

Winter

2010-11



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension

Northern New York Regional Local Foods Initiative

Report Bulletin

Northern New York Regional Local Foods Initiative

Winter Year End Update

With December comes the end of the second year of the NNY Regional Local Foods Initiative! It is hard to believe that we have completed another year, with only one more to go!

Some quick highlights on the numbers side of things. During 2010 I was involved in 11 events directly related to this project, with 6 being held in 2 or more locations. A total of 568 attendees participated in these events!

Over the course of the year I have been able to visit with some 73 individuals about their farm or rural business operations. Questions range from transitioning from one type of agriculture to another, diversification, value-added production, questions about taxes, regulations and direct marketing.

Eating Local Yet? Finding & Using Local Foods Conference held in three locations May 6-8 had 150 attendees. This consumer-focused conference featured Keynote speaker Jennifer L. Wilkins, from Cornell University as well as local speakers for the break out sessions. (see page 2 for more details).

From the Champlain Valley to the Thousand Islands farmers are growing, raising and making local food. The NNY Regional Local Foods Initiative is working to provide research-based education to expand production and consumption of local foods in the region.

This year general awareness of the NNY Regional Local Foods Initiative definitely grew. We had more press coverage related to the programs we offered than last year. I am eagerly anticipating coverage by Adam Federman with Adirondack Explorer. Adam interviewed me on the topic of farming in the Adirondacks.

This article is slated to be in the Winter Issue of Adirondack Explorer.

We continued to add to the library of resources available in local CCE offices for utilization by educators when working with farmers and consumers on the topic of local foods.

Lessons from the Strategic Marketing Conference: Laurie Davis, Adirondack Harvest Coordinator from CCE Essex and I attended this conference in November.

Five Keys to Marketing Success

1. *Sharing-social media is about sharing*
2. *Your Story – tell a good story*
3. *Time—time is your primary investment*
4. *Commitment—make a commitment and stick to it.*
5. *Recommendations—social media recommendations are replacing search for many consumers*

The topic this year was **Improving Your Social Media Marketing Skills for Agribusiness Success**. All the presentations were great. But one I'd like to highlight here was by David Becker: **A Nuts & Bolts approach to Getting Farmers Online using Social Media Tools**. David stated that social media is just another form of networking; so using social media basically means sharing. Social media is an umbrella networking on sites that enable discussion, sharing and voting. Farmers can use this to help build relationships with customers and tell their story. The technology and the tools should be the secondary part, but the message is the key component. David stressed that for farmers (and anyone) using social media the primary investment they will have is TIME. Most of the tools that are out there are free and fairly easy to use.

Education for Farmers: 2010 Highlights

One of the biggest challenges for farmers is how to market their product and how to make connections with customers. 63 farmers participated in programs focused on creating business cards, brochures, flyers, websites, as well as bootstrap marketing (cost effective ways to promote their business). As a result of this project we have been able to offer these programs in every county thereby allowing more farmers to gain necessary knowledge and skills to improve the success of their agribusinesses. Impacts of 2009-2010 programs:

Build it in a Day Website Class on Wordpress: (total attendees: 29) Within 3 months of taking the class more than 75% or 22 of the attendees have an online presence.

Build Your Brand with Consistent Marketing Collateral: (total attendees: 22) Within 6 months of

taking the class: 100% of class had created a business card. 19 created a brochure for their business. Eight have designed flyers and eleven created a sign for their business.

How they used what they learned: 16 designed and printed the materials themselves. Nine have seen a 20% increase in sales after 6 months of using marketing materials to promote their business.

Cheese-making Classes a Hit

We have already started our programming for this season with a resounding success of the two cheese making sessions held in Watertown and Plattsburgh in November. Both 2-day sessions were filled as were the evening sessions for general public.

Area farmers in November had the chance to learn how to add value to their milk by making it into cheese! Here Joe Shultz from Lowville, places an 8-lb wheel of gouda in the brine.

