

# Annual Report 2009

The Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development



Our **mission** is to enhance the capacity of Land Grant Universities to foster rural development and regional prosperity.

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# NERCRD Annual Report 2009

## Table of Contents

|   | Page |
|---|------|
| Introduction.....   | 1    |
| Local and Regional Food Systems .....                               | 2    |
| Entrepreneurship and Regional Economic Development .....            | 4    |
| Balanced Use of Natural Resources .....                             | 9    |
| Key Presentations & Meetings Attended, and Important Timelines..... | 10   |
| Publications/Books: recent, in progress and planned .....           | 12   |
| Grant Applications/Collaborations/Letters of Support Provided.....  | 13   |



## Introduction

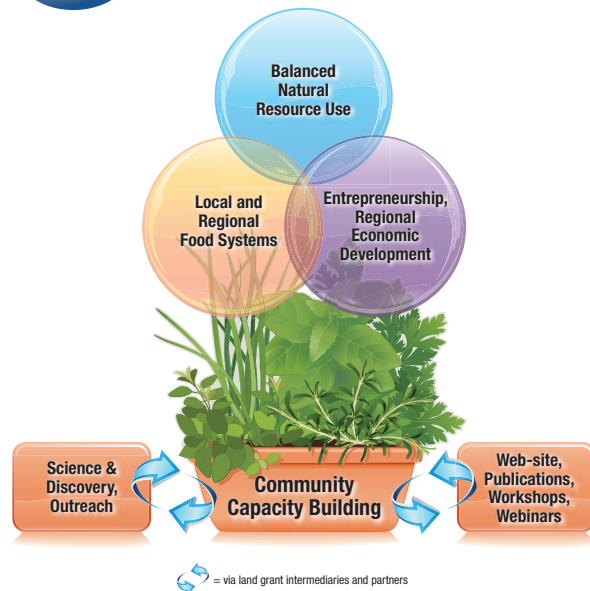
The Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development worked closely with land-grant university partners and a growing list of new collaborators to address major issues affecting the region. We expanded the capacity of faculty and educators to assist local officials, community developers, farmers and small business operators, and non-profit organizations in making more informed decisions about the issues they face.

Local and Regional Food Systems, Economic and Community Development, and Balanced Use of Natural Resources have been identified by our stakeholders as the most pressing priorities for rural communities in the region. The Center expanded the scientific and programmatic understanding of rural development through peer-reviewed publications, conferences, on-line and face-to-face trainings and outreach publications. We provided partners with information, data, analysis, and tools designed to help them better serve the communities they represent.

The need for better-informed public decision-making has never been greater, given the current economic crisis, and the increasingly complex issues facing society. The Northeast Center's strengths and unique contributions lie in jointly developing and disseminating science-based tools and insights with our networks

of regional partners, in order to help communities and individuals make better decisions in the areas of economy, society and environment. The condensed version of the 2009 NERCARD Annual Report is available at: <http://nercrd.psu.edu/Publications/Reports/AnnualReport2009Condensed.pdf>

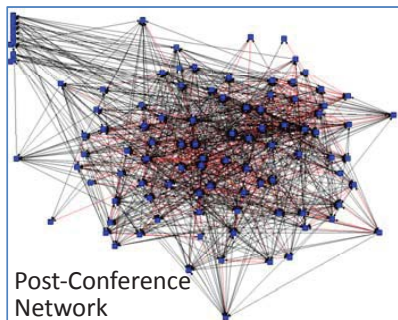
### Subject Matter Emphasis Areas (2010)



## Local and Regional Food Systems

Consumer interest in local and regional foods has exploded, but much remains unknown about these food systems, including their economic, social and environmental impacts. In response, The Center hosted the conference “Local Foods: Exploring the Research, What Works, and What We Need to Learn” in Kerhonkson, NY in May 2009. Originally proposed by the Northeast Land Use Extension Network (NEELUN), this event attracted over 100 participants from ten states in the Northeast and five others. Nationally-known researchers, educators, and organizers Kate Clancy, Michael Hamm, Clare Hinrichs, Rich Pirog, Dawn Thilmany, Duncan Hilchey, Kathy Ruhf and Jennifer Wilkins described the current science base and extension efforts, highlighting limitations, gaps and opportunities for new research. Conference participants contributed in poster sessions and facilitated roundtables. The proceedings are available here: <http://necrtd.psu.edu/LocalFoods/Proceedings.pdf>

This workshop was not only the first of its kind, but it also marked



the first time within Cooperative Extension that social network analysis was used to measure the impact of a workshop. Many conferences are organized with the goal of building relationships and facilitating collaboration, and we now have an assessment tool to evaluate whether or not these goals are achieved. At the Local Foods Conference, the number of “network ties” or direct contacts between individuals more than doubled, from 629 before the conference to 1,429 after the conference. The adjacent graphics show how these ties expanded. In follow-up work we are evaluating how the relationships formed during the event are being developed beyond the event, and the degree to which sub-groups (clusters) of collaborators are emerging.

Other key new initiatives in this area include:

- Collaboration with the Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group on research to strengthen regional food value chains, submission of a joint grant application, and hosting of a research session at the NESAWG conference (a follow-up to our Local Foods conference).
- Work with USDA-ARS (Agricultural Research Service), Tufts University and other partners on a Northeast Seaboard Food Security project.
- Helped secure funding for and co-organized the “Third International Food Technology Conference on Investigating Specialty Crops Challenges and Solutions,” in preparation for a larger



Specialty Crops Research Initiative grants application. <http://www.factny.org/pages/conference/>

We also continued to co-fund, along with NE-SARE (Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education), the Sustainable Community Grant program. A total of 10 awards were given to

A farm-to-school cafeteria project we co-funded with NE-SARE was twice featured on the Martha Stewart™ television show, underscoring the importance and relevance of the Center’s work to society.



projects that are making a direct connection between community revitalization and farming in the Northeast. **The demand for this program far exceeds funds available, and a number of high quality, fundable applicants are turned down every year. Only 16% of applicants are funded, making this program area by far the most competitive within the NE-SARE Grants Portfolio.**

“The conference especially served those of us who work across various topics of research, by providing a sort of ‘one-stop shopping’ for connecting to people and learning about specific research topics within food systems work.” *M.F. Muldoon, Program Officer, Wallace Center, Winrock International*

“[The conference] was one of the most useful gatherings that I have attended in a long time.” *Dr. J. Wilkins, Director, Cornell Farm to School Research and Extension Program, Cornell University*

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

Over the last decade, and most dramatically in the last five years, the concept of “local foods” has become a focal point of growing interest and attention. Consumers are now much more likely than in the recent past to recognize that what they eat has social, economic, environmental and political, as well as individual health consequences. Researchers and others have devoted considerable effort in books, publications, media reports, and research articles to the concerns and opportunities surrounding this evolving issue. Most importantly, consumers, agricultural producers, processors, government agencies and non-profit groups have become increasingly engaged in a wide array of local agricultural and food system development.

Despite this growing interest and activity, however, much remains to be understood about what makes local and regional food systems



thrive and what the empirical evidence suggests regarding the relative merits and impacts of efforts to address local food system development. Researchers, Extension professionals and others across the Northeast are increasingly being called upon to be able to provide this type of analysis and assistance to help individuals, businesses, organizations, communities, states and regions make the most of these emerging opportunities.

