



# New York State Council on Food Policy

Commissioner Patrick Hooker, Chairman

---

## Summer Meeting 2008

Friday, June 27<sup>th</sup> \* 10:30 am – 1:00 p.m. \* Rm. #250 (Blue Room) Capitol Bldg, Albany

### Hot Topics

DAM: Farm Bill Specialty Crop Provisions -- Commissioner Hooker .....	i - ii
Farmers' Market Federation: EBT at Farmers' Markets -- Diane Eggert.....	1-2
UFCW Local 1500: Food Policy Principles -- Bruce Both.....	3
DOH: Nutrition Updates / WIC Package -- Mary Cowans.....	4-8
SED: Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program -- Fran O'Donnell .....	9
School Food Service / Farm to School Survey -- Ray Denniston .....	10
Food Banks of NYS -- John Evers .....	11-13
CPB: Food Basket Program -- Mindy Bockstein .....	14-15
OTDA: Working Families / myBenefits -- Carolyn Karins .....	16-20

## 2007 Farm Bill Specialty Crop Provisions

For the first time in Farm Bill history, Congress recognizes the importance of our fruit and vegetable operations by creating a new specialty crops subtitle and approving over \$3 billion to fund specialty crops provisions.

This legislation is of particular importance to New York State, which offers a higher diversity of crops than many other states. Our congressional delegates in both houses were tremendously supportive throughout this protracted and often trying process, and stood firm to ensure our specialty crop growers were well represented at the table throughout.

Specialty Crop Provisions in the Farm Bill include the following:

**\$499 million for the Specialty Crops Block Grants Program.** These grants will help support state programs encouraging the consumption of fruits, vegetables and other specialty crops and enhance the competitiveness of the specialty crop industry.

**\$230 Million for Specialty Crop Research.** This establishes a specialty crop priority focused grant program, awarding grants to eligible public and private entities to improve the efficiency and competitiveness of U.S. specialty crop producers.

**\$78 Million for Organic Research.** This will provide for organic agriculture research and extension, to enhance the ability of organic producers and processors to grow and market organic food, feed, and fiber.

**\$600 million for Specialty Crop Growers in the Disaster Relief Trust Fund.** Currently, ad hoc agriculture disaster relief packages often get to farmers too late - sometimes years after the disaster. This delay can mean the difference between maintaining production and losing a farm for good. Michigan has received about \$260 million in disaster relief from 1995 to 2006. This fund will ensure Michigan farmers can get these payments faster and easier.

**\$407 million for pests and disease prevention.** This provision will direct the United States Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to create a program determining and prioritizing foreign threats to specialty crops' production, such as bio-terrorism and will help protect the specialty crop industry from pests and diseases.

**\$20 million to establish a National Clean Plant Network.** The National Clean Plant Network will help ensure that nurseries provide safe virus-free plant materials to orchards, vineyards, and other growers. Plant materials such as apples, peaches, and grapes are particularly vulnerable to viruses.

**\$33 million for farmers' markets.** These federal grants will support direct farmer-to-consumer marketing activities and transactions such as farmers' markets, roadside stands, on-farm markets, and community supported agriculture.

**\$3 million for healthy food.** This program will help support an infrastructure that serves healthy, affordable food to low-income communities.

**\$1.2 billion for the School Snack Program.** This Stabenow provision will help support the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program with \$1.2 billion in funding. This program helps increase children's access to healthy food options, reducing their risk of obesity and improving their overall

health. This program will serve up to 81,000 students in Michigan when fully implemented, and up to 3 million children around the country

**\$50 million for the Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program.** These grants will help support innovative community food projects and promote a wide variety of community-based solutions to local food system and food security problems.

**\$56 million for the Seniors Farmers Market Nutrition Program.** This program will provide coupons to low-income seniors for the purchase of fresh, unprepared foods at farmers' markets and other community based agriculture programs.

**\$52 million for tree removal assistance.** This program will help increase payments to qualifying growers for tree removal and replacement as a result of damage caused by natural disaster. Current payments do not reflect the actual costs for removal and replacement.

**\$59 million for trade assistance.** This funding will help boost specialty crop exports by facilitating the removal of specialty crop trade barriers.



## NYS Farmers Market Wireless EBT Program NY Fresh Checks

---

### *What are these programs?*

- Mechanisms for connecting food stamp customers with local farmers participating in New York's farmers markets using wireless technology.

### *How do the programs work?*

- NYS Farmers Market Wireless EBT Program provides handheld wireless terminals and support services to farmers markets for the acceptance of electronic food stamp benefits at New York's farmers markets. The terminals, provided free of charge, allow farmers market managers to use one central terminal and act as the FNS authorized agent for all farmers and vendors within the market. Wooden EBT tokens are exchanged for food stamp benefits and used as food stamp "cash" with the farmers and vendors in the market. Farmers redeem the tokens with the market manager at full face value at the end of the market day.
- NY Fresh Checks is a coupon incentive program that "tops up" food stamp benefits at farmers markets. This is a \$5 coupon given to every customer who spends a minimum of \$5 in food stamp benefits at participating upstate New York farmers markets. The coupon is issued one per customer per market day, with the encouragement to return on subsequent market days to receive additional NY Fresh Checks. The coupon is an extension of food stamp benefits and can be spent with any farmer or vendor in the participating markets on any food stamp eligible products. The coupons are redeemable through the Farmers Market Federation of NY with funds made available through the Humpty Dumpty Institute.

### *Program Goals*

- Increase consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables among the food stamp population.
- Provide incentives for food stamp recipients to use their benefits at farmers markets, using a long term incentive that will encourage behavioral changes in shopping and dietary habits.
- Demonstrate that shopping at farmers markets is affordable and a fun, family experience.
- Increase sales and profits for small family farmers participating in New York's farmers markets.

