



New York Small Scale Food Processors Association

Fall Newsletter

October 2011

Happy Harvest!

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The 'Legacy Barn' opened July 2nd

MEMBER EXPIRATION DATE CHANGE

All memberships will be due February 1 for a year's membership. During the transition months, any memberships received after September 1, 2011 will be considered covering 2012 as a special "perk". Our Membership Committee chair, Cheryl Leach, sent out a Member Card as a confirmation of payment. This will list the new expiration date.

LAST HARD COPY UNLESS REQUESTED

The Board decided that this Fall Newsletter will be the last hard copy sent. From now on you will receive an email saying that the newsletter will be on the website (www.nyssfpa.com). A special request can be made for a print copy to be sent to you.

NIAGARA REGION NEWS

Profitability Flows from Diverstiy and Education at SINGER FARM NATURALS

Tom and Viv Szulist are having a lot of fun developing their farm, retail store, education, event venue (an award winning strawbale and solar 1840's restored barn), taking on one project after another. Implementing and juggling their various ideas certainly keeps them busy.

Vivianne, part of the Singer family, moved to the familiar landscape of orchards and sandy soil, where her grandfather Harold grew mainly cherries and apples at Singer Farms. Now the fruit farm is being run and grown successfully by co-owner, Jim Bittner. In 2009, she and Tom bought 26 acres of family land and formed a separate farm business, **Singer Farm Naturals**, with the idea of growing gourmet garlic and opening a farm retail venue.

Today, much energy is spent on developing their niche products, growing the retail and value-added side of their farm business. They initially met up with the NY Small Scale Food Processors' Assn. at the 2009 NOFA NY conference, and Tom is now on the NYSSFPA Board of Directors.



One of the main products that has gone through many changes is their Tart Cherry Juice Concentrate. Tart cherry concentrate has received endorsements from Dr. Oz and the growing awareness has helped spur demand. Prior to this year's harvest, the concentrate was bottled by the Growers Co-op.

When the price of cherries jumped suddenly, he looked for ways to cut the cost. He found a food grade machine which pumped from a drum on Craigslist and in three hours could pump 50 quart bottles. Suddenly this former Wall Streeter was confronted with questions of "acidity base," "shelf stability" and other questions our food processors face. Since Tom wanted to be sure he met food regulations, we recommended he contact our Food Venture Center (<http://necfe.foodscience.cornell.edu>).

DIVERSIFICATION has become the name of the game at Singer Farm Natural. From dried fruit to concentrate, to frozen cherries sold to bakeries and from retail to wholesale, each day it seems the Szulists are building their name recognition/branding. They have worked actively with the Lexington Co-op in Buffalo and increasingly have moved into EDUCATION. Tom began giving garlic talks on weekend afternoons teaching customers about the chemistry of garlic, demonstrating cooking tools and tasting the various garlic grown on the farm. Included in his talks are instructions for growing garlic and mentorship through the process.

This August, Tom decided to try a new idea to further the experience on the farm. Singer Farm Naturals offered u-pick potatoes for kids and also adults. "It was great to see the expression on a child or adults face as the search for the buried treasure growing underground." This year the farm had 4 varieties of potatoes which again fits the theme of diversification.

As we talked Tom was getting ready for the Niagara Celtic Festival, 3 miles away where they not only had a booth, but encouraging people to visit the farm for u-pick apples. Tom and Viv have additional plan for the renovated barn to be used as a venue for hire.

On November 7th, the Barn will host a gourmet dinner cooked by a prominent chef Carmelo Raimondi (www.carmelos-restaurant.com) to benefit the Field and Fork Network, a regional food organization in Buffalo (www.fieldandforknetwork.com). Tickets are \$75 for a 5-course meal of local grown/produced food and wine, and the event is already nearly sold out.

Tom's reflects on the recent success, "It has become very clear that profit motive doesn't come first. Rather profitability is followed by diversity, education and striving for excellence."

HUDSON VALLEY REGION

New website for Hometown Foods, LLC

In 2005 Anna Dawson and her Cornell Food Science intern created the company's first website to feature frozen and vacuum packaged products, and it's time to upgrade www.ourhometownfoods.com.

Into Anna's life strolled an experienced graphic artist, journalist and website designer living on his Dad's farm in the Hudson Valley with a passion for local farms, food and cooks. David Russo has more creativity in his computer fingers than most artists and novelists. He gets it! If you want to connect, email me at annadawson@harvestkitchens.net.

Hometownfoods.harvestkitchens.net launches later this month. With it we'll encourage more processors to freeze and vacuum package local produce and join a Harvest Kitchen Network, where small scale processors can find entrepreneurial space to grow and farmers inspire local families and businesses to freeze and eat as each crop is harvested. Video clips will demonstrate how to design, make, package and prepare kits for stir fry meals, soups, quick breads, fruit and vegetable puddings, ready-to-heat and eat brown rice, hulled barley, dry beans and more. The possibilities for a variety of products are endless.