From food security to building vibrant economies, the growth in interest and market share of local and regional foods holds considerable potential for both rural and

urban communities. Many important questions remain regarding the specific conditions and food system characteristics that best enable localities and regions to make the most of these opportunities. Ensuring that communities, consumers, agencies and organizations – as well as all those along the value chain – have the best information possible requires a strong reliable research and education base. The Regional Rural Development Centers are pleased to support the development of these efforts. The conference proceedings can be found at:

<http://necrd.psu.edu/LocalFoods/Proceedings.pdf>



## Entrepreneurship and Regional Economic Development (overview)

Entrepreneurship is of critical importance to our region and, working with our Land Grant Universities and Extension partners, we continue to support the delivery of education and technical assistance to business owners. These encompass home-based businesses, small-scale farms, value-added food producers, as well as many other small businesses that are important to our towns, villages and counties. We also helped local leaders understand the importance of entrepreneurship as an economic development strategy at the community and regional levels.

“The nursery owners, growers, etc., with whom I have tried to work ... have been almost totally resistant to the use of technology for business development purposes. ... Your presentation has given me renewed enthusiasm to keep trying!”  
*Extension agent*

“I’ve been invited to join the board of our county Econ Dev’t Corp, and being a free market guy I’m struggling a bit with the whole gov’t intervention/interference issue. As chance would have it, I was reading your column in the Dec ‘09 *Network* 09 [‘Making the Case for Entrepreneurship Policy’] this morning, and your comments on externalities were just what I need to think more about.” *Faculty Member, Northeast US [e-mail correspondence]*

With growing concern about a “lost generation” of youth unable to find work<sup>1</sup>, we continue to support youth entrepreneurship through a working group that developed out of our 2008 Youth Entrepreneurship Symposium. This has resulted in the formation of a sub-committee within the eXtension Entrepreneurs & Their Communities team. This team presented two webinars and led a Lessons Learned roundtable at the eXtension National Conference held in St. Louis in October 2009. The monthly eXtension Entrepreneurs and Their Communities webinar series featured topics such as:

- eMarketing: Web 2.0 Tools and Tips
- Tips and Tricks for Successful Farmers’ Markets
- Engaging Youth in Entrepreneurship
- Economic Gardening

Participation at these monthly webinars ranged from 25 to over 200 individuals, with marketing and youth entrepreneurship being the most popular topics. Nearly one-half of the webinar participants were Cooperative Extension employees, one-quarter were community economic development specialists from communities across the country and 13% private business owners, farmers and entrepreneurs. Six in ten respondents indicated that they participated in the webinar “to be able to help my clients.” All webinars are available for on-demand viewing at [http://www.extension.org/pages/ETC\\_Webinar\\_Archive](http://www.extension.org/pages/ETC_Webinar_Archive).

The publication “Targeting Regional Economic Development” (ISBN 978-0-415-77591-5, in the series Studies in Global Competition, Routledge) was another



milestone. The book provides a scientific foundation for economic development efforts that range from economic targeting to identifying opportunities for import substitution through gap analysis using the IMPLAN software. A website with training materials is being developed: [www.nercrd.psu.edu/tred/index.html](http://www.nercrd.psu.edu/tred/index.html).

A research report on evaluating Rural Entrepreneurship Policy was prepared for an OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) workshop. The event was co-sponsored by Farm Foundation, the German Marshall Fund and the Economic Research Service of USDA. <http://nercrd.psu.edu/Publications/rdppapers/rdp46.pdf>

The Center’s county-level social capital measures have been updated and are being used by other researchers. One study employed the data to evaluate a community’s capacity to respond to natural disasters or emergencies. [http://nercrd.psu.edu/Social\\_Capital/index.html](http://nercrd.psu.edu/Social_Capital/index.html)

“Thanks ... for updating your social capital measures... I continue to spread the word about that valuable resource.”

*Robert Putnam, Author of Bowling Alone, and Professor, Harvard University*

<sup>1</sup>The cover story of *BusinessWeek* magazine on October 19, 2009 was “The Lost Generation: The job crisis is hitting young people especially hard – imperiling their future and the economy.” Nearly one in five workers under 25 years of age was unemployed in August 2009 according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

## Entrepreneurship & Self-Employment

NERCRD continues to recognize the importance of entrepreneurship to the Northeast. Encompassing home-based businesses, small-scale farms, value-added food sectors, as well as the many small businesses that populate our towns and villages, our work continues to support the delivery of education and technical assistance to business owners. We also offer support at the community level to help community leaders understand the importance of entrepreneurship as an economic development strategy.

In the past year our efforts have centered on contributions to the eXtension Community of Practice, Entrepreneurs and Their Communities (ETC). Since the original pioneer CoP application was submitted in 2005/06 as a joint project of the four RRDCs, a strong core group from the northeast region has played a key role in the leadership of this CoP. Our current northeast members include:

Mary Peabody, Co-Director of the CoP (with Bo Beaulieu, SRDC)  
Charlie French, UNH, Chair of the Evaluation Committee  
Louis Bassano, UMCE, Co-Chair of the Evaluation Committee  
Debra Kantor, UMCE, Youth Entrepreneurship Committee

Stephan Goetz, Advisor  
Sally Maggard, Advisor

## Youth Entrepreneurship

As a direct result of the Land Grant Youth Entrepreneurship Symposium (Land Grant YES) held June 4-6, 2008, it was decided that ETC would serve as a hub for the activity generated by the working group that formed following the symposium. As a result, the leadership team developed a plan of work, scheduled two popular

webinars, and presented their “lessons learned” at the eXtension National Conference in St Louis in October 2009.

## Evaluation

The Phase II evaluation survey was administered by Louis Bassano and Charlie French in April of 2009. The link to the survey results is:  
<http://is4.instantsurvey.com/Report/ViewReport.asp?SurveyId=63973&ReportId=bar&iid=144409&nid=13810&lang=en-us&h=bn5kV43ObSyyVkJZo9VgEtw>

A presentation at the 2009 San Diego NACDEP Conference summarizes the findings from both the Phase I and Phase II of the site evaluation surveys. As a result of this evaluation work, French and Bassano also contributed an article for Rural Connections entitled, “eXtension’s Entrepreneurs and Their Communities Website: An Emerging Resource for Community and Economic Development Professionals.” The article can be found at:  
[http://wrdc.usu.edu/files/uploads/Newsletter/eXtension\\_APR09m.pdf](http://wrdc.usu.edu/files/uploads/Newsletter/eXtension_APR09m.pdf)

## eXtension Entrepreneurs & Their Communities CoP Monthly Webinar Series

Background: Entrepreneurs & Their Communities (ETC) is one of eXtension’s pioneer communities of practice. This national team, coordinated by the four Regional Rural Development Centers, has been in place since October 2006.

Overview: In the fall of 2007 the ETC Community of Practice decided to pilot a series of monthly webinars on topics of interest to entrepreneurs and community/economic development specialists. Our original season included 4 webinars (February – May 2008). After reviewing the evaluation results of this pilot season, the team agreed to continue the series for a full season beginning in September 2008 and running through May 2009. We later agreed to extend the season through June 2009. We are currently researching the idea of launching an “advanced series” that would require a registration fee.





The webinars were originally viewed as a marketing tool for our eXtension website, <http://www.extension.org/entrepreneurship>. The hope was that the webinars would attract individuals who were interested in the topics and we could use the opportunity of the webinar to suggest that people visit our site. As an additional inducement to visit the site the recordings of the webinars are all archived at the website.

