

NY Farms!

Building Farmer-Consumer Connections in the Empire State

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NY Farms! publishes News to Share approximately monthly to provide information about food and farming to a wide range of interested individuals, organizations and businesses. It is a compilation from a variety of sources. Articles do not necessarily represent official positions of NY Farms! For more about NY Farms! Visit www.nyfarms.info. We would appreciate receiving your information and announcements for News to Share, at nyfarms@nyfarms.info. **Please also use this address to subscribe or unsubscribe.**

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NEWS TO SHARE

April 11, 2008

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NEWS FROM NY FARMS

NY Farms! Annual Meeting

On March 14 members of NY Farms! Association met for their annual meeting at the CCE office in Voorheesville, NY. Attendees were given the chance to network with other members after registering. Robert Stern of the Legislative Commission on Rural Resources gave a warm welcome to the group and spoke on the importance of agriculture to NYS's rural economy including the benefits of agri-tourism. Bill Kimball, Director of the Division of Agricultural Protection and Development Services for the NYS Dept of Ag and Markets, spoke about Agri-tourism programs in New York State, including 2007 and 2008 Agri-tourism Marketing grants program success stories and how to participate.

Diane Kinnicutt, the Tourism Matching Funds Director for NYS Division of Tourism discussed I LOVE NY and the partnership opportunities for farmers including the Explore NY program. Monika Roth of Cornell Cooperative Extension presented a review of opportunities and resources for farmers and visitors to connect together. Roth provided many ways to form those connections, for example, direct marketing, educational tourism, on-farm entertainment, outdoor recreation, and providing accommodations. Jill Adams Mancivalano of Adams Farm in Wilmington, VT discussed how Agri-tourism isn't for every farm and the reasons why it is working for their farm.

There was a wealth of very important information for the attendees of the meeting. Ommegang Brewery provided beverages to accompany the lunch and Larry Bennett spoke about the brewery's involvement with the first Farm, Cuisine, and Apple Trail in NYS. Thank you to all that attended and to everyone involved in the Annual Meeting.

NEW YORK STATE NEWS

Everything’s Not Peachy for Upstate N.Y. Fruit Growers: Worried About Market, Viruses

By Caroline Thompson, Associate Press Writer; *Lancaster Farming*

Three weeks before the peach growing season gets under way, growers here don’t know whether they will have a buyer for their crop at harvest time.

It's one of the many problems they face in uncertain times for western New York fruit growers.

The anticipated closing of a Canadian processing plant that has been buying tons of New York peaches is just the latest in a series of challenges that include a potentially devastating virus, persistent labor shortages and competition from abroad.

"What saves us is we're diversified," said James Bittner, an ownership partner at Singer Farms LLC and one of the largest growers in the Lake Ontario fruit belt. "None of us put our eggs in one basket."

CanGro Foods announced in early January that it will sell or close its St. David's, Ontario, fruit processing plant by March 31, severely diminishing the market for canning peaches that construction of the plant helped create. CanGro markets the peaches under the Del Monte label.

About 26 growers in Niagara, Orleans, Monroe and Wayne counties were contracted with CanGro to sell their peaches for \$500 per ton. Now they are scrambling to find other markets.

"Nothing's going to be as good as the deal we had, that's for sure," said Bittner, who has spent the last three months contacting potential buyers.

Another looming challenge for growers is the spring start of testing for plum pox virus and the serious measures in place to stop the invasive species from spreading.

The virus, spread by tiny aphids to peach, nectarine, apricot, and plum trees, was detected for the first time in the United States in 1999, in Pennsylvania, and has been found in Canada since 2000. It was found in two locations in Niagara County in 2006 and five more places, in Niagara County and neighboring Orleans County, in 2007. No one knows what 2008 will bring.

Once plum pox virus is found in a tree, growers have to rip out all susceptible trees within a roughly 150-foot radius and are barred from planting new trees in a 1 ½ mile radius. The restrictions must stay in place for at least three years.

Six growers, including Bittner, have had to destroy some 26 acres of trees, said Robert Mungari of the State Department of Agriculture and Markets.