### *Program Partners*

- Farmers Market Federation of NY
- NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance
- NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets
- Humpty Dumpty Institute, funding NY Fresh Checks program for 1 year

### ***Indicators of Program Need***

- The yearly increase in food stamp usage at the participating farmers markets clearly shows there is an interest in purchasing fresh local foods from local farmers. In 2002, food stamp sales were \$3,000. In 2007, food stamp sales were over \$90,000.
- Farmers Market managers are working increasingly harder to find community partners to help them administer the program on site and to promote the program within their community. The number of markets that have joined the program has increased 53% over 2007. (86 farmers markets, 3 mobile markets, and 3 direct delivery programs)

### ***Obstacles to Program Growth***

- The current level of funding allows for 130 terminals across the state. This represents 1/3 of the state's farmers markets. Funding will need to increase as market capacity and interest in participation in the program expands.
- Market capacity – most markets operate on shoestring budgets with volunteer managers. They lack the management capability to operate an EBT program in the market. The most successful markets in the program are those that have developed community partners that help with the onsite administration of the EBT program. However, not every market has the opportunity or the ability to develop such partnerships.
- Promotional efforts. The Federation has given markets the tools to help in this effort, but shoestring budgets do not allow for any significant amount of promotional work that lets the target population know the opportunity exists to use their benefits at the farmers markets. Markets still rely primarily on word of mouth.
- Incentives to encourage food stamp usage at farmers markets are in their infancy stages. The NY Fresh Checks program is poised to make significant inroads, but is only a one-year program and needs to capture state funding to continue on a permanent basis.

### ***Contact for more information***

Farmers Market Federation of NY

Diane Eggert

117 Highbridge St, Suite U3

Fayetteville, NY 13066

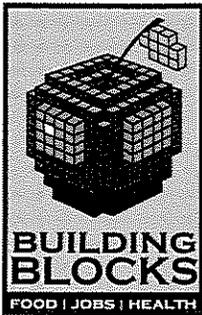
315-637-4690

315-637-4691 (fax)

[Diane.eggert@verizon.net](mailto:Diane.eggert@verizon.net)

[www.nyfarmersmarket.com](http://www.nyfarmersmarket.com)

*Our mission is to support and promote the viability of farmers' markets through innovative services, programs and partnerships that maximize the benefits of markets to sellers, buyers and communities.*



## **Statement of Food Policy Principles—Seeking Greater Access to Quality, Affordable Food**

1. Access to healthy, affordable food is a human right regardless of location, income, race or gender and therefore should be one of the most important goals of NYC public policy.
2. Healthcare advocates seeking long-term solutions to disproportionate rates of obesity, heart disease and diabetes in low-income communities must include employment and wages as factors in considering access to healthy, affordable food.
3. Healthy communities require a variety of purchasing options, including: farmers' markets, CSAs, community gardens, urban agriculture, food co-ops and supermarkets. These entities must work together with city and state officials to ensure a balanced range of food sources.
4. Public money is needed to ensure that existing and new responsible food retailers can build profitably in low-income communities and still provide food at reasonable prices.
5. All types of public/private partnerships need to be considered to finance existing responsible food retailers and the development of new food retailers responsive to community needs.
6. The policy of the City of New York should encourage the preservation and development of supermarkets in low-income communities by discouraging the eviction of supermarkets, changing the existing land use and zoning laws, implementing economic incentives, reviewing existing regulatory processes, and mainstreaming construction procedures. To ensure food access, special attention should also be given to any new development that includes new housing.
7. Responsible food retailers produce entry-level and skilled jobs, pay a living wage, and provide health benefits, pensions, and the type of financial job security necessary for a community to be economically viable. These create economic stimulus and buying power in low-income communities to ensure food security and good health.
8. Workers employed by markets that do not meet their economic responsibilities by providing living wage jobs, health benefits, job security, job training and career advancement should be afforded the opportunity to organize and improve their working conditions.
9. A regional approach to food procurement at the private and public levels can lower the cost of food, create jobs, ensure food safety, support small farmers and reduce carbon emissions, particularly by government and state agencies.
10. The Federal Food Stamp Program could provide a needed economic stimulus to New York City if it is made accessible to all eligible participants. A unified legislative effort by advocates will maximize our ability to reform the food stamp program to meet the economic, health, and food access needs of everyday New Yorkers.
11. Partnerships between supermarkets and health and nutrition advocates should be created to ensure that communities benefit from increased access.
12. Along with our effort to expand supermarkets, a citywide education program is needed to promote the three basic tenets that are the building blocks of all communities: good food, good jobs and good health.
13. Partnerships between supermarkets, local food manufacturers, regional farms, urban agriculture, and farmers' markets will create more local jobs and increase the sale of locally produced foods. Investment in infrastructure like the Hunts Point Market and wholesale farmers' market will enhance these partnerships.
14. A coalition of hunger advocates, environmental groups, health organizations, labor, industry representatives, city officials and community members should be formed both in conjunction with and separate from existing state and city councils to ensure the long-term viability of these food policy principles.

## **New York State Department of Health**

Division of Nutrition Updates

### **Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC)**

#### **1) Maximizing participation in food and nutrition assistance programs**

##### **WIC Caseload Expansion**

The NYS WIC Program is experiencing a steady increase in participants, and the diversity of this population has greatly expanded. FFY 07's average caseload was 482,851, while current FFY 08 average (through May) caseload is 491,209. The program anticipates that caseload will end up averaging 498,000 by the end of September, and expects to serve a record 500,000 participants by June 2008.

