encompass all New York State children ages 2 -18 who are at risk for poor nutrition, episodic hunger, physical inactivity and becoming overweight or obese. Target and provide all at risk children in the state with consistent nutritional education, messages and promotions using existing SNAP-Ed curriculum, materials, and strategies in multiple settings. Settings include, but are not limited to: day care, schools, WIC clinics, emergency food locations, summer feeding sites, after-school programs, youth programs, and YMCA's. Nutrition education programs are currently available only to Food Stamp Program/SNAP eligible or participating families. Funding to expand SNAP-Ed is limited by the requirement to put up a 50% local share match to draw down federal SNAP-Ed dollars.
- Advocate that health care providers incorporate and/or increase obesity prevention and awareness messaging to patients and refer early for medical nutrition therapy. Work with state medical association to identify provider-friendly methods to accomplish this.
- Limit food marketing to children, and consider supporting a national ban on advertising targeting young children ages 2 - 8 on television
- Support the coordinated nutrition education efforts being conducted by emergency food programs. Efforts are aimed at preventing or managing diet-related diseases, improving cooking skills and food safety while encouraging independence from emergency feeding programs.
- Encourage entities funded in part or in whole by state dollars, and which spend more than $25,000 per year on food or food products for its students, residents, or clients, to begin phasing in the Institute of Medicine (IOM) nutritional standards in state fiscal year 2010-2011.

12 (09) Increase Access to Safe and Nutritious Foods by Underserved Communities and Food Insecure Individuals.

- Support transportation efforts that facilitate bringing people to markets, such as increased busing, as well as bringing the market to people, such as mobile markets.
- Foster Food Bank partnerships with all agricultural industries and trade groups and seek opportunities in which food banks and farmers will achieve mutual benefit.
- Research and support effective 'food rescue' practices that collect and transport excess food from donors (restaurants, cafeterias etc.) to emergency feeding sites.

###

New York State Council on Food Policy

GOVERNOR ANDREW M. CUOMO COMMISSIONER DARREL J. AUBERTINE

Meeting Notes:
New York State Council on Food Policy

Meeting held at the Oneida County Offices of the Cornell Cooperative Extension, Oriskany, NY, Nov 9, 2011.

Phil Giltner opened the meeting at 10:15.

Housekeeping - Jim Manning, CCE Oneida County and Mohawk Valley Food Action Network. Brief description of the Oneida Correctional Cook-Chill Facility to be toured after the meeting - Marty Broccoli, CCE Oneida County Ag Economic Development. Amazingly, the CCF provides three meals per day for approximately $2.50.

10:20: Results of study on gleaning programs in NY State. Cornell College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Associate Dean Michael Hoffman presented the results of a study CALS conducted on gleaning. Rebecca Staehr conducted the study, entitled, "Gleaning from New York State farms to benefit the Hungry: Overview and Recommendations." This preliminary survey of the state of gleaning in New York State uncovered room for concern relating to liability for farmers, need for 'match-making' from extension, and other areas. Seven current gleaning programs (counting several counties' Extension efforts as a single effort) were described in the report. It was noted that there is no coordination between gleaning programs on a statewide basis. The report will be posted on the CFP website and is attached here as an appendix.

10:40: Results of Food & Health Network of South Central NY's Food System Assessment. Diane Albrecht, of the Food and Health Network of South Central New York gave a presentation on that organization's 2011 Regional Food System Assessment. This very detailed report can be found on the FHN's website: www.foodandhealthnetwork.org

11:00 Review of Mohawk Valley Food Action Network: Jim Manning, of the Oneida Cornell Cooperative Extension, gave a presentation on the efforts fo the Mohawk Valley Food Policy Action Network. This was done as part o Cornell's architecture school's "Rust to Green" project, but with a about 25 other partners, including the city of Utica, Catholic Charities, and many others. The project aims to develop a higher level of food security in the region, with special recognition of the needs of urban areas that need to be revitalized. The website for the Food Policy Action network is www.mvfoodaction.com.

11:20 Commissioner's comments. New York State Agriculture and Markets Commissioner Darrel Aubertine spoke on the Federal Farm Bill. He noted that the Department of Agriculture and Markets is a actively engaged with other states on the Federal Farm Bill. Believes that the Northeast Association of State Departments of Agriculture have achieved a 85-95% consensus on agriculture policy. A letter on this agreement was sent to Washington.

11:30 Discussion and Q&A
Highlights:
Commissioner Aubertine asked how the Council can play a role support of local initiatives such as those presented today; Ellie Wilson suggested using the Council's website to map such initiatives. Others suggested Council could serve to spotlight and disseminate best practice approaches to local initiatives; Steve Miller, CCE Madison, recommends also looking at successful initiatives from other regions of the country.

Pat Hooker, from ESDC, suggested that there might be a role in such an effort, to be played by the Governor's Regional Economic Development Councils.

Discussion of Farm Bill potential impacts from NY State and NE region perspective. Linda Bopp, Hunger Solutions, offered to send Commissioner her group's Farm Bill position paper.

Ellie Wilson recognized Ray Denniston's White House award.

New York State Council on Food Policy

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo | Commissioner Darrel J. Aubertine

S U M M E R M E E T I N G A P P E N D I X

Wednesday, June 29, 2011 * 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm @ State Capitol Building, Albany

Appendix A: New York Healthy Food & Healthy Communities Fund, Ray Salaberrios, ESD

Appendix B: Food Procurement Guidelines Workgroup, Dr. Heather Dacus, DOH

Appendix C: 2012 Farm Bill Planning, Commissioner Aubertine, AG&MKT

Appendix D: Proposed Nutrition Title Priorities, Nimmy David, NYS CFP

New York State Council on Food Policy

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo **Commissioner Darrel J. Aubertine**

SUMMER MEETING AGENDA

Wednesday, June 29th * 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Blue Room - #250, State Capitol Building, Albany

1:00	Welcome: Commissioner Aubertine
1:10	Introductions: Council Members
1:20	Governor's Assistant Secretary of Agriculture, Jackie Moody-Czub
1:30	Healthy Food/Healthy Community Fund Update: Ray Salaberrios, ESD (20 min / 10 min Q&A)
2:00	Agribusiness Development: Patrick Hooker, ESD (20 min / 10 min Q&A)
2:30	NYS CFP Workgroup on Food Procurement Guidelines: Dr. Heather Dacus, DOH (10 min / 5 min Q&A)
2:45	Farm Bill Findings: Commissioner Aubertine, AG&MKT (15 min)
3:00	Farm Bill Priorities & Open Discussion (30 min)
3:30	Public Comment Period (30 min)
4:00	Adjourn

The mission of the New York State Council on Food Policy is to develop policies that will increase adequate access to affordable, nutritious, local and safe food for all New Yorkers, especially for children, seniors and other at-risk populations; and to protect and expand agricultural food production in the state.

c/o NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets * 10B Airline Drive, Albany, NY 12235 * Ph 518.485.7728
www.nyscfp.org

New York State Council on Food Policy

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo | Commissioner Darrel J. Aubertine

S U M M E R M E E T I N G M I N U T E S

Wednesday, June 29, 2011 * 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm @ State Capitol Building, Albany

Commissioner Darrel Aubertine opened the annual summer meeting of the New York State Council on Food Policy (NYS CFP) by welcoming the audience and the Council members. Commissioner Aubertine expressed his interest in carrying out the mission of the NYS CFP as the new Chairperson. The members and representatives of the NYS CFP then introduced themselves.

