



CT Department of Agriculture

October 2008

Briefs

CT GROWN IN SEASON

October brings uncertainty...when will the first frost wipe out favorite tender crops? Only Mother Nature knows. Our best bet is to buy it while we can, and if we can, can, dehydrate, freeze, pickle, or otherwise preserve so we can enjoy CT Grown favorites well into the winter when fresh, local produce is in shorter supply.

The list of products at right was available at press time—some may have vanished before you read this. Our online [CT Grown Crop Availability Calendar](#) provides at-a-glance CT Grown produce seasonality info.

WINTER FARMERS' MARKETS BEING PLANNED

Last winter the state enjoyed three regular farmers' markets. This season, as many as half a dozen may operate throughout the colder months, offering year-round staples such as CT Grown meat, seafood, eggs, cheese, milk, dairy, and specialty foods, as well as cellared and greenhouse-grown produce. Look for updates in future newsletters as specific market information becomes available.

FARMERS' MARKET DEMO PARTICIPATION POOR

Requests from farmers' markets for culinary demos went largely unfulfilled due to low interest/participation by FTC members. Thank you to those who did step up to help educate the public about preparation and use of CT Grown products. FTC will direct its resources elsewhere next year.

DoAG GRANT APPLICATIONS DUE IN NOVEMBER

November 14, 2008 is the application deadline for the next round of annual [Farm Transition Grant](#) and [Farm Viability Grant for Municipalities](#) Programs. For more information, see article on Page 2.

MARKETING CONFERENCE SET FOR FEBRUARY

The 2009 Harvest New England Agricultural Marketing Conference & Trade Show is scheduled for 2/25/09 and 2/26/09 at the Sturbridge Host Hotel in Sturbridge, MA. For more information, please visit Harvest New England's [website](#).

CT Grown in Season OCTOBER

Apples Beans Beets
Broccoli Cabbage Cantaloupe
Carrots Cauliflower Collards
Corn Dairy Eggplant Eggs
Fin Fish Garlic Greens
Herbs Honey Kohlrabi
Leeks Lettuce Lobster
Meat Melons Mushrooms
Onions Peaches Pears
Peppers Potatoes Radishes
Raspberries Scallops
Shellfish Specialty Foods
Tomatoes Turnips
Winter Squash

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



Contact Us

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Up To \$1 Million in State Agricultural Grants Available

By Linda Piotrowicz, CT Department of Agriculture

In the midst of worry and pessimism about the national and local economy, the CT Department of Agriculture is offering financial assistance of up to \$50,000 to Connecticut agricultural producers, agricultural cooperatives, and nonprofit organizations through the Agricultural Viability Grant Program (AVGP)'s [Farm Transition Grants](#).

Municipalities also are eligible to apply through the AVGP's [Farm Viability Grants](#) and may use funds for town or regional planning purposes, as long as agricultural components are involved.

Awards are competitive. Applications are evaluated on the soundness of the business plans and the long-term feasibility of the proposed projects. Matching funds must be supplied by the applicant, and grantees have up to one year to complete the project, according to the terms of their contract.

The first round of AVGP grants was made available in 2006. According to Ron Olsen, who manages the program for the Department of Agriculture, the number of applications has increased every year since. The total amount of funds available annually is approximately \$500,000 for producers and non-profit organizations and \$500,000 for municipalities. The number of grants awarded depends upon the cumulative budgets of the projects selected for funding.

"It has become very competitive program," Mr. Olsen said. "We encourage applicants to do their homework and put a good deal of effort into their business plans. This is not an application that can be properly completed the morning it is due. We are looking for detailed, well-thought-out plans backed up with solid data."

Mr. Olsen said that the Department is seeking to fund projects that represent sound investments in the future of the state's agricultural industry.

Farm Transition Grant funds can be used to diversify existing agribusinesses to provide a more consistent stream of income over the year and to help manage risk. Previously granted projects include new and expanded greenhouses, dairy production and processing equipment, value-added commercial kitchens, maple syrup and honey facilities, farm wineries, production-related equipment, and marketing programs.

Farm Viability Grants have been awarded to municipalities for projects such as shellfish bed restoration, open space assessments, farmers' market promotions, and community outreach centered around local food and farming.

