



Spring Newsletter

April 2009

Taste the Region Debuts at NOFA-NY

NYSSFPA annual meeting was held in January, when we partnered for the first time with the Northeast Organic Farmers Association of NY at their conference in Rochester. The conference brought almost one thousand farmers, gardeners, and consumers, presented eighty workshops and three keynote speakers, and served delicious organic meals.

We felt we were real partners with many attendees already “adding value” to their produce. The two half day workshops we facilitated brought well over 30 people each and vigorous discussion. Dr. Olga Padilla Zakour, Director of the Food Venture Center of the NYS Agricultural Experiment Station, covered all the bases for producing value added products and meeting the regulations. Leslie Schaller, Director of the

Appalachian Center for Economic Networks, engaged people with her vast experience fostering marketing with small businesses focusing on food enterprises.

The Taste the Region specialty gift boxes from Long Island, Finger Lakes and Central Leatherstocking regions were displayed for the first time in our trade show booth, and received many positive comments. If you are still interested in participating in this project, let us know. We might not be ready with a box in your region at this time, but we hope to cover all of our regions across the state in the future. Contact one of our Board members nearest you and we will send you the requirements for participation.

Conference Resources Available

CDs have been ordered for several of the NOFA conference workshops. If you would like to borrow any of the following, contact Alison Clarke at accompost@gmail.com.

- Keynotes: Fred Kirschenmann, "How the Future May Change Our Food System: Crisis and Opportunities" and Mark Winne, "Closing the Food Gap: Working Towards a Just Local Food System"
- Market Opportunities for Specialty Organic - Leslie Schaller
- Growing Our Own Bread - Lazor/Earnhart/Connolly/Martens

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<President's Corner>

This is an exciting and somewhat scary time for NYSSFPA. In this troubled economy here and around the world, small scale community businesses (we say "less than 20 employees, mostly 1 or 2") are very important in building local economies where the money is recycled over and over. Though some sales have gone down, others like those at farmers markets have gone up as more consumers are becoming "locavores", buying locally and regionally, consuming less energy for transportation, and enjoying the local flavors.

To that end we are spearheading the "Taste the Region" specialty boxes staffed formerly by NY Farms! who just completed a grant from the NY Farm Viability Institute. We will focus on a few regions first and market them within those regions using multiple marketing channels.

In conjunction with the regional boxes, we will soon be publicizing regional workshops offering the skills of members in various regions such as:

- artisan breads,
- small scale sustainable meat production and on farm marketing,
- models of shared use kitchens,
- frozen and vacuum packaged meals from local foods
- diverse marketing techniques.

We will continue, as in the past, to have resources for wannabe processors and those who want to expand. Please let me know if you are interested in a tour of some shared use facilities later in the spring. There are three in the Capital area and others we may visit.

Our first partnership with the Northeast Organic Farmers Association of NY in January was very successful. We participated in the extensive trade show and held our annual meeting. We look forward to January 2010 when their conference will be in Saratoga Springs and hopefully more of our members can attend.

It's an honor to be your President this year, and I am also excited to have a larger Board representing more of our regions.

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Conference CDs: Continued from Page 1)

- Processing 201 - the 1000 Bird Limit & Beyond - McDonald and Knapp
- Preserving Culinary Herbs for Market - Jeri Woodhouse
- Processing Lactic Fermented Vegetables - Seth Travins
- Simple, Home-Based Processing of Honey - Wade and Babcock .

Unfortunately, the "Jam to Chutney" workshop given by our Board members, Beth Linskey, Liz Beals, and Jeri Woodhouse had taping problems.

Is there a “Pride of New York” Harvest Kitchen in your community?

You may be thinking, “That is a strange question!” We know we have school, church, firehouse, restaurant, Small Scale Food Processing Kitchens, and Elk’s Club kitchens. Who ever heard of a Harvest Kitchen? How is it different?

For ten years, I have been trying to figure out how to save small farms and how to design the healthiest foods possible to meet the needs of all income levels. Now in these difficult economic times, perhaps communities are ready to imagine establishing Harvest Kitchens where local foods are canned and frozen as crops mature to extend the season.

At the same time, trained cooks can design healthier whole food choices for today’s families. In the spring, an overabundance of chives and asparagus emerge challenging our culinary imagination. Imagine chive butter, frozen in one ounce portions, flavoring pan fried, sliced, frozen and vacuum packaged asparagus coins for omelets at breakfast, long into late fall. Frozen pureed asparagus tips might be used to flavor a gourmet soup kit finished and served at an elegant restaurant in your hometown or in your home kitchen any time of year.

