



NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY

**TASK FORCE ON FOOD, FARM AND NUTRITION POLICY
CHAIR, ASSEMBLYMAN FELIX W. ORTIZ**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
CHAIR, ASSEMBLYMAN WILLIAM MAGEE**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
CHAIR, ASSEMBLYMAN RICHARD N. GOTTFRIED**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SERVICES
CHAIR, ASSEMBLYMEMBER DEBORAH J. GLICK**

**PUBLIC HEARING
NEW YORK STATE FOOD AND NUTRITION POLICY**

**Monday, May 16th 10:00 am (2005)
Roosevelt Hearing Room C, Legislative Office Building, Second Floor
Albany, NY**



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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

SUBJECT: New York State Food and Nutrition Policy

PURPOSE: To solicit recommendations on New York State food and nutrition policies

Monday, May 16, 2005, 10:30 am
Roosevelt Hearing Room C
Legislative Office Building, Second Floor
Albany, NY

In 1988, the Governor's New York State Council on Food and Nutrition Policy, composed of the Commissioners of Health, Agriculture and Markets, Education, Aging, Social Services (now Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA)), General Services, and the Council of Children and Families along with an advisory committee made up of health professionals, academics, program administrators and advocates, farmers, and consumers released a "Five Year Food and Nutrition Plan" for the State. The document included policy recommendations addressing issue areas that overlap several agencies and policies including "Food Adequacy and Accessibility," "Nutrition and Health," "Food and Nutrition Education," "Food Supply," and "Food Processing and Distribution." The Plan described the goals of food and nutrition policy, e.g. "...to not only provide adequate nutrition in an accessible and affordable manner, but also strive to achieve efficient growth in agricultural production, job generation, food security and expanded markets for growth." More recently, food policy advocates have promoted the concept of "community food security," defined as "individuals and families successfully obtaining a culturally acceptable, nutritious diet using local non-emergency sources."

Although the Council was disbanded shortly after developing the Plan, some progress was made in achieving some of its goals and recommendations in the years since the Plan was released. Successful initiatives included: increased State funding for food assistance with provisions encouraging the use of local farm products; expansion of school breakfast programs; development of the Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs; and, creation of the Farm-to-School program and the Childhood Obesity Prevention Program. However, there are still significant policy challenges facing the State such as continued reliance on emergency food programs, increasing health care costs, especially Medicaid, as a result of increased rates of diet-related diseases, and the further loss of family farms and food businesses despite the proximity to one of the largest and most lucrative consumer markets in the world.

The Committees and Task Force would like to receive testimony on coordinated, comprehensive State food and nutrition policies which could address problems, such as limited food options, poor nutrition, and loss of farms.

WITNESSES MAY DIRECT THEIR TESTIMONY TO ALL OR SOME OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS. PLEASE SUMMARIZE YOUR WRITTEN COMMENTS DURING YOUR ORAL TESTIMONY.

1. Does the State need a comprehensive, coordinated Food Policy plan? Is there a need for legislation to establish comprehensive State Food Policy? What issues and goals would need to be addressed by such a plan?
2. Is there a need for a State Food Policy Council? How should such a Council be organized? Does it need to be part of State government? If yes, how should it be established, who should be members, and what powers should it have? Is there a need for local or regional policy councils?
3. What changes are needed in existing food, nutrition, and agricultural policies and programs that can mutually benefit both consumers and producers?
4. The Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs provide food assistance and nutrition education to low-income seniors and WIC families, and increased profits for local farmers. What other specific policy and program ideas could address interrelated food policy concerns, such as limited food accessibility and affordability, and poor nutrition, and the need to promote consumption and sales of local farm products?
5. Please comment on Assembly Bill A.2651, which would create a Community Food Security Program to support projects designed to increase the availability of culturally acceptable, affordable, nutritionally adequate food, from local sources whenever possible. (To read the bill, please go to: <http://Assembly.state.ny.us> and type in A2651 under Quick Bill Search or contact the Task Force at 518-455-5203 to get a printed copy).



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Public Hearing

New York State Food and Nutrition Policy

Monday, May 16th 10:00 am

**Roosevelt Hearing Room C, Legislative Office Building, Second Floor
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WITNESS LIST

1. Joel Berg, Executive Director, NYC Coalition Against Hunger
2. Lynn Fredericks, Founder, Family Cook Productions
3. Stephen L. Nortz, Vice-Chair, American Dairy Association & Dairy Council, Inc.
4. Renee Hanks, Vice-President, NYS School Food Service Association; Raymond Denniston, Food Service Director, NYS Farm to School Coordinating Committee, Johnson City Central School District; and, Betsey Bacelli, Supervisor of Food Service, NYSSFSA
5. William P. Jordan, Special Assistant, NYS Dept. of Agriculture & Markets
6. Susan M. Gugliuzza, RNC, Director of Nutrition Services, Urban Comm. Health Org.
7. Mark Dunlea, Associate Director, Hunger Action Network of NYS
8. Michelle Bennett Stieglitz, Executive Director, Urbgardens
9. Diane Picard, Growing Green Program Director, Massachusetts Avenue Project
10. Louise Johnson, Upstate Coordinator, NYSAGE
- 11a. Kate MacKenzie, MS, RD, Senior Policy Analyst, Food Change;
- 11b. Fern Estrow, NYCEN
12. Lester Rosenzweig, Nutrition Consultant, Council of Senior Centers and Services of NY City
13. Bridget Walsh, Presented for Karen Schimke, President and CEO, Schuyler Center for Analysis & Advocacy
14. Edie Mesick, Executive Director, Nutrition Consortium of NYS

(Continued)

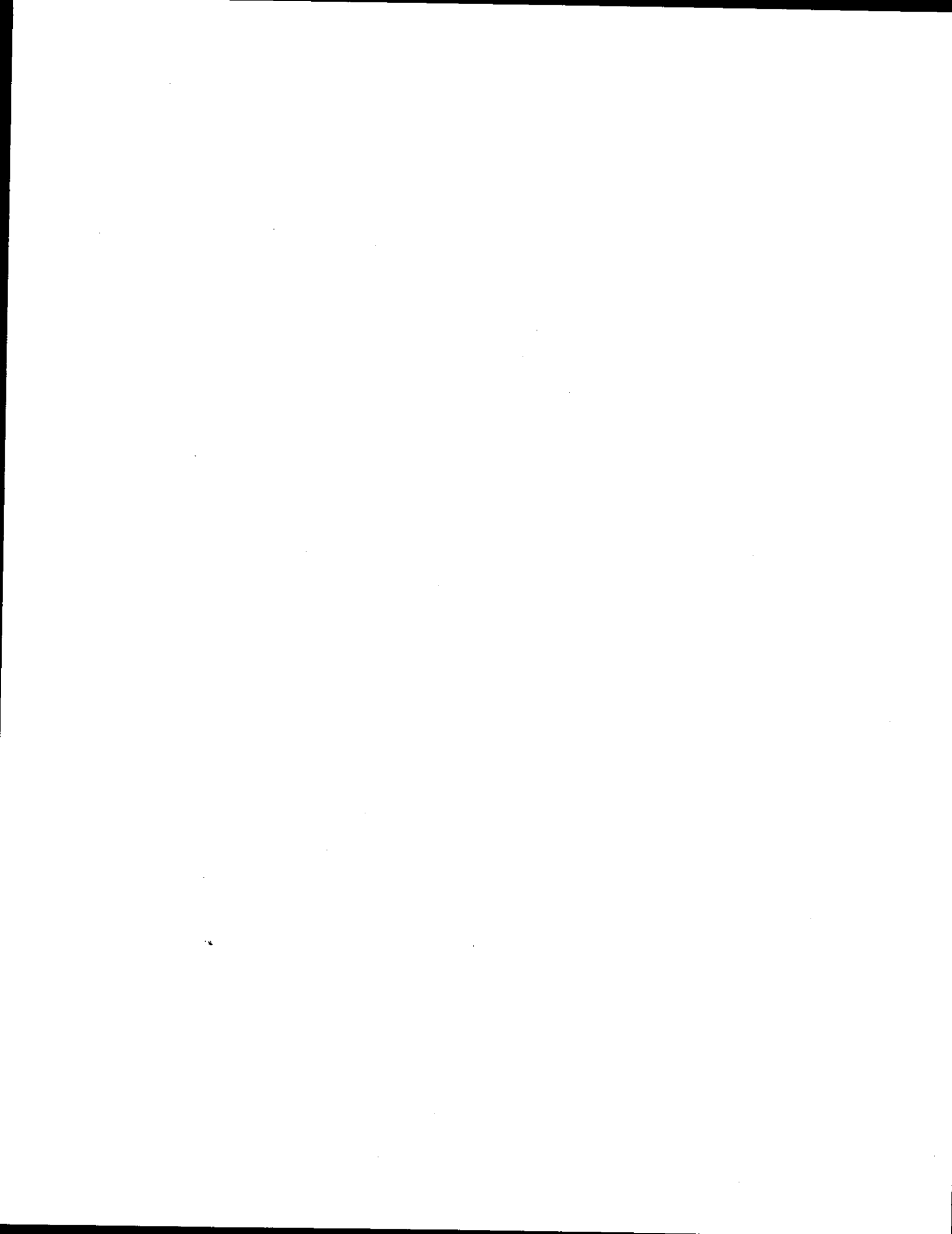
15. Amie Hamlin, Executive Director, NY Coalition for Health School Lunches
16. Sarah Johnston, Executive Director, Northeast Organic Farming Assoc. of NY
17. Peter C. Shuster, Farmer-Owner, P&K Shuster Farms
18. Dianne Woitkowski, Deputy Exec. Director of Program & Planning, God's Love We Deliver
19. Sandra Goldsmith, Director of Nutrition Services, The Children's Health Fund
20. Tom Ferraro, Foodlink, Inc
21. Ken Dibbell, Farmer, Chenango Co. Farm Land Protection Boardmember
22. Duncan Hilchey, Ag. Development Specialist, Cornell University
23. Hank Herrera, Managing Director, and Kate Mendenhall, Program Manager; NYSAWG
24. Fred Newdom, Legislative Consultant, WIC Association of NYS
25. Bruce W. Krupke, Executive Vice President, NYS Dairy Foods
26. Sjana McClure-Berry, Crop Farmer; Spokesperson, Farmwives United
27. Charmaine Ruddock, Project Director, Bronx Health REACH
28. Cassandra Daigle, Coordinator, Feed the Solution Campaign, Cathedral Community Cares
29. Martha Goodsell, Executive Director, OR Sherry Alpern, Vice President; NY Farms!
30. Glenda Neff, Consultant, NYS Farm-to-School
31. Billie Best, Executive Director, Regional Farm & Food Project
32. Sandra McNeil, MA, RD, CD/N FADA, Chair of Delegates, NYS Dietetic Association
33. Áine Duggan, VP, Government Relations, Food Bank For New York City (presented testimony with Tom Ferraro, #20)
34. Sharon Kroeger, NYS Small Food Processors Association (walk-in)

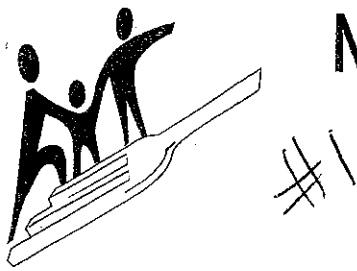


Public Hearing
New York State Food and Nutrition Policy
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SUBMITTED TESTIMONY FOR THE RECORD
Did Not Appear in Person

35. Ellen Rautenberg, President and CEO, Medical and Health Research Association of New York City, Inc. (MHRA)
36. Donald L. Hassig, Director, Cancer Action
37. Genrikh Vapne
38. Lynda Schuyler, Executive Director, Food Pantries for the Capital District
39. Kimberly Gray and Catherine M. Tretheway, et al, for the Ichabod Crane Elementary PTA Nutrition Committee
40. Elliot D. Brodsky, Managing Director, Catalyst Information Network
41. Anna Dawson, Hometown Foods, LLC
42. Diane Eggert, Executive Director, Farmers' Market Federation of New York
43. Michael F. Bopp, NYS Director of Advocacy, American Cancer Society
44. Julie C. Suarez, Manager of Governmental Relations, New York Farm Bureau
45. Jennifer Wilkins, Ph.D., R.D., Senior Extension Associate, Division of Nutritional Sciences, Cornell University
46. Robert Doar, Commissioner, NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance





New York City Coalition Against Hunger

Helping families move beyond the soup kitchen

#1

Joel Berg, Executive Director

New York City Coalition Against Hunger

Testimony

New York State Assembly Hearing on Food and Nutrition Policy

May 16, 2005

Introduction

Good morning. I am Joel Berg, Executive Director of the New York City Coalition Against Hunger, which represents the more than 1,200 food pantries and soup kitchens in New York City, and the more than one million low-income New Yorkers forced to obtain food from these charities. This testimony is submitted on their behalf.

I wholeheartedly support the Assembly's leadership in reinvigorating efforts to create and implement a comprehensive Food Policy Plan statewide to address both hunger and community food security. In particular, I offer strong support for A. 2651 to create a Community Food Security Program providing grants, although I would propose that the bill be amended to increase the program's focus on both anti-poverty work and on specific activities to increase the usage of federally-funded nutrition assistance programs. I can personally attest that, based on both my current role working in New York City and on my former role as Coordinator of Community Food Security for the U.S. Department of Agriculture working nationwide, such coordinated, cross-agency initiatives – when implemented properly – can indeed help reduce hunger and strengthen community food security.

Hunger and Food Insecurity Are Growing in New York

There is no question that personal hunger, household food insecurity, and community food insecurity continue to rise throughout New York State – at a time when federal, state, and local resources to fight the problem are actually being *reduced*.

Permit me to describe the situation in New York City, with which I am most familiar. Even before September 11, more than 1.7 million New Yorkers lived below the federal poverty line, and more than one million were forced to utilize charitable pantries and kitchens. According to the most comprehensive annual survey of hunger in New York City (conducted by my organization), the number of people fed at the city's pantries and kitchens rose by 48% from 2000 – 2003. That number rose an additional 9% from 2003 – 2004, indicating that any economic recovery has yet to significantly aid the lowest-income New Yorkers.

The fastest-growing populations at these agencies are working parents, children, and senior citizens. While the public often uses the terms "hungry" and "homeless" interchangeably, at least 90% of the people forced to utilize kitchens and pantries in the city do live in some sort of home; they simply don't have enough income to purchase all the food their families need.

Fully 81% of the city's pantries and kitchens said they faced at least some increased demand for food in 2004, with 52% saying the demand had increased "greatly." The number of people being fed by such agencies is now at record levels. Yet, in the last year, only 22% of the agencies obtained more food and funding, only 15% hired more staff, and only 27% obtained more volunteers. In fact, more than twice as many agencies faced cuts in food and money as obtained increases.

This "food distribution resources gap" forced a record 48 agencies to shut down entirely, forcing their clients to either go hungry or look elsewhere for food. Of the agencies that were able to stay in business, limited resources forced more than half (53%) to ration their food by either turning away hungry New Yorkers, reducing portion sizes, and/or cutting hours of operation – a 20% increase since 2002 in the number of agencies forced to ration food.

While, in previous years, the City's Human Resources Administration (HRA) has disputed the findings of our annual study, since November of 2003 HRA has published its own data confirming a sharp rise in people fed at the more than 600 pantries and kitchens funded by HRA's Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP). According to HRA, at these agencies funded by EFAP, the number of people fed in the most recent four-month period, November 2004 – February 2005, was 197,272 people (6%) greater than in the same four-month period one year earlier (November 2003 – February 2004). At just agencies funded by EFAP (which comprise only about half of the 1,200 agencies in the city), an average of 890,532 people are now fed per month.

We don't know precisely how many people are fed by the other 600 pantries and kitchens that are not funded by HRA. We do know that these agencies tend to be smaller and open less frequently than the agencies funded by HRA. Therefore, if these agencies fed only half as many people as the ones funded by the City, that would still mean that charitable pantries and kitchens are now providing an average of more than 1.3 million meals per month to low-income New Yorkers.

Of course, it only makes matters worse when government cuts anti-hunger funding.

Due to an oddity in a bureaucratic formula, funding provided to New York City from the federal Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP) – the main source of federal cash for food pantries, soup kitchens, food banks, and food rescue organizations – is being *reduced* this year. In this fiscal year, New York City's annual share of the program was cut by \$143,000, and President Bush failed to meet Senator Clinton's request to increase funding for this program in a way that would increase New York City's allocation.

Governor Pataki again proposed providing two million dollars less in funding than was provided in 2002 to the Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP), the primary state program that provides food to emergency food programs. **We are grateful that the State Legislature has added back \$350,000 into HPNAP, but that still means the program will now have \$1.65 million less in funding than it did three years ago.**

Mayor Bloomberg's Preliminary and Executive budgets for Fiscal Year 2006 both propose \$670,000 *less* in funding for the City's main source of food and funding for emergency food programs – the HRA Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP).

It is unacceptable to again try to balance the budget on the backs of the city's most defenseless residents, and on the under-funded agencies that struggle to serve them every day. The proposed cuts are even more outrageous in light of the fact that last year – even with a higher level of funding – half of these agencies in New York City were unable to meet the growing need.

I also hope that State more vigorously opposes cuts in the federal Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Program. While CSBG funding does not generally directly supply food, it does fund a wide variety of other anti-poverty programs; when these programs are cut, low-income New Yorkers have less money to pay for basic expenses, including food, and are more likely to face hunger. Additionally, the State should vigorously oppose federal and state cuts in other anti-poverty programs, including housing and health care programs. Further cutting these programs would surely increase hunger.

The Broader Problem of Community Food Security

Poverty and hunger continue to have far higher concentrations in certain communities. For instance, while the national poverty rate is 12.4%, the neighborhood of West Harlem/Morningside Heights in Manhattan has of 15.4% rate; Bedford-Stuyvesant/Williamsburg in Brooklyn has a 36.4% rate; and the South Bronx has a 40.7% rate.

Such neighborhoods not only face hunger, poverty, and gaps in government assistance – they also suffer from broader community food insecurity as a result of dysfunctional food systems that characterize low-income neighborhoods across the U.S. Such communities lack: access to fresh produce, direct ties to small and medium-sized farmers, and adequate knowledge of nutrition.

Furthermore, because charitable pantries and kitchens lack resources to meet the growing demand, they are often forced to rely on a limited supply of highly processed, high sodium, and high sugar foods from private donors and government surplus commodities of varied nutritional qualities. These inner-city problems in turn exacerbate the threat to the broader regional food system. Vast numbers of potential urban consumers are cut off from small and medium-sized farmers, and farmers are cut off from potential income that can preserve their land against encroaching development. Thus, hunger and community food insecurity are inexorably linked. Efforts to combat them will be most effective if we address them together, in a coordinated, strategic manner.

Why Coordinated, Cross-Agency Food Security and Anti-Hunger Efforts Matter

Before I joined the Coalition in 2001, I had served for eight years in the Clinton Administration working for the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture. During the last two of those years, I served as USDA Coordinator of Community Food Security, a position in which I helped implement the first-ever Federal government initiative to better enable faith-based and other nonprofit groups fight hunger, bolster food security, and help low-income Americans move from poverty to self-sufficiency.

The USDA initiative implemented a coordinated, cross-agency plan of action in seven areas: local anti-hunger infrastructure; economic and job security; the Federal nutrition assistance safety net; food recovery and donations; local food production and marketing; education and awareness; and research and monitoring. These efforts achieved great progress in a little under two years. Even though the initiative was formally cut short when the Bush Administration took office and discontinued it, the initiative did plant seeds around the country that continue to support governmental and nonprofit community food security efforts today.