Recipes will be shared. Why share? Because access to a whole foods plant based diet is the key to good health. Check out the new documentary getting raves in the NY Times FORKS OVER KNIVES.

To learn more plan to attend **the Malone workshop on Nov. 4th from 1 to 4 p.m. in the COMLINKS Cooperative Gleaning Harvest Kitchen** designed in 2008 when I worked there as a nutritionist. You will taste amazingly easy-to-do possibilities.



Guide book author Andy Dufresne (left) looks over a copy of *Traversing America's Grape Country* with Jim Roach, Vice President, Falconer Printing & Design, Inc.

CHAUTAUQUA REGION

VISITING AMERICA'S GRAPE COUNTRY

"Traversing America's Grape Country - A Personal Guide to the Eastern Lake Erie Grape Belt" is an introduction and orientation to the largest grape growing region east of the states of California and Washington. The region has over 30,000 acres of grapes predominantly of the *Vitis lumbrusca* species which are native to the eastern United States. *European Vitis vinifera* species or hybrids dominate other grape regions. With red, white, and blue grapes grown in the region, it really is America's Grape Country.

Andy Dufresne, NYSSFPA Board Member, retired after a 35 year career as an agricultural educator with new York's Cornell Cooperative Extension and the peace corps. Here he shares his knowledge of the local agriculture and his passion for the beauty of the region. In his conversation about grape growing and the grape industry, you learn about local food production, Amish country, where to gain access to Lake Erie and where to enjoy the outdoors. He shares the locations of a dozen of his favorite vineyard vistas of this NY grape heartland. He sprinkles in information to guide the visitor traversing the region for a greater appreciation of the culture of this rural 'small town U.S.A.' region.

Dufresne concludes with a discussion of the geology and influence of the Ice Age in the formation of the landscape and lays out the first Grape Escarpment Scenic Drive Route, a 68 mile route from sunset Bay Beach, Hanover, NY on the eastern edge of the grape belt to Shades Beach Park, Harborcreek, PA, on the western edge. The route is broken into four segments that can be completed over time or all at once. 'Footprints of the Ice Age' are pointed out on the scenic drive route.

Over 200 color photos, maps, and artwork are used to illustrate the narrative of this \$34.95 book.

BUY IT AT 3965 Harold Ave.,
Bemus Pt., NY 14712
Reach Andy: and4833@windstream.net

ALLEGANY REGION

TASTE THE REGION BOXES

Allegheny County is known for its pristine lakes and streams, abundant wildlife, woodland trails and scenic countryside. It offers endless venues for the nature lovers, photographers, hunters and anglers alike. There are designated wetland areas that offer a closer look at nature in its finest. The county also offers a host of places for the whole family. Swimming, exploring, just relaxing, golfing, and sleeping under the stars or a camping adventure, you'll always find a warm and accommodating welcome. There are designated areas for hiking, trails, boating on the lakes and canoeing on the Genesee River.

We also host many festivals, a general aviation airport, snowmobiling, and backpacking.

Check out our **newly launched website** for your "Bounty from our County" sample box. Our



Regional Contact in the Allegheny Region, Gretchen Hanchett, has currently launched an Allegheny box demonstrating that with the infrastructure, many community partners, and a great deal of effort on the part of Gretchen, the Director of the county small business development organization, excitement abounds. As we go to press, she is holding a press conference with the many partners and the area legislator **AND has an order for 100 boxes** from a car dealership (with each new car, one gets a Taste the Region box). **Check out the website of the Allegheny Business Center and the newly launched website for the Taste of Allegheny County! www.alleghenybusinesscenter.com**

www.TasteofAlleghenyCountyNY.com

ST. LAWRENCE REGION

LOCAL LIVING FESTIVAL

It was an amazing, super well organized, sunny day as the "Local Living Festival", Sept. 24-25, buzzed with people at the Cornell Cooperative Extension Learning Farm in Canton, NY. NYSSFPA member Chelle Lindahl was the Co-coordinator of the Festival as a leader in the Sustainable Living Center of the region. There were about 50 tables of organizations lining the big barn representing alternative energy and many other environmental organizations, wellness, community supported agriculture and other sustainable ag. groups. I do believe there might have been 150 workshop discussion groups through out the two days, I stayed at Birdsfoot Farm where I interned briefly in the eighties. The lead farmer, Dulli, led a workshop on organic farming techniques and later on how to make insulating curtains!