NYS CFP members and/or representatives attending include:

- Elizabeth Berlin, NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance
- Linda Bopp, Hunger Solutions NY
- Bruce Both, United Food and Commercial Workers Union, Local 1500
- Dr. Heather Dacus, NYS Department of Health
- Raymond Denniston, BOCES Broome-Tioga; NYS Farm to School Coordinating Committee
- Ellen Deutsch, Hain Celestial Group, Inc
- Diane Eggert, Farmers Market Federation of New York
- John Evers, Food Bank Association of NYS
- Lisa Harris, Division of Consumer Protection, Dept of State
- Patrick Hooker, Empire State Development
- Liz Neumark, Great Performances; Sylvia Center
- Julie Suarez, New York Farm Bureau
- Russell Sykes, NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance
- Eleanor Wilson, Price Chopper Supermarkets, Inc
- Jorge Montalvo, Division of Consumer Protection, Department of State
- Frances O'Donnell, NYS Education Department
- Florence Reed, NYS Office for the Aging
- Nicole Willis, New York Farm Bureau

Jackie Moody-Czub, the Governor's Assistant Secretary of Agriculture, took this opportunity to recognize the accomplishments of the NYS CFP and share the Governor's support of their continued efforts. Ms. Moody-Czub provided a brief update about the food and agriculture agenda of the administration, specifically mentioning interest in expanding food security efforts such as farmers' markets. In closing, Ms. Moody-Czub said that she hopes to be a resource for the NYS CFP going forward.

Ray Salaberrios, Senior Director of Economic Revitalization at Empire State Development, provided a presentation on the **NYS Healthy Food & Healthy Community Fund (HF/HC)** (Appendix A.). The mission of the HF/HC is to address food deserts around the state by providing grants and loans for food store development or renovations in lower-income, underserved and/or distressed areas.

New York Healthy Food & Healthy Communities Fund

Projected Impacts:

- Create or preserve **3,075 direct jobs**
- Create **382 construction jobs** as a result of project activity
- Create or preserve **740,000 square feet of food market space**
- Provide **$30 million in capital** for healthy food retail projects

Mr. Salaberrios discussed that the businesses that receive HF/HC loans and grants must accept SNAP benefits and WIC (in most cases) and that "convenience stores need not apply." Eligible stores must have at least 66 percent of the shelf space devoted to retail food sales. Further it was explained that if food co-ops require membership fees they will not qualify.

Other programmatic aspects and potential impacts were discussed. Topics include: job training programs; local hiring practices; local food purchasing; on-site nutrition education; energy efficient building; and use of mobile markets to access hard to reach populations such as older adults.

In sum, Mr. Salaberrios said that he is looking forward to collaborating with the NYS CFP on all aspects of the HF/HC Fund going forward. For more information: www.liifund.org/nyhealthyfood. Contact Ray Salaberrios: ph 212.803.3219 / rsalaberrios@empire.state.ny.us.

Patrick Hooker, Senior Manager of Agribusiness Development at Empire State Development spoke next about his new role and Governor Cuomo's "Farm NY" agenda, the high interest in agricultural market development, and on the importance of bringing more agencies together to achieve similar goals. Mr. Hooker shared his vision of capturing the synergy between agencies and industries to address challenges in our state. He listed some objectives of his current and future projects that include: increasing access to fresh food to underserved communities; ensuring farmer viability; exploring new market models; and new farmer recruitment. He stressed that agribusiness development is ultimately about "being a good community member."

Ann McMahon, Coordinator for the NYS CFP at the Department of Agriculture & Markets provided a brief introduction of an upcoming pilot project: **The Agriculture Promotion, Outreach and Demonstration vehicle, or Ag POD**. Through a multi-agency collaboration effort, a mobile kitchen formerly used by DOH for nutrition education, was transferred to the Department of Agriculture & Markets. The Ag POD will be used for promotion of locally produced, nutritious foods; outreach regarding food assistance programs; and cooking and agricultural demonstrations at community farmers markets and other sites.

Commissioner Aubertine took this opportunity to emphasize the Governor's awareness of the great potential for agribusiness development in the state. Commissioner Aubertine cited the Governor's Farm NY Agenda and specifically mentioned that issues such as distribution chains that may have received less attention in the past are now being keyed in on.

A discussion ensued regarding **food safety programs and local farm products**. It was noted that there are infrastructure and policy hurdles that need to be addressed to assist small to mid-sized farmers sell more product directly into grocery stores and institutions, such as schools. Ray Denniston mentioned "Bridge to GAP" program concept. The main objective of this program would be to assist small and mid-sized farmers adapt to and/or acquire equivalent food and farm safety validation as the Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) standards provide. It was noted that this is important because USDA recently passed new regulations that now allow schools to use "geographic preference" in their bids; however, if farms don't have some type of food safety validation they may face a major impediment for direct sales of farm-fresh products for school meals. Fran O'Donnell affirmed this concern.

Additionally, Julie Suarez brought up the issue that farmers would benefit from consistent food safety regulations among grocery stores produce purchasers. She also noted that there are many GAP success stories in New York State to learn from. Other suggestions included: seeking Specialty Crop Block Grant funding for piloting the Bridge to GAP concept; help agencies to be more agile in response to farm and food retail concerns; and expanding the presence of community farmers' markets around the state.

Dr. Heather Dacus, Director of the Bureau of Chronic Disease Control at Department of Health spoke about the NYS CFP workgroup on **Food Procurement Guidelines**. Dr. Dacus explained that the Department of Health received a CDC grant to enhance work on policies improving health. An aspect of this is to develop food procurement guidelines that state-funded agencies and organizations can voluntarily adopt. The overarching premise for the guidelines is that "state agencies that procure, provide and/or contract for foods and beverages should provide food that is safe and nutritious." It was also noted that there may be an opportunity to consolidate food purchasing and reduce costs (Appendix B.).

Dr. Dacus mentioned that the details of the guidelines (specific nutrition recommendations) have not been decided upon yet. She continued to explain that, through the help of the workgroup, a survey is being developed to get a better understanding of how state and local agencies are currently procuring or contracting for food and beverages and to what degree they already follow the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for America.

Follow-up discussions included: use of the word "guidelines" favored over "standards" (positive messaging verse implied mandate); considering the cost impact this may have on local governments and anti-hunger programs; being aware of population specific nutritional needs; how this may pressure/influence the food retail industry to develop healthier products; dove-tailing this with sodium reduction initiative and promoting USDA My Plate.

Next, **Commissioner Aubertine led a discussion on the 2012 Farm Bill.** First he provided a "30,000 foot view" of the Farm Bill including the history, accomplishments, structure, as well as some perspective on what still needs to be done. He provided a summary of findings from the recent Department of Agriculture & Markets Farm Bill hearings (May-June, 2011) (Appendix C.).

