

Agricultural Report

Connecticut Department of Agriculture

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CONNECTICUT
GROWN



Marketing & Technology Bureau, (860) 713-2503

Jessey Ina-Lee, Editor

Wednesday, February 17, 2010

NOTES from the DEPARTMENT . . .

FARM-TO-CHEF 2010 ANNUAL MEETING RECAP

By Linda Piotrowicz, Agriculture
Marketing Representative

Please note: The information in this article was taken from the notes the author took during the meeting, and is subject to errors and/or omissions resulting from interruptions, distractions, poor hearing, and/or brain dysfunction suffered by the author during the event, and/or her inability to read her own handwriting after the event. Any exclusions or mistakes in the information herein are unintentional and the full responsibility of the author, who apologizes in advance for any such misstatements.

INTRODUCTION

The third annual meeting of the Farm-to-Chef (FTC) Program, held 1/25/10 at the Country Club of Farmington, was the largest and most successful to date. One hundred thirty-eight producers, distributors, commercial users, and others keenly interested in CT Grown products turned out for the event, despite torrential rain and localized flooding. (Those who remembered the ice storm that descended upon the program's first annual meeting in 2007 arrived joking about the weather.)

The day kicked off with a welcome by FTC Program Manager Linda Piotrowicz, who proposed a few new activities and events for the year ahead. An informal vote (show of hands) determined that attendees thought the additions would enhance the program.

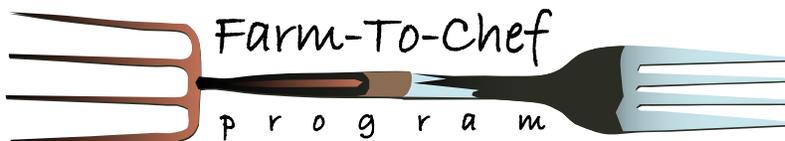
These new activities include bimonthly "mini-meetings" at various locations around the state and "mini-tours" hosted by FTC members. An FTC Restaurant Week also is in the planning stages and will feature fixed-price menu offerings made with CT Grown ingredients by participating FTC member restaurants.

More information about these events will be included in upcoming FTC newsletters.

FTC DOCUMENTARY

Sean Maloney, an employee at Max's Oyster Bar and a graduate journalism student at Quinnipiac University, next addressed the audience. Sean introduced the 30-minute FTC video documentary he created and produced as a class project, explaining that the topic was a suggestion of the Oyster Bar's Executive Chef Scott Miller, who is an active member of the FTC Program.

Sean's video is broken into three segments. The first focuses on the history of the FTC Program, while the second examines some of FTC's member farms, and the third provides examples of FTC users who are implementing the program's concepts and using CT Grown products in their daily menus.



After some technical difficulties (don't believe the commercials that say Macs and PCs always play nice together), the group watched the documentary. All three segments are available for viewing on Sean's YouTube channel.

NEW PRODUCT ANNOUNCEMENTS

Attendees who indicated on their registration forms they had new products to announce were called upon to introduce those products and services. The group learned about a wide array of new offerings, including the Broad Brook Beef's line of beef products, Deerfield Farm's gelato, The Farmer's Cow ice cream, GeoRoots Solar Growth Farm's nutrient-dense superfoods, Griffin Farmstead's aged gouda and tome goat's cheeses, The Kitchen at Billings Forge's farm-to-table catering services, Sankow Beaver Brook's rack of lamb and raw milk feta cheese, Two Guys from Woodbridge's sunflower shoots and micro salad mix, and more.

PANEL DISCUSSION

Winter Caplanson, one of The Coventry Farmers' Market organizers and managers, took the microphone next and began her role as moderator of the panel discussion sessions. She had the panelists introduce themselves, explained the format for the session.

Winter introduced the first topic, Relationships between CT Grown Producers and CT Grown Users. Panelists were asked to explain what they believed were the most effective methods of communication between CT Grown producers and users.

Mike Kandefor of Urban Oaks Organic Farm explained that he emails or faxes a weekly price list to chefs and then follows up with a personal phone call.

Kim Abell from Ladies of Levita Road agreed that email is a good practice because it provides a written/printed copy.

Marshall Epstein from Rosedale Farms and Vineyards emphasized that he must call chefs every day to reinforce the relationships and to provide information about day to day availability of seasonal crops.

Scott Miller concurred with the advantages of talking by phone daily as well as having an email copy of products and prices. He added that the best time to call chefs is between 2:00 and 4:00 PM.

Pauline Lord from White Gate Farm mentioned that she gives all the chefs she works with her personal cell phone number to make reaching her easier.