Photo credit: Heather Donahue



Master Cheese-maker Peter Dixon from Vermont was the instructor for all

sessions. 34 participants were able to make 3 different cheeses over the 2-day courses, as well they learned about aging, brining, building a creamery and cheese cave, and how to finance these ventures. It was an intensive program that inspired some and made others rethink what they are doing on their farms.

Education for Consumers: 2010 Highlights

To help address the many questions consumers have about local food the NNY Regional Local Foods initiative this year sponsored a consumer-focused conference on May 6, 7 and 8 called **EATING LOCAL YET? FINDING AND USING LOCAL FOOD**, in three sites. Each site featured keynote speaker Jennifer L. Wilkins from Cornell University and breakout sessions featuring local speakers. **Breakout Session topics include:**

1. Getting the Most Nutritional Bang for Your Food Dollars.
2. Buying Meat Direct From The Farmer – Where Does This Cut Come From, And How Do I Cook It?
3. Seasonal Menu Planning – Planning to Eat Local.
4. Is It Local? Organic? Natural? – Understanding the Language of

Local Food.

150 people attended this conference across the region. When attending consumers were asked what topics would they like to see offered in the future. Top choices were:

- Cooking, Meal Planning & Shopping with Local Foods
- Home Food Preservation (Canning)
- Cuts of Meat—What To Do With Them.
- Making Soup Stock From Bones or Vegetables
- Nutrition Education for General Public.

Additionally, the NNY Regional Local Foods Initiative and the

Keynote speaker Jennifer L. Wilkins, senior extension associate and Cornell University professor, speaks about locally grown food Saturday May 8th, 2010 at the local foods conference at Case Middle School.

Photo credit: Justin Sorensen Watertown Daily Times



regional Direct Marketing/Local Foods Team of educators worked with NOFA-NY to promote NOFA's **Eat Local Challenge** this past September. NOFA-NY provided posters, postcards and other promotional materials for CCE Educators to have on hand at county fairs and other fall events.

NNY Local Foods Efforts Get Statewide Exposure!

The local food efforts in NNY are well known in this area. And with the Regional Local Foods Initiative we have been able to showcase the tremendous efforts that we have taking place from the Champlain Valley to the Thousand Islands. The efforts were highlighted on **Cornell Cooperative Extension's** statewide website. In the cover article on the website where *"Buying Local Is A Hot Topic"*. Below is a beginning excerpt from that article.

Knowing where food is coming from is on many consumers' minds these days. Food safety is

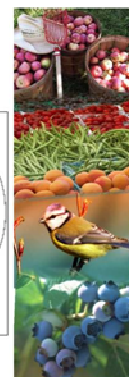
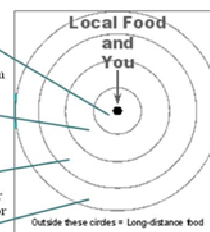
one reason, but buying local also supports local agriculture which in turn, is good for the local economy.

It's easy to buy local at farmers' markets, farm stands, u-pick farms, community supported agriculture (CSA), restaurants with a local foods menu, and look for **Pride of NY** labeled foods in stores.

Cornell Cooperative Extension plays a major role in fostering local food

What is "Local Food"?

- Food that you grow yourself in a home garden, or in a community garden
- Food grown or raised in your county that you buy directly from the farmer, at a farmers market, through CSA or u-pick.
- Food grown or raised in your county that you buy at a grocery store, food co-op, cafeteria or restaurant in the county
- Food grown elsewhere in NYS or in the northeast region at least for some parts of the year



efforts in all regions of New York State through education, research, and marketing and technical assistance.

Making the Connection to Consumers & Local Foods

This past quarter Regional Local Foods Specialist, Bernadette Logozar has been getting the word out about local foods in a variety of media formats.

Radio

The NNYRLF Specialist continues to do regular "Local Food Bite" radio spots in Franklin County. Additionally, over this past quarter, the Regional Local Foods Specialist has done radio spots on NCPR with David Sommerstein to respond to different articles around local food. Most recently in response to USDA recommendation for more cheese on pizza.

