



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

165 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106
Phone: 860-713-2503 Fax: 860-713-2516
An Equal Opportunity Employer



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 9, 2010

Contact: Linda Piotrowicz
Linda.Piotrowicz@ct.gov or 860-713-2558

CT Grown Foods Available Year Round *Cold-Season Farmers' Markets on the Rise*

Hartford, CT – Think that frosty nights mean the end of CT Grown foods and local farmers' markets until spring? Think again, says the Connecticut Department of Agriculture.

“Holiday and winter farmers' markets are growing in popularity,” said Richard Macsuga, a marketing representative for the state agency. “Five years ago, we could count them on one hand. Last year, nine ran throughout the winter, and an additional five were open through Thanksgiving or Christmas.”

While the Department of Agriculture continues to collect information from market organizers about their 2010-2011 cold-weather plans, Macsuga expects at least as many to operate this winter. Once winter market information has been received, it will be posted at www.CTGrown.gov.

The extended season is good news not only for consumers, who are increasingly seeking out local food, but also for farmers. Spreading risk and income across a longer timeframe strengthens their business and improves their bottom line.

Cool-season produce crops such as kale, claytonia, mizuna, and other hardy greens require some investment in equipment, including row cover and low- or high-tunnel framework, but the return on that investment is worthwhile. Farmers are finding consumers are eager to eat

fresh, locally grown produce in winter and are willing to brave the cold, ice, and snow, as well as travel longer distances, to shop at winter markets.

Producers of meat, eggs, cheese, and other CT Grown items that can be produced year round also are benefitting. In the past, demand for their goods dropped off after October, but the increasingly popular cold-season markets have provided a steady stream of customers delighted to purchase foods all winter.

“Some of our biggest farmers’ market sales days have been in January,” said livestock farmer Nunzio Corsino of [Four Mile River Farm](#) in Old Lyme, who has participated in New Haven’s [Wooster Square Farmers’ Market](#) in New Haven over the past three winters. “It doesn’t matter if it’s December, January, or February. People still need to eat and will come out.”

Corsino’s animals need to eat all winter, too, and the winter sales help to pay their feed costs. Furthermore, the markets keep farm employees employed year round, which is more important now than ever with so many people out of work.

“There is definitely room for growth in this area,” said Macsuga. “We may have peaked in terms of summer markets, but as farmers and customers both realize the benefits of winter markets, there probably will be more popping up around the state in the coming years.”

The Connecticut Department of Agriculture maintains a list of farmers’ markets; farm stands and stores (many of which are also open year round); meat, dairy, apple, honey, and maple syrup producers; and much more on its website, www.CTGrown.gov. (Click on “Publications” at the left of the page.)

CONNECTICUT GROWN - The Local Flavor

Visit us at www.CTGrown.gov

###