



SUMMER MEETING MINUTES

July 18th 2012 | SUNY Albany Alumni House | 10 AM - 2 PM

Commissioner Darrel Aubertine and Special Assistant Phil Giltner 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 in attendance include:

- **Darrel Aubertine**, New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets
- **Linda Bopp**, Hunger Solutions NY
- **Patrick Purcell**, United Food and Commercial Workers Union, Local 1500
- **Barbara Dennison**, New York State Department of Health
- **Raymond Denniston**, BOCES Broome-Tioga; NYS Farm to School Coordinating Committee
- **Diane Eggert**, Farmers Market Federation of New York
- **John Evers**, Food Bank Association of NYS
- **Liz Neumark**, Great Performances; Sylvia Center
- **Eleanor Wilson**, Price Chopper Supermarkets, Inc
- **Jorge Montalvo**, Division of Consumer Protection, Department of State
- **Nicole Willis**, New York Farm Bureau
- **Stanley (Lee) Talega**, Cornell College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
- **Cathryn Mizbani**, Cornell University Cooperative Extension
- **Patricia Race**, New York State Department of Health
- **Lisa Irving**, Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA)
- **Robert LaValva**, New Amsterdam Market



After member introductions, meeting host **Dr. Mary-Ellen Mallia** presented a slideshow illustrating the benefits of local, fresh produce in institutions, as well as the relationship between SUNY Albany and local producers. All of the ground beef served at SUNY Albany is grass-fed, and the wholesalers utilized include Purdy & Sons. (*Appendix A*).

John Evers followed Dr. Mallia's presentation with an update on his gleaning for food banks initiative. He explained that it is not cost-effective for farmers to glean unused crop to donate to food banks; he suggested that working with local Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) Offices may be beneficial for this task.

More on this initiative can be found on the newly launched www.GleanNY.org within the upcoming weeks.



Next, **Ellie Wilson, Ray Denniston and Dr. Barbara Dennison** (*left*) presented the most recent draft of guidelines developed by the Food Procurement Guidelines Workgroup (*Appendix B*). Next steps include a vote on recommendations and Council-wide edits before submitting as part of the 2012 Report to the Governor. Following next steps, Ray provided a brief synopsis of the current climate of school food standards, as the USDA has proposed new nutrition requirements. He illustrated the barriers to adhering to these requirements.

Next, **Commissioner Aubertine and Phil Giltner** delved into the plans of **Governor Cuomo** and the **2012 Federal Farm Bill**:

Governor's Plans

- First, it was presented that Governor Cuomo has delivered an on-time balanced budget with no tax increases; an efficient, dynamic administration with Regional Economic Development Councils.
- On Monday, July 16th, grants deadline for “Consolidated Funding Application, (CFA)” a single unified gateway to a number of funding programs. The CFA includes Department of Agriculture and Markets (DAM)’s new Agricultural Grants Program- \$3 million for farms, food systems and distribution, and a strong interest around the state. There were programs ranging from food distribution in food deserts to processing vegetables in the Hudson valley for NYC markets, to food distribution in NYC itself. Awards will be announced this Fall.

2012 Federal Farm Bill

- Some cuts to nutrition programs, conservation programs;
- Dairy reform, crucial issue for NY;
- Ends direct payment system;
- House Version brought up to markup in the House Ag Committee Last week (July 11-12);
- Largely similar to Senate Version;
- No word on whether the bill will brought to the wider house floor for a vote;
- Majority Leader Cantor and other members of the Majority want to sharply curtail nutrition programs in order to forestall defense cuts, as agreed to in last year’s “Super Committee” negotiations;
- Governor Cuomo strongly opposes sharp cuts in nutrition programs. New York receives about \$6B year in nutrition payments now.



Kathryn Tanner, Legislative assistant for Agriculture and Nutrition, then delivered comments on behalf of **Senator Kristen E. Gillibrand**. Like above, Kathryn commented that Dairy was a central focus of the Senator re: The Farm Bill. The legislation she authored focused on easing the transition from MILC to the new margin insurance program by keeping the costs as low as possible

for small and medium sized farms and extending the current rates until the new program is in place. Additional dairy legislation included improvements in the transparency of milk pricing and increases democratic participation in the co-op block voting. Regarding nutrition programs, Senator Gillibrand created the “Healthy Food Financing” legislation which gives one time grants and loans to build grocery stores in food deserts. More on Senator Gillibrand’s Farm Bill Legislation found in *Appendix C*.

Next, a **Council Member round-table** took place where, when applicable, each member illustrated updates in his or her organization, ideas on the direction and/or next steps of the NYS CFP:

Ray Denniston described the Farm to School Grant Proposal written and submitted by himself, **Sarah K. Johnson** and **Tim Pezzolessi** on behalf of the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (NYSDAM). As a means of sustaining a Farm to School Program, the proposed grant would consist of a pilot program utilizing GAP and food safety training for farmers and school food service staff, respectively.

Linda Bopp illustrated that, despite the potential national cuts in the SNAP program, her initiative has some positive developments. Finger printing for SNAP eligibility has been eliminated in NYS; increased funding for SNAP outreach in NOEP; and increased eligibility of SNAP participants.

Lisa Irving presented that OTDA has partnered with Hunger Solutions, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and the Food Industry Alliance to conduct SNAP outreach and healthy eating with SNAP benefits in grocery stores during the summer months. Starting this fall, OTDA, as part of the Eat Smart NY initiative, will partner with the NYS Department of Health and Cornell Cooperative Extension to promote nutrition and childhood obesity prevention in low-income schools and to bring nutrition education to upstate EBT Farmers Markets located in Buffalo, Rochester and Syracuse.

Finally, **public comments** adjourned the meeting. Speakers included:

- **Mark Dunlea**, Hunger Action Network NYS
- **Tom Ferraro**, Executive Director, Foodlink
- **Margaret Brown**, Legal Fellow, Natural Resources Defense Council
- **Barbara Baron**, Vice President, Nutrition Affairs; American Dairy Association and Dairy Council, Inc (*via email*)

All public comments may be found in Appendix C.

Following the meeting, a local, beautifully prepared lunch was served by the SUNY Albany dining staff to the NYS CFP.