The bottom line is that both the federal and state government have a bewildering number of vital, programs to combat hunger and food insecurity, yet they almost always operate independently of each other. These programs would be much more effective if they were coordinated in a strategic manner.

How A State Food Policy Plan and Food Policy Task Force Could Work

Creating and implementing a State Food Policy Plan, through a Food Policy Task Force and new Community Food Security grants, could also achieve significant progress. Similar efforts in states such as Connecticut and Oregon have already proven their effectiveness.

Members of the Food Policy Task Force should include decision-making representatives of:

- The State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance
- The State Department of Health
- The State Department of Agriculture and Markets
- The State Department of Education
- The Governor's Office
- The State Senate
- The State Assembly
- Cornell Cooperative Extension
- Leading statewide and local anti-hunger, nutrition, community food security, anti-poverty, farming, and consumer groups.
- Businesses that grow, process, transport, and sell food.

The Task Force should also ask for voluntary participation from the appropriate federal and county government agencies. The Task Force should base its activities on a number of basic principles:

- Neither the government nor communities can solve the large and complex problems of hunger and food insecurity on their own, but they can solve those problems if they work together. Only government has the resources, scope of work, and community legitimacy to take the lead in tackling these problems. Perhaps the most important goal of this process should be improving the coordination between state agencies that administer nutrition and food security programs assistance programs.
- The State should energetically forge innovative partnerships with nonprofit groups, private businesses, and individual citizens – as well as with federal, local, and tribal government agencies – in order to help communities solve problems of food in security and hunger. It is

important to expand technical assistance to counties, cities, communities, and nonprofit groups to build long-term local structures to increase food security.

- Led by the State Food Policy Task Force, all stakeholders should work together in a coordinated manner to build local food systems in order to decrease hunger, improve nutrition, and help families move from poverty to self-sufficiency.

The Food Policy Plan and the Food Policy Task Force should focus on achieving progress in eight concrete areas:

- 1) Strengthening the federal nutrition assistance safety net by supporting the full and efficient use of the Food Stamp; WIC; School Lunch; School Breakfast; Summer Food Service; and Child and Adult Care Feeding Programs.
- 2) Increasing economic and job security by helping low-income people obtain living wage jobs and attain self-sufficiency.
- 3) Catalyzing or enhancing state and local infrastructures to reduce hunger and food insecurity.
- 4) Increasing the amount – and improving the nutritional quality – of supplemental food provided by nonprofit groups by aiding food recovery, gleaning, and food donation programs, while helping front-line agencies to coordinate and harmonize their services.
- 5) Improving community food production and marketing by aiding projects that grow, process, and distribute food locally and regionally, including farmers' markets, farm-to-institution projects, and community supported agriculture. Bolster the ability of such projects and entities to utilize food stamp and WIC benefits.
- 6) Increasing both the availability of low-cost nutritious food and the education necessary to obtain and prepare such food, thereby combating both malnutrition and obesity.
- 7) Boosting education and awareness by increasing efforts to inform the public about nutrition, food safety, and community food security. Educating the public by using the "bully pulpit" of high-profile government offices to increase public awareness of the causes of food insecurity and highlight innovative community solutions to hunger.
- 8) Improving research, monitoring, and evaluation efforts to help communities assess and strengthen food security.

Goals for Increasing the Use of Federally Funded Nutrition Assistance Programs

The most important goal of the efforts at the State level should be to increase participation in federally funded nutrition assistance programs. In New York City alone, such efforts could achieve tremendous results.

These are some goals that could easily be set for New York City:

- 1) Increase by 46% the number of New Yorkers receiving food stamps, increasing program participation in the Food Stamp Program by 500,000 people. This would provide approximately **\$600 million more per year** in federally funded food to low-income New Yorkers. (Given that 380,000 fewer people receive food stamps today in NYC than 10 years ago, and that at least 600,000 additional people are eligible, the 500,000 goal for an increase is indeed realistic.) To achieve this goal, the City should implement a pilot project to enable food pantries and soup kitchens to enable their customers/clients apply for food stamps online; for applicants who are working, senior citizens, and/or disabled, HRA would waive face-to-face interviews. It is important to note that this would also increase the federal money going to the City's Board of Education because every child enrolled in the Food Stamp Program would automatically be signed up for the School Lunch Program, thereby increasing federal lunch reimbursements to the City.
- 2) Increase by 30% the number of children receiving nutrition and health assistance from the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program, increasing overall program participation by 70,770 people. This would provide pregnant and nursing women and children up to five years of age an extra **\$37.621 million more per year** in specially selected food. (Given that only 283,081 of the 586,845 -- 48% -- of the people eligible in NYC now receive WIC, the 70,770 goal for an increase is indeed realistic.)
- 3) Increase by 50% the number of children receiving free school breakfasts, increasing program participation by 72,486 students. This would provide an additional **\$16.727 million more per year** in federal funded school breakfasts. As of March 2004, only 19% of eligible students obtained breakfast in New York City, compared to the still very low level of 30% throughout the rest of New York State. (Thus, the goal for a 72,486-student increase is very realistic; even if this goal were reached, the participation rate would still be only 28%.)
- 4) Increase by 40% the number of children receiving free summer meals, increasing program participation by 76,872 children; also starting the program earlier in the summer and ending it later in the summer -- running it for a total of 40 week days of the summer. This would provide an additional **\$7.840 million more per year** in federal funding for summer meals for children. As of July 2004, only 25% of eligible children received summer meals in New York City. (Thus, the goal for a 67,263-child increase is very realistic; even if this goal were reached, the participation rate would still be only 34%.)
- 5) Increase the number of children receiving after-school snacks or suppers funded by the federal Child and Adult Care Feeding Program.

Together, those goals would leverage an addition \$362.180 million per year in federal funds to feed low-income New York City residents, most of whom would be children.

Other Goals for Strengthening Community Food Security

Statewide, the Food Policy Plan should work through a Food Policy Task Force and new Community Food security grants to:

- 1) Leverage public and private resources to strengthen and better coordinate the operations of the state's more than 2,000 soup kitchens and food pantries that make up the charitable food distribution system. This would include an increase in the State HPNAP Program to a level that would support an increase in food distribution by 20%, while increasing the involvement of such agencies in outreach on government benefits and better targeting food distribution to people who are either ineligible for certain government programs or for whom such programs are inadequate. These efforts should harmonize services and reduce duplication between agencies, while improving the nutritional content of their food and helping more of their clients/customers move towards long-term self-sufficiency.
- 2) Increase the amount of fresh produce purchased from regional small and medium-sized farmers by the City's Department of Education, as well as by other Departments such as the Department of Corrections.
- 3) Increase the number of families obtaining nutrition education.
- 4) Increase the amount of fresh produce grown at community gardens and urban farms.
- 5) Increase the number of farmers' markets located in low-income neighborhoods and the ability of such markets to accept food stamps, WIC farmers' market coupons, and seniors farmers' markets coupons.
- 6) Increase the number of food-related micro-enterprises.
- 7) Increase the number of low-income, working New Yorkers who file for and receive the Earned-Income Tax Credit.
- 8) Increase the number of low-income New Yorkers developing assets through Individual Development Accounts (IDAs).

The Need to Increase the Usage of Farmers' Markets by Low-Income New Yorkers

The State should take the lead in increasing all programs – including the Seniors Farmers' Market Program and the WIC Farmers' Market Program – which enable low-income New Yorkers to obtain fresh produce directly from small farmers.

First, the State should vigorously oppose President George W. Bush's proposed \$8 million (29%) cut in the WIC Farmer's Market Program. This proposal would reduce both the number of farmers and the number of Americans facing poverty who would be able to obtain the economic and nutritional benefits of the program. In previous years, President Bush proposed entirely eliminating the program.

I live right across from the wonderful farmers' market at Grand Army Plaza in Brooklyn, and frequently see how this program provides an important source of income to small farmers struggling to stay on their family's land, as well as fruit and vegetables to low-income women who are pregnant or have small children. At a time of both soaring hunger and increasing obesity, it is insane to slash a program that effectively fights both problems while also helping small farmers stay on the land. Furthermore, at a time when the President and the majority in Congress are proposing tens of billions of dollars – yes billion with a “b” – in additional tax cuts for the wealthy, such a proposed cut of \$8 million dollars – which would devastate the WIC Farmers' Market Program but be only a drop in the bucket in the federal deficit – demonstrates very misplaced values indeed.

Second, the State should increase its own matching funds to both the Seniors Farmers' Market Program and the WIC Farmers' Market Program to expand participation in the program.

Third, the State should provide extra funding to increase the usage of food stamp benefits at farmers' markets and through community supported agriculture (CSA) projects. Such funding would provide: more wireless food stamps redemption devices to farmers' markets; support for outreach to encourage more people to obtain food stamps benefits and then use them at farmers' markets; and technical assistance to markets and CSAs about how to increase food stamps usage.

Fourth, the State Department of Health should build more flexibility into the HPNAP Program to allow pantries and kitchens to obtain more fresh produce directly from farmers' markets and CSAs.

Support, and Suggested Improvements, for A. 2561

In particular, I offer strong support for A. 2651 to create a Community Food Security Program providing grants. It seems to be modeled on federal Community Food Project Grant, with which I was involved during my previous work at USDA. Such grants can indeed help grassroots groups strengthen local and regional food systems while improving nutrition. Today, virtually no funding is available from the State for this vital purpose.

The only significant constructive criticism of both the USDA program and the proposed State program is that both have legislative language that somewhat limits the anti-poverty and anti-hunger aspects of such projects. Thus, I would propose that A. 2561 be amended to make it even more explicit that the grants are intended to: reduce poverty; reduce hunger; increase the usage of federally funded nutrition assistance programs; and increase the ability of people using federal nutrition assistance programs to obtain fresh produce from farmers' markets, CSAs, and other farm direct projects. I would also suggest reducing the matching requirements from 100% for each year in the current bill to a scaled-down amount of 25% for year 1, 50% for year 2, and 75% for year 3 of any multi-year grant.

Support for A. 2655

We also strongly support A.2655, which would require the State to accept the federal waiver to enable able-bodied adults without dependents (“ABAWDs”) who live in areas of high unemployment to continue to receive food stamp benefits as they actively seek work. We are extremely pleased the Assembly passed this bill by such an overwhelming margin. We hope the Senate rapidly passes it, and that the Governor signs it into law.

The biggest impact of this bill would be enacting such a waiver in New York City, where Mayor Michael Bloomberg has, unfortunately, denied the waiver for four years in a row. Such a waiver is widely allowed nationally by the Bush Administration and made available, but not required, throughout New York State by the Pataki Administration. Numerous upstate cities and counties, including some run by conservative Republicans, now accept the waiver.

In defending the New York City's previous decisions to reject the waiver, City officials and some right-wing pundits have made the claim that, if the City accepted the waiver, such a decision would eliminate work requirements for able-bodied food stamps recipients; yet that claim is entirely untrue. Obtaining the waiver does not eliminate the requirement that all able-bodied food stamps recipients seek employment; it simply allows those seeking employment, but not able to obtain it, to continue to receive food stamps. When an ABAWD waiver is in place, federal law still requires that all able-bodied food stamps recipients make a good-faith effort to look for work. Even if the City were required to implement the waiver, ABAWDs would still have been required to participate in job search, workfare, or other employment activities, and could still have their benefits terminated by the City if they did not comply. The current policy of denying food to people looking for work only makes it more difficult for them to have the energy and focus to find employment. Additionally, if the City had accepted the waiver, it would have decreased the amount of paperwork the City needed to provide to the State. Lastly, the City's refusal to accept the waiver reduces federal funding coming into the city's economy. For all these reasons, A. 2655 not only promotes compassion, it advances common sense good government.

Conclusion

We greatly appreciate the State Assembly's leadership on these vital issues. We stand ready to work with you to implement these critical proposals. Thank you.



#2

FAMILYCOOK PRODUCTIONS

Bringing Families Together Through Delicious Fresh Food

330 East 43rd Street, Ste. 704, NYC 10017 212.867.3929
FamilyCookProductions.com



Testimony to the New York State Assembly Task Force
Food, Farm and Nutrition Policy
And Standing Committees on Agriculture, Health & Human Services

Presented by
Lynn Fredericks
President, FamilyCook Productions, Inc.

Hilary Baum
Baum Forum & Public Market Partners
May 16, 2005

Chairman Ortiz, Standing Committee Chairs Magee, Gottfried and Glick, on behalf of FamilyCook Productions (we are community food educators) and The Baum Forum (sponsors of urban food system continuing education @ CUNY) we commend you for calling hearings on food policy in New York State. We wholeheartedly support both statewide policy on food and the establishment of a NY State Food Policy Council for the following reasons.

The transformation of our nation's food system from a regional farm-to-table economy to our current one of factory farms and a largely manufactured food supply has occurred in little more than half a century. Post-war changes that presented economies of scale efficiencies, profit maximization for large farms, and convenience food for families with two working parents all seemed innocent enough. Yet because an overall policy for food as it relates to health and our

economy did not exist, food production today is concentrated into the realm of relatively few producers and marketers, who create and advertise so many artificial foods and snacks, that a growing segment of citizens in every state are becoming obese at alarming rates. This has led to sky-rocketing health costs to deal with the related chronic diseases, with a large percent of this ill health occurring among the poorest communities (both urban & rural), where nutrient poor food is the most affordable food available.

In the late 1970s, when urban food buyers were increasingly unable to purchase the very food grown around them, the farmer's market movement was born. But a more far-reaching solution to an imbalanced food system was innovated in Knoxville, Tennessee, in 1978. There, an urban planner named Robert Wilson saw that planning for food in communities was as necessary as planning for housing, transportation, water and waste. He assembled stakeholders throughout the regional food system and established the very first regional Food Policy Council to advise the city on policy issues related to food and taking into consideration all available resources, health needs of the community and opportunities for economic development.

Since then, state, county and municipal food policy councils have begun sprouting up across the American landscape like seeds blown in the wind and settling in fertile soil. Progressive states and communities, who see the health of farm and local economies as well as their citizens as intertwined, are utilizing food policy councils as a mechanism to approach food issues and concerns in a systemic fashion.

This phenomenon responds to the reality that well-intended Federal, state and local policies and programs that impact food often fall short in their effectiveness. The specialized agencies charged with policy implementation rarely benefit from the activities of other areas of government and/or private expertise. And thus: the impediment of good policies prevails. By contrast, through the establishment

of food policy councils, coalitions of community groups, public health professionals, farmers, food business owners, urban planners, environmental quality agencies etc. work together to think out of the box and create sustainable and positive changes across urban, rural and farm landscapes. Lessons learned from innovative pilot projects, often under private sponsorship, are leveraged and best practices shared with new communities in an organized fashion.

Because Food Policy Councils have a broad make up of individuals, their role as partners with and advisors to government entities can make all the difference in envisioning and implementing truly effective policies that offer urban planners mechanisms to work with communities on their food needs successfully.

Of course back in 1988, New York State did set up The New York State Council on Food & Nutrition Policy, which began to look at all polices in the state that touched food. But after excellent work assessing issues to be addressd via new policies, the Council and its work became defunct before the first five-year plan was up. Now, jumping ahead to 2005 in New York City, there is an informal group working to set up a similar type of body that will focus on the 5 boroughs. The emerging NYC Food System Network, a proposed alliance of stakeholders across NYC and the region's food system, will work to promote food systems that:

- strengthen the regional farm and food economy
- support healthy nutrition
- increase access to safe and wholesome food to all

Such organizations already in existence are having success in grappling with food issues as they impact different areas of government and a web of interrelationships. Here are some success stories:

The Iowa Food Policy Council was successful in advising creation of two gubernatorial task forces that are endeavoring to enhance food security and increase institutional purchasing of Iowa grown foods.

In Connecticut, its Food Policy Council has worked to increase purchases of state-grown foods by its Dept. of Corrections and has assisted in the development of a state highway map of outlets for locally produced foods, a joint project of the State Departments of Agriculture and Transportation.

And in 2004 the Portland/Multnomah Food Policy Council sponsored a community food assessment in a low-income neighborhood of Lentz, and trained 6 community members to survey their fellow residents. The results revealed half the community respondents were interested in improving their access to healthful food via: 1) nutrition education; 2) growing their own food in gardens if training was available; and 3) having access to a neighborhood farmers market. As of this April of this year, grants and other appropriations have been secured to proceed further on all three objectives.

Now just imagine, for a moment, if the state of New York sponsored technical assistance for such Community Food Assessment techniques in large urban areas of our state, including New York City and a State Food Policy Council worked together with local food policy councils or food systems networks and set policies that utilized this data to strengthen both the urban and farm economies and improve access for all!

In closing, we are buoyed by the reality of a number of progressive bills that the New York State Assembly is considering that touch on nutrition, community food security and local farm strengthening. Such bills as:

A02651	Relates to food security and economic development
A02543	Relates to funding for community gardens in certain cities
A0 3717	Establishes a kitchen incubator/shared-use kitchen facility program within the urban development corporation
A04301	Seeks to remove barriers to participation in the school breakfast system

A05664	Will require certain nutrition information to customers of chain restaurants and food establishments
A08000	Provides financing for transportation projects to facilitate delivery of New York farm products from farmers to institutional food service purchasers such as restaurants, schools and other food service.
A08001	Finances the construction, reconstruction, improvement, expansion or rehab of wholesale regional farmers' markets that promote farm products grown in New York State
A08003	Provides financing for the development of processed and packaged foods grown in New York for delivery to foodservice operation markets

These bills should all be supported, legislated into law and funded. Further, their implementation should be guided by a **NY State food Policy Council**, which will include representatives of all sectors touched by this legislation. In this way seed funding (because it's always seed funding, isn't it?) for the various programs will be maximized and supported by interweaving related programs at the implementation stage. This maximizes the benefits of all this new legislation to our state economy and its citizens.

And I have to say as a final comment, that in 10 years as a community food educator, it has been my experience that consumer education is a truly transforming mechanism. Once people have experienced such valuable education, the importance of access to healthful food, of preserving our farm base – becomes self-evident. So a final recommendation would be to fund technical assistance to foster development of local and regional food policy councils across the state, possibly as part of Bill A02651 that relates to food security and economic development. Such councils would, in addition to advise on policy, create public education campaigns in their communities to help communities make better food choices, to value food that is locally grown and teach these values to their children.

And because it's not necessary to reinvent the wheel, we have provided URLs of organizations that are involved in incubating and or educating about Food Policy Councils, as well as a list of all the state and local food policy councils we're aware of at this time.

Hilary Baum

Baum Forum/ Public Market Partners
hilarybaum@baumforum.org

Hilary Baum is the Director of Baum Forum and President of Public Market Partners, a not-for-profit corporation established in 1991. For 15 years, as a producer of educational seminars, multi-day conferences and special events focusing on food, farming and markets, she has advanced the dialogue on critical issues among industry professionals and culinary students, market managers and family farmers, government officials and concerned citizens. In addition, Ms. Baum has been involved in the development of farmers' and public markets, agricultural marketing programs, and community supported agriculture. A former producer and marketer of various food products, Ms. Baum is also co-author of *Public Markets and Community Revitalization*. She serves as an advisor to the NYC Wholesale Farmers' Market Development Study and to Cornell's Community, Food and Agriculture Program.