Specifically, the Commissioner addressed the timing of the Farm Bill. He stressed that it is imperative to begin coalition building and development of a unified and well-informed Farm Bill platform for the Northeast states now. Commissioner Aubertine also discussed the Research Title and the effort to reach out to institutions such as SUNY to examine this title more closely.

A brief presentation that summed up national and local "Proposed Nutrition Title Priorities" was provided for discussion along with a synopsis of the Nutrition Title Comments from the Commissioner's hearing in Syracuse (5/27/11) (Appendix D.). This material was researched and prepared by the summer Assistant to the NYS CFP, Nimmy David.

Council member discussion of Farm Bill priority issues included:

- Retaining structure and funding of the **Food Stamp Program (SNAP**) within the Farm Bill; negative impact of changing SNAP from an entitlement program to a block grant; expected debate over restricting SNAP purchases in Congress.
- Protect the image of **potatoes, peas and beans** as healthy food choices; it's how you cook the food that matters.
- Need to recognize and make correlations to other Farm Bill programs that address the NYS CFP mission, such as **Conservation, Horticulture and Commodity Titles**.
- Need for capital improvements for programs that address nutrition for older adults; for example the **Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program** (SFMNP) is one of the highest utilized programs that meets nutrition needs and provides economic stimulus to local farmers. As longevity rates increase, people are outliving their resources and nutrition and prevention programs for older adults will not be able to satisfy future demand.
- Allow for unexpended funds from **The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)** to rollover into next fiscal year; and retaining funding levels for TEFAP in all categories.
- New York State received over $6 million from USDA for the **Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program** (FFVP) at schools for 2011-12. This funding only stretches to schools that have 95 percent children eligible for free or reduced meals while other states can provide funding to schools with much lower percentages. The funding allocation formula should be based on need.
- Funding for **school kitchen equipment**, with the focus on food safety and fresh food preparation, is just 25 percent of previous level. New York State received $1.5 million this year but has requests for over $5 million in assistance.
- Food safety and **Farm to School** programs is still an unresolved topic. Schools now have USDA geographic preference guidance and are increasingly interested in purchasing local agriculture products. Additionally, there is a movement to change the Department of Defense Fresh Produce Purchasing Program (DoD Fresh) into a voucher system in lieu of food.
- New York State was 1 of 3 states to receive a grant for **Summer Food Service Program** grants. The $200,000 grant is for a 2 year pilot project that will focus on providing access children in rural areas of North Rose-Wolcott and the Southern Tier.

Commissioner Aubertine and others agreed that there needs to be continued, thorough analyses of these issues to develop a sound and comprehensive platform for New York State and the Northeast.

Public comments were then welcomed. Two members of the audience presented comments at the meeting while two others submitted comments for NYS CFP consideration. In sum, Bonnie Weber expressed concern over consumer's reluctance to buy food from farmers located in the Hudson Valley due to the potential hazards caused by hydro-fracking. Lacey Wilson from Legislative Commission on Rural Resources asked about initiatives to build infrastructure in rural areas to enhance food processing and access to local foods. Discussion ensued regarding investment in food hubs, formation of local community food and health networks, using food banks as a resource, and how to engage more farmers to participate in initiatives such as farm to school.

In her submitted comments, Elisabeth Radow outlines potential impacts that high volume natural–methane gas extraction through hydraulic fracturing may have on the safety of New York's water, food supply and human health. Krys Cail and Sam Bosco also submitted comments on the lack of attention to the potential impact of shale gas development on food and agricultural production. They additionally cite that New York State has reduced production of oats, wheat and hops which were once relied on as cash crops; and that the lack of available farm land for new and smaller scale farmers is limiting sustainable food production for local and regional market flow.

Commissioner Aubertine at NYS CFP

In closing, a reminder was made that the annual "**Farm to You Fest!** A Celebration of Local Food and Agriculture" will be held during the week of October 3rd – 9th.

Commissioner Aubertine thanked all the participants for their time and attention. He encouraged everyone to keep in communication with his office for follow up.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

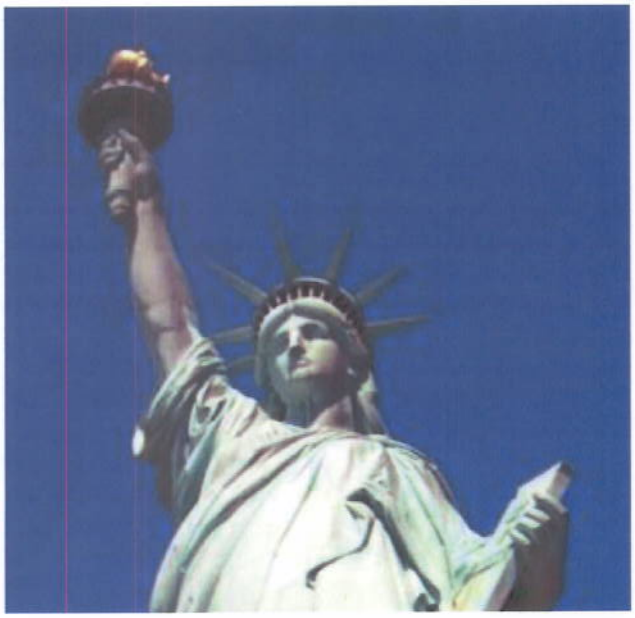
###

New York Healthy Food & Healthy Communities Fund

New York State
Council on Food Policy
June 29, 2011

About ESD

New York Healthy Food & Healthy Communities Fund



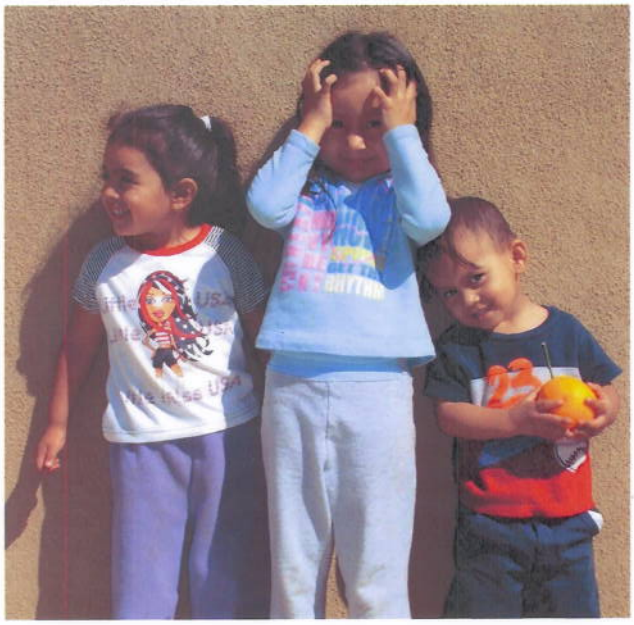
Empire State Development

The mission of Empire State Development is to promote business investment and growth that leads to job creation and prosperous communities across New York State.

New York State is focused on encouraging a diverse, competitive but business-friendly climate, and offers a diverse range of attractive financial and technical assistance programs for new and expanding businesses.

