



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 4, 2011

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Farm-to-Chef Annual Meeting to Be Held in Old Saybrook on January 31, 2011

Old Saybrook, Conn. – The Connecticut Farm-to-Chef Program will hold its fourth annual meeting from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Monday, January 31, 2011, at the [Saybrook Point Inn and Spa](#) in Old Saybrook.

Who should attend? All members of the [Farm-to-Chef Program](#) are strongly encouraged to be there. Producers, chefs, and others involved in agriculture or commercial foodservice who are interested in learning more about this program are invited as well.

What is on the agenda? This year's meeting will feature several presentations, group exercises, networking, and a delicious CT Grown lunch.

Carlos Cassar, Saybrook Point Inn and Spa's executive chef, will talk about his dedication to using ingredients from local farms, as well as the inn and spa's volunteer Green Team, which works passionately to promote sustainability in many different areas of the facility.

Christine Applewhite from the Connecticut Department of Public Health's [Food Protection Program](#) will provide a refresher on which farm products are approved for use in foodservice and how new legislation will help expand choices for chefs. She will also welcome questions from the audience and try to clarify any confusion that may exist regarding specific foods.

Bill Duesing, executive director of the Connecticut chapter of the [Northeast Organic Farming Association](#) (CT NOFA), will explain the legal definition and practices used in organic production, and will give an overview of the Farmer's Pledge and other environmentally friendly farming labels that are becoming increasingly popular.

Two new group exercises will provide opportunities to meet and get to know one another better, and to think and problem solve in a fun, productive environment.

Why attend? When attendees were asked what were the most important thing(s) learned at the 2010 annual meeting, their responses included:

- “It really taught me how to go after restaurant business.”
- “Overall very comprehensive learning day.”
- “I needed to know how to get at the products year round. I have a much better idea.”
- “How to communicate in a more effective way with chefs. Amazing amount of people this year – great contacts!”
- “Interesting to hear about how the recession is affecting producers and users, and hear conversations about working together through this period.”

Other comments from 2010 meeting attendees included:

- “Thank you for such a wonderful opportunity to network and have important conversations about how producers, restaurants, and institutions can learn how to work better together! We so appreciate having the Farm-to-Chef Program as a resource.”
- “Excellent program – covered a variety of very relevant topics.”
- “Enjoyed the networking! Friendly participants. Great sharing of ideas and information.”
- “Great venue to meet other like-minded CT Grown user/producers to help all of us be successful.”
- “I love these meetings. I find the networking and sharing of ideas to be very inspiring, knowing that we are all supporting the same cause.”

There is no charge to attend the meeting, but registration via [Survey Monkey](#) is required by January 17, 2011. Late registrations cannot be accepted due to the preparation required for the group exercises.

The Farm-to-Chef Program was established by the Connecticut Department of Agriculture in 2006. It helps connect producers and distributors of CT Grown ingredients with chefs and other foodservice professionals. It also helps the public locate restaurants and other dining venues that serve CT Grown foods. There is no charge to join the program. For more information, contact Linda Piotrowicz at Linda.Piotrowicz@ct.gov or 860-713-2558.

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