

# NY Farms!

Building Farmer-Consumer Connections in the Empire State

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NY Farms! publishes News to Share 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](http://www.nyfarms.info). We would appreciate receiving your information and announcements for News to Share, at [nyfarms@nyfarms.info](mailto:nyfarms@nyfarms.info). **Please also use this address to subscribe or unsubscribe.**

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## NEWS TO SHARE

January 22, 2009

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## NEWS FROM NY FARMS

### Taste the Regions of NY project update

New to the New York Farms! website is the link to Taste the Regions of New York. By clicking on the logo on the home page you will be taken to the new Taste the Regions page, with a link to each of the five regions we are presenting in our gift boxes. The producers listed will have the opportunity to have their products in a regional box as well as the state-wide box available from Nelson Farms. Browse through the amazing products listed, and be sure to check back as we will be updating producers and products weekly. Visit the [website here>>>](#)

## NATIONAL NEWS

### Multiple 2008 Studies Confirm Genetically Modified Crops Damage Human Health and the Environment

*From Organic Bytes; Organic Consumers Association*

Although genetically modified (GM) corn is banned in most of the world, it has been approved as "safe" for human consumption in the U.S. for 12 years and is now likely unknowingly consumed, in one form or another, by more than 90% of Americans on a regular basis. But a recent series of peer-reviewed studies were published in 2008 confirming previous studies indicating potentially severe health and environmental problems associated with the biotech crops. Recent alarming scientific research includes:

- 1) A new long term study by the Austrian government confirms previous findings that consumption of GM corn, for as little as 20 weeks, can damage the reproductive system, lower fertility rates and increase illness and death rates in offspring. Learn more [here](#).
- 2) Researchers in Mexico reported in December that some popular varieties of GM corn negatively affect the learning response of bees. Scientists say this may be an indicator of

the cause of Colony Collapse Disorder, a recent catastrophic and mysterious die-off of as much as 30% of the world's honey bee population in the past couple of years. Learn more [here](#).

3) In Italy, scientists published a study that put the biotech industry in a public relations tailspin. In the study, laboratory tests showed a direct connection between consumption of GM corn and a damaged immune system. Learn more [here](#).

### **COOL's Impact Surfacing, Clearer Picture to Come**

#### ***Pork Magazine***

The U.S. mandatory country-of-origin labeling law has been in place for less than four months, and some impact on the U.S. market is evident. Of course, Canada and Mexico filing a complaint with the World Trade Organization is an entirely different kind of impact that has yet to play out.

According to John Lawrence, Iowa State University agricultural economist, the number of Canadian slaughter hogs entering the United States during the first 50 weeks of 2008 was down 39 percent compared with the same period in 2007. More specific to COOL, the Sept. 1-Dec. 15 period, marked a 70 percent decline from 2007 levels. Reflecting a possible trend as COOL settled in further, the November/December combined numbers show a 78 percent drop from 2007.

"Part of that reflects Canada's herd liquidation, and higher grain and energy prices kept more Canadian hogs at home," notes Lawrence. "COOL may have had some impact; there were definitely fewer Canadian market hogs coming to U.S. plants after COOL."

As for Canadian weaned and feeder pigs, 2008 showed slower growth in exports to the United States. For the first 50 weeks of the year, numbers were up 5 percent compared with 2007. Again, the trend appears to change as COOL implementation materializes. The Sept. 1-Dec. 15 period shows an 11 percent decline, while the November/December level was down 18 percent from 2007's level.

Read more [here>>>](#)

### **NEW YORK STATE NEWS**

#### **NNY Agricultural Development Program Adds Resources for Goat Producers; Meetings Set for January 31, 2009**

##### ***Northern New York Agricultural Development Program***

The farmer-led Northern New York Agricultural Development Program has added resources for meat and dairy goat producers to its website at [www.nnyagdev.org](http://www.nnyagdev.org).

The nnyagdev.org website includes fact sheets prompted by the Empire State Meat Goat Producers' Association (ESMGPA) and prepared by Cornell University's Animal Science Department on feeding, breeding, pasture management, health care and the Kidding with Confidence mentoring handbook sponsored by Cornell Cooperative Extension and ESGMGA on the site.