#### **3) Increasing consumer awareness and knowledge about healthy eating, and improving access to safe and nutritious food**

##### **The WIC 1% or Less Milk Initiative**

The WIC 1% or Less Milk Initiative is a pilot project designed to increase the availability of low-fat milk in small stores and bodegas in New York City and to overcome two major obstacles – the misconception that whole milk was healthier for children, and the question of accessibility when many small stores and bodegas in New York City did not carry sufficient quantities of lower fat milk. NYS WIC staff e worked with WIC grocers/vendors in the metropolitan New York City area to ensure that low-fat milk is available while transitioning participants into selecting healthier milk choices. Visits to 939 WIC vendors resulted in the identification of 658 needing training/intervention due to having less than one gallon of low-fat or fat-free milk in stock. At the conclusion of the project 90% of the vendors carried low-fat milk.

The success of this project in ensuring enhanced availability of low-fat milk in the New York City area, which represents about two thirds of New York State's WIC population,. All WIC participants now receive low fat milk with the exception of children under two years of age, who may receive whole milk.

##### **Fruits and Vegetables Become More Accessible to WIC Families**

The NYS WIC Program was the first in the nation to develop a plan to distribute vegetables and fruits to WIC participants. The original distribution in 2006 and 2007 of three monthly \$5 checks for vegetables and fruits to 150,000 participants aged two through five years was expanded in 2008 to include all women, and to provide this benefit year-round. Eighty-eight percent of these checks were redeemed during the months of January through March 2006. This project was repeated from January through March 2007 with similar results

While providing participants with the resources to purchase fruits and vegetables making quality products available in local grocery stores becomes an issue as well. The program will be amending the state regulations that govern the authorization of WIC stores, so as to ensure the availability of stores that have adequate stock of healthy foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables, low fat alternatives and whole grain products.

#### **2) Strengthening the connection between local food products and consumers**

**The Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP)** provides checks to women, infants and children through the WIC Program and to seniors in the **Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)** for the purchase of locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables. The fresh fruits and vegetables can be purchased with FMNP checks at farmers' markets during the summer and fall. The program officially runs from July 1 – November 15.

FMNP checks are given to WIC participants (\$24.00) and CSFP Seniors (\$20.00) to purchase nutritious fresh produce in addition to the foods WIC and CSFP provides. Approximately 300,000 WIC and CSFP households benefit annually. (In 2008 we expect to provide over 280,000 WIC families with FMNP benefits - the same as 2007).

WIC local agencies provide farmers' market nutrition education to their participants through one on one and/or group counseling, videos, informational pamphlets, and recipes, discussing the benefits of purchasing fresh fruits and vegetables at farmers' markets and the nutrient value, proper selection, storage and preparation of fresh fruits and vegetables.

### **WIC Program Foods to Change Significantly**

USDA has enacted new rules for contents of food packages, which will include for the first time whole grain bread, fruits and vegetables, and require lowfat milk to all participants with the exception of children under two. These changes were made to further improve the health outcomes of Americans at greatest health and nutritional risk. WIC food packages are now based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and focus on the major health risks faced by the WIC population which is an increased prevalence of overweight and obesity in both adults and children. Finally, the demographics of the WIC population have changed significantly, necessitating a wider variety of food choices to meet the needs of a diverse population.

The ability of the WIC food packages to reinforce nutrition education messages provided to participants is critical to affecting the dietary quality and habits of infants, children and mothers served by WIC. The nutrition education provided by WIC enables participants to make informed decisions in choosing foods that, together with the supplemental foods contained in the WIC food packages, can meet their total dietary needs. The intent is to help participants continue healthful dietary practices after leaving the program.

### **Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)**

#### **1) Maximizing participation in food and nutrition assistance programs**

Recognized as the gold standard for nutrition and food service in day care centers, CACFP currently serves more than half of all eligible daycare programs, including all Head Start centers in the state and ensures that safely prepared nutritious meals and snacks are available to children and adults in day care settings. CACFP provides **\$2.6 M in weekly reimbursement** for qualifying meals and snacks for over 270,000 participants served daily through over 1500 center and home sponsor agreements reaching 4,100 child care centers and 8,500 family day care homes.

CACFP in conjunction with the New York City mayor's office and NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS) have initiated a joint outreach venture in New York City to encourage organizations that represent immigrant child day care providers serving low income children to participate in CACFP. This group of providers has been particularly difficult to reach through traditional enrollment and outreach methods.

#### **3) Increasing consumer awareness and knowledge about healthy eating, and improving access to safe and nutritious food**

CACFP reviews child care menus to evaluate the food and beverages served at participating daycare centers. Nutritionists provide technical assistance to child care staff on developing menus that promote low-fat milk to children over two years of age, low-fat meat choices and fresh fruits and vegetables.

- In 2006, four CACFP contractors implemented the Eat Well Play Hard in Child Care Settings intervention in low-income childcare centers in 12 counties. This intervention, which provides nutrition education for children and parents, and training for child care workers, reached low-income pre-school children, their parents and their caregivers at 60 licensed childcare centers. In 2007, an additional four contracts were awarded, covering an additional 19 counties. This totals a coverage area of 31 counties, reaching 120 childcare centers annually. During FFY 2008, another 90 low-income child care centers located in Harlem, Bronx, and Brooklyn will be reached with this intervention.
- Through the 2007 Childhood Obesity Prevention Initiative, CACFP provided two-day nutrition and physical activity training and tool kits to the staff of 112 childcare centers across New York. Another 40 child care centers will be trained on this curriculum during FFY 2008. These staff agreed to implement the Eat Well Play Hard in Child Care Settings curriculum at their centers during the current federal fiscal year.
- CACFP instituted a Breastfeeding Friendly Child Care Initiative to recognize child care centers and family day care homes that provide much needed support to mothers whose infants are enrolled in their centers.

