



*CT Department of Agriculture*

## Annual Meeting Set for February 13, 2008

The Farm-to-Chef Program will hold its first annual meeting on Wednesday, **February 13, 2008** from 8:00 AM to noon at the [Wadsworth Mansion](#) in Middletown.

Pre-registration is required. Please reply to [Linda.Piotrowicz@ct.gov](mailto:Linda.Piotrowicz@ct.gov) or 860-713-2558 **no later than January 31, 2008**.

This meeting will feature talks by Jonathan Rapp of [River Tavern](#) in Chester and the innovative [Dinners at the Farm](#) series, and by Thomas Peterlik, Director of the Culinary Resource Center at [Yale University](#). They will present different approaches to menu planning using local, seasonal foods.

A member panel comprised of both farmers and culinary members then will lead a thought-provoking discussion and Q+A session, followed by an opportunity for members to meet and mingle, network, and, of course, dine on a delicious CT Grown lunch.

We strongly encourage **all current members** as well as any **potential new members** to attend this first-of-its-kind Farm-to-Chef meeting. Come meet other program members, share ideas, network, learn, and enjoy some terrific local food.

Chefs who would like to prepare and bring a dish for lunch should contact [Linda.Piotrowicz@ct.gov](mailto:Linda.Piotrowicz@ct.gov) as soon as possible. The Department of Agriculture will reimburse the cost of materials, and will help with finding sources of CT grown ingredients for the dish.

This meeting was scheduled for a Wednesday morning because it was indicated in our recent [survey](#) as the best timeslot for members. Thank you to all who responded to this survey and helped us best accommodate your schedules. If you have not yet taken the survey, please take a few moments to [give us your feedback](#) on the FTC Program.

**January 2008**

### CT Grown Now in Season

CT Seafood available in January includes hard clams, oysters, sea scallops, squid, lobster, jonah crab, butterfish, cod, summer flounder/fluke, winter flounder, yellowtail flounder, hake, herring, mackerel, monkfish, sea bass, scup, skate, tautog (blackfish), and whiting.

CT Grown dairy, eggs, meat, honey, and maple syrup are available year-round.

Lettuce, herbs, and other greens are produced in a number of CT greenhouses throughout winter.

Celared produce such as onions, potatoes, sweet potatoes, and more may still be available from your local farmer. Don't be shy—call and ask!

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



### Contact Us

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Hartford, CT 06106  
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[www.CTGrown.gov](http://www.CTGrown.gov)

## Commentary

### Local Resolutions for the Coming Year

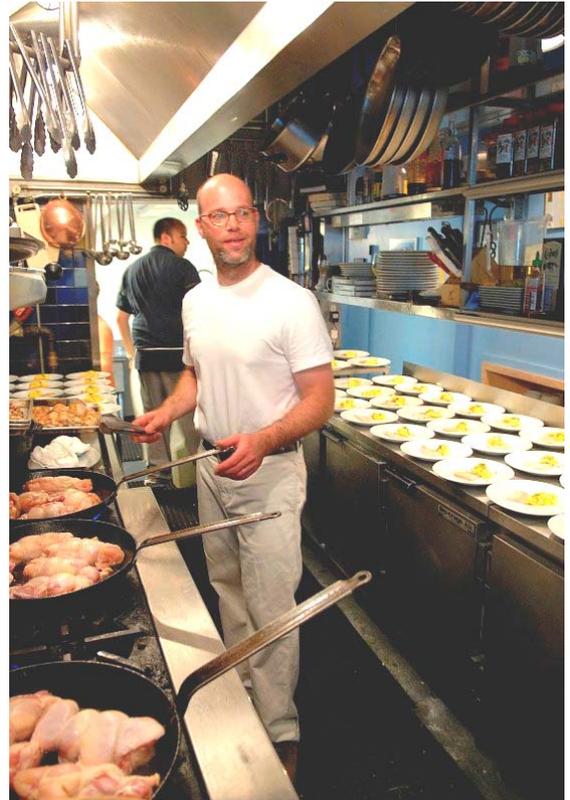
by Jonathan Rapp, Chef Owner [River Tavern Restaurant](#), Chester  
Photos by Jody Dole

The year's end is always a fertile time for both reflection and thinking ahead to the future. Last year's tender hopes, plans and dreams have matured into firmer success, failure, or most likely, something in between. But it is the start of 2008, a new beginning and as always we dream, hope and plan anew.

