



Small Farm Clusters Program

Profiles of Participating Small Farm Clusters

Rev 02/07/06 JG

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Molly Ames, Cluster Liaison**
- 7. Pennsylvania Women's Ag Network (PA) Linda Moist, Cluster Liaison**
- 8. Tuscarora Organic Growers (PA) Chris Fullerton, Cluster Liaison**

For Further Information

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1. Chesapeake Fields Farmer's Cooperative, CF Institute, CF Farmers LLC

Location:

- Chesapeake Bay Watershed Region of Delaware, Maryland, Virginia

Why interesting:

- Formal marketing cooperative; organized by an Extension educator in an intentional cluster-building effort. Ought to provide insights about potential role and challenges for extension to catalyze cluster development.

Common feature:

- Members are Delmarva farmers who grow identity preserved (*IP*) crops sold to local, national and international customers

Type(s) & numbers of participants (farmers, suppliers, processing units, etc.):

- At the end of 2004, over 33 farmers from eight Maryland counties grew almost 5,000 acres of identity preserved crops.

Where in life cycle/brief history:

- The Chesapeake Fields Institute was chartered as a non-profit in 2000, to address the loss of profitability in traditional agricultural markets throughout the Delmarva Peninsula farms. CFI worked with local operating agribusiness and community leaders to develop a solid and innovative strategic plan to investigate and develop markets that are more profitable. In addition, CFI educates its communities, its citizens, and future leaders about the importance and value of preserving and investing in America's existing farmlands.
- The Chesapeake Fields Farmer's Cooperative was established in Spring of 2005.

Key contacts:

- John Hall.
- To be determined: George Ery? Joe Bauer? Robert Bryan? Elizabeth H. Morris-Staff Associate? Augustine Cook? Kate Gregory? Graham Lee? Pat Nielsen? Andy Stein? John Trax?

Liaison:

Errol Mattox

Organic Farmer

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2. Hmong Farmers

Location:

- Lancaster, MA

Why interesting:

- The Hmong are an ethnic group from Asia that have their own language (Hmong) and culture. Originally they are from what is now China, but over generations have immigrated to Southeast Asian countries. The majority of the Hmong in the US are from the uplands of Laos. They assisted the US during the war and thus were persecuted as a result. This allowed many to immigrate to the US. The farmers who are farming in Lancaster are a part of a community who live in the nearby city of Fitchburg. They have been farming in this location for the past 20 years and grow Asian vegetables almost exclusively. The Hmong are marketing their produce through a wholesaler, area ethnic stores and in 12 of the Boston area farmers markets.

Common feature:

- All the farmers are Hmong who grow almost exclusively Asian vegetables.

Type(s) & numbers of participants (farmers, suppliers, processing units, etc.):

- Types: 8 small farmers (1-4 acres each)
- Numbers: 50 micro farmers (1/4 to 1/2 acre each)
- Farmers Markets: 12

Where in life cycle/brief history:

- The Hmong have been farming in Lancaster since 1984, all farmers started as micro farmers. Today eight have evolved into commercial farmers who rely on their farming activities for substantial part of their income.

Key contacts:

