



Connecticut Department of Agriculture

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Marketing & Technology Bureau, (860) 713-2503

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Wednesday, February 18, 2009

## NOTES from the DEPARTMENT . . .

### OVER 100 ATTEND FARM-TO-CHEF ANNUAL MEETING

by Linda Piotrowicz, Marketing Representative

Over 100 food service professionals, producers, distributors, and others with a vested interest in local food came to the Country Club of Farmington on January 21, 2009, for the second annual meeting of the CT Department of Agriculture's Farm-to-Chef (FTC) Program.

Emily Brooks of Edibles Advocate Alliance LLC delivered the keynote address. Her talk centered on planning and vision for small businesses, including creative and outside-the-box thinking. Emphasizing bootstrapping and networking, she shared the concepts of innovative products and services, niche marketing, costs, and different products and approaches to gain competitive advantage in today's climate and achieve financial success. Optimism was a common theme, and Emily reminded the audience that some of our country's greatest innovations were born of necessity during the most challenging of times.

At the conclusion of Emily's talk, Linda Giuca, writer and former food editor at the Hartford Courant, led the group through the remainder of the morning as she moderated a lively panel discussion. (A list of the panelists appears at the end of this article.) The topics were selected by FTC members through a survey distributed in November. Some highlights and comments from the discussion follow.

#### Topic One: Competitively pricing CT Grown foods

Most in the room agreed that demand for CT Grown products is very high. The users' customers respond positively when they see local foods on the menu. Because demand is so high, however, the users must compete with the general public for the product and often are charged full retail. This makes it difficult for the users to purchase CT Grown and stay within their food budgets.

Many of the users list the source of the CT Grown ingredients on their menus or in accompanying materials. This is great free advertising for the provider and can be considered one of the benefits of selling to a restaurant or foodservice institution.

Nunzio Corsino of Four Mile River Farm explained that he gets a large number of new customers at his farm as a result of the restaurants he supplies listing him as the source of the meat. "The listing of our farm name on the menu is more advertising than I could ever afford to pay for," he said.

Another producer in the audience commented that selling to restaurants and institutions saves him considerably in labor and packaging because he packs in bulk.

These benefits could be considered by providers when setting prices for foodservice customers, and may offset a lower-than-retail price, resulting in a win-win for all involved.

#### Topic Two: Effective marketing of CT Grown foods

The users on the panel expressed that they and their customers desire information about the farms supplying them.

Carlos Cassar from Saybrook Point Inn and Spa and Reg Briggs from Country Club of Farmington explained that the list of local producers from whom they purchase has grown so long it has become difficult to include on their menus. Reg is considering a separate listing to be posted or inserted into the menu, while Carlos educates his staff about the source of the foods on his menu so that they in turn can communicate this information to the customers.

Brendan Martin from Litchfield Market said that he brings in local farmers whenever possible to speak at his market and meet the customers. Nunzio Corsino mentioned that he has appeared at River Tavern Restaurant, which hosts regular dinners featuring a particular farm. That farm's products are served and the farmer is invited to speak at the dinner.

Devin Sardilli from Sardilli Produce and Dairy commented that he often is challenged to get the producers to consistently label their product with the farm name so that the end user knows exactly where it was grown.

After hearing the others' comments, Pauline Lord from White Gate Farm vowed to compose the write-up about her turkeys that she has talked about doing for the past several years so she could finally provide it to her customers.

#### Topic Three: Efficient distribution of CT Grown products

The group agreed that distribution is an ongoing challenge for restaurants and institutions using CT Grown. Buying direct from the farm ensures the highest degree of freshness, but it is inefficient for a chef to drive to many different farms to pick up product when his or her time is better spent in the kitchen.

Conversely, a farmer's time is more effectively spent farming than driving around the state dropping off small amounts of product to different customers. Most of the users at grocery stores and retail markets stated that they rely on delivery from the producer or a distributor, while a number of users at restaurants stated they pick up at least some of what they purchase from local farms.