Creation of the AVGP resulted from passage of [Public Act 05-228, An Act Concerning Farmland Preservation, Land Protection, Affordable Housing and Historic Preservation](#). This landmark legislation serves to protect and preserve Connecticut for future generations by providing funding for municipal open space grants, farm viability and preservation, historic preservation and new and existing affordable housing programs, along with new infrastructure to support and promote agriculture in the state.

The funding is generated through a \$30 fee collected by town/city clerks for the recording of all documents into municipal land records. Documents subject to this fee include deeds, mortgages, mechanics' liens, judgment liens, notices of lease, releases of mortgages and liens, name change certificates, notices of variances, and condominium declarations.

The deadline to apply is November 14, 2008. For more information on these grants, please visit [DoAG's website](#) or call Ron Olsen at 860-713-2550.



Happenings

[Fairfield Winter Farmers' Market](#) will run Saturdays, 10 to 2, November through April at the Fairfield Theatre Company, 70 Sanford Street. The [Old Saybrook Farmers' Market](#) will be open for special holiday markets at 210 Main Street from 11 to 1 on 11/25/08 and 12/23/08 .

Slow Food CT hosts a Sunday brunch 11/16/08. A vegetarian meal will be served at [Bloodroot Restaurant](#) in Bridgeport and will be accompanied by an engaging talk by Patricia Klindienst, award-winning scholar and author. For more info, contact Susan Chandler at slowfoodct@earthlink.net .

New Milford's [Plow to Plate](#) hosts "Back to the Barn...On the Farm" Sunday 10/12/08 from 11 to 2 at The Silo, 44 Upland Road. Enjoy the Big Green Pizza Truck, live performances, kids cooking, a mini farmers' market, pony rides, and more. www.plowtoplate.org or info@plowtoplate.org for more info.

The beeswax-encaustic paintings of Marina Marchese from [Red Bee Honey](#) will be on display at [The Bartlett Arboretum](#), 151 Brookdale Road in Stamford, through 10/26/08. Visit <http://redbee.blogspot.com/> for info.

Claire Criscuolo of [Claire's Corner Copia](#) and [Basta Trattoria](#) will be the keynote speaker at CT NOFA's Annual Meeting and Organic Harvest Celebration on 11/1/08. The topic will be "Good Food is Never Cheap, and Cheap Food is Never Good." Please call CT NOFA at 203-888-5146 for details.

[Firebox Restaurant](#) hosts a special dinner Thursday 10/16/08 featuring CT Grown cuisine and CT hand-harvested wild mushrooms. Connie Borodenko, President of the CT Valley Mycological Society, will lead an informative discussion about local fungi. Call 860-246-1222 or visit www.fireboxrestaurant.com for info.

[Cavey's Restaurant](#) is planning its third Local Farm Dinner for Columbus Day Weekend. The event will feature locally produced food to celebrate our farming community. www.caveysrestaurant.com for more information.

[Beltane Farm](#) in Lebanon hosts an offering of Autumn Cheeses every Sunday from 11 to 3, through 12/21/08. Cheeses include Beltane's award-winning fresh chevre, fresh cheese spreads, French-style ripened cheeses, feta, and a variety of aged 2-3 month-old raw milk cheeses. New this year is yogurt! Enjoy the farm's tasting house and local cider and pick up directions to nearby vineyards. For more info, visit www.beltanefarm.com.

[ZINC's](#) popular [Market Menu](#), which features ingredients found at the nearby [City Seed Downtown Farmers' Market](#), will continue through mid-November.

Member Feedback

Submitted by Claire Criscuolo, [Claire's Corner Copia](#) and [Basta Trattoria](#)

Linda, this has been the year we've been waiting for – CT Grown produce was on our plates every single day! Yesterday, it was Cecarelli Farms creamy cauliflower, most beautiful and delicious delicate green chard, corn (I feel like my day, every day, includes shucking corn, something I'll miss soon), Rose's Berry Farm blueberries, giant sweet cantaloupe, bell peppers, and most aromatic arugula, what a day! Cauliflower sauce, curried chard, corn soup, blueberry-lemonade, cantaloupe by the spoonful, Greek salad of local organic bell peppers, and arugula bruschetta over melted Liuzzi Scarmozza, local tomatoes, and homemade Italian bread crostini. Overall, it was a terrific, delicious day.

