



The Market Basket

*A Quarterly Update on Agricultural Marketing in Broome County
Fall, 2007*

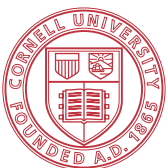
ANNOUNCEMENTS

TRIAL FARMERS' MARKETS TAKING PLACE

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Broome County has been working with Broome County and the City of Binghamton Northside Neighborhood Assembly in putting together several trial Farmers' Markets on the Northside of Binghamton and also in Otsiningo Park. The Northside of Binghamton has no grocery store and the residents would like access to fresh fruits and vegetables and homegrown meats. There will be four trial markets at this site with the winter being used to determine future implementation of a Farmers' Market in that area of the city.

The Otsiningo Park Farmers' Market trials are a collaborative effort between Broome County and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Broome County. Due to the large numbers of visitors (1.8 million) at the park on a yearly basis, and the healthy lifestyles that those people are following, it should be very successful. After the trials at the park, a feasibility plan will be put together by a team and then presented the county legislature. Future plans for this market would be a covered market.

If you are interested in becoming a vendor at either of these markets for the rest of the trials this year, or would like more information, contact Laura Biasillo, (607) 584-5007 or lw257@cornell.edu.



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CAPITOL CAMPAIGN FOR BROOME COUNTY EXTENSION LAUNCHED

On August 9th, 2007 Cornell Cooperative Extension of Broome County officially launched their capitol campaign. This campaign looks to ensure the Broome County Extension will be able to serve the public for the next century, as it has for the past one. Looking to raise \$5 million, this campaign will allow Extension to become a regional center by housing not only the Extension offices, but also NOFA-NY (Northeast Organic Farming Association) Licensing, Inc., the Soil & Water Conservation District and the USDA offices. Having these funds will also allow the current building to be updated with up-to-date technology, larger and increased number of meeting rooms, and rooms designed to better serve those groups utilizing our spaces.

For more information, or to get involved with the campaign, contact Marcia Waffner at (607) 773-1236 or mew64@cornell.edu.

NEW AGRICULTURAL WEBSITE LAUNCHED

A new agricultural website focusing on Broome County has been launched. <http://www.farmbroome.com>. This website was a collaborative effort between multiple agencies devoted to the sustainability and profitability of agriculture in our county. It features technical information, an events calendar, production information, natural resources information and forums for producers. Information on the website will be continuously updated so visit often.

Please visit the website and click on the "Contact Us" link to sign up for information in your interest area. There is also an area to leave comments.

NY HARVEST FOR NY KIDS WEEK APPROACHES

New York Harvest for New York Kids Week, October 1-5, 2007, approaches. This is a week in which schools work to bring local food products into their cafeterias and invite local farmers into their schools to educate the children about how produce is grown and the role that agriculture plays in their area.

If you would like to become involved in NY Harvest for NY Kids week in your area please contact Laura Biasillo and she will put you in touch with the appropriate person. Don't pass by this opportunity to educate the next generation.

"NATURAL" CERTIFICATION AVAILABLE TO FARMERS

Certified Natural New York is a certifying group that ensures the following: Animals are free from antibiotics, added hormones, being fed animal by-products (the farm feed tags are checked twice per year); The raising and producing of animals under humane practices, (certified and audited once per year by the Animal Welfare Institute); Animal identification program that is documented to the customer; A meat grading system to present to your customers (a score based on flavor, color, p.h., marbling, and texture); A source to network animal numbers, for needs, or over supply; A network of family farms to share in markets, genetics, management, husbandry, and overall sustainable farming practices.

Certified Natural New York is NOT a co-op, or a buyer or seller of your products.

There are currently 3 different regional Whole Foods Markets interested in purchasing products under this program. Steve Winkler is working to compile a listing of pork, beef, and lamb farmers who are interested in taking part. But it is a multi-species program and will include poultry and meat goats as it progresses.

If you would like more information on the Certified Natural New York Program contact Steve Winkler at lucki7@gisco.net.

THE NEW YORK MARKETMAKER WEBSITE GOES LIVE

The New York MarketMaker website went online mid-July, and that last week its Cornell domain name (<http://nymarketmaker.cornell.edu/>) also went 'live'.

This site promises to become a major resource for all NY producers, processors and food entrepreneurs. We've already registered the producers on the Pride of NY database, along with NOFA-NY and many of the growers contacted during off-season conferences from January through April. In fact, our New York producer database is presently equal in size to the other 4 states in the network! Producers who aren't listed can self-register or update the info that's there at present, either by clicking 'Register Your Business' or emailing us at Extension/NYC@nymarketmaker.cornell.edu.

Two innovations are being added to our site and the national network: [1] Ag Marketing Resource Center (www.agMRC.org) from Iowa State serves as the national portal for MarketMaker, and they're receiving over 3.5 million 'hits'/month; [2] A 'Buyers and Sellers' Forum is being added to our site- this new element is presently being beta-tested- both are viewable on the site in its present

form. We're at stage one but are confident that this resource will aid Extension and NY producers to develop and revivify the agricultural sector in a number of ways over the coming years.

JUST FOOD CONNECTS UPSTATE FARMS TO NYC

The interest in buying local food in New York City is growing rapidly, and farmers are needed! Just Food, a NYC based non-profit organization, helps to create marketing opportunities in NYC for farmers.

Through Just Food, there are three *innovative programs* that are looking for more farmers:

- The **City Farms** program is currently looking for farmers to sell all kinds of products to vibrant, community run markets for the 2008 and future seasons! These independent, non-profit markets support their farmers and their communities. Farmers work with experienced and knowledgeable market managers.

At these markets there is the flexibility to: sell as vendors, drop off products to be sold by community members, or arrange to have products picked up by the market.