A compensation program reimburses growers for lost trees but provides no relief for neighboring farms in the no-plant zone. So far, between \$750,000 and \$800,000 has been paid out, with about \$259,000 coming from the state and the rest from the federal government, Mungari said.

Though it poses no threat to humans, plum pox virus shortens the life expectancy and productivity of trees, Mungari said, "and more importantly, it was a disease we didn't

have here in North America, so it's an actionable pest by federal and state standards."

In the coming weeks, state inspectors will collect leaves from thousands of commercial trees across the state to be analyzed. The United States Department of Agriculture, meanwhile, will conduct its own survey of backyard fruit trees on homeowner's property.

In Pennsylvania, after a concerted eradication effort, there were no positive findings in 2007, authorities said. Canada, however, reported about 261 detections in Ontario, leading to increased sampling and the removal of higher numbers of trees across the border.

The closing of the CanGro processing plant may inadvertently help with eradication efforts by forcing Canadian farmers to leave peach-growing or reduce their tree stock. The CanGro plant received more than half its inventory from Canadian growers. New York farmers were happy to supply some of the rest, especially after the company offered farmers \$1.50 per tree in the late 1990s to plant processing peaches, Bittner said.

The state harvested about 7,000 tons of peaches from 1,700 acres in 2006.

Bittner's farm was set to grow 800 tons of processing peaches, worth \$400,000, mainly for CanGro in the coming season. That represents about a third of the farm's income.

For them to close up has really put a crimp on us, and it's sad," Bittner said, "because it's been a bright spot for the farm, profit-wise. It's been a bright spot for the last five or six years."

There are not many options for growers. A Michigan processing plant may take some peaches, but shipping costs would eat into the profits. There has been talk of a plant opening in the state, but nothing has been finalized.

**Taste of New York Series Showcases New York Agricultural Bounty:
Series Premieres on WXXI-TV Saturday, April 5 at 2:30 p.m.**

Few people know that farming is New York State's #1 industry, or even that farms are where our food comes from.

To change that, WXXI Public Broadcasting in Rochester and the New York Wine & Grape Foundation have co-produced a 13-part series Taste of New York which crisscrosses the state talking to the winemakers, farmers and restaurateurs who produce some of the finest wines and foods in the world.

We are proud to be able to present the fascinating story of New York agriculture, and the colorful personalities responsible for bringing their fine products to us, said Norm Silverstein, President of WXXI. The depth and breadth of wine and food production in

New York State far exceeded our expectations, and we look forward to sharing this fascinating discovery with our viewers.

Each segment begins and ends at the New York Wine & Culinary Center, a new world-class gateway to agri-tourism and culinary tourism. Series host Susan Hunt and Executive Chef Dan Martello introduce the region she will visit and, when she returns, they create a special dish using the food ingredients and wines from that region.

To learn more about the series visit www.WXXI.org/tasteofny.

Upstate Farms Find Foreign Workers Vital, Risky

By Glenda Gephart

Gannett News Service

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MONTOUR FALLS — Foreign workers are a vital component of Upstate New York's agricultural industry, but hiring foreign workers poses many legal challenges for employers.

Even just talking about hiring foreign workers can land farm owners in a load of potential trouble, Mark James, executive director of the New York Farm Bureau Finger Lakes Office in Seneca Falls, told a meeting of the Schuyler County League of Women Voters on Wednesday.

In Schuyler County, upward of 40 foreign workers are employed on dairy farms and by grape growers. In the tri-county region that includes Chemung and Steuben counties, the total number of foreign workers in agriculture is about 200, said Brett Chedzoy, Schuyler County Cornell Cooperative Extension senior resource educator, focusing on agriculture and natural resources. Steuben County probably has the highest number of the three counties, he said.

Among those employed, James said, some are permanent employees and some are temporary, seasonal workers.

Big farm, big challenges

Bergen Farms, a large dairy operation based in Mecklenburg in the Town of Hector, has about 40 full-time, permanent workers, divided about equally between local workers and foreign workers, primarily young men from Mexico.

Stephanie Bergen said her family's business could not operate without the foreign workers. She said she has been hiring foreign workers for about five years because Bergen Farms could not find enough local workers interested in the many necessary jobs, including milking cows three times a day.

