



Spring Newsletter

April 2008

Cornell Extension Leader Remembered

New York food entrepreneurs and industry have lost its pioneering leader. Dr. Downing, founder and the first Director of the New York State Food Venture Center (FVC) passed away in February. Below is a message from FVC's second Director, Dr. Olga Padilla-Zakour. A letter of condolence was sent to the family of Dr. Downing from SSFPA Board.

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It is with deep sorrow that we communicate to you that Dr. Donald L. Downing, 76, Professor Emeritus of the Department of Food Science & Technology at the NYS Agricultural Experiment Station, passed away very unexpectedly on February 29, 2008. Professor Downing provided in-depth knowledge and outstanding service to the NY food and wine industry for over 40 years. He offered specialized training to processors and regulatory personnel, and comprehensive assis-

tance to people interested in establishing new food businesses. To better help food entrepreneurs, Dr. Downing created the New York State Food Venture Center in 1988, in collaboration with the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets. Under his leadership, the Center assisted hundreds of food companies in the commercialization of thousands of new food products. He was an active member of the Institute of Food Technologists, both nationally and locally, and of the Associated NYS Food Processors. His mentorship, expertise, professionalism and joyful disposition will be forever remembered and honored by his peers.

Memorial contributions may be made by check to CORNELL UNIVERSITY, and it must note that it is "A contribution in memory of Dr. Donald L. Downing for the Downing Graduate Student Excellence Award" either on the check or with a letter. (Please send to: Cornell University, Attention Debby Ditzell, 630 W. North St., Geneva, NY 14456, or to FAMILY COUNSELING SERVICE OF THE FINGER LAKES, INC. 671 South Exchange Street, Geneva, New York 14456.)

A celebration of his life will take place at the Geneva Country Club on April 12th, 2008.

Olga Padilla-Zakour, Director
The NYS Food Venture Center

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To read more about Dr. Downing, visit
<http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/pub/press/2008/080318Downing.html>.

President's Corner

Regional Food Resource Centers

Being a Hudson Valley gal, experiencing February and March in the north country in Malone, NY, was something new. When it rains in my hometown of Kinderhook, it is snow and ice up in Malone. Some folks may wonder why I would move to the north country. The reason is simple. I wanted to learn how freezing and vacuum packaging the local harvest, grown by prison inmates, might fit into a not-for-profit organization providing supplemental food to EFRO (Emergency Food Relief Organizations) pantries and kitchens.

Folks up here in the north country face winter's high heating bills longer than in other areas of NY. Even the price of gas for their cars is higher than most areas. Couple these problems with a slow economy and limited health care resources, and you will find people coming more frequently to rely on the three days' worth of meals packaged by volunteers at the over thirty food pantries and one soup kitchen in Franklin County. Unfortunately, corporate food donations are on the decline. Companies like Aldi have emerged to recycle foods from the corporate world. Less food is being donated to those who need help to ensure food security for their families.

Luckily, Franklin County has a facility with a large drive-in cooler and a 3400 sq. ft. walk-in freezer; a warehouse for distribution; a food demonstration/classroom kitchen and a 750 sq. ft. kitchen that is suitable for use as a licensed processing kitchen. It could become a REGIONAL FOOD RESOURCE CENTER--to meet the needs of EFRO participants and their neighbors. Better health for all can come through minimal processing of whole foods in the rural regions of New York.

I believe we need to update the acronym, EFRO. Our new vision for a sustainable food system should include Economical Food Re-

source Organizations with the broader vision of harvesting and processing local foods for community food security for all consumers.

Prisoners from rural facilities are a potential human capital resource for the present and the future local food system. "Work release" inmates trained in food processing, green house production and human food production could find jobs at local food establishments and farms. Produce grown on prison land could provide donated fresh foods that could be processed and distributed to EFRO pantries and kitchens in nearby towns. College students in nutrition, food service and culinary programs could design healthy meal recipe kits using dried, canned or frozen and vacuum packaged foods produced at a community based REGIONAL FOOD RESOURCE CENTER.