- In the **Community Supported Agriculture** program (CSA in NYC), regional farmers sell shares in their harvest to New York City community-based groups. The urban CSA group members pay their farmer in the spring and manage all outreach, administrative and distribution logistics. Each week, from June through November, the CSA farmer delivers the week's share to a neighborhood distribution site in NYC where members collect their food. Some CSA's also provide opportunities for farmers to provide additional products like eggs, cheese, fruit, honey and more! We are currently accepting applications for the 2008 season!

- In our **Fresh Food for All** program, Just Food helps NYC food pantries or other institutions buy produce from local farmers. Like the CSA program, the farmer delivers a variety of produce to a food pantry in an urban neighborhood from June to November. Farmers are paid in full at the beginning of the season. This is a possible market for farmers transitioning to CSA because it focuses more on quantity than variety.

- **CSA and Fresh Food for All** offers farmers:
 - Knowledge of how many shares h/she will sell at the beginning of the season
 - Payment at beginning of the season (at least half of payments before the first distribution)
 - Choice of what veggies to give each week
 - Interaction with the wonderful people and vibrant communities that eat their food

- Extra time because farmers drop off to member run distribution sites
- Possibility to partake in markets while transitioning to organic

Interested farmers may contact Just Food for more information and applications. The contact is Emily Gunther, Farmer Outreach Associate, Just Food, Emily@justfood.org, (212) 645-9880 x231.

USDA TO HELP DEFRAY COSTS OF ORGANIC CERTIFICATION IN 15 STATES

By Ann Bagel Storck on 8/30/2007 for **Meatingplace.com**

USDA on Wednesday announced the availability of \$1 million to defray annual organic certification costs in Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia and Wyoming.

This funding is particularly important to smaller producers so that they can meet the voluntary uniform standards set forth by the National Organic Program.

The Agricultural Management Assistance Program will allocate funds to the 15 states in proportion to the number of organic producers in each state. The states, in turn, will reimburse each eligible producer for up to 75 percent of its organic certification costs, not to exceed \$500. Each state is allowed to retain 4 percent of the total amount granted as an administration fee. This program is separate from the National Organic Certification Cost Share Program.

In a news release, Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns noted that the 2007 Farm Bill proposal recommends that this program be re-authorized and expanded to include all 50 states and permit producers and handlers to be eligible as well as increase the cost-share reimbursement.

ANNOUNCING NORTHEAST GRASSTRAVAGANZA 2008

March 28th & 29th, 2008

The Holiday Inn, Binghamton, N.Y.

Hosted by the Central New York RC&D Project Inc.

The Featured speakers are:

Kathy Voth - Colorado-based consultant and owner of Livestock for Landscapes, a business that teaches using animals for weed control, local food production, fire prevention and improving biodiversity, Research Associate with Utah State University's BEHAVE Program and Stockman Grass Farmer contributor.

Kevin Fulton - Nebraska beef farmer, competitive power lifter and coach that custom grazes and grass-finishes over 1000 head on 2300 acres of native prairie grass and cropland. He is one of the few that have lifted the legendary Dinnie Stones in Scotland. Kevin is passionate about the Paleo Diet for good health.

Janet McNally - Minnesota sheep producer and owner of Tamarack Lamb and Wool Co. She is nationally known for practical small ruminant grazing production and profit strategies. Janet is also a regular columnist for the GRAZE magazine.

David Smith - Maryland based farmer grazier, marketer and president of the American Pastured Poultry Producers Assoc. The 67 acre multi-generational family farm has been in operation since the 1700s. David has a wealth of knowledge about on-farm marketing and working with the media.

Dan Barber - Chef/owner, Blue Hill & Blue Hill at Stone Barns Creative Director, Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture in Pocantico Hills, N.Y. Dan has been featured in the New Yorker, Gourmet Magazine, CBS Sunday Morning, New York Times, House and Garden, Martha Stewart Living, Breathe, and named as the next generation of great chefs for Bon Appetits 10th annual restaurant issue.

PLUS Over 35 practical workshops, Local grass-fed meats, Vendors and Surprises!!!

ACTIVITIES

MANAGING YOUR NATURAL RESOURCES WORKSHOP SERIES

This fall Cornell Cooperative Extension of Broome County, will present a workshop series entitled, "Managing Your Natural Resources", sponsored in part by a risk management education grant. The workshops will focus on forest management for beginners and intermediates, forest income opportunities, production and marketing of forest crops, maintenance of fallow fields, and bioenergy.

For dates of the workshops, refer to the events calendar, for more information, or to receive a workshop brochure, contact Susan Fahrenz at (607) 584-9966.

VALUE-ADDED PRODUCTION AND MARKETING OF SHEEP AND GOAT PRODUCTS

In October several workshops will take place geared towards the production and marketing of value-added products from sheep and goats. Keep an eye out or call our offices for more information, (607) 584-9966.

TRANSITIONING TO ORGANIC

On November 13th and 14th Cornell Cooperative Extension of Broome County will offer two workshops in collaboration with NOFA-NY Licensing, LLC on transitioning to organic. The workshop on November 13th will focus on the transition for dairies, the workshop on the 14th will be for fruits, vegetables and meats.

For more information, contact our office (607) 584-9966.

COMPUTER CLASSES

Computer classes for beginners will be offered at the computer lab at Cooperative Extension of Broome County each Monday in November. These classes will focus on how to use the Microsoft Office suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint) for agriculture, how to utilize the Internet to search and using email.

For dates of the workshops, refer to the events calendar, for more information, or to sign up, contact Susan at (607) 584-9966. The cost per workshop is \$5 per farm.

SCALING-UP PRODUCTION

Several workshops will be offered on different aspects of scaling up production. Workshops will be offered on starting up a CSA, the logistics of scaling up production and selling wholesale or at a business.