"It's been a pretty positive experience for us," Bergen said, describing her employees as a "stable, reliable work force."

Most men work for Bergen Farms for two to three years, and when they leave they find their own replacements, she said.

Bergen Farms provides housing for its employees.

“They leave everything behind to get here. Their goal is to come here and do their job and then go home. The pay is good, but the work is dirty and hard,” Bergen said.

“They're really doing us the favor by coming here and doing this work,” she said.

But, like other employers who hire foreign workers, Bergen Farms is faced with the challenge of assuring that the people they are hiring are working in the United States legally. The burden is on the employers and little help comes from the U.S. government, James said.

Verification difficult

Employers do their best to verify the documents presented by any potential employee: a Social Security card, a driver's license, working papers.

But, James said, the U.S. government has no reliable verification system in place. If an employer errs and accepts documents that turn out to be false, the employer loses the employee.

“Just one raid (by immigration officers) can wipe out their labor force,” he said.

Conversely, if an employer rejects documents that turn out to be true documents, the employer can be sued.

A verification system should be at the top of the list of necessary reforms in the nation's immigration policy, James said.

He said the Farm Bureau also would like to see a process that would allow people already in the United States to establish themselves legally.

“The notion of shipping 12 million people back to their homes is, quite frankly, ludicrous,” James said.

The process should allow workers to register, go through a criminal background check, perhaps pay a reasonable fine and then be permitted to stay here legally, James said.

The government has a program in place that lets farmers bring in foreign workers temporarily. But, James said, it's a costly venture.

The employer must pay the transportation of the worker from and back to his home country. The employer must provide housing and must pay a wage higher than the prevailing rate, as well as benefits. The worker may stay only for 10 months.

And, if a local person decides he or she wants the job instead, the employer is obligated by law to give it to the local person and fire the foreign worker.

“They are not displacing local workers,” James said. “People just don't want to go out and work on farms, for the most part.”

Attitude shift toward work

The grape industry certainly has seen this change in attitude toward farm work. Sue Gigliotti, who with her husband, Frank, has 20 acres of grapes in the Town of Reading, recalls when local women would work in the vineyards when their children were in school. The extra money was important to the families, she said.

However, as the job market opened up for women, fewer were interested in the tough work of the vineyards.

“We aren't big enough to have full-time workers, so we rely on the immigrants, and we have had positive results,” Gigliotti said.

Gigliotti said she checks workers' documents “religiously,” and if they don't have the proper paperwork, they may not stay.

James said false documents are readily available and are difficult to identify. The government should not be asking employers to be document experts, making decisions with legal implications without support from the agencies enforcing the laws, he said.

When farmers publicly talk about hiring foreign workers, they often set themselves up for intense scrutiny from immigration or Homeland Security, he said. James praised Bergen and Gigliotti for being willing to talk about their own experiences in a public forum.

The last comprehensive immigration law reforms were in 1986, and there was little pressure from the government to see them enforced, James said. But the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist acts changed everything, “for a lot of reasons,” he said.

For the sake of the agriculture industry, locally and nationally, something must be done, James said. Systems must be streamlined and be more accessible to employers, he said.

Simply “shutting the borders” is not the answer, James said.

“Then we're going to be in real trouble. It would cripple the economy,” he said.

James said he does not expect much to happen in the arena of immigration reform until after the presidential election.

To read this story online please visit:

<http://www.theithacajournal.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080322/NEWS01/803220362/1002>

Junior Dairy Leader program prepares next generation for farming
New York Farm Viability Institute, Inc.

On a recent wintery afternoon, two dozen young adults from across New York State gathered in a small dairy barn on the campus of Cornell University. Dressed in Carharts, wool hats, and plastic booties and gloves, the students huddled around a poster of a cow's reproductive system and recited body parts.

“Ovary, oviduct, uterine horn,” the students called out as a technician from Genex pointed to parts on the poster. The activity was preparation for a job shadowing experience few high schools can boast about, a hands-on attempt to artificially inseminate cows, as well as learn about the career from those who do it professionally.