Each webinar is one hour long and features a presenter(s) and a facilitator. The facilitator monitors the chat and encourages participants to ask questions and chat with one another about topics related to the presentation. The goal is to keep the presentations as interactive as possible.

**Topics & Speakers:** Topics are split between subjects of interest to small business owners, small-scale farmers and technical assistance providers and subjects of interest to those working in rural economic development (municipal officials, economic development staff). The largest segment of our audience is our own extension colleagues.

The original 2008 pilot season included the following topics:

**Marketing Value-Added Products**  
**Welcoming Entrepreneurs to Your Community**  
**Internet Marketing: Kick it up a Notch**  
**Youth Entrepreneurship: Stories of Two Successful Programs**

The 2008/2009 season covered the following topics:

**Talking about Tough Issues**  
**The Nebraska EDGE Program: A piece of the economic pie**  
**Effective Network Tips and Techniques**

**eMarketing: Web 2.0 Tools and Tips**  
**Maximizing Your Pay-Per-Click Campaign**  
**The Fruit Company: An Ecommerce Success Story**  
**Informal and Formal Business Planning: INventure**  
**Tips and Tricks for Successful Farmers' Markets**  
**Finding Your Target Market using MarketMaker**  
**Youth Entrepreneurship Highlights of Successful Programs**

The 2009/2010 season is scheduled as follows:

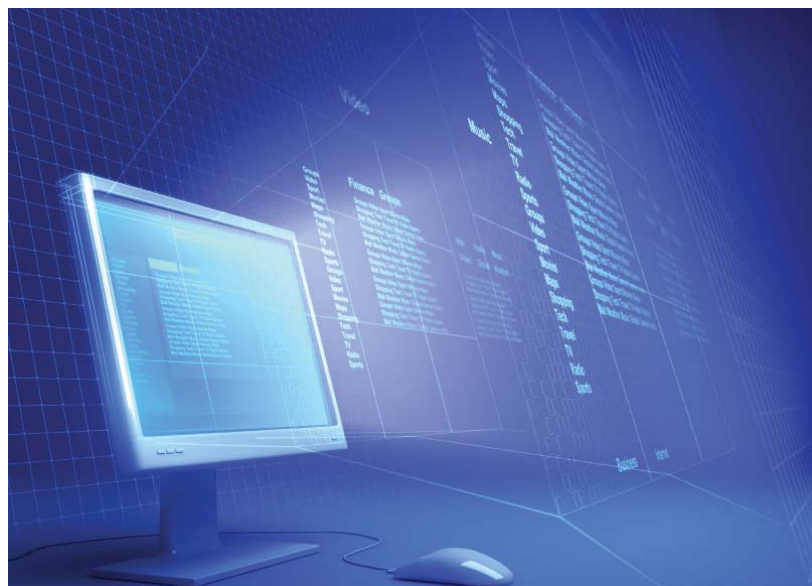
**Visual Merchandising as a Marketing Tool**  
**Economic Gardening – Lessons learned from two decades of local investment**  
**Youth Entrepreneurship – Program Highlights**  
**Community Vitalization: Preparing for the recovery**  
**Ecommerce series – 3 part series**  
**Data sources & Community demographics – 2 part series**

**Youth Entrepreneurship – Topic TBA**

**Attendance:** Attendance has varied greatly over thirteen webinars from a low of 20 – 25 participants to a high of 200. Marketing for the series is done via email listservs by the members of the community of practice. We also send announcements to several national listservs and send out a press release that can be used on websites or in newsletters.

- 49% of our respondents are Cooperative Extension employees
- 23% are community economic development specialists and/or lenders, technical assistance providers
- 13% are business owners, farmers, entrepreneurs

**Note:** We believe that a higher percentage of the actual participants may be community/economic development specialists, business owners, farmers and entrepreneurs but they are less likely to take the time to complete the evaluation than our extension colleagues who are more familiar with the need for accountability and more comfortable with sharing their email address.



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"I attended the conference yesterday on the same line as my colleague in Braxton County West Virginia. I really appreciated the conference yesterday."  
(Ext Agent – WV)

"Thank you so much for sending this information and for making this available on your web site. I really appreciated being able to watch/listen to it."  
(Farmer – NY)

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"Your message below got to me just in time. I took the information to the Kirksville Missouri Chamber Economic Development Committee yesterday. They supported the idea of bringing people together to view this webcast, with the goal to get some awareness of encouraging entrepreneurs as a form of economic development. The viewing location will be here at the Kirksville TCRC where I can display the webcast on a big screen. I have asked an innovation center director here, if she is willing to facilitate a discussion after the event, it would hopefully engage some people in actively using the approach."

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"The webinar was awesome! Thank you for coordinating it. Will you please add me to your mailing list for future webinars?" (WI)

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"I re-presented the recorded webinar to 40 people who attended the Piscataquis County Economic Development Conference. The scope of information was well suited for this audience." (Ext Agent - ME)

"Thank you; this was excellent and I regret I had to leave early (for an appointment made weeks ago), but having these links is perfect!

The nursery owners, growers, etc., with whom I have tried to work this year (primarily in Georgia, a few in surrounding states) have been almost totally resistant to the use of technology for business development purposes. I suppose it's been too easy for them to blame the drought and "the politicians" for their business failures.

Your presentation has given me renewed enthusiasm to keep trying!" (Ext Agent – GA)

\*\*\*

"Thank you for having this webinar available. I have a Farmers Market in Morrisville on Wednesday, we did listen to the great talk this past Wednesday, but probably won't be able to anymore, so I really am thankful I can get onto the website and listen/get the information that has been talked about. Thank you for this wonderful program!!" (Farmer – VT)

Evaluation: Participants are encouraged to complete an evaluation of the webinar during the actual webinar. Participants who share their email address are also contacted once more with the link to the recording of the webinar and the evaluation link. Response rates vary from lows of around 10% to highs of 25-30%. We use Instant Survey to collect and house the evaluation data.

- 5% of our respondents are new to webinars as a form of online education but 100% of respondents indicate they are either likely or very likely to attend another webinar
- 96% of respondents indicated that they gained some practical knowledge from the webinar
- 96% indicated the material was interesting and stimulating

- 95% indicated that they were able to get their questions answered

Future Challenges: Based on 2 seasons of webinar programming the series will be continued from September 2009 through May 2010. The following items are on

our to-be-explored list for the coming year:

- Looking into charging a subscription fee for some advanced webinar series
- Identifying ways to increase response rates for the evaluations

#### Results from 2008-2009 season

##### What made you choose to participate in this webinar?

##### Select all that apply

(Each Respondent could choose ANY of the following options:)

##### Response Total % of Total Respondents

To help me improve the profitability of my farm or business - 24%

It is a topic I am interested in - 52%

To be able to help my clients - 59%

To experience an online workshop - 10%

Other (please specify) - 12%

**Total Responses: 105**

- Identifying ways to capture evaluations from those viewing the recordings of the webinars
- Tracking the traffic to the recorded sessions

For more information on any information presented here or related to the webinar series in general please contact *Mary Peabody@uvm.edu*.