A January 31st meeting set for 1-3 pm to provide resources and information for those

raising or interested in raising meat, dairy and pet goats will be held at the Cornell Cooperative Extension of St. Lawrence County Learning Farm in Canton and telecast to the Extension offices in Watertown and Westport.

The meeting will cover general goat management and care and marketing. The meetings are free, however, pre-registration is requested - call Cornell Cooperative Extension at 315-379-9192 x234 for St. Lawrence County, at 315-788-8450 for Jefferson County, and 518-962-4810 for Essex County (pre-registration required).

[Read more here>>>](#)

### **Commissioner Gives Annual State Of Agriculture Address**

#### ***NYS Dept of Ag & Markets***

“I believe farming and agriculture in New York has a promising future.” New York State Agriculture Commissioner Patrick Hooker today gave the 10th annual State of New York Agriculture address at the 177th Annual Forum of the New York State Agricultural Society in Liverpool. The Commissioner recognized the more than 300 agricultural leaders in attendance, acknowledging their personal resolve to seek solutions to issues that not only confront agriculture, but the entire State of New York.

The topic of this year’s Annual Forum was planning for the future, and provided attendees with insight on how to plan for both expected and unexpected changes. During the Commissioner’s remarks, he mentioned that “With all the changes impacting the State and its farms – the economy, technology, weather, energy costs and more – New York is still a very powerful state with capable and motivated workers, a diverse economy, and extraordinary entrepreneurs, educators and research facilities... Together we can face the toughest challenge and solve any problem.”

[Read more here>>>](#)

### **Farmers’ Markets Open For The Winter In New York State**

#### **Fresh Produce, Local Foods Still Available at Many Winter Farmers’ Markets**

#### ***NYS Dept of Ag & Markets***

New York State Agriculture Commissioner Patrick Hooker today encouraged consumers to seek out local produce and other New York produced foods at farmers’ markets, even during these cold winter months. There are nearly 50 winter farmers’ markets throughout the State that have moved their operations inside for the winter, while still offering locally produced goods.

“Just because it’s cold outside does not mean you can no longer get local farm fresh produce and New York produced goods,” the Commissioner said. “There are many storage and root vegetables, along with fruits, dairy products, wine, maple syrup, and more that are available during the winter months in New York. Because the demand for local food is so great, many farmers’ markets have opted to stay in operation throughout the winter months. With winter farmers’ markets popping up in communities all over, New Yorkers will have outlets for fresh, local foods all year long, and farmers will have the opportunity to generate income year round.”

Read more [here>>>](#)

## **RISK MANAGEMENT**

### **Farm Risk Management, Crop Insurance and Planning for 2009**

#### ***Update from the NYS Dept of Ag's Crop Insurance Education program***

To help farmers with their risk management planning for the coming growing season, a series of 20 information sessions are planned throughout New York State starting in mid-January. They are scheduled well ahead of important deadlines for the purchase or modification of crop insurance policies. They are meant to complement, but not replace, working with a crop insurance agent or FSA representative. All of the sessions will be carrying the message that the 2008 Farm Bill requires that most crops be enrolled with crop insurance or FSA's Non-Insured Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) in order to be eligible for crop disaster payments. Farmers who purchase coverage at higher levels will now receive increased guarantees not only for crop insurance but disaster protection as well.

The majority of the sessions will deal with spring planted crops for which policies can be purchased this year up to March 16. Farmers who missed fall crop insurance deadlines may be able to restore eligibility for crop disaster payments by enrolling in a whole farm revenue protection policy called AGR-Lite (Adjusted Gross Revenue) also by March 16. Most information sessions will review that option. There will also be crop insurance meetings with more targeted focus, for example Onions (January 22 in Oswego County), Soybeans (February 2 in Jefferson County) and the risk management needs of organic growers (February 10, NYCO meeting in Geneva, NY). FSA Borrower Credits are available for attending these information sessions.

Participation in crop insurance has grown substantially in New York State in recent years. At the end of 2008, New York State had \$353,470,794 in crop insurance protection compared to \$82,608, 256 in 1998. One of the areas of potential growth are the crop insurance policies that extend protection from yields to market prices. Last year, many farmers benefited from Crop Revenue Coverage (CRC) who experienced reduced yields and declining fall market prices. Most of the upcoming sessions will deal with important changes in the 2009 CRC policies that may make this approach an even more attractive investment for corn and soybean producers.

