



# Fall Newsletter

October 2006

## 2007 NYS Farmers' Direct Marketing Conference January 18-20

### Nutritional Analysis

NYSSFPA offers this service to members using Nutri-base. Half of the \$50 fee benefits SSFPA. Go to [www.nutribase.com](http://www.nutribase.com) to learn all the features this program provides. The updated version fulfills the latest requirements for trans-fats and much more.

Need your recipe analyzed? Contact Anna Dawson at 362 Eichybush Rd., Kinderhook, NY 12106 or by phone at 518 758-7342 or email her at [annadawson@berk.com](mailto:annadawson@berk.com).

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The 2007 NYS Farmers' Direct Marketing Conference, "**The Food Less Traveled: How Local Food Contributes to Healthy People and Healthy Communities**", will be held at the Owego Treadway Inn in Owego, NY on January 18-20, 2007. The conference will focus on the links between local agriculture and the health and well being of citizens and communities. A strong farm base, providing good food directly to consumers builds local economies, protects the environment and builds community pride and vibrant public spaces through farmers' markets, on-farm markets and agri-tourism farms. It is widely believed that whole food is a key ingredient in maintaining health and quality of life.

The Food Less Traveled" Conference is an opportunity to bring together farmers, health and nutrition, and community and economic development professionals who all share the belief that local food production and consumption are a means to build strong communities and healthy citizens. Bringing together this broad spectrum of professionals will result in the creation of new partnerships and initiatives that will improve the health of our farms, our citizens and our communities.

The conference will be exploring a variety of topics in this venue, including:

*Personal health* – how local fresh foods fit into fitness and nutrition, what health claims can we legally make about fresh product, healthy eating and simple recipe cooking demo's.

*Economic health* for farmers and communities

*Environmental health*, including community planning and communicating organic principles

*Healthy children/healthy communities*, featuring farm to school initiatives

*Building healthy farm families*

*Healthy farm-neighbor relations*

*Health and hospitality on the farm*

*Farm collaboratives*, including Agri-cluster and farm trails

The keynote presentation for "The Food Less Traveled" Conference will be coming from the health and nutrition profession. This address will highlight the importance of fresh fruits and vegetables in a healthy diet and provide tools to farmers and health and nutrition professionals for encouraging more fresh local foods in consumer's diets.

Pre-conference workshops on January 18 will feature topics important to farm direct marketers. Topics include food service training, start-up bakery, CSA workshops, and livestock marketing. These workshops, will be in-depth and experiential.

In addition, the NY Small Scale Food Processors Association will hold their Annual Meeting and workshops.

Workshop topics include:

**Corporate vs. Local Foods: "Who will win the loyalty of Health Conscious Consumers?"**

**All you need to know to become a 20C licensed kitchen!**

**Nutrient analysis and Why it's important!**

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## President's Corner

The leaves are turning. The days are noticeably shorter and we are busily gathering up the field crops, fruits and seeds to cook, roast, dry, can and freeze so we can savor the bounty of our labors and preserve the harvest. Sometimes it seems that the bushel of apples we've purchased from the farm down the road will never get emptied and our arms ache from peeling. But at the end of the day there is nothing more satisfying than looking at rows of jars of jams and chutneys cooling on the counter. Making good food "feeds the soul" – it makes us feel connected and alive. It fuels our passions and we wind up at the end of the day feeling that in our own way we've made a difference.

In a delightful little book by Robin Chotzinoff entitled *People with Dirty Hands* the author asks the question why do people have dirt on their hands? What lures us back to the garden for one last look before dark? How to explain the passion?

Our passions let us have fun, be excited, be committed and creative. It pushes us to be innovative, to take risks, to plant new seeds, to try new recipes, and to achieve seemingly impossible tasks. Passion is that irresistible force that spurs our dreams and hopes and gives us meaning and purpose.

