New Logo and Newsletter Format

Perry Hack, owner/operator of Two Guys from Woodbridge Farm in Hamden, CT, submitted the winning entry in the Farm-to-Chef logo contest. Thank you to all who voted and to Perry for his terrific design, which will give the program a whole new look.

Complementing our new logo is an updated newsletter aimed at better serving you with information in an easy-to-find format. As always, we welcome your comments and feedback. Please let us know how you like the new newsletter and give us any ideas you have to make it better.

CT Department of Agriculture

November 2007

CT Grown Now in Season

DO NOT DESPAIR!

Although much of our fresh produce has come to an end with the frost, there is still plenty of CT Grown bounty for you to use and enjoy.

- Beets, carrots, onions, parsnips
- potatoes, turnips, and other root vegetables keep for months when stored properly. Many are available throughout the winter.
- Ditto for apples, brussel sprouts, winter squash, and other fall crops.
- Lettuce, herbs, and other greens are produced all year in several greenhouse operations throughout the state.
- CT Grown milk, cheese, yogurt, eggs, meat, seafood, honey, and maple syrup are available year-round.

If you need assistance locating any of these items, please contact us!

Contact Us
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CT Department of Agriculture Marketing Bureau
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Left: Perry Hack, winner of the FTC logo contest.

Right: Greenhouses at Perry Hack’s Two Guys From Woodbridge Farm, growing certified-organic, hydroponic lettuce, herbs, and edible flowers.
Chef Jerry Reveron named “Restaurateur of the Year” by CT Restaurant Association

Jerry Reveron, Executive Chef and Owner of the Woodward House, was among those honored October 15 by The CT Restaurant Association and the CT Lodging Association, along with the more than 380 hospitality professionals in attendance, at their annual Salute to Excellence Awards & Recognition Dinner held at the Marriott Hartford Downtown.

Also honored were Simon Konover, chairman, President, and CEO of Konover Properties Corporation, as “Hotelier of the Year,” and Danny Meyer, CEO of Union Square Hospitality Group, who was presented a Lifetime Achievement Award.

Chef Reveron, a native of Connecticut with a Puerto Rican heritage, began his culinary career 29 years ago while cooking for the United States Military. Since then he has honed his talents in many different pockets of the industry, from country clubs and private schools to restaurants and hotels. An active member of the American Culinary Federation, Chef Reveron has been recognized in Northwest Connecticut as Chef of the Year, and in 2002 he served as President and Vice President of the Northwest Connecticut Chef Association.

In 2004 he and his wife opened the Woodward House, a fine dining restaurant in Bethlehem that serves American cuisine with an eclectic twist. Their website boast that “every course is freshly prepared, using only fine and local ingredients.”

Congratulations Chef Jerry!

Botticello and Gresczyk Farms Donate Pumpkins to Military Families

Botticello Farms of Manchester and Gresczyk Farm of New Hartford were among seven local growers who donated CT Grown pumpkins to area military families in an effort to help them enjoy Halloween while their loved ones are serving overseas.

“While our thoughts and prayers are with the brave men and women fighting in the Mideast, we also want their families to have an opportunity to participate in holiday traditions here at home,” Agriculture Commissioner F. Philip Prelli said. “And for some, this may be their first-ever trip to a farm, unveiling a new family activity they can enjoy at other times the year, too.

Botticello Farms also donated pumpkins last month to Eli Whitney Elementary School in Stratford, after two pumpkins grown by second graders were stolen right off the vine. The theft threatened to ruin one of their science projects as well as their annual “Guess the Weight” contest.

“I was sick to my stomach when I heard what that rotten crook did to those kids,” Butch Botticello said. “This commendable school program is trying to teach students about the satisfaction of hard work and patience - planting a seed, nurturing it, and seeing it through to fruition. And here comes some selfish thug and destroys that. We, as a community, should be encouraging the next generation of farmers, not stealing the fruits of their labor.”

Chef Jason Collin to Appear on WVIT-30 TV

Jason Collin, Executive Chef of the Firebox Restaurant in Hartford, will appear on WVIT-30 TV’s 11:00 AM news program on Thursday, November 8th.