The students are members of the current class of Junior Dairy Leaders, a program of Cornell University's animal science department and Pro Dairy, an outreach program that offers education in cow nutrition, manure handling, and farm management for farmers and agri-service professionals. The youth program aims to draw an enthusiastic and prepared next generation into farming and agri-service.

“The Number 1 goal is to increase awareness of various careers and opportunities in the dairy industry. The Number 2 goal is to build enthusiasm for careers in the dairy industry,” said Kim Skellie, an advisor to the Junior Dairy Leader program and co-owner of Hi-Brow dairy farm in Washington County.

In late 2006, the New York Farm Viability Institute awarded the Junior Dairy Leader program a grant of \$88,000 for two years of programming and documenting the relationship between completing the class, attending college and finding jobs on farms or in agri-service. The Institute is a state-funded and farmer-led nonprofit group that supports research to increase farm profits.

To read this story online please visit <http://www.nyfvi.org/press-2008-03-07d.htm>

Cayuga Lake Wine Trail's Vino Visa Coupon Book
Cayuga Wine Trail, Inc.

In 2008, the Cayuga Lake Wine Trail is offering to their customers their revised Vino Visa Coupon Book. The sixteen member wineries of the Cayuga Lake Wine Trail each have a coupon entitling you to specials and discounts through out the year. Additionally accommodations, attractions, restaurants and transportation services are offering deals to make your visit complete. Each coupon is different offering you free tastings, discounts on wine purchases and free items plus discounts on rooms, specialty sandwiches and guided tours.

Price of the Vino Visa Coupon Book is \$15.00, a great value worth over \$250.00. To purchase your Vino Visa Coupon Book contact 1-800-684-5217, order online at

www.cayugawinetrail.com or purchase at any of the wineries that are part of the trail; Montezuma Winery, Cobblestone Farm Winery, Swedish Hill Vineyard, Knapp Winery & Vineyard Restaurant, Goose Watch Winery, Buttonwood Grove Winery, Cayuga Ridge Estate Winery, Thirsty Owl Wine Co., Hosmer Winery, Sheldrake Point Vineyard and Simply Red Lakeside Bistro, Lucas Vineyards, Bellwether Hard Cider, Americana Vineyards, Six Mile Creek Vineyard, King Ferry Winery and Long Point Winery. The coupon book is valid till the end of the year and makes a great gift!

Visit us for a truly memorable experience, tasting the best wines the Cayuga Lake Wine Trail has to offer and see the beautiful sights in Finger Lakes Wine Country. Follow our maps in our 2008 brochure or print a trail map from our website.

For more information on wineries, events and to download a trail guide visit www.cayugawinetrail.com.

Maple in Manhattan Day: Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal Sponsors First Day Dedicated to New York's Maple Syrup.

Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal (D, WF), who serves on the New York State Assembly's Agriculture Committee, teamed up with the New York State Maple Producers Association to teach schoolchildren about maple syrup production in New York State as part of the first ever "Maple in Manhattan" day. On Thursday, April 11, 2008 a mobile maple exhibit traveled downstate to teach 2nd and 3rd graders from three Manhattan public schools, P.S. 199, P.S. 9 and P.S. 87, about one of New York's unique agricultural industries. Students watched demonstrations of maple tree tapping and syrup production, learned about the history of maple farming in New York, and sampled maple products.

Assemblyman Magee named New York Farm Viability Friend of the Year *New York Farm Viability Institute, Inc.*

Citing his longstanding support of agriculture in New York State, the New York Farm Viability Institute named Assemblyman Bill Magee its Friend of the Year.

Magee accepted his award during a recent presentation in Albany. "Assemblyman Magee has been a champion of New York State agriculture, someone that has used his elected office to educate about the importance of agriculture to this state's character and upstate economy, said John Lincoln, chairperson of the New York Farm Viability board of directors.

Magee has supported allocating state funds to the New York Farm Viability Institute, a farmer-led nonprofit organization that provides grants for farm-based applied research and outreach education to help New York farmers increase profits.