NORTHEAST EGG PRICES U.S.D.A.
February 16, 2010

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

EXTRA LARGE	116-120
LARGE	114-118
MEDIUM	98-100

MIDDLESEX LIVESTOCK AUCTION

Middlefield, CT, February 15, 2010

Live animals brought the following average prices
per cwt.:

	Low	High
Bob Calves:		
45-60 lbs.	25.00	30.00
61-75 lbs.	35.00	50.00
76-90 lbs.	60.00	65.00
91-105 lbs.	70.00	75.00
106 lbs. & up	80.00	90.00
Farm Calves	95.00	110.00
Started Calves	35.00	40.00
Veal Calves	95.00	110.00
Open Heifers	60.00	95.00
Beef Heifers	60.00	64.00
Feeder Steers	55.00	105.00
Stock Bulls	62.50	92.50
Beef Bulls	60.00	82.00
Sheep each	75.00	115.00
Lambs each	35.00	140.00
Goats each	65.00	150.00
Kid Goats each	20.00	100.00
Canners	Up to	51.50
Cutters	52.00	60.00
Utility Grade Cows	61.00	64.50
Rabbits each	5.00	41.00
Chickens each	3.50	15.00
Ducks each	6.00	16.00

Provided by Middlesex Livestock Auction.

NEW HOLLAND LIVESTOCK AUCTION

MONDAY, February 15, 2010

Bulk/ High/ Low Dressing

SLAUGHTER COWS:		
Boners	80-85% lean	
47.50-50.00	50.50-52.00	44.00-46.50
Lean	85-90% lean	
43.00-47.50	48.00-49.50	37.00-42.50
SLAUGHTER BULLS: Yield Grade 1		
	1375-2150 lbs	68.50-73.00.
Yield Grade 2		
	930-1765 lbs	58.00-62.00
Bullocks:	905-1235 lbs	76.00-80.00
low dress		72.00-75.00
SLAUGHTER LAMBS: Woolled & Shorn		
Choice and Prime 2-3		
	60-80 lbs	167.00-192.00
	80-90 lbs	164.00-176.00
	90-110 lbs	160.00-172.00
	110-130 lbs	152.00-168.00
	130-150 lbs	150.00-164.00
Choice 2-3	50-60 lbs	157.00-168.00
	60-70 lbs	150.00-164.00
	80-90 lbs	146.0-164.00
	90-110 lbs	132.00-150.00
	110-130 lbs	116.00-134.00
SLAUGHTER EWES: Good 2-3: Medium Flesh		
	120-160 lbs	82.00-102.00
	160-200 lbs	72.00-90.00

FRESH FRUITS & VEGETABLES

NEW ENGLAND GROWN

APPLE CIDER, 4/1 gal	13.00	13.00
APPLES, Empire bu 2-1/2 up no grade	10.00	11.00
APPLES, Fuji 88ct fcy	18.00	18.00
APPLES, Gala fcy 100 ct	15.00	15.00
APPLES, Red Delicious 120ct fcy	14.00	14.00
POTATOES, Yellow 10/5lb sz A	9.00	13.00
SQUASH, Butternut 1-1/9 bu lge	16.00	17.00
TOMATOES, Greenhouse 11 lbs on vine lg	26.00	26.00
TURNIPS, Purple Top 25lb	12.00	12.00

SHIPPED IN

ANISE, 24ct CA	32.00	32.00
APPLES, Cameo us exfcy,80ct	28.00	28.00
Cantaloupes 12ct CR	14.00	15.00
ARTICHOKES, 30ct CA	26.00	26.00
BEANS, Green bu handpicked MX	47.00	55.00
BEETS, 12's TX	20.00	22.00
BOK CHOY, 30lb CA	18.00	19.00
CABBAGE, green 50lb CAN	11.00	14.00
CARROTS, 48/1-lb bags Organic CA	41.00	42.00
CAULIFLOWER, 12ct AZ	11.00	15.00
CELERIAC, 20lb CAN	18.00	18.00
CORN, 4-1/2 doz FL	22.00	28.00
CUCUMBER, 1 1/9bu med MX	24.00	26.00
GARLIC, 10lb elephant CA	33.00	34.00
GRAPEFRUIT, Red 40ct FLA	13.00	15.00
LEMONS, 115ct AZ	23.00	24.00
LETTUCE, Boston 12/4oz ghouse CAN	14.00	14.00
LETTUCE, icebreg, 24ct AZ	13.00	15.00
MUSHROOMS, 10lb White med PA	15.50	16.50
NECTARINES, 48-50 CHILE	22.00	22.00
ONION, Yellow 50lb med NY	11.00	12.00
ORANGES, Navel 88's CA	17.00	20.00
PEACHES, 44ct CHILE	21.00	22.00
PEAS, Sugar Snap 10lb GU	13.00	15.00
PEPPER, Cubanelles 1 1/9 bu FL	45.00	45.00
PEPPER, Bell Green xl FL	25.00	26.00
STRAWBERRIES, 8/1lb lg FL	28.00	30.00
TOMATOES, 5x6 FL	22.00	23.00