Award-Winning Members

[Connecticut Magazine](#) published their "[Best of Connecticut](#)" award winners in the September issue. Congratulations to the many FTC members who received honors:

- [Alchemy Juice Bar Café](#) – Best Smoothie
- [Basta Trattoria](#)- Best Meatballs
- [Carmen Anthony Steakhouse](#) –Best Cocktails, Manhattan
- [Chabaso Bakery](#) - Best Bread
- [Chamard Vineyards](#) – Best Connecticut Wine
- [CitySeed](#) – Best Farmers' Market
- [Claire's Corner Copia](#) – Best Quiche
- [Faith Middleton](#) - Best Local Radio Talk-Show Host
- [Flanders Fish Market & Restaurant](#) – Best Fish Market
- [It's Only Natural](#) – Best Vegetarian Dish
- [Jordan Caterers & Event Planners](#) - Best Caterer
- [Lyman Orchards](#) – Best Apple Pie
- [Max Downtown](#) – Best Cocktails, Cosmopolitan
- [Mayflower Inn & Spa](#) – Best Destination Spa
- [Saybrook Point Inn & Spa](#) – Best Marina
- [U.S.S. Chowder Pot](#) – Best Clam Chowder
- [West Street Grill](#) – Best "See and Be Seen" Restaurant
- [Whole Foods Market](#) – Best Cheese Selection
- [Whole Foods Market](#) – Best Health-Food Store

Red Lanphear of [Black Rock Tavern](#), Brendan Martin of Litchfield Market, and Jerry Reveron and Keith Levesque of [The Woodward House](#) comprised the team that took top honors 9/5/08 in the Iron Chef Competition at Connecticut Restaurant Association's and Connecticut Hospitality Industry's annual hospitality exposition, held at the Mohegan Sun.

Among the team's creations were celery-root gnocchi and a chocolate-fig-mascarpone-and-pecan bread pudding with sherry crème anglaise. Read the [Republican American story](#) about the event and see the photos at right.

[Fowler & Hunting - FreshPoint Connecticut](#) was named 2007 Regional Spirit of Progress Vendor of the Year by [So-dexo](#). The award specifically recognizes companies that have supported Sodexo in their initiative to provide for sustainable food sources and community outreach programs.



Above, L to R:
Keith Levesque and Jerry Reveron,
The Woodward House in Bethlehem;
Brendan Martin,
The Litchfield Market in Litchfield;
Red Lanphear,
Black Rock Tavern in Thomaston

Below: Chocolate-fig-mascarpone-and-pecan bread pudding with sherry crème anglaise, by Jerry Reveron of the winning team.

Photos by Scott Sommerfield, SJS Photography



In the News

The [Hartford Courant's](#) Flavor Section cover story on 09/11/08 featured the eco-principles and technology that abound at FTC member restaurant [Max Fish](#) in Glastonbury. Also highlighted were practices instituted by [Claire's Corner Copia](#) in New Haven and [It's Only Natural](#) in Middletown. Read the [online version](#) of the story and see the related [Metromix Green Living Guide](#), which also lists [Alchemy Juice Bar](#) in Hartford.

Chef Timothy Cipriano, in his new role as Food Service Director for [New Haven Public Schools](#), was featured in the [New York Times](#) in this [9/26/08 article](#).

[Claire's Corner Copia](#) was listed as one of five restaurants around the nation providing "Good Grub" in the September/October 2008 issue of [Sierra Club Magazine](#). [Read the column](#).

An in-depth look at [Cedar Meadow Farm](#) was published in [The Thames River Times](#) on 8/28/08. Read [Fresh and Original: Not All Their Eggs Are In One Basket](#).

The debut episode of CPTV's [Eating CT](#) visited eateries around New Haven, including [Union League Café](#) (with segment on Chef-Owner Jean Pierre Vuillermet), [Claire's Corner Copia](#), [Basta Trattoria](#), and [ZINC](#). Watch the [video trailer](#).

The 2008 Farm-to-Chef Summer Workshop was highlighted in an article entitled *The Undersea World of Farming* by Cynthia Keller, Chef-Owner of Restaurant du Village, in the October issue of [Ink Publications](#).

North Dakota farmers have spent \$6 million to open a pair of Washington restaurants, one just blocks from the White House, to showcase food from family farms. [Learn more](#).

Author and local food advocate [Michael Pollan](#) recently participated in a panel discussion entitled "Creating a World That Can Feed Itself" with Hugh Grant, President/CEO of Monsanto, and Sonal Shah, a development expert at Google.org. [Watch the video](#).



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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 or 860-713-2558, for more information.