

Local Foods – Local Markets Summit 2009



Brian Henehan, Sherry Alpern, and Jack Montague listen to Bill Reinhardt of NYSERDA at the podium

Thanks to all who attended the 2009 Local Farms/Local Markets Summit at Empire Farm Days in Seneca Falls on August 11. The presentations were well received and thought provoking. Brian Henehan, Senior Extension Associate at Cornell, gave a comprehensive explanation of his research on Evaluating Perishable Food Distribution. Also, thanks to Marty Broccoli, Ag. Economic Development Specialist at CCE Oneida, and Dana Stafford, General Manager of Regional Access in Ithaca, for taking part in the morning discussions.

Following lunch (pork barbeque from Harty Hog in Ovid, NY) we had another panel discussion, this time with Brian Henehan, Sherry Alpern (who participated in the NYC Wholesale Farmers' Market Study), Jack Montague of FoodLink, and Bill Reinhardt of NYSERDA, each adding a unique perspective to how they see the distribution issue in NYS.

We ended the day with an effort to knit together all of the conversations we heard. A few of the suggestions of ideas for moving forward were:

- Develop statewide food and ag plan with input from stakeholders
- Statewide leadership to coordinate key players
- Aggregation facilities / infrastructure
- State Fair Local Food Task Force

- More active involvement of Ag & Markets in organizational leadership and funding

Barriers that were identified that need to be addressed were:

- Insufficient funds for all aspects of local agriculture (eg. Farm-to-School)
- Economics of local food production
- Lack of NYS plan for food and agriculture
- Lack of communication between all parties

We will be compiling a more comprehensive report of the results of the 2009 Summit in the near future.