



CT Department of Agriculture

Briefs

NEXT FTC MINI-MEETING 5/18/10 IN STORRS

The next FTC “mini-meeting” will be held Tuesday 5/18/10 from 2:00 to 3:30 PM in Whitney Dining Hall on the UCONN campus in Storrs. Please join us for this free, informal 90-minute discussion session. It is an excellent forum for making valuable connections and exchanging information. [RSVP online](#) by midnight on Sunday 5/16/10. Directions and an agenda will be sent to all who register.

FTC HARVEST CELEBRATION WEEK

Farm-to-Chef Harvest Celebration Week, scheduled to run 9/26/10 through 10/2/10, has already received considerable attention from the media. We anticipate coverage to increase as the week draws near. Do not miss this opportunity to showcase your creative talents and our state’s outstanding CT Grown ingredients. Foodservice businesses interested in participating **must sign up by midnight 4/30/10**. Get the [guidelines](#).

DOAG TO OFFER GAP-CERTIFICATION COST SHARE

The CT Department of Agriculture plans to offer a grant this season to reimburse produce growers up to 50 percent of the cost of a third-party food safety audit (\$500 max. reimbursement). Funds will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis. This program is made possible through a USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant. For more information, contact [Rick Macsuga](#), 860-713-2544.

DOAG SURVEYS TO BE MAILED TO FARMERS

This month the CT Department of Agriculture will be mailing a survey to all farmers in agency’s database. Recipients will be asked to confirm, correct, and/or supplement their information so that the DoAG database can be updated. The more accurate the information in the database, the better the service DoAG can provide. Farmers are asked to keep an eye out for the survey and return it in the self-addressed, stamped envelope provided. Surveys received by 8/1/10 will be entered into a drawing to win a CT Grown pop-up tent.

NEW, FREE MEDIA AND PR TOOLKIT AVAILABLE

The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition has put together this comprehensive [online toolkit](#) for farmers to help tell their story and get their news out to the media and to the public. Step-by-step guides and worksheets can help even the most novice marketers present their business like a seasoned professional.

May 2010

CT Grown in Season MAY

Arugula Asparagus Beef
Black Currant Juice Broccoli
Carrots Cheese Cider
Clams Collards Cream
Dried Beans Eggs
Fin Fish Garlic Greens
Herbs Honey Ice Cream
Kale Lamb Lettuce
Lobster Maple Microgreens
Milk Mushrooms Onions
Oysters Pea Shoots
Potatoes Pork Raab
Radishes Scallops
Specialty Foods Spinach
Sprouts Squash Sunflower
Shoots Turnips Veal
Wheatgrass Yogurt

CONNECTICUT
GROWN



Contact Us

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On Buying Local Produce

Editor's note: When we saw this column, we were struck by how well it reflected the sentiments of many FTC members. Realizing that not all FTCers subscribe to Plate, we requested and received permission to reprint it in this month's newsletter.

By [Mark Mendez](#), Executive Chef at Carnivale in Chicago
Originally published 4/7/10 in [Plate](#); reprinted with permission

One of the things I hear customers talk about these days is the idea that local food is a fad. Many people feel it is a way for restaurants to charge more money for what they think is basically the same thing. Some of them tell me they are tired of hearing about "farm to table," "sustainably farmed" or any other of the many phrases we chefs put on our menus.

Some people say they don't need to know what farm the radishes come from, where the greens are grown, or who raised your pigs. I understand this, I really do. But, speaking as a chef who uses a lot of local produce, I don't do it for press or PR (although I have certainly gotten some due to that). I use local products because they taste better, pure and simple. The products we get in sometimes are so fresh and pristine, I am humbled by the quality. I always want to use the best products I possibly can, within reason. I only serve tomatoes, asparagus, and corn when they are in season. I do this because I feel they don't taste all that great otherwise.