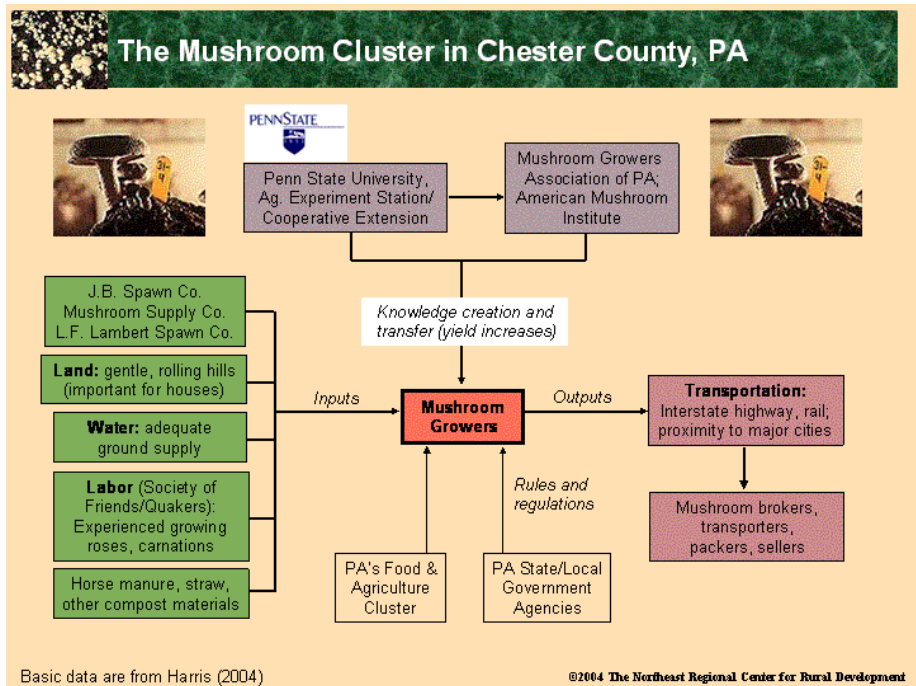
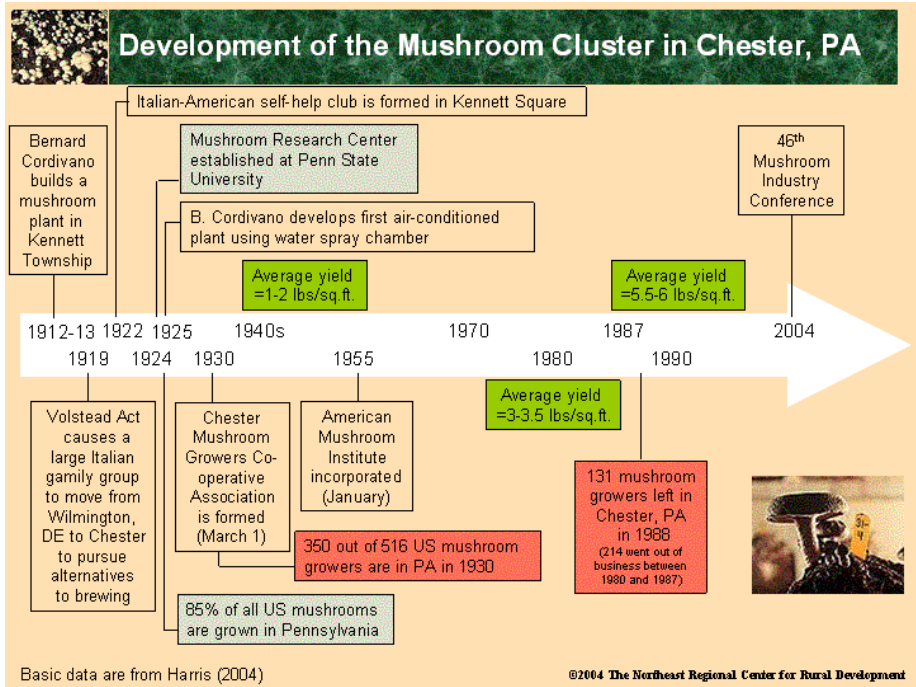
- Nou Yang
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3. Mushroom Cluster, Chester County, PA

Location: Southeast PA



Liaison:

- Cheryl Bjornson, PSU Ag Sciences, CEO, South-east, 601 Westtown Rd, Suite 370, PO Box 2747, West Chester, Pa 19380-0990. PH: 610-696-3500, cab46@psu.edu

4. New Farmer Development Project Participants

info at: <http://www.cenyc.org/HTMLGM/nfdpfaq.htm>

Location:

- New York City and environs

Why interesting:

- Example of a network with distinct social/ethnic character, mostly hispanic, various countries of origin, brought together by efforts of NY Cornell Cooperative Extension and Greenmarkets. How are relationships within the cluster affected by country of origin? Neighborhood? Market channels? Connections through mentor farms? Efforts of support organizations? etc....I am not really sure how much this group really functions as a cluster at this point. We would need to find out.