In 2007, the state legislature and Department of Agriculture and Markets secured \$5 million in funding for the NY Farm Viability Institute. That funding provided 36 grants to help market local farm-raised food, limit crop-damaging pests, encourage organic crop production, and explore grasses best suited for biofuel production and growing conditions in the northeast, among other projects.

Also in 2007, the state allocated \$750,000 for the newly launched New York Center for Dairy Excellence. The initiative by the New York Farm Viability Institute aims to bring together farmers, educators, researchers, agri-business personnel, government officials, and others to develop collaborative strategies to obstacles and opportunities facing dairy farming.

Magee has been a member of the New York State assembly since 1990. He has been chair of the assembly s agriculture committee since 2001.

This is the second year of the Institute s Friend of the Year program. The inaugural award went to state Senator Catharine Young.

To read this story online please visit: <http://www.nyfvi.org/press-2008-04-04a.htm>

New York Farm Viability board members return to office in 2008
New York Farm Viability Institute, Inc.

The New York Farm Viability Institute board of directors returned its slate of officers and members to a one-year term at the boards annual organizational meeting, held on March 20 in Syracuse.

John Lincoln, a dairy farmer from Bloomfield and president of the New York Farm Bureau, was re-elected chairperson of the Institutes board of directors.

Seven farmer-driven organizations representing the majority of New York farmers and the diversity of the state s agriculture each nominate a representative to the New York Farm Viability Institute board annually. The Farm Viability Institute board elects its own officers.

Lincoln operates Linholm Dairy, a registered Holstein farm in Ontario County.

Jim Bittner of Appleton was re-elected vice chairperson. Bittner is president of the New York State Horticultural Society and operator of Singer fruit farm.

Dave Wood of West Charlton was re-elected secretary/treasurer. Wood, who is also the chair of New York Farm Viability Institute Dairy Committee, operates Eildon Tweed dairy farm.

Each New York Farm Viability Institute director comes from a working farm.

Larry Eckhardt, president of the New York State Vegetable Growers Association, operates Kinderhook Creek Farm in Stephentown.

Steve Griffen, a member of the Empire State Council of Agricultural Organizations, operates Saratoga Sod in Stillwater.

Ron Robbins, a member of the New York Corn Growers, operates Harbor Dairy in Sackets Harbor.

Bob Smith, a member of the New York State Nursery and Landscape Association, lives in Springville. He works with Schichtels Nursery in Orchard Park, a wholesaler of flowering, fruit and shade trees.

Materials will appear on the New York Farm Viability website, www.nyfvi.org, in the coming months.

To read this story online please visit: <http://www.nyfvi.org/press-2008-04-04b.htm>.

Value-added products sweeten business for maple producer
Article appeared in Feb. 2008 issue of *American Agriculturalist*

A fresh look at maple confections has one fifth-generation producer predicting an income increase of 10-20 percent by 2009.

Bob Wright uses the same maple cream-making machine that his granddad, American Maple Museum Hall of Famer Leon S. Wright, Sr., used in the 1950s. However, thanks to recent hands-on training, Wright has created new product lines at Wright Farms in Franklinville, NY (Cattaraugus County).

Wright is among more than 90 producers who have attended maple confections workshops to date. Those workshops were part of an initiative funded with a \$78,000 grant from the New York Farm Viability Institute. Grant funds were for a series of trainings statewide in 2006 and 2007 to help maple producers learn techniques for making consistent and high-quality maple sugar, cream, candy and other treats, as well as to increase earnings from the high-value sweets. The project, spearheaded by Cornell University's Maple Program, recently received continuation funds of \$90,500 for work through 2009.

"Producers statewide are realizing that converting their syrup into confections can improve income four- to five-fold," says Cornell University Maple Specialist Steve Childs.

Impetus for educating producers about value-added opportunities came after a 2004 Cornell survey showed less than 10 percent of New York maple producers were making confections. Those responding to the survey reported only 8.8 percent of their gross

income was generated by value-added product sales.

To read this story online please visit: <http://www.nyfvi.org/press-2008-03-14a.htm>

Agriculture Fares Well in State Budget: Funding for Farm Product Promotion and Other Programs Pass Budget Process

New York Farm Bureau

New York Farm Bureau president John Lincoln today said that farmers should be pleased with the recently passed budget by the state legislature.