Advanced kitchen and packaging technology can expand the possibilities for local food security and enjoyment. Yes, the packaging is a plastic designed in the 1960’s for frozen meat packaging. But, combined with a vacuum, we can safely preserve many more delicious tasting fruits and vegetables than those processed by canning alone if produced in Ag. & Mkts. and health department certified kitchens. Currently many NYSSFPA kitchens focus on canning naturally acid foods or

pickled foods in glass. However, if we are qualified to can foods, freezing and vacuum packaging is just a few steps away. One step is to purchase energy efficient freezing equipment. Contact Mary Gordon (518-441-1977, gordom@nycap.rr.com) for help with equipment questions. NY State Energy Research and Development Authority has lists of energy efficient equipment on its website and incentive programs to help with the cost (www.nyserda.org).

Another step is to receive some training in freezing and vacuum packaging. I can help with designing a Harvest Kitchen and with training at my “Pride of New York” Harvest Kitchen”. In addition to experiencing and tasting the local food possibilities, I can provide healthy recipe development guidelines, freezer garden variety suggestions and packaging knowhow to those who want to both produce products to sell and to teach their neighbors to preserve the NY harvest from their own gardens or from the crops of local farmers. Please feel free to contact me (information below). A visit to Kinderhook (near Albany) provides an opportunity to see a working Harvest Kitchen. Or let’s plan a class at a kitchen facility near you. Visit my website (www.ourhometownfoods.com) to see more product possibilities.

Malone Harvest Kitchen Update

The installation of processing equipment in the 800 sq. ft. Harvest Kitchen in Malone, NY, will be completed this spring. All New Yorkers can take pride in this accomplishment that is one of the ComLinks Community Action Agency’s many programs. The NY Dept. of Health funds the distribution of gleaned food
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to Food Pantries from ComLinks' 7000 sq. ft. distribution facility that now includes the possibility of preserving local food. In addition, the NY Department of Corrections has a collaborative program where inmates grow produce for fresh distribution to food pantries through ComLinks Gleaning Program. The program under the direction of Dean Yando (518-483-1261, ext. 1042, dean.yando@comlinkscaa.org) looks forward to hiring a kitchen manager soon and developing a trained staff and to being able to offer co-packing possibilities to local farmers and food entrepreneurs. Food preservation training can also be offered to local citizens interested in food security in the future. This is the North Country's concept of a Pride of New York Harvest Kitchen where Economical Food Resources are organized to meet 21st century food security challenges.

"Buy Local, Buy Pride of New York." The message of the Department of Agriculture's "Pride of New York" program fits the pride we all feel in the vision of the ComLinks Gleaning Program and its Harvest Kitchen. It also fits the pride we will have in the healthy whole foods minimally processed in the Harvest Kitchen. You can become part of a vision to produce healthy NY food products in your community to address economic, health and sustainability issues in New York. Combine 21st century technology, harvest kitchens, young people and retirees like me, and we will accomplish our goals of healthy food for all.

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Join Buy Local NY discussion Group!

The New York State Working Group on Local Foods and Local Markets has established a yahoo group: Buy Local NY.

This yahoo group is for anyone interested in growing, processing, distributing, selling or promoting New York foods to New York consumers. It's also for those interested in buying, cooking, preserving and enjoying the bounty of New York. Buy-Local stakeholders including but not limited to program facilitators, project coordinators, farmers, processors, distributors, food service directors, market managers, consumers, and others are invited to join this Buy Local NY yahoo group, which will focus on connecting farmers and consumers.

This group is facilitated by the New York State Work Team on Local Foods and Local Markets, which is supported by the Cornell Small Farms Program.

Work team leaders include:

- Martha Goodsell, Farmer, Fallow Hollow Deer Farm,
- Heidi Mouillesseaux-Kunzman, Community Development Coordinator, Community and Rural Development Institute,
- Andy Turner, Executive Director, Greene County CCE,
- Todd Schmit, Assistant Professor, Cornell Dept. of Applied Economics and Management
- Monika Roth, Agriculture Development Specialist, Tompkins County, CCE,

and many more.

You can join the discussion on Local Foods and Local Markets by subscribing to the yahoo group. It's easy. Simply send an email to: BuylocalNY-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. Once you are subscribed you can post a message by sending an email to: BuyLocalNY@yahoogroups.com.

I hope you consider joining the discussion.