Common feature:

- New immigrant farmers trying to get established, or recently established, as commercial producer

Type(s) & numbers of participants:

- Recently established immigrant farmers - I believe there are maybe 6-8?
- Farmer mentors -- established, mostly caucasian, farmers who are working with and sometimes hosting immigrant farmers
- Also prospective farmers -- totalling many dozens -- who have participated in workshops, extended training programs, etc
- Greenmarket -- organization that coordinates farmers' markets in NYC
- Individual farmers markets that sell produce of participating farmers
- Probably other ethnic markets and neighborhoods that are supplied by these farmers
- Support organizations include NYC Cornell Cooperative Extension and Greenmarket. Probably others

Where in life cycle/brief history:

- I believe 4-5 years?

Key contacts:

- Maria Alvarez malvarez@greenmarkets.cc
- Kate Granger at Greenmarket (212) 788-7476
- John or Linda Ameroso

Liaison:

- Michelle Hughes, New Farmer Development Project/Greenmarket, c/o CENYC, 51 Chambers Street, Room 228, New York NY 10007, (212) 788-7476, mhughes@greenmarkets.cc

5. New York Certified Organic

Location:

- Mostly western/central NY but also statewide

Why interesting:

- Active cluster initiated originally by farmers Klaus and Mary-Howell Martens. The Martens transitioned 1000 acres to organic production in mid 1990's. There was no support (and sometimes antagonism) from regional extension. They networked with other local organic farmers to learn and experiment about organic grain production. As they succeeded, they formed NYCO, to share knowledge with many farmers in an intentional effort to grow the industry. Group meets monthly through off-season, publishes outstanding newsletter for members, and hosts occasional field days. The Martens, as key organic grain producing leaders, also have written extensively for New Farm and Acres USA. Mary-Howell now serves on the Cornell CALS Dean's Advisory Council.
- Originally, the group was part of OCIA and also provided certification services. That has been dropped.
- Through the NYCO meetings and networking, they have attracted active participation from organic fertilizer and amendment dealers (e.g. Fertrell, Krehers)
- New organic farmers have relied on NYCO for transition advice.
- To be able to mix and market grains and feed, The Martens opened a milling business, in 2002.

Common feature:

- Organic grains- maybe forages also
- Organic Philosophy

Type(s) & numbers of participants:

- Numbers: 30-50
- Farmers: Organic, transitioning and conventional
- Processors: Martens' Mill, Birds Eye Foods, and milk processors
- Amendment Dealers; Fertrell, Krehers, others

Where in life cycle/brief history:

- 10 years

Key contacts:

- Klaus and Mary Howell Martens, Brett Kreher, John Myer, John Sailus

Liaison:

Anusuya Rangarajan, Director, Cornell Small Farm Program, Department of Horticulture, 121 Plant Science Building, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853, Phone: 607-255-1780. Fax: 607-255-0599, Email: ar47@cornell.edu

6. North Country Dairy Viability Initiative (NCDVI)

Location:

- The cluster has participation from stakeholders within the entire dairy industry supply chain throughout the northern tier of New York. Six counties; Clinton, Essex, St. Lawrence, Franklin, Lewis and Jefferson participate in some way.

Common feature:

- The NCDVI is a group of representative members of various stakeholders in the dairy supply chain such as producers, manufacturers, dairy cooperatives, community members and agri-service providers including educators and economic development professionals who came together initially in response to the threat of the closing of a major cheese manufacturing facility.