Above quotations are based on Boston Terminal Prices

SLAUGHTER GOATS: All goats are sold by the head, on estimated weights.		
Kids:	50-60 lbs	72.00-88.00
	60-80 lbs	84.00-114.00;
	80-100 lbs	106.00-136.00
	100-120 lbs	125.00-152.00
Nannies/Does:	80-130 lbs	90.00-105.00
	130-180 lbs	102.00-116.00
Slaughter Bucks/Billies:		
	100-150 lbs	156.00-168.00
	150-250 lbs	162.00-176.00.

NEW HOLLAND, PA HOG AUCTION

Mon February 15, 2010 - Hogs sold by actual weights, prices quoted by hundred weight.

Percent Lean	Weight	Price
49-54	220-270 lbs	52.00-54.50
	270-300 lbs	54.00-56.50
	300-350 lbs	50.00-55.00
45-49	220-270 lbs	50.00-52.50
	270-300 lbs	51.50-52.50
	300-350 lbs	44.50-49.50
41-45	220-270 lbs	48.00-50.00
	300-350 lbs	42.00-45.00
Sows: US 1-3	300-500 lbs	35.00-40.00
	500-700 lbs	50.00-52.00

METROPOLITAN AREA U.S.D.A.

NEW YORK PRICES

WHITE EGGS TO RETAILERS

For 1 dozen,
Grade A eggs on:
February 16, 2010

EXTRA LARGE	109-113
LARGE	107-111
MEDIUM	95-99

Above quotations based on
CARTON sales to retailers.

NEW BEDFORD WHALING CITY SEAFOOD DISPLAY AUCTION

SEA SCALLOPS LANDINGS &
PRICES IN 1,000 LBS
DATE 2/15/10 - PRICES
INCLUDES DEALERS FEES
SPECIES SEA SCALLOPS

	LBS	MIN	HIGH
U/12 CHANNEL	1.9	1215	1220
10/20	20.8	815	885
20/30	16.6	615	650
10/20 ELEPHANT TRUNK			
	0.6	665	665
20/30	17.0	615	645
U/12 MID ATL	1.5	1110	1110
10/20	8.5	715	840
20/30	16.7	620	650

NEW BEDFORD WHALING CITY SEAFOOD DISPLAY AUCTION

FISH LANDINGS & PRICES IN
1,000 LBS & \$/CWT DATE 2/15/10
PRICES INCLUDES DEALERS
FEES 1/0 MEANS LESS THAN
100 POUNDS

	LBS	MIN	HIGH
SPECIES			
COD LGE	0.8	155	226
MKT	25.5	149	200
SCRD	3.4	141	152
GILLNET LGE COD	2.0	158	204
MKT	13.0	139	159
SCRD	0.4	142	144
JIG LGE COD 1/	0.0	192	192
MKT	2.1	158	158
SCRD	0.7	146	146
HADDOCK	1.4	189	192
HADDOCK SCRCD	1.5	184	184
POLLOCK	1.1	141	160
MED	1.0	146	184
SCRD	0.1	92	92
MED JIG POLLOCK	0.0	166	166
HAKL LGE	0.3	309	309
MED	0.2	230	230
SML	0.0	127	127
SOW	0.2	270	270
OCN PRCH	0.5	88	141
YELLOWTAIL LGE	0.4	252	252
SML	1.3	174	224
MIXED	7.0	170	188
DABS LGE	0.3	265	291
MED	0.6	236	237

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, ddonahue01@comcast.net or www.hobbyfarmusa.com.. 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, ddonahue01@comcast.net or www.hobbyfarmusa.com., Blumenthal/Donahue Insurance Agency. Farm Commercial Auto Coverage now available.

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.

12-R. Hay – excellent 1st cut round, plastic wrapped bales \$40. 2nd cut \$50. 2nd cut squares \$5. Lebanon 860-886-0716.

17-R. Hedge rows, drainage ditches, fence lines or any other hard to reach areas getting overgrown? We have the solution. An excavator mounted tree/brush mower capable of mowing 8"-12" diameters flush to the ground. Also Fecon mower mounted on Trac Skidsteer. Call for brochure or machine location to observe working or free demonstration on your site. (860) 875-0280 or visit Burkeridge.com Commercial Mowing Division.