About LIIF

New York Healthy Food & Healthy Communities Fund



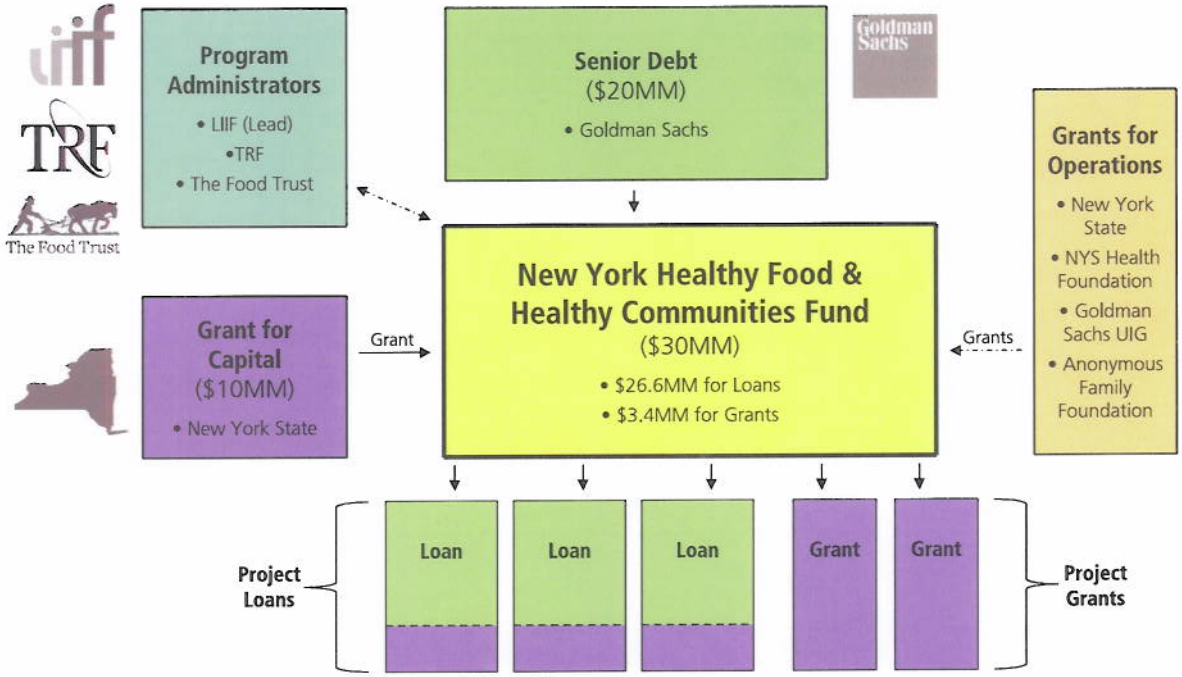
capital for healthy families & communities

LIIF is dedicated to creating pathways of opportunity for low income people and communities.

Serving the poorest of the poor, LIIF is a steward for capital invested in community-building initiatives. In so doing, LIIF provides a bridge between private capital markets and low income neighborhoods.

Fund Overview

New York Healthy Food & Healthy Communities Fund



Program Eligibility

New York Healthy Food & Healthy Communities Fund

Location Eligibility

- Low- to moderate-income area or greater than 50% of customers living in low-income area
- Below average food market density; "underserved" by healthy food retail
- Highly distressed or highly underserved projects qualify for grant financing

Programmatic Eligibility

- Alignment with Fund mission
- Eligible uses of funds
- Retail area thresholds for food, non-prepared food, perishable food
- Nutrition assistance programs
- Satisfaction of additional program goals, e.g. economic development, energy efficiency, location efficiency, local agriculture, targeted hiring

Financial Eligibility

- Operating experience
- Equity contribution
- Loan to value / loan to cost thresholds
- Realistic cash flow projections
- Adequate debt service coverage
- Good credit history

Projected Loan & Grant Volumes

New York Healthy Food & Healthy Communities Fund

Use	Funds Available	Min. No. Of Projects	Minimum Size	Maximum Size
Grants	$3.4MM	20	$5,000	$500,000 (1)
Loans	$26.6MM	6	$250,000	$5.0MM
		1	$5.0MM for NMTC transactions	$15.0MM (2) for NMTC Transactions
Total	**$30.0MM**	**27**		

(1) $200,000 for predevelopment grants

(2) Includes New Markets Tax Credit equity

Projected Impact

New York Healthy Food & Healthy Communities Fund

- Create or preserve **3,075 direct jobs**
- Create **382 construction jobs** as a result of project activity
- Create or preserve **740,000 square feet of food market space**
- Provide **$30 million in capital** for healthy food retail projects

Progress to Date

New York Healthy Food & Healthy Communities Fund

- **76 Applications Received**
  - 37 upstate projects
  - 39 downstate (New York City and Long Island) projects
- **$75.3 Million Requested**
  - $20.0mm total grant requests
  - $55.3mm total loan requests
- **$3.5 Million Approved**
  - 4 grants totaling $1.1mm
  - 2 loans totaling $2.5mm

Contact Us

New York Healthy Food & Healthy Communities Fund

Ray Salaberrios
Senior Director, Economic Revitalization
Empire State Development
(212) 803-3219
rsalaberrios@empire.state.ny.us

Katie Scallon
Program Manager, NY HFHC Fund
Low Income Investment Fund
(212) 509-5509 x16
kscallon@liifund.org

Website:
www.liifund.org/nyhealthyfood

Appendix B.

New York State Council on Food Policy
Food Procurement Standards Workgroup – June 29, 2011 Update

- For good health, the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend a diet high in fruits, vegetables, fiber and lean protein, and low in added sugars, sodium and saturated fats. Research has reported an association between policies that work to increase the availability of healthier foods and increased consumption of such foods. The aim of developing food procurement standards is to improve the nutritional quality and balance of foods offered (e.g., increase consumption of fruits and vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy and reduce consumption of low-nutrition, high caloric foods) as well affect nutrients (reduce sodium, saturated fat and trans fats) to reduce the risk for chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, obesity and diabetes.

- The New York State Council on Food Policy agreed to develop voluntary guidelines that state agencies can adopt to assure that foods provided or purchased (directly or through contracts) with government funds promote good health. A workgroup of Council members was formed in April 2011.

- The workgroup thus far has agreed on the following:
    - State Agencies that procure, provide, and/or contract for foods and beverages have an obligation (should) provide food that is safe and nutritious.
    - The most recent version of the Dietary Guidelines for America (2010), which are based on the most current evidence-base and consensus of the scientific community, provide guidance for optimal nutrition for New Yorkers.
    - The usual American diet is not consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for America (2010). Currently Americans consume less than recommended intakes for whole grains, vegetables, fruits, and milk/milk products, and excessive amounts of solid fats, saturated fats, added sugars, refined grains and sodium.
    - State Agencies may benefit from guidelines for meals, snacks, and specific foods, in order to improve the nutrition of the foods procured, served or contracted and to improve the nutrition and health of New Yorkers.
    - Standards should aim to improve nutritional quality and balance (increase consumption of fruits and vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy) and micronutrients (reduce sodium, fat), to reduce risk for chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, obesity and diabetes.
    - This is an opportunity to work on and understand food procurement policies and, if a food procurement standard is adopted across agencies, there may be an opportunity to consolidate and improve costs.

- The workgroup is developing a survey for state and local agencies. This will give the workgroup a better understanding of how agencies currently procure and/or contract for food and beverages and to what degree they already follow the 2010 Dietary Guidelines.