Recently I had a call from one of our new processors who was trying to decide how to market her products. I found myself thinking about how I got started and what is was about the markets that I loved the best – it was the connection we felt with each other as growers and vendors and with the customers who came back week after week. We only saw each other for a few hours on Saturday morning but tasting, seeing, talking about the foods we made with

the people who bought our products was an important part of what made us want to come back week after week even in the rain and the cold. Being part of the food community as farmers, as processors, and as consumers fueled our passions.

After September many of the markets start to close only to be followed by craft shows, holiday shows, trade shows and conferences. The approaching holidays sparks a new energy. These venues draw different crowds and new opportunities to expand our reach. Sometimes we just can't be everywhere at once or we don't have the budget to sign up for one more show. However, our Association's program of shared displays at some of the key shows organized by the Pride of New York and NYS Ag and Markets can be beneficial.

The Harvest Fest on Nov. 11 & 12 is one example. Here is how it works. This show is held in Albany at the Desmond Hotel on November 11 and 12. NYSSFPA organizes a booth at the show to promote the Association and attract new members through literature, personal contact, and displays of regional products. As a member, if you would like to have a sample of one of your products included in the display, please mail it to Anna Dawson ( 362 Eichy-bush Rd., Kinderhook, NY 12106) before November 3<sup>rd</sup> and include any literature you wish to have distributed.

If you would like an opportunity to come with some of your products to sell at the show just give me a call during the day at 631-734-6100 or in the evening at 631-323-2762.

Jeri Woodhouse jeriwood@aol.com  
631-734-6100

## NYSFDMA Conference (con't from page 1)

### Shared Use, Shared Marketing: Building Community!

**The SSFPA Annual Meeting will be held from 12:45 to 2 pm.**

A trade show will also be a feature of the conference. In addition to the industry representatives, an emphasis in the trade show will be for health and nutrition professionals, not-for-profits, and government agencies to showcase their information, resources and services, providing opportunities for sharing and networking with one another, as well as with a farm audience.

"Co-hosts for "The Food Less Traveled" Conference are

the New York State Farmers' Direct Marketing Association, Farmers' Market Federation of NY, NY Farms!, NY Small Scale Food Processors Association, Cornell's Community, Food and Agriculture Program, Cornell's Farm to School Program, Cornell's Small Farms Program, CADE, CNY RC& D, and Cornell Cooperative Extension.

For more information, contact Diane Eggert at 315-475-1101 or diane99@dreamscape.com or Martha Goodsell at nyfarms@clarityconnect.com.

## www.newyorkfarmersmarket.com

As mentioned in our last SSFPA Newsletter, **NewYorkFarmersMarket** is an online storefront for New York State agricultural producers. The storefront will open at [www.newyorkfarmersmarket.com](http://www.newyorkfarmersmarket.com) this fall.

### Our Goal

The NewYorkFarmersMarket is a Morrisville State College project to help agricultural producers around the state enter or expand online sales in a low cost and low risk environment. This farmer's market is a producer to consumer market, like a tailgate farmer's market, but operates entirely online. NewYorkFarmersMarket is supported by funding from the New York Farm Viability Institute whose purpose is to help producers enhance the profitability of their operations. We are working to help reach this goal by improving marketing opportunities.

### How an Online Farmer's Market Works

NewYorkFarmersMarket applies standard e-commerce principles to the specialty or value added product niche in our state's agricultural industry. Because the consumer can't physically inspect a product on line, a key point to selling online includes writing very good product and producer descriptions. Another key point is providing convenience to consumers by complementing and extending the hours of traditional farmer's markets. Another key to online selling is building loyalty and trust among consumers. We hope to tap into a consumer preference to buy NYS products first, and earn the customers' confidence by a well run operation.

A unique quality of the website NewYorkFarmersMarket is that it is developed by faculty and students at Morrisville State. We provide a hub of services in our storefront including secure transactions, inventory management, and customer order tracking—all using a web browser as the interface. In addition, our students help producers develop product descriptions and photographs, and provide training on moving into an online storefront. Our team is based in the Com-

puting & Information Technology Department, and soon we'll expand to college programs in entrepreneurship, agricultural marketing, business, and other areas.

