

Agricultural Report

Connecticut Department of Agriculture
 Dannel P. Malloy, Governor
 Steven K. Reviczky, Commissioner



Wednesday, July 25, 2018

FARM-TO-WHOLESALE PROGRAMS

Bureau of Agricultural Development and Resource Conservation

The Department of Agriculture (DoAg) works with Connecticut farmers and wholesale distributors of produce, meat, milk, eggs, and other agricultural products to encourage the sale and distribution of Connecticut Grown products.

In an effort to increase sales of Connecticut Grown agricultural products and enhance Connecticut farm viability, DoAg has developed the Farm-to-Wholesale program, which brings together five significant wholesale distribution sectors.

The program incorporates the Farm-to-Chef, Farm-to-School, Farm-to-Institution (Higher Education, Healthcare), Farm-to-Grocery/Big Box, and Farm-to-State Agency sectors.

In addition to serving Connecticut's agricultural producers, the program assists Connecticut Grown distributors and retail stores, Connecticut institutions, and students at Connecticut's schools.

The Norwich Public School's Farm-to-School program is one example of the program's success.

Norwich Public Schools started out buying a few cases of apples from a local orchard every other week. They have expanded to now bring more than 10,000 pounds of locally grown produce each year to 27 school cafeterias in three New London County school districts.

Agriculture Commissioner Steven K. Reviczky said facilitating wholesale sales of Connecticut Grown product is an agency-wide priority involving Agricultural Development, Regulatory Services, and Aquaculture staff.

"Marketing and promotion of Con-

necticut Grown product is an important part of what we do for Connecticut farm families," said Reviczky. "We also work hard to provide Connecticut famers with the regulatory guidance and services required to participate in the wholesale market."

DoAg recently partnered with the University of Connecticut (UConn) Extension to host an educational meeting for wholesale buyers of fresh produce regarding the new Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA)'s Produce Safety rule (PSR).

More than 60 people representing wholesalers, restaurants, and schools attended the July 17, 2018, meeting that was intended to help attendees understand what the PSR means to both the region's farmers and to those who buy their product.

DoAg will also be working with UConn Extension to conduct On-Farm Readiness Review (OFRR)s for Connecticut farms to help farmers align what they are doing with what is required in the PSR. The OFRR was developed to help farmers understand the details and implications of the PSR.

On March 6, 2018, DoAg held a wholesale readiness training at the Lyceum in Hartford for Connecticut agricultural producers interested in exploring intermediary markets and opportunities.

The training provided Connecticut producers with information about the risks and opportunities for wholesale producers, post-harvest handling, and FSMA updates, followed by one-on-one meetings with buyers from area retailers and distributors.

The one-on-one meetings provided

(continued on Page 3)



Norwich Public Schools provides students with locally grown food through the Farm-to-School program. Photo courtesy of Michael D. Tedesco.

(continued from Page 1)

a structured space for producers to make business connections and create opportunities for sales.

In addition to the trainings, networking opportunities, and on-farm reviews, DoAg collaborates with other organizations and agencies in its efforts to promote Farm-to-Wholesale sales, and to promote locally grown food.

State of Connecticut partners include the Department of Education, Department of Administrative Services, Department of Economic and Community Development's Office of Tourism, and the UConn Extension.

Private partners include the School Nutrition Association of Connecticut (SNACT), FoodCorps, and Farm-to-Institution New England (FINE).

According to FINE, Connecticut institutions—including schools, colleges, and hospitals—spend more than \$27 million on local food and serve more than 15 million meals each year.

Additionally, FINE reports that 80 Connecticut farmers sell to wholesalers, which then distribute to local schools. Nine major wholesalers are committed to selling Connecticut Grown food to schools.

According to the 2015 U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm to School Census, 97 of Connecticut's 187 school districts participate in farm-to-school activities.

The recent growth in the number of new Connecticut farms and increased interest and concern for local food has contributed to an increase in demand for Connecticut Grown food from institutions.

In 2017, the program met its participation goals which included increasing Facebook followers by 5-10% and expanding the wholesale producer listings to include 10 new farms for Farm-to-School and Farm-to-Wholesale sales. The program also continued to develop its five sector network through a variety of outreach and coordination efforts.

In 2018, DoAg made several adjustments to the Farm-to-Wholesale program in order to help reach its goals.

These efforts include increasing the number of subscribers to the monthly Farm-to-Chef newsletter (currently at more than 1,100) by 5-10% to include all sectors including consumers.

The program has also continued to collaborate with representatives of the five sector groups to encourage participation and implement programs that will benefit all stakeholders.

Part of the Farm-to-Wholesale program involves maintaining a database of producers and buyers to facilitate the sales of Connecticut Grown products, which currently includes information for 117 small and large wholesale farms.

In 2018, the program also intends to increase farmer participation by 10% and to update the database of producers and buyers to include food safety certifications.