Lynn Fredericks

Lynn Fredericks is the founder and guiding force behind **FamilyCook Productions** (www.FamilyCookProductions.com), a multi-media organization offering creative food /culinary education programming across a wide spectrum of media: books, articles, educational curricula and presentations. Author of the acclaimed, *Cooking Time Is Family Time*, she is an award-winning pioneer in the field of educating families and children about food and nutrition. FamilyCook Productions offers fun, field-tested techniques to use food and cooking as a learning tool and transform children's opinions about food. The FamilyCook Productions' team of dieticians, chefs and training specialists have developed family-focused food & nutrition programs for such national and regional organizations as: Wegmans supermarkets, Disney's *Family.com*, C-CAP (Careers Through Culinary Arts Program), The Urban Family Institute, *StarChefs.com*, *AIWF Days of Taste*, Tupperware, Reynolds® Oven Bags, 3-M Post-It Flags, O-Cello Sponge Scrubbers, and The National Pasta Association and Preferred Care, an HMO in Rochester, New York. Ms. Fredericks has appeared on such national television shows as *NBC Today* and *Cooking Live* as well as numerous local radio and television programs around the U.S.

State and Local Food Policy Councils: A Comparison and Contrast of Key Features and Outcomes
 Prepared for the Washington State Department of Agriculture Preliminary Stakeholder Meeting
 Olympia, Washington - April 29, 2004

(Please note: These are councils within the Drake/RMA project. An extensive list of former, new, and developing councils is being developed and will be published online.)

State, County or City	Council Structure	Council Administration	Validating Document	Stakeholders	Task Forces and/or Issues	Method to engage policy-makers	Recent Projects and Activities
Arizona	State	NGO - Community Food Connections	(Council is under formation as of 8/04)	NGO's, City Gov., Higher Ed, Faith Community,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food Security Direct Farm Marketing 	Reports and Publications Education and Outreach through conferences and workshops	
Illinois	State	NGO - Illinois Stewardship Alliance as of 6/04	(Council is under formation as of 6/04)	NGO's, K-12, Higher Ed, State Government Bureau Chiefs, Restaurant Industry, Governors, Governor's Policy Advisor, USDA RMA, Faith Based Community, Producers, Hunger Community Advocates, Business Owners, Producer Orgs., Nutritionists.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food Security Institutional Purchasing Local Foods Promotion Rural Economic Development There was an environmental task force in previous years. Discussions are underway to consider creating a health and nutrition task force. 	Recommendations to the Governor Reports and Publications The Annual State and Local Food Policy Council Conference "The National Workshop" for food policy councils.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National State and Local Food Policy Council website Administrator of the Greater Des Moines Buy Fresh Buy Local Campaign Transportation legislators and economic impact study
Iowa	State	NGO - Drake University Agricultural Law Center	Executive Order with standing appointments until 2007 or until the end of Governor Vilsack's term.				
Kansas (Salina)	Regional	NGO - Kansas Rural Center		NGO's, K-12, Youth, Producers, Dietitian, County Extension, Physician, Artists, Whiners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Food and Nutrition Promoting Local Foods Fundraising 	Kansas Rural Center staff have a liaison with the Governor's office as a Governmental Task Force appointee. This council is gathering baseline data and organizing efforts to approach city officials requesting support of the council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marketing Campaign to promote locally grown foods Tracking institutional purchases of restaurants who purchase direct from producers High school student liaisons who work with peers to provide education and outreach about competitive foods in schools. Food Policy Council booth at the farmers' market providing education about healthy foods and food choices Website featuring council work

The State and Local Food Policy Council Initiative, Drake University Agricultural Law Center and the USDA Risk Management Agency 2003-2004
 This project receives funding from the Community Outreach and Assistance Partnership Program of the USDA Risk Management Agency.



These Institutions are Equal Opportunity Providers.

Kansas	State	NGO - Kansas Rural Center	Under Consideration from the Governor			
Minnesota (Twin Cities)	City	NGO - Minnesota Food Association	Council is under formation as of 6/04	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Security • Direct Farm Marketing • Institutional Purchasing • Ag Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports and Publications • Lobbying • Conferences and workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed democratically based internal governance that provides the structure for the Council to function within • Elected a Governing Board to provide further leadership • Chose and supported three legislative actions presented at the 2004 legislative session (all passed and were signed by the governor) • Led rd e) in the Governor's Hunger Summit and the NM Task Force to End Hunger's development of a state plan. • Provided a venue for legislators, agencies and organizations to share their legislative priorities for 2004. • Democratically developed a list of policy issues, both state and federal, for the Council to work on in 2004-5. • Requested Senator Birnbaum to co-sponsor the Child Nutrition Act: Farm to Cafeteria Program (which he did), and • Initiated the development of a food and agriculture assessment document to educate legislators and the public about food and agriculture issues in NM.
New Mexico	State	NGO - Farm to Table	Jeri Memorial (HJM045)			
North Carolina	State	State Gov - NC Department of Ag.	Formed by the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Commissioner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Security • Institutional Purchasing • Direct Farm Marketing 		<p>(This council has gone through re-formation and is currently identifying project priorities)</p>

The State and Local Food Policy Council Initiative: Drake University, Agricultural Law Center and the USDA Risk Management Agency 2003-2004
 This project receives funding from the Community Outreach and Assistance Partnership Program of the USDA Risk Management Agency.

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RMA

Oklahoma	State	NGO - The Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture	Created by the Commissioner of Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGO's, Hunger Community, Farmer, Rancher, Native American Representative, Minority Representative • Conservationist • Faith Community • Press • Chef/Nutritionist • Food Processor • Farmers Markets • Department of Education • Department of Human Services • Department of Agriculture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Security • Institutional Purchasing • Direct Farm Marketing 	<p>Recommendations are made to the Commissioner of Agriculture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2003 Farm to School Report • Oklahoma Food Connection 2003 - A directory of Oklahoma Producers • Survey for Institutional Purchasing • Statewide Farm to School Initiative
Oregon (Portland Multnomah)	City County	City Gov. - City of Portland Office of Sustainable Development	Created by a City and County Resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extension, Producers, K-12, Business Owners, City Gov., NGO's, Chef, Nutritionist, Farmers market managers, city planning staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land Use • Food Access • Institutional Purchasing • Direct Farm Marketing 	<p>Recommendations are made to City and County Commissioners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2003 Executive Summary Report • 2003 Food Policy Recommendations • Immigrant farmer direct farm marketing training. • Food security assessments
Utah	State	Began as State - Dept of Ag - now forming a NGO to administer the council.	Developed under the authority of the Commissioner of Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry representatives, Hunger Community, Producers, Producer Groups, Higher Ed., Business Owners, Attorneys, State Government. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting Local Foods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of "Utah's Own" marketing campaign.
Washington	State	Under consideration of formation as of 6/04	To be defined.			

The State and Local Food Policy Council Initiative, Drake University Agricultural Law Center and the USDA Risk Management Agency 2003-2004
 The project receives funding from the Community Outreach and Assistance Partnership Program of the USDA Risk Management Agency.
These Institutions are Equal Opportunity Providers.



Summary of Established Municipal Food Policy Councils

Entity Name	Founded	Mission	Composition
Toronto Food Policy Council http://www.city.toronto.on.ca/health/fpcc_index.htm	1991	<p>The Toronto Food Policy Council partners with business and community groups to develop policies and programs promoting food security. Our aim is a food system that fosters equitable food access, nutrition, community development and environmental health.</p>	<p>The structure comes out of a Toronto DOH, by whom the Director is employed. Other Council members include: City Councillors, and volunteer reps from consumer, business, farm, labour, multicultural, anti-hunger advocacy, faith, and community development groups.</p>
Berkeley Food Policy Council http://www.berkeleyfood.org/	1999	<p>To build a local food system based on sustainable regional agriculture that fosters the local economy and assures all people of Berkeley have access to healthy, affordable and culturally appropriate food from non-emergency sources.</p>	<p>Symbiotic group of gov't, advocates and local business around food, agriculture and community health</p>
City of Hartford Advisory Commission on Food Policy (HACFP) http://www.hartfordfood.org/	1991	<p>City Council of Hartford established the Hartford Advisory Commission on Food Policy to address issues of hunger and food security in Hartford, particularly among its low-income residents.</p>	<p>The Commission is staffed by the Hartford Food System, a Hartford-based non-profit working to create an equitable and sustainable food system</p>
Knoxville Food Policy Council http://www.korri.net.org/kfpcc	1982	<p>Established by the City of Knoxville via a City Council resolution to "continually monitor Knoxville's food supply system and to recommend appropriate actions to improve the system as needed."</p>	<p>Now Defunct.</p>
Tahoma Food System http://www.tahomafoodssystem.org	1997	<p>To Grow Community With Food" Founded when farmers, gardeners, government, food bank staff, and environmentally conscious people came together to ensure the viability of existing community food projects, create new projects, and to develop community awareness of the value of</p>	<p>Now Defunct.</p>

<p>Portland Food Policy Council http://www.sustainableportland.org/default.asp?sec=slp&pg=food_policy</p>	<p>2003</p>	<p>supporting the local food system. Our projects create local food self-reliance and self-determination among disadvantaged people. To promote, support and strengthen a healthy regional food system, based upon the following principles: 1) Every City and County resident has the right to an adequate supply of nutritious, affordable and culturally appropriate food (food security); 2) Food security contributes to the health and well being of residents while reducing the need for medical care and social services. 3) Food and agriculture are central to the economy of the City and County, and a strong commitment should be made to the protection, growth and development of these sectors. 4) A strong regional system of food production, distribution, access and reuse that protects our natural resources contributes significantly to the environmental well-being of this region. 5) A healthy regional food system further supports the sustainability goals of the City and County, creating economic, social and environmental benefits for this and future generations. 6) Food brings people together in celebrations of community and diversity and is an important part of the City and County's culture.</p>	<p>Members represent the local agricultural, food business, emergency food, health, academic, faith-based communities.</p>
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Vancouver BC Food Policy Council

http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/comm_svcs/socialplanning/in/iatives/foodpolicy/

2004


The primary goal of a Food Policy Council is to examine the operation of a local food system and provide ideas and policy recommendations for how it can be improved.

Individuals from all aspects of our local food system; nutritionists, food wholesalers and distributors, chefs and restaurant owners, food retailers and grocers, managers of non profit organizations and academics engaged in the food system.

Municipal Food Policy Councils in Formation

Entity	Contact	Affiliation	Contact
Atlanta Regional Food System	Peggy Bartlett	Emory University	(404) 727.5766
Chicago Food Policy Advisory Council	Erica Allen	Growing Power Illinois	(773) 324.7924
Dane County Food Systems council	Jerome Kaufman	University of Wisconsin, Madison	
Holyoke Food Policy Council	Kristen Getler	Holyoke Food Policy Council	413) 322-5595.
King county Food Policy Council	Sylvia Kantor	Metro king county government	Sylvia.kantor@metrokc.gov
Lane County Food Coalition	Mariah Levitt	Lane County Food Coalition	(541) 343.2822

#3

 Nortz Farms Holsteins
Stephen L. Nortz
8098 St. Rt. 26
Lowville, New York 13367

NYS NUTRITION FOOD AND POLICY – MAY 16, 2005

DRAFT : OPENING STATEMENT

Dairy farmers across New York State provide dairy foods which are an incredible source of health and nutrition. According to recent estimates a diet high in calcium can save the government upwards of \$209 billion dollars in health care costs over a 5 year period. As milk, yogurt and cheese are the best dietary source of calcium it is imperative that they are made available to all individuals in our state. Adequate intake of calcium has been shown to help manage diseases such as Obesity, High Blood Pressure, Stroke, Coronary Artery Disease, Type 2 Diabetes, Osteoporosis, Kidney Stones, and Colorectal Cancer.

Calcium is a major contributor to bone development. Our children need adequate calcium intake to help develop strong bones. Federally funded programs such as WIC, Summer Foods, and School Meal Programs provide milk to children, adolescents, expectant and lactating mothers. Support of these programs that includes dairy as a meal component helps improve community food security, nutrient intake, growth and development, and hunger.

The United States Government struggles to gain control of our nation's weight which is growing at an uncontrollable rate. The recent release of the new food guide pyramid "Steps to a Healthier You" and the 2005 Dietary Recommendations for Americans developed by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) are the latest attempts our government has made in improving the health and waistlines of Americans. An increase in the servings of milk a day from 2-3 is no accident. Recent studies show that dairy can help promote overall health, and more data reveals the improvement in losing weight and fat mass when low fat dairy foods are incorporated into a reduced calorie diet.

It is the responsibility of New York State legislation to continue to support (federally) funded programs, and further improve legislation to incorporate the consumption of low fat milk and dairy products. Consumption of milk, cheese and yogurt encourages a healthier New York, and offers an opportunity to decrease in healthcare costs.

New York State Food and Nutrition Policies

Children and Adolescence:

Programs like New York State Osteoporosis Education Program and Eat Well Play Hard give children a chance to develop healthy habits and prevent chronic disease like osteoporosis and obesity by encouraging dairy consumption. Continued support of these programs will provide children with guidance toward making life long healthy choices

According to the 2005 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* individuals should consume 3 cups per day of fat-free or low-fat milk or equivalent milk products. The average consumption of Dairy for children is ~1.9 servings per day (Nationwide Food Consumption Survey II 1994-1996). Therefore children are not getting enough dairy in their diets according to recommendations, and dairy provides 3 of the 5 nutrients kids are lacking: calcium, magnesium and potassium.

Nine out of ten girls and seven out of ten boys are not meeting their calcium needs. Milk, yogurt and cheese are the best available source of calcium and encouraged consumption of milk can help improve this statistic.

Weight Management:

Almost 60% of adult New Yorkers are overweight or obese (36.7% overweight and 20.6% obese).¹ A growing body of research shows that when cutting calories to lose weight, 3 servings of milk, cheese or yogurt each day actually help people burn more body fat and lose more weight than just cutting calories alone. The mix of nutrients found in dairy foods, especially calcium, may be responsible for helping the body break down and burn fat.²

For ages 6 to 11, at least one child in five is overweight. For most children, overweight is the result of unhealthy eating patterns (too many calories) and too little physical activity. Over the last two decades, this number has increased by more than 50 percent and the number of "extremely" overweight children has nearly doubled.³ Too, often children are overfed but undernourished. Childhood Obesity Prevention Programs should encourage the recommended 3 servings of milk day to help reduce the prevalence of childhood obesity in the United States.

Federally Funded Programs:

Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) foods are intended to "supplement" participants' food intakes and should be consumed along with other wholesome foods needed for a balanced diet. Each of the WIC foods is rich in one or more of the following nutrients: protein, calcium, iron, vitamin A and vitamin C, which tend to be low in the diets of the population WIC serves. WIC encourages the consumption of milk and dairy foods as an excellent source of these nutrients.

¹ New York State Public Health Association
<<http://www.nyspha.org/obesity/index.php>>

² Zemel, MB et al Dietary calcium and dairy products accelerate weight and fat loss during energy restriction in obese adults. *Obesity Research*, 20004(4):582-590.

³ New York State Department of health
<<http://www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/nutrition/resources/pages/obparnts.htm>>

Federally Funded Programs (Continued):

The USDA School Meals, Summer Food Service Program, and Team Nutrition encourage consumption of 1% and low fat milk for children. Support of these programs increases community food security and reduces hunger by providing children access to food, a healthful diet, and nutrition.⁴

Cost Savings:

It has been estimated that overweight and obesity cost the United States an annual \$117 billion.⁵ Obesity-attributable medical expenditures cost New York State government and businesses \$6 billion a year. Medicaid alone spends \$3.5 billion.⁶ Evidence suggests the calcium intake may contribute to fat mass loss or prevent fat mass gains reducing the overall prevalence of obesity. Milk yogurt and cheese are the best bioavailable sources of calcium.

It is now apparent that improvements in diet quality across the population could yield rapid and extensive health care cost savings. Adequate intake of dairy foods are an integral component of improved diet quality and. Obesity, Hypertension, Stroke, Coronary Artery Disease, Type 2 Diabetes, Osteoporosis, Kidney Stones, and Cancer all demonstrate and decrease in disease burden with an increases intake of dairy products. As a result dairy consumption can help provide an estimated healthcare cost savings of \$209 billion dollars over a 5 year period.⁷

General Nutrition Statements:

Milk and dairy foods are among the best sources of naturally occurring calcium due to their high calcium content, and high bioavailability, and low cost.

What ends up in your glass may not match the label. A new study finds that naturally calcium-rich milk is the most reliable source of the bone building nutrient, superior to calcium-fortified soy and rice beverages and orange juice brands.⁸

According to the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans Dairy foods supply 4 of the 7 critical nutrients of concern for adults: Vitamin A, calcium, magnesium, and potassium missing in the adult American diet. Furthermore, USDA Dietary Guidelines suggest following a DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) eating pattern which includes increased fruits, vegetables and low fat dairy.

⁴ United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition web page
<www.usda.gov>

⁵ Gunter et al, "Dairy Products do not Lead to Alterations in Body Weight or Fat Mass in Young Women in a 1-y intervention." *Am J Clin Nut.*

⁶ New York State Public Health Association
<<http://www.nyspha.org/obesity/index.php>>

⁷ McCarron, David A., Heaney, Robert P. "Estimated Healthcare Cost Savings Associated With Adequate Dairy Food Intake." *The American Journal of Hypertension* DOI:10.1016/j.amjhyper.2003.08.008

⁸ Heaney, et al. "Not all Calcium Fortified Beverages Are Equal." *Nutrition Today*. 2005;40(1):39-44



#4

#4

May 16, 2005

Public Hearing – New York State Food and Nutrition Policy

Renee A. Hanks, SFNS, New York State School Food Service
Association, First Vice President
South Colonie SD, Food Service Director

Good morning Assembly members and guests. My name is Renee Hanks, and I am the 1st Vice President of the New York State School Food Service Association and the Food Service Director at South Colonie SD. It is an honor for me to be here today representing the 4000 members of our Association.

NYS schools serve over 1.6 million lunches everyday and almost half a million breakfasts daily.

I am here today to address the first two questions being asked at this hearing regarding a "state food policy". Currently, due to concern about childhood obesity, a concern that we, as representatives from school food service share, many states and advocacy groups have devised plans on how to "solve the problem". Laws are being proposed from Connecticut to California which effect school meals. Before NYS creates policy impacting school meals, NYSSFSA feels that legislators need to be more aware of how our programs operate.

I would like you to keep one thing in mind as I talk about school meals. There is much in the media lately about the prevalence of soda and candy in our nation's schools. I would like to remind you that in 1987 the state of New York adopted legislation that prohibited the sale of candy and soda in all public schools until after the last lunch period. This policy is firmly established. New York was 18 years ahead of the rest of the nation.

New York State School Food Service members work in the 1600 public and private school districts in this state preparing and serving breakfast and lunch. Schools range in size from one building district to New York City with 1600 sites. We are privileged to be in a profession whose primary purpose is to provide for the nutritional needs of our state's children. In that capacity we are deeply

concerned about the growing problem of obesity in this population and seek to find ways to address it.

New York State does not have a comprehensive policy that addresses either food at school or nutrition education. What we actually have is a series of mixed messages that makes it very difficult for school food service professionals to encourage good customer choices while operating in a fiscally responsible manner.

School meals are designed to meet the existing dietary guidelines. The programs are strictly operated under Federal, USDA Regulations and are monitored by the NY State Education Department. Our food selections and products are chosen with this goal in mind, and indeed, school meals do meet the goals in regard to nutritional benchmarks.

School meals are nutritionally sound. The School Nutrition Dietary Assessment published in 2000 by the USDA and based on 1998 data indicates that more than 80% of school meal programs nation wide offer meals that meet the dietary guideline for fat (less than 30% of calories) and saturated fat (10% or less). School lunches are one of the last places left in the country where food is provided in age-appropriate serving sizes. We do not super-size. Children who eat school lunches consume more fruits and vegetables and calcium than those who do not. Schools participating in the National School Lunch Program are providing healthy balanced meals at an economical price to our state's children.