Using local products binds you to the community, to the seasons and to a more natural way of cooking. Local does not always mean better; in some cases it's worse, and that's for you to decide. We still buy avocados, pineapples, and mangos, even though we are in the Midwest, but if there is something local that is good, I will buy it and serve it. The relationships I have made with local farmers and artisans have improved my understanding of food in a way that you can't get from a conventional produce supplier, and have made me a much better chef. I could write 1000 words just on how great a really fresh tomato tastes, when it hasn't been refrigerated or gassed to make it ripen faster.

There's a disconnect between people and where their food comes from. Most are unaware of what's in season, most have never had really fresh meat that came from an animal that has been treated with care and respect. They quite simply don't understand. I feel that if I talk about these things with my servers, customers and other chefs, then maybe people will come to get as excited about quality food as I am.

This for me is one of the most rewarding things about my job. When a customer comes in and asks me where I get something, I am always excited to tell them all about the farmer and try to slip in a story, because stories sell. The stories about the farmers and their products are much more interesting to your customers than you think. I realize local is not always affordable or practical, but if you can buy any kind of local product I urge you to do so, it's important to be a part of a community, and to know where your food comes from.

Plate is a professional culinary magazine that delivers innovative, profitable menu ideas and recipes to chefs. Plateonline.com features the largest foodservice recipe database, blog posts authored by professional chefs and beverage experts, beverage trends, industry news and more. For more information, visit www.plateonline.com.

CT Grown “Haves” and “Wants”

CT GROWN “HAVES” IN MAY

[Broad Brook Beef](#)

Broad Brook
Herb Holden, Jr.
860-250-3311

Herb@broadbrookbeef.com

The best in locally produced beef. All-natural, pasture-raised, CT Grown beef available in steaks, roasts, and burger. Gift boxes available. Come to the farm and see the difference. Farm tours on Saturdays.

[Eagle Wood Farms](#)

Barkhamsted
Bryan Woods
860-402-4953

bryanwoods@eaglewoodfarms.com

Frozen retail portions of beef, pork, veal, lamb, pig roasters, and suckling pigs. We grow our own animals. Ready-to-eat smoked items include beef sticks, hotdogs, andouille sausage, bratwurst, pepperoni, kielbasa, liverwurst and knockwurst.

[Sepe Farm](#)

Sandy Hook (Newtown)
Pete Sepe
203-270-9507 or 203-470-4084
pasepe@juno.com
Lamb for all occasions.

Wayne’s Organic Garden

Oneco
Wayne Hansen
860-564-7987
waynewog1co@sbcglobal.net

Certified organic tomato plants, suitable for greenhouse growing: Sun Gold, New Girl, Brandywine, Buffalo, and Arbison, in 4x6 pots, \$6 ea or make an offer.

CT GROWN “WANTS” for MAY

[Boxcar Cantina](#)

Greenwich
Nancy Roper
nroper@snet.net

Seeking local farmer willing to grow corn to be dried and turned into masa. We prefer organically grown. Looking to yield at least 400lbs. masa. Will help with costs.

[Norfolk Farmers’ Market](#)

Norfolk
Lisa Auclair, 860-542-5044
lisaauclair@sbcglobal.net

Looking for a beef vendor during the months of September and October. We run every Saturday 10-1.

JOB OPENINGS AND POSITIONS WANTED

[Restaurant Associates, One State Street Cafe](#)

Hartford
Bryan Hickey, 860-722-5310
bryan_hickey@hsb.com

Sous Chef Wanted: The most creative, fast-paced, large scale, food service operation that you'll ever work in; with a dream schedule! Professional management skills and International cuisine required. Email resume to bryan_hickey@hsb.com.
EOE-M/F/V/D



DISCLAIMER!!!

The CT Grown “haves” and “wants” listed in this newsletter were submitted by members. Farm-to-Chef Program reminds all members that 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.

There is no guarantee that products listed will be approved by your local health department.

Check with them directly.

