



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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**Connecticut Farmers Markets' Recipe for Success:
Fresh Food, Fresh Ideas and a Dash of Celebrity**
Famed Chef Alice Waters to Visit Hartford Market May 14

Hartford, CT – The buds and blooms of spring are a clear sign that the growing season for Connecticut farmers has arrived and that means that dozens of farmers markets around the state are gearing up to provide the fresh and local flavor of Connecticut Grown products.

Connecticut Agriculture Commissioner F. Philip Prelli said Connecticut farmers markets continue to grow in popularity and have become essential fixtures in communities large and small. In 2008, Connecticut citizens had an all-time high 114 markets to choose from and 2009 is shaping up to be even better, Commissioner Prelli said.

“Buying locally benefits so many sectors of society,” the Commissioner said. “These markets are a vital source of income to so many of our farmers. They also provide a source of good nutrition to our neediest citizens through the Womens Infants and Children (WIC) and senior nutrition programs.”

Connecticut farmers markets support about 400 farms providing fruits, vegetables, meat, dairy seafood, flowers and many specialty foods unique to Connecticut.

“There’s a specialty for every season and an opportunity to meet the farmer that grew it,” Commissioner Prelli said. “Farmers markets are wonderful community gathering places.”

Commissioner Prelli said famed California Chef Alice Waters is helping kick off the market season with a visit to the Farmers’ Market at Billings Forge on Broad Street in Hartford on May 14. Chef Waters is a longtime proponent of locally grown food. She began serving the freshest ingredients from local farms at her restaurant Chez Panisse in Berkley, Calif. in the 1970s.

“We are very excited to have Chef Waters visit Connecticut. Our Farm-to-Chef program is based on her model of having restaurants use ingredients grown on local farms,” Commissioner Prelli said.

The Connecticut Farm-to-Chef program helps Connecticut chefs and food service professionals find growers, producers and distributors of Connecticut Grown products. It also helps the public locate restaurants that served locally grown foods.

Chef Waters’ visit to the Billings Forge Market is in advance of her appearance at The Bushnell Theater where she will be on the panel of food experts for the Connecticut Forum’s “Food for Thought” event at 8 p.m. on May 14. Other panelists include Anthony Bourdain, chef and author of “The Bad Boy of Cuisine,” and Duff Goldman, also known as “The Ace of Cakes.”

For more information on Connecticut farmers’ markets, the Farm-to-Chef program and other CT Agriculture programs visit: www.CTGrown.gov.

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