



## CT Department of Agriculture

### Briefs

#### NEW FARM BILL USERS GUIDE FOR NORTHEAST PRODUCERS

The [Northeast Food and Farm Network](#) put together this convenient [Farm Bill User Guide](#) specifically tailored for use by producers in the Northeast states.

#### NEW SHARED-USE COMMERCIAL KITCHEN AVAILABLE FOR RENT

The Kitchen Coop, a shared-use commercial kitchen available for rent by the hour or the day, has opened in Bridgeport. [Learn more.](#)

#### AG DAY AT THE CAPITOL TO BE HELD 3/18/09

Come join the celebration of our state's agriculture. Over 50 organizations and agencies are scheduled to showcase their specific products and services. Exhibits will be open from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM in the North Lobby and Hall of Flags. Presentations and awards will be given at noon.

#### ONLINE NETWORKING GROUPS GROWING

The FTC member-created [Facebook](#) and [Google](#) networking groups are active and growing. Producers are posting product availability while users can post items they are looking for. Make new connections, learn about local food happenings, and network with your peers! We are looking into holding some informal workshops to help FTC members having trouble finding their way around these groups. Stay tuned for more info.

#### BUSINESS PLANNING WORKSHOP TO BE HELD 3/14/09

The Women's Agricultural Network (WAGN) will host this daylong event in South Windsor that is open to all, regardless of gender. Registration is \$50 at the door (\$25 for students). Contact Ross Eddy (860) 688-7725 ext.114 [Ross.Eddy@ct.usda.gov](mailto:Ross.Eddy@ct.usda.gov) or Dawn Pindell (860) 774-8397 ext.109 [Dawn.Pindell@ct.usda.gov](mailto:Dawn.Pindell@ct.usda.gov) for more information.

#### MAY MARKET EVENT SEEKS VENDORS

The Hill-Stead Museum in Farmington will host a May Market on 5/8/09 and 5/9/09. Vendors currently are being sought. For more information, contact Jan Wright, 860-673-0542, [janrw@worldnet.att.net](mailto:janrw@worldnet.att.net) or Anne Gerard, 860-284-5051, [annegerard@comcast.net](mailto:annegerard@comcast.net)

#### OVER 750 ATTEND HARVEST NEW ENGLAND CONFERENCE

Over 750 farmers and ag-enthusiasts from all over New England turned out for this year's direct marketing conference in Sturbridge, MA. See photos of FTC members at the event on Page 3. The next conference is scheduled for 2011.

## March 2009

### CT Grown in Season MARCH

Apples Cabbage Dairy  
Eggs Fin Fish Garlic  
Greens Herbs  
Indoor Plants and Flowers  
Honey Lettuce Lobster  
Meat Onions Pears  
Potatoes Scallops  
Shellfish Specialty Foods  
Turnips Winter Squash

*If you need help locating any of these items, please [contact us](#).*



#### Contact Us

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## Taste of the Nation - Putting an End to Childhood Hunger

by Timothy Cipriano

Over the past several years, Americans have gradually taken a much greater interest in what we feed our children and where this food comes from. As childhood obesity has developed into a national epidemic and concerns about tainted and unsafe food have created fear among American consumers, Connecticut residents can take solace in the fact that Share Our Strength's Taste of the Nation in New Haven is doing something to address these issues.

Since 2004, Share Our Strength has raised over \$245 million and provided support for more than 1,000 non-profits working to end hunger. Its grants have helped hundreds of organizations reach millions:

- served 40.2 million meals to kids
- established 926 new afterschool and summer feeding sites
- taught 200,000 kids about healthy foods and food choices
- grew 2.5 million pounds of produce in community gardens
- referred nearly 2 million people to food and nutrition assistance programs.

In 2009, more than 12 million children in America will be hungry. That's *one in six* who are at risk of hunger, and who have limited or uncertain access to the nutritious foods they need to develop to their full potential.

School districts nationwide are experiencing a rapid increase in the number of families applying and qualifying for free and reduced meals. This year in New Haven we have seen a 10% increase in students qualifying for free and reduced priced meals. New Haven offers free breakfast and lunch, regardless of family income, to all its K-8 schools and large high schools.

This is my first year involved with this event and my reason is that the money raised goes towards ending childhood hunger in Connecticut. As a "Lunch Lady", my passion is feeding children and offering them access to delicious healthy meals with a local flavor. It seemed like a no brainer...a way for me to continue to get my message out and to make a difference in my own community.

