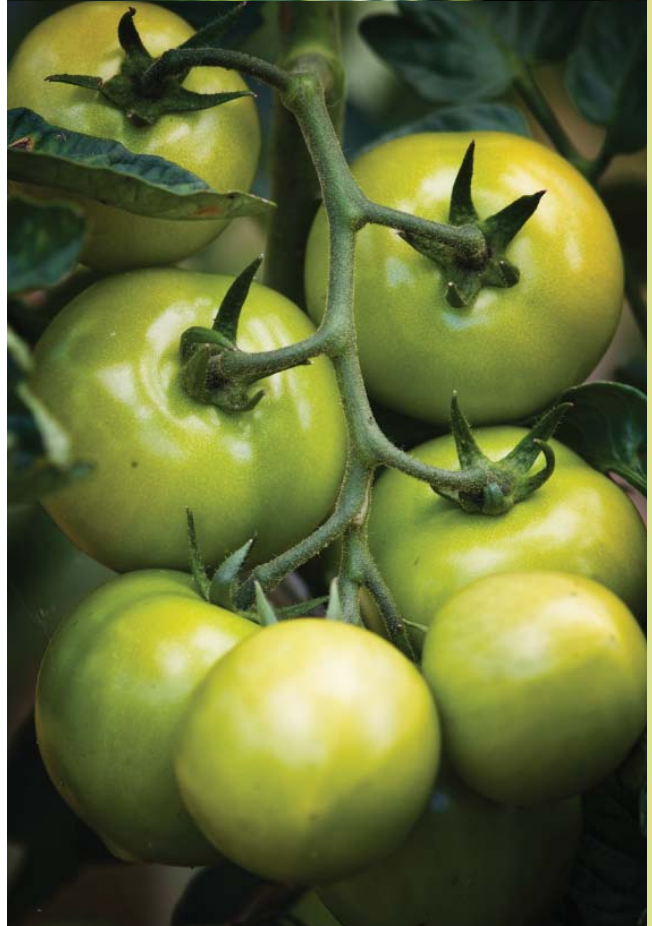


**Enhancing
Local and
Regional Food
Systems:
Exploring the
Research, What
Works, and
What We Need
to Learn**

**Conference
Program**

**Hudson Valley Resort,
Kerhonkson, NY
May 19-20, 2009**



The Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development



Enhancing Local and Regional Food Systems: Exploring the Research, What Works, and What We Need to Learn Planning Committee

Kathryn J. Brasier, Assistant Professor of Rural Sociology, Penn State University

Cheryl Brown, Associate Professor, West Virginia University

Michael Dougherty, Extension Specialist/Extension Associate Professor, West Virginia University Extension Service

Charlie French, Extension Associate Professor, Community Development, UNH Cooperative Extension/Department of Natural Resources and the Environment

Stephan Goetz, Director, The Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development/Professor of Agricultural and Regional Economics, The Pennsylvania State University

Thad Gulbrandsen, The Center for Rural Partnerships, Plymouth State University

Duncan Hilchey, Consultant, New Leaf Associates Publishing and Consulting

Rod Howe, Assistant Director, Community and Economic Vitality, Cornell Cooperative Extension

Chyi-Lyi Kathleen Liang, Associate Professor, Community Development and Applied Economics, University of Vermont

Heidi Mouillesseaux-Kunzman, Community Development Coordinator, Community and Rural Development Institute (CaRDI), Cornell University

Kathy Ruhf, Coordinator, The Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (NE-SAWG)

Walt Whitmer (Chair), Extension Associate, Economic & Community Development, Penn State Cooperative Extension, and Associate Director, The Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development

Agenda

Tuesday, May 19

- 8:00 – 9:00 Registration
- 9:00 – 9:30 Welcome and Introductions – Setting the Stage
- 9:30 – 10:15 Kate Clancy, Food Systems Consultant and Senior Fellow, Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture, University of Minnesota, *What Are We Talking about When We Talk about Local and Regional Food Systems?*
- 10:15 – 10:30 Break
- 10:30 – 11:15 Clare Hinrichs, Associate Professor of Rural Sociology, Penn State University. *What Do We Know and What Do We Need to Know about the Community Impacts of Local and Regional Foods?*
- 11:15 – 12:00 Dawn Thilmany McFadden, Professor of Agricultural and Resource Economics, Colorado State University, *Consumers of Local Foods: Civic Minded or Seeking Assurances?*
- 12:00 – 1:00 Lunch
- 1:00 – 1:45 Mike Hamm, C.S. Mott Professor of Sustainable Agriculture, Michigan State University, *Farm to School Programming: Opportunities, Barriers and Lessons Learned.*
- 1:45 – 3:00 Facilitated Panel Discussion
- Duncan Hilchey, consultant with New Leaf Associates Publishing and Consulting in Ithaca, New York
- Kathy Ruhf, coordinator of the Northeast Sustainable Ag Working Group (NESAWG)
- Jennifer Wilkins, Senior Extension Associate, Division of Nutritional Sciences at Cornell University; director of the Cornell Farm to School Program
- 3:00 – 3:15 Break
- 3:15 – 4:00 Research Roundtables I
- 4:00 – 4:45 Research Roundtables II
- 4:45 – 6:00 Poster Sessions/Refreshments
- 6:30 – 8:00 Dinner and Presentation
- Jerry Cosgrove, Deputy Commissioner, New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, *Local Food System Policy*