Did You Know? ASPARAGUS

ASPARAGUS: Did you know? According to www.nutritiondata.com, fresh asparagus is a good or very good source of 21 essential nutrients. A 100g serving of raw asparagus contains

20 calories

2 grams of Protein

2 grams of Fiber

5% of the RDA for Niacin

5% of the RDA for Vitamin B6

5% of the RDA for Phosphorus

6% of the RDA for Potassium

8% of the RDA for Manganese

8% of the RDA for Riboflavin

9% of the RDA for Copper

9% of the RDA for Vitamin C

10% of the RDA for Thiamin

12% of the RDA for Iron

13% of the RDA for Folate

15% of the RDA for Vitamin A

52% of the RDA for Vitamin K

A member of the Lily family, asparagus is a long-lived perennial plant that can produce for 20 years or more if well cared for. Plants generally are grown for at least two years before the first harvest. Under optimum conditions, an asparagus spear can grow up to 10 inches in a single day. After harvest has been completed for the season, the plants develop separate male and female ferns that undergo photosynthesis to produce energy and nutrients necessary for the plant to remain strong, healthy, and productive for the following season.

Nothing says "Spring" like local asparagus; however CT Grown asparagus season is short, so take full advantage of its abundance during the month of May.



2011 FTC Annual Meeting

The date for the 2011 Farm-to-Chef Annual Meeting has been set. Mark your calendars to be at the Saybrook Point Inn and Spa on Monday 1/31/11 for great presentations, discussion, networking, and, of course, CT Grown food.

Happenings

The New Haven Wooster Square Farmers' Market's opening ceremonies will take place at 9AM on 5/1/10 as it kicks off its seventh season. For more info and directions, visit City Seed's [website](#).

The [Farmers' Market at Billings Forge](#) in Hartford will begin its outdoor season 5/6/10 and run each Thursday 11- 2PM next to Firebox Restaurant (539 Broad St). Fresh CT grown herb starter plants, greens, cheese, grass-fed meats, bread, eggs, and fresh meals from local ingredients to eat in or to go! Contact Rita Decker-Parry, 860-878-1854 or rdeckerparry@hartfordfarmersmarket.org.

CT NOFA's Bill Deusing will teach a free class on how to grow delicious organic vegetables at [New Morning Natural and Organic](#) in Woodbury on 5/6/10 from 5 to 6:30 PM. Starting a garden, building healthy soil, planning for a long harvest season, and pest management will be covered. 203-263-4868 for more info.

[Holmberg Orchards](#) in Gales Ferry will hold its annual spring wine tasting, Blossoms & Bottles, on 5/8/10 from 1 to 6 PM. A total of eight CT wineries will participate and over 30 local wines will be poured. Live music, craft vendors, and specialty food producers also will be in attendance. \$20 in advance/ \$25 at the door. 860 464 7305 for more info.

New London Main Street's [Spring Food Stroll 2010](#) will be held 5/12/10 from 5:30 to 8:30 PM. Organizers are looking for producers of CT Grown and locally made items who would like to sample products during the event. Producers would need to staff their own table. If interested, contact Tracy at 860-444-2489.

[Urban Oaks Organic Farm](#) in New Britain will hold its annual seedling sale on Fridays (2-6PM) and Saturdays (10AM -4PM) from 5/14/10 through 6/12/10. There will be plenty of specialty and heirloom varieties as well as over 100 types of Tomatoes.

[White Silo Farm & Winery](#) in Sherman hosts their annual family-friendly, asparagus festival 5/15/10 and 5/16/10 from 12-5 PM. Asparagus BLTs, grilled asparagus, asparagus soup, spring asparagus pasta salad, and more will be available. Tours of farm museum, winery, and farm. Admission is free. 860-355-0271 or 917-699-7355 for more info.

[Catch A Healthy Habit Café](#) in Fairfield will host a session on wild food foraging with Arthur Haines on 5/23/10 at noon. Preregistration is required. Contact catchahealthyhabit@yahoo.com for more.

[CT NOFA](#) City Farm & Garden Tour will take place 8/7/10 in New Haven, CT. If you have or know of a city garden that could be featured, or if you want more information about this event, please contact ctnofa@ctnofa.org.

[Farm-to-Chef Harvest Celebration Week](#) will run 9/26/10 through 10/2/10. Over 30 restaurants and foodservice businesses will offer a Farm-to-Chef menu of at least four items, each showcasing one or more CT Grown ingredients. CT wines also will be offered at venues that serve alcohol.