Here is an example of how the storefront will work. A consumer visits the online storefront and browses or searches among the showcase of products available from New York State (honey, jam, maple syrup?, herbs, frozen food, meat, sauces, cheese, gift baskets and other specialty foods). Using product descriptions, photos and information about a product creates value in the online world. The consumer puts selected items in a shopping cart. Upon checkout, where a secure payment service is used, a completed order is stored in our database, and at the end of the day, producers receive an email message with a link to an online report showing their orders. Producers ship products directly to the consumer and are reimbursed for their sales on a monthly cycle.

In the future we plan a centralized inventory/shipping option for producers. We currently have 20 producers signed up with the storefront with a goal of reaching 100 producer partners by the end of this year.

### Will This Idea Work?

There are a number of reasons we're confident our storefront will be helpful. A survey of producers on online selling showed strong demand. Producer groups such as New York Farms!, the New York State Small Scale Food Processors Association, and the New York Food Venture Center have partnered to help us get started. Producers who participate in our storefront will benefit from a number of early 2007 marketing initiatives that are not accessible to a single producer storefront. Producer partners may continue to use their own storefront, start with us and move to their own, or do both. We have students to help. (continued on page 4)

### Interested?

Are you a producer of a value-added product? Would (continued on page 4)

you like to explore the potential for online sales in your business? Please consider joining NewYorkFarmersMarket as a producer partner. Our goal is to build the online farmer's market and a number of related e-commerce opportunities for agricultural producers, while helping the students at Morrisville State gain professional experience in technology, business, and agriculture. If you are interested in joining as a producer partner, please contact Kim Mills: [millsk@morrisville.edu](mailto:millsk@morrisville.edu) or 315-684-6746

## Getting Local Press – Creating a Buzz by Barbara Lang

Author of *From Restaurant to Retail – A Handbook for Food & Hospitality Professionals* available at: [www.restauranttoretail.com](http://www.restauranttoretail.com)

Unpaid publicity is a powerful and beautiful thing. What food producer wouldn't want a TV newscaster, radio DJ, newspaper reporter or influential local personality to speak highly about a product he or she has made? Anyone selling a product welcomes positive public recognition, especially if they didn't have to pay for it. But what many food entrepreneurs don't realize is that they have the opportunity to influence this type of promotion. Creating a buzz is about getting other people to talk about you in a positive way, either through word-of-mouth or through media coverage.

Paid advertising, the traditional way to promote a product, has its place, but consumers recognize an ad for what it is – a paid, subjective promotion. The advantage of an ad is that you are in control of what you write. Word-of-mouth promotion, and media coverage, ultimately is not in your control. Unpaid promotion by people not employed by you is always a gamble, but the goal is to make that gamble a sure thing in your favor.

This approach of unpaid support involves a marketing application called "third party endorsement" – when a person other than yourself says positives things about you that influences someone else. The focus here is about creating that endorsement without paying the person. (Often third-party endorsements are paid – think of an athlete promoting a sports drink.) Justin Rushid, President of the award-winning gourmet food manufacturing company, American Spoon Foods, once said that third-party endorsement was the most powerful thing that can happen to a product.

For example, assume I'm a food editor of your local newspaper and I've tried your product, loved it, and proceed to write about it. You are the "first party" the party whom I'm talking about and the "second party" is the person reading my column. I'm the third party, and because the 'second party' trusts my opinion, they believe what I have to say, more than any paid ad could do and subsequently follow my advice and buy your product.

Third party endorsement can happen in a variety of ways, either in the way just described or through word-of-mouth among well known people who others admire and trust. Identifying customers who are "influencers or persuaders" – people whose opinion other people respect, help create a positive buzz.

