

# Impact...

## From the Director's Desk...

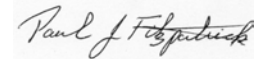
As I write this summer introduction I again find myself appreciating how lucky I am to live where I do. This morning's news talked of triple digit temperatures in the far west and rainfalls in excess of ten inches per day in the country's mid-section! Couple this with wildfires out of control, landslides, earthquakes and don't forget hurricanes and tornados! Now I do realize that we are capable of experiencing most of these natural disasters in Central New York, but we are fortunate to experience most of these only a fraction of the times our fellow Americans do in some parts of the country! This day is a beautiful summer day with sunshine and a hope of some afternoon rains. OK, we are in need of more rain, a few days of good soaking rain would be good but ten inches in a few hours!

Madison County has the potential for excellent growing conditions for a wide variety of both field crops and market gardens. With a little cooperation from "Mother Nature" we can still see a good year for locally grown produce. As Steve Miller's article below indicates, Farmer's Markets are growing in popularity throughout New York State. Steve is working on a couple of grant funded projects designed to encourage this important connection between local growers and local consumers of fresh produce. And in a very much related article, Debbie SeGuin discusses how Cooperative Extension helps local residents incorporate these locally grown products into a healthy, balanced diet. The "Eat Smart New York" program encourages folks on limited incomes

to use food stamps at local farmers markets and use these fresh products in their daily meal planning. This too is a special grant funded program from the USDA through our local Dept. of Social Services.

So the next time you are shopping and you have a choice, choose Locally produced items. You will be helping our local economy and chances are that it will be fresher and more nutritious! It's a win win proposition!!

Sincerely,



Paul J Fitzpatrick  
Executive Director

## Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

By: Steve Miller, Senior Extension Resource Educator

Farmers' markets are growing in numbers all over the country and in New York the number has increased from 225 to 350 in the last five years. Communities and consumers are recognizing the value of locally grown produce and products. There is a program called the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program FMNP that uses Federal dollars to provide WIC recipients and low income seniors with coupons which they utilize at farmers' markets to purchase locally grown fruits and vegetables.

In New York about \$5.5 million of coupons are redeemed each year at farmers' markets throughout the state. Consumers, farmers, and

communities all benefit from the influx of dollars spent at these markets. The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets oversees the program and has contracted with Cornell University and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Madison County to provide activities to support and expand the program around the state. In 2006, 50

farmers' markets participated in two events to promote consumer use of potatoes and cabbage. The Pride of NY program and the

Leafy Greens Council helped provide materials for the program statewide.

In 2007 we are piloting a program to promote the use of

food stamps primarily by senior citizens, at farmers markets millions of dollars each year never reach New York's economy because

thousands of seniors who are eligible do not apply for food stamps. Only 20 percent of



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eligible seniors actually apply to receive them and this is money lost to them and the community. The pilot will encourage their enrollment and the use of food stamps at 6-8 farmers' markets within the state. If all goes well the program will be expanded to more farmers markets.

Another project we are involved in is the result of a federal grant from the USDA Agriculture Marketing Service that staff wrote and was

awarded in the fall of 2006. The project includes the production of a training video on merchandising and customer service for farmers selling at farmers markets. The video will provide information on the best ways to display at markets and how to insure that the public has confidence in the local food supply. Filming is currently underway and the end product should be available this fall/winter. It will be made available through Cooperative Extension offices all over the U.S.

## How Far Can Your Food Dollar Stretch?

By Debra SeGuin, Extension Issue Leader

Twenty one dollars a week. That's the average amount of money a food stamp recipient receives to supplement their income and purchase food for a week. A family of four could receive up to \$120 per week. It's a challenge to make ends meet on a food stamp budget, but over 2100 families and



individuals in Madison County do just that each week. Add to that the challenge of choosing healthy foods, and it's easy to see how overwhelming the task of feeding a family can become. That's where Eat Smart NY comes in. ESNY is a CCE nutrition education program designed to help food stamp recipients eat healthy foods on a very limited budget. ESNY is funded by a federal USDA grant, matched with local resources and conducted in partnership with the local Department of Social Services. Nutrition educators engage participants in a series of lessons where they learn new skills, increase knowledge, and incorporate changes in their daily lives that add up to health benefits now and in the future. Last year, over 60 people graduated by completing a series of 6-12 lessons on healthy eating, managing food dollars, and food safety.

Here are just a few examples of how ESNY is making a difference:

- A young mom who can now put together a week's worth of menus using simple items she can keep stocked in her cupboard
- A senior who lost weight by using the Food Pyramid as a guide
- A mom who never looked at food labels is now regularly reading the labels and using the information to make healthier choices for her family
- A group of individuals with developmental disabilities now packing their own healthier lunches with more fruits, vegetables, whole grains and water rather than sugary snacks and drinks
- A mom who gained the confidence and skills to prepare meals rather than relying on less healthy fast foods and convenience foods

With newly gained cooking skills, some basic nutrition knowledge and improved self- confidence, food stamp recipients are meeting the challenge and heading towards a healthier future.

## Did You Know...

Madison County has 15 NOFA-NY Certified Farms & Businesses, which are listed in the most recent *Organic Food Guide 2007* published by the Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York. Most of these farms produce dairy, hay and pasture. Others raise beef and grow barley, oats, buckwheat, canola, sorghum/sudan grass, rye, herb, vegetables, and hops. The Organic Food Guide 2007 is available at our office.

## F A Q...

**Don't you need 40 acres and a John Deere to have a garden?**

*Not so, said a group of enthusiastic 4-H'ers who recently planted a Taco in a Pot garden. Using a 5 gallon container filled with potting soil, they are growing a tomato plant with 2 pepper plants (you need 2 peppers to keep each other company) with a little Black Seeded Simpson lettuce on the side. Taco salad for all this summer!*



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