Today most prisons receive foods made in central New York from one large processing facility that has state of the art equipment producing "Cook/Chill" food products. These foods are shipped to prison kitchens for reheating. This change has resulted in culinary equipment that is not being used to train prisoners in cooking skills. Equipment donations to regional processing centers are a possibility.

Community and correctional facility collaborations could be beneficial to all concerned, especially when the community uses the community based, regional food resource facility after the four or five hour inmate training program is over. Local farm foods could then be processed into value added products for urban and rural independent stores, co-ops, local restaurants and buying clubs. Jobs would be created and local farmers would have a market for their crops again. Community food security would be ours.

Anna Dawson
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NYSSFPA Conference Report

Thank you everyone who attended our annual conference/meeting on March 1 and contributed to a successful day!

Sara and Tim Higgins of Raspberry Fields Farm said about the conference, "Informative, Inspiring, and delicious describes our day spent at the conference. The presenters shared a wealth of information and thought-provoking experiences."

For those who could not make it, here is a report from one of our members.

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On March 1, about 70 people gathered for the annual meeting and conference of the New York Small Scale Food Processors' Association (NYSSFPA). This conference brought together chefs, packers, bakers, livestock and produce farmers, as well as advocates of eating and buying locally.

There were two main portions of the day: The morning panel on small scale meat processing and the afternoon talks on incubator kitchens and the pros and cons of co-packing.

The small-scale meat processing panel consisted of three individuals, all who work their own small livestock operation and one of whom works at a local USDA slaughterhouse. They each told of the trials and tribulations involved in the daily activities necessary to run such an operation and the obstacles of being a small producer in a big business world. They emphasized the need to educate the consumer in regards to the raising of the animals as well as the aging and packaging of the meat. The necessity of consumer education and awareness transcends the meat industry into all other areas of agriculture and food processing.

After the panelists finished, other conference participants had the opportunity to ask questions. Some questions posed included the differ-

ences between flash freezing and a slow freeze and the USDA guidelines on 'natural' or 'organic' meat.

After a deliciously prepared lunch, there was a brief discussion about marketing strategies followed by the incubator kitchen and co-processing panel. The idea of an incubator kitchen is a good one. It gives new chefs and bakers an area to test their skills and the market. They are able to produce product without having to go through the expense of buying equipment or finding a long-term space with a suitable commercial kitchen. And while the idea of an incubator kitchen is a wonderful idea, it seems as though it is best suited for an urban environment. Otherwise the expense in travel, hourly rental, and time may be too great a demand to place on a small scale processor just starting out.

Co-packing was another topic discussed during the afternoon session. The principles for co-packing follow closely with that of the incubator kitchen. Individuals who have a recipe are able to develop that recipe for mass production and have someone else make the product in a commercial kitchen. This allows for an individual to get their produce to market without having to go through the lengthy process of securing their own commercial kitchen or actually preparing the produce on a grander scale.

Overall the conference was full of great information, fresh ideas, and networking. Networking is perhaps the most critical part for a small scale processor. It is through networking that we find more efficient ways to produce and market their product.

J. Shiepko & Janet Picarelli,
Janet's Quality Baked Goods Inc.
jbakedgd@warwick.net

2009 Conference/Annual Meeting

We are pleased to be collaborating with NOFA (Northeast Organic Farming Association) on next year's annual conference to be held on January 23 - 25, 2009 in Rochester.

Annual Meeting Report

At the annual meeting, the budget was approved and new board members were introduced. Here are their biographies.

Miriam Haas: Miriam is the organizer and manager of the current Ossining Farmers Market. She first sought to make organic produce available at existing stores. Having moved in the area in 1987 with her husband and daughter, she soon joined a local chapter of Families for Safe Food, a consumer-advocacy group. With a few hundred dollars of her own money, she opened the new market with two farm stands. Two years later she affiliated with the Open Space Institute to get nonprofit status, and with each season new vendors joined.

Contact: (914) 923-4837
mhaas@communitymarkets.biz

Cheryl Leach: Cheryl is Extension Support Specialist at Dept. of Food Science & Technology, Cornell University New York Agricultural Experiment Station. Her work, supported by a grant from the NY Farm Viability Institute, is to assist new and existing agriculture businesses interested in value added opportunities to improve farm sustainability. She joined Cornell in 2000 to support the business marketing programs of the Northeast Center of Food Entrepreneurship. Prior to that, she worked with a non-profit economic development agency in Geneva.