FARM-TO-CHEF CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

**NORTHEAST EGG PRICES U.S.D.A.**

February 17, 2009

Prices To Retailers, Sales To Volume Buyers,  
USDA Grade A and Grade A, White Eggs In  
Cartons, Warehouse, Cents Per Dozen

EXTRA LARGE	87-91
LARGE	86-90
MEDIUM	79-82

**MIDDLESEX LIVESTOCK AUCTION**

Middlefield, CT, February 16, 2009

Live animals brought the following average  
prices per cwt.:

	Low	High
Bob Calves:		
45-60 lbs.	18.00	22.00
61-75 lbs.	24.00	28.00
76-90 lbs.	30.00	36.00
91-105 lbs.	38.00	42.00
106 lbs. & up	45.00	62.50
Farm Calves	72.50	100.00
Started Calves	20.00	24.00
Veal Calves	40.00	105.00
Open Heifers	70.00	82.00
Beef Heifers	45.00	67.00
Feeder Steers	72.00	87.50
Stock Bulls	70.00	88.00
Beef Bulls	31.00	50.00
Hogs,Barrows and Gilts	42.00	52.00
Feeder Pigs each	35.00	42.50
Sheep each	55.00	97.50
Lambs each	65.00	105.00
Goats each	50.00	152.50
Kid Goats each	47.50	55.00
Canners	Up to	46.50
Cutters	47.00	49.00
Utility Grade Cows	51.00	53.00
Rabbits each	7.00	25.00
Chickens each	5.00	46.00
Ducks each	6.00	29.00

Provided by Middlesex Livestock Auction.

**NEW HOLLAND LIVESTOCK AUCTION**

MONDAY, February 16, 2009

Bulk/	High/	Low Dressing
<b>SLAUGHTER COWS:</b>		
Breakers	75-80% lean	
48.00-51.00	51.00-53.00	44.00-48.00
Boners	80-85% lean	
45.00-48.00	48.00-50.00	41.00-44.00
Lean	85-90% lean	
42.00-45.00	45.00-47.00	37.00-42.00
<b>SLAUGHTER BULLS: Yield Grade 1-2</b>		
1000-1750 lbs	61.00-67.00	
1750-2170 lbs	55.00-60.00	
<b>SLAUGHTER LAMBS: Woolled &amp; Shorn</b>		
Choice and Prime 2-3		
60-70 lbs	164.00-180.00	
70-80 lbs	158.00-167.00	
80-90 lbs	148.00-164.00	
90-110 lbs	130.00-154.00	
<b>SLAUGHTER GOATS: All goats are sold by the head, on estimated weights.</b>		
Kids: 50-60 lbs 60.00-78.00		
60-70 lbs	68.00-82.00	
70-80 lbs	72.00-92.00	
80-90 lbs	88.00-100.00	

**FRESH FRUITS & VEGETABLES**

**NEW ENGLAND GROWN**

ALFALFA SPROUTS, 5lb	9.00	11.00
APPLE CIDER, 9-1/2 gallons	17.00	17.00
APPLES, Cortland 80ct xfancy	22.00	23.00
APPLES, McIntosh 80ct xfancy	25.00	26.00
APPLES, McIntosh 100ct fancy	18.00	20.00
APPLES, Red Delicious 2-3/4 no grade	14.00	15.00
BEAN SPROUTS, 10lb bag	5.00	6.00
CELERY ROOT, 20lb organic	18.00	18.00
POTATOES, Russet 10lb	2.00	2.00
POTATOES, Round White Chef 50lbs US1	9.00	10.00
SQUASH, Acorn Organic 35lb	32.00	32.00
SQUASH, Butternut 1-1/9 bu lg	20.00	22.00
SQUASH, Butternut Organic med	32.00	32.00
SQUASH, Delicate Organic 35lb	37.50	37.50
TURNIPS, White Cape 1-1/9 bu	23.00	23.00
<b>SHIPPED IN</b>		
ARRUGULA, Baby 3lb bag FL	12.00	14.00
ASPARAGUS, 11lb Green lge PERU	16.00	17.00
BEANS, Green bu Handpicked FLA	30.00	30.00
BLACKBERRIES, 12 - 1/2pts med MEX	14.00	16.00
BLUEBERRIES, 12/1pt lge Chile	18.00	20.00
BRUSSELS SPROUTS, 25lb CA	17.00	18.00
CABBAGE, Green 50lb xlge NY	6.00	7.00
CABBAGE, Red 50lb med-lge CAN	14.00	14.00
CANTALOUPS, 12ct CR	6.00	7.00
CLEMENTINES, 5lb CA	6.50	6.50
CUCUMBERS, 1-1/9bu med FL	24.00	24.00
GARLIC, Col 30lbs CA	39.00	42.00
GRAPEFRUIT, Red 32ct FL	13.00	14.00
LEMON GRASS, 30lb CA	35.00	35.00
LETTUCE, Green Leaf 24's CAL	13.00	14.00
ONION, White jbo 25lb NY	16.00	16.00
ORANGES, Navel 88 ct CA	19.00	22.00
PEPPER, Green lge 1-1/9bu FL	16.00	18.00
PEPPER, Habanero 1/2bu Red MEX	33.00	33.00
ROMAINE, 24's CA	15.00	16.00