Workgroup Members:
Dr. Barbara A. Dennison, New York State Department of Health
Patricia Race, New York State Department of Health
Ann McMahon, Department of Agriculture and Markets
Carlise Lovelady, New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance
Ellie Wilson, Price Chopper Supermarkets
Julie Suarez, New York Farm Bureau
Ray Denniston, Broome-Tioga BOCES
Jorge I. Montalvo, New York State Department of State
Patrick Hooker, Empire State Development
Amy Jesaitis, New York State Department of Health
Deb Spicer, New York State Department of Health
Suzanne Kuon, New York State Department of Health

Ad-hoc Members:
Robert Stern, New York State Assembly
Ana Garcia, New York Academy of Medicine

Heather Dacus, DO, MPH
Director, Bureau of Chronic Disease Control
Division of Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention
NYSDOH
518-474-1222 (office)
hlm04@health.state.ny.us

PLANNING FOR THE 2012 FARM BILL

Commissioner Darrel J. Aubertine, NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets

New York State Council on Food Policy Meeting, June 29, 2011

What is the Farm Bill?

- A package of federal laws that governs most food and farm policies
- Undergoes review and reauthorization roughly every five years
- Provides predictable opportunity to address issues more comprehensively
- Covers expanding range of new programs and provisions
- 1st Farm Bill: 1933 New Deal's "Agricultural Adjustment Act"
- Most Recent: 2008 "Food, Conservation and Energy Act"
- Much of current law will expire in 2012

Examples of Significant Updates

- 1973 Farm Bill rolled in Food Stamp Act of '64, Rural Development Act of '72, and Rural Conservation Title
- 1977 Bill rolls Extension, Ag Education & Research under USDA
- 2002 Act included Energy Title
- 2008 Act added Horticulture, Livestock, Insurance, Commodities Trading, Trade & Taxes Titles

Review 2008 Farm Bill

- 15 Titles: Commodities, Conservation, Ag Trade and Food Aid, Nutrition, Farm Credit, Rural Development, Research, Forestry, Energy, Horticulture and Organic Agriculture, Livestock, Crop Insurance and Disaster Assistance, Commodity Futures, Miscellaneous, and Trade and Tax Provisions
- Cost: $284 billion over five years ('08 – '12); $604 billion over ten years ('08 –'17)
- Majority of funding ($188.9 billion or 67%) dedicated to Nutrition Title
- Commodities (crop subsidies) = 15%; Conservation and Crop Insurance = 8% each
- Less than 1%: Rural Development, Research, Forestry, Energy, Horticulture & Organic, Livestock

New York/Northeast and the Farm Bill: Seeking Broad, Regional Coalition

- NYS DAM, as contractor for the USDA & FDA, receives federal funding for: Pest Control, Food Safety Inspection, Conservation, animal and plant health
- New York State, and Northeast in general, has small role in direct crop subsidies
- Nutrition Programs run through many partner agencies and organizations on the NYS Council on Food Policy
- Coordinating NYS stakeholders and Northeast parallel efforts = Strong delegation

Start of Conversations

- Series of Hearings April-May 2011 in Syracuse covering (7) Titles

- Nearly 150 participants; 14 hours of meetings; over 200 pages of transcripts
- Discussions with NEASDA (Northeast Association of State Directors of Agriculture)

Some Initial Findings from Stakeholders (not endorsed policies):

Conservation Title (April 29)

- Fully fund programs (ex: Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) Program and Grazing Program)
- Need more flexibility in implementation (ex: allow fence buffer)
- Review/adjust funding formulas to reflect actual production and make more viable
- Many technical suggestions for farmland preservation, nutrient management, etc.

Energy, Forestry, Rural Development Titles (May 5)

ENERGY

- Incentives and creative financing options to pursue renewable energy; remove obstacles associated with production and distribution
- Renew/fully fund programs such as: Renewable Energy for America Program (REAP) and Community Wood Energy Program
- Expand Biomass definition; Restructure Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP) and make more producer-friendly

FORESTRY

- Expand Forest Legacy Grant Program
- Adjust tax incentives for forest products industry landholding trusts to adequately recognize smaller landholders and processors
- Create Block Grant for Forest Resource Assessment Strategies to allow for variation in regional needs
- Open up programs and technical assistance to private sector; private landowners are faced with new challenges such as invasive pests

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

- Fund programs for farmland *preservation*, not sprawl
- Incentivize the development of cropland for new crops (ex: flax)
- Recognize rural broadband as infrastructure for the purposes of bonding and tax deduction
- Fund state-level "Agricultural Innovation Centers"

Horticulture & Organic Titles (May 13)

- Preserve funding levels for programs such as Integrated Pest Management (IPM), Specialty Crop Research, Organic Research, and Clean Plants
- Adjust funding allocations for Specialty Crop; 25% of market, yet disproportionate funding from USDA
- Support research on alternative pest controls / data collection of organic production

- Clarify Specialty Crop definitions
- Create permanent office of Pest Management at USDA
- Tree Assistance Program: lower thresholds and raise cap
- Allow H2A workers to use federally backed housing

Commodities Title (May 20)

- Found consensus on: Eliminating price support; Ending Dairy Commodity Pricing (DCP) and using funding for increased risk management
- Eliminate subsidy for ethanol
- Support daily electronic dairy pricing
- More flexibility in FSA crop loan rates
- Remove planting restriction that bars those receiving a base payment from switching to growing vegetables

Nutrition Title (May 27)

- Retain structure and funding levels for SNAP
- Allow unexpended TEFAP fund rollover into next fiscal year
- Research and invest in Food Hubs
- Adequately fund Farmers' Market Promotion Program and Community Food Projects
- Reinstate potatoes, peas and beans as healthy in the USDA nutrition guidelines
- Adjust allocations of the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program based on free/reduced school meal eligible students
- Track and Evaluate the Farm to School Program; assist with geographic preference purchasing in schools (language clarification, etc)
- Develop/support program to provide technical assistance for small producers that need to meet Good Agriculture Practices (Bridge to GAP)

Next Steps

- Continue dialogue, build coalition, and prepare strong platform that reflects New York State and Northeast agriculture, food industry and food security needs

###

New York State Council on Food Policy
Food Procurement Guidelines Workgroup

- The New York State Council on Food Policy believes that a healthy diet is essential for good health, and recognizing the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans as the accepted reference, concurs with the recommended diet high in fruits, vegetables, fiber and lean protein, and low in added sugars, sodium and saturated fats. The Council also is aware that research has shown an association between policies that increase the availability of healthier foods with increased consumption of such foods.

- Food procurement guidelines aim to improve the nutritional quality and the balance of foods offered to reduce the risk for chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, obesity and diabetes.

- The New York State Council on Food Policy agreed to develop Food Procurement Guidelines that state agencies can adopt to assure that foods provided or purchased (directly or through contracts) with government funds promote good health. A workgroup of Council members was formed in April 2011.