I traveled to Canton to share information about NYSSFPA, emphasizing our Adirondack Value Added Institute coming up in northern Malone, southeast Ballston Spa and western Watertown. However, I gained more than I offered, meeting many people fueling the alternative economy that gives me hope.

ADIRONDACK VALUE ADDED FOR PROFITABILITY INSTITUTE

Our summer newsletter mentioned the NE SARE grant that NYSSFPA received to offer classes in various parts of the large Adirondack Region on ways farmers and others may become more profitable by processing food products grown locally. We have a class series listed below!

- **October 7-8** Jefferson County Cooperative Extension, Watertown
“Processing Fruits and Vegetables for Market” Friday a.m.
“Models of Shared Use Kitchens” Friday p.m.
“Small Scale Meat Processing and Marketing” Saturday a.m.
- **October 21-22** Saratoga County Cooperative Extension, Ballston Spa
”One Stop Shopping for Food Business Start-ups” Friday a.m. or
“Processing of Fruits, Vegetables and Herbs” Friday a.m.
“Local and Sustainable Marketing” Friday p.m.
“Small Business Profitability Makeover” Sat. a.m.
- **November 4-5**, Com Link in Malone
“Freezing and Vacuum Packaging of Produce for Market” Friday p.m.
“Models of Shared Use Kitchens” Friday a.m.
“Small Scale Meat Processing and Marketing” Saturday a.m.
- **November 17**, NYS Agricultural Experiment Station’s Food Venture Center, Geneva
“Acid and Acidified Foods” 1 pm. seminar plus tour followed by tour and graduation dinner in the NY Wine and Culinary Center, Canandaigua, NY, short distance from Geneva.

\$25 covers: lunch at chosen Adirondack site, lunch upon arrival in Geneva on Nov. 17, and the graduation dinner. Thanks to the USDA NE SARE grant (Sustainable Agriculture, Research and Education), we are able to offer this program valued at \$250.

We are also grateful for the partnership with Adirondack Harvest (www.adirondackharvest.com) and N. Country CCEs.

REGISTER SOON through Alison Clarke, Coordinator, at 585-394-0864 or acompost@gmail.com since time is limited. Registration with checks to “NYSSFPA” are to be sent to Alison at 19 Jaques St., Rochester, NY 14620

NYSSFPA ANNUAL MEETING AND WORKSHOPS WITH NOFA -NY

For the fourth year, NYSSFPA is joining the Northeast Organic Farmers Assn. in their winter conference, with this year’s theme, “Cooperative Economy.” We were pleased to be a part of the Education Committee sorting through the many workshop ideas, sorted into various themes.

We submitted three to the Value Added section, and after a very good process led by Matt Robinson, Education staff, all three of our suggestions were chosen. They include two Friday half day workshops:

1. “One Stop Shopping for Food Business Start-ups” to be facilitated by our Board member, Mimi Fix and
2. “Small Scale Meat Processing and Marketing” led by Adele and Jim Hayes, long-time partners with our organization, and...
3. On Saturday “Incubators and Co-packing for New Small Businesses” offered by Board Member Beth Linskey and member, Kathrine Gregory.

These are among the hundreds of workshops at the conference which will be in the pre-conference booklet to be mailed to our members within a month.

ANNUAL BOARD MEETING

For the first time our Board decided to have a breakfast annual meeting on SATURDAY, JANUARY 21 AT 7 A.M at the Saratoga Hilton and City Center, Saratoga Springs, NY (NOFA-NY Winter Conference). Breakfast comes with registration and will be at stations, and our tables will be together with NYSSFPA signage. Business will be as limited as possible with most of the time allotted to discussing members concerns and ideas.

BRITISH COLUMBIA SSFPA DIRECTOR VISITS

For a long time we have thought we were the only trade assn. supporting small scale food processors, and I guess we are in the U.S. Then we discovered SSFPA.net on the web leading us to Candice Appleby, Executive Director. Over a year we exchanged messages and calls and finally she flew from British Columbia on western coast of Canada to Rochester where she drove to Canandaigua for a 4 day visit. We rapidly discovered that Candice is involved in the food system in many ways. For example, she is the provincial representative to the Canadian Cooperative Council. She has been a leader in setting up food safety training models used not only by others in Canada but by some in the U.S. She helped design programs that fit within the World Trade Organizations standards of the Codex Alimentarius, so that no one could make rules that would be unfair to small processors. The major gain for us will



be linking to the many resources on their web site!

Our NYSSFPA Board had outlined questions for Candice and one was about her “outreach” for members. We mistakenly said in our Summer Newsletter that there are 800 members rather than about 120, but that was because the British Columbia Assn. has “organizational members” as well as single businesses. When one counts memberships in those organizations, 800 are reached. A major service that draws members is one that provides opportunity for members to dialogue with one another for advice, cooperative marketing, supply buying and more which NYSSFPA will be offering soon (see “Mail Chimp” article).

