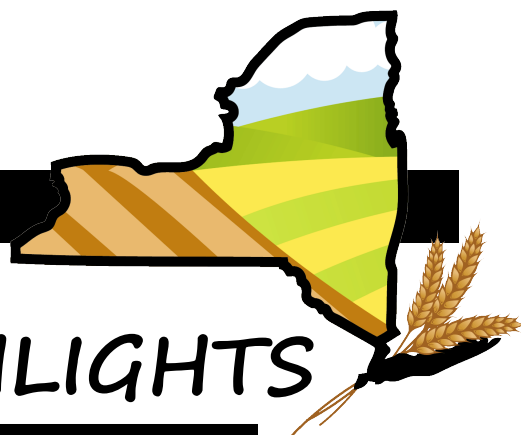


Cornell University
Cooperative Extension

QUARTERLY REPORT

January—June 2014

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



Harvest New York



Learn how the Double Up Food Bucks program can help you
get more fresh local produce for your money!

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Double Up Food Bucks Western NY Launches!!

Cheryl B. Thayer—Agriculture Economic Development Specialist



Double Up Food Bucks (DUFb) launched in 7 farmers markets throughout Erie, Niagara and Chautauqua counties in late June/early July 2014. Participating markets by county include: Elmwood Bidwell, Clinton Bailey, ECMC @ Grider, North Tonawanda, Lockport Community, Fredonia, and Downtown Jamestown. DUFb is a SNAP incentive program that provides a dollar-for-dollar match, up to \$20 per market visit per day. In other words, if a SNAP recipient takes full advantage of the program and spends \$20 per day in SNAP benefits at a participating farmers market, DUFb will provide an additional \$20 to be spent on fresh NYS grown fruits and vegetables. Developed by Fair Food Network, with whom the project team has joined forces with, the Michigan based program has resulted in an increase in the consumption of fruits of vegetables by SNAP recipients and an increase in the earning potential of farmers selling through markets. Anecdotally, the Western NY pilot program is already having a tremendous impact on the communities being served (see testimonial at right).

Project team members and community partners include Field and Fork Network, Harvest NY, Fair Food Network and Eat Smart New York. The program is made possible through the generous support of the following philanthropic organizations: John R. Oishei Foundation, Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, First Niagara Foundation and Univera Healthcare.

“The Elmwood-Bidwell Farmers Market began participating in the Double Up for a Buck pilot program on July 5th of this year. Our producers-only market is in its 15th season and serves a diverse clientele in one of Buffalo's largest and densest neighborhoods. We have been running an EBT program at the market for several years, and had experimented with coupons and incentives for EBT customers in the past. Nothing prepared us for the overwhelming response to the DUFb pilot. On July 12th, our market administrator processed 72 transactions for a total of nearly \$1200 dollars in EBT; not only is this our highest -ever single day total, it is 43% higher than the transaction total for the entire month of July 2013. Vendors reported a huge increase in foot traffic and sales, and both vendors and patrons feel that the program is extremely beneficial”.

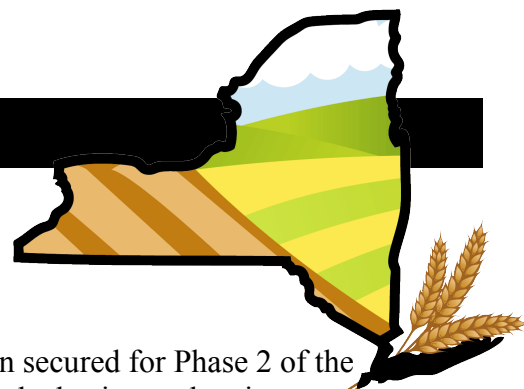
Carly Battin, Executive Director of Elmwood Village Association

WNY farmer participating in the Double Up Food Buck's program on opening day at the ECMC Market @ Grider!



Ready to Grow Western NY Food Hub Planning Project Update

Cheryl B. Thayer—Agriculture Economic Development Specialist



The Ready to Grow project team is in the final stages of completing Phase 1 of the planning project, the feasibility study. The goal of Phase 1 is to quantify regional supply and demand, determine the optimal business model for a food hub and assess a hub's financial viability. While the study is primarily focused on the five-county region including Erie, Niagara, Orleans, Genesee and Wyoming, primary research extended to include seven surrounding counties: Chautauqua, Cattaraugus, Monroe, Livingston, Allegany, Wayne, and Ontario. Primary research to inform the recommendations in the feasibility study included a buyer grower survey, which yielded 163 grower responses and 49 buyer responses. Targeted one-on-one interviews with high potential growers and buyers were conducted post survey, as well as a buyer/grower meeting. Based on a thorough analysis of primary and secondary research, an in-depth look at the financial analysis of the selected operating models and multiple Advisory Committee meetings, the Ready to Grow planning team finds strong evidence in support of the establishment of a Western NY Food Hub, with an initial focus on the aggregation, marketing and sales of regionally sourced fresh produce.

Funding has been secured for Phase 2 of the project, which is the business planning component. This phase launches with a formal operator search through an RFI process. Finding a highly-skilled operator who can build strong grower relationships and execute on an aggressive sales strategy is an important step to ensuring the food hub's success. Once the operator has been identified, the following activities will ensue: a site identified, occupancy costs for that specific facility confirmed, supplier quotes received, operating agreements with partners negotiated, a sample price list vetted by growers and buyers, salaries for staff and workers actualized, etc. When the business plan is developed, the financial model will be expanded into projections through breakeven.