19-R. First cut 4x5 round bales \$40 p.u. First cut square bales \$4.50. For information call 203-265-4588.

23-R. Flat filler and bale breaker, good condition \$2,000. Onan generator 30kw, single or three-phase 6-cylinder Ford, runs on propane, 320 hrs, very good condition \$3,200. 8 greenhouse carts, base plus 7 slide-in shelves, 22-1/2"w, 49-1/2"h, 72"h, solid 6" wheels, good condition \$200 ea. Greenhouse sprayer 3gpm Hypro pump, 100' 3/8" hose and reel, Green Guard spray gun on small cart \$400. Call 860-289-8436, 860-268-5931 after 3:30.

25-R. Honeybees for sale, 3lb packages scheduled March 27 and April 26; 5 frame nucs April 10, Riverside Apiaries, 860-295-8972.

26-R. Hay, first-cut square bales, naturally fertilized. \$4.50 per bale. Rowland Farm. 203-888-1599.

29-R. JD 5320, 5420, 6200 - \$14,500 each. 2 – 730's direct start diesel. IH 4230 new motor, clutch. IH 784. MF 375 new motor \$6,500. JD B late model, new rear tires \$3,200. JD 328 baler with kicker \$5,500. NH 575 baler with thrower "02" models, 2 to choose from \$13,500 each. 311 with thrower \$6,500. 565 311 chute and hitch \$5,500 and \$4,500. NH BR730 round baler \$11,000. IH 7' Dina balance mower, 2pt hitch \$1,500. IH 720 4&5 bottom reset plows. IH 3-bottom reset plow. #450 plow \$1,600. NH rakes. New Pequea 4-star tedder. New Morra 4-star tedder. 203-530-4953.

31-R. NH 316 baler w/mod. 75 kicker, electric controls \$7,500. JD 1219 Haybine, stub guards, hyd. tongue \$3,900. Haywagon \$1900. Kuhn GF452T tedder \$1900. NH hay rake, old, \$900. 150 gal. Mueller M self-contained bulk tank \$2,500. Small 2" DeLaval pipeline, complete w/pump, wash sink and receiver jar \$2,500. 860-951-8021.

32. J.D. diesel 4230, very clean \$8,000. J.D. COM MX bush hog 7ft. \$1,500, 1 year old. 860-301-1809.

33-R. 1987 Ford 350 diesel platform truck – good running condition, almost new tires \$2,200. Phone 203-906-9306.

34-R. Hereford cow & calf pair. The calf was born Feb. 6th and is a male. He is very vigorous, healthy and nursing well. His Mother is a very nice large cow in excellent body condition and is extremely docile. She is very gentle to be around and will let you handle her calf without problems. This pair would be great for a family to raise as a pet, 4-H show project or just to raise your own natural beef steer for your table from start to finish. MUST BE SOLD AS A PAIR. I WILL NOT SEPARATE. \$1200 FIRM takes them both. Delivery available RyanM01@comcast.net or 860-655-0958

WANTED

510-R. Producers Wanted: Connecticut 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. Additional Connecticut producers and distributors are needed for this popular and expanding program. Please help us get your product into the hands of local chefs! Contact Linda at the CT Department of Agriculture, Linda.Piotrowicz@ct.gov or 860-713-2558, for more information.

511-R. Wanted: Farmers for the CT Farm-to-School - The Farm-to-School Program is a statewide effort designed to incorporate CT Grown fresh fruits and vegetables into local schools cafeteria meals and snacks. This project is intended to be twofold: to support local farms and to offer more nutritious school meals as a result of buying local, fresh, produce. If you are interested in selling to one, several, or to a whole school district of schools (through a wholesaler or direct), call Jane Slupecki at (860) 713-2588 or at Jane.Slupecki@ct.gov

MISCELLANEOUS

6-R. The Connecticut Department of Agriculture has established the Farm Link Program. It is a matchmaking service to help new farmers find farm land owners (for rent or for sale) and to aid in the process of land rental and/or farm transfer to the next generation of farmers. A website will be developed to aid linking farm seekers and farm owners. Persons interested in the process can receive applications now available at www.farm-link.uconn.edu or calling the CT Dept. of Agriculture at (860) 713-2503. The Department is encouraging all next generation farmers and transitioning family farms in Connecticut to participate. For further information, please contact Jane Slupecki at (860) 713-2588.

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.

FARM-TO-CHEF CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Winter then asked the panelist to share their thoughts on pricing of CT Grown products.