For dates of the workshops, refer to the events calendar, for more information, or to sign up, contact Susan at (607) 584-9966. The cost for each workshop is \$5 per farm.

FARMER TOWN HALL MEETINGS

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Broome County will hold two town hall meetings to introduce farmers to those agencies which deal with agriculture (USDA, Soil & Water Conservation District, Farm Bureau, etc...) so that they can ask questions and become aware of services available to them. This is also an opportunity to give input into the programming at Broome County Extension. Please refer to the calendar for the dates and times.

To reserve a spot, please contact Susan at (607) 584-9966.

EXPLORING CREDIT/DEBT MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Broome County is offering a free Exploring Credit/Debt Management Issues workshop. This workshop provides information on selecting and using credit wisely, strategies for paying down debt, obtaining and reviewing a credit report, and understanding a credit score. Participants receive free credit management tools. Advance registration required. Please call (607) 584-5016 for available dates and locations.

SAVE ENERGY, SAVE DOLLARS

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Broome County is offering a free Save Energy, Save Dollars workshop to assist participants reduce their energy bills, discover low-cost/no cost energy conservation methods and learn of community resources to financially assist residents in making home improvements. Each household will receive a free energy savings tool kit. Advance registration is required. Please call (607) 584-5016 for available dates and locations.

MAKING ENDS MEET

Cornell Cooperative Extension-Broome County is offering a free money management workshop called Making Ends Meet. Participants will set financial goals, develop spending plans, and learn ways to manage their debt. Each household will receive a free money management tool kit. Advance registration is required. Please call (607) 584-5016 for available dates and locations.

BEEF NUTRITION WORKSHOP WITH MIKE BAKER

(Beef Cattle Extension Specialist - Cornell University)

Do you have questions about nutrition for your beef animal during the winter or wonder what quality hay is most suitable for your animals? On Thursday, October 11th at 7:00 p.m. Mike Baker, Beef Cattle Extension Specialist, Cornell University will present a workshop at Cornell Cooperative Extension-Broome County on nutrition of the beef animal. He will be looking at several different feed rations that are feasible from our local hay and corn products produced locally. As we look towards the winter months many areas of the state are struggling with their winter supply of forages with a drought occurring in several parts of the state. With limited supply it becomes even more important to maximize the potential out of the limited supply of forages available. This workshop promises to be a great opportunity to learn key information about feeding your beef animals as inexpensively as possible while maximizing your animals growth potential. To register please call Susan at 607-584-9966.

SIDE HILL ACRES GOAT FARM TOUR

Side Hill Acres has been operating since 1987 as a dairy goat farm and since 1994 as a goat cheese processing plant. They have 157 goats and produce many goat products, such as milk, cheese, ice cream, and health and beauty aids. On Saturday October 13th at 10am we will tour their facility and see how they have been able to take their dairy goats to the next level. There is no cost for this tour, but you must pre-register to get directions. To pre-register call Susan at 607-584-9966

MARKETING YOUR FREEZER TRADE MEATS

On Tuesday October 23rd at 7pm come to a workshop given by Laura Biasillo, Agricultural Economic Development Specialist with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Broome County, on marketing your freezer trade meats. Call Susan at (607) 584-9966 to register or for more information. Cost is \$5/person.

AGRICULTURAL AGENCIES ROUNDTABLE

On Thursday October 25th at 7:00 p.m. Cornell Cooperative Extension-of Broome County is sponsoring a Round Table meeting for the agricultural community to inform them about all the agencies, programs and opportunities that are out there to help them. When in the field we hear several times well who does that or where do I go to learn more about that. Well here is an opportunity to learn what all these agencies do, the grant programs that they offer and all the educational programs that are available. All agencies that deal with agriculture will be at the table with a short presentation and a display of information. For more information or to pre-register contact Susan at 584-9966.

SOAP-MAKING USING GOAT'S MILK

On Saturday November 13th at 1 p.m., come and learn from Kelly Tskoumagos of Old Thyme Soaps and Northstar Goat Farm, to learn how to make soap from goats milk using lye and oils. Due to materials used, this class is for adults only. A soap making class for children will be offered in Spring 2008. The cost for this workshop is \$30 per person. Participants will go home with 2-3 pounds of soap. Space is limited and registration is required for this workshop. Please register by November 8th by calling Susan at 607-584-9966.

MARKETING ARTICLES

PRICING YOUR PRODUCTS TO SURVIVE RISING ENERGY COSTS

by Wen-fei Uva, Senior Extension Associate. Dept. of Applied Economics and Management, Cornell University

It should not be a surprise to any of us by now. Due to a variety of factors, natural gas and propane prices have risen considerably over the past few years. Moreover, today's natural gas markets exhibit extreme volatility that makes it difficult for businesses to rely on conventional wisdom and past experience to try to establish an effective energy management strategy. With the high energy needs of many types of agricultural production, producers are becoming increasingly alarmed by the situation. Adding to their concerns, natural gas and electricity prices are linked more closely to one another than ever before.

What is the impact of rising energy costs? Let's look at greenhouse operations, one of the most intensive agricultural production systems, as an example. According to an informal survey of greenhouse growers around New York State, the prices they are paying for natural gas and heating oil have increased 50 percent, and the price of electricity has increased around 20 percent over the last two years. Facing the increase, many greenhouse growers have adopted or are considering adopting one or more energy saving techniques such as reducing air leaks, installing an energy-conserving blanket, double-covering greenhouse walls, increasing space utilization, updating heating and cooling systems for better efficiency, conserving electricity, improving management, and switching to less energy demanding crops. Combining these techniques, growers can sometimes realize energy savings of 20 to 40 percent.