## Rural Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development: Supporting Sustainable Rural Communities by Building Local Wealth and Successful Enterprises

Rural America's self-employed (i.e., nonfarm proprietors) now

exceed 5.6 million persons. At the current pace of growth, nearly 1 in 3 rural adult residents are expected to be self-employed by the year 2015. But, this accelerated growth provides reason for concern. The average earnings captured by self-employed rural Americans are 50 percent lower than those secured by rural wage and salary workers. Entrepreneurs and small businesses are asking for help – for high quality science-based research that can uncover new ways for them to succeed in a global marketplace and for access to comprehensive outreach education programs that can equip them with the knowledge, skills and tools they need to contribute to the long-term health of their rural communities.

In response to the Secretary of Agriculture's interest in rural communities, the May 2008 recommendation on entrepreneurship from the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education and Economics (NAREEE) Advisory Board, and the requests by local residents and leaders taking part in 38 listening sessions across rural America, the Regional Rural Development Centers (RRDC) have committed to developing efforts to create and sustain programs that encourage communities to focus on local assets to support and increase successful entrepreneurial ventures. In addition, the Centers work to catalyze programs that can provide rural residents with the skills and resources they need to create and sustain successful small businesses. We believe that these approaches also align with the priorities being proposed by various Experiment Station and Extension regional associations, especially those that are dedicated to building sound and sustainable economies for rural America in the years ahead.

Since our work with the listening sessions, the Centers have sought opportunities to strengthen programs that support entrepreneurial networks through community partners and local service providers. In doing this work we recognize the importance of tailoring such efforts to the unique assets, needs, and opportunities existing in each of the four major regions of the U.S. Current efforts by the RRDCs include:

1. Development of an exemplary pioneer community of practice (CoP) within eXtension focused on entrepreneurs and their communities. This CoP has over 300 members from across the land-grant system and from our partners, all of whom are working hard to identify and develop resources that are



easily accessible and eminently useable for community leaders and existing or prospective entrepreneurs.

2. Support of a specific focus on youth entrepreneurship. The Northeast Center for Rural Development supported the first conference on youth entrepreneurship which drew about 40 people. Since then, the group has worked on developing a matrix of programs, scheduling a webinar for next June, and creating opportunities for people to share what they are learning about these programs.

3. Create a focus on the role of communities in supporting entrepreneurship and small businesses. Recently, several projects have examined what a successful entrepreneurial development system looks like and what strategies exist to support them. The RRDCs have coordinated inquiry and practice around what role communities can play in these systems and how they can expand access to the entrepreneurship pipeline as well as create more educational opportunities and resources for entrepreneurs at different points in the pipeline thus increasing entrepreneurial success.

As federal and state leaders and agency leaders work to spur economic development in rural America, it's the RRDCs and their Extension partners that are positioned to deliver high quality education and technical assistance that can increase both the number of sustainable businesses and the jobs they create as well as the overall profitability of small businesses and hence the viability of rural communities in Rural America.



## Balanced Use of Natural Resources

How to use natural resources for the betterment of society without destroying them in the process is a challenge facing many communities. The Northeast Center conducted or supported research and delivered programming to help localities achieve balanced use of natural and related resources while providing a high quality of life.

Key new initiatives include:

- Research reports on the Marcellus Shale – a region of rapidly developing natural gas extraction across West Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania and New York, with reports on social, economic and environmental impacts. A network of educators and faculty was formed with the goal of helping NE communities understand this important issue. <http://necrd.psu.edu/Publications/rdppapers/rdp43.pdf>
- A report on understanding and evaluating the impacts of natural amenities in economic development, jointly with

USDA-ERS. <http://necrd.psu.edu/Publications/rdppapers/rdp45.pdf>

- A scientific volume entitled “New Perspectives on Agri-Environmental Policies: A Multi-Disciplinary and Transatlantic Approach,” featuring a chapter on soil carbon sequestration as an ecosystem service, among many other topics. Joint with Wageningen University (Netherlands) and published by Routledge Explorations in Environmental Economics, ISBN: 978-0-415-77702-5.

As a contribution to the debate on climate change, the Center also initiated research on the role that commuting networks play in economic growth. One question examined is whether information spillovers created by commuting increase economic growth sufficiently to allow compensatory payments to be made for carbon offsets. This area of work extends our applications of social network analysis. If you are interested in this topic, please contact Stephan Goetz at [sgoetz@psu.edu](mailto:sgoetz@psu.edu).

## Key Presentations & Meetings Attended, and Important Timelines

(\$ - travel paid for from non-Center funds, if applicable)

### 2009

#### January

Webinar: The Fruit Company – A real ecommerce story. 26 participants, January 14, 2009

#### February

Attended pre-PASA meeting, State College, PA, February 4, 2009 [SG]

Center for Rural PA Board Meeting, Harrisburg, PA, February 9, 2009 [SG] \$

Webinar: Maximizing Your Pay-Per-Click Campaign with Andy Lewis, University of Wisconsin Extension and John Wells, President of WebWise Design & Marketing. 55 participants, February 11, 2009

Invited presentation at the Univ. of Wisconsin: Schaeffer/Pulver Memorial Seminar series, Small Business Development and Rising Self-Employment: Opportunities for Land Grant Universities, February 27, 2009 [SG] \$

#### March

Webinar: Business Planning using INVenture with Maria Marshall, Small Business Specialist, Purdue University. 36 participants, March 11, 2009

Meeting with Bob Seem and Kathy Brasier and visit to ZedX, Bellefonte, PA, March 12, 2009



#### April

NE Traders network meeting, Hudson Valley, plus Kathy Ruhf's RVT leadership meeting, April 6-7 [missed due to travel delay, SG]

Webinar: Tips and Tricks for Successful Farmers' Markets, Jennifer Dennis, Purdue. 188 participants, April 8, 2009

eXtension Community of Practice, Entrepreneurs and Their Communities presented a workshop on eLearning as an extension activity [MP]

Attended NACDEP conference, San Diego, CA, April 19-23, 2009 [WW]



SFIC Staff meeting, State College, PA, April 29, 2009 [All]

#### May

\*\*Kristi Thompson joins the Center

Webinar: Finding Your Target Market Using Marketmaker with Dar Knipe, University of Illinois. 23 participants, May 13, 2009

Attended Market Maker planning meeting, Harrisburg, PA, May 15, 2009 [WW]

Organized, Hosted the Local Foods conference, Kerhonkson, NY, May 19-20, 2009 [HM, SG, WW]

Convened multi-state Marcellus Shale Research and Extension meeting, State College, PA, May 27, 2009 [WW]

Small Farms Clusters project presentation, "Networks and Farm Viability: The Role of Social Ties in Weaving Agricultural Clusters," Joint 2009 Annual Meetings of the Agriculture, Food and Human

Values Society (AFHVS) and the Association for the Study of Food and Society (ASFS), State College, PA, May 28-31, 2009 [KB]

Meeting with Dr. David Carrier, ARC Chief Economist; in conjunction with Amy Glasmeier, Penn State Geography Dept. and ARC/LDD representatives, Penn State Office of Economic and Workforce Development, and Outreach, May 29, 2009 [SG]

#### June

TRED Phase II meeting, State College, PA June 2-3; Also Community Development summer institute presentations by Hughes and Deller, June 3-5, 2009 [SG]

Webinar: Engaging Youth in Entrepreneurship – Nebraska, Michigan, Maine. 100 participants, June 10, 2009

OECD Paris experts consultation on Rural Policy; 2 papers (RDPs), in collaboration with Ohio State, Univ. of Wisconsin and USDA/Economic Research Service, June 15-16, 2009 [SG]