Wednesday, May 20

7:30 – 8:30	Breakfast
8:30 – 9:15	Rich Pirog, Associate Director of the Leopold Center at Iowa State University, <i>Making the Power of the Food and Agriculture Network Really Work in Iowa: Iowa's Value Chain Partnerships Project.</i>
9:15 – 9:30	Identify Small Group Topics
9:30 – 10:45	Needs Identification – small group breakouts to identify: research, data, information, partnership and Extension program needs
10:45 – 11:00	Break
11:00 – 12:00	Small Group Reports
12:00 – 1:00	Lunch
1:00 – 1:45	Making it Happen – large group discussion
1:45 – 3:00	Developing an Action Agenda
3:00 – 3:30	Wrap up/adjourn

Featured Speaker Biographies

Kate Clancy

Kate Clancy is currently a food systems consultant and Senior Fellow in the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture, University of Minnesota (she resides in University Park, Maryland). She has a Ph.D. in Nutrition Sciences from the University of California at Berkeley. Her resume includes positions at several universities (Cornell, Syracuse, and the Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems at the University of Wisconsin): the federal government (nutritionist and policy adviser at the Federal Trade Commission); and nonprofits (the Wallace Center for Agricultural and Environmental Policy, the Union of Concerned Scientists, and the National Center for Food and Agricultural Policy). She has served on numerous boards (the Society for Nutrition Education, Bread for the World, Wallace Institute for Alternative Agriculture, Consortium for Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education, and Michael Fields Agricultural Institute among others). Clancy developed a graduate course on food systems in 1982 and since then has published, taught, spoken, and consulted widely on sustainable agriculture and food systems with government agencies, universities, and nonprofits around the country. Her present interests are the research and policy facets of Agriculture of the Middle, the development of regional food systems, the relationships between land use and farm viability, and the research needed to advance sustainable agriculture and food systems policy.

Jeremiah P. Cosgrove

Jerry Cosgrove is currently a Deputy Commissioner for the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, with program responsibility for food policy, dairy and agricultural protection and development. He worked for almost 15 years at American Farmland Trust, a national farmland conservation nonprofit. He directed AFT's policy development, technical assistance and advocacy activities in New York and New England as its Northeast Director. Prior to his tenure at AFT, he practiced law with Bond Schoe-neck & King in Syracuse, New York. He served for 13 years as a member of the NYS Advisory Council on Agriculture as well as the CoBank Northeast Regional Council, the Cornell Agriculture and Life Sciences Advisory Committee and Senator Hillary Clinton's Agricultural Advisory Council.

Cosgrove grew up on his family's dairy farm in Clinton in central New York. He is part of a fourth generation farm family (his brother Mike owns and operates the family farm). Jerry graduated from Cornell's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences with a degree in agriculture and he holds a JD from Cornell Law School. Jerry lives with his wife, Judy Anderson and their daughter, Megan in Kinderhook, New York.

Michael Hamm

Michael Hamm is the C. S. Mott Professor of Sustainable Agriculture at Michigan State University. Mike has a B.A. in Biology from Northwestern University and a Ph.D. in human nutrition from the University of Minnesota. Mike is currently affiliated with the Departments of Community, Agriculture, Recreation and Resource Studies; Crop and Soil Sciences; and Food Science and Human Nutrition. His appointment encompasses teaching, the Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension. Prior to moving to MSU he was Dean of Academic and Student Programs for Cook College, Rutgers University. He was co-founder and director of the New Jersey Urban Ecology Program, an effort to address sustainable food systems in New Jersey. He was founding director of the Cook Student Organic Farm as well as board member and board president of the Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Jersey. At MSU he is co-founder of the C.S. Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems which engages communities in applied research and outreach to promote sustainable food systems. Community food security, community and sustainable food systems are active research areas. Mike is a member of the Governor-appointed Michigan Food Policy Council, a member of the Eastern Market Corporation Board of Directors and chairs the National Advisory Committee of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation's Food and Fitness Initiative.

Duncan Hilchey

Duncan Hilchey is a consultant with New Leaf Associates Publishing and Consulting in Ithaca, New York, following 18 years as a senior extension associate (agriculture development specialist) at Cornell University. Duncan grew up in Alabama and received a BS in agricultural education from the University of New Hampshire and a masters in regional planning from Cornell University. With funding from the National Geographic Society, the Kellogg Foundation, and the New York Agriculture Experiment Station, his most recent research has focused on developing a GIS-based food system mapping program, studying agricultural heritage areas, and developing local food system sustainability indicators. He specializes in regional place-based food and agriculture and has a forthcoming paper being published by the Alliance for Historic Landscape Preservation entitled "Gôut de Terroir (Taste of Place): Exploring the Boundaries of Specialty Agricultural Landscapes." Current consulting assignments include strategic planning for a hospital-based farm, an evaluation of a rural local-foods project, and a regional agritourism project associated with a national forest. New Leaf Associates provides research, publishing, data analysis and technical assistance to farm and food organizations, agencies and businesses across North America.