Why interesting:

- This group includes many non-producer participants and despite challenges and tensions, the group has continued their interactions despite the early setback of a plant closing. With efforts towards preventing the closing unsuccessful but information gathered on the resulting impact of the closing on producer prices as partial successes, the group continued work on identified areas needing attention. These representatives recognized that regardless of short-term differences in perspective, the complete value chain could and would be negatively impacted by the failure of any one piece. The mission has become to strengthen the position of all stakeholders to improve the overall health of the system. The recognition that critical mass and system sustainability is crucial for all individuals has encouraged this group to continue the mutually agreed on activities including activities such as education of all stakeholders on system realities, promotion of the industry, and research of opportunities and challenges.

Types and numbers participants:

- Executive Committee – 15 individuals – one representative from each of the six counties (CCE usually) one manufacturer, a representative of economic development, one cooperative representative, one producer and one Cornell campus based representative.
- Steering Committee– A much more inclusive list, about 50 people.
- County committees – Sub-groups working on issues specific to that county. Not all counties have active committees. I.e St. Lawrence county sponsored a dairy night at Clarkson Hockey arena featuring a cow painted zamboni and worked on milk vending machines in local schools.
- Sub-committees – I.E. manufacturing subcommittee met around a project to investigate a local manufacturing facility for MPC's.

Brief history:

- Group started in 2001 with regional listening sessions. Activities have been on-going. Structure and inclusive participation are on-going topics of discussion.

Key contacts:

- Doug Dornbier – Kraft, Judy Tomlinson - Empire State Development, Doug Shelmidine – dairy producer, Dr. Richard Halpin – CCE of Jefferson Co., Madeline Pennington – Retired from CCE of St.Lawrence Co., R. David Smith, Cornell /CCE.

Liaison:

Molly Ames, Farm Business Mgt Educator, Jefferson County Cooperative Extension, 129 Mullin Street, Watertown, NY 13617, Phone: 315-788-8450, Email: mba7@cornell.edu.

7. Pennsylvania Women's Ag Network (PA-WAgN)

Location:

- Across PA, some from outside state (<15%) (much hunch is that this group is either close to border, or are involved in other women's networks and were helpful in getting group started)

Why interesting:

- This organization is relatively young/new, only in existence for a couple years. Combination of producers and educators started it, with heavy involvement of Penn State employees (faculty and extension staff), but vast majority of members are growers.
- Explicit focus on increasing capacity of women farmers through peer-to-peer learning network.
- No formal economic tie among members. Tie is based on mutual interest, learning, networking, common interests and frustrations with 'old boys network' of ag (especially traditional ag).

Common feature:

- Women producers and ag professionals
- Sustainable ag is focus, but not exclusively so

Types and numbers of participants:

- Approximately 400 members as of mid-October, across all regions of PA
- Heavier concentrations in central and southeast regions, but growing in all (particularly in response to field days/events)
- Network of women involved in agriculture, including growers, ag professionals (NGO and government agencies), and educators
- Although not specific feature of the group, members tend to be organic (certified and not) or low-input, small-scale, direct marketers/value-added, vegetable and (small) livestock producers
- But, having said this, members *are very diverse* in background, commodity, production methods, markets

Brief history:

- PA-WAgN formed in 2003, and is modeled after the women's ag networks in Vermont and Maine. One point of difference, however, is that PA-WAgN is focused explicitly on sustainable ag (but in practice, this is broadly defined).
- "The goal of the network is to enhance women producers' success as environmental managers, innovative entrepreneurs, and community leaders. The project will facilitate the development of a peer-to-peer information sharing and support networks and create educational programs and events to increase women's knowledge about sustainable agriculture practices, business management, and entrepreneurial strategies" (NE-SARE proposal, p. 6).