Above quotations are based on Boston Terminal Prices

90-100 lbs	96.00-114.00	POLLOCK
100-110lbs	98.00-116.00	POLL MED
Nannies/Does: 80-130 lbs	72.00-84.00	SCRD
130-180 lbs	80.00-102.00	WOLF
Yearlings: 80-90 lbs	58.00	CUSK
100-110 lbs	74.00-92.00	HAKE LGE
110-120 lbs	82.00-98.00	MED
Bucks/Billies: 100-150 lbs	130.00-152.00	SML
150-250 lbs	156.00-180.00	OCN PRCH
<b>NEW HOLLAND, PA HOG AUCTION</b>		
Mon February 16, 2009 - Hogs sold by actual weights, prices quoted by hundred weight.		
Percent Lean	Weight	Price
49-54	220-270 lbs	47.00-50.00
	270-300 lbs	46.00-49.5
	300-375 lbs	48.00-51.00
45-49	220-270 lbs	44.00-47.00
	270-300 lbs	43.00-46.00
	300-375 lbs	45.00-48.00
40-45	220-270 lbs	40.00-44.00
	270-300 lbs	39.00-43.00
	300-375 lbs	41.00-43.50
Sows: US 1-3	300-500 lbs	46.00-51.00
	500-700 lbs	51.00-54.25
Boars:	300-700 lbs	12.50

**METROPOLITAN AREA U.S.D.A.**

**NEW YORK PRICES**

**WHITE EGGS**

**TO RETAILERS**

For 1 dozen,

Grade A eggs on:

February 17, 2009

EXTRA LARGE	95-99
LARGE	93-97
MEDIUM	86-90

Above quotations based on  
CARTON sales to retailers.

**NEW BEDFORD WHALING CITY SEAFOOD DISPLAY AUCTION**

FISH LANDINGS & PRICES IN  
1,000 LBS & \$/CWT

DATE 2/17/09 - PRICES

INCLUDES DEALERS FEES  
SPECIES LBS

	MIN	HIGH
HADDOCK	0.7	203 203
HADD SCR D	3.3	182 189
JIG HADDOCK 1/	0.0	182 182
JIG HADD SCR D	0.0	163 163
JIG LGE COD	0.0	312 312
MKT	0.4	169 169
SCR D	0.1	141 141
GILLNET LGE COD		
	0.1	363 363
MKT	2.4	160 174
SCR D	0.9	133 133
COD LGE	0.5	182 182
MKT	4.4	157 167
SCR D	3.1	132 134
MIXED COD	0.3	115 115
	0.2	62 62
	5.9	46 52
	1.9	45 47
	0.0	43 43
	0.0	109 109
	0.0	162 162
	0.0	89 89
	0.0	37 37
	0.4	92 92
	2.1	197 207
	1.7	152 159
	0.2	194 194
	0.4	181 181
	0.0	25 25
	0.0	437 437
	0.1	312 312
	0.3	163 163
	0.1	325 325
	0.0	122 122
	0.0	362 362
	0.3	263 297
	0.0	122 122
	0.3	334 334
	0.3	286 286
	2.6	51 67

## ADVERTISEMENTS

### FOR SALE

1-R. CT. Christmas Tree Growers, CT. Sheep Breeders and CT. Beekeepers Associations Special Insurance Packages available through Blumenthal/Donahue Insurance Agency--Toll Free 1-800-554-8049, 1-877-267-8323 or ddonahue01@comcast.net. Farm Commercial Auto Coverage now available.

2-R. Farm Insurance for all types of farming at very competitive rates. 1-800-554-8049, 1-877-267-8323 or ddonahue01@comcast.net, Blumenthal/Donahue Insurance Agency. Farm Commercial Auto Coverage now available.

3-R. CT Grown Mesh Bags - The Connecticut Department of Agriculture has CT Grown Mesh Bags for sale. These bags are super strong and exceptionally attractive. The dimensions are 16" l x 5" w x 12" h. They are being sold by the case (40 per case) for \$156.16. For more information or to order, please call (860)713-2503.