(Continued on p.5)

## Frozen and Vacuum Packaged Local Foods featured in the September 2006 issue of "Today's Dietitian" p. 60-64.

### **Hometown Foods, LLC featured in Sept. 2006 issue of "Today's Dietitian".**

Kindy Peaslee, dietitian and writer wrote an article titled "Preserving the Taste of Yesterday to Meet the Health Needs of Today". Dietitians were encouraged to support the concept of freezing and vacuum packaging local foods. Small scale and regional processors can combine healthy whole food product development with a 21st century technique that maintains quality.

Kits for stir fry meals, soups and crock pot meals fill the consumer's need for convenience, high quality and great taste. Frozen fruit sauces allow opportunities to use minimal amounts of sugar—unlike jams which use up to 65% sugar for shelf stability. Freezing soaked whole grains and cooked dry beans adds convenience to nutrient dense foods—meeting today's health needs.

Visit [www.ourhometownfoods.com](http://www.ourhometownfoods.com) and contact Anna Dawson to learn more about training opportunities.

## Getting Local Press (continued)

### Malcolm Gladwell's book, *The Tipping*

**Point** explores this phenomenon by examining the beginning and building momentum that can occur with word-of-mouth buzzing. These "influencers" are people with personality – people who may: dominate a social, business or political circle; are recognized as an expert or just beloved local well-respected community members.

Generating local media, or creating a buzz, doesn't just happen by chance, you need to provide the necessary ingredients to create these occurrence. These ingredients are found in well-conceived press releases, creative events or well chosen participation in in community fairs, festivals or charities. But first, you need to identify what your product really means to the people you've identified as your target market.

### Telling a story

You need to create a profile of your product as though it were a person. The product needs its own identifiable footprint or personality, setting it apart from its competition. How people *feel* about a product has an enormous influence on whether they build a loyalty to that product. Often, a third party endorser conveys this personality when they learn, and then tell, the story behind the product. A person, without even realizing it, creates an affinity for a product because they connect with it in a way that extends beyond a simple purchase.

Following are some ideas where your product's personality can be found. As you proceed to tell your story, remember that truth is the underlying convincer and most appealing quality of your story. People love to hear the stories behind how a product came to be. Don't be modest. Have fun with your product's story.

**How was the food item created?** (A mistake in the kitchen; created as a new menu item that customers loved; inspiration from a travel experience; you had a dream.)

**Why did you decide to make the item into a product?** (Customer demand; nothing like it in the marketplace; it would make life easier and more delicious for people cooking at home; divine intervention.)

**What makes the product special?** (Unique ingredients; special method of preparation; versatility of product; it's your grandmother's recipe.)

Your product's personality should be edited down to two to three sentences that you can use in any marketing material as a quick sound bite. Taglines are often designed to convey this message in one

catchy phrase. (Think Olive Garden's "*When you are here, you're family*". Notice not a word about their food is included in the tagline.) The product's bio should convey a message that exceeds the expected attribute of just tasting delicious. This story can be incorporated on your label but can also be expanded in press releases and point of sale marketing materials.

### Getting Media Coverage

Food editors are always looking for something unique to write about; a story with a human interest perspective appeals to their readers. Radio hosts often seek well-spoken story tellers (short story tellers at that) to join them at the microphone, while newscasters look for visual performances to entertain their viewers. People on the internet, well, they want it all!

No matter who you may be targeting, you need to provide that media person with the hook or pitch that meet's their needs and the needs of their audiences. You need to learn how to write a press release and when to follow up with a phone call. If your press release is about a specific event, know the deadlines for calendar postings. Such deadlines are often nonnegotiable so do your homework ahead of time.

A press release can be about the launching of a new product (telling the story of how the product came to be) or promoting an event that involves your product. For instance, if you are donating your product to a charity, create a story associating you with the charity and write a press release promoting the event. This type of collaboration is called "cross promotion" when you promote two parties, creating greater interest and awareness than if just one party were being publicized. This strategy can be done with holidays, festivals and regional events. Offer recipes and when appropriate, entertaining tips that you, yourself have enjoyed. Recipe writing is another skilled technique and one poorly written recipe can discourage the media from using your recipes in the future.