While we make every attempt to continue to keep school meals affordably priced, at the same time we operate under the constraints of an unwritten policy which demands school food service programs operate as PROFIT CENTERS in a school district rather than as an adjunct of the education day. The food service program is the only department in a school which is expected to be self-supporting. What this means is that tomorrow, when tax payers go to vote on the school district budget, in 94% of the districts, none of the funds they are voting for go to support the school meals program. Only 90 school districts in the state include any local tax-supported funding in their budgets for school food service programs, and that number has been slowly decreasing each year. Food service programs are expected to generate sufficient revenue to cover all food costs, indirect costs such as cafeteria monitors, electric use and refuse removal, all labor costs, including salary, negotiated fringe benefits such as health insurance, NY State Retirement, Workers Comp, plus the costs of repair and purchase of replacement equipment. This policy has moved school food service from an educational component to a business model.

It must be realized that all business is customer driven and School Food Service is NO EXCEPTION. If programs are to be financially self-supporting, as the

majority of programs in New York State are required to be, we must sell what the customer wants to buy. If customer demands are in conflict with the dietary guidelines, we encounter a serious problem. Decreased participation due to customer dissatisfaction with foods offered can cause programs to fail. Schools are not mandated to participate in the National School Lunch Program. If they drop out then everyone loses, especially those students for whom school meals make up the only meals they receive.

School food service programs compete for a customer's desire against all other available offerings including bringing food choices from home. This often compromises or dilutes the opportunity for nutrition education and for modeling nutritionally sound choices. If school meals were presented to all children every day in the same manner we present English, Science and Social Studies, we might have a chance of changing nutritional behavior and habits of children. While we recognize, in this challenging fiscal time, that any request for a "universal feeding model" would be well out of the economic ability of the state, this still remains the best way to provide the strong educational base which we need so much if we are to have an impact on students' food choices.

We also face the reality that many children still will not choose to eat meals that meet these nutritional goals. On average, the child who pays for his/her lunch each day at school only eats lunch at school 35% of the time. This occurs for multiple reasons, but one fact remains clear through much research. A child's eating pattern is largely developed through the messages the child receives from society and his family. Often a child's food attitudes have been hardened long before entering the school system at age 5 or 6. In addition, even if a child were to eat lunch every day at school, this would account for 16% of his or her meals eaten during the course of a year. This is a very small amount of meals in which to effect change. Our society sends many messages to children, and massive advertising campaigns are designed to create demand for products that are often in direct conflict with nutritional goals.

A state nutrition policy must include initiatives designed to help directly influence the food selection decision making process of children. This would take the form of nutrition education and development of a marketing plan aimed at children of all ages. The impact of our children's bad eating habits is well documented and the root cause of a public health crisis. As part of NYSSFSA efforts to educate our customers to make smart choices when deciding what food they choose to eat -- the Association spearheaded development of the Choose Sensibly Campaign. The driving force behind this initiative is that school food service program directors are concerned about childhood obesity and wish to provide a tool to educate students on how to make good choices from the beginning of

their day to the end of their day. Everyday we see the choices of our customers and each day we have an opportunity to influence their food choices at the very moment they are making a decision. No other program designed to influence food selection in the educational system and to improve the eating habits of students is in a better position for success than "Choose Sensibly". We fully understand that changing behavior and counteracting the millions of dollars in food industry advertising campaigns is no easy task.

As a starting point, the campaign provides our customers with information that identifies the more nutritious food choices while in the lunch line or making a vending machine purchase. This initiative is designed to change food choice selection at the very moment a decision is being made. In addition, we believe this process will help in the development of a "life skill" -- learning how to read a label to assess the nutritional value of a food. The benefits of this education, we are confident, will extend beyond the lunch room and into families' weekly trek to the supermarket or whenever they enter a convenience store to pick up a snack.

Please note that NYSSFSA has underwritten the initial start of this program's development cost but has not been able to secure state dollars to broaden the number of schools participating in Choose Sensibly. Funding was requested in the State budget to purchase and develop campaign materials and to help educate and train school district staff regarding how to market healthier choices to students in order to make a "Sensible Snack" the choice they wish to make.

We actively support the current initiatives which seek to partner our state's farms with our state's schools. We support any reduction of barriers that will increase these opportunities and will continue to do so. We know there is a close correlation between local farms and good nutrition choices for our students.

We are hopeful there will be more policy suggestions that would further enhance the availability of fresh fruits and vegetables and other nutritious foods in our schools. This concern is a by product of school food service programs seeking to offer both more nutritious and more appealing food choices that meet the tastes of our customers. Achieving this goal is presenting a great challenge to all school food directors because of the lack of funding.

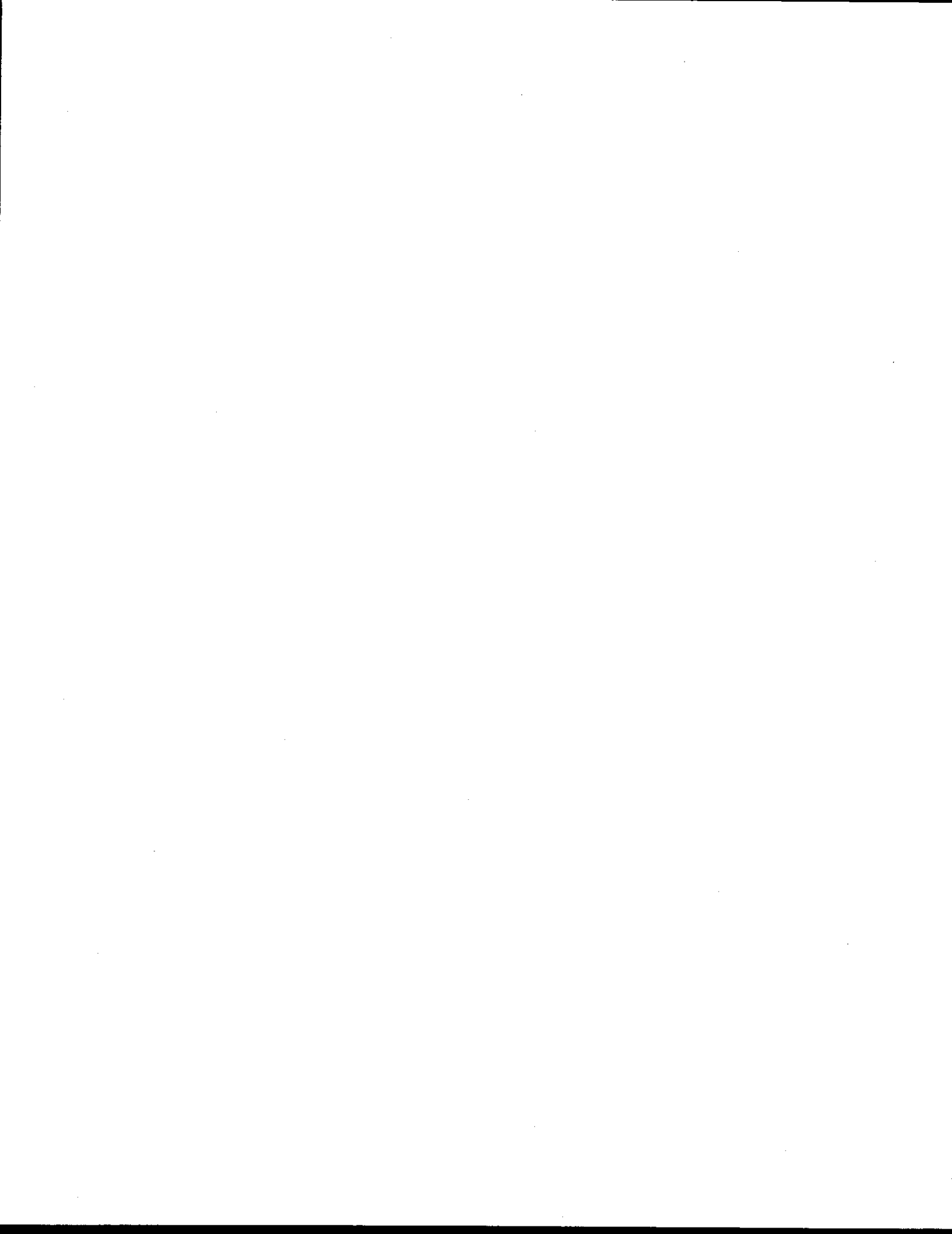
Early in the history of school meals, the state and federal governments subsidized school meals in order to make meal choices affordable for students and encourage good nutritional choices. In 1980, when the price of lunch averaged 50 cents, the state subsidy of 6.5 cents and the federal subsidy of 18.5 cents made up 33 percent of lunch revenues. Today, 25 years later the Federal subsidy is 21 cents, and the state subsidy is still 6.5 cents, while the price for

lunch has tripled to an average of 1.50. Clearly the state and federal support, placed initially to subsidize nutrition, has not kept pace with rising costs.

We actively sought the appropriation of resources to meet this demand in the last two budget cycles from both the Executive and Legislature. Our efforts were focused on securing an additional 5 cents a meal in the State budget to help school food service programs purchase locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables. A total of approximately of \$12 million was requested to fully fund this initiative. This funding was not included in the SFY 2005-06 budget.

If a statewide policy group is to be helpful to school meals, it is very important that someone who represents the School Food Service Association be included. Additionally, we would urge including some one to represent the School Boards Association as School Boards are in the position of approving district policies. Both of these constituencies must share in the determination to see that changes in policy will not be in conflict with already mandated USDA regulations and be workable with the current district expectations of school meals.

I thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts with you today, and we stand ready to work with whatever forum develops from this hearing.



#4

Testimony for Hearing on behalf of New York State School
Food Service Association Farm to School Committee

Responding to Question #3

What changes are needed in existing food, nutrition and agriculture policies and programs that can mutually benefit both consumers and producers?

Farm to school is a deceptively simple idea. Support local farmers who practice sustainable agriculture and improve children's nutritional status by supplying school cafeterias with local produce. But we need to take that a step further and educate school children about food systems and environmental issues, and have the basis of that be farm to school, and throw in a dose of nutrition education for good measure. It is a concept embraced by a number of schools and districts and support by new federal legislation for farm to cafeteria start-up funds, as yet unfunded. Children need a healthy diet for normal growth and development. Our country needs "better educated eaters". At the same time family farms are dwindling and need new markets for locally grown products. The time is right...

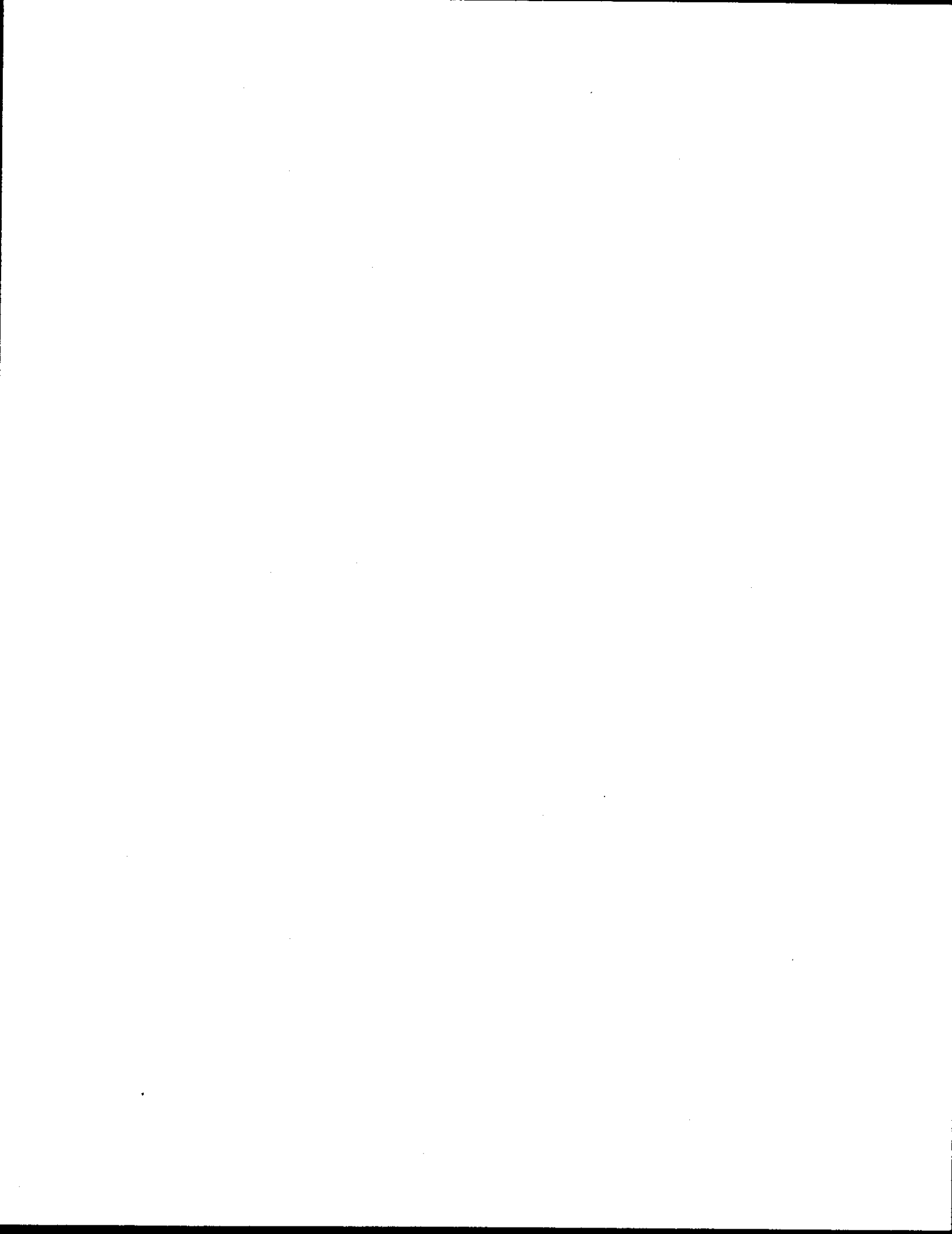
1. It is well documented that when children are exposed to and have access to farms, farmers and local products they consume a healthier diet and are more willing to try new and unfamiliar foods. Needs:
 - A. Mandated Comprehensive Nutrition Education
 - B. Educational Outreach and Activities
 - C. Partnerships with college and universities

- D. Parent advocacy
 - E. Community involvement
2. The seasonality of crops in our area makes the focus of our activity happen in the summer and fall. Needs
- A. Expansion of DOD program
 - B. Processing, Distribution, Nelson Farms
 - C. Agency to promote Farm to School contacts
 - D. Additional 5-10 cent reimbursement for lunch to help offset cost of purchasing local foods
3. Farm direct purchasing would be ideal, but must be a simple process and workable for both the farmer and the institution. Needs
- A. Relief from bidding regulations
 - B. Distribution chains
 - C. Central data base for making F-S connections
 - D. Continued promotion of New York Harvest for New York Kids Week.

The passage of New York's 2002 Farm to School Law was a wonderful first step to help Farms and Schools begin working together but some allocation of funds could help to push forward with this healthy, community enhancing, timely mission of getting locally grown foods to students.

So the saying "getting them while they are young" may be used when considering strengthening students ties to their local farmer and creating

a means for the most nutritious wholesome foods. Farm to school programs offer the obvious benefit of bringing healthier foods to young people and thus reducing their consumption of the typically less nutritious foods, but the farm to school programs also deliver a means of making the children and farmers part of the educational process, changing the food environment and influencing those young consumers.



Task Force on Food, Farm, and Nutrition Policy, Assemblyman Felix Ortiz
Assembly Standing Committee on Agriculture, Assemblyman Bill Magee
Assembly Standing Committee on Health, Assemblyman Richard Gottfried
Assembly Standing Committee on Social Services, Assemblymember Deborah J. Glick

“New York State Food and Nutrition Policy”
Monday, May 16, 2005

Testimony of William Jordan
Special Assistant to the Commissioner
New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets

Good morning, my name is William Jordan and my position is Special Assistant to the Commissioner at the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets. I am pleased to represent Commissioner Rudgers here today, and I appreciate the opportunity to provide input on New York State food and nutrition policies through this public hearing. The Department has had many accomplishments that we are proud of in furthering both access to healthy foods and providing new markets for New York farmers.

The Department, in collaboration with many community-based organizations, local school districts and government agencies, and other State departments and agencies, with support from the Governor and the Legislature, has made significant progress in achieving many of the goals and policy recommendations that were part of the 1988 “Five Year Food and Nutrition Plan.” Indeed, collaboration was a primary objective of the 5 year plan.

For example, New York State has led the way in creating new programs that both increase funding for food assistance and increase the use of local farm products. The Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) was started in 1988 as one of the first programs in the country to achieve these dual objectives. Today it is a collaborative effort between the Department, the New York State Department of Health, the State Office of Aging, and Cornell University. This effort has resulted in the program receiving \$5.5 million in federal funds annually. The same collaboration thrives at the county and town levels in most parts of the state.

Through the FMNP, recipients eligible for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and Seniors who need food assistance are provided more nutritious food to supplement their standard benefits, and our farmers are receiving fair prices for their nutritious food products. State funds through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program complement the important federal programs our collaborations have helped create. We have also led the nation in creating sales at farmers markets through EBT machines, which can process both Food Stamp account sales and regular credit card sales. These EBT machines were first piloted in New York City farmers markets and have since expanded to other farmer’s markets throughout the State.

Meanwhile, we have been making progress with respect to providing nutritious food from local farmers in order to address continued reliance on emergency food programs. For example, the

Department of Health's Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program provides over \$22 million to eight regional food banks around the state. Over 50% of those funds are expended in direct purchase of food products, thus reducing the reliance on emergency food programs in those areas.

An example involving the Director of one of the food banks, Christina Rohatynskyj of the Food Patch of Westchester County, provides more insight. Christina reached out to our New York City Marketing Chief, Bob Lewis, seeking help in procuring local fruits and vegetables with these funds. Bob put Christina in touch with Cornell Cooperative Extension agents and last year over \$300,000 was used to purchase product from local farmers for Food Patch recipients. We have met with the Department of Health to encourage adoption of this collaborative model in other regional food banks. Creative collaboration, like this, produces concrete results.

Another area of success is with farmers' markets. The Department's commitment to promote farmers' markets in lower income communities has helped improve community economic food security. These markets have been important anchors to attract people and economic activity to urban centers that directly benefit from such activity, and have improved a sense of community. We are reaching out to other food outlets in communities that are high priority "at risk" areas, such as bodegas in New York City, and are encouraged that new collaborations will lead to more progress in this area. Farmers' markets also strengthen and heighten the importance of the connection between urban consumers and rural farmers.

Christina's positive example also served us well in meetings with the New York City Department of Education Office of School Food. Her message that large scale institutional purchases from local farmers are feasible and helpful to New York's economy resonated with Mayor Bloomberg's team at School Food. As you may know, our efforts contributed to New York City schools procuring New York apples throughout their system. Our collaboration continues to expand, with New York pears, apple slices, and other products now being procured from New York state.