However, faced with higher and more volatile energy prices, is conservation alone enough to maintain profitability and sustain business growth? I would dare to say no. Moreover, although these energy conservation strategies are all good practices to consider for better management, many of the technologies also require additional capital investment. Further, increased energy prices do not just affect heating and electricity costs. They also affect other input costs such as greenhouse plastics, fertilizers, and pots; and commonly, growers have to pay higher delivery surcharges for purchases. Besides, the costs of delivering products to customers are also higher due to higher gasoline prices.

How did these all add up? According to the Cornell Greenhouse Business Summary project, in 2003 the heating cost among New York greenhouse operations averaged around 7 percent of sales, the average cost for electricity was around 2 percent of sales, and the average cost for gas for delivery trucks was around 0.7 percent of sales. Moreover, the average costs for fertilizer, packaging materials and other greenhouse maintenance and repair supplies amounted to another 7 percent of sales. Assume that between 2003 and 2005 the greenhouse operation has not changed any production and management strategies, and during the same period the cost of natural gas and heating oil increased 50 percent, the price of electricity increased 20 percent, and costs for other related inputs and delivery increased 20 percent. Although it is not realistic, to simplify this analysis let's hold the percentages of all other costs stable during the same period. The greenhouse operation would have an increase of production costs of around 30 percent or 5.1 percent of sales. Assuming a greenhouse business has a profit margin of 15 percent in 2003, with these increases its profit margin would decrease 5.1 percent to 9.9 percent.

Along the same line, if a greenhouse business had energy related costs totaled around 10 percent of the sales, an increase between 20 to 50 percent would decrease the pro-fit margin by between 2 to 5 percent. Table 2 demonstrates how increasing energy costs might affect the profit margin.

What do all these have to do with marketing? With the greenhouse example, the business is faced with 5 percent lower profitability, or it needs to market much better and sell 50 percent more products to maintain profitability, but then it would have to produce more products and incur more costs. Of course, growers can adopt management and technology to become more energy efficient and maybe look to government regulation to control the energy prices and volatility issues. One marketing component over which growers have control and which can definitely help the situation is smart pricing. Some growers have said to me that in order to survive, businesses have to have the "guts" to raise prices. Many greenhouse growers have decided to raise the prices of bedding plant flats 10 percent this year.

Many horticultural businesses, especially wholesale growers, have to determine their prices the summer before. Therefore, growers have to take their best guesstimate on how much energy expenses might increase in the coming year and adjust their prices accordingly. We have little control over the energy prices, at least in the short run. If you want to make change happen, it is a lot easier to start with what you have control over. To survive rising energy costs, improving energy management efficiency will be important, but it will be just as critical to better market your business value and your products, communicate with your customers, know your costs, and raise your prices to maintain profitability.

"Smart Marketing" is a monthly marketing newsletter for extension publication in local newsletters and for placement in local media. It reviews the elements critical to successful marketing in the food and agricultural industry. Articles are written by faculty members in the Department of Applied Economics and Management at Cornell University.

"Share the gift of communication." Please cite or acknowledge when using this material.

CUSTOMERS VS CONSUMERS

Even if You're a Direct Marketer, They're Not Necessarily the Same By Bernadette Logozar

Are you a small-scale, diversified farmer? Do you grow or raise a variety of agricultural products? Do you sell these products directly to customers either through a farm stand, roadside stand or at the farmers market?

If so, then you are a “direct market farmer,” even if you sell only a portion of what you produce on your farm directly to customers. Most of the folks I work with are selling their products directly to their customers...hence they can all be pooled under the banner of “direct marketers.”

It doesn't really matter if you are selling freezer lamb, beef, chicken, fruits, vegetables, eggs, cheese, jams and jellies, honey, yarn, maple syrup, hay or whatever... for ANYONE who sells directly to their customers, there are certain skills and knowledge that cross commodity and industry lines. Now notice I did not say “consumers”. And the reason for that is there is a difference between “customer” and “consumer.”

What is the difference between customer and consumer? And why should I care?

Often these terms are used interchangeably, and buyers are often in fact both consumers and customers. However, the distinction can be made around the fact that a customer is the one who purchases and pays for a product or service. The consumer is the ultimate user of the product or service, however she or he may not have paid for the product or service.

A simple example can highlight the difference between customer and consumers. Let's say you have started a cheese-making business and are trying to develop some wholesale accounts at small groceries and specialty food stores in your region. As far as your wholesale business is concerned, your customers are the dairy department buyers at the stores you want to sell to. Your consumers, on the other hand, are the individuals who will actually eat the cheese.

Now, in terms of its marketing effort, who should you target, the customer or the consumer? In reality – you need to understand the needs and wants of both the customer and the consumer. You need to develop a strong understanding of the needs of the retail food stores in terms of their requirements for purchasing cheese, including packaging, labeling, pricing, delivery, and payment systems.

You also need to understand the needs and wants of the consumer. How are tastes changing? Are consumers happy with the taste of your product? Is the packaging attractive? It would be a good idea to get your customer — the food store buyer – to help you better understand your consumers.

In essence, your customer is the individual doing the purchasing, while the consumer is the individual that is ultimately the end user of the product or service. If you are selling directly to the end consumers via a farm stand, roadside stand, or farmers' market, your customer and consumer is one in the same.

Even direct market farmers need to understand who your customers and consumers are, what they want and how much they are willing to pay for it. This is the first step in market analysis. You can find more helpful marketing tips at www.tutor2u.net.

Bernadette Logoza is Rural & Ag Economic Development Specialist with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Franklin County. She can be reached at 518-483- 7403 or bel7@cornell.edu. Small Farms Quarterly Oct 2006

DIVERSE LIVESTOCK, MULTIPLE MARKETS

Stone and Thistle farm grows a sustainable business by not putting all its eggs in one basket.