Contact: (315) 787-2622
cal35@cornell.edu

Lorene Nans: Lorene is co-owner with her husband, Russell, of Spring Brook Farm in Weedsport. She had no background in farming when she purchased her 190 acre farm in Cayuga County in 1999. Through the help of grants,

mentoring, workshops, and good old fashioned hard work, they renovated an old dairy into a multi-species grazing farm. Russell eventually quit his “day job” in 2003 and began working full time on the farm producing calves, piglets, hay and organically grown feeds. The couple direct markets all of the meat from their animals through their on-farm market by using both a USDA processing facility and their own on-farm meat processing facility. They also direct market their meat to restaurants, local food stores, farmers markets, co-ops and local csa’s. Lorene and Russell also have eight children!

Contact: (315) 834-6871
springbrookfarm@verizon.net

SSFPANY 2007 Financial Report		
	estimated 2007 Budget	Actual 2007
INCOME		
Grants	\$2,000.00	\$1,000.00
MEMBERSHIP	\$3,500.00	\$1,045.00
Individual	\$3,000.00	\$745.00
Corporate	\$500.00	\$300.00
Nutrition	\$500.00	\$275.00
Conference Profits	\$500.00	\$0.00
Interest	\$30.00	\$20.02
Booth sales	\$0.00	\$0.00
	\$6,530.00	\$2,340.02
EXPENSES		
Gift Box Program	\$200.00	pending
Regional Workshops	\$3,000.00	pending
Website	\$300.00	\$214.00
Newsletter (copies & postage)	\$700.00	\$1,256.97
Phone conferences	\$200.00	\$382.47
Equip.:Nutrition/other programs	\$500.00	\$288.34 (display board)
Booth Rental	\$500.00	200 (NOFA)
Postage/Office Supplies	\$200.00	\$27.94
Fines/Bank Fees	\$200.00	\$120.00
Insurance	\$476.00	\$223.00
Legal Fees/IRS filing	\$290.00	pending
COI/Cert. of Occupancy @ Festival	\$30.00	pending
Speaker Fees/Travel	\$500.00	pending
Board Exp. Travels/Meeting	\$1,000.00	\$623.26

From Lard to Mustard

Making Value Added Products at the Battenkill Kitchen

How It All Started

In 2002, the new jail in Washington County was being built. This meant the historic courthouse and jail in Salem was going to be empty. Salem community members with a forward thinking approach decided to save the courthouse and jail and begin preservation of this historic landmark.

Today, the Historic Salem Courthouse Preservation Association manages the Courthouse complex (www.salemcourthouse.org). Part of the complex was an 800 square foot kitchen. A group of volunteers came together and the end result was a new organization and a shared-use kitchen facility called the Battenkill Kitchen, Inc.

The Battenkill Kitchen, Inc. is a not-for-profit 501 (c) (3) organization and operates a commercially equipped kitchen available to farmers, individuals, businesses, and community organizations to process food products for individual use or retail sale. The kitchen is also available to hold educational programs, meetings, and special events. The kitchen provides a space for individual producers to create and process their food products. The kitchen has been inspected by the New York State Department of Ag and Markets and is a perfect place to launch a small food business without a large capital investment.

BKI's goals include; to provide educational seminars and instruction in the areas of food preparation to local farmers and food producers; to provide area residents information and educational assistance in the creation and packaging of food products; to use the kitchen as a teaching platform to educate local school children about food; to provide the kitchen to be used for community events.

The kitchen was equipped with the basic equipment needed to make meals for the prisoners, such as a six-burner gas range, a convection oven, two gas fired baking ovens, a high temperature dishwasher, and a walk-in cooler. With a little paint and a lot of elbow grease, a group of dedicated volunteers began to transform the kitchen space into a usable shared-use kitchen.

