



# Spring Newsletter

April 2005

## Membership Renewals!

If your Annual SSFPA Membership has expired, or you are not currently a member, a membership form is enclosed with this Newsletter!

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## SSFPA Looks to the Future at Our Annual Meeting

On January 17, 18, and 19, SSFPA joined in our third collaboration with the NYS Farmers Direct Marketing Association and Federation of Farmers Markets of NY. The conference was held in Syracuse and was very successful in many ways.

We hosted four well-attended workshops on January 18, spurring a great deal of discussion! Featured were resource people on entrepreneurship, with solid information on insurance and legal issues; an update on food safety regulations with information as to where in our regions we can get further assistance; advice on framing advocacy issues; a marketing workshop providing models for building a "branded identity" for your region; and information on regional marketing and distribution. The Association has purchased cassette tapes of the workshops, which can be borrowed by emailing: [alison-clarke@mailstation.com](mailto:alison-clarke@mailstation.com) and paying the postage.

Rather than members renting individual booth spaces at the trade show, the Board of Directors opted to combine three booth spaces together under the NYSSFPA banner. The exhibit showcased products made by 15 processors, representing our 11 regions across the state.

The end-of-row location provided ample room for people to walk "through" it, as well as talk with the individual processors staffing the booth space. While there are limited direct sales at this show, there certainly was plenty of sampling - and very positive feedback on our products!

The highlight of January 18 was our Annual Meeting. The energy of those attending was amazing; the enthusiasm for each processors' products was an inspiration!

We are in the process of filing for our 501 c 5 status, and as part of this needed to revisit our By-Laws. All present voted to change the By-Laws as they were proposed by the Board of Directors.

Jeri Woodhouse moved up to President, with Anna Dawson elected as Vice President, Junko Kanemura elected as Secretary, and Beth Linsky elected as Treasurer. Joan Reid and Fred Forsburg were elected to the Board of Directors.

Members also volunteered to be on committees such as monitoring legislation, and working to make our shared trade shows even better. We were grateful for the donation of regional wines and foods from many of our members for a tasting which capped off the meeting.

## President's Corner

Greetings! As I write this on the eastern end of Long Island, Spring has officially arrived but snow still covers the ground in some places. It is cold and cloudy – hard to think about working in the garden -even though the daffodil shoots are starting to poke through providing a bright green contrast to the still frozen landscape.

It was cold, too, for our Annual Meeting in Syracuse, but you'd never know it from the warmth inside. Lots of good information and opportunities to meet and talk with other small-scale processors from Long Island to Buffalo. The most valuable experience was the networking – the ability to share ideas with friends and colleagues who are working in similar ways throughout the state. I came home inspired and re-energized from being exposed to the energy, creativity and enthusiasm that filled the rooms.

In our workshops and discussions we heard over and over again how it is the niche markets that are most successful. We learned from the experiences of farmers building specialty markets and from the examples of processors in different areas around the state who are organizing around their regional needs and concerns.

These are exciting times for us. The NYSS-FPA is growing in strength and numbers. We are working to build strong and effective regional food systems throughout the state by:

- Identifying new marketing opportunities
- Fostering local farm and food connection opportunities

- Linking farmers and suppliers with processors and distributors in our rural and urban areas and

- Exploring new ideas for shared purchasing and delivery systems

We are forging a strong link across the state. We are beginning to identify & tackle some of the barriers we face with regulators, high fees, legislation, etc.

We have a busy agenda ahead. Working with our members we are planning for a full day session on organizing shared use kitchens and developing effective business and marketing plans, advocating for our Assembly Task Force and Agricultural committees to hold hearings, and helping to provide exposure for our members through cooperative programs and shared booths at trade shows. With lots of terrific products and limited space this has proved to be a real challenge but with your input we are in the process of creating a set of guidelines and policies for group show participation. And with your help we are ready to move forward to address the critical issue of fundraising to ensure our continuing viability as an organization.

Spring is in the air! We have started planting our seeds and our farmers markets are getting ready to open. As we get ready for another bountiful season, I look forward to working with you and for you in the coming year.

Keep in touch - *Jerí*

## Learn What Large Scale Processors are doing!

Small scale food processors need to keep up with what the Large Scale Food Processors are doing! Food scientists today take farm foods apart or chemically copy food parts. "Inulin" is a natural fiber, a food part taken from chicory root--a natural laxative. Stonyfield Farm adds inulin to all their yogurt to be different. Their claim is "If you ingest 8 g. of inulin, you will absorb calcium better". Of course, you would have to eat 24 oz. at a cost of 600 calories.

An article in Prepared Foods magazine tells the whole story including the fact that some people get gas from inulin. Would you be happy to hear Stonyfield has vending machines in your child's school? That is one of their marketing targets.....

