

# IMPACT

NEW YORK'S LAND GRANT COLLEGE

impact.cals.cornell.edu

## LOCAL FOODS: HEALTHY COMMUNITIES, HEALTHY ECONOMIES

Local and regional foods enhance the economy and the environment while providing a healthy and safe food supply for New York. In New York City alone, \$30 billion is spent on food. Encouraging networks between producers, manufacturers, retailers and consumers keeps food dollars circulating in-state, which benefits not only New York's 36,000 farms, but all of its 19.5 million residents. The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS) is at the forefront of expanding the capacity of local foods to deliver on its enormous potential by supporting the fast-growing and multiple market channels between producers, retailers and consumers, creating healthier farms, food, communities, and aiding the environment.



### SOME EXAMPLES:

- CALS plant breeders and economists are working to establish a \$100 million East Coast broccoli industry to supply the region with the popular consumer vegetable. Varieties will be New York-climate tolerant with the texture and quality consumers prefer.
- CALS has released 66 varieties of apples, including consumer favorites Empire and Jonagold, which keep the \$224 million industry competitive and apple dollars in-state.
- Farm tours, wine and cheese trails and food fairs organized by the Cornell Cooperative Extension have helped transform agritourism from a \$1.4 million enterprise in 2002 to an \$18 million industry in 2007.
- Nationally, the specialty food industry is \$40 billion and growing. The New York State Food Venture Center in Geneva has helped 1,300 entrepreneurs with the commercialization of 5,100 new food products in New York.
- The market for organic food has grown 142% from 2003-08. New York is now the fourth in the nation, with 827 organic farms and \$105 million in sales, expanding, in part, through farmers markets, farm stands and other direct-to-consumer channels. CALS has more than 65 research and extension projects in organic agriculture, including dairy, livestock, field crops, fruit and vegetable production, forest management, and community education.
- Small farms make up 92% of New York's farms. CALS Small Farms Program and crop and animal production specialists address the the issues unique to small farm operations. Among other things, economists, researchers and educators are exploring current and future models for food processing and transportation, to enhance farmers markets, school districts and farm-to-chef initiatives.
- Cornell Cooperative Extension specialists provide farm fresh food to New York City through support and training for 600 community gardens, 120 farmers markets, 100 CSAs, and 10 food pantries and soup kitchens.
- Extension specialists are leveraging the power of the Internet through sites like CNY Bounty, an online farmer's market linking producers and consumers, and Market Maker, a site linking farmers and retailers that gets 100k hits per month.
- CALS food scientists support local producers. For example, Cornell's Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) program has been adopted by the U.S. government's Produce Safety Alliance to provide on-farm safety trainings for smaller, local producers, in advance of new national regulations.

**These are just a few examples of the college's achievements and the collaborative programs that will continue to be major, innovative contributors to a thriving state economy and prosperous future.**

**CONTACT:** Michael Hoffmann • (607) 255-2552