The CT Community Farming Conference will be held 10/30/10 at the [Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station](#) in New Haven. Organizers are looking for programming ideas, speakers, and help with planning. Contact Kim Stoner at 203-974-8480 or Kimberly.Stoner@ct.gov to get involved.

Miscellaneous Announcements

[CT Sea Grant](#) and the CT Seafood Council have teamed up to offer insulated market bags at cost, for resale to your customers. The bags keep seafood and other temperature-sensitive purchases cold and safe, and promote local seafood with the colorful logos and text printed on the exterior. They are great for farmers markets, farm stands, and other retail operations. The insulated bags are 13" x 14" x 7" with a zipper top. **\$3.25** each plus shipping (or can pick up). For more info, contact Nancy Balcom, 860-405-9107 or nancy.balcom@uconn.edu.

[Beltane Farm](#), a goat dairy and goat cheese maker in Lebanon, is offering a series of internships for the 2010 season. Internships run between four and 10 weeks and are categorized by focus on either goat husbandry or on the dairy and cheese production aspects of the farm. Combined internships in these two areas are also possible, as are single-day internships. For more information, contact Paul Trubey at ptrubey@earthlink.net or 860-208-2887.

The Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (SARE) has released a handbook on cooperative marketing for community supported agriculture farms (CSAs). The 130-page manual gives concrete details on strategies for forming and maintaining a multifarm CSA, including advice on staffing, volunteer boards, distribution, and legal topics. *Local Harvest: A Multifarm CSA Handbook* is available as a [free PDF](#) or can be ordered as a print copy from the [SARE website](#).

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The Xerces Society has developed Organic Farming for Bees, a tool kit for organic growers that includes guidance on how to minimize disturbance to pollinators from farm activities, and on how to provide nest sites and foraging patches. In particular, two fact sheets provide information on toxicity to native pollinators for all major organic-approved insecticides and about pollinator-friendly organic farming practices. Both of these fact sheets are now available at <http://www.xerces.org/organic-farms/>

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Common Ground School in New Haven has a newly upgraded [commercial kitchen](#) available for use. For more information, please contact Betsy Sneath, 203-389-4333 x1211 or bsneath@nhep.com.

In the News/On the Net

FTCer Meg Buchsbaum of Whole Foods is interviewed in this 4/1/10 [Hartford Courant Q+A](#) with MaryEllen Fillo.

Steve Grant writes about the philosophy and practices of CT farmer Byron P. Ruggles (1838-1917) in this 4/7/10 [blog post](#).

The work of FTCer Tim Cipriano of the New Haven Public Schools is the subject of this 4/16/10 [WNPR story](#) by Diane Orson. A photo of Tim with White House assistant chef and Food Initiative Coordinator Sam Kass appears in this 4/11/10 [Obama Foodorama post](#).

Mike Agogliati announces the 11 winners of The Farmers' Cow ice cream naming contest in this 4/13/10 [Register Citizen article](#).

Farm-to-Chef Harvest Celebration Week is the topic of this 4/14/10 [New Haven Register article](#) by Cara Baruzzi. FTC week also is covered in this 4/5/10 [Fairfield County Restaurant Examiner article](#) by Valerie Albarda.

Alice Waters contemplates television as way to spread her message about fresh, local food in this 4/21/10 [Associated Press story](#).

The 4/22/10 issue of Ellegram contains a piece by Deb Hornblow on local CSAs on its [food page](#).

[This post](#) by Jeremy Porter in Journalistics gives some practical advice on effective networking. "For me, relationships are the most valuable currency of business," he says.

The Farm-to-Chef newsletter is published electronically at the beginning of each month and welcomes submissions from members and others. Get the complete [submission guidelines](#).

Please email copy to Linda.Piotrowicz@ct.gov no later than the 20th of the month for inclusion in the next month's newsletter. The editor reserves the right to decline submissions for any reason. Copy may be edited for space, grammar, and/or clarity. All submissions become property of the Farm-to-Chef Program.



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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.