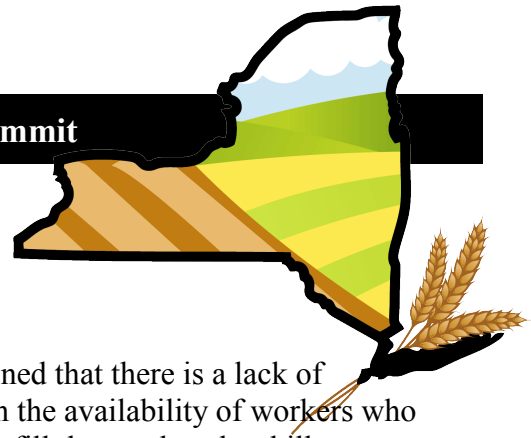
The project team is comprised of Field and Fork Network, New Venture Advisors and Harvest NY and has been made possible through the generous support of [Farm Credit Northeast](#) and the [Western New Power Proceeds Allocation Fund](#). Stay tuned via [Harvest NY's website](#) for the release of the full feasibility study and the operator RFI!

Expanding the Incubator Program at Cornell's Food Processing Development Lab

Tristan Zuber - Dairy Foods Extension Support Specialist, Harvest NY Program

Economic Development spurs when new companies are able to get up and going in NYS. Many start-up food companies face challenges of finding a location to refine a product they have developed and gain regulatory as well as consumer approval. Cornell University's Food Processing Development Laboratory has been accessible to new companies for many years. Harvest NY has been working with Julie Stafford - Cornell University's Food Industry Liaison and Rob Ralyea - Senior Support Specialist - on refining Cornell's capabilities and incubating dairy start-ups. This has included looking at the incubation and product development process and identifying areas that Cornell can support new companies. The Harvest NY specialist has worked with two start-ups thus far on beginning the incubation process. We look forward to supporting these companies through their journey of becoming successful manufacturers!

Harvest NY Hosts Food & Beverage Workforce Development Summit



Tristan Zuber - Dairy Foods Extension Support Specialist

New York State has not only been attracting dairy manufacturers, but is also attracting other food manufacturers outside of dairy, including companies such as Amy's Kitchen, Agrana Food Products and many small artisan producers or start-ups. One of the growing concerns is how a future workforce is going to be developed to meet the growing workforce demands at these new and growing food manufacturers.

There have been many efforts to address this growing demand, including development of a 2-week Food Processing Training Program by the Genesee County Economic Development Center, a new AAS Degree Program in Food Processing Technology by Genesee Community College, a Certification program by Erie Community College and expansion of Cornell's Dairy Food Extension Certification program.

Harvest NY in collaboration with NY Association for Training Employment Professionals hosted a Food & Beverage Workforce Development Summit in April that brought together training providers and industry. The summit brought together over 70 individuals from regulatory, industry, educational and training institutions and workforce development agencies. Vinnie Esposito, Empire State Development, discussed how attracting and growing food manufacturers is a priority for New York State and the trend of bringing in new companies will continue. Chris Gerling, Cornell University, and Casey McCue, NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets – both spoke about job growth in the wine and dairy industries, respectively.

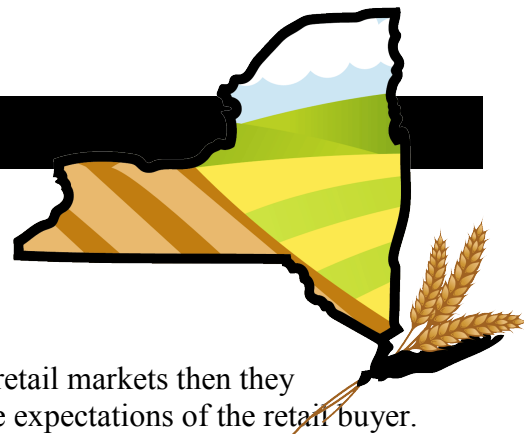
It was determined that there is a lack of information on the availability of workers who may be able to fill these roles, the skills required for these positions are highly stratified, employers are struggling continuously on finding qualified individuals and there is a lack of local awareness on careers in food manufacturing. Future outcomes of the summit will potentially be to create a food and beverage industry alliance that coordinates different activities surrounding workforce development, establishment of apprenticeships for highly technical positions, and organization of industry awareness events. Harvest NY has already been working with Genesee County Economic Development Center on mapping out food industry resources that will be readily accessible to all through a website.

Pat Hooker moderates a panel on educational institutions and food manufacturers on issues on training and finding qualified individuals to work in food manufacturing across New York



Expanded GAP Training in WNY

Elizabeth Newbold—Local Foods Systems Specialist



In recent years, several food borne illness outbreaks in produce have made national news. Both the produce industry and the federal government have stepped up demands for fruit and vegetable farms to meet food safety practice standards. These standards are known as GAPs (Good Agricultural Practices).

Good agricultural practices are guidelines established to ensure a clean and safe working environment for all employees while eliminating the potential for contamination of food products. GAPs can reduce food safety risks and can also reduce plant disease and post-harvest loss. An important step toward food safety is the development of a personalized farm food safety plan.

New York's retail produce buyers, such as Wegmans, are asking growers to adopt GAPs certification in many cases. The number of retail produce buyers asking for some level of food safety practices has only increased over the last several years. If produce growers plan to maintain or gain

access to those retail markets then they need to meet the expectations of the retail buyer. Meeting these expectations is voluntary, so adopting these practices is an opportunity for produce growers to access some new markets.

Food safety, GAPs guidelines and implementing food safety practices is an in-depth process. In response, Harvest NY worked closely with the Cornell Vegetable Program to present information at winter meetings. Food safety presentations covered basic GAPs and current status of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). Grower meetings were held in six counties across Western NY reaching over 300 fruit and vegetable growers.



DID YOU KNOW?

The Harvest NY territory includes 16 counties, highlighted in green in the map at the right.