No matter what the content of your press release, it needs to be newsworthy with the most important information contained in the first few sentences. The title of your press release should catch the attention of the recipient – conveying the purpose of the release.

Don't get discouraged when media coverage seems like a sure thing and it doesn't come through. Never convey a negative or frustrated attitude to people who

## Getting Local Press (Continued)

### **Creating events that create a buzz**

Think of activities involving the influential people whom you want to have talking about your product. If you are working on a new product, consider creating a taste panel with some of these folks (include one or two media folks). Let these persuaders have fun and don't push a hard sell. Let them experience a fun, creative activity soliciting their opinions. The emotional connection that these persuaders develop is what will inspire them to talk about their experiences with other people. You need to create an experience that is memorable. The *experience* is the key component in getting positive word of mouth promotion.

Produce dishes using your product and have the panel critique the dishes, helping you refine your recipes. If having a panel is unrealistic, focus on single individuals of influence and get feedback one on one. Even going into an elementary school classroom can create this word-of-mouth, especially, if you make it a fun event that is newsworthy to the local media. The more involvement people have with the evolution of a product, a greater sense of ownership occurs when the product is introduced into the market.

Keeping this community of influencers informed and involved keeps the product alive in their minds and hopefully, in their conversations.

Host a party, as modest or as elaborate as you wish, when a product is launched or when the product is having an anniversary. You can always write a press release after the event, and if you have exciting photos (avoid talking heads and focus on action shots that include your product), the media may be encouraged to use the shots, as appropriate, in their medium. If you want to encourage a newspaper photographer to attend the event, be sure to have an activity that sounds appealing to a photographer. People standing around eating appetizers are not exciting – having the high school pep band play at the event could be exciting. Taking photos is another skilled technique worth learning if you plan on expanding your marketing activities.

Finally, be consistent in all that you do so that your product's personality is continually reinforced in the minds of the influencers and the consumers. Marketing is a calculating process that you control; thinking through this process provides a strategy.

## **WHOLE FOOD MEMORIES: Will our children have them in the future?**

Once upon a time in 1943, a New York family doctor visited a farmhouse where a two-year-old girl was near death. She had diarrhea and had not been able to keep any solid food down for a long time. There was nothing the doctor could do. Mother and doctor were resigned to the inevitable. However, that was not to be the end of the story. I am alive writing this article.

I remember lying on the living room couch when this strange man with a mustache came into the house. After he left, I began to think about the cellar and the sauerkraut that my mother had made "with my help". I called to my mother in the kitchen, "Mommie! Sauerkraut!" My mother called the doctor and asked if she should give it to me. He didn't think it would do any harm. That lacto-fermented sauerkraut restored me to digestive health. If we are old enough or lucky enough, we all have a "whole food history", but will our grandchildren?

In an article in the summer 2006 newsletter, "The Councilor", published by the NYS NutritiCouncil, Amie Hamlin shared some insights about modern diets from Dr. Joel Fuhrman's book [Disease-Proof Your Child: Feeding kids Right](#). She prepared a pie chart to represent 1998 U.S. Food Consumption Patterns by Calories. Her chart showed that 42% of calories is sourced

from animal products, 52% of calories comes from refined and processed foods, while only 6% of calories came from whole vegetables, fruits, legumes, unprocessed nuts and seeds and whole grains.

How many two-year-old children of today would have ever had homemade sauerkraut in their food memory bank? You might find sauerkraut in a can on the grocery store shelf--digestion benefits destroyed by exposure to high temperature processing. You might find sauerkraut in a plastic bag in the refrigerated section with vinegar used in the processing instead of lacto-fermentation. Or, if you are lucky, you might keep a jar of sauerkraut in your refrigerator that was made by a local entrepreneur the way my mother made it.