Clare Hinrichs

Clare Hinrichs is an Associate Professor of Rural Sociology at Penn State University. She received her graduate degrees from Cornell University. Before joining the Department of Rural Sociology and Agricultural Economics at Penn State in 2004, she served as a faculty member in Sociology and Sustainable Agriculture at Iowa State University. As a researcher and teacher, she examines how people understand problems of sustainability in the food and agricultural system, and how they act individually

or work collectively to create solutions. She is a co-editor, with the late Tom Lyson, of *Remaking the North American Food System: Strategies for Sustainability* (University of Nebraska Press, 2007). In 2006, she held an ESRC/SSRC Visiting Fellowship with the Rural Economy and Land Use Programme, based at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, where she studied interdisciplinary knowledge generation and research practice in the UK surrounding the emergence and development of sustainable food chains. As a community member and eater, she enjoys participating in a local winter CSA, visiting local farmers' markets when they are open, and seeing what her own backyard vegetable garden can yield.

Rich Pirog

Rich Pirog is Associate Director of the Leopold Center at Iowa State University and serves as the Marketing and Food Systems program leader. He provides oversight to the Center's competitive grants program, is responsible for program assessment and new program development, and conducts research on ecolabels and food system pathways. In addition, he is project director of the Value Chain Partnerships for a Sustainable Agriculture (VCPA) and its Regional Food Systems Working Group, which is funded in part by the Wallace Center of Winrock International. Pirog's research and collaborations on food miles, food value chains, local and place-based foods, and ecolabels has been publicized in magazines and media outlets across the globe, used by local food practitioners, and is often cited in books and college courses. He has a master's degree in agricultural meteorology from the University of Missouri and an undergraduate degree in earth science from Kean College in New Jersey.

Kathy Ruhf

Kathy Ruhf is the coordinator of the Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (NESAWG), a regional network promoting a more sustainable and secure food system for the Northeast. Kathy has led numerous food system development projects, including the current Northeast Regional Lead Team of the National Good Food Network. This project is studying and promoting regionally focused food value chains. Kathy specializes in farm and food policy and has developed materials and trainings to build policy advocacy capacity among grassroots groups in the region. She promotes regional analyses and approaches. Kathy is also co-director of Land For Good, a New England nonprofit specializing in working lands access, tenure and succession. She holds Masters degrees in education and natural resource management. Kathy lives and works in western Massachusetts.

Dawn Thilmany

Dawn Thilmany is professor of agricultural and resource economics and Extension Economist at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, CO. Dr. Thilmany is a past Farm Foundation Fellow for Rural Community Viability (2006-2009) and was Interim Program Leader for Organic Agriculture at USDA, Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service in 2006-2007. Dr. Thilmany is known for her work on a variety of marketing issues, most recently a national study of consumers' motivations to purchase

local foods. Her work also examines the economic impacts of emerging sectors of agriculture (ornamental horticulture, agritourism, wines) in Colorado. Dr. Thilmany has recently been involved in discussions with Wal-Mart regarding their interest in selling local foods through her role on the Market Maker National Advisory Board.

Jennifer Wilkins

Jennifer Wilkins joined the Division of Nutritional Sciences at Cornell University as a Senior Extension Associate in 1993. Her work focuses on how the food and agriculture system impacts public health, environmental sustainability, and community well-being. Shortly after joining the Cornell faculty Jennifer conceptualized and developed the first regional food guide in the United States, the Northeast Regional Food Guide. This food guide promotes health, sustainability, and local food systems. She was one of eight people selected from a national pool of over 150 for Class IV of the Kellogg Foundation Food and Society Policy Fellowship. During this 2-year fellowship (2004 to 2006) her work appeared in the media including an op-ed in the New York Times and she developed a newspaper column, The Food Citizen which has appeared monthly in the Albany Times Union since May 2006, and in the Ithaca Journal since November 2007.

Dr. Wilkins directs the Cornell Farm to School Research and Education Program, which received a Dannon Institute Award for Excellence in Community Nutrition in 2003, and the extension partnership with the New York State Farmers Market Nutrition Program. In 2007, she received the College of Human Ecology (Cornell University) Award for Excellence in Community Public Service. She served as president of Agriculture, Food and Human Values Society from 2003-2004, and served on the board of Directors for the Society for Nutrition Education (SNE) from 1994-97 and will serve as chair of the SNE Advisory Committee on Public Policy starting July 2009. She is the 2004 recipient of the Environmental Nutrition Award from the Hunger and Environmental Nutrition Dietetic Practice Group within the American Dietetic Association. She has served on the Chefs Collaborative Board of Overseers and is currently a Visiting Professor Fellow at the Università degli Scienze Gastronomiche (University of Gastronomic Sciences) in Pollenzo and Colorno, Italy.

Invited Speakers Presentation Abstracts (Abstracts in order of presentation)

Kate Clancy
MN Institute for Sustainable Agriculture
University Park, MD

What Are We Talking about When We Talk about Local and Regional Food Systems? After close to four decades of interest in local foods, and a rapidly growing body of research and commentary, it seems useful to review some of the issues presented by the field at the present time. I will discuss six concerns: the multiple meanings of food systems; confusion of global with US situations; important differences between regional and local; conflation of local foods with direct marketing and sustainability; transition scenarios; and the need for systems research on food systems. The goals of the review are a commitment by researchers and practitioners to clarifying key concepts, developing shared terminology that allows comparisons across studies and projects, and more interdisciplinary research.