DoAg maintains consistent communication with program participants and will continue outreach efforts to wholesale farmers and those looking to enter new markets to ensure the Farm-to-Wholesale program is a valuable resource for both producers and consumers of Connecticut Grown products.

ADVERTISEMENTS

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56-R. 6 year old boar, excellent manners. Good breeder, trailer loads easily. Must be seen to appreciate. Yorkshire, Landrace, and Heritage. Call for more information. 860-668-2181.

58-R. Garlic, organically, locally grown for fall planting. Available in August. 860-391-3466 or jos@festivagardens.net.

60-R. For sale: 4 acre irrigation system, also 2 water pumps. Farmall I6 and BN. 860-237-1107.

61-R. 1010C J.D. bulldozer diesel with six way manure blade and log winch. Needs T.L.C. \$3,250.00. 2011 Ford Super Duty 350 dump truck, 1,300 miles. Like new. Best offer above \$20,000.00. Homemade flatbed trailer. Heavy duty with winch. Needs some work. \$1,500.00. 860-889-6568.

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63. 4x5 net wrapped bales, 1st cutting 2018. Under cover when baled. \$45.00/bale. 860-672-6237.

64-R. Registered Hereford bulls, 1 yearling, and 5 weaning age. All halter broke. Old Beech Farm 860-693-2052.

65-R. Hay tedder for sale: New Holland#162, new hubs, pins, and bushings. 16", 4 baskets. Works great, needs nothing. \$3,000.00 or BO. 860-823-9349.

66-R. Hay tedder for sale: SITREX # ST 520H. Works great, needs nothing, 16', 4 baskets, ready to go: \$2,500.00 or BO. 860-823-9349.

WANTED

7-R. Livestock wanted: Dairy cattle, heifers of any age, beef cows, bulls, steers, feeder cattle, veal, groups of sheep and goats. RyanM01@comcast.net or 860-655-0958. If no answer, leave message. All calls returned.

MISCELLANEOUS

6-R. Farm/Land specializing in land, farms, and all types of Real Estate. Established Broker with a lifetime of agricultural experience and 40 years of finance. Representing both Buyers and Sellers. Call Clint Charter of Wallace-Tetreault Realty (860) 644-5667.

CT RC&D HOSTS HEALTHY SOILS WORKSHOP

The Connecticut Resource Conservation and Development (CT RC&D) will host a *Healthy Soils Workshop* focusing on dairy farms on August 9, 2018, at Oakridge Dairy, 33 Jobs Hill Rd, Ellington, CT.

The workshop will feature keynote speaker Tom Kilcer of Advanced AG Systems, who brings 34 years experience as a Cornell Cooperative Extension Field Crop and Soils Educator.

Topics will include boosting the energy of haylage by 16%, reducing the weather risk for hay crop silage, double cropping-making money on both ends of the season, yielding results from field trials, and optimizing nitrogen.

To register online visit www.CTRCD.org. Cost to attend is \$25.00 per person and includes lunch. For additional information call Amanda Fargo-Johnson at 860-345-3977.

NEW UCONN EXTENSION VEGETABLE EDUCATOR

The University of Connecticut (UConn) Extension has added Dr. Shuresh Ghimire to their staff as a vegetable educator. Dr. Ghimire has a PhD in horticulture and is based in the Extension office at the Tolland Agricultural Center in Vernon.

Prior to joining UConn, Dr. Ghimire was at Washington State University studying crop yields and quality with biodegradable plastic mulch for pumpkin and sweet corn production. He has also done work on the effects of organic manures and urea on peppers. To learn more about the UConn Vegetable Crops IPM program visit <http://ipm.uconn.edu>.

HARVEST NEW ENGLAND AGRICULTURE MARKETING CONFERENCE AND TRADE SHOW

The biennial Harvest New England Agricultural Marketing Conference and Trade Show returns to Sturbridge, MA on February 27-28, 2019.

The Harvest New England Agricultural Marketing Conference and Trade Show is New England's premier agricultural marketing conference.

Conference organizers are currently accepting applications for conference workshop presentations. Proposals are due by August 3, 2018.

Topic areas of interest include farm transition/succession planning; women in agriculture; grant writing; media/ag education; social media and online marketing; and business planning, accounting, and expansion.

With more than 800 people expected in attendance and a trade show of nearly 100 exhibitors, this is New England's largest agricultural conference solely dedicated to agricultural marketing.

Farmers of all types and sizes, new and established, from throughout New England, attend to boost their marketing and business skills.

The goal of the conference is to provide practical agricultural marketing education and information to farmers in New England which they can apply to their agribusiness.

The complete request for presentations (RFP) is available at www.harvestnewengland.org. For additional information about the RFP contact David Webber at 617-626-1754 or David.Webber@state.ma.us.

CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



CTGrown.gov

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