



CT Department of Agriculture

December 2008

Briefs

DEDICATION

This issue of our newsletter is dedicated to Henry Rose of Rose's Berry Farm, who left this earth 11/29/08. Henry will be deeply missed by everyone who knew him. The farm continues to operate with Henry's business partner, wife, and best friend, Sandi, at the helm.

ANNUAL MEETING 1/21/09

Please register now for the 1/21/09 Farm-to-Chef Annual Meeting in Farmington. We have a terrific day shaping up. Join us to participate in discussion of the topics you deemed most important to you and to network with other producers, providers, and users of CT Grown.

We need additional volunteers to help provide lunch. Cost of ingredients is reimbursable. Please contact Linda.Piotrowicz@ct.gov (860-713-2558) for details.

DoAG JOINT VENTURE GRANTS

The Joint Venture Grant Program will accept applications 1/1/09 - 1/31/09. This popular program offers matching funds for marketing projects that use the CT Grown logo. Eligible projects include signage, advertisements, menus, brochures, websites, etc. FTC members are encouraged to apply. This is a competitive program; applicants are not guaranteed funding. Awards will be announced in February 2009. Get the application and guidelines.

PANTONE ANNOUNCES 2009 COLOR OF THE YEAR

Mimosa has been selected by Pantone as the 2009 Color of the Year (see full story). It is easy to work bright yellow and golden hues into your crop plans and menus with CT Grown! Crookneck squash, zucchini, pattypan squash, cherries, raspberries, cauliflower, carrots, beets, onions, sweet corn, potatoes, tomatoes, peppers, wax beans, melons, hard squash, eggs, cheese, butter, honey, maple, and so much more comes in these cheerful, sunny shades. Use your imagination and cash in on this color trend!

WINTER MARKETS

A list of winter and holiday farmers' markets now is available on our website. This year brings several new markets eager to welcome you throughout the winter months. Dairy, meat, eggs, seafood, breads, greens, herbs, and specialty foods are among the CT Grown products you can find. Put on your hat and gloves and head out for some delicious fresh, CT Grown food to warm your taste buds!

VOTE FOR EDIBLE COMMUNITIES LOCAL HERO

Vote at www.ediblecommunities.com/heroes by 12/12/08.

CT Grown in Season DECEMBER

Apples Cabbage
Christmas Trees Dairy
Eggs Fin Fish Garlic
Greens Herbs
Holiday Plants Honey
Lettuce Lobster Meat
Onions Pears
Potatoes Scallops
Shellfish Specialty Foods
Turnips Winter Squash

If you need help locating any of these items, please contact us.



Contact Us

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Teamwork in Government: Grant Projects Combine Resources

By Linda Piotrowicz

As widespread economic concerns and the state budget crisis grow more dire each day, the CT Department of Agriculture (DoAG) continues to look for the most efficient and effective ways of providing valuable services to the agricultural community and people of Connecticut.

An excellent example involves a grant that DoAG was just awarded by the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service through its Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. Recent passage of the new Farm Bill made available \$123,000 to DoAG for projects that enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops in the state. After careful consideration of how these funds could best be used, Robert Pellegrino, Director of Marketing for DoAG, called Dr. Louis Magnarelli, Director of the CT Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES).

Under the state's organizational structure, DoAG and CAES are separate agencies, each with its own budget and management. At a time when every state agency is facing cuts of still-unknown proportions, it may seem counter-intuitive that one would cheerfully offer a sizable sum to another. However, that is exactly what Mr. Pellegrino did during that call to Dr. Magnarelli.

"Hi Lou. It's Bob. How's it going? Let me ask you a question...I was wondering if you could use about \$120,000 down there?"

Why would Mr. Pellegrino do such a thing? Because DoAG knows that making the entire grant available to CAES is an investment that will pay exponential long-term dividends to the farmers and residents of Connecticut.

"Working with the Experiment Station is one of the most efficient ways to use this money," Mr. Pellegrino said. "In these tight economic times, it is especially

important for us to combine our resources on projects that best serve our constituents. The Station's scientific research is a perfect complement to the marketing work we do at the Department."

"We are thrilled about this partnership," added Dr. Magnarelli. "Much of what we do at the Station is interconnected with the efforts of the Department. This is a great opportunity for both agencies to serve the public in a very logical, efficient, and cost-effective manner."

CAES is home to a family of world-class scientists that quietly work day in and day out on research projects that benefit the local agricultural community in countless ways. The \$123,000 from the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program will be used on three key projects that will have a profound impact on producers and consumers for years to come.

Dr. Abigail Maynard will head up the first project, which will study ethnic and other new vegetables well-suited for the state's farmers' markets and farm stands. Dr. Maynard will evaluate cultivars of edamame, vegetable amaranth, and pak choi. Those most suitable for cultivation in Connecticut will be identified, along with the best growing methods for each. CAES and DoAG will work together to distribute the findings to interested growers, along with technical information about other specialty ethnic vegetables that Dr. Maynard has studied, including jilo, calabaza squash, radicchio, Chinese cabbage, and globe artichoke.

As a result of this project, producers in the state will have the opportunity to become more competitive and profitable by adding crops that grow well and appeal to new customers seeking produce that has largely been previously unavailable at farmers' markets and farm stands.

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News and Events

[Firebox Restaurant](#) is launching [The Kitchen at Billings Forge](#), a non-profit, farm-to-table cooking program that will include job training, a catering business, artisanal bakery, our own garden, and cooking school for kids and adults.