Fast forward to 2008, BKI has a fresh look and new equipment ready for any food processor to use. Thanks to funding from grants and donations, the kitchen boasts a new commercial tile floor, 40-gallon steam kettle, 40-quart stand mixer, digital scale, commercial food processor, and stainless steel food preparation tables

Who is Processing at the Battenkill Kitchen

The kitchen offers farmers an avenue to develop value added products to sell. Just talk to Jennifer Small, owner of Flying Pigs Farm, who renders leaf lard at the Battenkill Kitchen. Pork is Flying Pigs Farm's major product sold at the four Greenmarkets in New York City they attend twice a week. Their business goal is to maximize every cut of meat they sell. Leaf lard is a special piece of fat from the pig that is processed into the finest fat used for baking. By processing the fat into leaf lard, Flying Pigs Farm now offers a ready to use product for their customers. Before, when they sold the fat unprocessed, it would have sold for \$4.00 per pound. By processing it for the customer, they are selling more leaf lard and getting \$6.25 per ½ pound. The leaf lard is seen as a value added product by the customer.

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“Just as you need good tools on the farm with adequate power for a job,” Jennifer says, “the same holds true in the kitchen. The Battenkill Kitchen has the professional equipment to get a large job done right.”

Another product being processed at BKI is Jailhouse Mustard. This spicy mustard with an attitude was a long time coming from Mary Marschhauser of Hebron Hills Farm Products, Ltd. For years, Mary Ann made the mustard for her family and friends and was encouraged to produce her mustard to sell. Now thanks to the BKI, Mary Ann can sell her mustard at local and regional retail venues.

“I’m excited to finally be releasing my own product to market,” says Mary Ann, “I have been making home-made mustard for over 20 years, sharing it with family, friends and neighbors who urged me to sell it to the public.”

How to Get Started

Jailhouse Mustard, as well as many other processed products, came out of the workshops taught by the Northeast Center for Food Entrepreneurship through Cornell University. A *Recipe to Market* workshop which provides an overview of the steps and regulations regarding small-scale food production will be held on Friday, May 16 held in Salem. For those interested in processing products like BBQ sauces or pickled vegetables, an Acidified Foods classes will be held Saturday, May 17.

Anyone interested in developing a product should plan on attending the workshops.

If you are interested in renting the kitchen to process a food product, contact the BKI at (518) 854-3032. The BKI holds classes, events, and fundraisers in the BKI facility and also co-sponsors events by other organizations in the facility, as well as off-site. Visit BKI’s website at www.battenkillkitchen.org for a full listing of equipment and details about the facility, upcoming events, classes, and processor user forms.

The Capital District-Saratoga region is fortunate to have the Battenkill Kitchen as a processing resource to produce your locally grown value added products.

Paula Schafer
Vice President
Battenkill Kitchen, Inc.

BATTENKILL Kitchen
Our Kitchen is Your Kitchen

TO MARKET, TO MARKET

- * Have a favorite recipe you think could sell?
- * Are you a local farmer who'd like to package your food for sale?

The Battenkill Kitchen is your kitchen. Our 800-square-foot, commercially certified food production facility is available for packaging foods you want to bring to market.

We're available for rent by the hour or for events, and we also host educational seminars.

INTERESTED?

Call us: 518-854-3032
E-mail us: manager@battenkillkitchen.org
Visit us: www.battenkillkitchen.org



MARY ANN MARSCHHAUSER AND HER JAILHOUSE MUSTARD

BATTENKILL Kitchen Inc.

WWW.BATTENKILLKITCHEN.ORG

Enhancing Regional Flavor: A Tool for Economic Development

The title above proved totally true as about 90 people attended the March 12 conference in Mayville sponsored by the Concord Grape Belt Heritage Association and the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Chautauqua County. Lead organizer, Andrew Dufresne, brought together an incredible diversity of participants from Chamber of Commerce and Industrial Development Associations to farmers and processors, from tourism and cooperative extension agents to organizations promoting regional identification and job development.

It was a full day with eight speakers, but well timed for lots of networking. Leslie Schaller, Appalachian Center for Economic Networks, kept us on the edge of our seats with stories of incubator kitchens, start-up of many small regional businesses and all intertwined with humor. Dave Eson, who leads the “Buy Local” Branding in Western PA, was dynamic as he showed how this colorful campaign could make a region come alive. I was fortunate to be in his small group where we discussed each of our collaborative successes, and the elements that made for success, e.g. interpretation, preservation, revitalization. Then we all voted with dots which of those strategies were most important.