ERS Local Foods workshop, June 26 (participated via Web) [SG]

#### July

Meeting with The Honorable Victor Vasquez, USDA Deputy Undersecretary for Rural Development; and staff, and Rural Development State Partners, DC meeting, July 7-8, 2009 [SG]



Pittsburgh PSU Urban Extension Center, visit with Mayor's office and key neighborhood associations, July 10, 2009 [SG]

Presentation to the NERA/NEED directors on Northeast Center activities and the Role of the Center in the New Mandatory Programs Environment, Joint Summer meeting, Portland, ME, July 13-14, 2009 [SG]

Philadelphia ShopRite Town Meeting, invited by Adolfo Carrion, Director, White House Office of Urban Affairs and Derek Douglas, Special Assistant to the President for Urban Policy, Domestic Policy Council, July 23, 2009 [SG]

Presented "Social and Economic Impacts of Marcellus Shale Exploration and Development" at Annual Meeting NE chapter of the Society of American Foresters, Bradford, PA, July 25, 2009 [WW]

Small Farms Clusters grant Poster presentation at the USDA-CS-REES PD meeting, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, July 25-26, 2009 [SG] \$

### August

\*\*Associate Directors H. Mouillesseaux-Kunzman [HM] and M. Peabody [MP] join the Center

Small Farms Clusters presentation, poster at the RSS annual meeting, Madison, WI [KB]

NERCRD Plan of Work Staff Meeting, State College, PA, Aug. 5-6 [SG, MP, WW, HMK, PAH]

CRPa meeting, Pittsburgh, August 11 (cancelled due to PA budget delays) [SG] \$

SARE Community Grants application webinar, over 50 participants from four Northeastern States, August 25, 2009 [WW]

USDA Rural Development Trade Show (Invited) presentation, Aug. 26-27, and second meeting with the Deputy Undersecretary (also met Hon. Undersecretaries Tsongas and Cooke) [WW, SG]

### September

Webinar: Visual Merchandizing, Glenn Muske, Oklahoma State. 28 participants, September 10, 2009

Rangarajan, A., K. Brasier, S. Goetz, C. Raboanarielina, W. Whitmer, Social Networks and

Small- to Medium-Sized Farm Viability in the Northeast. Presented at the 5th National Small Farm Conference, Sept 15-16 [AR] \$

### October

Kentucky/ARC Poverty Symposium, Oct. 1-2, invited presentation on "Migration vs. Commuting as Poverty Reduction Strategies: Applications of Social Network Analysis to US County Data," UKPRC and Cleveland Federal Reserve Bank [SG] \$

Economic Development, Foundations of Practice webinar sessions, Oct. 13-14 [SG, WW]

NERCRD Board Meeting, Burlington, VT, Oct. 15-16. [All]

Combined RRDC annual meeting, Park City, UT, Oct. 27-28 [SJG, MP, HMK]

Webinar: Lessons Learned from Twenty Years of Economic Gardening, October 8, 2009

SARE PDP Submitted: Improving the effectiveness of outreach and technical assistance to women famers in the northeast [MP with collaboration from Maine, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Maryland]

### November

NESAWG and Ag of The Middle, workshop and meeting, Albany, NY, Nov. 12-13 (incl. preparation of one session with T. Griffin, Tufts, University) Presentation on Industry Clusters [SG]

Webinar: Youth Entrepreneurship Success Stories, November 12, 2009

Symposium on The Pros and Cons of Wal-Mart, Inc., Wake Forest Univ., North Carolina, Economics Department, November 16, 2009 [SG] \$

Presentation of work by Rupasingha, A. and S. Goetz at the 56th Annual North American Meetings of the Regional Science Association International, November 18-21, 2009. San Francisco, CA, <http://www.narsc.org/> [AR] \$

### December

Bob Seem Conference, Investigating Specialty Crops Challenges and Solutions, Dec. 3-4, Rochester, NY [SG]

Webinar: Community Data – Where to Find It, How to Apply It, Why It Matters, December 10, 2009



## Publications/Books: recent, in progress and planned

Goetz, Stephan J. and Floor Brouwer, editors (2009), *New Perspectives on Agri-Environmental Policies: A Multidisciplinary and Transatlantic Approach*, Routledge/Taylor and Francis Group, UK; 2010.

Brouwer, Floor and Stephan J. Goetz, editors (2010), *Dynamics of Land Use and Ecosystem Interactions: A Transatlantic, Multidisciplinary and Comparative Approach*, Springer Verlag, Amsterdam (forthcoming).

Goetz, Stephan J., Steven Deller and Thomas Harris, editors, *Targeting Regional Economic Development*, Routledge/Taylor and Francis Group, UK, 2009, 410pp. (includes four chapters co-authored by Goetz). **March 2009.**

### Network Newsletter

Four Issues of *Network09*, vol. 24, Nos. 1-4, A Quarterly Newsletter for Northeast Rural Development. URL: <http://nercrd.psu.edu/Publications/newsletter.html>; from the Director columns, published quarterly in *Network09*

*From the Director columns:*

“After Almost a Decade, Taking Stock” (no. 1), March 2009

“Groundbreaking Conference Highlights Emerging Local & Regional Foods Issues” (no. 2), June 2009

“Supporting Innovation in Specialty Crops Production and Distribution” (no. 3), September 2009

“Mapping the Case for Entrepreneurship Policy” (no. 4), December 2009

### Rural Development Paper Series

Jacquet, J. “An Introduction to Natural Gas Development and Workforces.” RDP No. 43, January 2009.

Jacquet, J. “Energy Boomtowns & Natural Gas: Implications for Marcellus Shale Local Governments & Rural Communities.” RDP No. 44, January 2009.

Fleming, David A., David A. McGranahan and Stephan J. Goetz, RDP No. 45, “Natural Amenities and Rural Development: The Role of Land-Based Policies,” 21pp. <http://nercrd.psu.edu/Publications/rdppapers/rdp45.pdf>

Goetz, Stephan J., Mark Partridge and Steven C. Deller, June 2009, RDP No. 46, “Evaluating Rural Entrepreneurship Policy,” 17pp. <http://nercrd.psu.edu/Publications/rdppapers/rdp46.pdf>

### Other Scholarly Contributions from The Center

Mouillesseaux-Kunzman, H. and W.E. Whitmer, “Enhancing Local and Regional Food Systems and Exploring the Research, What

Works and What We Need to Learn: Conference Summary,” The Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development, Univ. Park, PA, Nov. 2009, 5pp.

Brasier, K., et al. “A Social Network Analysis of the May 2009 NERCRD Local Foods Conference: Technical Report,” The Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development, Penn State University, Nov. 2009.

Brasier, K., S. Goetz, J. Green, A. Rangarajan, C. Raboanarielina and W. Whitmer. “Social Networks and Small- to Medium-Sized Farm Viability in the Northeast,” presented at the 5th National Small Farms Conference, Illinois (to be published in the proceedings).

Goetz, S.J., M. Partridge, S. Deller and D. Fleming, “Evaluating Policy Options for Stimulating Rural Entrepreneurship,” invited paper prepared for the Experts Consultation on Rural Policy, OECD,





Paris, France (June 15-16, 2009).  
In review at *Journal of Regional Analysis and Policy*.