[Max Downtown](#) welcomes Chef Jacques Pepin on 12/19/08 for dinner and reception celebrating his new book, *More Fast Food My Way*. Call 860-522-2530 for info and reservations.

[Restaurant du Village](#) celebrates the Festival Diane Goddess of the Hunt, 12/3/08 – 12/28/08, with a gathering of seasonal ingredients from fields, woodlands, and vineyards. Call 860-526-5301 for details.

The [Growing Green Coop](#) is hosting an informational meeting on 12/12/08 about its new food buying club. [More info.](#)

The [CT Farm Risk Management Team](#) is planning a financial planning workshop for 1/26/09. For more info, contact Joe Bonelli at joseph.bonelli@uconn.edu.

The 2009 CNLA-CGGA [Winter Symposium](#) will be held 1/14/ and 1/15/09 at Mountainridge in Wallingford. Pesticide application, disease and insect identification, water conservation, risk management, and much, much more will be covered. [Register online.](#)

The next Harvest New England Agricultural Marketing Conference and Trade Show is scheduled for 2/24/09 – 2/26/09 in Sturbridge, MA. For more info or to register online, go to the [Harvest New England website](#).

The [Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism](#) is hosting five public input sessions to help prepare their strategic plan for the next three fiscal years. Please help the Commission plan for its future as well as the future of arts, film, historic preservation, and tourism in Connecticut. [Learn more.](#)

The 2009 New England Foodservice & Lodging Expo, 3/22/09 – 3/24/09 in Boston, is introducing a new "Buy Local" program for exhibitors. For more info, see the NEFS-Expo [website](#).

[Waldingfield Farm](#) in Washington is featured in this [New York Times article](#) that also references [Old Maid's Farm](#) and [Yale University](#).

Beekeeper Andrew Cote and his [Bees without Borders](#) project are featured in this [New York Times article](#).

This [Business Week article](#) profiles Chef Jonathan Rapp of [River Tavern](#) and [Dinners at the Farm](#).

Jonathan Rapp and his business partner Drew McLachlan of [Feast Gourmet Market](#) were honored for their work with a Pathfinder Award at the 11/19/08 annual meeting of [Working Lands Alliance](#).

Chef John Turenne of Sustainable Food Systems discusses his consulting work at [Unquowa School](#) in this [YouTube video](#) excerpted from the movie *Two Angry Moms*.

This [YouTube post](#) discusses the economic balance achieved at [Unquowa School](#) by purchasing more expensive organic milk but wasting less of it.

Chefs Tim Cipriano of [New Haven Public Schools](#) and Emily Brooks of [Bridges Healthy Cooking School](#) and [Edibles Advocate Alliance](#) will do a CT Grown cooking demo 12/14/08 on WFSB-3 TV. Learn more on their new [Cooking Local website](#).

Teamwork in Government (continued)

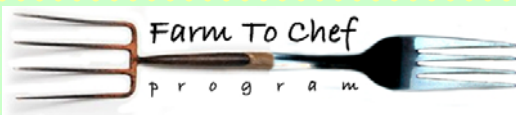
The second project funded by the grant will be led by Drs. William Nail and Francis Ferrandino, whose work will enhance the competitiveness of Connecticut's vineyards and winegrape industry. The two scientists will research the best pruning and training methods, evaluate new cultivars, and study the effectiveness of using high-grafted vines for improved winter survival and decreased disease damage. Dr. Nail and Dr. Ferrandino will distribute their findings to producers through electronic, print, and in-person methods, in collaboration with DoAG.

This work will allow Connecticut's vineyards to improve their efficiency and profitability in an industry that is relatively new to the state but making impressive strides. The number of Connecticut farm wineries has grown to 28 since the first opened 30 years ago. Collectively, the wineries are projecting total sales for 2008 of \$8,000,000 to \$10,000,000 and production of about 400,000 gallons of wine. This new research will further enhance the state's competitiveness not only on a local level, but nationally and internationally as well.

Drs. James LaMondia and Richard Cowles will direct the third grant project, the development of strawberry breeding lines that have enhanced resistance or tolerance to the most problematic insect and diseases in Connecticut. This work will result in increased strawberry yields and longer lifespan of the plants. As with the above two projects, the findings will be made readily available to producers across the state through cooperative efforts of CAES and DoAG.

Connecticut's strawberry growers utilizing this information will become more profitable and competitive in pick-your-own, farmers' market, and farm stand sales, while the customers will benefit by the availability of better-quality, more abundant fruit.

This collaboration between DoAG and CAES demonstrates how state government can work more intelligently and efficiently, even in the most challenging of times. Rest assured that both agencies will continue to seek out creative ways to best serve both the agricultural community of Connecticut as well as all of the state's residents, regardless of budget cuts or economic downturns. It is during these times that the agencies' services are needed most, as so many other means of assistance disappear.



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Farm-to-Chef is a free program that helps connect local culinary professionals with producers and distributors of CT Grown products. Informational newsletters, workshops, networking, promotions and other opportunities are provided to members as part of the program.

The program also helps the public locate restaurants and other dining facilities that serve CT Grown foods.

Farmers, wholesalers, chefs, and other food service professionals are encouraged to join. Please contact Linda at the [CT Department of Agriculture](http://www.CTDepartmentofAgriculture.com), Linda.Piotrowicz@ct.gov or 860-713-2558, for more information.