- First activity was Women in Ag Conference, part of the annual Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA) conference in 2004. Ninety women attended the day-long workshop. Needs assessments of women at this and subsequent events indicated that they desired educational programs that are hands-on, farm-based, and led and organized by women. These surveys also indicated that “the majority of women farmers do not currently use cooperative extension programs for their educational needs, lack the respect and skills that most men seem to have automatically in agricultural communities, make connections and visualize in ways that are often dismissed by traditional views of farming ,and want training in supportive and empowering spaces” (NE-SARE proposal, p. 7).
- Because of geographic spread and diversity of farms in PA, network has regional presence in 6 regions of the state (following extension’s administrative regional boundaries). Events are held in each of the regions at least once a year. There are 3 regional contacts, women identified as regional leaders and liaisons with the statewide organization.
- Steering committee includes PSU faculty, extension staff, and administrators; farmers from across the state; NGO representatives; and government agency representatives. The steering cmte meets 4x per year.
- Note: the group has received 2 grants to develop the network (NE-SARE) and to learn about women farmers (NRI), running concurrent with the SFIC NRI. We must avoid taxing and confusing participants.

Key contacts: (founders)

- Carolyn Sachs – PSU professor of Rural Sociology
- Mary Barbercheck – PSU professor of Entomology
- Amy Trauger – PSU research associate
- Lyn Garling – farmer, PSU Extension employee, steering cmte member
- Gay Rodgers – farmer, steering cmte member
- Leslie Zook – Executive Director of Pennsylvania Certified Organic – steering cmte member

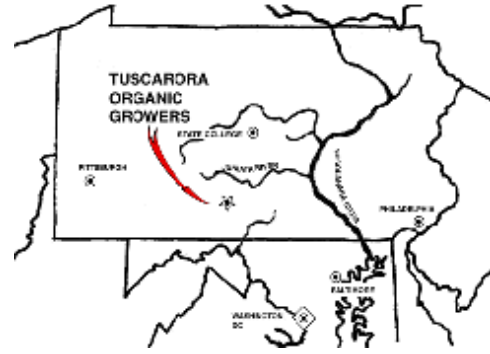
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8. Tuscarora Organic Growers (TOG)

Location:

- Growers farm the highlands of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, most of them located in a six-county region of south central Pennsylvania known as the Juniata River Valley. The area is known for its rolling forested hills, numerous creeks and rivers, family-owned dairy farms, great outdoor recreation opportunities, summertime fire company carnivals, high unemployment, and tiny country churches. The warehouse and office are located on New Morning Farm near Maddensville, north of McConnellsburg and near Exit 13 of the PA Turnpike (a little over 2 hours away from the edge of DC).



Why Interesting:

- Very successful and a typical cluster, but also heavily studied; members are held to strict standards; interesting use of information technology (a computer relational database) so that growers know what is expected of them, when. Delivers year-round.

Common Feature

- Organic products, delivered to major metros

Types and Numbers of Participants:

- Over 25 producers ranging from 2 acres of produce to 60 acres. Average farm manages 20-30 acres of organic ground for fruits and vegetables. Also get organic mushrooms from an organic house in Philadelphia (possible link to mushroom cluster).

Brief History:

- Tuscarora Organic Growers (TOG) took root in 1988 when a group of neighboring organic fruit and vegetable farmers discussed the possibility of joining forces in the marketing of their products. By working together, they could coordinate crop production to complement one another rather than compete. And they could enjoy economies of scale in shipping and selling. The cooperative form of business fit the farmers' needs, allowing ownership and market access to be divided fairly and decisions to be made jointly. And through cooperation, the growers were able to serve their customers better, by providing a diversity of crops and a level of service that no one grower could provide on his own. In TOG's first season, seven growers moved about 1,500 cases of produce to Washington DC retailers over a five-month period. The next thirteen seasons brought steady growth in sales as well as diversity, season length and professionalism. In the coming season, TOG will work with over 25 producers to bring a projected 50,000 cases of produce from farm to city, offering locally grown, certified organic produce all 12 months of the year.

Key contacts: To be determined.

Liaison:

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