- The Food Procurement Guidelines workgroup has agreed on the following:
    - State Agencies that procure, provide, and/or contract for foods and beverages have an obligation (should) provide food that is safe and nutritious.
    - The most recent version of the Dietary Guidelines for America (2010), which are based on the most current evidence-base and consensus of the scientific community, provide guidance for optimal nutrition for New Yorkers.
    - The usual American diet is not consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for America (2010). Currently Americans consume less than recommended intakes for whole grains, vegetables, fruits, and milk/milk products, and excessive amounts of solid fats, saturated fats, added sugars, refined grains and sodium.
    - State Agencies may benefit from guidelines for meals, snacks, and specific foods, in order to improve the nutrition of the foods procured, served or contracted and to improve the nutrition and health of New Yorkers.
    - Guidelines should aim to improve nutritional quality and balance (increase consumption of fruits and vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy) and micronutrients (reduce sodium, fat), to reduce risk for chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, obesity and diabetes.
    - This is an opportunity to work on and understand food procurement policies and, if a food procurement guideline is adopted across agencies, there may be an opportunity to consolidate and improve costs.

- The workgroup developed a survey for state and local agencies. This gave the workgroup a greater understanding of how agencies procure and/or contract for food and beverages and to what degree they already follow the 2010 Dietary Guidelines.
- The workgroup received input from other states and cities that have developed and implemented Food Procurement Guidelines to better understand the challenges and benefits.
- The workgroup is currently working to finalize draft guidelines for purchased food and drink items.

Workgroup Members:

Dr. Barbara A. Dennison, MD, New York State Department of Health
Patricia Race, RD, New York State Department of Health
Ann McMahon, Department of Agriculture and Markets *(left end of 2011)*
Carlise Lovelady, New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance
Ellie Wilson, RD, Price Chopper Supermarkets
Julie Suarez, New York Farm Bureau
Ray Denniston, Broome-Tioga BOCES
Jorge I. Montalvo, New York State Department of State
Patrick Hooker, Empire State Development
Amy Jesaitis, RD, New York State Department of Health
Deb Spicer, RD, MPH, New York State Department of Health
Suzanne Kuon, New York State Department of Health

Ad-hoc Members:

Robert Stern, New York State Assembly
Ana Garcia, New York Academy of Medicine

New York State Council on Food Policy

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo **Commissioner Darrel Aubertine, Chairperson**

Executive Order No. 13

The mission of the New York State Council on Food Policy is to develop and recommend policies that preserve and enhance agricultural food production in New York; and ensure that all New Yorkers have adequate access to safe, affordable, fresh and nutritious foods.

April 8, 2011

Julie Brewer, Chief, Policy and Program Development Branch
Child Nutrition Division, Food and Nutrition Service, Department of Agriculture
3101 Park Center Drive, Room 640
Alexandria, Virginia 22302–1594

Docket ID: FNS–2007–0038

Re: Proposed Rule to Revise the Meal Patterns and Nutrition Requirements for the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program

Dear Ms. Brewer,

The New York State Council on Food Policy respectfully submits the below comments and recommendations regarding the FNS, USDA proposed rule to revise the meal patterns and nutrition requirements for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP) listed in the Federal Register. We strongly agree with the basic premise of the 2005 Dietary Guidelines that nutrient needs should be met primarily by consuming a variety of nutrient-dense foods from the basic food groups and have made similar recommendations in the past.

In general, we are very encouraged to see the proposed increases in the amount of fruits, vegetables and grains in the meal patterns. As a strong agricultural state, we hope to continue meeting those needs with locally grown products to the maximum extent possible. Ensuring that all New Yorkers, and especially children, have access to affordable, nutritious foods is a key tenet of the New York State Council on Food Policy. Thus concern exists that some requirements may have unintended and substantially damaging effects on school food service personnel's ability to operate, thus causing the most needy of children to not have access to federal meal programs.

Comment 1: Measurement of fruit component in both SBP and NSLP is insufficient [Table, Page 2499 and Page 2500]. The proposed rules require 1 cup of fruit to be served. This measurement does not take into consideration the variation of size and difficulty of measuring fresh, whole pieces of fruit such as an apple or an orange. To most efficiently reach the required measurement, food service personnel may be more inclined to serve canned or frozen fruit and dissuaded from serving fresh fruit.

Recommendation 1: Amend the language to read as such: 1 cup of fresh, frozen or canned fruit OR any combination of products equaling 1 cup serving.

Comment 2: We agree that **limiting starchy vegetable** options at meals will expose children to more varieties of vegetables [Page 2500]. Concern exists around the supposition that schools are serving a preponderance of the starchy vegetables in the form of fried or par-fried potatoes that may be the impetus for this rule. On average, schools are offering fried or par-fried potatoes not more than once a week. Fresh, unprocessed baked or boiled potatoes provide valuable nutrients for children and do not exceed the Institute of Medicine's nutrition recommendations. Limiting fried and par-fried potatoes on school menus is supported.

Recommendation 2: School food service personnel need flexibility to serve a variety of nutritious vegetable options especially those that are available locally, are cost effective, and that children will eat - thus limiting expenses and plate waste while supporting local agricultural economies.

Comment 3: Whole grain rich product standard is supported [Page 2500]. Concern exists around the ability to easily identify such products. Current labeling practices do not provide adequate information and formulas are often necessary to determine if a product meets the "51 percent whole grain rich" requirement. This was previously cited as a difficulty for providers and individuals participating in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).

Recommendation 3: USDA should develop more simplified methods for determining if a product meets the requirements and further, USDA should provide clear directives to producers regarding adequately labeling products for ease of content identification.

Comment 4: Low-fat, skim and flavored skim milk standard is generally supported [Page 2501]. Concern exists around product availability of flavored skim milk and the acceptance of low fat milk products within certain cultural or ethnic groups. Additional transition time and allowing for flexibility to account for cultural preferences is recommended.

Recommendation 4: Flavored skim milk may not be readily available in many places of the country. Milk processors need time to adapt to the new standards and develop acceptable products. Allowing a transition time of 2 to 3 years is recommended. Allowing flexibility to continue serving low fat flavored milk depending upon the community preferences is recommended to ensure appropriate education of all children that low fat milk products are healthy, nutritious, and tasty to consume.

Comment 5: Reduced sodium product standards are supported [Page 2502]. Concern exists around product availability to meet the standards.

Recommendation 5: USDA should work with industry food processors to set sodium level goals, such as yearly targets, and have lower-sodium commodity products available for meal programs as soon as possible. As many lower-sodium commodity products as possible should be available by the end of the first 2 years of the Nutrition Standards implementation. Sodium guideline levels should be in line with the National Sodium Reduction Initiative. Many large food processing companies have already signed on to this effort, and aligning the efforts of school food service vendors (often subdivisions of larger food processors and manufacturers) with larger public health sodium reduction initiatives ensures the food industry can be an effective partner and reformulation costs can be managed.

Comment 6: Language changes from **"offer versus serve"** for fruit and vegetable items [Page 2504] may unintentionally lead to increased plate waste and reduced intake due to the reluctance of children to try unfamiliar products. Programs that introduce children to new fruits and vegetables in creative ways, both in and outside of the cafeteria, have proven successful in children's acceptance of new menu items.