Television

The Cheese-making classes that were held in Watertown and Plattsburgh this past November received coverage on Channel 7 News Now in Watertown and Channel 5 in Plattsburgh.

Bernadette was able to discuss why farmers were learning about making cheese and how value added production such as making cheese can help to diversify the income streams for the farm.

Newspapers & Newsletters

The Regional Local Foods Specialist works with Kara Dunn to ensure regular newspaper articles across the region. As well Bernadette continues to write regular articles that are included in CCE county newsletters. Topics for articles include:

- *Changing Numbers and Changing Trends in Agriculture: A 20-Year Review*
- *Building a Successful Business with the Right Partners: Quality Dairy Farms Inc., Mercer's Dairy and Sustain Brand. Part 1 & 2*
- *If You Could Would You do It? Extending Your Market Season*



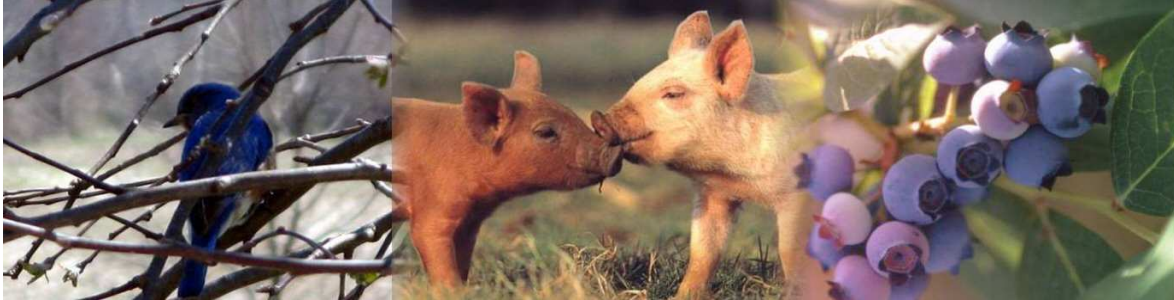
for Fruits & Vegetables Locally

- *You & Local Foods: Putting It All Together Through The NNY Regional Local Foods Initiative*

Internet

Keeping in touch through various media formats is a key in today's fast-paced world. Since starting the NNY Regional Local Foods Initiative Project blog has a new dedicated address at

www.nnyregionallocalfoods.com a complete listing of the media coverage and updates from this project can be found on this website. Most recent update gives tips for the holiday season and food trends from 2010 that consumers and farmers will find useful!



What is the NNY Regional Local Foods Initiative?

This three-year project uses a “three-pronged approach” to provide educational opportunities, business-development services and practical information to increase the production and consumption of local food in Northern New York.

This approach combines educational programming, outreach and resources to connect with:

1. Farmers seeking to diversify and grow their business and food production.
2. Consumers interested in the benefits of local foods, where it can be found and how it can be easily identified.
3. Educators & Colleagues who want to further the Local Food Initiative in their region.

NORTHERN NEW YORK REGIONAL LOCAL FOODS INITIATIVE

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Upcoming events:

- **Build it in a Day Website with Wordpress:** 12/11/10—Clinton/Essex; 1/8/11—St. Lawrence; 1/15/11—Franklin; Jefferson/Lewis—rescheduled to run in April.
- **Advanced Wordpress:** 1/22/11—Norwood(St. Lawrence); 2/26/11—Malone
- **Marketing for Profit** every Thursday 6-9pm starting January 13-April 4th. Locations: Westport, Malone, Canton & Watertown.
- **Pre-Season Farmers Market Trainings:** Thursday, 6-9 pm Jefferson Saturdays 9-3; 3/5/11-Lewis; 3/19/11-Franklin; 3/26/11—St. Lawrence; 4/2/11—Clinton/Essex
- **Build Your Brand with Consistent Marketing Collateral:** Saturdays 10-3 1/29/11—Clinton/Essex; 2/5/11—Jefferson/Lewis; 2/12/11—Franklin; 2/26/11—St. Lawrence



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