You can get free magazines and on-line e-mails to keep yourself informed at:  
[www.preparedfoods.com](http://www.preparedfoods.com) or  
[www.newproductsmag.com](http://www.newproductsmag.com)

# Little Finger Lakes Region Food Festival

Join us on Saturday, July 30 for the first “Little Lakes Food Festival”. Held at the Eagle Crest Vineyard, the festival will be a celebration of Little Lakes food, wine, music and the arts on Hemlock Lake, the jewel of the Finger Lakes.

With a focus on showcasing our unique Little Finger Lakes District, we plan to make it a destination for tourism (within the Greater Finger Lakes Region), its food and wine, and the arts.

Featuring many regional food processors, visitors can “eat in” or “take it out”. Among the processors attending will be Nunda Mustard, Hemlock Lakes Vinegars, and Honeyhill Farm Pickled Garlic Scapes. The Genesee Valley Council on the Arts will help us select artists and jury that portion of the festival. An eclectic mix of music by local groups will be offered all day. Other food activities of local and agricultural interest, like an heirloom tomato tasting, will also held.

An extraordinary - but casual! - dinner will feature strictly fresh local foods and wines

from our best restaurants in the district in a tasting station arrangement. Beginning at 6 pm, diners will have plenty of time to savor the many dishes and eat at a leisurely pace.

A Pack, Paddle, and Ski canoe event will depart from the festival in the evening and return at dark. Canoeists will return to the festival by walking up a beautiful forested trail to enjoy dessert, music, and dance at the festival. The Nature Conservancy will offer interpretive walks down the trail to Hemlock Lake through the land they recently purchased.

The history of Eagle Crest Vineyard makes this festival site more interesting. It was established by Bishop McQuaid 133 years ago to produce altar wines for his then recently formed Rochester Catholic Diocese. Today it is a major producer on the East Coast of sacramental wines for many faiths. Eagle Crest Vineyard is now producing table wines and sampling will be part of the fun.

For more information, or to participate as a food vendor, contact Fred Forsburg, Honeyhill Farm, (585) 346-3829.

## Products Wanted!

Gallery Three-Two-One, in Oxford, NY, is looking for “Gourmet Food Products” to expand their food product line. Gallery 3-2-1 is a national award-winning showcase for American artists and craftwork, appealing to consumers within the region and also tourists passing through the area.

Bill and Diane Troxell, owners, are interested in including a variety of New York grown

and processed food products to add to their fair-trade coffees and other food products.

If you are interested in selling your products at Gallery 3-2-1, contact them at: 41 State Street, Oxford, NY 13830, or phone (607) 843-9538. Feel free to send them your product brochure and information for consideration!

## SSFPA Displays at National SARE Conference

At the culmination of our last grant, we accepted an invitation from USDA SARE (Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education) to present a poster display at their National Conference in Vermont in late October 2004. We were one of 83 poster displays depicting results of grants to Farmer/Growers, Research and Education and Professional Development projects, and were proud to spotlight the grant results for Regional Development of our Small-Scale Food Processors Association.

Alison Clarke, who served as the Program Manager during this grant, produced a poster-size collage (which has been laminated for future use) of some of the many photos capturing the organizing and development of several chapters. Included were photos of the Buffalo chapter, which began organizing around the goal of a shared-use kitchen in the center of the city. Other photos were from a summer gathering of processors and farmers at the Livonia Farmers Market, who came together to work on marketing a branded product or idea, possibly "Taste of the Little Finger Lakes". And there were some great shots taken at the Empire Plaza Food Festival in August of both our trade show booth and meetings and discussions with legislative representatives on policy issues.

Fred Forsburg, newly elected Board of Director member, and member of our new Little Finger Lakes chapter, also attended the SARE Conference. He presented his successful research on using vinegar as a control for the weeds in his garlic garden.

Thanks to members across the state, as part of our display we had a bushel basket packed full of 30 sample products; these each had a color-coordinated tie to their respective region on an enlarged NYS map next to the poster display. These products were gratefully given as a retirement gift to Dr. Herb Cole at the end of the conference. Dr Cole was the administrator of the SARE Professional Development Grants and as an individual who had supported our association's growth these past six years, this gift was a fond

remembrance to use in his retirement!

Beyond the many displays and fabulous networking with food system people from all over the Northeast and beyond, there were two keynoters and 93 people involved in presenting workshops. Russell Libby, Executive Director of the 4200 member Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Assn. (MOFGA) opened with his talk "Putting a Face on your Food, or Who's Your Farmer". Currently 4% of farms in Maine are certified organic and 15% of dairy farms.

