

## Just What Did NY Farms! Do in 2004?

### **Communication:**

The NY Farms! website [www.NYFarms.info](http://www.NYFarms.info) has a brand new format. If you haven't visited the website yet, you'll want to check it out. There's an on line form for becoming a member and a membership listing and directory of the current membership. There are two running calendars--one for conferences and agricultural education and meetings, the other for events, fairs and festivals. The results of the I Love My NY Farmer Contest are posted under 'What's New'. The Taste, Place and Face photo contest is now on line in an easy to navigate gallery format. We're always looking for new photo submissions. 'Farm to School' is a resource stop and 'Farm to Restaurant' provides a listing of NY restaurants going out of their way to source local products. If you know of a restaurant that should be included, please submit their name and contact information. 'What's in Season' highlights NY farm products and provides nutrition, cooking and sourcing information. The months of March, May and October feature agri-tourism opportunities you'll want to check out. If you're looking for a NY agricultural organization, chances are you'll find their direct links on the 'Buy Local' pages under retail or wholesale contacts. You'll also find some great links on the 'LINKS' pages. Finally, the 'Recipe Pages' are a work in progress. If you have a recipe you would like to share, please send it to us.

'News to Share' has been a fabulous success. This year we have doubled our readership from 3,000 subscribers to 6,000. While some issues can be lengthy most people have found a way to navigate the information. Sometimes an article creates a bit of controversy, which is good because traditional paradigms are challenged and readers become enlightened to other views. 'News to Share' is released every other week, more often if the in-box overflows, or less often if it isn't full enough!

NY Farms! keeps two extensive calendars for our reading public. 'What's Happening' is a calendar to invite the public to on farm events, farm market happening, festivals, dinners, etc...and 'Save the Date' is a calendar for farmers, educators, agents and others directly involved in agriculture. It's a listing of conferences, meeting, workshops, etc...

'What's in Season' is a monthly release featuring a NY product, nutrition information, preparation tips and recipe links. We work with many databases to pull these together including the PRIDE of NY, NYSDAM Farm Fresh Guide, Farm to Table (Earthpledge), Local Harvest, Eatwell, NOFA, New Farm locator and other guide listings.

**Outreach to Consumers:** This year the NY Farms! booth, and/or it's executive director, attended the NYS Fair, Rochester Festival of Food, Ag-Stravaganza Ithaca, Farm Days at the Oakdale Mall in Johnson City, and several PRIDE of NY Events- Sackett's Harbor, Sylvan Beach, and the Harvest Festival in Albany.

**Membership:** As of March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2005 NY Farms! has 153 paid members, double that of one year ago! The biggest benefit to our members, outside of networking, is the online member listing including the live links; and the opportunities to take advantage of free classified listings in News-to-Share.

**Fundraising:** This year NY Farms submitted 16 Grants. We collaborated with CFAP, NYSAWG, HANNYS, Farm to School, Agriculture in the Classroom, and others. Current projects that have been funded include: Risk Management Outreach to minority farms with

NYSAWG. (NY Farms! Is a small contributor in their grant.) SARE Professional Development Grant, an outreach to educators and food service where NY Farms! is working in collaboration with Cornell Farm to School and the NYSSFSA. We have two FAID grants under way including a Fruit and Vegetable Distribution study being done by Glenda Neff, past director. The second FAID grant is the development of A Farmer's Guide to Direct Marketing Meat: A Legal Guide.

### **Create Public Awareness:**

Through the News to Share, NY Farms! has helped to inform and educate Policy Makers within the NYS Assembly and Senate. In addition I attended both Farm Days in D.C. and the Farm Bureau Legislative Reception. Creating public awareness especially at the legislative level is a high priority for NY Farms!

The Taste, Face, Place photo contest was initiated several years ago because of the lack of high quality, local agricultural photo stock. Photo contests were organized at local fairs and winners were selected at the NYS Fair. This project and photo gallery is now on the website. We continue to seek photos for the collection.

The I Love My NY Farmer Awards was new this year! There were 100 entries with 10 winners in 10 categories. This is a great way to connect local people with the food they produce. Look for the contest to reappear sometime in August.

I had the pleasure of speaking at a World Ag Day Celebration in Chenango County and at a North American Rural Opportunities Meeting in Rochester. If you would like NY Farms! to advocate for agriculture in your area, let us know how we can help.