By Martha Goodsell

Editor's note: *This article is part of a series focusing on risk management funded by the New York Crop Insurance Education Program under the Risk Management Agency (USDA) and the NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets.*

Managing risks is one of the keys to building a sustainable farm business. That's what Tom and Denise Warren are finding on their grass-based, value-added livestock operation in East Meredith, N.Y. They're also finding that having multiple enterprises, as well as diversified products and markets, is a good way to reduce their production and marketing risks.

The couple, along with their children Reily, Katey and Shane, raises cattle, hogs, sheep, goats, chickens and turkeys on their farm nestled in the Catskill Mountains. They sell meadow-raised meat under their Stone and Thistle Farm label, and they also operate Kortright Creek Creamery, which processes and sells milk, artisan cheese and yogurt from their dairy goats.

Sunday afternoon tours and twice-a-year seminars attract more than 1,000 visitors annually to the farm, where they can shop at the Warren's on-farm store for wool and wool products, maple syrup, honey, jams and crafts in addition to their meat, eggs, and dairy products.

HERITAGE HOGS, ITALIAN DOGS

Having a wide range of products increases market reach and overall sales. But the Warrens' extensive diversification efforts reduce their production risks, as well. Should disease or some other trouble hit one group of livestock, the other enterprises can continue producing income.

Predators, such as coyotes, are one of the biggest production risks faced by small ruminant and poultry producers like the Warrens. In addition to investing in high quality electric fence, the Warrens protect their sheep and goats with Maremmas – guard dogs that can approach 100 pounds that were originally bred to defend flocks of sheep in Italy. Occasionally these dogs do double-duty guarding poultry. Border collies are used to herd and move the livestock.

Drought is another potentially devastating production risk for grass-based livestock producers. Instead of investing in an expensive irrigation system, the Warrens use low-cost portable fencing to move their animals from field to field on acreage they rent from nearby landowners when moisture is scarce and grass is in short supply.

Keeping the animals moving is actually a good preventive health practice. It helps reduce parasite loads and eliminate the need for routine antibiotics. The Warrens use an accurate identification system and extensive recordkeeping to track the genetics of their livestock to make sure they are well-adapted to grazing with minimal grain feeding.

They raise Tamworth hogs and Scottish Highland cattle, both heritage breeds that produce lean, flavorful meat and thrive on pasture in cool climates. In addition to providing healthful milk and lean meat, the Warrens' goats are also good at ridding pastures of thistles, burdocks, multiflora rose and other weeds and shrubs left behind by the other livestock.

MANY WAYS TO MARKET

As the animals head to market, they are processed several ways. Cattle, hogs, sheep and goats are slaughtered at a local USDA slaughterhouse. The Warrens process the chicken and turkeys on-farm. And the goat milk, cheese and yogurt are processed and bottled on site. Exercising some control over processing has helped reduce the risks of being dependent on a single processor.

The Warrens reduce market risks by selling the numerous Stone and Thistle and Kortright Creek Creamery products through several different market outlets. Locally, they sell at the Oneonta farmer's market. They have worked with local retailers, and their own on-farm store is now open seven days a week, year round. A distributor picks up bottled goat milk destined for the New York City and Boston markets.

The Warrens' solid reputation for quality and reliability has reduced the need for extensive advertising campaigns. They post prices and details about their products and practices on the farm's website (www.stoneandthistlefarm.com), but currently don't take online orders or ship retail products. In spring 2005, Stone and Thistle Farm was recognized by National Geographic in an Appalachian eco-tourism feature. (See www.nationalgeographic.com/Appalachia.) Stone and Thistle Farm was a founding member of the Meadow Raised Meats Cooperative. Cooperatives, both formal and informal, allow risk and rewards to be spread over the membership. They can also help reduce costs and enhance prices, and provide access to new markets or improve bargaining strength. The cooperative gathered orders and shipped product. Today the Warrens cooperate with other farmers and local artisans to expand product offerings and draw more customers to their on-farm store.

Keeping abreast of consumer demand and market trends also helps to reduce market risks. Tom and Denise read extensively, attend meetings and network with other farmers. They even traveled abroad to the Terra Madre forum in Turin, Italy, a global gathering of "Slow Food" advocates, a movement that recognizes that the enjoyment of wholesome food is essential to the pursuit of happiness. (See www.slowfoodusa.org.) Even their children network at monthly 4-H meetings.

WORST-CASE SCENARIO

Small farms are particularly vulnerable to people risks because they usually rely on a very limited labor pool, in this case immediate family members. Like many family farms, the Warrens strive to maintain a safe work environment and to maintain strong family ties. They have invested in health and disability insurance – as well as in friendships and good neighbors in the event they need help due to some catastrophic event.

The Warrens face a myriad of legal risks, from the possibility of a visitor getting hurt while on the farm to a customer getting sick from a food product. They use good management practices and take necessary precautions to reduce the chances of anything going wrong, and are covered by both general liability and product liability policies. They also purchase special event insurance as needed, but they purchase no crop insurance. One of the biggest risks for the Warrens is uninvited visitors. "People think our farm is a petting zoo and they can stop their car and get out and wander around," sighs Denise. "I have to pursue them and tell them that they are welcome to come back on Sundays at 1 p.m. when we conduct our tours. I explain to them that farms present real dangers for people, such as electric fences and guard dogs. These risks are taken care of when we open the doors on Sundays."

Like many farmers who are expanding and diversifying, Stone and Thistle farm does not have a formal risk management plan. Because there are so many other things that need to be done and the circumstances are always changing, a written plan is not yet a high priority. However, the Warrens have thought about worst-case scenarios.

“Losing electricity would be the worst thing that could happen to us,” admits Denise. “We use electric fencing, so we would lose all of our animals. We would lose our fresh milk in the tank and the meat in the freezers. We don’t have a generator at this time.”

When asked if they had a contingency plan for this catastrophe, Denise responded, “No, but we are definitely buying a generator this fall.”