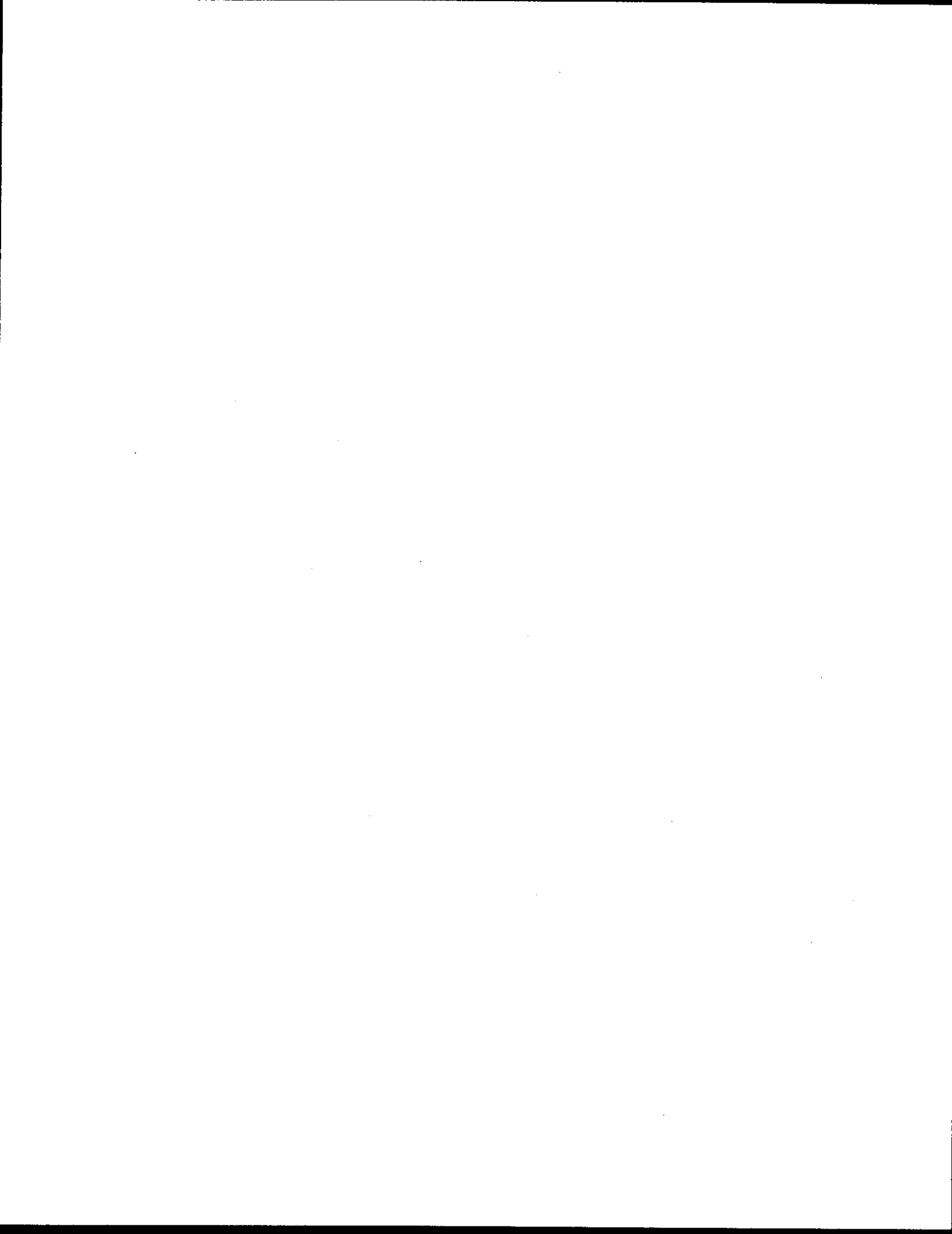
I commend the organizations that have been collaborators in this ongoing effort, and I know some of them are presenting testimony here today. Such collaboration has happened because of the positive disposition that exists to work with each other to the benefit of both farm producers and the state's consumers. An article in last week's *U.S. News & World Report* lauds the efforts of Chef Jorge, head chef of the New York City schools in serving healthy meals that include local produce, and it concludes by saying "If he succeeds, the rest of the nation will most likely not be far behind." We intend to continue collaborating to help see New York City and New York State lead the way to better school meals and healthier local rural economies.

Meanwhile, the Department has had tremendous success with the broader statewide Farm to School program. The success of this program too, has been based on concerted collaboration amongst committed individuals, groups, and organizations. The Farm to School Program is a success because organizations such as the New York State Office of General Services, Cornell University Farm to School, the New York State School Food Service Association, NY Farms!, Food Change, the City and State Departments of Health, and our producer organizations, such as the New York Apple Association, the New York State Horticultural Society, the New York State

Vegetable Growers Association, and many others who are collaborating with each other around common objectives. At \$5-\$6 per carton in transportation costs to ship a carton of apples across the country vs. \$1 per carton from Western New York to New York City; economic factors in the marketplace will drive schools to get more locally grown product, with more of the food dollars they spend retained and multiplied in our New York economy. The bottom line for us has been that collaboration makes sense, and we have been promoting effective collaboration as a means to make the connections that put healthy, local produce in grade school and college food programs.

Pride is a word we have used a lot lately, in relation to the prioritization of local food products, through the Pride of New York program. We feel that the Pride of New York Program has been tremendously successful in prioritizing New York products in the marketplace. Most of the focus of the Pride program has been in direct and retail markets, but as the program grows, increased collaboration around institutional markets, such as schools, hospitals, and other institutions, will only strengthen our common message.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.



#6

NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY

**TASK FORCE ON FOOD, FARM AND NUTRITION POLICY
CHAIR, ASSEMBLYMAN FELIX W. ORTIZ**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
CHAIR, ASSEMBLYMAN WILLIAM MAGEE**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
CHAIR, ASSEMBLYMAN RICHARD N. GOTTFRIED**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SERVICES
CHAIR, ASSEMBLYMEMBER DEBORAH J. GLICK**

**Public Hearing
New York State Food and Nutrition Policy
Monday, May 16, 2005
10:00 am**

**Presented By:
Susan M. Gugliuzza, RNC
Director of Nutrition Services
Urban Community Health Organization**

Thank you Assembly-member Ortiz, for organizing this hearing and the opportunity to speak with you regarding New York State Food and Nutrition Policy.

I am Susan Minkiewicz-Gugliuzza, a registered nurse for twenty years, specializing in the area of Maternal-Child Health. The first part of my career focused on working with pregnant women, teaching proper nutrition before, during and after pregnancy and the nutritional needs of the infant once born. After ten years specializing in this arena, at levels of increasing administrative responsibility, my career turned toward consulting. Working with senior administration, in healthcare networks across the nation, I was responsible for educating health care practitioners and surgeons on the topic of reducing non-salary expenses while maintaining quality care. In addition to operating a private consulting business, I have held my current position, Director of Nutrition Services with the Urban Community Health Organization, for three years.

I am here today to address the issue of Food and Nutrition Education for Mothers' and Infants'. Assembly Bill AO2651 supports the goal of improved nutrition and helping families and individuals help themselves. This is a very important bill however, being able to locate and purchase nutritious foods is not indicative of individuals knowing how to prepare these foods in a nutritious manner that encourages adequate consumption. Over the past eighteen months, my field work included speaking with healthcare administrators and providers from several different venues: Pediatricians', Pediatric Nurse Practitioner Groups, the government funded Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC), Blue Cross Blue Shield of Western New York, Independent Health Foundation and Ross Labs, a division of Abbott Labs, an international company that manufactures and distributes infant formula throughout the world. The commonality amongst all these groups is that they directly or indirectly care for the most vulnerable segment of our population, women and infants.

In our conversations regarding early childhood nutrition, focusing on the period of birth through twenty-four months of age, many commonalities arose. Majority of the third party healthcare administrators consistently responded "we do not address that in any of our community education classes." They will go so far to say "yes, we know it is a pressing issue but, we have not applied any resources to that area yet." Pediatricians and Pediatric Nurse Practitioners most frequently answered, "the information provided by pediatric offices is minimal and inconsistent from one facility to the next." Most information, found in libraries or on the internet, addresses the school-aged child. This is understandable when we consider where research has been focused over the past ten years. However, the alarming trend that is being documented by a greater number of researchers is the fact that a child's food preferences are formed by the age of twenty-four months. This information coupled with the fact that plaque-laden arteries are being found in the two to five year old age group is cause for action.

The WIC program provides low-income mothers' with vouchers to purchase certain foods that will nourish the family. Recipients are asked to schedule a fifteen minute "education" visit prior to picking up their vouchers. They receive their vouchers whether or not they attend this educational session. Nutrition educators from the WIC program have fifteen minutes to meet with each recipient when they come for these vouchers. Approximately seven minutes are spent gathering information to complete required government paperwork. This leaves five to seven minutes for the all important nutrition education to be addressed. What is the quality of this education when we take into consideration time and language barriers? WIC participants receive vouchers for fruit juice. WIC nutritionists teach that a six to eight ounce glass of juice is equivalent to one fruit serving from the daily intake requirements that are guided by the food pyramid. New research just confirmed that dental caries (tooth decay) is being found in one and two year olds. The greatest affected populations are African-American and Hispanic. WIC does provide a tremendous benefit to societies low-income mothers' however, the challenge remains to not only provide access to nutritious food but to also appropriately teach the new mothers' how to prepare and consume such foods to reap the

greatest nutritional benefit. What is lacking is community partnership. No one organization can fulfill the needs of our growing, diverse, low-income population.

The following information applies to discussions held with WIC administrators; the content can be applied to any of the groups mentioned earlier, i.e. pediatric office, Bluecross Blueshield, Independent Health Foundation... In meeting with administrative staff from the Western New York WIC program we discussed the issue of access to nutritious fruits and vegetables in addition to educating new mothers' regarding the introduction of solid foods. It was refreshing to hear the strides made by the advent of the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program. This program enables WIC recipients to purchase in-season fruits and vegetables, directly from a local Farmers' Market, during the months of July through October. Where we continue to lack resources is in providing education to new mothers' on how to prepare such foods to ensure adequate consumption. New mother's not only need to learn food preparation techniques that are efficient and healthy but they also require education regarding baby's feeding cues, what reactions are inherent in a baby's nature and how can a parent make feeding time successful.

The Urban Community Health Organization is positioned to assist organizations such as BlueCross BlueShield, WIC, and the Independent Health Foundation, among others. We provide classes for new mothers dealing specifically with the topic of early childhood nutrition. Informing parents of the feeding stages that an infant and toddler will go through enables them to persevere versus give up. The period of solid food introduction, which begins around four to six months of age and continues well through twenty-four months of age, can be frustrating and confusing for parents. Therefore it remains our obligation to educate parents so they may anticipate feeding challenges. Our classes teach new mothers' about food selection. Providing a healthy shopping guide, we educate the new mother on what foods to store in her home to prepare a nutritious meal or snack anytime of the day or night. We teach food preparation techniques. Most often recipes and food preparation styles are passed down through the generations. This is why many believe that it is hereditary or a family trait to be overweight or obese. Once we teach new mothers' how to use healthier cooking techniques they begin to see that weight can be lost. They are not locked into the family cycle of overweight due to the way foods are prepared.

Children are great imitators of their environment. If we want nutritious eating to become a habit with our child all we need do is create an atmosphere where our children can have repeat exposure and experience to nutrient dense foods. If they see such foods in the house on a regular basis, if the foods are prepared in a nutritious manner on a regular basis they will become the preferred food or habit. The meaning of exposure and experience differs as an infant develops. If a mother delays the natural progression from pureed to textured to small, soft cubes of food the child may well be set up for developmental delays. Such delays have been known to cause the family to engage an occupational therapist to assist the child with accepting new tastes and textures. This then becomes an additional yet avoidable cost incurred by our already taxed

healthcare system. Teaching the importance of developmental readiness, feeding cues, healthy shopping and food preparation techniques that are efficient and healthy is the focus of our community education class. We are the only program of its type within the United States. The only other place where a comparable program may be found is in Canada and the United Kingdom, where health education is much more progressive than in the United States.

With respect to follow-up, that would ensure the education provided is creating a positive impact, we have a built in measurement system that would not further compromise the government organizations or third party administrators' financially. Through their Pediatric office, parents are instructed to begin the introduction of solid foods between four to six months of age. Very little information is provided after this point, leaving the new mother with family and friends' as resources. Well visits to the pediatric office are mandated and occur at regularly scheduled intervals throughout the infant's first twenty-four months of life. Therefore, each mother-infant unit who attends the class would be evaluated from a nutrition, growth and development perspective, at their pediatric office, every two to three months until the age of twenty-four months. We then arrange for feedback to be sent to us informing us of the success or to continue working with a group of mothers'.

The topics discussed today, surrounding the issue of increased availability of culturally acceptable, affordable, nutritionally adequate food from local sources are so closely tied to the issues of childhood obesity prevention. A book published this year by the Institutes of Medicine of the National Academies addresses the issue of childhood obesity prevention at home, at school and in the community. The authors' of the book make the following statement, "Grassroots efforts made by citizens and organizations will likely drive many of the ... efforts at the local level and can be instrumental in driving policies and legislation at the state and national levels. This is precisely what we, at the Urban Community Health Organization, are doing. With our "Growing a Healthy Baby" community education class and the accompanying book with the same title, we are beginning to impact New York States future society by recognizing that new mothers' and their infants require education regarding proper nutrition from the earliest possible age. With greater volumes of research being published regarding non-nutritious foods that are fed to our infants and toddlers at home and in daycare settings, coupled with the fact that food preferences are formed by the age of two, it is incumbent upon each and everyone of us to support this local grassroots effort.

I am closing with a quote by Jac Fitz-enz, a Healthcare human resources writer / educator, "Working toward a positive healthcare destiny requires people with power to support people with vision." With this statement, Assembly-members Ortiz and Lavine, I am proposing a call to action. With nearly four million babies being born annually in the United States the impact of such a forward thinking, educational program would be phenomenal. Current community education programs are either non-existent or lacking pertinent information regarding selection, preparation and consumption of nutritionally adequate food. It is in

implementing a community education program for mothers' with infants' that we will truly be able to work toward promoting proper nutrition and consumption for all mothers' and infants'. With a built-in system of checks and balances, we will be able to track program effectiveness thereby securing a healthier lifestyle for our future generations. Assembly-members, you are the people with power. With proper support from you, the Urban Community Health Organization's vision of nutrition education focusing on new mothers' and their infants' can become reality within New York State. New York State will then be in a position to set the bar for the rest of our nation.

I thank you for the opportunity to address Assembly members at this public hearing and am prepared to answer any questions you may have regarding my presentation.

#7

**Testimony of the Hunger Action Network of New York State
Mark A. Dunlea, Associate Director**

**To a Joint Hearing of the
New York State Assembly
Task Force on Food, Farm and Nutrition Policy
Agriculture Committee
Health Committee and
Social Services**

**On New York State Food and Nutrition Policy
May 16, 2005**

I want to thank the Assembly for convening this hearing on New York State Food and Nutrition Policy.

Hunger Action and its member programs have been working since 1982 to end hunger and its root causes, including poverty, in New York State. Unfortunately, hunger – and the related problems of problems of poor nutrition – have continued to increase.

Each week, more than 900,000 individuals are forced to use the more than three thousand emergency food programs (EFPs) in New York to feed their families. The majority of people using EFPs have incomes below the federal poverty level.

Hunger Action has always understood the hunger is an integral part of the larger goal of creating a sustainable food system. New York State farmers often struggle to find markets for their fresh fruits and vegetables, while many low income consumers lack reliable access to these healthy foods. New York's school children suffer from obesity at alarming rates due in part to malnutrition and food insecurity. When these problems remain separated, they continue to frustrate us. When we come together, the solutions come within our reach. It is time to make the connection between all of New York's communities, our farms, and the food system.

What is Community Food Security?

According to the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization, "food security means that food is available at all times; that all persons have means of access to it; that it is nutritionally adequate in terms of quantity, quality and variety; and that it is acceptable within the given culture. Only when all these conditions are in place can a population be considered food secure".

In a community food system, food is grown, produced, processed and disposed at a local level. Since locally produced and distributed food reduces dependence on long-distance food sources, a community food system increases community self-sufficiency. A community food system has the potential to promote ecologically friendly food cultivation methods and encourage community development. Such a system can also have a significant impact on economic development because it creates locally based employment and provides opportunities for people to raise themselves out of poverty.

Attached as part of our testimony is a background paper we have written on the larger issues involving community food security in New York State. We would like to briefly highlight a few of them in our testimony.

Agriculture Trends – And Challenges in Building a Local Food System

Changes in our national agriculture system have contributed to a decline in the growing of fruits and vegetables in New York. Our current food system is based largely on cheap fuel costs, public investment in transportation, subsidies for irrigation, industrial livestock facilities, row crop production and the externalization of many environmental costs.

In-state production has shifted to crops where New York has a comparative advantage, such as sweet corn, cabbage, pumpkins, beets, cauliflower and snap beans. Since the turn of the century, there has been a substantial decline in NYS production of potatoes, dry beans, wheat, poultry, and many fresh vegetables such as tomatoes and lettuce. As regional markets dwindled, processing capacity shut down for all but a few crops. Foods that were once locally grown are no longer produced in sufficient commercial quantities to currently meet regional demand, even though the state has sufficient productive capacity.

Corporate supermarket chains want guaranteed year round supplies of produce and prefer to deal with only a few wholesalers, so they import produce items even when regional production could satisfy demand. For example, 75% of apples in New York City come from Washington, California or overseas, even though New York State produces ten times the annual apple consumption of NYC residents. The system of nationwide distribution makes it difficult for consumers to find local produce and food products, even when they want to support their region and feel local foods are superior in quality.

Re-Establish a NYS Council on Food and Nutrition Policy

A New York State Council on Food and Nutrition Policy should be re-established, pulling together the various state agencies that work on health, hunger, food and agriculture issues. The council also needs the broad participation of farmers, consumers, anti-hunger advocates, food bank managers, labor representatives, members of the faith community, food processors, food wholesalers and distributors, food retailers and grocers, chefs and restaurant owners, officials from farm organizations, community gardeners, and academics involved in food policy and the law.

In establishing the NYS Council on Food and Nutrition Policy in the late 1980s, Governor Mario stated that "the basic goal of a food and nutrition policy is not only to provide adequate nutrition in an accessible and affordable manner, but also strive to achieve efficient growth in agricultural production, job generation, food security and expanded markets for goods."

The Commission pulled together the seven state agencies most involved with food and nutrition - Office of General Services, Departments of Health, Education Department, Department of Agriculture and Markets, Department of Social Services, Council on Children and Families - together with an advisory committee representing agriculture, nutrition, food production and consumer interests. The Commission had four goals:

1. encourage diets that promotes good health (including ensuring the availability of a food supply that is of high quality, safe, affordable and nutritious)

2. alleviate and ultimately prevent hunger in every household by assuring that all citizens have access to food through adequate purchasing power
3. support an adequate food producing system in NYS, one, which attains the state's potential as a producer of nutritious foods and preserves the environmental resource base and labor supply that supports it.
4. promote the development and economic viability of the state's food processing, marketing and distribution industries.

The council was directed to develop a Five Year Plan for Food and Nutrition Policy to improve the nutritional status of low-income New Yorkers. The plan was based on review of existing food and nutrition programs and their impact and a study of New York's food producing and distribution capabilities. A series of public hearings were held to solicit information from interested groups.

Although the former Council became inactive with a few years after developing its 5 Year Plan, largely due to the death of its chairperson, Department of Health Commissioner David Axelrod, some progress was made in achieving some of its goals and recommendations. Successful initiatives included: increased State funding for food assistance; expansion of school breakfast programs; development of the Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs; and, creation of the Farm-to-School program and Childhood Obesity Prevention Program.

Two other key recommendations outlined in the Five Year Plan were:

1. In order to systematically coordinate food and nutrition programs, the Department of Health should convene an interagency task force of state directors of food and nutrition programs to reduce program duplication, develop uniform application procedures, encourage the sharing of food preparation facilities and track pertinent legislative initiatives at the state and federal level.
2. State Government should provide increased incentives for farmland preservation and agricultural production, and to improve the state's food marketing potential.