Mary Jeanne Packer, new director of NY Farms!, who staffs the maple and forest products associations in our regions under her firm, Ghostwriter Communications, told how “Working Together Makes Great Things Happen”. After lunch, Jan Joannides, staff to “Renewing the Countryside” which began in Minnesota telling stories of unique regional business successes through a book of that name, described how that germinated

books in other states and wonderful programs that mapped green businesses in the regions expanding tourism.

Our own Duncan Hilchey, Community and Rural Development Institute (CARDI) at Cornell, a founder of NYSSFPA, spoke of the “New Value-Added Niche Opportunities for Microenterprise Agripeneurs in the Grape Belt”. He has worked actively with partners in Chautauqua County and his work was celebrated with presentation of the gift of a large metal sculptured grape vine! The great speakers continued with Jon Cullen exemplifying the collaboration in the rural community of North East, PA; Lucy Bryer, NY Heritage Program, and Stephanie Burdo, Chautauqua county Visitors Bureau.

To top it all off, we ended with a marvelous “Regional Flavor Tasting” of wines, grape juice, grape seed oil, and maple products. This was a real model of what can happen to truly enhance regional identity.

Alison Clarke
accompost@gmail.com
(518) 244-2711

Internet Marketing Workshop

Small Business Development Center at Jamestown Community College will hold a workshop on internet marketing on Thursday, April 24 (8:00am - 3:30pm). There is a fee of \$50. For more information or to register, call the numbers below:

Jamestown (716) 338 - 1005.

Dunkirk (716) 366 - 2255

Olean (716) 376 - 7506

Taste of New York TV Show

Explores culinary journeys through New York's regions in a unique television show featuring food, wine, agriculture, restaurants, people and landscapes. The series is hosted by nationally known television lifestyle host Susan Hunt, and the New York Wine & Culinary Center's Executive Chef Dan Martello.

In each episode, Susan explores how agriculture moves from the farm to the table, while Chef Dan prepares a savory dish using a featured agriculture product. *Taste of New York* is a highly educational, interactive and entertaining experience. The series is made up of 13 episodes and they will air weekly. For more info, visit www.wxxi.org/tasteofny.

WXXI Rochester - Will broadcast the show on Saturdays at 2:30pm with the premier on April 5th.

WSKG Binghamton - Will broadcast the show on Saturdays at 2:30pm with the premier on April 5th.

WPBS Watertown – Will broadcast the show on Mondays at 1:00pm with the premier on April 14th.

WMHT Albany / Troy - Will broadcast the show on Thursdays at 7:30pm with the premier on May 1st.

WCNY Syracuse - Will broadcast the show on Saturdays at 1:30pm with the premier on May 10th.

The series is also being broadcast on Thinkbright (a digital channel that appears on all upstate NY PBS stations) every Sunday evening at 8:30pm premiering on April 6th. See the channel list below. For more info, visit www.thinkbaright.org.

WNED/Buffalo - Digital 43.3; Time Warner 21

WXXI/Rochester - Digital 21.3; Time Warner 433

WCNY/Syracuse & Utica - Digital 24.2; Time Warner 851

WSKG/Binghamton & Elmira - Digital 46.3 in Binghamton & 30.3 in Corning; Time Warner 750

WPBS/Watertown - Digital 16.2 & 18.2; Time Warner 851

Mountain Lake PBS/Plattsburgh & Burlington VT - Digital 57.3; Charter 115

WMHT/Albany - Digital 17.2; Time Warner 200

Branding Effort for the Lake Erie Grape Region

America's Grape Country, a branding initiative for the Lake Erie Concord Grape Belt was announced at the Enhancing Our Regional Flavors Conference held at Chautauqua Suites on Wednesday, March 12. The America's Grape Country branding campaign is the result of a collaborative effort between the Chautauqua-Lake Erie Wine Trail, the Concord Grape Belt Heritage Association and the Chautauqua County Visitor's Bureau as part of a regional branding grant provided by the New York State Wine & Grape Foundation.