Clare Hinrichs
Associate Professor of Rural Sociology
Penn State University

What Do We Know and What Do We Need to Know about the Community Impacts of Local and Regional Foods? The recent surge of interest in local and regional foods emerges from both consumer and farmer disenchantment with the conventional, industrialized and globalized food system. Concerns are many: environmental, economic, nutritional, social, to name the main ones. Many efforts to develop local and regional food systems assume their benefits are assured and dramatic. Most efforts give little consideration to possible downsides or trade-offs in local and regional foods. This presentation will focus on one frequent and intuitively appealing assumption: that local and regional foods help to build community. While many of us have had positive individual and personal experiences of community at, say, a farmers' market or a CSA, what does broader scale, more systematic research tell us about the community impacts of local and regional foods? This presentation will first examine the community-building expectation for local and regional foods. It will then review recent research findings on community interactions, family dynamics, social learning, and social equity and justice issues as related to local and regional foods. It will conclude with some suggestions of questions that could guide our future research and outreach.

Dawn Thilmany McFadden
Professor of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Extension Economist
Colorado State University

Consumers of Local Foods: Civic Minded or Seeking Assurances? There are a myriad of reasons being cited for the significant growth in locavores, including the desire to reconnect with their food system, better quality produce or support for the local economy. It is likely that all these food issues matter for some share of the consumers, and that a diverse set of consumers are now seeking local foods. In this presentation, we explore whether local and direct markets represent a market-based solution to provide consumers with assurances that their purchases have substantive impacts on issues that matter to them. To inform marketing and policy makers, we also examine the types of assurances consumers seek (farmland preservation, support for farms or local economies, more healthful food), value placed on these assurances and the overall buying behavior of this segment.

Mike Hamm
C.S. Mott Professor of Sustainable Agriculture
Michigan State University

Farm to School Programming: Opportunities, Barriers and Lessons Learned. This talk will explore the growing development of farm to school programs across the U.S. Conceptually they are simple – develop agreements between local farmers and K-12 food service directors to supply local food products for the school lunch program. However, concept and reality often diverge. What are some of the advantages and benefits to such programs across the K-12 educational system? Why do farmers and food service directors wish to engage in such relationships? How does the school lunch budget relate to the price farmers are able to get for their product? How does the farmer know if they are getting a good price relative to their cost of production? What are limitations to continued development of these programs across the upper Midwest and Northeast? In addition, this talk will explore examples of strategies under development in Michigan to help ease the barriers to implementation of these programs.

PANEL DISCUSSION

Jennifer Wilkins

**Director of the Cornell Farm to School Research and Education Program
Senior Extension Associate, Division of Nutritional Sciences
Cornell University**

The locavore movement has taken hold in the United States and beyond. Consumers want to maximize food enjoyment and minimize their food miles. The local choice is motivated by a desire to decrease environmental impact, keep land in agriculture, and make farming more viable. On a personal level, consumers seek out local food for health and sheer enjoyment. This presentation will explore the implications of eating locally on diet and health and some policies and programs that have the potential to expand access to local food. Is local food more nutritious? What does eating locally mean in the winter in the Northeastern U.S.? Do locally grown foods taste better than travel weary alternatives? Can eating locally help control weight and reduce chronic disease risk? What public and institutional policy opportunities exist to expand access to locally grown foods for more people?

Kathy Ruhf

**Coordinator, Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (NESAWG)
Northeast U.S./Western MA**

Regionalism is an important concept for food systems research, policy and action. Regionalism responds to regional differences and needs and encourages regional approaches and solutions.

Food systems research should be grounded in place: does something work for a particular region? How? Why not?

- How can research most properly address issues of location, geography and scale?
- Regionalism is a way to move past the box of “local” in food systems research and action

Duncan Hilchey

**Consultant, New Leaf Associates Publishing and Consulting
Ithaca, NY**

The diversity of climates, soils, cultures, and markets in the Northeast creates a remarkable variety of economic opportunities in our region-- from value-adding, ethnic specialty crops, and alternative marketing structures such as cooperatives, multi-farm CSAs, auction houses, and regional supply chains. I will briefly identify some of the most recent and enduring adaptation and innovations, and then key in on a couple of some of my favorites such as geographic indications, agriculture industry clusters, and inter- (not intra-) regional cooperation.

Jerry Cosgrove
Deputy Commissioner
New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets

Local Food System Policy

Rich Pirog
Associate Director, Leopold Center
Marketing and Food Systems Program Leader
Iowa State University

Making the Power of the Food and Agriculture Network Really Work in Iowa: Iowa's Value Chain Partnerships Project. All too often the organizations that work to support businesses and communities in sustainable food systems collaborate only at superficial levels that do not synergize the expertise and social and financial capital available to make systems change. Value Chain Partnerships uses a more collaborative, decentralized approach in managing knowledge for food systems change. Value Chain Partnerships is an Iowa-based network of food and agriculture working groups. The Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Iowa State University, and Practical Farmers of Iowa are core members of a network that includes more than 200 active participants, 50 organizations, and more than 100 businesses. Our mission is to deliver social, environmental, and economic benefits to the clients and communities we work with in building more resilient food value chains

We do this by:

- Identifying emerging opportunities with high potential to deliver benefits,
- Facilitating cooperation of diverse interests to create cumulative learning, innovation and solutions,
- Creating, documenting and leveraging knowledge, and deploying this knowledge as technical assistance, and
- Attracting, leveraging, and distributing funding to support our mission.