4-R. Gallagher High Tensile and portable electric fencing for farms, deer control, gardens. Sonpal's Power Fence (860) 491-2290.

6-R. Packaging for egg sales. New egg cartons, flats, egg cases, 30 doz and 15 doz. Polinsky Farm (860) 376-2227.

9-R. Rough sawn lumber, fence boards, trailer planks, stakes, custom and portable sawing available. (203) 788-2430.

18-R. John Deere 450 hydra-push manure spreader; Arkfeld scales for sheep/goats; Noland nipple waterers for sheep/goats; medication proportioner for water line; portable 4'x5' lambing pens; Premier sheep handling equipment; 300' fenceline feed bunks for sheep/goats; Vent-o-matic wall fan; 24 - 3'x16' white steel roof panels. Call Howard at (860) 489-3736 after 6:00 pm.

21-R. Round bales 4x5, 1st cut, unwrapped, stored inside. \$60 p.u. Square bales 1st and 2nd cut. (860) 537-1974.

22-R. Hay for Sale as low as \$3.00 per bale, second for \$4.00 per bale. Telephone (860) 274-8159 or (203) 206-1344.

32-R. Hay for sale: 1st cutting from fertilized fields - \$4.50. Call (203) 453-9865.

### WANTED

13-R. John Deere 3940, 50, 60 or 70 corn chopper wanted. Running or parts. Prefer 3960. Also wanted, 1 or 2 point sub soiler. (860) 875-0280.

20-R. Wanted: Land to Lease/ Rent - Small, outdoor recreational club seeks lease of land. Possible long term arrangements. References available. Leave message 860-303-5252.

### MISCELLANEOUS

7-R. Farm/Land Specializing in land, farms, and all types of Real Estate. Established Broker with a lifetime of agricultural experience and 40 years of finance. Representing both Buyers and Sellers. Call Clint Charter of Wallace-Tustin Realty (860) 644-5667.

8-R. Horse properties, Farms and Land. Ralph's the man specializing in all types of Real Estate. With a lifetime of agricultural and business experience he is the best choice to represent both buyers and sellers and make your dreams come true. Call Ralph Winn with Century 21 Alaimo & Corrado at (860) 648-6902 or www.winwithWINN.com.

10-R. Sign up to attend the Harvest New England Ag Marketing Conference & Trade Show! Over 20 breakout sessions, three general sessions, two pre-conference workshops, optional farm tours, and a trade show with over 60 vendors! Improve your marketing skills, network with producers from around New England, and learn from hearing the experiences of others! Don't miss out on the largest ag marketing conference in New England! One-day registrations are \$50, full conference registrations are \$85, and additional family members/employees are \$70! Register online at www.harvestnewengland.org or call Jaime Smith at 860-713-2559 for more information!

### FARM-TO-CHEF CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Nunzio Corsino explained he considers delivery part of his relationship with the restaurants he does business with, and does not charge for it, while Pauline Lord said that she does not offer delivery, and that all of her customers come to the farm to pick up.

Mid- to large-sized distributors allow chefs to spend more time in their kitchens and farmers on their farms, but some feel freshness and quality can be compromised when product is held too long. In addition, it can be challenging to determine exactly what farm the product is from, because distributors may buy the same item from many different local producers, and, as Devin Sardilli pointed out earlier, producers do not always label their products clearly.

Small delivery companies like Deb Marsden's CT Farm Fresh Express fit the needs of some users and producers. Carlos Cassar explained that now he picks up only 20 percent of the local ingredients he uses while Deb's company delivers the remaining 80 percent. Carlos stressed that it is important for users to visit each farm at least once, however, and be familiar with the way it operates.

When several audience members realized there were others in the group from the same neighborhoods, the suggestions of carpooling and combining pick-up/delivery trips arose. Networking and communication are key. Others also suggested back-hauling when deliveries are made to increase efficiency.

#### Topic Four: Users contracting with growers for specific CT Grown crops/products in advance of the season

Several panelists discussed their experience with formal or informal arrangements made in advance of the season whereby producers grow specific products for users. Jamie Jones from Jones Family Farm and Winery explained that they contract with winegrape growers frequently because they are unable to grow all the grapes they use in their wine. As a grower, he said, he would be interested in trying a new crop if a user asked him for it.

Pauline Lord stated that she has received wish-lists from a restaurant user that she has found extremely helpful in planning her crops. The arrangement is informal, but works out well for both parties.

A restaurant chef in the audience described his favorable experience making arrangements for specific crops ahead of the season with a microgrower. He emphasized that planning ahead is essential.