### **The Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP)**

- 2) Strengthening the connection between local food products and consumers; and
- 3) Increasing consumer awareness and knowledge about healthy eating, and improving access to safe and nutritious food

HPNAP provides funding and works in partnership with food banks, food pantries and soup kitchens to improve the quality and quantity of nutritious food in the emergency food relief organization (EFRO) network, while ensuring nutritious foods are provided in a safe fashion. HPNAP policies require that **10 percent of HPNAP food funds are spent on fresh produce and 2 percent are spent on non-flavored 1% or less fat fluid milk. In addition:**

- Food recovery projects, food banks, and other contractors are increasing the availability of fresh produce, including locally grown produce, in food pantries, soup kitchens and emergency shelters by gleaning leftover produce on farms, participating in Community Supported Agriculture, operating gardens; and delivering fresh produce to low-income areas.
- Just Say Yes to Fruits and Vegetables (JSY) is a Food Stamp Nutrition Education program designed to increase access to and consumption of fruits and vegetables by individuals and families receiving food stamps and WIC benefits. JSY nutritionists conducted 1,350 nutrition interventions including nutrition education sessions and community marketing events with over 15,000 food stamp clients.

### **Eat Well Play Hard (EWPH) Community Projects**

**3) Increasing consumer awareness and knowledge about healthy eating, and improving access to safe and nutritious food;** and EWPH grants to establish local collaborative partnerships to address childhood obesity prevention from a community perspective were awarded to 15 projects covering 22 New York counties in a variety of settings including daycare centers, WIC clinics, schools, and after-school programs. The goals focused on promoting healthy eating and physical activity at the community level. Examples of the accomplishments include:

- Establishment of community partnerships that included representatives from a wide variety of organizations, including: health care agencies, food and nutrition programs, fitness organizations, business, faith-based institutions, youth based organizations, voluntary groups and government.

- Increased physical activity time in day care centers.
- Increased offerings of low-fat milk and fruits and vegetables on day care center and school menus.
- Decreased TV time in participating day care centers.
- Increased access to farmer's markets for WIC participants.
- Increased access to fruits and vegetables for emergency food program recipients, through establishment of community supported agriculture options and community gardens.

## **Changes to WIC Food Package**

After more than 30 years of successfully improving the nutrition health status of low-income women, infants and children, the WIC Program's food package is changing to address the critical health issues of the new millennium. The WIC Program will be providing new WIC foods that will be lower in fat, higher in fiber and more culturally appropriate. Our goal is to help families meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, the Healthy People 2010 Objectives and follow the American Academy of Pediatric recommendations for infant nutrition.

### Immediate Changes

The New York State WIC Program is taking the first steps in meeting these goals and achieving healthier outcomes for thousands of New York families. Beginning January 1, 2008, the following modifications were made to the WIC foods prescribed monthly to program participants:

#### Low-fat or Non-fat Milk Only

All women and children over the age of two now have a choice of non-fat (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk. Whole milk will only be issued to children who are between 12 and 24 months of age. These changes reflect our overall approach to obesity prevention and provide a consistent message about healthy eating.

#### Vegetables and Fruits Added

All women and children (2-5 years old) will be able to purchase fresh, frozen or canned vegetables and fruits.

#### Juice Amounts Adjusted

All women and children will receive an adjusted food prescription to reflect a recommended daily juice intake of approximately 4 ounces per day. The juice for infants will be eliminated at a later date. This more closely aligns WIC with the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Institute of Medicine recommendations.

### Future Changes

By 2009, the WIC food package will also include the addition of:

- Tofu and soy milk
- Whole wheat bread and other options such as corn and whole wheat tortillas, brown rice and bulgur
- Whole grain cereals and oatmeal
- Canned beans, peas or lentils
- Infant vegetables, fruits and meats in jars
- Light tuna, salmon, sardines, and mackerel for breastfeeding women

###

## State Education Department **The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program**

The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) is a USDA federally funded program, administered in New York State (NYS) by the State Education Department, that provides all students in participating schools with a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, free of charge, during their school day. The program began in 2002 as a pilot project funded by Congress in four states. The tremendous successes of the project led to its expansion in 2004, and its implementation as a permanent program under the National School Lunch Act. The FFVP has continued expansion to include all states, effective July 1, 2008.

NYS will join the program through a provision in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2008, Public Law 110-161. NYS will select 25 elementary or secondary schools to participate in the program, the majority of which have at least 50 percent of its students eligible for free or reduced price meals. The recent passage of the Farm Bill (the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008) expands the original FFVP to create a more sustainable program that reaches more schools. However, the Farm Bill limits the program to elementary schools where at least 50 percent of students qualify for free or reduced price meals. The full impact that the Farm Bill will have on the 2008-2009 school year (beginning July 1, 2008) is not known at this time.

The goal of the FFVP is to:

- Create healthier a school environment by providing healthier food choices
- Expand the variety of fruits and vegetables children experience
- Increase children's fruit and vegetable consumption
- Make a difference in children's diets to impact their present and future health
- Encourage nutritious snacking

The FFVP in NYS will be administered as 25 discretionary grants and each participating school is expected to receive \$10,000 to cover all costs of the program for the school year. The participating schools will be funded to purchase domestically grown fruits and vegetables, with the exception of bananas, and are encouraged to expand their nutrition education programs in conjunction with the FFVP. Schools will be in charge of determining how and when their enrolled students will have access to the fresh fruits and vegetables, but the FFVP must operate separately from the school lunch program. The FFV can not be counted as a component of a reimbursable meal. All enrolled students must have equal access to the fresh fruits and vegetables, and can not be denied access to them for any reason. Each school is required to submit monthly claims for reimbursement, evaluation and reports. Additionally each FFVP could be observed and evaluated.

The program has seen great success in the states where it has been implemented. The FFVP, through promoting healthier eating, is an important component of combating childhood obesity and creating healthier individuals.

Contact Meghan Usher or Lindsey Tredo at 518-473-8781 for further information.