Food Policy Councils help convene multiple stakeholders in a food system, providing a forum for a comprehensive examination of a food system. Councils enable different parts of the food system and government to learn more about what each does and consider how their actions impact other parts of the food system. Councils create an environment in which people are able to ask questions usually not asked, such as "How much food eaten is raised locally?" or "Does the state make efforts to purchase local food?"

FPCs provide a mechanism to develop specific priority objectives for a food sector, e.g. reducing the incidence of hunger, expanding rural economic development, and improving the administration of state programs. The Councils provide a forum to discuss emerging issues such as local foods, direct marketing, small farms and other "new agriculture" developments, which fall outside traditional "farm" programs.

Joel Berg of the NYC Coalition Against Hunger and former director of Community Food Security for USDA during the Clinton administration, has outlined eight goals for a food policy council in NY:

- Strengthening the Federal nutrition assistance safety net by supporting the full and efficient use of the Food Stamp; WIC; School Lunch; School Breakfast; Summer Food Service; and Child and Adult Care Feeding Programs.
- Increasing the amount – and improving the nutritional quality – of supplemental food provided by nonprofit groups by aiding food recovery, gleaning, and food donation programs, while helping front-line agencies to coordinate and harmonize their services.
- Improving community food production and marketing by aiding projects that grow, process, and distribute food locally and regionally, including farmers' markets, farm-top-institution projects, and community supported agriculture. Bolster the ability of such projects and entities to utilize food stamp and WIC benefits.
- Improving research, monitoring, and evaluation efforts to help communities assess and strengthen food security.

Establish a SEED Program to Fund Community Food Security, Empowerment and Economic Development Projects

The Assembly Task Force on Food, Farm and Nutrition Policy has introduced legislation to create a SEEDs program to provide matching grants for community food security, empowerment and economic development grants. Projects would: increase the availability of culturally acceptable, affordable, nutritionally adequate food, from local sources whenever possible; develop linkages between local farmers and communities served by the projects; support job development and training; support entrepreneurship; and encourage community collaboration and decision making in the development of projects. Potential projects would include: providing training in urban gardening and sales, assist entrepreneurs starting micro-enterprises, supporting farmers' markets in distressed neighborhoods; and, providing food-based educational opportunities for schools.

The proposed legislation however has a number of requirements that would make it difficult for some programs to participate. The local groups would have to provide up to 50% of the costs. The applicants must also have applied for federal community food security funding prior to applying for these grants.

Increase Access to Fresh Fruits and Vegetables through the State Funding for Emergency Food Programs (HPNAP)

The Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP) provide state funding (\$22.83 million in 2005-06) to the state's food banks and emergency food programs to assist them in providing nutritious food to hungry individuals in New York State. While the amount of state funding is a small fraction of the actual cost to provide food to more than 900,000 individuals weekly, its principal benefit is that it enables the emergency food network to obtain more nutrition food items than is donated by the private sector and charitable efforts. State funding of HPNAP should be increased to at least \$30 million.

The state presently allocates \$500,000 of HPNAP funding to assist in obtaining fresh fruits and vegetables. Most of the funding (\$300,000) goes to Food Patch in Westchester County.

While such initiatives should be expanded, it is critical that this be done with new funds rather than redirecting the already inadequate funding provided by HPNAP to EFPs. Many of the state's three thousand plus EFPs only receive a few hundred dollars from existing HPNAP funds.

Our report contains additional recommendations and background information related to other critical initiatives needed for community food security. We have outlined the recommendations below.

HANNYS recommendations on Support for Low-Income Consumers

- Promote the use of regional foods in food pantries, soup kitchens, and other food aid programs. Ensure state funding for infrastructure development to make it easier for institutions to connect with local farmers who wish to donate surpluses. Increase Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP) funds for the purpose of purchasing fresh produce from local producer, farmers markets and for low-income Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) shares. Increase overall HPNAP funding to at least \$30 million. Increase tax incentives for farmers to donate to EFPs.
- Expand and replicate projects that increase the availability of local produce at an affordable price for low-income communities. (i.e.: "Second Sale" farmers markets, Community Supported Agriculture projects that utilize revolving loan funds). Support the enactment of the Community Food Security, Empowerment and Economic Development (SEED) program (A2651) to provide grants for community food security in low-income neighborhoods.
- Increase state funding to establish more farmers markets, especially in low-income neighborhoods. Ensure state funds for more farmers' markets to adopt the EBT (Electronic Benefits Transaction) card system so that more farmers can accept food stamps. Currently, the expense of scanning machines and the amount of paperwork required to accept food stamps limits participation by farmers' markets, community supported agriculture operations, etc.
- Advocate for the development of programs that make food stamp benefits worth more when spent on regional foods.
- Increase funding (e.g., higher benefits) and improve access to the WIC and Senior Citizen Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs. Create a state supplement to the federal Food Stamp Program. Make school breakfast and lunch free for all children.
- Expand the national Community Food Projects Grant Program, which provides federal funds for the development of community based projects such as community gardens in New York State.

Community Land Ownership

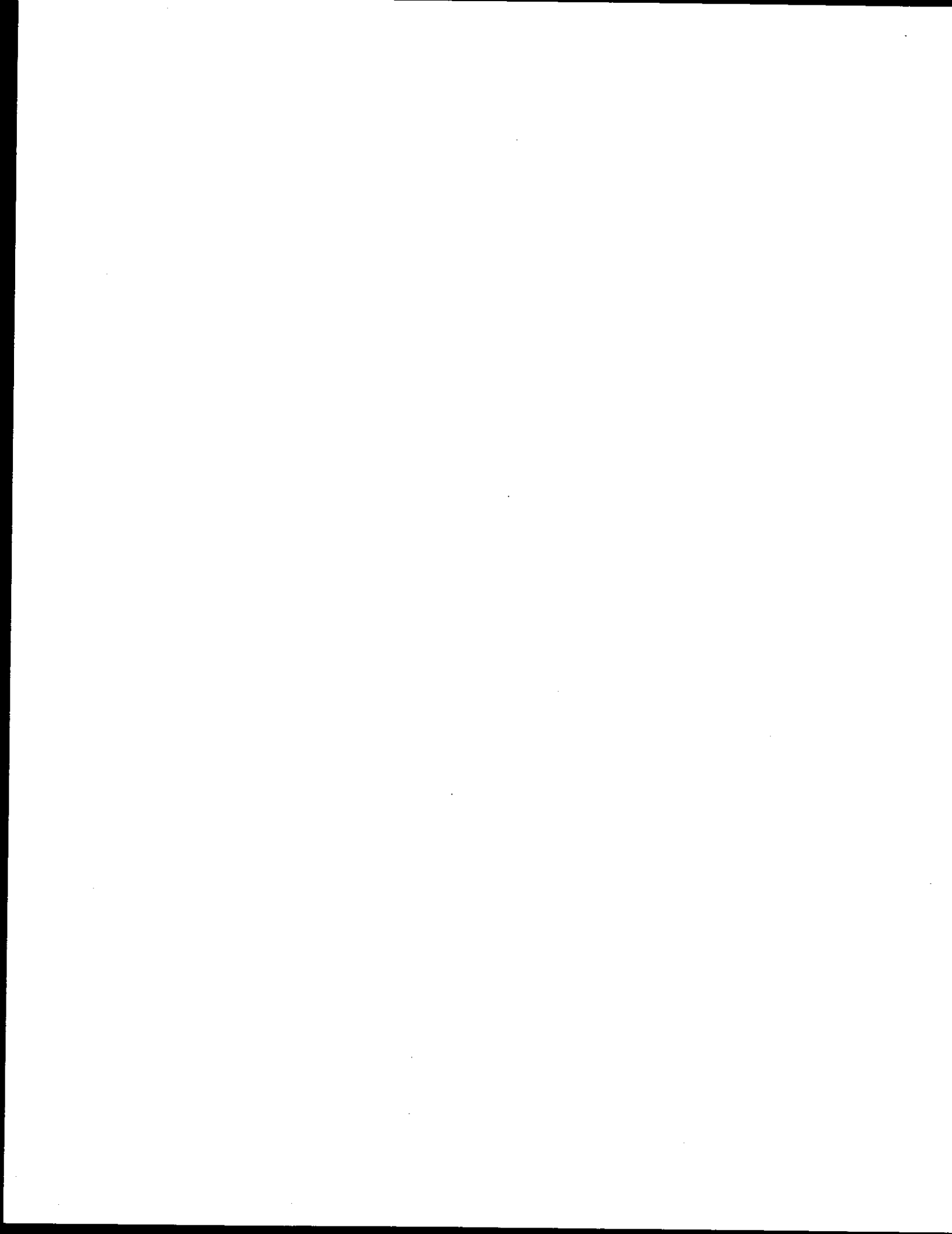
- Refund the NYS Council on Community Gardens in the NYS Dept. of Agriculture and Markets. The council helps to: identify public lands available for community garden use; provide support for community gardens and encourage cooperative extensions, community organizations and local governments to provide land, tools, input and expertise to residents; work with interested communities to develop urban agricultural projects such as city farms;

and, work with communities to obtain stable ownership of land for community gardens in urban and rural areas.

- Provide increase government funding and protection for community gardens. S1019 seeks to prevent the conversion of community gardens by dedicating such plots after one year into parkland and prevents its future sale unless approved by the local Zoning or Community Board.
- Maintain farmland of sufficient quality and quantity to preserve or enlarge New York's diverse farm industry's ability to produce agricultural products. Actively encourage communities to zone land for agricultural use, grant farmland preservation easements, and provide stable land tenure for community gardens, urban agricultural production and farm markets within their jurisdiction.
- Increase funding for state programs that currently exist to support small farmers that help agricultural landowners cut their tax expenses, conserve their land and improve their environmental stewardship. Such programs include the Federal Farm and Ranch Land Preservation Program, NYS Farmland Protection Grants, Agricultural Districts Law and Farmland Viability Grants. Extend agricultural assessment eligibility to start-up farming operations and land rented to farmers, which would otherwise be ineligible for agricultural assessment.
- At least double state funding of the Environmental Protection Fund for the Purchase of Development Rights for farmland and to otherwise preserve open space. Support legislation (A6450 / S3253) to give New York towns the authority to create Community Preservation Funds using a local real estate transfer fee of 2% or less, if approved by a local law and voter referendum. This would be a completely voluntary option for towns, and would provide a new tool for those towns struggling to protect open space in the face of rapid growth and development. Six towns on Long Island already have this authority.
- Support increased state and local action to control suburban sprawl. Legislation is needed to encourage regional planning and sharing of resources; remove subsidies to sprawl; eliminate barriers to redevelopment and revitalization of existing communities; and increase investment in the public transit system. Support the Smart Growth Infrastructure Act (A3574 / S2070) to require state project that construct or expand public infrastructure to comply with seven smart growth criteria designed to maximize the use of existing infrastructure and to minimize the costs to taxpayers.
- Strengthen state and local Right to Farm Laws. Right to Farm Laws protect farmers from lawsuits brought by disgruntled neighbors who moved into the area after the farm was established. Right to Farm Laws also prohibit the local government from creating regulations that would unreasonably inhibit agriculture.
- Support legislation and education programs to reduce the use of pesticides and genetically engineered crops.

Strengthen Connections with Local Farmers

- Increase funds that will assist farmers in adopting land conservation practices, including certification, adoption of conservation practices and development of value-added enterprises (organic, IPM, Pride of NY, grass-fed, free-range etc). Coordinate federal and state grant and loan programs for farmers
- Create New York State based programs that fund the development of community food projects designed to increase connections between local farmers and low-income communities. New York should actively promote Community Supported Agriculture.
- Increase funds for the development of programs that combine food-growing projects with entrepreneurial projects. For instance, community gardens and farmers' markets provide opportunities for skills-training and youth employment, welfare-to-work recipients and community service rehabilitation programs. Increase funds for youth agricultural entrepreneurial grants.
- Work with communities and county officials to ensure the expansion of farmers' markets within more New York State jurisdictions. Increase support and funds for farmers' market and direct marketing promotion grants. A8001 would finance the construction or improvement of wholesale regional farmers' markets that promote food products grown in New York.
- Provide support for the development of farmer cooperatives and more links to retail outlets or consumers, such as farmers' markets and farm stands. (Cooperatives can include groups of producers marketing the same product to improve the volume and reliability of their supply; some cooperatives combine diverse agricultural enterprises to provide a wide range of products to stores, restaurants or consumers).
- Expand the NYS purchasing program for in-state fruits, vegetables, dairy and animal products to serves all state-run schools, colleges, hospitals, prisons, government agencies and other institutions. A8000 would fund projects supporting the transportation and distribution of New York State farm grown products to food service market, including schools and colleges, especially in underserved communities.
- Combine agricultural development programs with skills-training and youth employment programs, business courses, welfare-to-work and community service rehabilitation programs.
- Provide services to help integrate migrant labor into communities and pass legislation guaranteeing agricultural workers living wages and legal protection from workplace abuse.



A Community Food Security Agenda for New York

A Report by the Hunger Action Network of New York State

May 2005

I. Introduction

Hunger Action and its member programs have been working since 1982 to end hunger and its root causes, including poverty, in New York State. But even as our allies in this fight have multiplied, the problem of hunger continued to increase. To succeed in overcoming hunger, we must expand the breadth of our work by forging new partnerships at a community level with farmers, community advocates, schools, churches, gardeners, local businesses, food pantries, and lower income consumers, along with many other groups and individuals.

Hunger-related issues touch all of these groups. For example, New York State farmers often struggle to find markets for their fresh fruits and vegetables, while many low-income consumers lack reliable access to these healthy foods. New York's school children suffer from obesity at alarming rates due in part to malnutrition and food insecurity. When these problems remain separated, they continue to frustrate us. When we come together, the solutions come within our reach. It is time to make the connection between all of New York's communities, our farms, and the food system.

A. Hunger in New York State

Each week, more than 900,000 individuals are forced to use the more than three thousand emergency food programs (EFPs) in New York to feed their families. The majority of people using EFPs have incomes below the federal poverty level. According to a recent survey by America's Second Harvest, over 90 per cent of EFP clients have incomes below 130 per cent of the poverty level.

People using emergency food programs include low-income families, children, the elderly, displaced workers, single adults, the working poor, the homeless, seasonal and migrant farm laborers, and other immigrant populations. Approximately 63.9 per cent of those utilizing EFPs are women. 34.9 per cent of those utilizing EFPs are white, while 34.2 per cent are African American and 24.5 per cent are Hispanic.

In addition to hunger, poverty and unemployment are also high in New York. According to 2002 Census data, the poverty rate in New York rose from 11.7% to 12.1% (a 1.7 million person increase) and unemployment is at a peak with 583,000 thousand unemployed individuals.

Many low-income New Yorkers live in communities without major supermarkets, curtailing their ability to access food of high quality and nutritional value, including fresh fruits and vegetables. Much of the food donated to the EFP network has low-nutrition value.

Obesity rates in the United States have risen dramatically during the last decade. Data from 2002 shows that over half (57%) of adult New Yorkers are overweight (CDC, 2004). One in six New York adults is obese. Additionally, the obesity rate among New York adults doubled between 1990 and 2002 (CDC, 2004). An overwhelming 28% of New York State adolescents are overweight or at risk for becoming overweight, according to the New York State Department of Health (USDA, 2004).

There are four key causes that can lead a person to be obese/overweight, including environmental factors, which include lifestyle and behaviors like patterns of eating, food access, and physical activity. According to public health experts, the environment is the most important factor contributing to the dramatic rise in

obesity over the last decade. The expansion and addition of new networks and projects in our food system that increase access to healthy produce is one way to reverse this trend.

B. What is Community Food Security?

According to the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization, "food security means that food is available at all times; that all persons have means of access to it; that it is nutritionally adequate in terms of quantity, quality and variety; and that it is acceptable within the given culture. Only when all these conditions are in place can a population be considered food secure".

Food for Growth in Buffalo points out that ensuring food security differs from the concept of feeding the hungry. Emergency food programs are a short-term measure that only treats the symptom of a societal problem. Food security in contrast requires proactive steps to create a community food system that enhances citizens' access to nutritious and affordable food at all times.

In a community food system, food is grown, produced, processed and disposed at a local level. Since locally produced and distributed food reduces dependence on long-distance food sources, a community food system increases community self-sufficiency. A community food system has the potential to promote ecologically friendly food cultivation methods and encourage community development. Such a system can also have a significant impact on economic development because it creates locally based employment and provides opportunities for people to raise themselves out of poverty.

According to the Community Food Security Coalition, the term Community Food Security was developed in 1994 by advocates seeking comprehensive solutions to the nation's food and farming crises. It integrates many different fields, such as public health, ecology, community development and economic development into a comprehensive framework for meeting a community's food needs.

There are five basic principles to Community Food Security (CFS):

Low Income. CFS focuses on meeting the food needs of low-income communities. In addition to providing food to the hungry, it includes job training, business skill development, urban greening, farmland preservation, and community revitalization.

Community sustainability. CFS builds up a community's food resources to meet its own needs. These resources may include supermarkets, farmers' markets, gardens, transportation, community-based food processing ventures, and urban farms.

Self-reliance/empowerment. CFS seeks to build individuals' abilities to provide for their own food needs.

Local agriculture. CFS builds better links between farmers and consumers, helping to strengthen consumer knowledge and concern about their food source.

Food system. CFS emphasizes collaboration among many partners involved in farming, processing, distributing, marketing and consuming food products.

C. Agriculture in New York State

i. An Overview

Agriculture remains the state's largest industry, particularly dairy. Farming communities however face significant challenges from development, tax issues and adequate prices. New York has witnessed a major decline in manufacturing, long one of the key foundation's of the state economy. It has been replaced by the service industry (including finance, insurance, and real estate), which now accounts for the largest component of the state's income, more than one-third.

Much of the state's food budget goes to out-of-state agriculture interests. New Yorkers purchase \$43 billion worth of food each year, but only \$2.8 billion of it goes to the State's farmers. Ironically, New York's farmers are twice as likely to qualify for food assistance programs as the average New Yorker.

Agricultural production returned over \$3.0 billion to the state's economy in 2002. About 25 percent of the state's land area, or 7.6 million acres, is used by 37,000 farms to produce a very diverse array of food products.

According to the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, dairy and animal production in NY provided \$1.87 billion to farmers in 2002, 60 percent of all cash receipts. Milk is New York's leading agricultural product. Produced statewide, milk represents over one-half of total agricultural receipts. Production in 2002 was 12.2 billion pounds with a value of \$1.56 billion. New York is the nation's 3rd leading milk producer.

New York livestock producers marketed 211 million pounds of meat animals during 2002 bringing in \$116 million in cash receipts. Sales from cattle and calves accounted for \$108 million, hogs and pigs returned \$6.4 million and sheep and lambs provided \$2.0 million.

The value of New York eggs, ducks, broilers and turkeys plus the value of sales for other chickens totaled \$64.6 million for 2002. Eggs made up \$44.8 million of the total followed by ducks at \$10.9 million. New York ranks 20th among all egg producing states.

Field crops, fruits and vegetables returned \$1.2 billion to New York farmers in 2002.

New York's fruit crop receipts were valued at \$179 million in 2002. Apples and grapes lead New York fruit crops in value. New York ranks 2nd nationally with an apple crop worth about \$102 million in 2002. Wine and juice grape production place New York 3rd behind California and Washington. The crop was worth \$43.3 million in 2002.

Strawberries are the 3rd most valuable fruit in New York and places New York 7th in national production. About 6.30 million pounds were harvested in 2002 and returned \$8.82 million to growers.