Minimal processing of whole foods provides convenient access to a healthful plant-based diet filled with naturally occurring nutrients of fiber, antioxidants, vitamins and minerals. Whether you buy lacto-fermented vegetables or frozen and vacuum packaged local foods or locally produced shelf stable products, you can trust that recognizable whole foods are on the label. (Con't p. 7)

## Food Processing Workshops

### Dutchess County Cooperative Extension holds Food Processing Workshops:

October 10, 2006—Tuesday—Commercial Preparation of Jams & Jellies for the Retail Market. \$50

October 11, 2006—Wednesday—Good Manufacturing Practices for the Production of Acid & Acidified (Pickled) Foods—Technical Content & Materials for this workshop is in Spanish only on Wednesday, October 11<sup>th</sup>. \$50

Dr. Olga Padilla-Zakour, Director of the NYS Food Venture Center will be teaching both days.

A complete description of workshops, forms and registration information are available at

<http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/necfe/nande/workshops.html>.

Or, call Bob Weybright at 845 677 8223

ext. 122 or email: [rw74@cornell.edu](mailto:rw74@cornell.edu)

## Tilling the Soil of Opportunity—a six day workshop

Millbrook, NY (Dutchess County): January 9, 10, 23, 24 and February 6 & 7, 2007 The hours are Tuesdays, noon to 9 p.m. and Wednesdays from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Each session builds on the previous one.

If you are an agricultural entrepreneur or small-scale food processor thinking of starting an agricultural-based venture, or have already started one, consider taking this NxLevel course this spring. It is designed for people searching for innovative ideas and enhanced marketing opportunities in the area of value-added agriculture and food. Each two-day session covers several topics.

They include: Taking Stock of Your Resources; Business Concept; Mission and Goals; Legal Structure; Management from the Ground Up; Marketing Issues; Marketing Strategies; Budgeting; Record Keeping and Accounting; Cash Flow and Financial Statements; Financing and Business Growth Issues and Strategies,

Cash Flow and Financial Statements; Financing and Business Growth Issues and Strategies.

The workshop is sponsored by the Cornell Cooperative Extension in Dutchess County, the NYS Food Venture Center at the Dept. of Food Science and Technology and the NY Ag Innovation Center.

Instructor Bob Weybright is a business and marketing specialist with over 25 years in the food arena. At each session guest speakers such as small business attorneys, bankers, insurance agents and marketing consultants with experience serving the farming community will be available for consultation. You can view the workshop brochure at <http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/necfe/nande/workshops.html>.

For more information about NxLevel, visit <http://www.nxlevel.org>.

Please register through Cheryl Leach at 315 787 2622 or [cal35@cornell.edu](mailto:cal35@cornell.edu).

## Whole Food Memories Continued

If you do not recognize the ingredient or it does not naturally occur in the product, ask why the ingredient is in the product. You will find minimally processed whole foods offered at farmers markets, farm stores and food coops supporting local food based businesses.

Our bodies were designed eons ago to take in whole foods and take them apart—not to take in food parts and put them back together. Don't be fooled by the packaging and the messages sent by

large scale food processors. Many food scientists are employed by large corporations to obtain processing patents. They take apart whole farm foods and sell the pieces of the food to other large scale processors. Their nutraceutical concoctions—many touted for their organic ingredients as well—are on store shelves everywhere. Few consumers can resist the messages sent by the media or the fancy packaging. You and I know better!

- Anna Dawson

THE overpowering smell of vanilla in her home led Priscilla Maddox to her current business — and passion—Kitchen for Hire.

In 2000, Ms. Maddox was 16 years into retirement, after 36 years of employment in New York City hospitals and at a nursing home, when she decided to try turning her cookie-making skills into a business. For two weeks, she supplied batch after batch of her homemade goodies to a restaurant and to the nursing home where she had worked as an administrator. But the strong vanilla smell that soon permeated her Brooklyn home from her baking “was making me ill,” she recalled recently, and she thought of renting another space in which to make her cookies. But that inspired still another thought: If she needed such a space, then others starting small food-production businesses, or even well into operating them, might also need one.