## **School Food in NYS**

Raymond Denniston, Johnston City School District  
Chairman, NY Farm to School Coordinating Committee

### **School Child Nutrition Financial Challenges**

Schools in NYS as well as the rest of the country have experienced rapid growth in operating cost:

#### **FOOD COST RISING:**

Bread-up 12%

Milk-up 17%

Pasta-up 13%

Fresh Produce-up 15%

#### **OTHER:**

Increasing delivery and fuel cost

Increasing Labor cost

State aid has not increased in 20 years

Unfunded mandates

All negatively affect the present growth and success of a Statewide Nutritionally positive Farm to School Program for New York State.

*Based on presentation by The Rock On Café Coalition: "The Perfect Storm... A forecast for the Child Nutrition Programs in Broome & Tioga County" May 21, 2008 (Created by ASBO) Appendix A.*

---

### **NY Farm to School Program**

An on-line survey was conducted of the NYS food service directors to determine the extent of NY's Farm to School activity; to assess interest in Farm to School; to identify opportunities and barriers; and to focus the activities of NYS DAM and the Coordinating Committee members on greatest needs and interests.

The preliminary results reflect the desire to purchase more local food by food service directors mostly to benefit the local economy and to increase student's consumption of fruits and vegetables. Local apples, carrots, lettuce and tomatoes top the charts of local produce purchases.

Some of the major obstacles cited by the Food Service Directors include expense of purchasing local and the delivery needs (quantity and timing) of schools meal programs. Also, approximately 53% of the Food Service Directors who responded to the survey were not familiar with NYS's procedure for local purchasing.

The NY FTS Coordinating Committee is currently gearing up for New York Harvest for New York Kids Week: Farm to You Fest 2008! (Sept 28- Oct 5).

*Based on presentation by The Farm to School Coordinating Committee: "New York Farm to School: 2008 Food Service Director's Survey Highlights" June 4, 2008 (Christina Grace, NYSDAM) Appendix B.*

# Food Bank Association of New York State

## Major Challenges Facing Food Banks in 2008

1. Most significantly, we have seen dramatic increases in the number of clients coming to emergency feeding programs. Food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, and emergency feeding programs directly aiding the hungry, have repeatedly stated that they are serving an increasingly larger number of clients in 2008 as compared with previous years. We anticipate this situation will only get worse as we face the economic uncertainties enveloping the hungry, poor, and working-class seeking food relief. It is the food banks' contention that the recent downturns in the economy are forcing a higher number of middle-class and others not usually reliant on the emergency feeding network, to seek assistance. Simply stated, we cannot do more with diminishing resources, especially when hunger is increasing. For example the Regional Food Bank of Northeastern New York (in Latham) stated in the period covering 2004-5 their agencies averaged 812,301 meals served per month; in the period covering 2007-8 they report these same agencies are serving 1,018,134 meals per month. Correspondingly the same food bank reported that in 2006 they distributed 19,663,972 pounds to its agencies whereas in 2007 they fell below 17,808,931 pounds distributed. Demand is up, but bulk donations are not keeping pace (as we will see explained in detail below).
2. The food banks have suffered almost a 50% decrease in federal food aid over the past 5 years. The decline in USDA commodities under The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) has greatly impacted New York State. In 2003, our state received \$25,174,283 worth of federal TEFAP commodities (both in entitlement and bonus offerings). By 2007 – the last year of the old Farm Bill – the state received only \$13,437,870 under the TEFAP program. Further, the USDA altered the formula for aid and reduced New York State TEFAP funds an *additional 8.4%* in December 2007 retroactive to October 2007.
3. State aid was cut by 2% this year. For state fiscal year 2008-9 the Hunger Prevention Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP) – the main state funding for food banks – was cut by 2% in the Health Budget. This reduction lowered funding from \$28.34 million in FY 2007-8 to \$27.85 million for FY 2008-9. But, it should be kept in mind that the food banks receive only \$16.6 million of all HPNAP.
4. Declines in food donations from the food industry for a variety of reasons are impacting the food banks. Greater efficiencies in the food industry have resulted in: a “just in time” model; the avoidance of overproduction; a reduction of misprints or cosmetically damaged “unsalable” product that, while perfectly edible, cannot be marketed or sold; and, a diversion of product to secondary markets or overseas. Consolidations within the food industry and a decline in manufacturing generally has also resulting in fewer sites from which food banks used to draw salvage and overproduced food. This new industry paradigm reduces the amount of food usually donated to the food banks. Food banks report they while they have a pool of dedicated donors, a variety of smaller donors are being solicited to make up for donation decreases. One food bank reports that almost double the number of donors are being solicited for the same amounts of food as compared with just five years ago.

5. Food banks are being hit extremely hard by food inflation. With donations down, we are forced to buy more food to keep our pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters stocked. This means that we are forced to purchase more, but with food inflation hitting record highs, we are unable to buy in the same quantities as we did in the past. In other words, food inflation has caused a decrease in the amount of food we are able to distribute to the emergency feeding programs. For example, the Harry Chapin Food Bank on Long Island states that some recent offers for purchased goods reflect extreme fluctuations and cost increases:

Item:	Pack Size	3/10/08 Price	5/15/08 Price
Canned Green Beans	24/14.5 oz.	\$8.75	\$9.75
Canned Peas	24/14.5 oz.	\$8.90	\$9.90
Canned Corn	24/14.5 oz.	\$8.55	\$9.75
Canned Mixed Vegetables	24/14.5 oz.	\$8.50	\$9.75
Canned Sliced Carrots	24/14.5 oz.	\$8.60	\$9.75
Rice	24/16 oz.	\$8.64	\$13.60
Brown Rice	12/16 oz.	\$5.12	\$6.80

Our New York City food bank reports that prices for certain bulk staple items have increased astronomically between July 2007 and June 2008. For example, based on case size (similar to statistics above), pasta is up 32%, rice 31%, tuna 28%, and milk 9% from the wholesale prices offered just one year ago.