"In a very difficult budget year, our farm programs were still strongly supported in a bipartisan way," Lincoln said. "This budget is a strong statement on the importance of agriculture to our leaders in Albany."

"We are particularly grateful to Senator Catharine Young and Assemblyman Bill Magee for their advocacy for our industry," Lincoln said. "They deserve great praise for their hard work in pushing agriculture budget items in their respective legislative houses."

Key budget highlights include increased funding for animal health programs and continued funding of the various commodity promotion programs. Apple growers, wine makers and maple producers received program funds to promote their respective crops. All of that funding will help advertise and promote some of New York's fastest growing agricultural industries.

The budget also includes \$40 million in funding for the Agricultural Development Fund.

The Department of Economic Development, in consultation with State Agriculture Commissioner Patrick Hooker, has been tapped to administer the program.

Other budget victories included new program funding for Long Island deer control measures and cluster-based agribusiness development.

To read this story online please visit: <http://www.nyfb.org/nyfbnews/2008/PR-FB-FinalBudget-04-10-08.pdf>.

MARKET TRENDS

Maple Weekend 2008 March 29-30; Will It Be in Late January in 2080?

NNY Maple Producers Testing Early Tapping Opportunity

Northern New York Agricultural Development Program

Maple Weekend in 2008 was March 29-30 as current weather patterns provided for good sap flow in the maple trees of Northern New York. However, over the next century, if climate change models are correct, by the year 2080 the annual maple

production showcase at regional sugarhouses in Northern New York could be January 29-30. The climate patterns producing warmer winter weather and increased thawing events are causing some NNY maple producers to test the tapping process earlier in the winter.

Six maple producers have begun working with Brian F. Chabot of Cornell University and Uihlein Maple Research Station Director Michael Farrell to evaluate the effects of climate change on the industry that adds roughly \$1.7 million to Northern New York's economy each year.

The Northern New York Agricultural Development Program Maple Advisory Committee has given their highest priority to understanding the opportunities and consequences of tapping sugar maples for their sap earlier in the late winter-early spring.

"Maple producers have a legitimate concern about how they should be adapting to climate warming trends. Long-term sap collection records on the trees at the Uihlein Forest show that both the start and end of the sap season has moved about a week earlier in the past 30 years with an overall loss of three to four days of production," Farrell says.

Chabot, director of the Cornell University Maple Program, says, "Climate projection models suggest that the sap season with the freeze-thaw conditions needed to make the sap run will continue to advance. Winter as we now know it may be replaced by spring beginning in early January."

For more information on previous maple research conducted with funding from the Northern New York Agricultural Development Program, go online to www.nnyagdev.org or <http://www.nnyagdev.org/press-03-17-08.htm> to view full story.

New York Farmer Named to First Ever Agricultural Advisory Committee for EPA. *New York Farm Bureau*

Douglas Young, one of New York's premier dairy producers from Union Springs, Cayuga County, NY, has been named to a newly formed Farm, Ranch, and Rural Communities Advisory Committee for the Environmental Protection Agency.

Young has demonstrated that he has the knowledge, enthusiasm, ability, and the desire to make significant contributions to the Advisory Committee," said John Lincoln, president of New York Farm Bureau, who nominated Young to the committee.

The committee was formed to help the EPA strengthen relations with the agriculture community. Thirty members were named.

"Through increased cooperation with our agriculture partners, EPA is planting the seeds to reap both environmental and economic benefits for the American people," said EPA Administrator Stephen L. Johnson.

EPA officials say they are looking forward to helping the committee provide EPA with solutions that benefit agriculture, the environment, and the economy.

Young has been at the cutting edge of New York's efforts to work with state and federal agencies to implement innovative technologies that will improve environmental quality. Young is also a state leader in agriculture, and has embraced innovative techniques and adapted such techniques and practices on his farming operations.

He has worked with Cornell University engineers, research and extension faculty and industry personnel to explore new technologies.

"Young is demonstrating his dedication to the industry and working to enable agriculture remains profitable while protecting the environment," Lincoln said.

For more information visit: www.nyfb.org.