What you might find surprising is that despite its devastating and highly visible consequences, childhood hunger is invisible. You can't see it just by looking, and you can't measure it in pounds, but it is among us; it affects black, white, Asian and Hispanic, short and tall, thin and chubby. According to a recent CT Department of Public Health report, we know that in just over one generation, US rates of obesity have approximately tripled among preschoolers and adolescents, and quadrupled among children aged 6 to 11 years. Unhealthy food choices and eating behaviors are major factors contributing to overweight and obesity. Obesity is a major risk factor for many chronic conditions, including 4 of the 10 leading causes of death in the US: heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and several forms of cancer.

In my role as the Executive Director for Food Services for New Haven Public Schools, and as a parent, I have seen first-hand the positive impact that providing higher quality, locally grown food can have on our young people. In New Haven, as in other large urban areas, the food we serve in the schools may be the only food these children consume on a daily basis. It is disheartening to think that with all the fame and glamour attributed to chefs and the food industry in this country, that the children in our communities must continue to desperately seek it to keep nourished.

While there are many food and wine "tasting" events throughout the year, Share Our Strength's Taste of the Nation is the only one of its kind where 100% of the ticket sale proceeds go directly to the fight to end childhood hunger, making an immediate impact right here in Connecticut. It brings together the finest chefs and restaurants, top corporations and individuals who take pride in seeing a situation and act to resolve it! Poverty is complex; feeding a child is not.

***Taste of the Nation in New Haven is scheduled for 4/23/09 and will be co-chaired by Jacques Pepin and Pedro Garzon. Taste of the Nation in Hartford, to be co-chaired by Billy Grant and Mary Clare Mooney, is scheduled for 5/7/09. The Great American Dine Out, A Tasteful Pursuit, and other Share Our Strength events also may be of interest to Farm-to-Chef members.***

For more information, go to [www.strength.org](http://www.strength.org).

# 2009 Harvest New England Direct Marketing Conference



*Clockwise from above photo:*

- Allyn Brown III, Maple Lane Farm
- CT Agriculture Commissioner F. Philip Prelli
- Russ Holmberg, Holmberg Orchards (2nd from L) on Best of New England Panel
- Jonathan Rapp and Drew McLachlan, Dinners at the Farm (1st and 2nd from L) on Culinary Tourism Panel
- Keynote speaker Mel Allen, Editor of Yankee Magazine, with Rick Macsuga, CT DoAG

## News and Happenings

ATTRA (National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service) has published this guide on using draft animal power in farming. Links to their entire list of publications is available on this page of their website.

Emily Brooks of Edibles Advocate Alliance will host a book talk on 3/21/09 about *In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto* by Michael Pollan and another on 4/18/09 about *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life* by Barbara Kingsolver. Book talks are at the Gunn Memorial Library in Washington, CT.

The Northeast Cooperative Summit will be held 6/20/09 in Boston. Topics and speakers include managing in a recession, coop-to-coop successes, sustainability and greening, raising capital and financing, national and regional marketing, national speakers, and important political guests. Go to <http://www.cabotcheese.coop/RSVP/> for more.

Lt. Governor Fedele has posted a survey on his website for residents to provide feedback about the state budget. Take the survey.

In this 1/26/09 press release from USDA, Secretary Vilsack lays out his priorities as the country's new head of agriculture. This 2/4/09 press release from USDA announces the results of the 2007 Census of Agriculture.

Slow Food USA recently published this interesting piece on Restaurant Supported Agriculture, a restaurant-producer model based upon the popular Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), consumer-producer model.

Dairy Herd Management ran this article in its 2/17/09 issue about milk trucks powered by gas extracted from dairy cattle manure.

Author and local/sustainable food advocate Michael Pollan recently was interviewed by Mother Jones. Read the transcript.

Claire's Corner Copia was featured in the 2/3/09 issue of My Foodservice News. Read the article.

### IMPORTANT NOTICE FROM THE BUREAU OF INSPECTION AND REGULATION

Questions regarding what can or cannot be sold in a food service establishment should be answered by your local department of health (DPH). Your local department of health, and by extension, the state Department of Public Health, are the entities that regulate the sources of foods and the documentation of the sources of foods that can be purchased and served in a food service establishment.



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Farm-to-Chef is a free program that helps connect local culinary professionals with producers and distributors of CT Grown products. Informational newsletters, workshops, networking, promotions and other opportunities are provided to members as part of the program.

The program also helps the public locate restaurants and other dining facilities that serve CT Grown foods.

Farmers, wholesalers, chefs, and other food service professionals are encouraged to join. Please contact Linda at the CT Department of Agriculture, [Linda.Piotrowicz@ct.gov](mailto:Linda.Piotrowicz@ct.gov) or 860-713-2558, for more information.