Thus was born Kitchen for Hire, a shared-use commercial kitchen that Ms. Maddox and two other women opened in 2000 in a former restaurant in the Prospect Heights section of Brooklyn. They used \$60,000 from their savings to buy the 10-burner stove and the refrigerators, freezers and other equipment that the restaurant had used.

Ms. Maddox, who demurred when asked her age, and one of her partners, Joan Reid, 65, who retired in 1998 as an executive secretary at the nursing home where Ms. Maddox had worked, run Kitchen for Hire. The third partner, Rayda Marquez, who is still employed as an administrator at the nursing home, is not involved in the kitchen's daily operation.

According to the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, which regulates shared-use commercial kitchens, only a dozen of them exist in the state, mostly outside New York City.

Ms. Maddox has never made any cookies at Kitchen for Hire; she gave up her commercial baking aspirations, she said, because she and Ms. Reid had to concentrate on running the kitchen, which is at 766 Washington Avenue in Brooklyn. And that has been a challenge.

“This year looks like the first year we'll break even,” Ms. Reid said. Revenue last year was about \$25,000 while costs, including rent, utilities and insurance, totaled \$35,000, she said. But both women said they had been able to handle the red ink so far. Moreover, they said, they prize the non-monetary compensation. “We're in the business of helping entrepre-

neurs,” Ms. Maddox said. She spoke of the community value of providing a workplace for those who are producing or seeking to produce food for the marketplace but who, for legal or practical reasons, cannot make their products at home, and whose volume is too small to afford their own professional kitchens.

Federal, state and local laws and regulations governing food safety, zoning and building safety make it illegal in the United States to use home kitchens to produce most kinds of food for sale. There are varying exemptions in many states for foods considered non-hazardous.

In New York, cookies and certain other baked goods, for example, may be produced in home kitchens, but the production of most other food requires a “full-scale food processing facility subject to licensing and inspection,” said Jessica Chitenden, a spokeswoman for the Department of Agriculture and Markets.

The shared-use kitchens are also an alternative for businesses whose volumes are too small to interest co-packers, companies that manufacture the recipes of other companies, said Bob Weybright, a program leader with the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Dutchess County, who has worked with operators of shared-use commercial kitchens.

And such kitchens are an alternative as well for small-scale producers who find that they cannot rely on another approach, renting time in catering company.

Ms. Maddox, meanwhile, has another reason for continuing Kitchen for Hire. “What would I do at home?” she said. “Waste away?”

### **SCOOTER FOOD AT KITCHEN FOR HIRE**

Michelle Lewis, a client of Kitchen For Hire, prepares homemade dog food at the Kitchen. Her business was featured in the New York Times newspaper on Sunday, July 9, 2006. She started SCOOTER FOOD, named after her own dog, two years ago. Ms. Lewis knew that everything people eat is not good for dogs and started preparing separate meals for her dog, Scooter Mae. Acknowledging the high price for her offerings, Ms. Lewis said she would promote the food not only as full meals, but also as toppings on standard dog fare. She now supplies her special food to a Brooklyn Veterinary Clinic that sells pet food. She is optimistic that her client base will expand because people increasingly “want better

I was very much looking forward to the summer SSFPA board meeting because we could also attend the Little Finger Lake Festival that one of our members and board member, Fred Forsburg, organizes.

When we arrived at the festival site at the vineyard, the parking area was packed. As we walked through the entrance adorned with colorful summer bouquets on both sides, the vendor table set up caught my eyes. It was different from anything that I had seen in festivals; there were the outer circle and the inner circle. This set up, I believe, gave every vendor an equal amount of exposure.