Martha Goodsell
Chair, the New York branch of the North American Deer Farmers Association, and secretary, Tioga County Farm Bureau
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Incubators, the Who and the Where

first in a series of six articles dealing with incubators

A Kitchen incubator is specifically created as a nurturing facility which will support your business growth and allows you to rent their facilities as you need; be it one day a week or one day a month or more.

The main purpose to work within a kitchen incubator is so that you can start your business slowly without over extending your capital - capital you will need for expenses on a daily basis. If you were to build your own kitchen, even a small one will cost you a minimum of \$100,000 combined in rent, security deposit, equipment and build out costs. And that is just to get it up and running. Going forward, you would have to pay rent, utilities and other monthly expenses - all for a kitchen you only need to use part time! Once you increase your production to a minimum of 5 days a week, it is appropriate to create your own kitchen. At that point, it would probably be cheaper than using the incubator.

The facility that is best for you is the one that has the equipment you need to manufacture your product. For bakers, it is the type of oven which will allow you to manufacture in a time efficient manner. For manufacturers of sauces, chutneys etc., it will be that the facility has a Swiss braiser or steel jacketed kettles.

In order to select the incubator that is best for you, you must evaluate your manufacturing process and decide which equipment is mandatory. No incubator facility has everything you will need. If the incubator has one or two of the main pieces you need, then you will have to structure your process around that. You might be able to bring in a piece of equipment and store it there.

There are two important steps you must take before attempting to work in an incubator:

- Create some type of legal entity for your business. This can be as simple as a DBA or as involved as an LLC or INC. This will depend on the available funds and your other personal assets.
- You must also investigate insurance - Product

Liability and a Business Owner's Policy.

These insurances are mandatory for you to sell your product, to protect your business and even your home! All incubators require this. Some will provide you the insurance through their coverage and others will require you to obtain it yourself, usually offering a list of brokers who are familiar with their facility and the food industry.

Using a kitchen incubator will test your skills as an entrepreneur and thinking 'lean & mean'. But that is for another month. First let's talk about where to find an incubator near you.

National Business Incubator Association

www.nbia.org Click "links to member incubators", then select your state and there will be a list of all types of incubators.

North East Center for Food Entrepreneurship

www.nysaes.cornell.edu/necfe Click "Food Entrepreneur Center" from left and then "Small Co-packers and Commercial Kitchens".

Association for Enterprise Opportunity

www.microenterpriseworks.org Click "Resources" and then "Find an AOE Member Near You".

Other websites:

www.commercialkitchensforrent.com/

The alternative is to work with a church, fire-house or existing caterer. If they have a kitchen with the type of equipment you need, then ask to rent their kitchen during their "down time" when they are not using the kitchen.

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Small Scale Processing in the Dominican Republic

In February, I spent a week in El Cercado, Dominican Republic, near the border of Haiti (one island split into these two countries). It was my fifth trip to this area where my friend Joanne has lived for about 28 years, working among people whose land is resource poor but with amazing beauty and spirits. Through a lot of faith and a process called "Comunidades de Basa" or Christian Based Communities, they reflect on their needs - education, water, health - and then become empowered to take charge and "move mountains".

I spent three afternoons with the Mujeres Unidas en Desarrollo/Women United for Development (MUD). A group of 17 women meet frequently, currently making two products: Conserva de Marmalada and Nutrifort. Women sat in the backyard peeling oranges knocked from the trees with long sticks. They then chop them into a large metal bowl, add sugar, cinnamon sticks and nutmeg and cook over a fire. After cooling they bottle it in 16 oz plastic bottles for sale at street farm stands.

Nutrifort is similar, but not the same as Peanutty, a patented product sold around the world in foil packets for malnourished children. We worked adjusting the recipe of dry milk, honey, peanut butter, oil and vitamins. By heating the honey we were able to blend in the dry milk for a product that is "suave" or creamy without being too processed. Health Promoters, a wonderful group of women trained in preventative health, water purification and prenatal training, each teach 10 families and build community as well. These women weigh babies and assess various degrees of malnutrition. The children identified as malnourished will receive 3.25 oz servings of Nutrifort. It will also be marketed through health centers, doctors' offices and to malnourished seniors.

When I arrived home, I took a sample (yes, I managed to bring a jar of peanut butter, one of marmalade and Nutrifort samples through Customs!) of the Nutrifort to the Food Venture Center of the

NYS Agricultural Experiment Station for our friends, Dr. Olga Padilla Zakour and Cheryl Leach, to assess the ingredients, proportions, and to make a general Nutrition Label.