Fleming, D., D. McGranahan and S.J. Goetz, "Natural Amenities and Rural Development: The Role of Land-Based Policies" invited paper prepared for the Experts Consultation on Rural Policy, OECD Headquarters, Paris, France (June 15-16, 2009).

Goetz, S.J., M. Partridge, S. Deller and D. Fleming, "Evaluating the Contribution of US Federal Policies on Human Development: Entrepreneurship," in review at *EuroChoices*.

Zhemoyda, O. and S.J. Goetz, "Regional Specialization of Agriculture and Competitive Advantages of East-European Countries," pres. at Green Week Scientific Conference 2009, Multi-Level Processes of Integration and Disintegration, Berlin, Germany (Jan., 14-15, 2009).

Goetz, S.J. and S.S. Shrestha, "Explaining Self-Employment Success and Failure: Wal-Mart vs. Starbucks or Schumpeter vs. Putnam," *Social Science Quarterly*, 91, 1 (2009): 22-38.

Goetz, S.J. and A. Rupasingha, "Determinants and Implications of Growth in Non-Farm Proprietorship Densities: 1990-2000," *Small Business Economics*, 32, 4 (2009): 425-38.

Goetz, S.J. "Small Business Development and Rising Self-Employment: Opportunities for Land Grant Universities," (invited) Powerpoint presented at the

University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI, February 27, 2009.

Goetz, S.J., Y. Han, J. Findeis and K.J. Brasier, U.S. "Commuting Networks and Economic Growth: Measurement and Implications for Spatial Policy," NERCARD and Penn State Univ., University Park, PA. in progress for second submission.

Goetz, S.J., Y. Han, K.J. Brasier and A. Rupasingha, "Migration vs. Commuting as Poverty Reduction Strategies: Applications of Social Network Analysis to US County Data," NERCARD and Penn State Univ., University Park, PA. Presented at the Cleveland Fed Workshop, Lexington, KY, Oct. 1-2.

Goetz, S.J., M. Partridge, D. Rickman and S. Majumdar, "Sharing the Gains of Local Economic Growth: Race to the Top vs. Race to the Bottom Economic Development," presented at the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy Race to the Top Workshop, Boston, MA.

## Grant Applications/ Collaborations/ Letters of Support Provided

1. Kathy Liang, Univ. of Vermont, SCRI grant application;

letter of support and collaboration. "Specialty Food and Agri-Tourism – Successful Marketing Channels for Niche Agribusiness in Rural America" (May 13, 2009)

2. Leland Glenna et al., PSU; co-PI, SCRI grant application; pending, "Understanding and Addressing Social and Spatial Dimensions of Organic Agriculture Development in Four U.S. Regions" \$499,798 (June 2, 2009)

3. Managed Eco Systems RFP (USDA/AFRI) with Jeff Steiner's group, ARS (pre-proposal not accepted), "Eastern Seaboard Food Security: Linking Production Capacity with Regional Demand" incl. Tufts Univ., MIT, USDA-AMS and USDA-ERS

4. Jinyang Deng, WVU, ARC Water Quality Assets grant, \$250,000; funded "Appalachian Assessment of Natural Assets: Water" (Sept. 8, 2009)

5. Robert Seem, Cornell (SCRI conference grant – funded; \$50,000); International Advanced Technology, Food and Agriculture Conference: Addressing Challenges in Specialty Crops, co-PI





6. Brasier, Kathryn et al. (\$15K CAS Seed Grant on Marcellus Shale), co-PI; on-going
7. NE-SARE Pre-proposal application with Kathy Ruhf; accepted, grant application is due Oct 29, 2009
8. Collaborator on Cornell Hatch grant application with Richard Stedman
9. NE-SARE PDP Grant Application: Improving the effectiveness of outreach and technical assistance to women farmers in the Northeast [MP with collaboration from Maine, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Maryland]

## Other Collaborations

Examples of New Collaborations and Increased Visibility Developed During 2009 [networking, coordination, partnerships, collaborations].

## New Collaborations and Partnerships (highest intensity)

University of Vermont and Cornell University/CarDI: Associate Directors Peabody and Mouillesseaux-Kunzman have joined the Center Staff (50% positions).

Research grants were applied for with:

1. Cornell Univ./Geneva SCRI Planning Grant (also collaborating on a December conference to be held in Rochester, NY) \$50,000

2. NE Sustainable Ag Working Group; pre-proposal on Regional Value Chains accepted, full grant application development is in progress (\$125,000 total)
3. NE Food Security Project: on-going collaboration, grant pre-proposal to managed ecosystems not approved
4. WVU/Regional Research Institute and Downstream Strategies (WV), ARC grant secured; collaboration is

underway with meeting in DC and a meeting in Morgantown, WV; \$250,000

Collaborated with Tim Griffin, Friedman School of Nutrition Sci. & Policy, Tufts University on a joint session on Research and Evaluation at the Ag of the Middle/NE-SAWG meeting in November, 2009.

Regional Technology Strategies (Stuart Rosenfeld), Goetz is serving as advisory board member on the Community College-based



## International Advanced Technology, Food and Agriculture Conference Addressing Challenges in Specialty Crops

December 3-4  
Double Tree Hotel  
Rochester, NY 14623

Specialty crops (all fruits, all vegetables, nuts, ornamentals, flowers, herbs, spices, mushrooms, medicinal plants, etc) represent a diverse, yet valuable component of US agriculture.

There are innumerable challenges to produce and market specialty crops, yet in many cases their needs are overshadowed by research and development in major food crops. Challenges to specialty crops occur in production, protection from pests, processing, food safety, marketing, and distribution. The producers and processors are often small businesses who are affected by the challenges listed above, but they are also confronted by new challenges like new environmental standards, traceability, and verification of safe production and products.

The International Advanced Technology, Food and Agriculture Conference will build upon the preceding conferences in 2007 and 2008. In 2009, the conference will pay special attention to specialty crops and will bring together producers and processors involved with many different specialty crops. Joining them will be representatives from small to large technology companies and research centers who share an interest in investigating the challenges in specialty crops. **The unique feature of this conference is that people, who never would have crossed paths otherwise, meet and start to solve problems!**

This day and a half conference will first allow participants to see the *big picture* about specialty crops and their challenges and the role that new technologies might play. It will then focus on different specialty crops and their challenges, while the final third will focus on common areas of production, protection, processing, distribution and marketing. An outcome of the conference will be a road map of how new technology can lead to better, safer, and more healthful specialty crops.

Although prior focus of the conference has been on Western New York, we now seek broader representation from New York, Pennsylvania, other Northeastern states, and beyond.

Join us at the Double Tree. Registration information is at [www.factny.org](http://www.factny.org); questions can be addressed to Susan Noble, [susann@thetechnologyfarm.com](mailto:susann@thetechnologyfarm.com) or 315.781.0070 ex 2012.

### Primary sponsors



Alliance for Sustainability. Funded by Ford Foundation and in collaboration with the Government of Denmark; an international conference on the role of community colleges in cluster-based green workforce development is scheduled for next year. This activity has many partners, including presidents of community colleges.

### **Networking and other coordination (selected)**

Meeting held with ARC Economic Development District Staff Altoona, PA, in conjunction with a visit to Penn State by Dr. David Carrier, new chief economist at Appalachian Regional Commission; also met with Penn State Workforce Development Office staff.

