



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Connecticut to Host Meeting of Northeast State Departments of Agriculture

Hartford, CT – This weekend commissioners and officials from departments of agriculture throughout the Northeast will convene in Connecticut to discuss agricultural issues specific to the region.

The conference runs Sunday, June 8 through Tuesday, June 10 and will be conducted at the Spa at Norwich Inn in Norwich. It is the first time in a decade that Connecticut has hosted the annual event.

“We are honored to welcome our peers from around the region,” said F. Philip Prelli, Connecticut Commissioner of Agriculture. “This is a terrific opportunity for agricultural leaders to exchange ideas about challenges and concerns that we share here in the Northeast, such as skyrocketing energy and production costs.”

Participants are scheduled to arrive on Sunday. The conference kicks off Monday morning with a welcome by Commissioner Prelli and USDA Deputy Under Secretary J. Burton Eller, Jr., followed by several breakout sessions. A special session will focus on the new federal Farm Bill and its impact on the region. Roger Johnson, North Dakota Commissioner of Agriculture and President of NASDA (National Association of State Departments of Agriculture) will lead that discussion.

Monday afternoon and Tuesday, attendees will tour three of Connecticut's agricultural icons: Westford Hill Distillers in Ashford, the state's only distillers of CT fruit spirits; Monsanto, Inc. a worldwide agri-biotechnology firm with a facility in Mystic; and the Stonington docks, home of the state's last remaining commercial fishing and lobstering fleet.

Throughout the conference, participants will enjoy The Local Flavor with scrumptious meals comprised of CT Grown ingredients. The Norwich Spa's Executive Chef Daniel Chong-Jimenez—an avid member of the Connecticut Department of Agriculture's Farm-to-Chef Program—will use Ekonk Hill Turkey from Sterling, pork from Footsteps Farm in Stonington, sea scallops from Stonington Seafood Harvesters, The Farmers' Cow Fresh Connecticut Milk, Connecticut eggs, and cider from Holmberg Orchards in Gales Ferry in his gourmet culinary creations. A selection of fine Connecticut wines will be served with dinner.

Additional conference information and a complete agenda are available online at <http://www.nasda.org/neasda2008/>.

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