Recommendation 6: USDA funded research and evaluation of plate waste needs to take place. Successful programs that expose children to fruits and vegetables in an affirming and universal manner, such as the USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program where all children eat fresh products together with adults in the classroom environment, should be expanded and/or replicated. The Department of Defense Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program that offers schools a variety of fresh produce through entitlement funds should be expanded to increase food service personnel's access to fresh produce. This will help increase selection and meet increased volume requirements.

Comment 7: The proposed **SBP meal pattern** [Page 2504] requires an excessive amount of items than can be reasonably consumed by some children. Additionally, **time allotted for breakfast** at most schools is inadequate. Children are rushed to consume breakfast; this can negatively affect the SBP participation rates. SBP participation, especially when offered prior to the school day, is already low in New York State. This proposed rule, that will significantly increase food costs, may also result in increased plate waste, logistical issues around serving, and even lower participation rates.

Recommendation 7: Generally, higher test scores, positive student behavioral changes, less absenteeism and decreased body mass index are noted to coincide with a positive breakfast environment. USDA should encourage breakfast to be served in the classroom where breakfast time is both counted as official instruction time and integrated into homeroom activities. In the 2009/10 school year, student participation in the SPB increased a full 48 percent (from 42 percent to 90 percent) when served in the classroom in Broome County, New York. In addition, it is recommended that schools have flexibility to offer "grab and go" breakfast items. Further, portion sizes should be re-assessed to accurately reflect reasonable consumption rates of children by age group.

Comment 8: We believe that the **cost of adapting to new rules** [Page 2507] will destabilize the programs causing a major burden for many schools, and potentially be unattainable for others. It is estimated that the cost will double to meet the requirements for a reimburse-able breakfast; this does not estimate for the predicted rise in food inflation. If school meal prices increase for the students overall participation will likely decrease. Schools may opt to drop out of the federal meal program and ultimately some children will not have access to necessary and nutritious meals. As a result, New York's low-income students would be disproportionately impacted. Based on New York State Education Department data for the school year ending June 2009, 80 percent of all school breakfasts served were eaten by students approved for free or reduced priced school meals.

Recommendation 8: The six cent increase for reimbursement is not sufficient to adequately meet the nutrition standards and increased cost of production. As nutrition standards increase, it is important that schools have adequate resources to support increased production costs, including low cost loan funds for obtaining food service equipment needed to meet the new standards. The Federal reimbursement rates need to be adjusted to reflect true costs for practical implementation. Additionally, funds should be included to support nutrition curricula and linking the curricula to federally mandated school wellness policies, at all levels of education.

Thank you for your consideration. We believe that these recommended changes will go a long way to provide food service and nutrition professionals with the tools and funding necessary to provide healthier meals and food options for our children. Fostering healthier school environments and educating our children on nutrition principles will contribute to lifelong health and well-being.

Respectfully submitted by the New York State Council on Food Policy,

Darrel Aubertine, Chairperson
Commissioner, NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets

Members
Kenneth Adams, Commissioner, NYS Department of Economic Development; President and CEO, Empire State Development Corporation
Dr. Kathryn Boor, Dean, NYS College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell University
Linda Bopp, Executive Director, Nutrition Consortium of NYS
Bruce Both, President, United Food and Commercial Workers Union; Local 1500
Mary Warr Cowans, RD, CDN, Assoc Director Division of Nutrition, NYS Department of Health *(retired)*
Raymond Denniston, BOCES Broome-Tioga; Co-Chair NYS Farm to School Coordinating Committee
Diane Eggert, Executive Director, Farmers Market Federation of New York
John Evers, Executive Director, Food Bank Association of NYS
Cathryn Mizbani, WIC Program Coordinator, Cornell University Cooperative Extension, Schenectady Co.
Liz Neumark, CEO, Great Performances; Sylvia Center
Gregory Olsen, Acting Director, NYS Office for the Aging
Kristen Proud, Acting Commissioner, NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance
Dr. Nirav Shah, Commissioner, NYS Department of Health
Irwin Simon, Founder, Chairperson, President and CEO, Hain Celestial Group, Inc
Dr. David Milton Steiner, Commissioner, NYS Education Department
Julie Suarez, Director, Public Policy, New York Farm Bureau
Eleanor Wilson, MS, RD, CDN, Senior Dietitian, Price Chopper Supermarkets, Inc
Catharine Young, New York State Senator, 57th District

Member Representatives
Barbara Dennison, Director, Policy and Research Translation Unit, Division of Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention, NYS Department of Health
Ellen Deutsch, Chief Growth Officer and Senior Vice President, Hain Celestial Group, Inc
Dr. Michael Hoffmann, Associate Dean, NYS College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell University; Director, Agricultural Experiment Station at Cornell University
Jack Kennedy, Special Assistant, NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance
Robert McNary, Executive Director, Community and Sustainable Development, Empire State Development
Jorge Montalvo, Director, Strategic Policy Initiatives, Division of Consumer Protection, Dept of State
Frances O'Donnell, Coordinator, Child Nutrition Program Administration, NYS Education Department
Patricia Race, Division of Nutrition, Director, Bureau of Nutrition Risk Reduction, NYS Dept of Health
Florence Reed, Director, Nutrition Unit, NYS Office for the Aging

Coordinator
Ann McMahon, Special Assistant, NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets

PROPOSED NUTRITION TITLE PRIORITIES FOR 2012 FARM BILL

June 29th 2011

NYS Council on Food Policy

Contact: Nimmy David – Email: nimmy.david@agmkt.state.ny.us, Phone: 518-457-8884

Increase Funding and Benefits for SNAP

1. Retain structure and funding of the Food Stamp Program within the Farm Bill
2. Increase funding, education and technical assistance for farmer's markets to adopt the use of Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT)
3. Use Incentives for purchase of fresh fruits and vegetables such as "Health Bucks" or "NY Fresh Checks"
4. Set aside portion of SNAP-ED funding for promoting shopping at farmers markets
5. Pilot use of smart phone technology at farmers markets
6. Increase education to SNAP recipients/vendors about using SNAP to purchase seeds/plants

Track and Evaluate the Farm to School Program

- Track and Analyze effectiveness of Farm to School Programs
  1. Incorporate data gathering on food to school programs and local purchases into the school meals audit process
  2. Work with Processors and Distributors to track data
  3. Analyze data to determine best practices (health & economic benefits)
  4. Extend program to all institutional food service

Research and Invest in Food Hubs

- Increase use of multi purpose facilities designed to aggregate, store, process, distribute, and market locally or regionally produced food products
  1. Eliminate where external costs are concerned (reduces unnecessary food transportation costs)
  2. Continue to fund USDA Programs such as FMPP that allow funding to be used to promote and support multi use facilities (See Resources, #1)

Expand Farmers' Market Promotion Program & Community Food Projects

- Defend and expand FMPP
  1. Increase from $33m over the life of the Farm Bill (2012 to 2017) to $100m
  2. Create set aside of 10% for development of farmers market capacity building activities
  3. Allocate a portion of FMPP for technical assistance at farmers markets for EBT
- Defend and Expand Community Food Projects (CFP)
  1. Tie CFP funding to inflation
  2. Reduce the CFP match requirement from 1:1 to 2:1