NE Water Quality Group, EQIP, IPM, NE-SARE, others; listserv of Northeast Center Directors has been established thanks to Rubie Mize of the NERA Office. The following are in the listserve -- <necenterdirs@aesop.rutgers.edu> Dan Rossi <rossi@aesop.rutgers.edu>, Stephan J. Goetz <sgoetz@psu.edu>, John E. Ayers <jea@psu.edu>, Carrie Koplinka-Loehr <ckk3@cornell.edu>, Elizabeth Myers <ebm24@cornell.edu>, Doug Parker <dparker@arec.umd.edu>, Chris Obropta <obropta@envsci.Rutgers.edu>, David Holm <David.Holm@uvm.edu>, Fred Wheaton <fwheaton@umd.edu>, Art Gold <agold@URI.EDU>, Larry Walker <lpw1@cornell.edu>, Corey Rutzke <cfj4@cornell.edu>

This is an outgrowth of the NERA/NEED Summer Meeting of the Center Directors (in Portland, ME), proposed and organized by board member Dr. Dan Rossi.

Hudson Valley, Local Foods Conference participants (various groups; we are still analyzing the specific networks formed at the event). See Brasier et al. Technical Report.

Cornell Foodsheds and Foodprints project (Kellogg-funded); participated in survey conducted by Vanguard Communications, Washington, DC on applications and extensions of the foodsheds and foodprints concept (an outgrowth of the Local Foods Conference).

Pittsburgh PSU Urban Extension Center, Mayor's Office; urban food and urban gardening projects, with various lower-income community groups in the Hill District and on the South Side of Pittsburgh. Also have taken up contact with local Food Banks to understand their problems, and we are exploring the possibility of linking this effort with the Pittsburgh office of the Cleveland Federal Reserve Bank.

Had preliminary discussion with the Cleveland Federal Reserve Bank (Dr. Francisca Richter, Community Affairs Department) to host a conference on urban renewal of cities in the manufacturing belt of the Northeastern US, possibly with a focus on green development. In conjunction with the Philadelphia, Boston and New York Federal Reserve Banks.

USDA Rural Development, ARS, ERS, AMS and MIT, Tufts, Cornell. Eastern Seaboard Food Security Group. Recently ARS received funding from the Secretary of Agriculture to hire two associates to work on issues related to this project (under the Know Your Food, Know Your Farmer program).

Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland, Community Affairs, invited to present at the Third Applied Research Seminar on Poverty in Appalachia, held in conjunction with the University of Kentucky's Center for Poverty Research conference (Dr. James Ziliak, Director). Preliminary discussion with Dr. Melissa Fry Konty of MACED (Mountain Association for Economic Development) about community research, and with Dr. Evelyn A. Knight, Director of the UK Appalachian Center about networking of community development professionals and other local development/revitalization opportunities.

USDA Rural Development Kick-Off meeting, August 24-28, 2009, Washington, DC.

Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, Cambridge, Mass. Race to the Top/Race to the Bottom Workshop held in September 2009; paper presented at the workshop (by Dan Rickman). Todd Gabe of Univ. of Maine also attended.

Appalachian Regional Commission, October 6, 2009, Washington, DC; Indicators Project (revising distress measures); joint with Ohio State Univ. and Southern Rural Development Center.

FEMA/AFRI meeting, November 23-24, 2009, Washington, DC.

Organization for Economic Cooperation & Development.

National eXtension work, Foundations of Practice Webinars.

## Selected Impact Statements

Wal-Mart Inc. is using earlier published research in new employee orientations to “showcase the range of possible community perceptions of the chain.”

Social Capital county-level data are being used by Robert Putnam, and university faculty in Indiana as well as Ken Hubbell, Ken Hubbell & Associates, Arizona (these are the ones we are aware of). The Indiana group is using the data to better assess community preparedness for disasters.

Local Foods Conference: The density of ties at this conference was documented to have more than doubled from 0.06 to 0.14 while the number of ties increased from 628 to 1,376. Other impacts are being evaluated. Also, we created a collaboration with the Ag. Econ. Department at Cornell and the NE Food Security Project, and Cornell post-doc Chris Peters was hired by Tufts University after meeting with Tufts faculty at our conference.

Following the director’s invited presentation on self-employment trends to BEA/Department of Commerce in the fall of 2008, the Bureau revised downward its national reported county-level self-employed numbers by 6 percent in spring of 2009. The publication underlying this presentation was also used to document the importance of local entrepreneurs in a successful \$1.5 million grant application by Kentucky Highlands Corp. to the EDA.

One of the NE-SARE community grants projects on farm-to-school cafeteria was featured on the Martha Stewart syndicated television

show in January 2009 and aired again on September 8, 2009.

The Northeast Center funded the creation of three food system planning guides in 2000. Since 2001, 859 copies of the “guide for community organizations,” 727 copies of the “guide for county and municipal planners,” and 383 copies of the “guide for extension educators” have been distributed through the Penn State publications unit.

Dr. Barbara M. O’Neill, a financial resource management specialist for Cooperative Extension at Rutgers University and member of the Financial Security for All eXtension Community of Practice National Leadership Team, was named the 2009 winner of the William E. Odom Visionary Leadership Award by the Jump\$tart Coalition® for Personal Financial Literacy. The award recognizes individuals who have made substantial contributions to the promotion of financial literacy among students. It is considered the highest award given for individual

contributions. The Northeast Center funded parts of Dr. O’Neill’s early work.

Local government officials and planners from states impacted by the Marcellus Shale natural gas extraction project have heavily referenced Jeffrey Jacquet’s research reports on the impacts of the Marcellus Shale on the region. The Chair of the Legislature in one New York county said about one of the research reports: “It has been very hard to find any analysis of the economic costs and benefits of Marcellus development, so your paper is a rare source of information. I greatly appreciate your work!” In addition, Jeffrey Jacquet and Richard Stedman have recently co-authored a Research and Policy Brief for Cornell’s Community and Rural Development Institute (CaRDI), “Emerging Trends in the Marcellus Shale:”

<http://devsoc.cals.cornell.edu/cals/devsoc/outreach/cardi/publications/upload/07-2009-RPB.pdf>



## NERCRD/NE-SARE Collaboration

**CNE09-057 Building a Case for Local Agricultural Infrastructure (Massachusetts)**

Massachusetts leads the nation in average direct farm sales per farm, and demand for local food continues to grow. A restraint on increased direct sales is a shortage of local processing capacity, especially for dairy, meat, and greens. The project manager will write case-specific rationales on the economic benefits of improved processing capacity, identify the infrastructure needs in the farm community, and develop a guide and tool kit on this topic suitable for wider adoption.

### **CNE09-058 The Rhode Island “Market Mobile”: Easing Channels for Distribution for Farmers and Food Buyers (Rhode Island)**

The demand for locally grown foods is expanding, but many farmers do not have the time to solicit and manage many small orders and tend to rely on wholesale to remain viable. Buyers – grocery stores, chefs, institutions – do not always have time to source and purchase local food either, although they would prefer it if it were easily available. To address this, the project manager will coordinate orders and deliveries among farmers, food processors, and buyers, and pilot a local food hub that will increase sales and redirect buying habits.

### **CNE09-059 Local Officials Training Initiative (New York)**

Changing land-use patterns and the globalization of the food system make the future of farming uncertain. The project manager will train local officials in the economic and environmental importance of agriculture and also develop a “farm book” that will enhance understanding of farming as a way of life, an occupation, and an engine of prosperity.

