



CT Department of Agriculture

April 2009

Briefs

2009 CHEFS' WORKSHOP

Although the state budget has yet to be determined, the Farm-to-Chef Program is proceeding with planning for this year's chef workshop. Stuart Family Farm in Bridgewater will be our host. Participants will learn about production of their all-natural, Animal Welfare Approved meats. The event is tentatively scheduled for October so that the full beauty of the farm in fall color can be appreciated.

Be sure to check out Stuart Family Farm and their participation with Animal Welfare Approved this Saturday (4/4/09) at 6:30 PM on WPIX-11 TV's program *Dining PIX*.

USDA'S FARMERS' MARKET PROMOTION GRANTS

USDA's Farmers' Market Promotion Program (FMPP) grants are available to agricultural cooperatives, nonprofits, and producers' associations, among others, to help improve and expand direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities. Applications are due 4/27/09. Get more info.

ONLINE VIDEOS FOR NEW FARMERS

Cornell University Cooperative Extension has produced Voices of Experience, a new video series for new farmers that showcases experience in marketing, profitability, financing start-up, and other agribusiness topics from established, successful farmers. The entire series is available for online viewing.

GREEN INSTITUTIONS SHOWCASED

Premier's Green Corner has launched this website dedicated to showcasing success stories from institutions having "green" initiatives, or programs that contribute to a safer and healthier environment, including programs implemented in foodservice.

PLANT A ROW FOR THE HUNGRY

Connecticut Food Bank encourages home and community gardeners and farmers to plant an extra row of produce this year to donate to local hunger-relief efforts as part of its annual *Plant a Row for the Hungry* campaign. To help, Connecticut Food Bank is giving away free tomato seeds donated by H. J. Heinz Company. Call the Food Bank at 203-469-5000 for details on the free seeds. For details about *Plant a Row*, call Marilyn Wilkes at 203-937-6939.

CT Grown in Season APRIL

Apples	Beef	Cheese
Cream	Eggs	Fin Fish
Garlic	Greens	Hardy
Perennials	Herbs	
Holiday Plants	Honey	
Lamb	Lettuce	Lobster
Maple Sugar	Maple Syrup	
Milk	Pork	Potatoes
Potted Bulbs	Scallops	
Shellfish	Shrubs	
Specialty Foods	Trees	
Turnips	Winter Squash	

If you need help locating any of these items, please contact us.



Contact Us

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CCSNC—Reducing Waste, Fighting Hunger, and Training the Next Workforce

by Carolyn Haglund, RD

What does a culinary school, located in New Milford, have to do with CT Grown, The Local Flavor? Let me tell you our story.

The Community Culinary School of Northwestern Connecticut (CCSNC) is a non-profit program modeled after the *America's Second Harvest Community Kitchen (Feeding America)*. CCSNC's first goal is to provide long-term hunger relief by training and helping participants find and sustain employment in the food service industry.

Another goal of the program is to assist with our community's food insecurity. Our students, under the direction of professional chefs, produce "packaged" meals to our food pantry clients with food donated by private and public food assistance programs.

Here is where DoAG comes in! Some food donations come from our local CT Grown farms! Yes! Fort Hill Farm and Sullivan Farm donate their overstock, just-past-prime products to CCSNC. We're able to rescue those perishable foods that would otherwise be discarded. Our program is designed to utilize the foods when they are available.

Our students then prepare entrees, casseroles, and soups that are frozen and distributed. These prepared CT Grown products help feed over 150 food pantry clients each week. Our pantry clients consist of elders, families with children, and the disabled.

Some foods from our local farmers are not familiar to our clients, so our chefs provide recipes and give food demonstrations. The additional resources enable our clients to learn about local foods and how to store, cook, and serve them to preserve their nutritional quality.

Fresh CT Grown foods—rather than canned or boxed items loaded with additives—certainly are healthier and more nutritious. It has been noted that a town is more food secure when there is more agricultural activity. This definitely has been the case in New Milford.