For the Warrens, risk management means maintaining diverse enterprises and markets, using good management practices, producing quality products, developing an excellent reputation, using precautions especially when expecting visitors, insuring against the most threatening risks, and considering how to avoid the worst possible situation. These are all action steps you can take, too.

Martha Goodsell raises 1,700 deer and other livestock with the help of her husband and four children on a 425-acre, grass-based farm in Candor, N.Y. She is also the Executive Director of NY Farms!, a statewide coalition of organizations, individuals, businesses, agencies and institutions committed to the future of New York’s farms and families.

Small Farms Quarterly, April 10, 2006

HIGH TUNNELS JUMPSTART SEASON FOR VEGETABLE GROWERS

Crave a fresh, locally-grown tomato and cucumber salad? In July? In upstate New York?

A small, but increasing number of vegetable growers are making consumer dreams like early season fresh and local produce a reality, thanks to high tunnels and other innovations.

“There’s a demand locally for early season tomatoes,” said Howard Hoover, owner of Evergreen Farm in Penn Yan, located approximately 55 miles southeast of Rochester.

Hoover picked bell peppers for market during the last week of June, well ahead of the plants’ typical peak season in mid-August. The demand for early fresh produce is one that consumers appear willing to pay for. The Hoovers reported receiving \$15 per half-bushel for early season bell peppers last year, compared to \$4 per half-bushel at peak season.

Growing vegetables, fruit and nursery plants inside high tunnels gives growers a jumpstart on the harvest season. High tunnels are metal frame structures covered in heavy plastic. Vegetables are planted directly in the ground. Tunnels capture the sun’s natural heat and light and, unlike greenhouses, typically don’t use artificial light or heat. High tunnel advocates say produce tastes like garden-grown food.

Evergreen Farm is among eight vegetable, fruit and nursery plant operations across the state participating in an applied research project funded by the New York Farm Viability Institute. In late 2005, the Institute committed \$122,000 to a two-year effort to compare yields of produce varieties, explore rotational plant combinations, test the costs and ability to trap heat among various plastics, provide business data, study disease/pest occurrence and control, and other unknowns related to high tunnel-growing.

A high tunnel demonstration day, hosted by the Cornell University Vegetable Team, took place at 6 p.m. Aug. 1 at Evergreen Farm, 2849 Swartout Road, Penn Yan. Call Yates County Cooperative Extension at (315) 536-5123 for more information.

The Farm Viability Institute is a farmer-led nonprofit organization that directs on-farm applied research to increase farm profits.

“High tunnels offer growers the opportunity to extend our marketing season both early and late in upstate New York, to create a more viable production area to compete with out-of-state regions,” said Larry Eckhardt, a member of the Farm Viability board of directors.

Eckhardt, who is a vegetable grower in Rensselaer County, added, “the Farm Viability Institute saw a great value in helping other growers realize the potential of extending the season.”

In addition to an extended growing season, farmers report larger yields in high tunnels.

“High tunnels remove a lot of the unpredictability of the vegetable business,” said Hoover. “We don’t have to worry about hail or heavy rain. We can still work when the rain turns the fields muddy.”

The Hoovers erected their first high tunnel in 2001. Higher profits from vegetables convinced the family to put up another high tunnel the following year. The farm added a third high tunnel for the 2007 growing season.

Hoover said the net profit on vegetables grown under three high tunnels – comprising less than a quarter-acre – is close to the net from the 20 acres of vegetables he grows in fields.

“High tunnels bring more consistency and order to the production,” said Judson Reid, a vegetable specialist with Cornell Cooperative Extension. “In the field, there are more wild swings in production.”

High tunnels are not without drawbacks, including a need for more weeding, pruning and watering. The expense of high tunnels deters others. Costs vary depending on whether a grower is purchasing a ready-made model or building a tunnel. Because the technology is relatively new, economic data is still being collected.

A Cooperative Extension project among Kansas, Nebraska and Missouri researchers estimated high tunnel costs to run \$.75-\$1.50 per square foot, compared to \$6 per square foot for a greenhouse. (Those costs are for the structures, before adding any accessories, such as watering lines.)

“People think, ‘why would you build a tunnel when you can plant something in the ground and it will grow anyway’,” Hoover said. “Having these tunnels puts us a bit on the leading edge, but it is coming. There’s a huge interest in tunnels.”

A growing season with sunny but cooler days – like the start of 2007’s season – provides an argument in favor of high tunnel technology.

Reid said he knew of two dozen high tunnels new in the past five years in the Finger Lakes region. Evergreen Farm started a complimentary business building the tunnels and has sold 20 in the past four years.

Howard Hoover’s son, Nelson, said the farm has tweaked the designs offered by larger manufacturers to offer high tunnels better-suited to smaller farms in upstate New York. Their model is modular and can be assembled by three people in one day. Evergreen Farm moves its tunnels every two-three years to rotate fields, Nelson said.

The Hoovers build tunnels with a four feet span between the ceiling ribs, meant to bear the weight of snow. Evergreen’s tunnels are fitted with battery-operated rollup sides that can be connected to a temperature gauge to rise automatically on the hottest days. (Some other models must be rolled by hand, which can require more than one person.)

The Hoovers said they use a low-pesticide approach. Early results from pest study suggest high tunnels present a different set of concerns than in the field. Spider mites and thrips are more common in Evergreen’s tunnels than fields, and the reverse seems true of downy mildew and striped cucumber beetles.

DOWNY MILDEW OF CUCURBITS

Margaret Tuttle McGrath, Cornell University, and Molly Shaw, CCE Tioga

Downy mildew to cucurbits is like late blight to potatoes. It’s a potentially devastating fungal disease that can begin to develop at any time during cucurbit crop development. Last year downy mildew became widespread in NY much earlier than in previous years, and this year is poised to be the same.