### **CNE09-060 A Mobile Farmers’ Market for Senior and WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program Benefi- ciaries (Pennsylvania)**

Low-income seniors and participants in the WIC program struggle to find transportation to markets, and many farmers see direct marketing as time consuming and unprofitable. The project manager will bridge this gap by managing the production, promotion, and delivery of local food; the effort is chiefly targeted at people in the Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program. Business planning, cooking instruction, and a web site that can accept orders and process payments will supplement the delivery and order management effort.



**CNE09-061 Recipes for Success: Empowering Farmers, Leveraging Resources, Building Community (Maine)**

School kitchens, with their commercial certification and wide range of equipment, are idle during most of the growing season; these same schools also seek local foods, but need foods that are processed and ready for preparation. At the same time, farmers and food entrepreneurs want to process and add value to local farm products, but lack access to an adequate facility, training, and recipe development. The project manager will bring these two elements together to increase farmer revenue, reduce the barriers to local food purchasing for schools, and offer training that will likely enhance local economic development.

**CNE09-062 Maine Fiber-arts Online Tour Map: Studios and Farms, 2009-2012 (Maine)**

In 2006, funding for a map locating fiber farms, studios, and galleries resulted in increased sales and other opportunities for craftspeople and farmers. As the map is being reprinted, the project manager will also mount an interactive map of the same farms and venues on the World Wide Web, allowing wider access to the information and showcasing specific weekend tours and events. The overall goal is to reinforce the identity and skill of fiber farmers and craftspeople, increase agritourism, and improve sales.

**CNE09-063 Mid-Atlantic Small Black Farmers Food Distribution Project (Pennsylvania)**

While black farmers struggle to keep farming a viable full-time occupation, there are unmet nutritional and food-access needs in Philadelphia. The project manager will develop marketing and distribution partnerships between farmers and urban institutions, organize a food buying club that targets urban community groups, position black farmers to supply materials for value-added natural soaps, oils, ornaments, and other high-value items, create a web-based inventory, pricing, ordering, and payment interface, and train farmers and urban entrepreneurs to explore potential shared opportunities.

**CNE09-064 Southern Litchfield County's First Regional Locally-grown Produce Distribution Facility (Connecticut)**

Farm advocates and the local economic development commission have identified the absence of a way to collect and distribute local food as a barrier to growth that also frustrates consumer demand. To address this, the project manager will oversee needed feasibility work for a light processing and distribution center; this work will inform potential site selection, business planning, financing, and other future decisions to support implementation.

**CNE09-065 Marketing the Market: Facilitating EBT Usage Among Farmers' Market Customers (Vermont)**

Although Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards can be used at farmers' markets, there is evidence that lower-income residents doubt they can afford fresh, organic food and often aren't sure how to cook it. The project manager will use the coming market season to distribute print materials about healthy eating and also operate a wireless EBT reader on behalf of vendors. The goal is to increase EBT sales, change perceptions and relationships between farmers and consumers, and encourage people to opt for fresh local food.

**CNE09-066 Incubation, Expansion and Learning: The Microloan Fund for Northeast New England Farmers (Massachusetts)**

Building on previous research and planning supported in part by SARE, the project manager will address farm financing gaps by collaborating with lenders, matching farmers with business planners, and offering modest loans that will leverage access to conventional capital. The goal is to educate lenders about agricultural lending, improve access to farm credit, increase alternative lending practices in the farm community, and expand the microloan program so that larger loans can be offered.

## Staff Growth in 2009

Two new Associate Directors joined the staff in August 2009: Heidi Mouillesseaux-Kunzman of Cornell University and Mary Peabody from the University of Vermont. With an expanded Extension and outreach capacity the Center will be able to extend more widely the strong research base for which it is internationally known, facilitate additional shared learning opportunities among rural development scholars and extension educators across the region, and in turn, increase multi-state collaborative efforts that benefit Northeast communities. **Mouillesseaux-Kunzman** has primary responsibilities in the area of agriculture and food and regional learning networks, while **Peabody** focuses on entrepreneurship and strengthening capacity to provide educational opportunities through distance learning venues. Associate Director **Whitmer** continues to emphasize community capacity building and local and regional food systems, and leads the effort of assessing the Center's impact. In addition, Kristi **Thompson**, Administrative Support Assistant, joined the Center in May 2009.

Center Director Dr. Stephan J. **Goetz** provides overall leadership for the Center. He pursued new partnerships and collaborations, represented the Center at various meetings including the NERA/NEED joint summer meeting in Portsmouth, ME, and prepared research reports and papers listed on the website.

## Selected Presentations

- NERA/NEED joint summer meeting
- Lincoln Institute on Land Policy Race to the Top Workshop
- Appalachian Regional Commission/University of Kentucky Center for Poverty Research and Cleveland Federal Reserve Bank

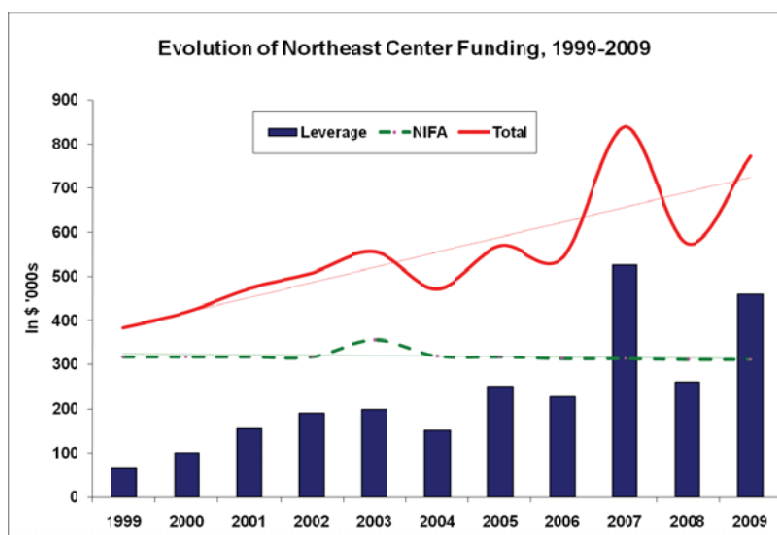
## Partners/Collaborators Non-Land Grant (\*new)

- Center for Rural PA
- \* Eastern Regional Conference/Council of State Governments
- Farm Foundation
- \* Food and Agriculture Collaborating through Technology in New York (FACTNY)
- \* Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
- LEI Wageningen UR
- \* MidAtlantic Farm Credit
- NESARE
- \* NESAWG
- Plymouth State University, NH
- \* Tufts University, Nutrition Program
- \* USDA-ARS Beltsville, MD and Orono, ME
- \* USDA-ERS
- \* USDA-RD
- \* Wallace Center/Winrock

## Looking Forward

Selected examples of what we are working on in 2010:

1. Webinar series highlighting the science and practice of Local/Regional Food Systems
2. Webinar series and major What Works Conference on Entrepreneurship
3. Edited book volume on Land Use Dynamics
4. Several grant applications to NIFA and other funders



### In Brief:

- One edited book volume (Targeting Regional Economic Development)
- Doubled the network ties among stakeholders working on local foods
- Three conferences with over 375 participants
- Four new Rural Development Papers (RDPs)
- Ten Webinars delivered to over 875 participants
- 13 new papers/reports
- 18 major presentations
- More than 6,000 new visitors to the website
- Over \$400,000 leveraged directly



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