America's Grape Country incorporates the themes of Heritage, Hospitality, and Health to describe the grape region from Silver Creek, NY to Harbor Creek, PA. Historically known as the Concord Grape Belt, the region boasts the oldest and largest Concord grape growing region in the world and the largest grape growing region in the United States outside of California. In 2006, the Lake Erie Grape Region became the first Agricultural Heritage Area in New York State.

The region is also rich with farm markets and fruit stands, over 85 in Chautauqua County alone and by this summer, 21 wineries will be open for tours and tastings along the Chautauqua-Lake Erie Wine Trail. In addition to agriculture, the region is known as "Steelhead Alley" for the abundance of steelhead trout in Lake Erie's tributary creeks and as a major watch spot for migratory birds and raptors.

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Concord grapes share a distinction with blueberries and cranberries as one of only a few fruits native to North America. They yield a high concentration of vitamin C and antioxidants to promote heart health and support a healthy immune system (visit www.healthyconcordgrapes.com).

The goal of the initiative was to unify the varied perspectives of regional grape growers, juice producers, wine makers, and tourism promotion agencies to create a single brand incorporating the common objectives of all. The group identified a lack of public awareness as their first challenge to overcome. Over 800 farms cultivate 30,000 acres of vineyards in this region that runs approximately 50 miles along Lake Erie. The New York portion of the Lake Erie Grape Region produces more than 60% of the state's overall annual grape tonnage, whereas the Finger Lakes Region is commonly misidentified as New York's primary grape region. At the conference, Duncan Hilchey, Senior Extension Associate and agriculture development specialist with the Community Rural Development Institute at Cornell University, described the uniqueness of the grape region. "You may not realize this," he said, "but there is no where else on earth like the Lake Erie Concord Grape Belt."

The new brand and awareness building campaign will promote the unique history and local flavor of the grape region located within Chautauqua County, New York and extending into Erie County, Pennsylvania. Plans include print advertising in major regional and women's magazines, a new website incorporating photos and stories from America's Grape Country, and a map of the natural and cultural history of the region created by local artist Mark Baldwin. Guidelines and use of the new logo will be by permission of the regional branding group.

For more information, contact

Stephanie Burdo
Chautauqua County Visitors Bureau
(716) 357 - 4569

High-End Product to Help Food Pantries

A new nonprofit called Hamilton Hill Food Processing Project was started by the Hunger Action Network of NYS. Under the Healthy Community Harvest label, the nonprofit produces such products as bruschetta and wine flavored fruit jams. Sales from these high-end products are expected to pay for the simple, nutritious prepared foods that would be supplied to local soup kitchens.

Running the business is the group's Director of Food Processing, Vincent Ross, a NYSSFPA member and a graduate of Culinary Institute of America. He says that running a nonprofit presents some challenges, but that he is willing to tackle them.

According to the Executive Director of the Network, Mark Dunlea, the idea of the business was to create a good and nutritious product and to find an alternative to mass-produced products that so many consumers are exposed to. The products have been for sale for the past several months. The first batch was manufactured at a kitchen at SUNY Cobleskill campus and was picked up by Honest Weight Co-op in Albany, where it was sold out in a few days.

The group is now planning to build a kitchen at the Schenectady County Community Business Center, an incubator on Albany Street in the city. The 1,500 square foot space will soon be filled with all the equipment. The ingredients will be purchased from local farmers.



Small Scale Food Processors Association of NY

P.O. Box 113

Stuyvesant Falls, NY 12173

www.nyssfpa.com

TO:



SSFPA Board Members

Anna Dawson, President
Jeri Woodhouse, Vice-President
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Deadline for the summer issue
of the newsletter:

June 15, 2008

Submit articles to: Junko Kanamura
1116 East Delavan Avenue
Buffalo, NY 14215

Or E-Mail to:

junkokanamura@yahoo.com

Those of you who would rather read this newsletter
online, please let us know via email:

junkokanamura@yahoo.com

If your NYSSFPA membership fee is due,
a renewal form is enclosed.

Individual membership fee for 2008 is \$30.
Your membership expiration date is listed
on your address label.

Consider becoming a board member. **Our
by-laws require a minimum of 15
members. Each chapter should be
represented!**

We need your ideas and energy.