We currently have five working groups that focus on niche pork, grass-based livestock, regional foods, small meat processing, and fruit and vegetables. A new group focusing on energy conservation for small farms was added in April 2009. For more information, contact Rich Pirog at rspirog@iastate.edu or 515 294-1854.

Research Roundtables

Ben Amsden

Research Assistant Professor

Plymouth State University Center for Rural Partnerships

Plymouth, NH

Agri-leisure: Exploring Recreation and Leisure Linkages in How Producers and Consumers Interact with Farms, Farmer's Markets, CSAs and Other Local Food Venues. Agri-leisure: Exploring the fun of local food Local food research is often situated in contexts of healthy living, environmental sustainability, and community well-being. Additional components of a local food system include recreation, leisure, and tourism. A new approach is needed to elucidate these linkages and introduce recreation and leisure to our thinking about how producers and consumers interact with farms, farmer's markets, CSAs, and other local food venues. This poster will explore future research opportunities in this area, highlighting recent literature, relevant theory, potential research questions, and policy implications for the purpose of creating a new direction in local food system research.

Dr. Khin Mar Cho

Research Associate

Cornell University Cooperative Extension-NYC

New York, NY

MarketMaker Electronic Infrastructure for Enhancing Local and Regional Food Systems. MarketMaker is an online resource, currently available in 14 states, created to link farmers, processors, retailers, consumers, and other food chain participants. MarketMaker allows all farmers access to higher value markets for their food crops to satisfy the growing demand for fresh, local, safe, and healthy food. MarketMaker is rich with demographic and business data that the user can query (5,000+ producers, 400,000 food industry data). Details can be summarized on a map to show concentrations of consumer markets and strategic business partners. Providing this kind of information in a map-based format makes much more sense than business lists and statistical tables. MarketMaker provides an effective conduit for Extension education, with plans to incorporate educational content on farm business planning, marketing, regulations, liability, food safety, risk management and other important subjects when accessing new markets.

Michelle DaPra
Economic Research Service (ERS)
Ed Ragland, Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)
USDA: Economic Research Service and Agricultural Marketing Service
Washington, DC

The Growth of Local Food Market and Preliminary Findings from the ERS Local Food System Study. Despite growing interest in local food systems, many questions remain about its effects on health, food safety, the environment, market efficiency, and its overall impact on local economies. Economists from the USDA will discuss the growth of local food markets using results from recent USDA surveys, case studies on local food system best practices, project outcomes from Farmers Market Promotion Program grantees (AMS) and preliminary findings from the ERS local food system study. We will use this opportunity to solicit ideas on data gaps, research priorities, and ideas for future collaboration on local food systems research.

Co-presenters:

Michael Hand (ERS) Debra Tropp (AMS), Jim Barham (AMS), and Adam Diamond (AMS)

Jennifer Hashley
Director
New Entry Sustainable Farming Project
Boston, MA

Strategies to Meet the Training and Technical Assistance Needs of Beginning Farmers. Our research investigates innovative strategies to deliver broad-based training and technical assistance to an expanding pool of beginning farmers across Massachusetts, as alternatives to formal agricultural education. We will present the results of surveys and interviews with dozens of farm groups and with prospective, beginning, and established farmers regarding alternative learning options – via classroom, distance learning, and field-based methods. We are planning for a coordinated statewide T&TA strategy for beginning farmers, involving service providers, farm organizations, and independent farmers to provide education, technical assistance, mentoring, and access to resources covering production, marketing, farmland access, financial management and other farm-related topics.

Co-presenters:

Hugh Joseph, PhD Tufts University Research Associate New Entry Sustainable Farming Project Developer Email: hugh.joseph@tufts.edu Phone: 617-636-3788

Brian Henehan
Senior Extension Associate
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY

An Evaluation of Distribution Channels for New York Perishable Product Producers. The content of the poster and presentation would be based on a 2006 research project involving a survey of over 1,200 distributors of perishable food products that operated in the Northeast and case studies of various types of food distribution firms. Cases include: a grower-shipper, a national distributor, a marketing cooperative, and an independent wholesale distributor. Various distribution opportunities and barriers for producers are evaluated. This study provides valuable information for producers interested in perishable product distribution practices in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions.\

Co-presenters:

Dr. Todd Schmit, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Applied Economics and Management
Cornell University

Duncan Hilchey
Associate consultant
New Leaf Associates
Ithaca, NY

Broadening the Horizons of Practitioners in the Emerging Field of Food System Planning and Ag. Development: A New Journal. The field of local food systems (including food production and food security) has arrived. Local food is in the popular press, and food system planning is now formally recognized by the American Planning Association. New Leaf Associates Publishing and Consulting would like to publish a journal that broadens the horizons of practitioners in the emerging field of food system planning and ag. development, keeps them apprised of their colleagues' work, and gives them tools they can use in their own work. The journal will engage, excite and respond to the needs of professionals in the field. In addition, the journal would be supported by a full-featured, interactive website with the latest in information technology to provide up-to-date news, statistical information about the food system, ways to share ideas with colleagues, and tools that can assist researchers and practitioners in the course of their work and careers. During this roundtable Duncan Hilchey will briefly describe the mission and scope of the proposed journal and solicit input on how it might be an effective vehicle for publishing new research on local food systems and agriculture development.