To assist you in finding a workshop nearest you, all information sessions for Winter 2009 are now posted at the New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets website. If you have questions, please feel free to contact Christopher Reed, NY Crop Insurance Education Program, at (518) 485-8935 or email [chris.reed@agmkt.state.ny.us](mailto:chris.reed@agmkt.state.ny.us).

Visit the NY Crop Insurance Education Program Website [here>>>](#)

*New York Crop Insurance Education Program*  
Risk Management Agency USDA  
New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets



## GRANTS

### **Loan Guarantees Available for Enterprises Involved in Local and Regional Food Distribution, Processing, Aggregation, and Marketing**

#### *Northeast Midwest Institute*

With the interim rule (i.e. program guidelines) being implemented January 16, 2009<sup>1</sup>, federal loan guarantees will be available and prioritized for enterprises involved in local and regional food distribution. The 2008 Farm Bill also provided for 5% of the entire Rural and Business and Industries Program to be available for this priority – but only until April 1<sup>st</sup> of each calendar year. Projects which apply after April 1 will still be eligible, but will compete among the general application pool on a first-come first-serve basis.

Loan Guarantees are designed to “back” or secure a private bank loan. This program allows for loans of up to \$5 million to receive an 80% guarantee. The maximum loan value is \$25 million, and up to \$40 million for cooperatively-organized entities of agricultural producers. The average loan value being guaranteed by this program is for \$2 million. Loans of \$400,000 and under have a simplified application process.

To apply for a guarantee, an individual interested in the loan guarantee or a lending institution may contact their state’s USDA Rural Development Office [here](#).

[Read more here>>>](#)

## OPPORTUNITIES

### **Announcing 2009 Online Courses for Beginning Farmers**

#### *CCE NY Beginning Farmer Project*

The NY Beginning Farmer Project announces the next round of online courses designed to help plan new farm enterprises.

Starting Feb. 18, “Taking Stock: Evaluating Your Resources and Choosing an Enterprise” is 5 weeks long. The second course, “Marketing and Profits: Making Money Selling What You Grow” is 6 weeks long and begins March 18. Both courses are designed to stand alone, or build on each other by being taken back-to-back. They will be taught by educators from Cornell Cooperative Extension, and both courses will incorporate real-time interaction with webinars.

Register soon as space is limited. Cost is \$100 per course or \$150 for both.

[Visit this page](#) for computer requirements and registration details.

## CALL TO ACTION

### **NRDC Announces First Annual Growing Green Awards to Honor Extraordinary Contributions in Sustainable Food**

#### ***Natural Resources Defense Council***

The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) announces its first annual *Growing Green Awards* to recognize individuals that have demonstrated original leadership in the field of sustainable food. Through this national award, NRDC will recognize extraordinary contributions that advance ecologically integrated farming practices, climate stewardship, water stewardship, farmland preservation, and social responsibility from farm to fork.

A *Growing Green Award* will be given to an outstanding individual in each of three categories, including Food Producer, Business Leader, and Thought Leader. A \$10,000 cash prize will be awarded in the Food Producer category and all winners will be widely celebrated through media outreach and to NRDC's networks. Award selections will be made by an independent panel of sustainable food experts. Information about award eligibility, selection criteria and process, and the award selection panel are provided below.

[Read more here>>>>](#)

## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

### **Eat the Stimulus: Investing in a new food system should be part of the economic-spending package**

#### ***Grist Magazine***

President-elect Barack Obama and the new Congress can't afford to turn their attention to reforming the food system.

We've got two wars to fight, the Middle East conflict is raging again, the financial system is in chaos, and layoffs are mounting. And don't forget the likelihood of trillion-dollar annual budget deficits for years to come. Food, it's clear, is just too banal when matched up against those challenges.

That's the conventional wisdom, anyway.

Even some veteran food-reform advocates accept the "food-must-wait" logic. "I think it's somewhere between naïve and fairy tale to think [Obama's] No. 1 focus is going to be on food," Ann Cooper recently told *The New York Times*. Cooper is the "renegade lunch lady" who's made a mission of turning public-school cafeterias into places where people actually cook nutritious food. When someone as bold as she preaches patience, it's time to sit up and take note.