CCSNC is now in its 6th session. Each session is 12 weeks long and includes not only basic culinary instruction, but also food-safety and job-readiness skills.

What have our students achieved? What has the school accomplished and what have been the benefits to the community? Here are some highlights from our first year:

- 90% of our graduates currently are employed
- 100% have passed the *ServSafe* examination
- Over 10,000 meals have been donated to the New Milford Food Pantry
- CCSNC is a job-training program qualified by the *Work Force Investment Board*

We believe next year will be even better. More students will graduate, become productive citizens in their communities, and more food donations will help feed our hungry. We all stand to gain from this program.

For farmers wondering "What can I do with just-past prime or overstock perishable foods?" please contact us and be a part of our community kitchen as we grant opportunities and eradicate hunger!

*For more info, please contact
The Community Culinary School of NW CT (CCSNC)
Chef Dawn Hammacott, Executive Director
New Milford, CT
203-512-5791*

In the News

Read the [transcript](#) from the 3/9/09 media conference with Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack on the potential impact that *The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* funding will have on the country's agricultural industry.

Chris Prospero of [Metro Bis Restaurant](#), Robin Chesmer of [The Farmer's Cow](#), Deb Marsden of [CT Farm Fresh Express](#), Bill Duesing from [CT NOFA](#), and Henry Talmage of [CT Farmland Trust](#) all appeared on the 3/10/09 *Faith Middleton Show* on WNPR. [Get the podcast.](#)

The new White House vegetable garden and the first family's efforts to promote local, sustainable, and healthful food have generated a great deal of interest in these topics. The *New York Times* has published many stories in recent weeks pertaining to local food, including these articles: [3/10/09](#), [3/19/09](#), [3/19/09 \(2\)](#), [3/21/09](#), [3/21/09 \(2\)](#).

Thanks to all who turned out for Agriculture Day at the State Capitol on 3/18/09. The annual event, along with the concurrent rally held outside by local agriculture advocates, received widespread coverage in the local media: Check out [WFSB-3 TV](#), [WTNH-8 TV](#), [WTIC-1080 AM radio](#), [Hartford Courant](#), [Norwich Bulletin](#), [Norwich Bulletin \(2\)](#), [CT News Junkie](#), and [Real Hartford](#).

Chef [Alice Waters](#) appeared in this [3/15/09 interview](#) on *60 Minutes* to discuss her philosophy about healthful, fresh, local food for all, regardless of income or social status.

The *Sacramento Bee* published [this article](#) about the diversity of nutritious and delicious greens starting to turn up on restaurant menus.

WNPR's *Where We Live* discussed the state's struggling dairy industry in this [3/11/09 episode](#).

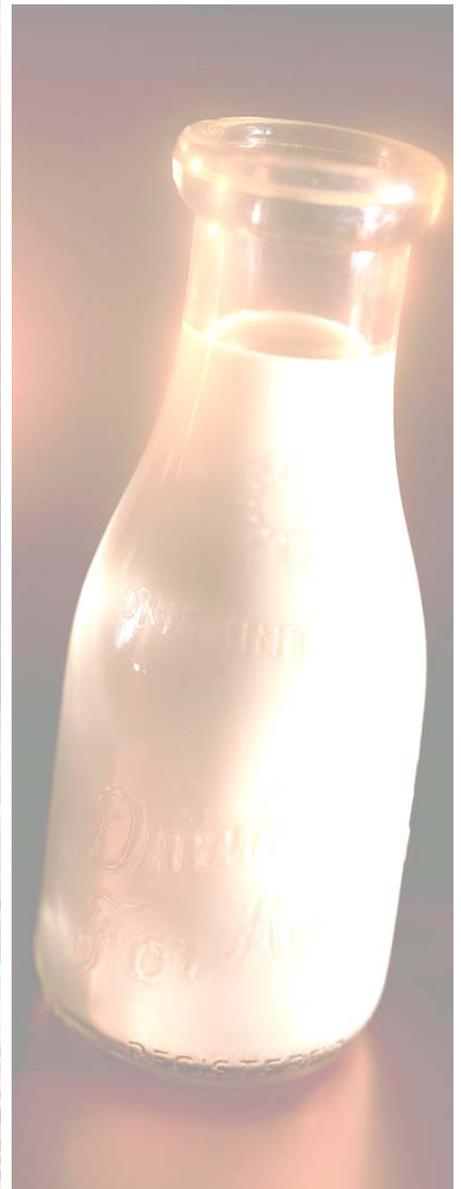
Tim Cipirano's New Haven Public Schools Foodservice Department was back in the news on 3/25/09 in this New Haven Independent [story and video](#).