Jessica Hyman
Research Specialist
UVM Center for Rural Studies
Burlington, VT

A Transdisciplinary Approach: The Food Systems Research Collaborative at the University of Vermont. A transdisciplinary approach is critical for something as complex as food systems research. Launched this year, the Food Systems Research Collaborative at the University of Vermont joins a team of on-campus researchers with off-campus practitioners to further food systems research and enhance connections within Vermont and beyond. These collaborations are intended to help leverage resources and knowledge toward research, grants, publications, and outreach. A poster presentation would outline the benefits, structure, and activities of the collaborative. A discussion session would uncover existing communication strategies; discuss current research projects in priority research areas; and brainstorm transdisciplinary approaches to these research areas.

Co-presenters:

Erin Roche, Research Specialist, UVM Center of Rural Studies
Will Sawyer, Senior Outreach Professional, UVM Center of Rural Studies

Dr. David Lamie
Associate Professor
Clemson Institute for Economic & Community Development
Clemson University
Clemson, SC

An Evaluation Framework for the National Market Maker Program. MarketMaker (MarketMaker) is an interactive web-based resource that provides geo-coded food marketing information to food entrepreneurs and customers. MarketMaker was developed by and is administered through the University of Illinois Extension, and is being deployed state by state through the Land Grant network. The project has grown into a collaborative effort of more than a dozen states' Land Grant Universities and Departments of Agriculture that aspire to build a national food marketing data base and support system.

Though MarketMaker embodies many very valuable features to support producers, farmers markets, value-added food processors, and consumers searching for nutritious local products, it has not been rigorously evaluated. MarketMaker staff track sign up levels and website hits. However, limited resources have not allowed the MarketMaker staff to fully evaluate their program. The development and implementation of a well-researched evaluation protocol is necessary to support the continuous quality improvement of MarketMaker. Given its rapid deployment across so many states, it is important that any shortcomings be identified and quickly corrected. Otherwise, the credibility will suffer --- of MarketMaker and related Internet-based efforts. Our research aims to design and implement a well-conceived evaluation protocol for the MarketMaker program.
www.MarketMaker.uiuc.edu

Matthew LeRoux
Marketing Specialist
Cornell Cooperative Extension
Ithaca, NY

The Relative Costs and Benefits of Marketing Channels Used by Typical Small-Scale Diversified Vegetable Crop Producers. This study investigates the relative costs and benefits of marketing channels used by typical small-scale diversified vegetable crop producers. The study compares the performance of wholesale and direct marketing channels, including how the factors of risk, owner and paid labor, price, lifestyle preferences, and sales volume interact to impact profitability across different channels. Case studies of four farms that sell through different marketing channels present a “snapshot” of the costs and returns associated with marketing their crops. Each case study farm has been in operation for over five years, and has between 15 and 20 acres in diverse vegetable and small fruit production. For the analysis of small scale vegetable marketing, it is not adequate to simply determine which one channel is the most profitable. The marketing mix for such farms includes consideration of many factors in addition to profit. Among many small scale farmers, profit maximization is less important than lifestyle preference. Additionally, the nature of highly perishable crops, along with the risks and potential sales volume of particular marketing channels requires a combination of different marketing channels to maximize gross income.

Kenneth A. Meter President
Crossroads Resource Center
Minneapolis, MN

How Could Northeast Food Systems Research, Implementation and Evaluation Apply Systemic Approaches? It is often misleading to apply linear models to the complex, adaptive systems in which food is traded. There are risks of selecting indicators in early stages that lose relevance over time — as well as risks of overlooking emergence. Insights of “wise practitioners” often complement academic inquiry. Credit is a potent lens for understanding food-system dynamics, yet obtaining data can be challenging. Systems concepts themselves often add confusion. How could these concepts be applied in the Northeast in a way that adds clarity to the work?

Jeffrey J. Steiner
National Program Leader
Agricultural Research Service, USDA
Beltsville, MD

Eastern Seaboard Food Security: Systems that Link Local Production Capacity with Regional Consumer Demand. A substantial percentage of this region’s food supply comes from distant outside sources. An interdisciplinary team is developing a comprehensive assessment framework to conduct region-wide assessments of the viability of alternative local-based production systems designed to significantly meet consumer demand, now and in the future. The purpose of this research is to determine the potential

resource capacity, requirements, and uncertainties of local production and supply chains to meet great urban market demand, and to identify the biophysical, infrastructure, and socioeconomic challenges to realizing this potential.