[Read more here>>>>](#)

## FARMLAND PRESERVATION

### **How can we save enough farmland to maintain our food chain?**

#### ***The Food Chain***

Cities are eating up our prime farmland at the rate of two acres per minute 24-7-365. This loss of farmland leads us to ask...How can we save enough farmland to maintain our food chain? Michael Olson's Food Chain Radio hosts Ellie Kastanopolous from Equity Trust and Jody Bolluyt from Hudson Valley's Roxbury Farm for a conversation about holding on to farmland.

Listen by clicking [here>>>](#)

**The Food Chain** is an audience-interactive newstalk radio program that airs live on Saturdays from 9am to 10am Pacific time. The Food Chain, which has been named the Ag/News Show of the Year by California's legislature, is hosted by Michael Olson, author of the Ben Franklin Book of the Year award-winning MetroFarm, a 576-page guide to metropolitan agriculture.

Listen to other podcasts on Food Chain Radio by clicking [here>>](#)

## NUTRITION

### **Food trends for '09: home cooking and certified fish**

#### ***Special to the News Sentinel***

Every year consumers grow more nutritionally savvy and more aware of the downsides of favorite foods.

In 2009, watch for traditional dieting to wane as people shift to healthier lifestyles for the long term; for heightened concern about what fish is acceptable to eat; and for a growing wariness of gluten.

And tapping into rising concerns about sourcing, more producers will supply product codes that allow consumers to learn just where their apples were grown or chickens raised.

As the recession deepens, dining out will decline and home cooks will sharpen their knives and their repertoires. Trendspotting experts at JWT, a national advertising agency, predicts the following fads for 2009:

1. Sous vide at home: High-end restaurants have been using sous vide, a technique in which food is vacuum-packed and cooked at precise temperatures, for several years. Now this exacting method, which requires less fat yet results in juicy, intensely flavorful dishes, is trickling down to the home chef. Per Se chef Thomas Keller's latest cookbook, "Under Pressure," focuses on sous vide; upscale cookware chain Sur La Table recently started offering sous vide appliances; and ambitious home cooks are trading tips online.

2. Gluten-free: Gluten is becoming an increasingly popular villain, even though celiac disease, an autoimmune disorder triggered by gluten, affects only about 1 percent of the population. Proponents say a gluten-free diet can stimulate weight loss and help with chronic intestinal issues as well as diseases including autism and schizophrenia. While these benefits are unproven, Mintel forecasts 15-25 percent annual growth for gluten-free foods in the U.S. over the next few years.

[Read more here>>>](#)

## **RECOMMENDED READING**

### **Winter 2008 Edition of Farmers Market Forum**

#### *Farmers Market Federation of New York*

The Winter 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 Winter 2008 Farmers Market Forum is [here>>>](#)

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 Winter 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](http://www.prideofny.com). Also sponsoring the Winter edition is Johnny's Seeds. Visit [www.johnnyseeds.com](http://www.johnnyseeds.com) for a full catalog.

### **Choose Right Supermarket Shopping Guide**

This is your resource for simplifying making healthy food choices. It's like walking through the grocery store with your own personal nutrition expert! To purchase the shopping guide for \$12.99 please visit [this page>>>](#)

### **Weekly Harvest Newsletter**

#### *National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service*

[Read the newsletter here>>>](#)

### **Food & Environment Electronic Digest - January 2009**

#### *Union of Concerned Scientists*

The Union of Concerned Scientists is the leading science-based nonprofit working for a healthy environment and a safer world. UCS combines independent scientific research and citizen action to develop innovative, practical solutions and to secure responsible changes in government policy, corporate practices, and consumer choices.

[Read the newsletter here>>>](#)

## **CLASSIFIEDS**

The old Schallers plant, on Rt 8 in Bridgewater, NY in Oneida County is going up for foreclosure auction on January 28th at 10:00am at the Oneida County Court House on Elizabeth St. in Utica. Only the real estate will be sold--the slaughterhouse, the house and 11 acres. The processing equipment is owned by someone else. If you are interested call Justin Brown at First Pioneer Farm Credit in Cobleskill (518) 296-8188.

## **WHAT'S IN SEASON?**

We're glad you asked. This month we're featuring **CHEESE**. 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>

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