Only leaves are affected by downy mildew. The symptoms start out as yellow spots on the tops of the leaves, which later turn brown. Brown spots are angular because they are delineated by leaf veins. Often several spots occur together in a coalesced group. On the bottom sides of the leaf spots the fungus produces grayish-purple spores resembling a soft fuzz. Photographs are posted at <http://vegetablemendonline.ppath.cornell.edu>. Also see an article at this site ‘identifying initial downy mildew symptoms in cucurbits is critical for successful management’.

Although the names sound similar, downy mildew is a different beast from powdery mildew, the familiar white coating pumpkins, squash, and other cucurbits get when they start setting fruit. Downy mildew develops much faster than powdery mildew and has the potential to kill the plants outright. Downy mildew does not survive the winter in NY, but the spores typically travel up from Florida on storms, sometimes making it as far as NY. The difference in the story last year was that the disease moved from greenhouse cucumbers in Canada to field cucumbers in Michigan and on to NY on the winds, appearing earlier than it usually does when coming from the south. The disease spread in 2007 illustrates how fast this fungus can move. On June 12, 2007, downy mildew was found on greenhouse cucumbers in southern Ontario, Canada. On June 20 the disease was confirmed in northeast Ohio, and June 24 it was identified in Geneva, NY. There was high risk on infection to cucurbits in our region of NY on Wednesday, July 4th.

The downy mildew fungus exists as pathotypes varying in ability to infect the various cucurbit types. Some can infect all types while others are able to infect cucumber and cantaloupe but not watermelon, squash or pumpkin.

A major change evidently occurred recently in the downy mildew fungal population in the US based on detection in 2004 of resistance to the qoi fungicides and observations of downy mildew developing on resistant cucumber varieties.

Manage downy mildew first by planting resistant varieties. Many are available for cucumbers, but the resistance is not as complete as it used to be. There are a couple resistant

cantaloupes, one resistant summer squash (sunray), and no resistant watermelons, zucchini, pumpkins or winter squash (information from Cornell's veg md website, <http://vegetablemdonline.ppath.cornell.edu/>). The website also has tables listing varieties that are resistant to various diseases).

The second step in managing downy mildew is choosing planting sites with good air movement and without shading. Avoid overhead irrigation in early morning when leaves are wet from dew or late in the day when leaves will not have an opportunity to dry before dew forms. Maintain ample but not excessive nitrogen fertility.

The third step in managing downy mildew is monitoring disease occurrence and weather forecasts and inspecting crops for symptoms weekly. Forecasts are posted at a North Carolina state university web site (www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/pp/cucurbit/) twice weekly. The forecasts are very good and the website easy to interpret.

Once downy mildew is reported in or near your area (or the risk is high based on the forecast), you can apply broad-spectrum protective fungicides before disease detection (bravo, maneb, dithane, copper). Researchers in NC regularly conducting fungicide efficacy trials for downy mildew rated chlorothalonil (4 rating) better than mancozeb and maneb (3) and also copper (1). Systemic narrow-spectrum fungicides can be used when downy mildew is found in your field early in crop production (curzate, tanos, previcur flex, ranman, gavel, check the labels for directions and crop specifics. Also phosphorus acid fungicides can be used). For organic growers, copper is the best option. There is a new copper, kocide 3000, that releases more active copper while reducing the total amount of copper applied to the field. Again, copper is a preventative fungicide, it will not combat an epidemic and should be used preventatively based on the forecasted disease spread.

If a field is abandoned due to downy mildew, be sure to get rid of those plants. The pathogen can only survive on living tissue, so the sooner the field is disked or plowed the less inoculum will be around to infect nearby plantings.

Please note: the specific directions on fungicide labels must be adhered to — they supersede these recommendations, if there is a conflict. Any reference to commercial products, trade or brand names is for information only; no endorsement is intended.

NEW MARKETS FOR MEATS

This beef producer's business is growing faster than expected to meet growing demand for natural and Halal-certified Meats

by Kara Lynn Dunn

David Reino may become a full-time farmer sooner than he expected. Two new brands of naturally produced meats have opened marketing opportunities that are accelerating the growth of his grass-fed beef enterprise in Farmersville, NY, approximately 45 miles south of Buffalo. Reino has raised beef cattle on pasture since 1993. He owns 500 acres and rents 250 acres. He works to steadily improve his herd through genetics, grazing management, high quality pasture, and winter forage. In 2005, he switched to grass finishing. That year he sold 50 backgrounded calves at auction and seven steers by private freezer trade. This year he anticipates selling more than five times the number of steers, a leap he credits to transitioning away from direct marketing in favor of selling through a specialty retailer.

A CLUSTER OF COOPERATING ENTERPRISES

Reino learned about some new marketing options in June 2006, from Joan Petzen, a farm business management specialist with Cornell Cooperative Extension in Allegany and Cattaraugus Counties. She told him about a group of meat producers in New York who had leveraged grant funding from the New York Farm Viability Institute to create four cooperatively-linked enterprises:

- Pure Farm Goodness Livestock Cooperative, whose farmer-members produce naturally-raised beef, goat and lamb under both the "Twin Rivers Northeast Artisan Meats" and "Halal Premium Meats" labels
- The Friendly Butcher, a privately owned, USDA-inspected processing facility in Randolph, New York;
- Halal Premium Foods, a management and holding company; and
- Halal Premium Meats, a singleowner subsidiary for sourcing and marketing cleric-certified "Halal Tayyib," or lawful and wholesome, meats to Muslim markets.

Through their New York Farm Viability Institute grant, the producers had gotten help from Brian Henehan and Judith Barry of Cornell University's Applied Economics and Management Department to figure out the plans and business structures for the four linked enterprises. The Institute is a farmer-led nonprofit organization that provides direction and grant funding to farm based efforts to increase farm profits, reduce barriers to success and encourage innovation. The Institute collaborates with the

state department of Agriculture and Markets, agricultural colleges, Cooperative Extension, agribusiness, nonprofit groups and others.