The membership of BC SSFPA is set at \$100 for processors and \$75 for supporters, but the gross income surprised some of us: 10% under \$50,000, 80% to 90% between \$250,000 and \$400,000 and a few in the \$1 to 8 million! They have a loan program with 0% interest up to \$100,000. The British Columbia trade association offers advocacy on inspection and regulations and offers training and education as we are offering in the Adirondacks.

We have established a wonderful partner whose Mission Statement we agree with wholeheartedly: “to be Canada’s leading support organization for small enterprises in the food processing industry by providing leadership, education, marketing, networking and advocacy to foster success in a competitive global market”

MAIL CHIMP TO HELP OUR NETWORKING

Recently a member, noting that our program says that we encourage marketing, supply and equipment buying cooperatively for greater savings, emailed us with needs for specific glass bottles and lids. A dialogue ensued among a number of members which hopefully will lead to not only good information on sources, but others wanting to buy together. At the recent meeting with

our new partner in British Columbia, one of the strong services their Small Scale Food Processors Assn.offers is this kind of networking through a specific server. Suggestions were made and one member uses "Mail Chimp" and it is a free service. Members of our Web site committee will recommend that we initiate this service soon. Watch for details.

ADVOCACY

Alicia Dargan is a member/processor in the Syracuse area. In trying to decipher some of the rules and regulations, she is an example of one who has become a fine advocate. As NYSSFPA forms an Advocacy Committee we urge all to read Alicia's letter below with the attachments that describe her journey with NYS Ag & Markets and others.

Thusfar, Alicia has discovered some interesting things from FOIL requests.

Part II of Chapter 59 of the New York State Laws of 2009 - ISSUES:

- After reviewing the documentation it appears that there is a conflict between the current legislation and what was signed by the Governor in 2009.

There are no written "promulgated regulations" to date for the \$900.00 license fee which is current legislation for Article 20 C holders.

*- A List of 20 C license fee holders in NYS, 22,500 approximate license holders (Excel)
-A List of 20 C Exempt license holders in NY, 2,500 approximate non paying license holders - Excel Spreadsheet*

<http://www.agmkt.state.ny.us/FS/industry/04circs/Art20CLicofFooCIR951.htm>

Alicia's Letter

Being passionate about small-scale processors (I am the founder of my own business here in the central region of the state) and about, as I say, "a fair playing field" for all, I hope that you will take an interest in my advocacy work. The turning point is now but I am one voice trying to get

the word out and muster support for change that will benefit EVERYONE.

Being a former small-scale food processor in Wisconsin and now living here in New York, I had the chance to re-launch my company this past year. Having a difficult time getting my license, I started to investigate, in depth, the law that regulates my business. Knowledge in this area is as important as having a business plan.

During my initial research, I immediately saw "yellow flags" and continued to dig further. The related information and communications are attached and those findings are profound! My concern for change and fairness is not just about myself, but is important for everyone in the small-scale processor industry. As of today, my many requests for clarity of Article 20 C have gone unanswered.

I hope that you will support my efforts by "getting the word out" to anyone that may be interested. If you know of any parties for whom my messaging would be relevant, please forward this on to them.

My next step is to formulate positive change by making recommendations for legislative measures that will be positive for the "little guy", and equally and, most importantly, FAIR to everyone! My hope is that I will be able to gather and gain input that is valuable and represents all parties.

Your interest and your sharing of this information are most appreciated.

I thank you for your consideration and look forward to your thoughts.

Regards,
Alicia M. Dargan
315-882-4832
Email: nysfoodpreneur@gmail.com

If you have any time to participate at any level in this advocacy need, please contact Alicia and also our Co-chr. Bonnie Yox at blyox@baldwinhillfarms.com



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Paul Yox, Allegany
Mimi Shotland Fix, Hudson Valley
Tom Frey, Adirondacks
Andrew Dufresne
Amy Jackson
Tom Szulist

Deadline for the next issue of the newsletter is December 5, 2011

Submit articles to: Alison Clarke
aecompost@gmail.com

Individual membership fees of \$30 for 2012 are due in February.

Consider becoming a board member. We need your ideas and energy.

Our goal is to have all regions represented.

Now you can use Paypal on our website
<http://nyssfpa.com/html/membership/index.html> to pay for your annual, renewal or corporate membership dues.

Calendar of Events:

Mark your calendars for the NYSSFPA ANNUAL MEETING **SATURDAY, JANUARY 21 AT 7 AM BREAKFAST**. If you have products to add to breakfast (LIKE MU MU MUSLI!), WE WILL BE YOUR SAMPLERS!