### **Promote Agriculture and Food System Literacy:**

NY Harvest for NY Kids is just one way agricultural education is taking place. NYHNYK is a week long celebration of NY agriculture within NY Schools. Some schools feature NY products on their school lunch menus. Others invite farmers into the school. Some celebrate by harvesting school gardens. NY Farms! in conjunction with the NYS School Food Service Association, recognize the outstanding participation of schools with an Award Celebration. To help food school food service personnel and educators plan for the event, NY Farms! works with the Cornell Farm to School Program and the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets updating websites and resource material for this weeklong event.

NY Farms! a co-founder in the Farm to School movement in NY State has an active role on the Steering Committee. Farm to School is a program that works with schools, distributors, processors and farmers, to get fresh NY grown fruits and vegetables into local schools in a form schools can use. Currently a FAID project is underway looking specifically at sourcing NY pears and processing NY carrots for the 2005-2006 school year.

NY Farms! is also on the Advisory Board of Agriculture in the Classroom. This program works on developing agricultural literacy through all the grade levels. This program helps children to develop an understanding of agriculture through a newly developed food and fiber curriculum which sets bench marks students should reach at specific grade levels. NY Farms! already a good electronic communicator, recently submitted a grant for an electronic "Ag News Kids Can Use". We should hear back shortly regarding this proposal.

A Farmer's Guide to Direct Marketing of Meat: A Legal Guide, pools a strong team of meat marketing experts including Jim Mc Laughlin, Tatiana Stanton, Marty Broccoli, Bob Weybright, Mark Grennen, and Adelle Hayes. The purpose of this project is to help producers to understand the complicated meat laws, while helping to solidify that understanding by regulators

themselves. With our partners we are exploring the distribution and processing systems here in NY in an effort to open more market opportunities for livestock producers. On behalf of NY Farms! and the farmed deer industry I attended five distribution/ marketing summits this year helping to open up current bottle necks that are holding our producers back. In addition, NY Farms! has been aggressively promoting grazing workshops, which will help livestock producers reduce input costs, result in a healthier meat and a healthier environment. NY Farms! continues to support all NY agriculture, not just the fruit and vegetable industry. (Did I fail to mention the NY Farms! director is also a livestock producer!)

NY Farms! is also working in cooperation with the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets and the USDA Risk Management Agency. News-to-Share is being used as a tool to help farmers reduce risk by helping them and those that assist them (and those who govern them) understand the greater picture both with the U.S. and around the globe. We're helping those who see trees, see and understand the forest! In addition, specific information regarding risk management is included in most issues.

NY Farms! is a Growing Home Partner. This is a collaboration between many partners (NYSAWG leading the way!), to develop very local food chains/systems. This encompasses farmer education, legislative education, consumer education, and working with local economic development and planning departments. The goal is to get local food to local people at all income levels and to increase NY's spending on local food by 10% each year. Projects proposed encompass developing markets and outlets for fresh local food where none currently exist.

While the program councils did not meet at Cornell this year, NY Farms! is still involved in CARDI initiatives on campus. In addition NY Farms! is a member of Senator Clinton's Agriculture Advisory Committee. Our board positions ensure that NY Farms! is in an excellent position to act as an industry advocate, statewide coordinator and communicator and leader.

### **Foster Consumer Loyalty**

NY Farms! has been an active participant in current PRIDE of NY advisory discussions. We support the PRIDE program and believe our programs compliment the Department's efforts.

NY Farms! also supports regional branding and marketing initiatives around New York State. I attended a meeting of the Finger Lakes Culinary Bounty Program, a Hudson Valley Agricultural Partnership Meeting and a Watershed Ag. Council Meeting in the Catskill Region.

Renewing the Countryside is national syndicated book project which highlights rural diversity and the local economic development that is created as a result. This project is in need of both funding and leadership to get off the ground. A website for the project was developed by SUNY Morrisville Students. Anyone interested in this project should contact the NY Farms! office.

NY Farms is diligently working to stay abreast of agri-tourism initiatives around NY State. We have been working with county tourism offices on promoting local events and are working closely with several counties to develop Agri-trails and Clusters. We have been happy to promote the work of Chris Grant who is working on an international agritourism website. We distributed the Agri-guides of more than a dozen counties at the NYS Fair. This was extremely successful. Our goal this year is to focus on four seasons and their associated events and to work in cooperation with I LOVE NY, the state department of tourism, on promotion. We also worked with the Tioga County Tourism Department and CCE Tompkins County and sponsored an Agri-tourism workshop with Jane Eckert. This was well attended.