6. Fuel costs are at all time highs. Food banks are paying exorbitant transportation costs to transport food to the food banks and back out to our member agencies, thus reducing the amount of money available for other services. In fact our statistics reveal that cost has reduced the number of shipments we have been able to secure, and we are paying more for less.

- January to June 30, 2007:  
360 shipments for a total of 898,057 miles equating to 11,002,258 pounds of food costing \$457,250 for the network. It averages \$0.04155 cost per pound
- January to June 23, 2008 (6 business days remaining in June 2008):  
282 shipments for a total of 197,011 miles equating to 8,137,216 pounds of food costing \$407,382 for the network. It averages \$0.05006 cost per pound.

Thus one can see that higher diesel costs have impacted our bottom line and it is costing more to secure less food by truck. This does not include the internal costs at the food banks themselves who transport much of this food to agencies once it arrives at the banks. And, agencies that pick-up from the food banks are also spending more on fuel.

## Solutions in the Works for the Food Banks of New York State

1. The New Farm Bill passed. Thankfully the new Farm Bill reverses much of the cuts in baseline TEFAP entitlement from October 2007 through June 2008. In early June 2008 the food banks were notified that \$3,127,836 has been added to New York State's base thus reversing the declining trend under the old Farm Bill. But it should be noted this increase comes AFTER we faced 5 years of declines. We are still uncertain what the trend will be in USDA commodities in the category of "bonus" offerings. This category has precipitously declined over the past 5 years. We suspect TEFAP will be adversely impacted by the recent floods in the mid-west.

2. Reversing state aid declines. In state fiscal year 2007-8 the Hunger Prevention Nutrition Assistance Program experienced its first major increase in almost a decade. HPNAP increased by \$5 million under the Department of Health budget and another \$5 million in targeted food aid to the eight food banks and the New York City United Way. This commitment by the State needs to be continued. However, as noted previously, state aid was flat funded in state FY 2008-9.

3. Local Agriculture. Food banks received a record-breaking 3.67 million pounds of food from New York farmers in 2007. The figure placed the New York Farm Bureau #1 in the nation in food donations [from farmers to food banks.] The program, *Harvest For All* ©, has shown the food banks that not only is food produced locally but it is the same nutritious food desired by those we serve. In that vein, food banks have renewed their efforts to explore local purchases from farmers. Some food banks, such as The Food Bank For Westchester, already buy most of their produce locally. Others have bi-lateral contracts with large local farms. But, research needs to be done to link both small and large farms with food banks. A variety of resources are needed to make this work. Akin to the research being undertaken by the *Farm to School Program*, food banks needs to identify local farmers, set-up a process to buy from them, establish a purchase-invoice system, and create a transportation and delivery process. An overarching entity familiar with the fruit and vegetable farming community needs to be enlisted to help the regional food banks both identify opportunities and establish a mutually beneficial process of buying local produce (and other New York farm products). This has been a recurrent theme at all of the Food Policy sessions and staff from Agriculture and Markets has already assisted several food banks in buying local.

4. Partnerships. Food banks are exploring systems that would interconnect their network, both within the food bank system and between the food banks and in-state farmers, food producers, and processors. These partnerships range from the exploration of joint purchasing and sharing food between the food banks to projects designed to add shelf-life to locally produced and/or donated produce (canning, packaging, freezing). Basic research is needed to help identify existing facilities with the ability to either process for the food banks on an ad hoc basis or process products to food bank specifications (usually bulk). This basic system is the potential link between fresh and locally grown product and millions of people who would welcome additional food resources in a time of declining bulk donations.



# New York State Consumer Protection Board Food Basket Program



## The NYS Consumer Protection Board (CPB) Food Basket Initiative

- The CPB's Food Basket initiative represents a partnership with the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets to empower consumers by providing them with information so they can make informed cost-effective choices.
- The Food Basket includes, thus far:
  - A List of Agricultural Fairs in New York State.
  - The CPB's Food Terminology Brochure.
  - Tips for the Savvy Shopper - A "Recipe" for smart shopping.

## What is the "You Are What You Eat" – Guide to Food Terminology?

- Written by the CPB with the assistance of the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, the brochure provides educational information about food product labeling in an effort to help consumers make wise dietary and expenditure decisions in the supermarket, and is the centerpiece of the CPB's Food Basket Program.
- Since consumers are faced with more and more grocery items on the shelves, the CPB's Guide provides a concise explanation of commonly used terminology such as "natural" vs. "organic" or "light" vs. "free" to foster greater understanding.
- While labels on food provide consumers with factual information such as a list of ingredients, instructions for safe handling and storage, identification of the manufacturer/distributor and nutritional content, the Guide clearly explains numerous terms that are often confusing to shoppers.
- The CPB is working with partners on the State and federal level to make this information more accessible and easier to understand for the general public.

## Support and Promotion of the Food Basket Program

- The CPB staff provides program and administrative resources to the Food Basket Program.
- The "You Are What You Eat" – Guide to Food Terminology has been made available to consumers via the CPB's website and at informational and outreach sessions conducted by the CPB staff statewide.
- On February 1, 2008, in time for the Super Bowl, a press release was distributed to media statewide regarding the Guide to Food Terminology. Media interest in the program and brochure resulted in saturation of information across media markets, including Buffalo, the Capital District and New York City.
- The Guide was a featured publication at the CPB's table during its Annual Consumer Action Day held on March 25 at the Empire State Plaza. More than 30 organizations participated and the event drew hundreds to the Plaza Concourse.
- The CPB's "Tips for the Savvy Food Shopper" was featured in the 2007-2008 Holiday Edition of the Agency's newsletter: *The Consumer Watchdog*, which is available on the CPB website.
- Both the Tips for the Savvy Food Shopper, and the "You Are What You Eat" – Guide to Food Terminology were highlighted in the CPB's Consumer Tips for Memorial Day Press Release which received statewide coverage in multiple media outlets.
- The Guide has been distributed by New York State Dairy Foods, Inc. to its members and at the Dairy Month celebration held in the Legislative Office Building as part of a partnership effort with the CPB to build toy safety awareness.