NATIONAL NEWS

The Food Citizen: Support new spending in Farm Bill *The Ithaca Journal*

\$10 billion. That's the amount policy makers have been asked to cut from the new farm bill to keep it from exceeding \$280 billion — and from getting a Presidential veto. The farm bill — omnibus legislation that governs U.S. farm subsidies, international trade, biofuels, land stewardship, rural economic development, and nutrition programs like food stamps — is overhauled by Congress every five or so years.

If your eyes haven't glazed over, you're one of an increasing number of people who have cottoned (or corned) on to the importance of the farm bill to rural communities, food prices, agriculture land, and to public health.

As Senator Tom Harkin of Iowa, chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, said last July, "This is not just a farm bill. It's a food bill, and Americans who eat want a stake in it." If this is true, and I believe it is, then food citizens need to ask themselves — and, while they're on recess, their representatives — exactly how the farm bill supports things they value.

Will the policy improve availability of nutrient-rich foods, such as fruits and vegetables, at prices affordable to all Americans? Will it protect natural resources, benefit rural communities, and minimize negative public health impacts of agricultural practices? Will it support the U.S. Dietary Guidelines? Will the policy strengthen local and regional food systems?

Both the House and Senate versions contain new or modestly expand on existing programs that will, to some extent, do all these things. But unfortunately, when pushed to

decide where to trim that obligatory \$10 billion, these small programs — that could benefit many — will most likely be eliminated or squeezed.

To read this story online please visit;

<http://www.theithacajournal.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2008803240309>

RESOURCES

Farmers Market Forum

The spring edition of the Farmers Market Forum, the quarterly newsletter of the Farmers Market Federation of NY, is now available on the web. The link to the Spring 2008 Farmers Market Forum is

<http://www.nyfarmersmarket.com/PDF2008/newsletterspring08.pdf>

Please feel free to make copies to distribute to the farmers and vendors in your market or direct anyone interested to the website to enroll in the email announcement of the newsletter.

The Spring edition of the Farmers Market Forum is brought to you in partnership with the NYS Department of Agriculture and Market's Pride of New York program. Visit their website at www.prideofny.com.

Also sponsoring the Spring edition is Johnny's Seeds. Visit www.johnnyseeds.com for a full catalog.

Farm-to-Consumer Legal Defense Fund

Are you concerned with:

- * A consumer's right to consume non-toxic products directly from the farm (e.g. raw milk)?
- * Protecting small & medium-size farmers and ranchers from the threats of the National Animal Identification System (NAIS) or other misguided governmental actions?
- * The increasing consolidation of our food supply into the hands of a few large, multinational corporations who squander resources to ship foods from as far away as China?
- * The infiltration of genetically modified plants and animals in our food supplies?

Those involved in developing the Farm to Consumer Legal Defense Fund (FTCLDF) are concerned as well. We have many different backgrounds, many different areas of expertise. Some of us have been members of the farming community for our entire lives; others have taken an interest in our local farms because of the many health benefits we have seen from consuming these foods. We are diverse but unified in purpose.

The FTCLDF provides affordable legal counsel to farmers and consumers in need, it will make the needs of the small farmer and the concerned consumer known to our government, and it will promote our shared vision: Sustainable farming and direct farm-to-consumer transactions.

Won't you help?

E-lert Service: This is a free service! All you have to do is provide us with your email address and you will begin receiving email alerts regarding the latest Federal and State legislative issues. Send an email to info@farmtoconsumer.org

For more information on this resource please visit <http://www.ftcldf.org/>.

EMPLOYMENT

For employment opportunities please visit <http://www.nyfarms.info/JobListings.html>.

WHAT'S IN SEASON?

We're glad you asked. This month we're featuring LAMB and GOAT. If you are a farmer and not listed on this website please send us your contact information.

<http://www.nyfarms.info/whatsinseason.html>

SAVE THE DATE

For an updated calendar of events, visit: <http://www.nyfarms.info/calendar.html>

Like News to Share, then Join NY Farms! Download membership application at <http://www.nyfarms.info>. Please check the calendar at <http://www.nyfarms.info/calendar.html> for upcoming events.