Scott Wishart of Gulf Shrimp Company said that CT Grown seafood pricing has been very competitive and at times less expensive than product shipped in.

Scott Miller expressed the need for the group to figure out a CT Grown pricing structure for commercial users that is different from what is charged at farmers' markets. Putting the farm name on the menu has value to the producer and should be reflected in the price.

Robert Landophi of UConn Dining Services explained that the prices he charges are set for the semester. This can be challenging if a producer changes prices based on their own costs or fluctuations in the market. He also lists farm names on the menu and invites farmers to come on campus and talk to students about their work.

Becky Clark from Griffin Farmstead concurred with Scott about the value of having her farm name listed on menus and explained that even though her farm is on a back road off the beaten path, customers who have had her cheese at a restaurant have hunted her down and come to the farm to buy more. She offers commercial users a discount on product in exchange for listing her on their menus.

John Zito from Alchemy Café and the Growing Green Wellness Center vocalized his feelings about the importance of putting and name and face on one's food.

Wayne Hansen from Wayne's Organic Garden praised the state of Vermont for their organized system of recognizing participating farms in restaurants that buy from them.

Winter asked panelists to describe payment terms that work for both CT Grown producers and users.

Jonathan Eddy from New Boston Beef cited a system used by a small café that buys from him and processes a check each week when they do payroll. This procedure results in timely payment for him and is relatively easy for the café.

Mike Kandefer said he used to offer 30-day credit but has cut it back to 14 days.

FARM-TO-CHEF CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

FARM-TO-CHEF CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Tim Huchthausen from Dove and Boar Farm asked if chefs would be interested in participating in a CSA model that works well for general consumers.

Peter Gorman from The Unquowa School responded that he has business shares with two local CSAs.

Stuart London from Nini's Bistro remarked that he keeps a company credit card on file to pay small producers right away. This process produces a paper trail, an added benefit.

Annalisa Russell-Smith from Sustainable Food Systems asked if most chefs pay on short turn-around.

Peter Gorman replied he pays immediately.

Scott Miller shared that he starts new relationships with local producers by purchasing small quantities on a cash basis, using petty cash. As trust builds and the relationship grows stronger, he places larger orders and is extended credit.

Robert Landolphi described the challenges of having no petty cash system and being required to make all purchases from approved vendors with a formal purchase order, which takes about 30 days. This makes it difficult or impossible to work with small producers that must be paid right away.

Bob Burns of Aiki Farms recollected a time when he made friends with his customers and strongly discouraged others from making his mistake, which resulted in unpaid bills. He recommended exercising discipline to keep business separate from friendships and getting payment terms in writing.

Carol Byer-Alcorace from New Morning Natural and Organic discussed her tenuous relationship resulting from having responsibility for placing the orders but not for processing the payment. She explained how she talks honestly and openly with everyone involved in the transaction in an effort to have each producer paid on a schedule that meets his or her specific needs.

Leo Bushey from The Simsbury Inn emphasized the importance of his relationship with producers and said he works with his business office to ensure the small farmers get paid before other vendors.

Becky Clark iterated her concern as a farmer about rising input costs and wondered if chefs understood that production costs were not fixed and sometimes farmers have to adjust their prices accordingly.

Carol Byer-Alcorace responded by explaining that when a farmer raises their prices, her team has a discussion about whether to continue purchasing from them, even if it means passing along the increase to their customers. She said that eight out of 10 customers understand and are supportive of the local farmers' challenges.

Winter Caplanson, who is a soap producer in addition to her farmers' market duties, shared her approach of giving customers as much advanced notice as possible when price increases are inevitable. This provides an opportunity for the customer to stock up on one order if they choose before the price goes up on the next order.

Marshall Epstein emphasized the value of understanding customers' individual needs regarding pricing.

Susan O'Keefe from UConn Dining Services reiterated the challenges of buying in large volume and being unable to pass along increases to students who prepay for the entire semester. She said that creativity is a must in dealing with price fluctuations.

The next topic was Efficient Distribution of CT Grown Products. Winter asked producers on the panelists what delivery options they offer.

Jonathan Eddy responded that all of his commercial customers are nearby, so he delivers to them personally for free. In exchange they list his farm name on the menu. If, however, he expands his business to customers farther away, he will need to employ someone to deliver.

Kim Abell said she personally delivers to her customers also, because presently she is a small-scale, new producer and one-person operation.

Gregg Wershoven from Mountaintop Mushroom delivers himself as well. He enjoys the personal connection this provides to the chefs who use his product. As he grows, however, he will need to hire someone to deliver. He is considering offering a discount to those who pick up.