Promote and Assist with Geographic Preference Purchasing

- Increase school reimbursement rates for those engaged in direct purchasing
  - Ensures ability to purchase high quality produce and to encourage direct contracts between farmers and schools
    1. Increase rate by at least 35 cents per meal for school districts that provide nutritious school meals
    2. Urge Congress to adopt a method that more accurately indexes the reimbursement rate to the actual cost to provide school meals
    3. Urge Congress to provide Secretary of USDA with authority to increase rates based on appropriate indexes during times of rapid rising costs or increasing nutritional standards

Promote and Assist with Geographic Preference Purchasing

- Provide Affordable insurance for farmers
  1. To overcome risk management issues from facilities contracting directly with farmers, have USDA work with its preferred insurance vendors to offer affordable insurance for farmers
- Incorporate more local product into the Department of Defense's Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) and USDA Foods Programs
  1. Address the prime vendor system for Department of Defense's FFVP to facilitate local purchasing
- Provide guidance/assistance to state facilities and school districts wishing to implement geographic preference in procurement bid specifications
- Provide small and mid-sized growers alternative food safety certification that meets Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) but is appropriately scaled (Bridge to GAP)

Comments from Nutrition Title Hearing – Syracuse, 6/27/11

Not in order of priority. Not endorsed policy statements.

1. Retain entitlement structure and funding levels for SNAP; Oppose block grants
2. Retain funding levels for TEFAP in all categories; Allow unexpended TEFAP fund rollover into next fiscal year
3. Continue and adequately fund Food Stamp outreach and education
4. Relax rules relating to audience sizes in nutrition education programs
5. Raise ceiling (cap) on household budget expenditure for housing in calculating eligibility
6. Increase nutritional value of benefits for recipients, perhaps by setting nutritional standards for eligible foods
7. Provide incentives such as tax credits for gleaning foods not suitable for retail sale for use in food banks and nutrition supplement programs
8. Increase Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program from $20m to $40m
9. Increase participation of benefit recipients in Community Supported Agriculture

Comments from Nutrition Title Hearing – Syracuse, 6/27/11

Not in order of priority. Not endorsed policy statements. (Continued)

10. Research and invest in Food Hubs
11. Reinstate Mickey Leland Memorial Hunger Relief Act
12. Reduce or eliminate subsidies for unhealthy foods, such as high-fructose corn syrup
13. Invest in Farmers' Market Promotion Program and Community Food Projects: Increase FMPP from $33m over the life of the farm bill to $100m; Create set-aside of 10% for construction of Farmers Market capacity building; Reduce match of CFR from 1:1 to 2:1
14. Provide liability limits for municipally sponsored farmers markets
15. Maintain flexible definition of farmers markets to include mobile markets, etc.
16. Streamline application for benefit vendor status for farm stands and producers
17. Develop study of regional capital gains of local food purchasing
18. Track and Evaluate the Farm to School Programs

Comments from Nutrition Title Hearing – Syracuse, 6/27/11

Not in order of priority. Not endorsed policy statements. (Continued)

19. Reinstate potatoes, peas and beans as healthy in the USDA nutrition guidelines
20. Adjust allocations of the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program to states based on free/reduced school meal eligible students
21. Assist with geographic preference purchasing in schools (language clarification, etc)
22. Develop/support program to provide technical assistance for small producers that need to meet Good Agriculture Practices (Bridge to GAP)
23. Change formula for free or subsidized school lunch by removing state-by-state allocations to move to a purely school-district-by-school-district analysis
24. Create program to install school kitchens for preparation of foods beyond mere re-heating; Provide training in food preparation and fresh food acquisition

Definitions

- **Community Food Projects (CFP)** - help promote the self-sufficiency of low-income communities through grants which help eligible private nonprofit entities that need a one-time infusion of federal assistance through the Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program
- **Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT)** - issues food stamp benefits to recipients through an "EBT Card" similar to a bank ATM or debit card to receive and use their food stamp and/or cash benefits. Benefits are automatically deposited onto the card by the State.
- **Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP)** – mandates $33m over 5 years for competitive grants for marketing proposals for community-supported agriculture programs, farmers' markets, roadside stands etc.
- **Farm to School Program -** is an effort to connect schools such as day care centers, public/private schools and colleges /universities with regional or local farms in order to serve healthy meals using locally produced foods. Activities can include classroom lessons on food and nutrition, visits to farms and farmers markets, creation of school gardens and the support of school based community supported agriculture (CSA) programs
- **Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Program (FFVP)-** provides children in participating elementary schools with a variety of free fresh fruits & vegetables. This is a competitive grant that must be applied for annually. The level of funds provided to any one school depends on the school's enrollment and the available funding provided by the USDA.

Definitions Continued

- **Geographic Preference Purchasing** – In the 2008 Farm Bill, the National School Lunch Act was amended to encourage institutions operating Child Nutrition Programs to use a geographic preference (specification of region where food is grown/harvested) when purchasing food.
- **Health Bucks Program -** Health Bucks, worth $2 each, is sponsored by the NYS Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and can be used to purchase fresh fruits & vegetables at participating farmers markets (listed on each Health Buck).
- **NY Fresh Checks -** incentive program to "top up" food stamp sales by providing a $2.00 coupon to food stamp customers for a minimum $5.00 in food stamp purchases at participating farmers markets. This program is currently active on a limited basis, operating in 12 markets.
- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) –** aka the food stamp program, government assistance program to help low-income households pay for food. The amount of SNAP food stamps a household gets depends on the household's size, income, and expenses.
- **SNAP –ED -** federal/state partnership that supports nutrition education for persons eligible for SNAP.
- **The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) -** Federal program that helps supplement the diets of low-income needy persons, including elderly people, by providing them with emergency food and nutrition assistance

Resources

1. Potential USDA Programs to Support Regional Food Hub Development: http://www.ngfn.org/resources/ngfn-database/knowledge/Regional%20Food%20Hub%20Resources%20from%20USDA%20v1.pdf
2. NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets Farm Bill Work Groups: Transcripts of session available from phil.giltner@agmkt.state.ny.us
3. Hunger Action Network of NYS Introduction to the Farm Bill: http://www.hungeractionnys.org/farmbill.html
4. Seattle Farm Bill Principles: http://seattlefarmbillprinciples.org/seattle-principles/
5. Seattle Farm Bill Principles – Possible implementation Actions: http://seattlefarmbillprinciples.org/media/pdf/possible-implementaion.pdf

Resources Continued

7. National Governor's Association, Policy Position: Healthy Students & Healthy School Meals: http://www.nga.org/portal/site/nga/menuitem.8358ec82f5b198d18a278110501010a0/?vgnextoid=206a9e2f1b091010VgnVCM1000001a01010aRCRD
8. Farmers' Legal Action Group, Inc – Planting the Seeds of Public Health: How the Farm Bill can help Farmers to Produce and Distribute Healthy Foods: http://www.flaginc.org/topics/pubs/arts/PlantingTheSeeds.pdf
9. One Tray: Community Food Security Coalition/ National Farm to School Network / School Food FOCUS - What can USDA do?: http://www.farmtoschool.org/files/publications_243.pdf
10. Community Food Security Coalition – Priorities for the 2012 Farm Bill Draft for Discussion: http://www.foodsecurity.org/policy/FarmBillPriorities_Online_May2011.pdf