Jason will demonstrate the preparation of a delicious CT Grown meal featuring Four Mile River Farm beef short ribs braised in fresh CT Grown apple cider with celery root pearl onions, and fingerling potatoes.

Thank you to Chef Jason for teaching the public about all the goodness of CT Grown.

Chefs Peter Gorman and Tim Cipriano in CT Post

Peter Gorman, Executive Chef at the Unguowa School in Fairfield, and Tim Cipriano, Food Service Director for Bloomfield Public Schools, were featured in a recent CT Post article entitled “Moms Upset over State of School Food.”

The two FTC members were cited for their use of CT Grown foods in their menus and fresh approach to nutrition education in their schools.

For the whole article, please go to http://www.connpost.com/women/ci_7291328

If you have an news about a FTC member that you would like to share, please send it to Linda.Piotrowicz@ct.gov
Out and About

Above left, Denise Appel, Chef/Owner of Zinc and Chow Restaurants in New Haven, directs a customer to a farmer selling the ingredients used in her Market Vegetable Rice Paper Rolls, above right, at the Whole Foods Farmers’ Market in West Hartford.

Chris Prosperi, Chef/Owner of MetroBis Restaurant in Simsbury, above left, at the Whole Foods Farmers’ Market in West Hartford. Above right, Chef John Turenne chats with customers at the Manchester Community College Farmers’ Market about ingredients.

Above left, Daniel Chong-Jimenez, Executive Chef of the Norwich Spa and Inn, at the Denison Farmers’ Market in Stonington, preparing his well-received pigs’ feet, above center. Above right, farmer Craig Floyd of Footsteps Farms, who supplied the pigs feet for the demo, holds the tent down while Chef Daniel works. It was a very windy day!
Commentary

Lobster V-Notch Program Is a True Win-Win for Connecticut

By D. J. King

Last month training began with aquaculture students from New Haven, Bridgeport, and Groton, who will assist Connecticut’s lobstermen and DEP officials with the new V-Notch Program. This past week, trained students hit the boats and got to work.

The students examine lobsters trapped in the fishermen’s lobster pots to determine sex, size, and condition of each lobster. Adult female lobsters’ tails are harmlessly notched with a special instrument and then placed back into the water, where they will continue to grow and reproduce.

The notch will remain visible until the lobster outgrows her shell several years later. During that period, she may not be harvested.

In return for putting the female lobsters back, the lobstermen are compensated through the state-funded program for the money they would have earned by harvesting the lobsters. The students, who receive academic credit for their work, are paid an hourly wage for their labor.

It’s a win-win situation for everyone involved.

By returning the female lobsters to Long Island Sound, the lobster populations are expected to rebound after the devastating die-off that occurred in the late 1990s, threatening the industry. As a result, the 60 or so remaining Connecticut lobstermen not only can stay in business now, they are helping to ensure their future by rebuilding the natural lobster populations.

The students working on the program have a tremendous opportunity to experience hands-on education that will be invaluable to them as they begin their own careers, while at the same time earning school credit and some well-deserved pocket money. It is hard, real-world work with real-world benefits.

And all the state’s residents win by ensuring a dependable, sustainable source of high-quality, local lobster.

We applaud the CT General Assembly and Governor Rell for enacting the legislation and providing the funding that made this program possible, as well as the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission for allowing us to try this pilot program to determine its success, rather than insisting we impose stricter gauge regulations.

We also thank the CT DEP for all the legwork they have done to organize and implement this program.

Finally, we thank you, Connecticut’s chefs and consumers, for purchasing fresh, locally harvested lobster instead of buying it in from elsewhere.

D.J. King is the owner/operator of King Lobster in Branford (203-488-6926). He has been a professional fisherman since 1969 and currently fishes for lobster in Long Island Sound aboard his boat, a 42’ Dixon named the ‘Kory Alexander.’

D.J. is also a member of the Connecticut Seafood Council.
Q: What is winter squash and how do I store it?

A: “Winter” varieties of squash are those available in the late summer and fall as well as winter and tend to be called “keepers”. Most are harvested when the cooler weather of autumn has arrived. Traditionally, they tended to keep well into colder months, which lead to their name and allowed for their use when few other vegetables were available.