Marshall Epstein also delivers. While he usually has an employee do the deliveries, sometimes he goes himself, because, like Gregg, he enjoys the personal connection with his customers.

Dave Finn from Eagle Wood Farm said his many of customers pre-order and pick up at the various farmers' markets he attends.

Mike Kandefer offers delivery for an added charge. Some customers opt to pick up instead.

Scott Wishart has trucks on the road in a regular route throughout the Greater Hartford area. This service is provided to customers at no charge. For those outside the Greater Hartford area, delivery is offered for an extra fee.

Leo Bushey interjected that he enjoys getting out of the kitchen on occasion and visiting the farm to pick up product.

Pauline Lord explained her customers may pick up at the farm or can order through distributor CT Farm Fresh Express.

Paul Trubey of Beltane Farm said he uses a variety of distributors including CT Farm Fresh Express, Artisan Made Northeast, FreshPoint CT, and also has a regular delivery route. In addition, he ships his cheese via UPS next day ground service in insulated packages.

Scott Miller mentioned that many chefs purchase produce from a popular OH farm via overnight UPS or Fed-Ex service, but the shipping costs are high and he would prefer to be able to get the same product locally.

Kathy Smith from the Farmer's Cow explained her company needs to use a distributor due to the large volume of product sold, but this arrangement does not allow for the personal, one-on-one service she would like to provide. They are considering starting a local delivery route for commercial foodservice customers.

Winter then turned the question around to the chefs on the panel, and asked how much local product they pick up vs. how much is delivered.

Peter Gorman pointed out that when gas prices spiked the year before last, every vendor other than local farmers tacked on delivery surcharges. He added that his vendors offer a discount if he picks up at the farm.

The next question asked panelists if they would use a farmers' market as a drop off/pick up point if available.

Scott Miller reflected that there are two farmers' markets within 100 feet of his restaurant, yet none of the participating farmers have ever offered to drop off to him on market days. He urged farmers to call chefs the day before if they will be coming to a market nearby.

Rita Decker-Parry from the Billings Forge Farmers' Market articulated that she runs a market year round and works hard to reach out to area chefs, encouraging them to pre-order from the farmers at her market. Sometimes she even delivers the product herself, figuring it helps her farmers sell more product, which in turn helps her retain the best vendors at her market.

Nancy Freeborn from the Chester Village Farmers' Market explained that she visits producers who would like to participate in her market but cannot for whatever reason, and picks up product, which she sells for them at the market table.

Bob Burns encouraged producers to be persistent and consistent in contacting chefs who have shown interest in their product.

Yousef Ghalaini from Bespoke said he is new to the area and looking for local product but it seems that only the big produce distributors stop by and deliver. He currently is picking up from farms but would like to see more local producers come to his restaurant.

Leo Bushey agreed he likes to have farmers come to the restaurant but added that they should not come during lunch or dinner and it is preferable if they call ahead of time. Afternoons between 2:00 and 5:00 PM, Tuesday through Friday, are the best time to visit chefs.

Peter Gorman reinforced that farmers should not call or visit during mealtimes. He added that it also is important for chefs to go out to the farm to observe production practices first. Other issues can be worked out after a chef is satisfied with the way the farmer raises the food.

Laura Hodge from CT Farm Fresh Express explained that they cannot get to all parts of the state, so it is essential to meet some producers at specified midpoints to pick up product for deliveries.

The third topic discussed was CT Grown Crops/Products Desired but Not Readily Available. Winter asked the panel what types of local products they would like to use but cannot readily find.

Peter Gorman said that volume of products needs to be increased, making more CT Grown products available to those who want them.

Scott Miller agreed with Peter and said this point especially pertains to the colder months. He currently sources 85 to 90 percent of his produce locally during the summer and fall but cannot get enough CT Grown product in winter. He also expressed a strong desire to find locally made butter,

FARM-TO-CHEF CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

explaining he uses The Farmer's Cow dairy products now, but cannot get local butter (pointing out that his restaurant uses a lot of butter). He has sampled some locally made gelatos and ice creams and is eager to try the Farmer's Cow new ice cream line. Scott mentioned that he attended last year's CT Specialty Food Association's buyer show and was impressed by the quality of products there. In particular, he found a granola that he has since started buying.

Robert Landolphi explained that they do not serve tomatoes during the winter in their sustainable dining halls because the students are aware of produce seasonality, but students in other dining halls want tomatoes year round, so they must serve shipped-in produce.

Ian Pocock from Yale said he is looking for opportunities to purchase local produce when it is abundant and then process into forms that can be used during other seasons.