TWO BRANDS FOR TWO MARKETS

Reino was among the first producers to sign a forward contract for his Angus beef to be processed and sold under the Twin Rivers brand. Twin Rivers-branded meats are distributed to health food stores, food co-ops, specialty retailers and “green” chefs. Twin Rivers products are also certified Halal Tayyib through Halal Premium Meats and can be marketed under the Halal Premium Meats label to targeted Islamic markets. Halal Premium Meats CEO and Marketing Director John Umlauf says, “our production protocols attract ‘green mainstream’ and ‘true natural’ customers, including retailers and fine dining restaurants looking for naturally-raised, regionally-produced meats from small farms.” “The only change I made to fit the required protocols was to work with my feed dealer to make sure my supplement concentrate does not contain antibiotics or animal by-products. Under the new contract, I will truck my cattle one hour to The Friendly Butcher in Randolph, New York,” Reino says.

TARGETED MARKETING = PREMIUM PRICES

Reino will collect a premium price when his cattle reach the processor. He recommends the retail location at the Friendly Butcher to his former freezer trade customers so they can still find the naturally raised beef they desire. He says structuring his enterprise to the markets has been a key to success. This new contract represents the difference between selling seven steers last year and 50 in 2007. Capturing direct market price without doing the marketing myself will absolutely have a positive impact on my time and my bottom line,” he says. Reino’s goal of raising 100 steers for slaughter each year is now within reach on a much shorter timetable. “I would never have been able to maximize my return on investment for the land I have through traditional marketing channels. The Pure Farm Goodness Livestock Cooperative and the new branding have dramatically changed the nature of the opportunity for the viability of my farm business,” he says. “My gross receipts will nearly triple this year, and when I reach 100 head in annual sales, I will no longer have to work full-time off the farm.” Reino says he is happy to be among those who meet the Pure Farm Goodness standards for consumers and for his farm business. A second grant from the New York Farm Viability Institute is helping the Pure Farm Goodness Livestock Cooperative develop a program to recruit more producers to supply the anticipated demand for naturally-raised meats. Petzen says more than 150 prod-

ucers of sheep, goat and beef meat have expressed interest in the cooperative. For more information on the Pure Farm Goodness Livestock Cooperative contact Mr. Kelly Rhinehart, President, at kelhart@windstream.net or call (716) 474-2581.

Kara Lynn Dunn is a freelance writer and consultant for the New York Farm Viability Institute. She writes from her farm in Mannsville, NY.

October**2007**

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
	1	2	3	4	5	6 9am Forest Management for Beginners CCE-BC \$10/person (607) 584-9966
7	8	9	10	11 Road Kill Composting Workshop Syracuse, NY Free 607-255-1187 Beef Nutrition Workshop, CCE-BC, 7pm, Free, (607) 584-9966	12	13 Side Hill Acres Goat Farm Tour, Candor, NY, 10am, Free (607) 584-9966
14 9am-4pm 7th Annual Northeast Small Farm and Rural Living Exposition and Trade Show Ulster County Fairgrounds in New Paltz, New York \$5 adults, \$2 children (845) 677-8223	15	16 7pm Mushroom ID Workshop CCE-BC \$10/person (607) 584-9966	17	18	19	20 9am-4pm Otsiningo Park Farmers' Market
21	22	23 Marketing Your Freezer Trade Meats, CCE-BC, 7pm, \$5/person, (607) 584-9966	24	25 Ag Agencies Roundtable, 7pm, Free, (607) 584-9966	26 Cornell Sheep & Goat Symposium	27 9am Forest Income Opportunities CCE-BC \$10/person (607) 584-9966
28	29	30	31			

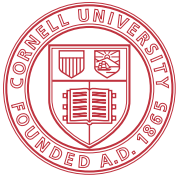
November

2007

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
				1 7pm Forestry 102: Financials CCE-BC \$10 /person (607) 584-9966	2	3
4	5 10am Farmer Town Hall Mtg (607) 584-9966 CCE-BC 2-4pm Computer Class – Word \$5/farm (607) 584-9966	6 Marketing Your Forest Crops, 7pm, \$10/person, (607) 584-9966	7	8 7pm Scaling Up for Farmers: CSA's CCE-BC \$5/farm (607) 584-9966	9	10 9am Bio-Energy CCE-BC \$10 /person (607) 584-9966 Making Goat's Milk Soap, 1pm, \$30/person, (607) 584-9966
11	12 2-4pm Computer Class – Excel CCE-BC \$5/farm (607) 584-9966	13 9:30-noon Making the Organic Transition (Dairy) CCE-BC Free (607) 584-9966	14 9:30-noon Making the Organic Transition (F&V/Meat) CCE-BC Free (607) 584-9966	15 7pm Log Innoculation Demonstration CCE-BC \$10/person (607) 584-9966	16	17
18	19 2-4pm Computer Class – Email & Internet CCE-BC \$5/farm (607) 584-9966	20	21	22	23	24
25	26 2-4pm Computer Class – Publisher CCE-BC \$5/farm (607) 584-9966	27 7pm Scaling up for farmers: production methods CCE-BC \$5/farm (607) 584-9966	28	29	30	

December**2007**

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
						1
2	3 7pm Scaling Up for Farmers: Wholesale \$10/person (607) 584-9966	4	5 7pm Hydroponics \$10/person (607) 584-9966	6	7	8
9	10 1pm Farmer Town Hall Mtg (607) 584-9966	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18 10am-3:30 pm Agribusiness Conference Cornell University 607-255-8429	19	20	21	22
23	24	25 Christmas – Office Closed	26	27	28	29
30	31					



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