The value of vegetables totaled \$476 million in 2002. Fresh Market vegetables rank 6th and processing vegetables are 9th among all states. Leading crops in New York are cabbage, sweet corn and onions.

The average age of farmers in New York increased in 2002 to 54.1 years of age, 1.2 years younger than the national average of 55.3 years of age.

The Five Year Plan of the NYS Council on Food and Nutrition Policy reported that the State produces more than estimated state consumption for milk, cheese, apples and grape juice. The state produced less than consumer demand of eggs, carrots, poultry, potatoes and tomatoes.

ii. Agriculture Trends – And Challenges in Building a Local Food System

Changes in our national agriculture system have contributed to a decline in the growing of fruits and vegetables in New York. As pointed out in a recent paper by Julie Dawson for the NY Sustainable Agriculture Work Group, our current food system is based largely on cheap fuel costs, public investment in transportation, subsidies for irrigation, industrial livestock facilities, row crop production and the externalization of many environmental costs.

As rapid transportation systems made it easier to import cheaper, often subsidized crops from southern states, California and Mexico, in-state production shifted to crops where New York has a comparative advantage, such as sweet corn, cabbage, pumpkins, beets, cauliflower and snap beans. Since the turn of the century, there has been a substantial decline in NYS production of potatoes, dry beans, wheat, poultry, and many fresh vegetables such as tomatoes and lettuce. As regional markets dwindled, processing capacity shut down for all but a few crops. Foods that were once locally grown are no longer produced in sufficient commercial quantities to currently meet regional demand, even though the state has sufficient productive capacity.

Corporate supermarket chains want guaranteed year round supplies of produce and prefer to deal with only a few wholesalers, so they import produce items even when regional production could satisfy demand. For example, 75% of apples in New York City come from Washington, California or overseas, even though New York State produces ten times the annual apple consumption of NYC residents. The system of nationwide distribution makes it difficult for consumers to find local produce and food products, even when they want to support their region and feel local foods are superior in quality.

According to Dawson, many economists contend that regional specialization is the most efficient way to produce affordable food. It is likely that shifting to regional food systems would result in at least a short-term increase in food prices. However, the way we produce food now is not environmentally, socially or economically sustainable.

The existing cost advantages for a national agriculture system will begin to shift as oil prices continue to rise and subsidized water supplies out west become depleted. Transportation is responsible for 20% of the petroleum used in food production. As fuel costs rise, transcontinental shipping will become much more expensive. Western states are facing severe water shortages and unsustainable use of underground aquifers.

The primary barriers to regional food systems are issues of seasonality and marketing, not a lack of local capacity or demand. In a survey of Northeastern consumers, 88% believed that local fruits and vegetables were fresher, 62% said they tasted better and 60% thought they looked better than produce from non-local sources (Duxbury and Welch).

Dawson concludes that it would be most effective to focus on fruit, vegetable and animal products when promoting a regional food system for NY. New York is a top producer of winter vegetables, apples, grapes, cherries, and milk products. There are also many specialty items, such as wines, cheeses, maple syrup and sustainably raised meats, which could capture a larger market share. However, a true regional food system would diversify production to meet the complete nutritional needs of all consumers in the region, including those with little purchasing power.

II. Feedback from Local Listening Sessions about Community Food Security Issues in New York State

Hunger Action Network of New York State, in coordination with other groups, organized a series of listening sessions throughout New York to document problems and opportunities related to food systems in the last year. Sessions have been held so far in the Capital District, Western New York and the Southern Tier. Participants have included community organizations, Emergency Food Providers and clients, low-income households, community food advocates, farm groups, Cornell Cooperative Extension workers, nutrition educators, food bankers, community gardeners, and representatives of Government agencies involved in food and nutrition services. Hunger Action Network also received a sample of feedback forms on food issues from individuals and groups in New York City, Rochester, Hudson Valley, Central New York, and the North Country.

Below is a summary of some of the key issues that have been raised at the sessions. Many are direct comments from New Yorkers and some have been paraphrased by note-takers at the various meetings.

A. Community Food Problems

The Current Food System is Not Sustainable:

- No community ownership of the food market.
- Right now, there are a lot of programs that provide only temporary relief of hunger as opposed to long-term solutions.
- Small farmers are exploited in that they do not get much profit for what they produce.
- Food is not affordable for many people.

Food Access – Lack of Availability:

- Not enough healthy, locally grown organic food.
- Lack of supermarkets in low-income neighborhoods. Most supermarkets are in suburbs. Lack of adequate public transportation to and from supermarkets.
- Sometimes it's hard to bundle kids up and go to the store and the bodegas are more convenient. The Wegman's in Elmira is in a high traffic area and it's hard to get there.
- Don't have good healthy food choices for ALL people in ALL communities. Poor nutrition habits are everyone's problem, not just problem of poor people. Media has skewed public perceptions of obesity epidemic, sometimes making it seem as though only poor people make poor food choices.
- Few independent grocers - less likely to buy locally.
- Problems accessing food stamps.
- Cannot use Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card at most farmers' markets and food buying clubs.
- Not enough community garden space.
- Culturally appropriate food is often inaccessible to ethnic and immigrant groups.
- Programs often can't give out fresh fruits, veggies and dairy to all our families because they lack refrigeration. They end up giving canned fruits and vegetables. Many people are diabetic, overweight or have high blood pressure and can't eat the items we give them.
- HPANP funding very inadequate. Most EFPs find that HPANP grants are way too small.
- Not enough food in pantry to stretch monthly.

Food Access – Lack of Affordability:

- Farmers' markets and local growers' produce can be expensive, especially organic food.
- Lack of affordable produce at supermarkets.
- Growing food costs money and takes skill.

- Prices are high at convenient stores, which tend to be located in lower income areas where supermarkets are lacking. Assortment of food is lacking at convenient stores. There is also a lack of quality food at convenient stores.
- Low-income families are forced to choose between food and fuel. They need fuel to stay warm and gas to get to work. They are finding the dollars just do not stretch enough.

Lack of Adequate Food Distribution

- Low redemption rates of WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program coupons at farmers' markets.
- There are never enough Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Coupons.
- Low usage of EBT cards at farmers' markets that are accepting food stamps in NYS.
- Waste of surplus food (i.e., Stewarts stores dump lots of food and milk).
- Many people do not have access to transportation that is needed to purchase healthy food in both urban and rural areas at farmers' markets and supermarkets.
- Rural areas find that many EFP guests are homebound, disabled or don't have transportation to get to EFPs sites. EFPs would like to be able to deliver to those who can't get out, yet who are capable of cooking for themselves.
- People using EFPs are often ineligible for food stamps by a small amount.

Lack of Agricultural Sustainability

- Small farms are going out of business.
- Concentration of agribusiness increases food costs and exploits farmers.
- Money for food does not go to local economy.
- Cornfields paved for development.
- Lack of progressive farm groups (Not many farmers are involved in connecting low income groups with locally grown food).
- Not much sense of community in today's society and local support is lacking.
- Many consumers don't value what farmers do (due to being disconnected to farmers).
- Price of corporate food doesn't reflect real food prices.
- Our apples growers are competing with apple growers in China-cheap labor costs.
- Global food economy producing commodity crops.

Need for Nutritional Education:

- Fast food addiction – we are competing with media/advertising/lifestyle – people aspire to sociological norms.
- People don't know what to do with raw ingredients; working poor have little time to prepare food.
- Unhealthy school food shaping young peoples' palates.
- People of all incomes have lost art of cooking.
- Over-reliance on convenience (pre-made) products.
- Need to educate low-income individuals in how to prepare fresh vegetables for consumption (i.e. recipes/demonstrations/follow-through).
- Education of low-income individuals in importance of consumption of wide variety of wholesome foods.
- Many people need assistance with nutrition education and how to cook/prepare wholesome, fresh food.
- General public does not recognize need for healthier food.
- Crisis of obesity (across all socio-economic levels).

Need for Education on Various Food Issues:

- Corporate advertising to children via toys and pop culture (Fast Food industries).
- Inadequate labeling of where food is from: education about place of origin, how long has food been on shelf, and what is in it.
- Lack of knowledge where food comes from; what pesticides are on it.
- Lack of awareness about land issues and farming; if land is paved or being dumped on, it cannot be used to grow food.
- More information needed about genetically modified foods, the importance of purchasing locally grown and organic food. More people need to know about Community Supported Agriculture.
- Education of the community, we are a college town (Canton) and many residents close their eyes to low-income people. Often you hear we don't have hungry people in Canton or we don't have homeless people.

Lack of Coordination Between Human Service Organizations:

- Food pantries and soup kitchens are overwhelmed and overextended.
- A better central referral service system is needed to assist people in accessing helpful resources and benefits.
- Human service organizations are concentrated in urban areas, leaving rural areas underserved.
- Once buy-in by nutritionists, public service providers (including transit), local food growers/purveyors, public market, and low-income contact groups is achieved, development and implementation of program to unite: low-income individuals, food products, and education resources.
- Better community relations between pantries on days open and closed and most important – hours.

B. Policy Issues and Recommendations from the Listening Sessions

Increase the Affordability and Availability of Locally Grown Produce:

- Bring farmers and food system economists to the table to discuss and plan how to make locally grown food more affordable to working people (i.e.—use of sliding scale fees at markets, the use of yearly contributions to offset discounts at farmers markets for some). Bring distributors and processors to table as well.
- Expand or replicate more Community Supported Agriculture projects that utilize the revolving loan fund system.
- Advocate so that more farmers' markets can accept food stamps.
- Establish second sale farmers' markets, in which produce that does not get sold at a regular farmers' market is sold at lower prices in low-income neighborhoods/areas.
- Duplicate project in Schenectady in which a network of people is working to get a farmers' market located closer to Hamilton Hill area.
- Create a buzz – partnership with local food advocates and youth service providers
- Need to reach out to and organize with urban population and groups, including people of color.
- Investigate best practices, model programs and replicate what we know works (i.e.- revolving loan fund CSAs).
- Use cooperative food buying models (e.g., clubs) for purchase of healthy foods to meet people's basic needs
- Establish more farmers' markets in low-income neighborhoods.
- Establish more community gardens.
- I made a display on container gardening and distributed your flyer. Many people took interest in it. I would like to encourage this idea again. The cherry tomatoes are great for kids in an apartment. Once again, we are on a budget and there are no extras for this type of idea.
- Support projects such as: GardenShare in North Country - families share their abundance of fresh produce.

Establish Food and Farm Connections:

- Use HPNAP funds toward revolving loan funds for low-income CSAs.
- Enable food pantries to use HPNAP funds to purchase fresh fruits and veggies from local producers (as opposed to purchasing produce solely from the Regional Food Bank).
- Connect with local land trust organizations including the Albany Land Trust to increase access to land that can be used for community gardening.
- Transportation provisions for low-income individuals to / from public market and end of market day (when unpurchased product might be discarded) for distribution of unpurchased product.
- Provide municipalities incentives to promote community gardens. Tax break or something on paper so they will work with community and develop gardens.
- Popularize the Grow an Extra Row and Seed & Seedling Campaigns; set up small networks to deliver fresh produce to pantries.
- Conduct public education campaigns about local markets, gardens, and farms.
- Press local grocers to sell local food.
- Promote small independent businesses and demand local produce in those we use.
- Buy more local products personally.
- Duplicate "Hometown Foods" project in Columbia County (freezes/processes locally grown food for year round consumption via small industrial kitchen).
- Map disconnect of resources in communities and conduct community food assessments - there are many good resources and local colleges to support this research.
- There are very few produce distributors to independent grocers nowadays - farmers can help fill the void.
- Combine farming and gardening as exercise for kids through local wellness plans.
- Community gardens in Southern Tier. Need more though. Beautification of community.

Create Local and State Food Policy Councils:

- Public policy relating to food has to be a part of the solution.
- Create food policy councils that could promote local legislation that will set aside funds for community food project development.
- Food policy councils need to be gradually built up and need to involve farmers, residents, etc.

Nutrition Education:

- Raise community awareness of need for healthy food.
- Encourage people to access EFNEP and FSNEP and Just Say Yes!
- Education in existing forums such as schools, day care centers, community gardens and food pantries. Provide easily adaptable recipes for 1-5 people.
- Free cassette/video with fun food information.
- Nutrition education programs need to visit *more* food pantries and soup kitchens to provide demonstrations and classes.
- Develop culturally appropriate programs that provide education and training about nutrition and food.
- Nutritionist presentations at locations where individuals congregate to receive services, of information on diet choices.

General Education about Food Issues:

- Discuss ripple effects that CFS projects would have in community in terms of creating new jobs, building economy, and supporting farmers. Supporting local food yields money for local economy.
- Promote NY Harvest for NY Kids.

- Wegman's in Southern Tier puts a label so that you know if food is from a local farm.
- Reaching out to children, education.
- Take someone to a farm, farmers market, meet a farmer to learn about how local food is grown.
- Hold free community dinners/parties or potlucks in various neighborhoods featuring locally grown food. Hold a community event around a community garden.
- Provide education about Community Food Security and projects to youth.
- Educate government officials to take care of the hungry in our own country.
- Duplicate community food projects involving youth: i.e.- in Rochester NY, there is a program called the Greater Rochester Urban Bounty (GRUB) in which kids in city work (and get paid) on a garden and grow food. They then sell the produce at the local farmers' market and the money made is used toward the maintenance of the garden. The kids then teach in classrooms about how to grow food and become buy local advocates.
- Increase awareness about the importance of purchasing locally grown food, nutrition and other food related issues. One option is to use Public Access TV.
- Media coverage about the issues; public access stations.
- Community education – ads in local papers, flyers or grocery bags to make people aware of need.; weekly or monthly information in newspapers.
- People should look at the circulars in the newspapers and then go to the supermarket with a budget – one woman used to buy food mostly from bodegas but now runs a bagged lunch nutrition program where she teaches others how to budget.
- More home economics in schools so people know how to cook, shop, etc.
- Job training.

III. Food Policy Councils

HANNYS Recommendation on Food Policy Councils

- *Encourage the development of state and local food policy councils. These councils will work to create policies that support regional food systems designed to benefit small farmers and low-income communities alike. A New York State Council on Food and Nutrition Policy should be re-established, pulling together the various state agencies that work on health, hunger, food and agriculture issues. The council also needs the broad participation of farmers, consumers, anti-hunger advocates, food bank managers, labor representatives, members of the faith community, food processors, food wholesalers and distributors, food retailers and grocers, chefs and restaurant owners, officials from farm organizations, community gardeners, and academics involved in food policy and the law.*

A. Overview of the former NYS Council on Food and Nutrition Policy

In establishing the NYS Council on Food and Nutrition Policy in the late 1980s, Governor Mario Cuomo noted that despite the existence of many state and federal initiatives to improve peoples' access to an adequate diet and promote nutrition education, a substantial number of New York State's citizens, most of them poor, many either very young or very old, were neither adequately fed nor nourished. "The basic goal of a food and nutrition policy is not only to provide adequate nutrition in an accessible and affordable manner, but also to strive to achieve efficient growth in agricultural production, job generation, food security and expanded markets for goods."

The Council consisted of the heads of the seven state agencies involved in food and nutrition programs (Office of General Services, Departments of Health, Education Department, Department of Agriculture and

Markets, Department of Social Services, Council on Children and Families), together with an advisory committee representing agriculture, nutrition, food production and consumer interests. The Commission had four goals:

1. to encourage diets that promotes good health (including ensuring the availability of a food supply that is of high quality, safe, affordable and nutritious)
2. to alleviate and ultimately prevent hunger in every household by assuring that all citizens have access to food through adequate purchasing power
3. to support an adequate food producing system in NYS, one which attains the state's potential as a producer of nutritious foods and preserves the environmental resource base and labor supply that supports it.
4. to promote the development and economic viability of the state's food processing, marketing and distribution industries.

To achieve these goals, the Council was charged with developing polices addressing each element of the food system:

- food consumption trends as they reflect consumer demand and choice of food;
- agriculture, aquaculture, fishery and other food production systems and their capacity over time to meet consumer demands;
- food processing capacity for foods locally produced;
- stocking, warehousing and transportation systems adequate and efficient, enough to meet production and processing needs and emergency situations;
- access of all segments of the population to the food supply;
- education of the population of food needs, appropriate dietary intake and health related issues;
- consumption of foods from a safe and nutritious food supply;
- improvement and maintenance of local food subsystems through economic and conservations initiatives;
- effective information system to provide communication among all the various elements in the food system.

The council was directed to develop a Five Year Plan for Food and Nutrition Policy to improve the nutritional status of low-income New Yorkers. The plan was based on review of existing food and nutrition programs and their impact and a study of New York's food producing and distribution capabilities. A series of public hearings were held to solicit information from interested groups.

Although the former Council became inactive within a few years after developing its 5 Year Plan, largely due to the death of its chairperson, Department of Health Commissioner David Axelrod, some progress was made in achieving some of its goals and recommendations. Successful initiatives included: increased State funding for food assistance; expansion of school breakfast programs; development of the Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs; and, creation of the Farm-to-School program and Childhood Obesity Prevention Program.

Two other key recommendations outlined in the Five Year Plan were:

1. In order to systematically coordinate food and nutrition programs, the Department of Health should convene an interagency task force of state directors of food and nutrition programs to reduce program duplication, develop uniform application procedures, encourage the sharing of food preparation facilities and track pertinent legislative initiatives at the state and federal level.

2. State Government should provide increased incentives for farmland preservation and agricultural production, and to improve the state's food marketing potential

B. An Overview of Food Policy Councils (FPCs)

(The following information was compiled from Drake University. www.statefoodpolicy.org)

i. What is a food policy council?

A food policy is any decision made by a government agency, business, or organization which effects how food is produced, processed, distributed, purchased and protected. Examples include:

- A decision by school officials whether to purchase foods raised by local farmers;
- Regulations for selling raw milk to consumers;
- The eligibility standards that allow low-income residents to participate in food assistance programs;
- The regulatory health and safety requirements for food based business;
- Food ingredient labeling.

The primary outcome of Food Policy Council activities should be a change in food and/or agriculture policy. Examples of public policy changes catalyzed through FPC's include:

- Change in the motor vehicle requirement for food stamp eligibility;
- Implementation of EBT (Electronic Benefits Transfer) equipment at farmers' markets;
- Urban agricultural resolution to conduct an "Agricultural Inventory" of city-owned property directing appropriate bureaus to identify city-owned land which may be available for community gardens or other agricultural uses;
- Procurement rule change allowing correctional facilities to purchase locally grown food;
- Creation of new forms of insurance for small producers;
- Development of a simplified application for food stamp benefits;
- Implementation of "Farm to School" and "Farm to Cafeteria" programs.

Joel Berg of the NYC Coalition Against Hunger and former director of Community Food Security for USDA during the Clinton administration, has outlined eight goals for a food policy council in NY:

- Strengthening the Federal nutrition assistance safety net by supporting the full and efficient use of the Food Stamp; WIC; School Lunch; School Breakfast; Summer Food Service; and Child and Adult Care Feeding Programs.
- Increasing economic and job security by helping low-income people obtain living wage jobs and attain self-sufficiency.
- Catalyzing or enhancing state and local infrastructures to reduce hunger and food insecurity.

- Increasing the amount – and improving the nutritional quality – of supplemental food provided by nonprofit groups by aiding food recovery, gleaning, and food donation programs, while helping front-line agencies to coordinate and harmonize their services.
- Improving community food production and marketing by aiding projects that grow, process, and distribute food locally and regionally, including farmers' markets, farm-top-institution projects, and community supported agriculture. Bolster the ability of such projects and entities to utilize food stamp and WIC benefits.
- Increasing both the availability of low-cost nutritious food and the education necessary to obtain and prepare such food, thereby combating both malnutrition and obesity.
- Boosting education and awareness by increasing efforts to inform the public about nutrition, food safety, and community food security. Educating the public by using the "bully pulpit" of high-profile government offices to increase public awareness of the causes of food insecurity and highlight innovative community solutions to hunger.
- Improving research, monitoring, and evaluation efforts to help communities assess and strengthen food security.