Aramark has announced they will begin serving local food in ballparks around the country, including Fenway. Read the [3/26/09 news release](#).

[Stuart Family Farm](#) and their participation with [Animal Welfare Approved](#) will be featured on [WPIX-11 TV's](#) program *Dining PIX* on 4/4/09 at 6:30 PM.

On 3/21/09, the [Sundance Channel](#) filmed New Milford's [Plow to Plate Program](#) in action and will feature the program on an episode of the upcoming [Grains of Change](#) series on healthy eating, scheduled to air in August.

This [3/30/09 Business Wire](#) article reveals results of a study by [NPD Group](#) about the American public's concerns regarding the safety of food in restaurants and supermarkets, including the substances about which they are most concerned.



Happenings

The Kitchen Coop, a new shared-used commercial kitchen in Bridgeport, is hosting an open house 4/5/09 from 4:00 to 7:00 PM at 2889 Fairfield Avenue (inside Dish Restaurant). Free parking is available on the street or at the municipal lot located next to Ash Creek Saloon. Contact 203-243-9419 or kitchencoop@gmail.com for more info.

Chef Jacques Pepin will be honored 4/15/09 at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford during the presentation of the Governor's Awards for Excellence in Culture and Tourism. The event will be hosted by award-winning journalist Diane Smith. It begins at 6:30 PM and is open to the public, but seating is limited, so it is recommended attendees arrive early.

The Greater New London Farm to City Coalition will be presenting and participating in a collaboration with the Garde Arts Center performance of Miracle Tomato on 4/25/09. *Miracle Tomato* is an original story of love, bioengineering and the search for home. *Creator Jessica Cerullo credits the generosity of seed savers and tomato growers around the world. "Each interview I conducted, whether with a farmer harvesting thousands or a home gardener with her precious few, was a gift from those willing to tell their stories."* For more info, contact Art Costa.

Many CT vineyards and wineries will offer barrel tastings in April and May. CT Vineyard and Winery Association member events, along with information about the CT Wine Trail, can be found at www.ctwine.com.

Urban Oaks Organic Farm in New Britain will be having a grand opening fund raiser 5/2/09 from 3:00 to 5:00 PM in their new farm market space. The event will feature live music, entertainment, tours, food, and special guests. The farm has implemented a new pre-order system which allows customers to email orders in then pick up at a designated time. For more info, call 860-223-6200.

Over 50 vendors will offer annuals, vegetable transplants, perennials, shrubs, and other garden-related products at Hill-Stead Museum's May Market in Farmington on 5/8/09 and 5/10/09. Check the museum's website to learn more.

White Silo Farm and Winery has announced these CT Grown events for 2009: 5/16/09 and 5/17/09 - asparagus festival featuring recipes made with our own asparagus; 6/13/09 and 6/14/09 - rhubarb festival featuring cobbler, compote, ice cream, and more made with our rhubarb; 7/18/09 CT Grown Day with farm products from NW CT; 9/19/09 and 9/20/09, raspberry festival, a customer favorite. Visit the website to learn more.