**Next Steps for the CPB's Food Basket Program**

- The CPB will be expanding the Food Basket Program to youth via the Kidsumer Programs and Newsletter.
- Additional public and private partnerships will further expand brochure distribution.

*For More Information Contact:*



**The New York State Consumer Protection Board**

*Advocating for and Empowering NY Consumers*

[www.nysconsumer.gov](http://www.nysconsumer.gov)

**Toll-Free Consumer Hotline 1-800-697-1220**

**2008 Farm Bill Highlights**  
**Title IV - Nutrition**  
**June 2008**

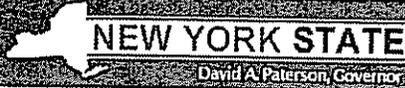
<b>Name Change</b> <i>Section 4001/4002</i>	Changes program to "Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program," or SNAP. Changes Food Stamp Act of 1977 to Food and Nutrition Act of 2008.
<b>Standard Deduction</b> <i>Section 4102</i>	Raises minimum standard deduction for households of one to three from \$134 to \$144 in FY 2009, with annual inflation adjustment in later years. <i>CBO 9-yr cost: \$5.420 billion</i>
<b>Dependent Care Deduction</b> <i>Section 4103</i>	Removes cap on dependent care deduction. Will provide on average almost \$500/yr. to 100,000 working households with high child care costs. <i>CBO 9-yr cost: \$500 million</i>
<b>Minimum Benefit</b> <i>Section 4107</i>	Raises minimum monthly benefit for 1 and 2 person households from \$10 to 8 percent of thrifty food plan for a household of one (\$14 in FY 2009, with annual adjustment for food inflation).
<b>Exclude Combat Pay</b> <i>Section 4101</i>	Codifies current policy that excludes from countable income special pay received by service members deployed to a combat zone.
<b>Index Asset Limits</b> <i>Section 4104(a)</i>	Adjusts asset limits for annual inflation (rounded down to nearest \$250). Limits will first increase to \$3,250 for households with elderly/disabled in 2012 and \$2,250 for all other households in 2014.
<b>Exclude Retirement Accounts</b> <i>Section 4104(b)</i>	Excludes all tax-preferred retirement accounts, such as IRAs, from countable resources. USDA to develop list of all excludable accounts.
<b>Exclude Education Accounts</b> <i>Section 4104(c)</i>	Excludes all tax-preferred education accounts, such as 529s, from countable resources.
<b>Simplified Reporting</b> <i>Section 4105</i>	States can extend "simplified reporting" to households with seniors and people with disabilities. Households in which all members are elderly or disabled and have no earnings can participate for 12-months; only required to report if household income exceeds 130 percent of poverty level.
<b>Transitional Food Stamps</b> <i>Section 4106</i>	States currently have option to extend transitional food stamps to families with children that leave TANF funded cash assistance programs. Now states can extend transitional food stamps to state-only funded programs as well.
<b>Food Stamp Employment and Training Activities</b> <i>Section 4108</i>	(1) Allows use of FSET funds for job retention services up to 90 days after FSET participants begin employment, (2) clarifies that FSET volunteers are not subject to 120 hour/month participation limit or requirement that hours of participation not exceed household's FS benefit divided by minimum wage.

<b>FSET Funding</b> <i>Section 412</i>	Requires that states spend annual FSET grant money within 15 months of beginning of fiscal year, or it ceases to be available.
<b>Clarification of Split Issuance</b> <i>Section 4113</i>	Clarifies that states may not divide a monthly benefit into two or more issuances, as some retailers have sought. Benefits can still be issued on different days of the month for different households and a second allotment allowed if a benefit correction is necessary.
<b>Accrual of EBT Benefits</b> <i>Section 4114</i>	Allows states to store a household's benefits "off-line" if they have not accessed Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) account for 6 months. A state that does so must send notice to household and make benefits available within 48 hours of a request. Requires states to "expunge" a household's benefits if household has not accessed account for 12 months.
<b>De-obligation of FS Coupons</b> <i>Section 4115</i>	Phases out food stamp coupons as legal tender. Coupons may not be redeemed as of one year after the date of enactment. Provides that no interchange fees — fees card companies charge merchants — may apply to EBT transactions.
<b>Review of Major Changes in Program Design</b> <i>Section 4116</i>	Requires USDA to set standards for identifying major changes in program operations. Requires states implementing such changes to notify USDA and collect data on impact of changes on program integrity and household access, particularly for vulnerable households. Clarifies responsibility of state agencies in states where counties administer Food Stamp Program and requires states to keep necessary records to determine compliance with program rules.
<b>Telephonic Signature Option</b> <i>Section 4119</i>	Gives states option to allow households to apply for food stamps and establish a filing date over the telephone.
<b>Preservation of Access and Payment Accuracy</b> <i>Section 4121</i>	Requires states to adequately test and pilot new computer systems, update systems for changed policy and circumstances, and evaluate systems' effect on access and payment accuracy.
<b>Civil Penalties and Disqualification for Retailer Fraud</b> <i>Section 4132</i>	Gives USDA flexibility to set disqualification periods and fines for certain retailer violations, such as allowing customers to purchase non-food items with food stamp benefits.
<b>Major Systems Failures</b> <i>Section 4133</i>	If USDA finds that a major systems failure in a state, such as a failed computer system, caused overpayments to a "substantial number of households," USDA may prohibit state from collecting overpayments. Instead, state would be responsible for reimbursing federal government for the claim.
<b>Technical Clarification Regarding Eligibility</b> <i>Section 4112</i>	In an effort to ensure that innocent people are not wrongly denied benefits, requires the Secretary to define several terms and ensure consistent application of a 1996 provision that prevents suspected criminals ("fleeing felons") from receiving food stamps.
<b>New Eligibility Disqualifications</b> <i>Section 4131</i>	Disqualifies individuals from FSP for: 1) intentionally obtaining cash by using food stamps to purchase products in returnable containers, discarding product, and returning container for deposit; or 2) intentionally selling food purchased using food stamp benefits.