While in El Cercado, I also visited another cooperative, a "panaderia"/bakery run by one of the Farmers Associations. They bake 19,000 - 28,000 various types of rolls and flat breads each week which are sold in various towns and markets nearby. They also bake enriched bread and cupcakes for area schools. The Farmers Association who runs this bakery also has one of 17 "viveros"/agricultural nurseries that grows avocado, citrus and coffee trees under a black woven plastic roof suspended over poles. Organic production is taught to the farmers who share the trees according to the amount of time a farmer spends. The trees are planted on the hillsides against deforestation. Since my last visit, "hortilizas" /green houses have been put up near every nursery. They are growing mostly tomatoes, salad peppers and lettuces for a good price. About five associations also have cement ponds growing tilapia fish and a few have started vermiculture/worm farms.

Talk about "value added"! These farmers associations are really producing against many odds - water shortages, aqueducts breaking, and of course natural disasters such as hurricanes, which are becoming worse by deforestation. Despite it all, we have much to learn from each other, and the hospitality can't be beat.

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Enhancing Regional Flavor II Events Calendar

The 2nd annual conference sponsored by the Concord Grape Belt Heritage Association (CGBHA) drew about 90 people from Western New York for an amazing day of diverse panels and speakers. I have never seen the breadth of players contributing to “Regional Flavor” together in one room. In one panel, birder, boat and bike businesses described how the recreation they enjoy depicts the “flavor of the region.” For example, the organizer of bike trails donated a bike rack to put in front of a pancake house, making it a more accessible destination for a morning bike hike. I have seen similar trails also popping up in my Finger Lakes Region. In the third panel, it was shown that art trails, musical events in the renovated opera house, sports arenas and the big craft market added their distinct flavors.

Andy Dufresne, Director of the CGBHA, gave plenty of time for networking between panels, speakers and discussion groups, while keeping the day on track.

Leslie Schaller, a returning speaker, gave a wonderful opening keynote with a power point presentation of the gamut of Regional Flavor Partners around the Northeast. The usual sleepy time after lunch was interrupted by three dynamic speakers who didn't let us nod a moment! Lisa Tucker, publisher of “Edible Buffalo”, one of the many “Edible Communities” magazines across the country (Look for “Edible Finger Lakes”, “Edible Manhattan”, and the upcoming “Edible Hudson”), and Christa Seychew who co-founded the Field to Fork Network that has spread through the Western Region this past year, made us sit up and listen. They were followed by Amy Kedron, founding Executive Director of Buffalo First, one of 70 chapters of Business Alliances of Local Living Economies. What a closing keynote it was to an inspiring day!

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2009 Pasture Poultry Seminar

The 7th Pasture Poultry Program will be held at the Weber Farm on Saturday, April 25, 2009. This year's presenter will be Dave Smith of Springfield Farms, Sparks, MD. Dave is the past President of the American Pastured Poultry Producers Association and operates his diversified farm along with his wife and kids. He will talk about integrated farm models, operation and marketing of pasture poultry production, and the back yard flocks.

The day will start at 8:00 – 9:00am with coffee and pastries. The program will start at 9:00am and finish approximately at 5:00pm. Lunch will be provided. Pre-paid registration of \$60 per person and \$100 for 2 people is requested by April 15, 2009. After April 15th, the price will increase by \$20. Program will include a tour of our farm and licensed/inspected poultry slaughter shop. Please dress for the weather. Boot covering and clothing covers will be provided.

For more information and to register, contact Hermann & Laura Weber, HLW Acres, 1727 Exchange Street, Attica, NY 14011, (585) 591-0795.

Bio Diesel Program

In an attempt to help people attain information on making your own bio diesel at home, the Weber Farm is hosting a program on April 26, 2009, from 11:00am to 4:00pm. The presenter will be Bill Botch from New England Bio Diesel. We will make fuel in a step by step demonstration giving you an opportunity to ask questions. We will also have the equipment available to purchase. The cost of the program is \$10 per person with lunch included. Pre-paid registration by April 19 to HLW Acres, LLC, is required. Space is limited and no online registration available and no company coupons accepted. To register, send to Hermann & Laura Weber, HLW Acres, 1727 Exchange St. Attica, NY 14011, (585) 591-0795.

Small Scale Food Processors Association of NY

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TO:



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Deadline for the Summer issue of the newsletter:

June 15, 2009

Submit articles to: Junko Kanamura
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Or E-Mail to: junkokanamura@yahoo.com

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

Individual membership fee for 2009 is \$30. Your
membership expiration date is listed
on your address label.

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

**Our by laws require a minimum of
15 members. Each Region
should be represented!**