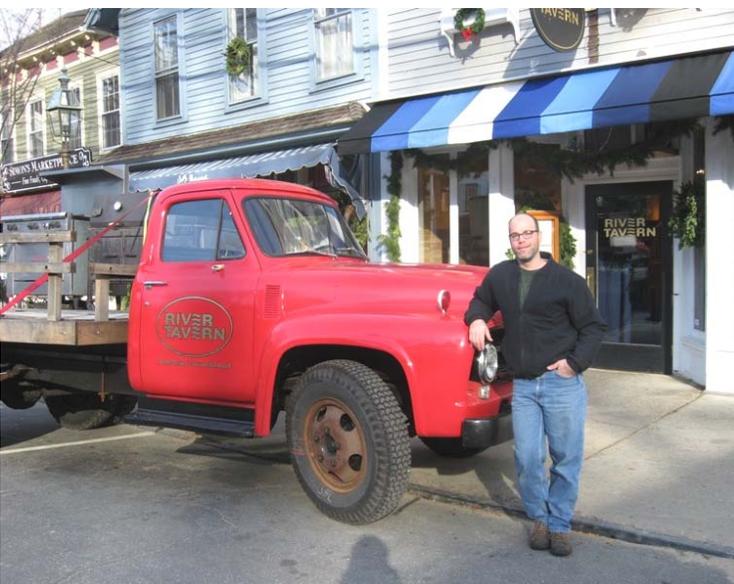
This is also the famously perfect moment to resolve to do new things for ourselves, our community and for our environment. In that spirit, I'd like to suggest a few resolutions that we as chefs and farmers can make to help further our common goal of preserving and expanding our unique and fundamentally important agriculture and food production. If we want healthy, delicious, environmentally friendly, local food to become a part of everyday life we need to take the lead and find ways to make it more available and less expensive. We need to get people excited about and committed to eating locally.

Some of the things I resolve to do this year include:

1. Highlight local food on my menu
2. Use local products as much as possible
3. Promote the names of the farms that supply my restaurant
4. Generate awareness of the importance of eating fresh and local
5. Create a special grant that will foster entrepreneurial ideas to improve the state's farm food distribution system



*Jonathan preparing poultry from FTC member Soell Farms of Salem*



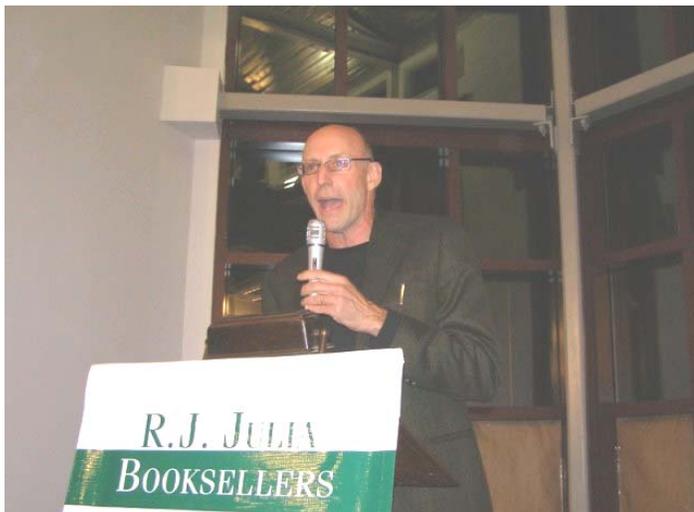
*Jonathan outside River Tavern with the signature Dinners-at-the-Farm mobile-kitchen truck*

As environmental food journalist and author Michael Pollan points out, promoting local farms and eating fresh is nutritionally healthier for us and environmentally healthier too. He says that the decision to buy local is also an act of land conservation, that eating locally helps protect farmland from sprawl by keeping those farms around. Simply said, our landscapes will be saved by "eaters."

So if eating local supports our farms, maintains open space, tastes better, is healthier, what's the downside? As a chef living in rural Connecticut, I feel more compelled than ever to bring this thinking to my guests. Ultimately, eating fresh and local creates a chain reaction that benefits families, farmers, and the community as a whole. If each of us, chefs, farmers, and consumers alike, can take just a couple small steps to raise awareness and spread the word, we all benefit.

*Jonathan Rapp is Chef-Owner of [River Tavern Restaurant](#) in Chester. He also is the creator of the highly acclaimed [Dinners at the Farm](#) series, which he began last year with Drew McLachlan of Feast Gourmet Market in Deep River.*

# Photo Gallery



Best-selling author and local food advocate Michael Pollan, left, entertained and inspired a large crowd during a book talk and indoor farmers' market held in Madison Monday, 1/9/08.

Below and right, numerous Farm-to-Chef members enjoyed themselves at the well-attended market.



Perry Hack (R),  
Two Guys from Woodbridge



Jean Palazzi, Palazzi Orchards



David Zemelski (R), Star Light Gardens



Chris Bassette, Killam & Bassette Farmstead



Bridget Riordan, Chamard Vineyards



Jonathan Rapp (L) and Drew McLachlan, Dinners at the Farm



Killam & Bassette Free-Range Eggs



Sankow's Beaver Brook Farm Cheese



Tim Cipriano (L), Bloomfield Schools, with Bill Duesing, CT NOFA



Sankow's Beaver Brook Farm Lamb

## Ask the Chef

*Q: Why is refrigeration recommended for maple syrup after opening but not for honey?*

This was a very interesting question, especially since I rarely refrigerate syrup at home myself, so I felt I needed to do some investigation.