Foodmed 2009 will be held 6/30/09 and 7/1/09 in Detroit, MI. This conference is dedicated to local, sustainable healthcare food. See www.foodmed.org for presentation, exhibitor, and sponsorship opportunities.

Dinners at the Farm has announced its Farm Dinners for the 2009 season: 7/16/09 – 7/18/09 at Stanton-Davis Farm in Pawcatuck, benefiting Stanton-Davis Homestead; 8/13/09 - 8/15/09 at White Gate Farm in East Lyme, benefiting CT Farmland Trust; 8/27/09 – 8/29/09 at Barberry Hill Farm in Madison, benefiting City Seed; and 9/10/09 – 9/12/09 at Old Maid's Farm in South Glastonbury, benefiting Working Lands Alliance. For more info, go to the newly redesigned website.

Scoozzi has scheduled its first "Toil the Soil/Farmers Dinner" of the season for 6/11/09. The six-course tasting menu will feature local produce, seafood, meat and cheese. www.scoozzi.com for more info.

The Farm-to-Chef Program lists news and events of potential interest to members as space allows. Send to Linda Piotrowicz. The editor reserves the right to edit or exclude listings at her discretion. Submissions should be short, to the point, and related to the Farm-to-Chef Program and/or of direct benefit to its members. The FTC newsletter typically goes out the first week of each month, but sometimes is delayed until later in the month; be sure to allow adequate lead time when submitting listings.

Photo Gallery



Clockwise from bottom left:

Lt. Governor Michael Fedele stands with Eric Henry from Blue Hills Orchard in Wallingford after the presentation of the 2009 Outstanding Young Farmer Award during Agriculture Day at the State Capitol



Eric Henry, 2009 Outstanding Young Farmer, Agriculture Commissioner F. Philip Prelli, Lt. Governor Michael Fedele

Chef Tim Cipriano and daughter Molly perform a CT Grown cooking demo on WFSB-3 TV

Molly and Tim during "Cooking Local with Chefs Tim and Emily" a segment featured monthly on WFSB-3 TV

Agriculture Journalism Awards

The 2008 Agriculture Journalism Awards were presented on 3/18/09 during Agriculture Day at the State Capitol. These awards recognize excellence in reporting on agricultural issues published or broadcast in the state during the calendar year 2007-2008. The Awards were made possible by a grant from Moark LLC/KofKoff Egg Farms.

Congratulations to this year's winners:

- Ryan Hanrahan, NBC-30-TV, "Going Green at the White Hart," 11/17/08 (news story/television)
- John Charlton & Mike Piskorski, Fox 61 TV, "CowPots," 11/13/08 (feature story/television)
- Christine Ayotte, NBC-30-TV, "CT-Grown stories/demos", 5/2/08 – 12/1/08 (series/television)
- Terri Miles, Hersam Acorn Newspapers, "How Do You Move A Giant Pumpkin?" 10/4/07 (photography/weekly newspapers)
- Joel Thompson, The Connecticut Post, "Friendly Rivals", 12/13/08 (feature story/daily newspapers)
- Steve Grant, The Hartford Courant, "Tried, True & New," 7/6/08 (feature story/daily newspapers)
- Jan Ellen Spiegel, The New York Times, "Yes It's Local, Even In Winter," 3/23/08 (news story/daily newspapers)
- Karen Avitabile, Journeys Magazine (AAA), "Connecticut On the Vine," Jul-Aug 08 (feature story/magazines)
- Macklin Reid, The Ridgefield Press, "Tomato Time," 8/28/08 (feature story/weekly newspapers)

The FTC Program thanks all journalists who cover local agricultural stories and help spread the word about CT Grown and the importance, value, and benefits of local farming and farm products.

IMPORTANT NOTICE FROM THE BUREAU OF INSPECTION AND REGULATION

Questions regarding what can or cannot be sold in a foodservice establishment should be answered by your local department of health (DPH). Your local DPH, and, by extension, the state DPH, 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 or 860-713-2558, for more information.