Once obtained, winter squash can be stored for up to 6 months in a well-ventilated, cool, dry place. (A refrigerator is too cold.) Select the best-looking squash, minimal or no bruising, cuts or soft spots. These can be indications of decay and should be avoided.

Once cooked and cooled, the squash can be kept in the refrigerator for up to one week. Squash can also be peeled and cut raw, then frozen in an air-tight container or Ziploc bag. If you know how you’d like to enjoy your squash, you can also, peel, cut and cook your squash and store in the freezer. You will need to check your seasoning once you reheat, however, as the squash will take on additional moisture in the freezer and dilute the seasoning.

Q: What are the benefits to using fresh herbs vs. dried?

A: Different flavors are moved forward when herbs are dried, so the notion that dried herbs have more flavor than fresh can be true. That said, unique flavors are achieved when using fresh, so I strongly recommend using fresh whenever available.

Chop fresh herbs together with salt and then sprinkle over meats when you season. Add herbs to a dish in the finishing stages, and if slow cooking or braising, add no earlier than 1 hour before completion.

You can add herbs to things you might not normally think of (i.e. biscuits, breads, pancakes and waffles) to produce a more savory flavor.

Because fresh herbs are perishable, they should be stored in the refrigerator with their stems in water. Too much moisture can cause a more rapid decay so you shake herbs free of water after cleaning and pat dry before storing them. They won’t last forever in the fridge so try to plan your meals accordingly.

When fresh herbs are not available, the general ratio for substituting dried in a recipe is 3 to 1.
Farm-to-Chef is a free program that helps connect local culinary professionals with producers and distributors of CT Grown products. Informational newsletters, workshops, networking, promotions and other opportunities are provided to members as part of the program.

The program also helps the public locate restaurants and other dining facilities that serve CT Grown foods.

Farmers, wholesalers, chefs, and other food service professionals are encouraged to join. Please contact Linda at the CT Department of Agriculture, Linda.Piotrowicz@ct.gov or 860-713-2558, for more information.

Farm Aid Donations

In the October issue of the FTC newsletter, we reported that Chefs Jonathan Rapp, Drew McLachlan, and Jason Collin were selected to prepare local, sustainable food for approximately 600 VIPs at the 2007 FarmAid Concert.

What we failed to report, however, were the generous donations of local food by our local farmers. Our apologies for that oversight—please join us in thanking these producers for their generosity:

- Eagle Valley Farms, Stafford Springs
- Four Mile River Farm, Old Lyme
- Holcomb Farm, West Granby
- Scott's Orchard, Deep River
- Windham Gardens, East Windsor
- Fall's Brook Organic Farm, Lyme
- Grozyck Farm, Enfield
- Meadowstone Farm, Brooklyn
- White Gate Farm, East Lyme

Thanks to these farmers (and the three chefs) for putting CT Grown in the national spotlight.

Announcements and Events

Announcements are NOT intended as endorsements by the CT Department of Agriculture or the Farm-to-Chef Program. We reserve the right to edit or decline any posting for any reason.

Farm-to-Chef Annual Meeting
The FTC Program is in the process of organizing an annual meeting to bring together chefs, farmers, and other members this winter. Date and location will be announced soon.

FTC 2008 Chefs' Workshop
Another chefs’ workshop is being planned for next summer, similar to our popular past events in Stonington. The 2008 workshop will feature a new location and exciting new activities. More info to come.

Farm-to-Chef Survey
Have you taken the FTC chefs’ survey yet? If not, please go to http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=w2f53HkuGStzgSdV6TU47g_3d_3d and take a few minutes to answer the 10 questions. Your input will help make FTC work better for you!

Year-Round Greens
Star Light Gardens is committed to season extension. Fresh salad greens, arugula, and other items year-round. Delivery to Hartford, West Hartford, and the shore from New Haven to Old Lyme. 860-463-0166.

New “Green” Organization
Green Drinks is a national networking community designed to link together those interested in aspects of green living and green business. For more info, please visit www.thegreenvibration.com

Announcements of 40 words or less are published as a service to Farm-to-Chef Program members. Please email them to Linda.Piotrowicz@ct.gov.