Hunter Morton from Max Downtown, who also attended the CSFA buyer show, pointed out that many CT made products are not using CT Grown ingredients.

Phyllis Haynes from Southern Relishes said she would prefer to use CT Grown ingredients but cannot find a consistent source of local green tomatoes year round.

Tess Foley from the CT Agricultural Experiment Station told the group about the New Crops Research Project, through which station scientist develop growing recommendations for lesser-known vegetables that might be of interest to chefs.

The fourth topic was Less-Utilized CT Grown and CT Made Products. Producers on the panel were asked if there were CT Grown products they felt were overlooked by chefs.

Wayne Hansen raised the issue of crops that store well and can be used during the winter, such as celeriac, kohlrabi, turnips, and rutabagas, and suggested that perhaps growers and users should revisit this once-popular tradition and work on improving storage techniques and equipment.

Eleanor Provencal from We Wanna Feed U Farm asked if chefs had an interest in heritage breed poultry.

Peter Gorman commented on the limited availability of CT Grown poultry and explained that although 100 percent of the beef he uses comes from local farms, only 20 percent of the poultry he buys is CT Grown.

Scott Miller said only 15 percent of his poultry is from local farms.

Donna Lesczczynski from Soeltl Farm pointed out that health regulations stipulate foodservice institutions can use only USDA inspected meat and poultry.

Jonathan Rapp from River Tavern cited exemptions for small poultry producers, but Diane Wright Hirsch from UConn Cooperative Extension said these exemptions were not applicable to this situation and that foodservice institutions must use USDA inspected poultry and meat.

Winter asked if there was a market for subprime and seconds from local producers.

Eloise Marinos from GeoRoots Solar Growth Farm asked if chefs would be interested in purchasing at a discount product left at the end of a farmers' market.

Scott Miller quickly instructed her to bring them right over to his restaurant, bringing grins and nods of agreement from many of the other chefs.

Larry Williams of Jessey D. Shellfish explained that there is a high demand for littleneck clams, while other desirable sizes such as topnecks are ignored, and suggested that chefs could help educate their customers to appreciate these underutilized sizes by offering them on their menus.

Leigh Mabee of Jones Family Farms and Winery expressed disappointment in the fact that very few restaurants serve local wines.

Leo Bushey replied that he loves wine and would like to sample and feature more local product and even possibly do a CT wine dinner. He suggested Leigh call and make an appointment with him.

Yousef Ghalaini suggested that two or three chefs could go in on whole animals more often.

Bryan Woods from Eagle Wood Farms said that organ meats, shanks, and lard are a hot commodity at farmers' markets but wondered if chefs were interested in buying them.

Robert Landolphi pointed out that the dieticians who are involved in student meal planning would be reluctant to use such products but perhaps chefs did not face these same restrictions.

Nancy Domyan of MetroCrops wondered if school and community fundraisers could take advantage of healthful, locally produced items instead of candy bars and the common fundraising fare.

Peter Gorman said he frequently puts on cocktail parties and dinners to raise money and sources product from within a 50-mile radius for these events. They have become so popular that he regularly receives requests to do more of them.

Bob Burns discussed hosting workshops on his farm to educate other producers about growing spouts, shoots, and other crops that would help farmers diversify and increase profitability.

Several members of the group cited online resources aimed at matching supply and demand, including the Farm-to-Chef newsletter "Haves and Wants" section, www.BuyCTGrown.com, the Growing Green Coop website, and a proposed new Shared Harvest website.

LUNCH

After the moderated panel discussion, Scott Miller gave a quick introduction to the lunch that he and Kevin Cottle from The Country Club of Farmington had prepared using CT Grown ingredients.

Offerings included salads of Star Light Gardens greens and Two Guys from Woodbridge shoots, winter root vegetables, stew featuring Sankow's Beaver Brook Farm lamb, Gulf Shrimp topneck clams, The Farmer's Cow cider and dairy products, and Wave Hill Bread in the impressive buffet.

Scott mentioned that Eagle Wood Farms had donated veal for the meal, but that they had been unable to get the product in time, so it had gone to good use at FTC member Firebox Restaurant.

As attendees enjoyed lunch, they made new contacts, caught up with old ones, and visited the display tables situated throughout the dining area. These displays included company and product information from The Farmer's Cow, FreshPoint CT, Two Guys from Woodbridge, Four Mile River Farm, Sankow's Beaver Brook Farm, and Gulf Shrimp Company. The fee each company paid for their display table helped defray the cost of providing lunch free of charge to all attendees.