One of the maple syrup producers' associations explained that the rationale for refrigerating this sweet gift from nature is strictly for taste. As pure maple syrup warms for extended periods of time (i.e. at room temperature in your pantry), the color and flavor of the syrup, which are the characteristics reviewed in the grading process, gradually fade. The refrigeration of the syrup can help prolong the integrity of the syrup.

Additionally, you can freeze syrup that you purchase locally or directly from a sugar maker. Freezing the syrup will keep flavors at their peak until you are ready to use it. Here's a hint: A good way to freeze things that come in large amounts, but that we might use in smaller portions, is the ice cube tray. This can be done with a wide range of things in the kitchen, from syrup to chicken or veal stock.

On the other hand, we do not refrigerate honey because honey, unlike syrup, will form large crystals from its sugar during any prolonged refrigeration. This crystallization can occur when honey is kept in the pantry as well, but the crystallization from the refrigerator will be larger and coarser than others and will not be easily broken up.

*Executive Chef Steve Mannino draws on his broad experience to bring a mastery of classic techniques and an eye for culinary innovation to the [Mayflower Inn](#) in Washington. Mannino's immediate focus there has been the implementation of local food to an intuitively seasonal menu.*



*Mannino is striving to bring a truly Connecticut experience to diners and Inn guests by focusing on the quality food available from around the corner, including Averill, Waldingfield, and Gray Ledge Farms.*

*Steve has received numerous culinary accolades and recognition throughout his career. He has received critical acclaim from Food & Wine (Best New Restaurant 2000), Gourmet, Food Arts, Washingtonian, The Washington Post, and Bon Appétit, among others.*

**If you have a question for Chef Steve, email it to [Linda.Piotrowicz@ct.gov](mailto:Linda.Piotrowicz@ct.gov). Answers will be published as space allows in upcoming issues of the FTC newsletter.**

## COMING SOON: Member Q + A

Beginning this spring, the Farm-to-Chef Newsletter will feature a column of reader questions and reader responses, similar to a message or bulletin board.

The goal of the column is to continue dialog started at the 2/13/08 Farm-to-Chef annual meeting. It will be an area for members to share ideas and exchange information.

Members can email questions or responses to previous questions to [Linda.Piotrowicz@ct.gov](mailto:Linda.Piotrowicz@ct.gov). The Department of Agriculture reserves the right to edit or decline any posting as it deems appropriate.



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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](http://www.CTDepartmentofAgriculture.com), [Linda.Piotrowicz@ct.gov](mailto:Linda.Piotrowicz@ct.gov) or 860-713-2558, for more information.

## Announcements and Events

*Announcements of 40 words or less are published as a service to Farm-to-Chef Program members. They are NOT intended as endorsements. Email them to [Linda.Piotrowicz@ct.gov](mailto:Linda.Piotrowicz@ct.gov). We reserve the right to edit or decline any posting for any reason.*

The [Connecticut Weekly Agricultural Report](#), previously available only through paid mail subscription, is now available in a free online version. [Check it out!](#)

[Farmers Markets Today](#) is a new national magazine featuring high-quality, full-color, interesting, and informative content. Editors are seeking information about chefs using local food to be featured in future issues. Send bios, photos, recipes, and relevant information to [mshepherd@cfu.net](mailto:mshepherd@cfu.net).

**Commercial Kitchen** in **Wallingford** available for rent. For more information, contact Chef Pierre at 203-269-8003 or [pierre@pierreculinaryevents.com](mailto:pierre@pierreculinaryevents.com).

The CT [Department of Environmental Protection's](#) nationally recognized [No Child Left Inside Program](#) is seeking locally-minded chefs to cater and/or give demonstrations at a variety of events emphasizing healthful activities, starting in February. If interested, email [Linda.Piotrowicz@ct.gov](mailto:Linda.Piotrowicz@ct.gov).

## CT Grown Winter Shopping Venues

*If you know of other farmers' markets or farm stands open this winter, please [contact us!](#)*

### Winter/Early Spring Farmers' Markets

**[Fiddleheads Food Coop \(New London\) Farmers' Market](#)**  
13 Broad Street, New London  
Saturdays 2/2/08 through 4/28/08  
10:00 AM to 2:00 PM

**[Westport/Fairfield Indoor Winter Farmers' Market](#)**  
Fairfield Theater Company, 70 Sanford Street  
Saturdays  
10:00 AM to 1:00 PM  
Start date to be announced soon. See [website](#) for more info.

**[New Haven Wooster Square Farmers' Market](#)**  
Russo Park, at corner of Chapel Street and DePalma Court  
Third Saturday of month (1/19/08, 2/16/08, 3/15/08, 4/19/08)  
10:00AM to 1:00 PM

### Year-Round Farm Stands/Stores

**[Lyman Orchards Apple Barrel](#)**, Middlefield  
860-349-1793  
Daily 9:00 AM to 7:00 PM

**[Holmberg Orchards Farm Store](#)**, Gales Ferry  
860-464-7305  
Daily 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM

**[Bishop's Orchards Farm Market](#)**, Guilford  
203 453-2338  
Daily

**[Rogers Orchard](#)**, Southington  
860-229-4240  
Daily Late July through Mid May