Co-presenters:

Patrick Canning, Economic Research Service, USDA David Fleisher, Agricultural Research Service, USDA Cornelia Flora, Iowa State University Stephan Goetz, Pennsylvania State University Timothy Griffin, Tufts University John Halloran, Agricultural Research Service, USDA Wayne Honeycutt, Agricultural Research Service, USDA Audrina Lange, Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA Karen R. Polenske, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Edmund Schuster, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Gerald Whittaker, Agricultural Research Service, USDA

Sara Williamson
Extension Associate
The University of Kentucky
Lexington, KY

The Kentucky Food Consumers Panel: An Assessment of our Attitudes and Behaviors. The traditional model of food distribution creates a separation between producers and consumers, often leading to an accumulation of processors, manufacturers, brokers, shippers, and retailers. This industrial size, global system can increase the price of food for the consumer, yet decrease the pay price to the producer. Regionalized food systems are a viable alternative to this challenge when farmers are able to meet demands with an adequate supply of food that achieves or exceeds the commercial standard. The Kentucky Food Consumer Panel was designed to collect information about food purchasing and consumption from households across the state, in an effort to provide resources to farmers and their communities that will assist in developing more localized food systems. The impact could be strengthened economies, higher food quality, lower food costs, an increase of fresh produce consumption, overall health improvement of residents, and a positive environmental impact. In March 2008, the first online survey was conducted. Topics included were dairy, bourbon agri-tourism, and blueberries. In June 2008, another survey was conducted, primarily targeting produce, salsa, and sweeteners. Both surveys included questions about health, food activities and behaviors, demographics, and willingness to pay. More than 300 panelists participated in each survey, representing each region of Kentucky.

Poster Sessions

Frances Alloway
Nutrition and Family Living Educator
Penn State Cooperative Extension
Springfield, PA

The Changing Face of Hunger in Delaware County. The Changing Face of Hunger in Delaware County, a hunger awareness day, was held on March 6, 2009 in Delaware County, PA, a suburb of Philadelphia. Initiated by Fran Alloway, Nutrition Educator for Penn State Cooperative Extension and the food cupboard network, Delco Interfaith Food Assistance Network (DIFAN), representatives from agencies serving the food insecure were recruited for the planning committee. Over 120 persons attended, including food stamp recipients, food cupboard hosts, agency staff and social workers. A directory of food resources is being developed by students at Neumann College as a result of the conference. Expanding community gardens was also an objective of the conference and 11% indicated that they would start gardens at home or in the community.

Ben Amsden
Research Assistant Professor
Plymouth State University Center for Rural Partnerships
Plymouth, NH

Agri-leisure: Exploring Recreation and Leisure Linkages in How Producers and Consumers Interact with Farms, Farmer's Markets, CSAs and Other Local Food Venues. Agri-leisure: Exploring the fun of local food Local food research is often situated in contexts of healthy living, environmental sustainability, and community well-being. Additional components of a local food system include recreation, leisure, and tourism. A new approach is needed to elucidate these linkages and introduce recreation and leisure to our thinking about how producers and consumers interact with farms, farmer's markets, CSAs, and other local food venues. This poster will explore future research opportunities in this area, highlighting recent literature, relevant theory, potential research questions, and policy implications for the purpose of creating a new direction in local food system research.

J. Dara Bloom
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Hybrid Food Networks: The Role of Conventional Distributors in Building Local Food Systems. Scaling up local food systems to meet growing demand may require alternative food movements to engage with the conventional food system, creating hybrid food networks. This research explores the relationships that arise around local food

procurement and distribution by small to mid-size, conventional, wholesale produce distributors in three hybrid food networks in Pennsylvania. Analysis indicates that specialty producers may benefit the most from hybrid food networks, while still facing challenges in how to make local produce more accessible. This suggests that in order to contribute to rural development, hybrid food networks need additional strategies to generate and redistribute value.

Dr. Khin Mar Cho
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MarketMaker Electronic Infrastructure for Enhancing Local and Regional Food Systems. MarketMaker is an online resource, currently available in 14 states, created to link farmers, processors, retailers, consumers, and other food chain participants. MarketMaker allows all farmers access to higher value markets for their food crops to satisfy the growing demand for fresh, local, safe, and healthy food. MarketMaker is rich with demographic and business data that the user can query (5,000+ producers, 400,000 food industry data). Details can be summarized on a map to show concentrations of consumer markets and strategic business partners. Providing this kind of information in a map-based format makes much more sense than business lists and statistical tables. MarketMaker provides an effective conduit for Extension education, with plans to incorporate educational content on farm business planning, marketing, regulations, liability, food safety, risk management and other important subjects when accessing new markets.

Martha Goodsell
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NY Local Foods Local Markets Work Team
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Issue, Strategies and Recommendations for Ensuring Success in Local Foods Systems. In July of 2008 local food leaders from across New York state gathered for a day long Local Foods- Local Markets Summit to examine the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges to establishing and maintaining local food systems. From an extensive statewide survey - conducted prior to the gathering- summit individuals working in small groups were able to focus on the most pressing issues to local market success. Strategies for resolving these barriers were identified and prioritized. A prioritized Issue-Strategy Summary reports the significant and pressing issues to local foods system success as identified by the stakeholders themselves, and their suggestions for solving. In some cases the solutions identified can be undertaken by individual groups such as educators, researchers, policy makers or those working in community outreach; in other cases a collaborative effort is needed to resolve the challenges faced. We encourage all those with an interest in a local food system to consider these state-wide recommendations so that the most effective efforts are employed to ensure success and that our limited resources are used wisely.