PRICING PRESENTATION

When the group reconvened, Kevin Cottle gave a presentation on pricing CT Grown menus. Kevin began by explaining that costing out menus is a basic and essential skill that all professional cooks and chefs must have. He told the producers in the audience that all chefs know how to cost out and the farmers' part of the equation is to provide high-quality products on a consistent basis.

It is up to the farmer, he emphasized, to reach out to the chef to let them know what is available. Farmers should call and bring samples to the restaurant. When a chef decides to order, it is the farmer's responsibility to get the product to the restaurant, whether by delivering personally, using a third-party distributor, or via shipping service such as Fed-Ex or UPS.

Kevin stressed that chefs want quality local product and are willing to pay for it. He expounded that private clubs typically have higher food budgets, and advised producers to "beat down the doors of private clubs, who have more money to spend."

When asked for an example of inconsistency in local product, Kevin cited greens he had been purchasing from a local farm, and explained that at first they were of superior quality, but as time went on, quality declined (even as the price increased), and eventually he began receiving orders with slimy leaves mixed in. In the unfortunate situation that a chef is dissatisfied with the quality of a product, Kevin believes the farmer should credit that order.

Kevin went on to discuss sharing different cuts of meat and parts of the animal to colleagues and friends in order to help the farmer move the entire animal, and proposed that the farmer, in return, should be willing to arrange delivery to multiple locations.

Asked if he made arrangements with farmers in advance to contract grow any crops, Kevin replied that he currently did not do so with any CT Grown producers but would be willing to discuss the possibility with growers who were interested.

MARKETING PRESENTATION

Moderator Winter Caplanson gave the second presentation, putting on her Coventry Farmers' Market Master hat to talk about creative marketing ideas. Winter began by giving some history about the Coventry Farmers' Market, which is in its sixth season, and described it as a very "unlikely suc-

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cess.” She cited several factors that would, at first glance, seem to work against the market, including its remote location, both in relation to the state and population concentrations, and within the town of Coventry itself.

Yet the market has, in its relatively short lifespan, grown to be one of the largest and best-attended markets in the state. Even when it moved the season before last to the Nathan Hale Homestead, which is on a back road and can be difficult to find, 5,000 people turned out on opening day.

Winter provided examples of some of the marketing tools employed by the farmers’ market to help make a destination that brings families from all over CT as well as neighboring states. Good signage is key, she said, and the market invested in quality signs bearing the market’s colorful logo, and placed them on main roads to help direct traffic to the market site.

Each week, the market has a different theme, such as the Frugal Frolic, Picklepalooza, Fiber Twist, or Dog Days. These changing themes create a reason for marketgoers to return each week and make for a festival-like occasion every Sunday.

A website and weekly newsletter filled with useful information about what customers can expect to find at the market that week is an inexpensive, useful tool. The market has a Facebook fan page, which helps inform fans of what is happening from week to week, and displays photos of vendors, products, and entertainers. Community access cable television, local newspapers, online event boards, and press releases are other effective and free methods of getting the word out.

One of the market’s most successful marketing programs to date has been its Friends of the Market Program, which allows customer to purchase a button that provides them with weekly discounts or giveaways at every market vendor for the entire season.

Buttons also can be purchased by exchanging volunteer work, which has worked beautifully to provide the market with parking personnel, greeters,

graphic designers, and professional photographers, to name a few. These services are invaluable to a market on a tight budget.

In conclusion, Winter encouraged audience member to focus on whatever they can be not just good at in the business, but really great at, and then to create a place that customers love and want to keep coming back to. This advice is applicable to not only farmers’ markets, but farm stands and restaurants as well.

WRAP-UP

Linda Piotrowicz addressed the audience briefly for a final wrap-up. She emphasized the importance and value of participation by Farm-to-Chef Program members, and asked them to spread the word to like-minded colleagues if they felt the program was worthwhile. More members will generate a stronger voice, be able to overcome more challenges, and have the collective brainpower to solve more problems.

After the meeting concluded, attendees were asked to fill out a survey and provide feedback about the event. In exchange for a completed survey, attendees were given an eye-catching, lime-green t-shirt featuring the Farm-to-Chef logo on the front and the CT Grown logo and Department of Agriculture website address on the back.

Photos taken at the 2010 Annual Meeting by FTC member Alan Budney can be viewed on Budney Photography’s online gallery. An automated slide show also is available.

Planning for the 2011 Annual Meeting already has begun. Please mark your calendars for Monday, 1/31/11 and plan to join us at the Saybrook Point Inn and Spa for another big day of speakers, presentations, discussion, displays, networking, brainstorming, and fabulous CT Grown food.



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