A small producer in the audience said she would be very interested in contract growing for users since she does not have the resources to grow the volume of staple crops to supply farmers' markets and prefers to specialize on unusual crops that would be of interest to chefs.

#### Topic Five: Creative uses for underutilized CT Grown products

The group largely agreed that demand for previously unwanted cuts of meat, produce seconds, and other items has increased in recent years. Some of the users in the audience pointed out that European countries consider organs and other parts of the animal as delicacies, and feel that consumers in the U. S. are catching on to this idea.

Nunzio Corsino said he has no trouble selling all parts of his animals. Restaurants are interested in lesser-known cuts and making them popular with their customers. Another producer in the audience said that he has seen an increase in demand by ethnic groups for items he used to throw away. This has resulted in much less waste on his farm.

Pauline Lord and a vegetable grower in the audience said they offer their tomato seconds at a reduced price and have no trouble selling them. Pauline lets users come and pick the seconds off the vines, while the other producer sells her seconds to prepared food counters in grocery stores and markets.

Another vegetable grower in the audience said he has some unusual crops, such as celeriac, that he has a hard time selling. Users in attendance agreed they are interested in such crops and that increased communication about product availability is needed.

### FARM-TO-CHEF CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

**FARM-TO-CHEF CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3**

Jamie Jones told the group that he would like to see local restaurants and other users take a closer look at CT Grown wines, noting that there are some very high-quality varieties available and worth trying.

**Topic Six: New crops/products desired; not readily available**

Users in the audience voiced their desire for such crops as CT Grown wheat, spelt, rye, root vegetables for winter use, cooking oil, cheeses, and wholesale berries. Once again, the topic of communication and networking arose. A bulletin board or other online forum could help match up user wants with farmers willing to grow or produce them.

A discussion about online networking ensued. Sites such as Google and Facebook could be conducive to this effort. Linda Piotrowicz, Farm-to-Chef Program Manager, pointed out that State Internet usage policy prevents her from participating in social networking while at the Department of Agriculture. A media representative in the audience told the audience that they are "right where they need to be" right now, and encouraged everyone to get involved and start their own online group to continue the discussion and networking of the preceding three hours.

After the meeting, Tim Cipriano contacted the group to announce he had created a group on Facebook called CT Farm to Chef. Donna Leszczynski created a group on Google entitled Farm-Fresh-to-Chef-Connecticut. This information was distributed to all Farm-to-Chef members, who are encouraged to make use of these tools for communication; networking; and posting product wants, needs and availability.

When the discussion portion of the meeting concluded, a buffet lunch consisting of food prepared by FTC members was served (see list of providers at end). Linda Piotrowicz challenged attendees to meet every other person present and find out who they were, where they were from, and what they did, stressing the importance of taking advantage of the networking time while it was available.

During lunch, the food providers were gathered to give an impromptu presentation about what they had prepared and where the ingredients had been sourced. Diners were heard raving about how delicious everything was.

Surveys were distributed to attendees, who were asked to complete and return them before leaving for the day. Comments provided on the surveys were extremely positive. Chef Tim Cipriano, Executive Director of Food Services for New Haven Public Schools offered this feedback:

"Over 25 new business contacts were made as a result of the Farm to Chef meeting. Farm to Chef is THE best networking institution for me in CT. I have increased our use of CT Grown products through the Farm to Chef Program more than any other program available in CT. The support I receive is second to none, the marketing materials featuring CT Grown are very valuable educational tools to the students in New Haven Public Schools. Linda, Thanks for making this conference the best one yet, I can't wait till the next one!"

The FTC Program is grateful to all who participated in this event to make it a success. In particular, special thanks go to keynote speaker Emily Brooks, moderator Linda Giuca, and the panelists and food providers who are too numerous to mention in this publication.

For more information about the Farm-to-Chef Program, please contact Linda Piotrowicz at 860-713-2558 or [Linda.Piotrowicz@ct.gov](mailto:Linda.Piotrowicz@ct.gov).

Announcing the 2009 Blue Ribbon Forum! Saturday February 21st 2009 UConn College of Agriculture & Natural Resources, Storrs, CT Starting at 8:30 AM W.B. Young Building. For further information visit; [www.ctsheep.org](http://www.ctsheep.org) or email Cathy @ [dragonslairfarm@yahoo.com](mailto:dragonslairfarm@yahoo.com), (860) 639-9196 with any questions.

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