Brian Henehan
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An Evaluation of Distribution Channels for New York Perishable Product Producers. The content of the poster and presentation would be based on a 2006 research project involving a survey of over 1,200 distributors of perishable food products that operated in the Northeast and case studies of various types of food distribution firms. Cases include: a grower-shipper, a national distributor, a marketing cooperative, and an independent wholesale distributor. Various distribution opportunities and barriers for producers are evaluated. This study provides valuable information for producers interested in perishable product distribution practices in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions.

Co-presenters:

Dr. Todd Schmit, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Applied Economics and Management
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Best Practices and Shared Kitchen Incubators. Local food production, packaging and distribution can be enhanced by a community shared kitchen incubator. While this type of facility is relatively easy to open, it is vastly more difficult to sustain. A Penn State research project explored established shared kitchen incubators along the Eastern Seaboard to determine the specific Best Management Practices (BMPs) for increasing facility longevity. These BMPs were identified and published in a report for distribution for community stakeholders, resulting in five kitchens opening doors in 2007/2008, and four additional communities conducting feasibility studies. This poster session addresses the BMPs discovered and the rationale for their effectiveness.

Deborah Muntner
Fingerlakes-Genesee Farm to Cafeteria Coordinator
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Genesee-Fingerlakes Farm to Cafeteria is a grant-funded program that began in 2006. We strive to connect local farms with institutional cafeterias to make fresh, locally grown produce available to all diners. We work with schools, colleges, elder care facilities, county programs, camp programs, and hospitals. For food service directors, distributors, and farmers, we hosted a local foods breakfast as well as a local foods lunch with two farm tours; we promote "Harvest Days" in the spring and fall; we email produce availability lists to food service directors; we now plan to create a small pilot project of local produce processing.

Christian J. Peters
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Foodprint and Foodshed Models – An Examination of New York’s Capacity for Meeting its Local Foods Needs. In evaluating the potential to enhance local and regional food systems, a key question to ask is, “How much food could be produced locally or regionally?” Research at Cornell University has developed two methodologies which can be used to answer this question. The “foodprint” model estimates the land requirements of the human diet for a variety of consumption patterns. The “foodshed” model optimally allocates the available land within a study region to meet local food needs while meeting a predefined goal, such as minimizing “food miles.” Both models have been used to examine the capacity for New York State to meet its food needs. Future work will adapt these models for other states and ultimately the conterminous U.S.

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Increasing Local Food Security With Community Supported Agriculture: The Case of Roxbury Farm. The destructive forces of industrialized agriculture can be counteracted by local small-scale sustainable farms which would increase local food security, create jobs and increase income, thus stabilizing rural areas, allow organic agricultural methods to flourish and, in the process, while satisfying consumer demands for safer and more environmentally friendly products. We use the example of a community supported agriculture (CSA) farm in Upstate New York to illustrate the effectiveness of sustainable small-scale farming. We use data from surveys we conducted to explore how CSA can be expanded to increase local food security

Co-presenters:

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The Cornell Small Farms Program. The Cornell Small Farms Program’s mission is to support and encourage the sustainability of healthy, thriving small farms that

contribute to food security, healthy rural communities, and the environment, with detail at www.smallfarms.cornell.edu. We build collaborations aimed at leveraging all possible resources to enhance small farm economic viability, environmental stewardship and community relations. We work to understand the research and education needs of these farmers and then cultivate teams to address those needs. We seek grants to investigate new strategies to improve small farm viability. These efforts will help increase opportunities and long term sustainability of small farms in NYS.

Todd Schmit
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An Empirical Model of Farmers' Markets Vendor Performance as a Function of Vendor, Market, and Customer Characteristics. Farmers' markets are successful only to the extent that vendors are satisfied with their sales performance. We offer an empirical model of vendor performance as a function of vendor, market, and customer characteristics. Objective and subjective measures of vendor success are considered that evaluate both sales performance and vendor satisfaction rankings. Data from 27 markets in Northern New York is combined with secondary data on broader community characteristics and demographics to analyze vendor performance. Preliminary findings indicate that all three characteristic categories influence vendor performance, but that vendors' motivation to participate does not depend exclusively on profit maximization.

Co-presenters:

Miguel Gomez, Assistant Professor, Cornell University Allyson Jones-Brimmer, Undergraduate Research Assistant, Cornell University

Moira M. Tidball
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Educational Web Resource for Seasonal Fish and Game: Recipes. Nutrition Information, Regulations, Health and Consumption Research and Guidelines. Wild fish and game are abundant in Seneca County, NY, and play a role in the diets of local sportsmen and their families, but are often overlooked as a local food resource and component of a nutritious diet. Recognizing this information gap, Seneca County CCE, in consultation with Cornell's Department of Natural Resources, has piloted an educational web resource for seasonal fish and game recipes, nutrition information, regulations, and health and consumption research and guidelines. Investigating linkages between fish and game consumption and food security for low income residents in Seneca County (ESNY), and barriers to game consumption, is implied.

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