The closing keynote, "What Comes Next? Eating Sustainably in a Post-Global War" was given by Bill McKibben author of "The End of Nature", one of the first books on global warming. But, don't think this was a depressing talk; his wonderful humor and praise of a local community food system kept the audience smiling. He plans to spend the next year eating only foods (including all ingredients) grown within a small radius from his home and work.

The first day was dedicated to a choice of 5 farm tours with the following days having 5 sessions of workshops with 5 tracks each on: Marketing and Identity, Sustainable Production, The Policy of Food, Communications and Learning from Farmers.

I feel that SARE has really made a difference for so many organizations and farmers. We, as individuals and as NYSSFPA, should advocate for more funding within the Farm Bill to continue SARE projects. I was grateful to be with the overflowing number of registrants, all of whom share the values of sustainability.....a food system that is environmentally sound, economically viable and socially just.

- Alison Clarke

## State Assembly to Address Processing Issues

In the next few months, the New York State Assembly Task Force on Food, Farm and Nutrition will be convening an Assembly Roundtable to discuss the barriers and needs of small-scale food processors. Besides the Task Force members, the Assembly Agriculture Committee and Small Business Development Committee will co-sponsor this discussion of issues with members of our association and other food processors.

If you have special needs or encounter barriers you feel should be addressed, please contact Sharon Kroeger ([dodger@mohawk.net](mailto:dodger@mohawk.net) or 845-373-9201) or Alison Clarke ([alisonclarke@mailstation.com](mailto:alisonclarke@mailstation.com) or 585-244-2711) of the Advocacy Committee as soon

as possible. It would be helpful if you write paragraph or two delineating the issue. There will most likely be two roundtables, one in NYC and another in upstate. Representatives of SSFPA will be invited as soon as the date is determined.

In contrast to the above Roundtable, focused on the "nuts and bolts" issues of processors, the hearing on May 16, 2005, will focus on ways that different players in the food chain can build a regional food system in which all people have access to sufficient, quality, culturally acceptable food from non-emergency sources. As one of the players, small-scale food processors can speak, for example, to what is needed to make our products more accessible to individuals, stores, restaurants and institutions such as schools.

## SSFPA Members Participate in Farm Food Show

In February, SSFPA was well represented at the Farm Food Show in NYC at the Javits Center! Led by Joanna Ezinga, "Granola Jo", the members cooperatively planned the booth display space to showcase their products as well as SSFPA information. A well-thought out display backdrop included signs for each processor, as well as the SSFPA sign and Pride of New York logo.

The following members exhibited: Granola Jo, Palatable Pepper Products, Beths Farm Kitchen, A Taste of the North Fork, Pausmonock Preserves, Dines Meats, K & S Foods, Rick's Picks, Renners, Sidor Potato Chips, and Hudson Valley Homestead.

At our Annual Meeting, the consensus was that the more shows we could participate in as an organization, the more exposure for both SSFPA and the processors who exhibit. Having a SSFPA booth allows members to exhibit for a lower cost than if they were to do so as part of their own business.

SSFPA is considering other regional and national Food Shows as potential venues to exhibit at under the SSFPA "umbrella". If you are interested in participating, or have a show to recommend, contact Jeri Woodhouse at (631) 323-2762

# New York State Food and Nutrition Policy Hearing

On Monday, May 16, 2005, there will be a Public Hearing at 10:30 am in the Roosevelt Hearing Room C, Legislative Office Building, Second Floor, in Albany NY. This Hearing is sponsored by the Task Force on Food, Farm and Nutrition Policy, and the Committees on Agriculture, Health, and Social Services as a follow-up to the "Five Year Food and Nutrition Plan" developed in 1988.

The Committees and Task Force would like to receive testimony on coordinated, comprehensive State food and nutrition policies which could address problems, such as limited food options, poor nutrition, and loss of farms. Anyone wishing to submit testimony is requested to submit the form available with the Hearing notice.

The questions to be discussed include: 1. Does the State need a comprehensive, coordinated Food Policy Plan??

2. Is there a need for a State Food Policy Council?  
3. What changes are needed in existing food, nutrition, and agricultural policies and programs that can mutually benefit both consumers and producers?  
4. The Farmers' Nutrition Programs provide food assistance and nutrition education to low-income seniors and WIC families, and increased profits for local farmers. What other specific policy and program ideas could address issues of limited accessibility and the need to promote local products?  
5. Please comment on Assembly Bill A.2651, which would create a Community Food Security Program to support projects designed to increase the availability of culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate food, from local sources whenever possible.

If you need a copy of the Public Hearing Reply form, contact Robert Stern, Assembly Task Force on Food, Farm and Nutrition Policy at (518) 455-5203 or by e-mail at [sternr@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:sternr@assembly.state.ny.us)

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**TO:**