<b>Nutrition Education Program</b> <i>Section 4111</i>	Codifies nutrition education activities for individuals eligible for Food Stamps and updates authorization language. To the maximum extent possible, states must notify participants and applicants of availability of nutrition education.
<b>Pilot Projects on Obesity, Nutrition Promotion, and Health</b> <i>Section 4141</i>	Provides \$20 million for Secretary to conduct and evaluate pilots to provide incentives for food stamp households to purchase fruits, vegetables, or other healthy foods at supermarkets and other food stores. Authorizes appropriations for pilots to test additional strategies of using the FSP to improve the dietary and health status of food stamp recipients and reduce obesity.
<b>State Performance on Enrolling Children Receiving Food Stamps for Free School Meals</b> <i>Section 4301</i>	Requires USDA to submit to Congress annually a report on the effectiveness of each state in automatically enrolling school-aged children for free school meals using “direct certification” based on food stamp participation, including best practices.
<b>Effective Date</b> <i>Section 4407</i>	Except where otherwise provided, all provisions take effect October 1, 2008.

## Working Families Food Stamp Initiative (WFFSI) and Supporting Initiatives Update

- **Resource Test Eliminated for Food Stamps** - As of January 1, 2008, expansion of categorical eligibility eliminated the resource test for nearly all Food Stamp recipients statewide, encouraging savings and supporting economic independence. All LDSSs must include "*Helping Hands*" brochure with all food stamp applications and the brochure will be mailed annually to entire FS caseload.
- **Telephone Recertification Interviews** -Under a USDA waiver, implementing use of telephone interviews at recertification for all Non-Temporary Assistance Food Stamp cases. Training of LDSS staff continues and we anticipate statewide rollout by October 2008. This initiative reduces demands on local social service districts, eases process for participants and increases food stamp benefit continuation.
- **Working Families Food Stamp Initiative** - Currently implementing the WFFSI to increase participation in Food Stamp Program by low-income working households. Qualified households can apply for Food stamps without visiting a social services office. WFFSI initially implemented by 11 counties that had piloted telephone recertification and has expanded to include additional districts.
- **Enrollment Target** - OTDA established goal of increasing food stamp participation by 100,000 households and 215,000 individuals by December, 2008. As of April, 2008, enrollment has increased by 55,693 households and 102,680 individuals.
- **Mybenefits.ny.gov** – As of May 30, 2008, New York now offers *myBenefits*, an online multi-benefit pre-screening tool statewide. This allows anyone with internet access to screen for food stamps, tax credits and other work supports. Additional benefit programs will be added over time, starting with HEAP in early fall.
- **Facilitated Online Food Stamp Application** - Beginning June, 2008, a facilitated online Food Stamp application is being introduced in New York as part of *myBenefits*. Initial implementation involves three upstate counties (Jefferson, Ulster, Dutchess). Working with community-based-organizations, applicants can apply online without going to a social services office. Phase II of online application will provide for an open web-based application.
- **Employer Outreach** – Plans are being developed to provide informational materials and conduct outreach about Food Stamps and other work supports directly with employers of lower-wage employees.



OFFICE OF TEMPORARY AND DISABILITY ASSISTANCE  
David A. Hansell, Commissioner

[Home](#) | [Am I Eligible?](#) | [Check My Account](#) | [About myBenefits](#)

^^ THIS WEBSITE SHOULD ONLY BE USED FOR TESTING AND TRAINING ^^ Tuesday April 29, 2008

**Before you go to the next page:**

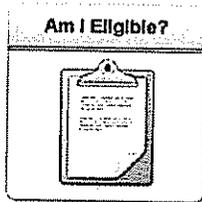
This website can only be used to test myBenefits and teach people how to use myBenefits. You cannot use this website to apply for benefits.

**Welcome to myBenefits!**

myBenefits is a quick and easy way for people in New York State to find answers to questions about New York State's programs and services. Please click on a picture below to choose the tool you would like to use.

To avoid errors when using myBenefits, please do not use the Forward, Back or Stop buttons on your browser. Instead, click on the myBenefits pictures and links to move from page to page. Please keep in mind that this website works best with Internet Explorer.

If you are a local district worker, provider or community partner, please [click here to enter your worker home page](#).



Click on the picture to see if you might be eligible for:

- ✓ [Food Stamps](#)
- ✓ [Earned Income Tax Credit](#)
- ✓ [State Earned Income Tax Credit](#)
- ✓ [Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit](#)
- ✓ [School Breakfast and Lunch Meals](#)

Click on the picture to check your Food Stamps and/or Cash Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) account.

Available only to individuals already receiving benefits.

Click on the link to learn more about [Resources For Working Families](#)

**¿Reúne los requisitos?**

Haga clic en el dibujo <<Am I Eligible>> arriba para ver si usted reúne los requisitos para recibir ayuda de los programas:

- ✓ [Cupones para Alimentos](#)
- ✓ [Crédito Tributario por Ingreso del Trabajo](#)
- ✓ [Crédito Tributario Estatal por Ingreso del Trabajo](#)
- ✓ [Crédito Tributario por Cuidado de Menores y Dependientes](#)
- ✓ [Desayunos escolares y almuerzos](#)

Haga clic en el siguiente enlace para averiguar más sobre [Recursos para familias trabajadoras](#)