



CT Department of Agriculture

January 2009

## Briefs

### NEWSLETTER

The editor apologizes for the brevity of this month's newsletter. She's busy planning the 1/21/09 Annual Meeting but promises to put more into next month's issue...The article on Page 2 originally was written for [The Dredge](#) and used with CT Sea Grant's permission.

### ANNUAL MEETING 1/21/09

Registration is closed and the meeting is full. We look forward to seeing the 120 of you who are planning to participate. For those unable to attend, a recap will be included in next month's newsletter.

### DoAG JOINT VENTURE GRANTS

The Joint Venture Grant Program will accept applications between 1/1/09 and 1/31/09. This very popular program offers matching funds for marketing projects that utilize the CT Grown logo. Examples of eligible projects include signage, advertisements, menus, brochures, websites, etc. FTC members are encouraged to apply. This is a competitive program; applicants are not guaranteed funding. Awards will be announced in February 2009. Get the [application and guidelines](#).

### WINTER MARKETS

A list of winter and holiday farmers' markets now is available on our [website](#). This year brings several new markets eager to welcome you throughout the winter months. Dairy, meat, eggs, seafood, breads, greens, herbs, and specialty foods are among the CT Grown products you can find. Put on your hat and gloves and head out for some delicious fresh, CT Grown food to warm your tastebuds!

### CT GROWN TABLETOP SIGNAGE

CT DoAG is considering a collaboration with the state's winemakers to produce table toppers with information about CT wines on one side and about other CT Grown products on the other. These would be provided free of charge to restaurants and other facilities serving these products. DoAG is trying to determine interest. If you would like some of these signs to display in your business, please contact [Linda.Piotrowicz@ct.gov](mailto:Linda.Piotrowicz@ct.gov) (860-713-2558).

## CT Grown in Season JANUARY

Apples Cabbage  
Christmas Trees Dairy  
Eggs Fin Fish Garlic  
Greens Herbs  
Holiday Plants 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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## Marketing Connecticut Seafood: Building a Brand

By Linda Piotrowicz

Even the best product or service in the world will not be purchased if consumers do not know it exists. Marketing involves providing information to a target audience about a product or service they may need or want.

Many people immediately think “advertising” when they hear the term “marketing.” Advertising indeed can be a valuable component of marketing, but marketing takes numerous and diverse forms and does not necessarily include paid advertisements.

The [CT Department of Agriculture](#) has been working with the CT Seafood Council and [CT Sea Grant](#) to market, or promote, CT seafood in several ways. Brochures have been developed to educate consumers about which species of CT seafood are available at different times of the year, what to look for when purchasing CT seafood, and how shellfish is regulated and tested in the state. These have been distributed in hard copy and posted on the internet.

The Department of Agriculture’s [Farm-to-Chef Program](#) has collaborated with the CT Seafood Council to host three different Farm-to-Chef workshops for local culinary professionals. These events have brought chefs down to docks in Stonington and Milford to meet with CT seafood producers and to learn more about the industry and its products. Immensely popular with the chefs, these workshops have provided a much deeper understanding of and appreciation for both the products and all that is involved with their production.

The Department of Agriculture’s marketing department also has worked through the state’s media outlets to promote CT Seafood by distributing press releases and arranging television and radio appearances by producers and chefs using CT seafood.

These efforts have raised awareness of the state’s seafood industry. “What?” “When?” and even “How?” have been effectively answered. However the question “Where?” continues to be addressed vaguely or not at all, primarily because this information is difficult to nail down. Tracing CT seafood through the distribution chain is challenging. It is not uncommon for a retail clerk to be unaware of the origin of the products he or she is selling.

From the consumer’s standpoint, “Where?” is at least

or more important than “What?” “When?” and “How?”. Directing the customer to where they can purchase the products they now know about and want is key to selling more of those products. Consistent and conspicuous identification is needed to help “brand” CT seafood as a product line that will be recognized and requested by wholesalers, retailers, and consumers alike.

The [CT Grown Program](#) and “brand” was developed by the CT Department of Agriculture in 1986 to help identify and promote products grown and harvested in the state. The now-familiar blue and green CT Grown logo appears in every county in grocery stores, at farmers’ markets, at on-farm stores and stands, and on a wide variety of marketing materials including signage, brochures, business cards, and websites. Consumers have come to recognize and look for the logo to help them identify foods that they know are produced locally, are of high quality, and are as fresh as they possibly can get.

The CT Department of Agriculture’s marketing department’s [Joint Venture Grant Program](#) offers matching funds to producers, businesses, and associations for marketing projects that use the *CT Grown* logo. This is one way that the state’s seafood industry can more effectively begin to “brand” CT seafood and take advantage of the public’s increasing desire for local foods. Wholesalers and retailers of CT seafood also should be encouraged to use the *CT Grown* logo to identify and promote the products.

With everyone in the industry working together with this same goal, “branding” CT seafood can be accomplished reasonably quickly and efficiently. However it must involve participation by everyone in the chain, from the person harvesting, to the wholesaler, to the retailer, and to the sales clerk. Encourage everyone you do business with to use the *CT Grown* logo in conjunction with products grown and harvested here. Explain that customers are looking for CT Grown foods and are eager to buy them. Together as a team, we can market CT seafood more effectively than ever before.

For more information about the Department of Agriculture’s marketing programs, including the Joint Venture Grant (application deadline 1/31/09), please contact Linda Piotrowicz at [Linda.Piotrowicz@ct.gov](mailto:Linda.Piotrowicz@ct.gov) or 860-713-2558.

## News and Events

### HAPPENINGS

Chocolate 911, a fundraiser to be hosted 1/25/09 in Shelton by the Valley chapter of the American Red Cross, is seeking vendors who have chocolate related products or desserts. For more info, contact Fred Ortolini at [fred12192@comcast.net](mailto:fred12192@comcast.net) or 203-888-1219.

The [CT Farm Risk Management Team](#) is sponsoring a financial planning workshop on 1/26/09 in Meriden from 3:00 to 5:30 PM. Contact Joe Bonelli at [joseph.bonelli@uconn.edu](mailto:joseph.bonelli@uconn.edu) for more information. It will be followed at 6:00 PM by a marketing workshop presented by Buy CT Grown. For more on that session, contact Elise Cusano, [elise@cityseed.org](mailto:elise@cityseed.org) or 203-773-3736 x301.

There will be a Greater New London Farmers' Forum held at 10:00 AM on 1/24/09 to gather information about the needs of area Farmers and to better understand the food-producing capacity of the region. Email [info@re-newlondon.org](mailto:info@re-newlondon.org) for more info.

The next Harvest New England Agricultural Marketing Conference and Trade Show is scheduled for 2/24/09 – 2/26/09 in Sturbridge, MA. For more info or to register online, go to the [Harvest New England website](#).

### IN THE NEWS

Steve Grant of the *Hartford Courant* wrote [this story](#) about the rise of winter farmers' markets in the state.

Lt. Governor Michael Fedele contributed [this article](#) about small business development in Connecticut to *My Business* magazine.

*Specialty Food Magazine* offered [this thought-provoking article](#) on low-cost strategies for food businesses during challenging economic times.

### JOB OPENINGS

The Kitchen at Billings Forge in Hartford is seeking a Director of Culinary Arts as well as a Farmers' Market Master and Head Gardener. For more information, contact Cary Wheaton at [cary@billingsforgeworks.org](mailto:cary@billingsforgeworks.org) or 860-548 -9877.



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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.