Along with familiar products such as sauces, jewelry, preserves, etc., I found some that particularly attracted my attention. Lying next to the beautiful knitted alpaca products are two pretty real alpaca themselves. It had never occurred to me that we could have "local" alpaca products! Next to the wine-tasting station, a small creamery was selling artisan European cheeses made from raw milk from pasture fed cows on their family farm. Just the kind of thing I was looking for! Many products at the festival were so sophisticated and of high quality that I believe they will sell very well in any city.

The finale was the five-course feast with all local ingredients, each paired with local wine. We started with a grilled spring lamb kabob. The organic cherry tomatoes in the appetizer salad were the sweetest and the tastiest ones I had ever had in my life. Coq au vin, using Fred's organic pasture raised chicken, was cooked in white wine instead of usual red, which was perfect as a summer meal. Then came filet mignon followed by grilled caramelized peaches. I had so much more wine than I could usually drink that I fell asleep in the back seat of the car on our way home.

What a festival! It was good to see so many local small scale farmers and processors producing high quality products based on smart ideas and with such passion. If such festivals were held in each region of the state and were well publicized, it would bring more interested crowd and might increase the venue for the products.

- Junko Kanamura

We are all concerned about diet related diseases but what can we do about it? Eat better? That is not as simple as it sounds. Should we select the latest, highly processed corporate food, or foods produced by small scale food processors? Which choice is really better? Consumers face a nutrition challenge every time a food buying decision has to be made.

Stagnito Communications publishes food industry magazines filled with articles and ads promoting the latest processing ideas for providing the consumer with convenient, "healthier" food options called nutraceuticals. Newly patented processes offer 60 fiber ingredient options; omega 3 removed from fish oils and algae grown in stainless steel tanks; powdered lycopene processed from tomatoes and watermelon; calcium powder formulated for use in beverages and new esterified oils without trans fats, to name a few "neutraceutical" ingredients used in new grocery store products.

Stagnito's Food Engineering magazine features machines that "shear" foods into tiny fibers; "fresherize" meats using irradiation, pulsating electrical fields, or high pressure to break bacterial walls; "aseptic" packaging machines replaces frozen food packaging. The speed of innovation in corporation processing is mind-boggling but the effect of these innovations have not fully been researched. Consider the fact that it took 50 years to find out that hydrogenated trans fats are harmful.

Small-scale food processors seldom use highly processed ingredients for their recipes. Whole foods comprise major recipe ingredients for small-scale processors. Labeling laws exempt many producers with limited production from nutrition labeling. The "clean label mania" of large corporations is a problem that small producers do not face.

Are we missing an opportunity that consumers would appreciate? Would a nutrition label be helpful? The answer is—yes and no. Yes, consumers are being trained to read nutrition labels and look for them. However, because of the limited "required nutrients" on the label, the complete nutrient story is not revealed. Whole foods have many more naturally occurring nutrients than food labels provide. Be reassured of the value of locally processed whole foods for health conscious consumers. Our bodies evolved eons ago to flourish on whole foods grown and processed locally.

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**Volunteer to be a Board Member!**

We need your creative ideas and skills. Let's take advantage of opportunities that our website provides **www.nyssfpa.com**. Let's think of ways to provide marketing support for each other and for the online website being set up at Morrisville. Please contact Jayne Mc Cahill 631-734-6100 to get more involved.

**NYSSFPA IS TRADE ORGANIZATION**

Our NY Small-Scale Food Processors' Association has received the official acceptance from the Internal Revenue Service that we are designated a 501(C)(6) not-for-profit trade association. As a trade association, an important part of our mission is to give information and support to our small-scale food processor members. While we can not give tax exemption to individuals who contribute funds to our organization, member businesses can advertise through NYSSFPA as a business expense. We hope to enlarge the number of processor and supportive business members in the eleven regions of the state. If you would like us to add a business you work with to our data base, let us know. - Alison Clarke

Small Scale Food Processors Association

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**TO:**