In addition to tangible policy changes, FPCs provide government agency representatives with the opportunity to meet and interact with citizens and each other on food and agricultural policy. FPCs promote inter-agency cooperation and understanding that results, helping to better coordinate government policies. For instance, FPCs can help state institutions that purchase food better connect with another state agency that is promoting the purchase of locally grown food.

ii. Why create a Food Policy Council?

Food Policy Councils help convene multiple stakeholders in a food system, providing a forum for a comprehensive examination of a food system. Councils enable different parts of the food system and government to learn more about what each does and consider how their actions impact other parts of the food system. Councils create an environment in which people are able to ask questions usually not asked, such as "How much food eaten is raised locally?" or "Does the state make efforts to purchase local food?"

FPCs provide a mechanism to develop specific priority objectives for a food sector, e.g. reducing the incidence of hunger, expanding rural economic development, and improving the administration of state programs. The Councils provide a forum to discuss emerging issues such as local foods, direct marketing, small farms and other "new agriculture" developments which fall outside traditional "farm" programs.

FPCs convene individuals and government agencies which do not typically work directly with each other nor are they asked to be involved when farm and agricultural policy is discussed. They foster a comprehensive approach to analyzing food system issues, addressing the inner-workings of the different parts of the food system and the need for coordination and integration of actions if policy goals are to be achieved. For example, if a key objective is to increase markets for locally produced food, a Council can play a role to consider how decisions at all levels of a food system - not just farmers or governmental officials, but also food buyers, wholesalers, retailers, and consumers - factor into public policy decisions.

iii. How are Food Policy Councils structured?

FPCs can either be administered as an official part of the state or municipal government (e.g., Department of Agriculture) or can be administered through a non-profit or educational institution as an advisory body. The Agricultural Law Center at Drake University administers the Iowa Food Policy Council which was created through executive order. The New Mexico Food Policy Council is administered through the non-profit organization, Farm to Table.

A Council is usually established either by statute or an executive order. Councils created by "government action" usually have greater 'buy-in' from government officials which is critical for implementing public policy changes. This provides the Council with clearer authority to move forward on the decisions they make. This model usually has an advisory committee of nongovernmental officials to assist it.

Councils usually include officials from government agencies responsible for policy decisions affecting the state's food system, e.g. Department of Health - food inspection; Human Services - food assistance; - and Education - school food purchasing.

The other model focuses more on developing policy and administrative recommendations, with the members more representatives of non-government officials.

Both models seek input from a broad representation of issues and interests of stakeholders across the food system. Typical representatives include farmers, consumers, anti-hunger advocates, food bank managers, labor representatives, members of the faith community, food processors, food wholesalers and distributors, food retailers and grocers, chefs and restaurant owners, officials from farm organizations, community gardeners, and academics involved in food policy and the law.

IV. Support for Low-income Consumers

HANNYS recommendations

- *Promote the use of regional foods in food pantries, soup kitchens, and other food aid programs. Ensure state funding for infrastructure development to make it easier for institutions to connect with local farmers who wish to donate surpluses. Increase Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP) funds for the purpose of purchasing fresh produce from local producer, farmers markets and for low-income Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) shares. Increase overall HPNAP funding to at least \$30 million. Increase tax incentives for farmers to donate to EFPs.*
- *Expand and replicate projects that increase the availability of local produce at an affordable price for low-income communities. (i.e.: "Second Sale" farmers markets, Community Supported Agriculture projects that utilize revolving loan funds). Support the enactment of the Community Food Security, Empowerment and Economic Development (SEED) program (A2651) to provide grants for community food security in low-income neighborhoods.*
- *Increase state funding to establish more farmers markets, especially in low-income neighborhoods. Ensure state funds for more farmers' markets to adopt the EBT (Electronic Benefits Transaction) card system so that more farmers can accept food stamps. Currently, the expense of scanning machines and the amount of paperwork required to accept food stamps limits participation by farmers' markets, Community Supported Agriculture operations, etc.*
- *Advocate for the development of programs that make food stamp benefits worth more when spent on regional foods.*

- *Increase funding (e.g., higher benefits) and improve access to the WIC and Senior Citizen Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs. Create a state supplement to the federal Food Stamp Program. Make school breakfast and lunch free for all children.*
- *Expand the national Community Food Projects Grant Program, which provides federal funds for the development of community based projects such as community gardens in New York State.*

Low-income consumers lack funds to purchase an adequate diet. There are a range of income-related issues (e.g., higher minimum wage, living wage jobs, increased welfare and SSI benefits) that need to be addressed so that low-income households can readily obtain food.

In addition, it is important to recognize that at present some innovative community food initiatives price their food products at a level that can be a barrier to low-income households to participate.

One barrier that Hunger Action Network has worked to overcome is that with the new EBT system for food stamps, it is more difficult for food stamp households to use their benefits at farmers' markets because many farmers do not have access to the scanning machines needed to accept the new EBT card. New York has made significant progress in helping farmer markets in NYC and several upstate communities to obtain the EBT machine. However, significant implementation problems still remain, including with farmers markets that have access to the machine. Utilization of food stamp benefits at farmers markets has dropped sharply under the new system. More must be done to educate both food stamp participants and farmers to facilitate their participation in the new system.

A. SEED Program – Community Food Security, Empowerment and Economic Development (A2651 – Cook)

The Assembly Task Force on Food, Farm and Nutrition Policy has introduced legislation to create a SEEDs program to provide matching grants for community food security, empowerment and economic development grants. Projects would: increase the availability of culturally acceptable, affordable, nutritionally adequate food, from local sources whenever possible; develop linkages between local farmers and communities served by the projects; support job development and training; support entrepreneurship; and encourage community collaboration and decision making in the development of projects. Potential projects would include: providing training in urban gardening and sales, assist entrepreneurs starting micro-enterprises, supporting farmers' markets in distressed neighborhoods; and, providing food-based educational opportunities for schools.

The proposed legislation however has a number of requirements that would make it difficult for some programs to participate. The local groups would have to provide up to 50% of the costs. The applicants must also have applied for federal community food security funding prior to applying for these grants.

B. Increasing Access to Fresh Fruits and Vegetables through the State Funding for Emergency Food Programs - HPNAP

The Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP) provide state funding (\$22.83 million in 2005-06) to the state's food banks and emergency food programs to assist them in providing nutritious food to hungry individuals in New York State. While the amount of state funding is a small fraction of the actual cost to provide food to more than 900,000 individuals weekly, its principal benefit is that it enables the emergency food network to obtain more nutritious food items than is donated by the private sector and charitable efforts. State funding of HPNAP should be increased to at least \$30 million.

The state presently allocates \$500,000 of HPNAP funding to assist in obtaining fresh fruits and vegetables. Most of the funding (\$300,000) goes to Food Patch in Westchester County.

While such initiatives should be expanded, it is critical that this be done with new funds rather than redirecting the already inadequate funding provided by HPNAP to EFPs. Many of the state's three thousand plus EFPs only receive a few hundred dollars from existing HPNAP funds.

V. Community and Farmland Preservation

Community Land Ownership

- *Refund the NYS Council on Community Gardens in the NYS Dept. of Agriculture and Markets. The council helps to: identify public lands available for community garden use; provide support for community gardens and encourage cooperative extensions, community organizations and local governments to provide land, tools, input and expertise to residents; work with interested communities to develop urban agricultural projects such as city farms; and, work with communities to obtain stable ownership of land for community gardens in urban and rural areas.*
- *Provide increase government funding and protection for community gardens. S1019 seeks to prevent the conversion of community gardens by dedicating such plots after one year into parkland and prevents its future sale unless approved by the local Zoning or Community Board.*
- *Maintain farmland of sufficient quality and quantity to preserve or enlarge New York's diverse farm industry's ability to produce agricultural products. Actively encourage communities to zone land for agricultural use, grant farmland preservation easements, and provide stable land tenure for community gardens, urban agricultural production and farm markets within their jurisdiction.*
- *Increase funding for state programs that currently exist to support small farmers that help agricultural landowners cut their tax expenses, conserve their land and improve their environmental stewardship. Such programs include the Federal Farm and Ranch Land Preservation Program, NYS Farmland Protection Grants, Agricultural Districts Law and Farmland Viability Grants. Extend agricultural assessment eligibility to start-up farming operations and land rented to farmers, which would otherwise be ineligible for agricultural assessment.*
- *At least double state funding of the Environmental Protection Fund for the Purchase of Development Rights for farmland and to otherwise preserve open space. Support legislation (A6450 / S3253) to give New York towns the authority to create Community Preservation Funds using a local real estate transfer fee of 2% or less, if approved by a local law and voter referendum. This would be a completely voluntary option for towns, and would provide a new tool for those towns struggling to protect open space in the face of rapid growth and development. Six towns on Long Island already have this authority.*
- *Support increased state and local action to control suburban sprawl. Legislation is needed to encourage regional planning and sharing of resources; remove subsidies to sprawl; eliminate barriers to redevelopment and revitalization of existing communities; and increase investment in the public transit system. Support the Smart Growth Infrastructure Act (A3574 / S2070) to require state project that construct or expand public infrastructure to comply with seven smart growth*

criteria designed to maximize the use of existing infrastructure and to minimize the costs to taxpayers.

- *Strengthen state and local Right to Farm Laws. Right to Farm Laws protect farmers from lawsuits brought by disgruntled neighbors who moved into the area after the farm was established. Right to Farm Laws also prohibit the local government from creating regulations that would unreasonably inhibit agriculture.*
- *Support legislation and education programs to reduce the use of pesticides and genetically engineered crops.*

A. Preservation of Farmland

New York is a heavily urbanized state with 92 percent of the population living in metropolitan areas. However, while only one sixth of the state's population lives in the forty-four "rural" counties, many of the state's communities are rural or small towns.

New York's farmland is at risk. There is a total of 7.6 million acres of farmland remaining in the State. According to American Farmland Trust, New York lost 127,000 acres of farmlands between 1997 and 2002- an average of 70 acres of farmland a day. However, this is a decline in the rate of loss from prior years. Between 1974 and 1992, New York was, on average, losing over 100,000 acres of farmland each year, or approximately 8 percent annually. In comparison, the 2002 Census reported that New York lost 132,000 acres in total over the past five years.

Much of the loss of farmland is due to poorly planned growth rather than increases in population. The amount of urbanized land in upstate New York grew 30 percent between 1982 and 1997 while population growth was less than 3 percent (Sprawl without Growth: The Upstate Paradox; Cornell University and Brookings Institute). Sprawl refers to low-density, fragmented development in areas of previously untouched land. Rather than revitalizing existing communities, sprawling development patterns consume open space and habitat, deplete natural resources and increase traffic congestion. Environmental Advocates point out that government policies have a large hand in encouraging sprawl. The greatest federal contribution to sprawl is in the billions of dollars spent on building new roads and widening old roads each year. Roads open up rural areas to suburban development. State and local programs seeking to entice corporations into their communities also subsidize sprawl.

The number of farms in NYS totaled 36,000 in 2004, a decrease by one thousand over the previous year and down from 38,264 in 1997. There are 55,841 farm operators in the State, 57.9 percent claim farming as their primary occupation, a 69.5 percent increase from 1997.

New York State's Farmland Protection Program was enacted in 1992 as part of the Agriculture Protection Act. The program encourages counties and towns to work with farmers to promote local initiatives that help maintain the economic viability of agriculture and protect the industry's land base. Funds are available to develop county agriculture and farmland protection plans and implement farmland protection projects. According to American Farmland Trust, more than 49 counties have received planning grants. In 1996, the law was changed to provide funds to counties with approved plans to purchase development rights (PDR) to farmlands. Proposal is pending to enable towns to receive funding for such plans.

PDR pays farmland owners for permanently protecting the land for agriculture. The farmers sell the development rights to the property but maintain ownership and the right to use it for agricultural purposes. The money received by the farmer is a monetary benefit for continuing operation of their farm, and provides

capital for farm improvements or, later on, retirement. The PDR program gives the farmer an alternative to selling his or her land to developers and ensures it will remain farmland or open space.

Since its inception, the state has awarded nearly \$70 million to counties and towns for protecting 28,000 acres of farmland on over 136 farms in 15 counties. The requests for funding have far exceeded funds. In 2004, requests totaled \$86 million, but available funding was only \$12.6 million.

The PDR program is funded out of the Environmental Protection Fund. Most of these funds come from a portion of the state's Real Estate Transfer Tax. There is a proposal pending before the State Legislature – Community Preservation Act – would which enable Town governments to establish “community preservation funds” through a portion of the real estate transfer tax.

V. Strengthening Connections between Farmers and Consumers

Connections with Local Farmers

- *Increase funds that will assist farmers in adopting land conservation practices, including certification, adoption of conservation practices and development of value-added enterprises (organic, IPM, Pride of NY, grass-fed, free-range etc). Coordinate federal and state grant and loan programs for farmers.*
- *Create New York State based programs that fund the development of community food projects designed to increase connections between local farmers and low-income communities. New York should actively promote Community Supported Agriculture.*
- *Increase funds for the development of programs that combine food-growing projects with entrepreneurial projects. For instance, community gardens and farmers' markets provide opportunities for skills-training and youth employment, welfare-to-work recipients and community service rehabilitation programs. Increase funds for youth agricultural entrepreneurial grants.*
- *Work with communities and county officials to ensure the expansion of farmers' markets within more New York State jurisdictions. Increase support and funds for farmers' market and direct marketing promotion grants. Support efforts to establish wholesale Farmer Markets that promote food products grown in New York; A8001 would finance the construction or improvement of such a market in NYC.*
- *Provide support for the development of farmer cooperatives and more links to retail outlets or consumers, such as farmers' markets and farm stands (Cooperatives can include groups of producers marketing the same product to improve the volume and reliability of their supply; some cooperatives combine diverse agricultural enterprises to provide a wide range of products to stores, restaurants or consumers).*
- *Expand the NYS purchasing program for in-state fruits, vegetables, dairy and animal products to serves all state-run schools, colleges, hospitals, prisons, government agencies and other institutions. A8000 would fund projects supporting the transportation and distribution of New York State farm grown products to food service market, including schools and colleges, especially in underserved communities.*
- *Combine agricultural development programs with skills-training and youth employment programs, business courses, welfare-to-work and community service rehabilitation programs.*

- *Provide services to help integrate migrant labor into communities and pass legislation guaranteeing agricultural workers living wages and legal protection from workplace abuse.*

A. Community Supported Agriculture

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) allows New Yorkers to buy affordable, nutritious food and support local farmers at the same time. A CSA farmer sells shares of his/her crop to CSA members in the winter and spring. The produce is harvested and distributed to the CSA members at a neighborhood site about once a week throughout the summer and fall.

New methods of organizing CSAs are making it easier for low-income people to participate. Some CSAs now accept Food Stamps or operate on a sliding scale. Soup kitchens and food pantries can use HPNAP funds to purchase CSA shares for redistribution to their guests. In addition, some community organizations create revolving loan funds, allowing farmers to be paid up front with low-income CSA members paying back the sponsoring organization on an affordable weekly cost. With this system of repayment, the funds are available again the following year to help community members afford the CSA shares. Just Food, a non-profit group based in New York City, has helped groups establish numerous model CSAs in New York City and has provided training to others to duplicate this project

In October 2004, the Hunger Action Network surveyed over 100 New York farms listed as running CSA programs. While the 41 CSA farms responding vary greatly in terms of size and structure, they all provide weekly shares of fresh vegetables. In addition to vegetables, many CSAs, either independently or with a partner farm, provide a wide range of other locally produced foods to their members, including fruit, meats, eggs and dairy products.

The survey found that New York CSAs:

- Support the local economy by keeping over \$2.6 million in the state.
- Protect the environment by protecting more than 1,100 acres of diversified farmland with sustainable farming practices.
- Provide healthy, affordable and fresh produce to over 6,000 NY families in 38 counties.
- Reach out to those in need, with over 70% of CSA farms doing specific work with low-income members in their communities, and over 80% looking to reach out in the future.
- Innovate and work together to make CSA economically feasible and accessible by offering scholarships, payment plans, working shares, surplus produce donation, cooking classes, acceptance of food stamps and other unique programs.

Low-income participation. Of the CSA farms surveyed, nearly 70 percent (28) currently have some sort of program in place to include low-income households. Overall, at least 690 households were included in CSAs as a result of this outreach. Specific efforts included flexible payment plans (20), scholarships/sliding scale (14), working share (10) and acceptance of food stamps/EBT (5). Additional diverse payment options included student shares (1), senior shares (2), paycheck deduction (1), 1 free share per 40 paid (1) bartering arrangements (1), and low share price (1).

The most common barrier to outreach to low-income members mentioned was the economic situation of the farmers/farms themselves. One farmer mentioned that "I am the most low-income person I know" while another stated that the "low-income" members they served often had more funds than the farmer. At least one farmer mentioned the disparity between low-income farm workers and the generally high-income CSA

members they serve. In general, even for farmers who were actively reaching out to low-income members, they expressed an unwillingness to “reach out so much that I am in poverty myself.”

Additional barriers/challenges mentioned include lack of interest in CSA model and/or donated fresh produce, members’ lack of experience preparing certain vegetables, inconsistent fulfillment of work obligations, and inconsistent pick-up of shares as well as transportation/delivery problems.

B. Wholesale Farmers Markets

The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets released a study in May 2005 documenting the potential for a wholesale farmers’ market in NYC, allowing city chefs and retailers greater access to a wide range of locally grown and processed foods while benefiting area farmers.

New York City currently represents a \$30 billion dollar per year market for food. Between 2004 and 2010, consumption of fresh foods away from home, including produce, meat, dairy, and eggs, is expected to grow about \$500 million in the city. Moreover, federal, state, and local government nutrition initiatives are underway that are expected to increase significantly the volume and variety of locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables purchased for New York City’s school food program and other food assistance programs.

The study noted that “during the past 30 years, farmers in the NY region have increasingly marketed their locally grown products directly to New York City consumers through Greenmarket and other *retail* farmers’ markets. On the *wholesale* level, however, despite increasing interest among chefs, retailers, and the food media in sourcing fresh foods from local farms, wholesale farmers’ markets where local farmers once sold directly to buyers no longer exist.”

The survey estimates the market demand for locally grown and processed products to be more than \$866 million per year.

More than 225 buyers were surveyed, which included restaurants, caterers, institutional food buyers, grocers, supermarkets, specialty food retailers, wholesale produce distributors, florists, garden centers, landscapers and food manufacturers. The overwhelming majority of buyers were interested in buying local products directly from farmers at a NYC wholesale farmers’ market. Many of those surveyed said they are already purchasing some locally grown items, but would be interested in buying more if it was high quality, comparable in price, readily accessible, and if delivery was available. Over a quarter cannot presently find wholesale sources for various local products.

The study also surveyed 150 area farmers, including those presently selling wholesale direct in New York City at the City’s Greenmarkets and at the Bronx Terminal Market. All farmers surveyed indicated interested in a wholesale farmers’ market and two-thirds said they would definitely use such a market if there were one in New York City. Other information collected through the survey of farmers included:

- \$1,500 sales average per day per farm would make the market economically worthwhile.
- Average estimated gross sales at the market was \$79,000 per year per farm.
- The four most critical factors cited by farmers would be potential sales volume, access to buyers, affordable rent, and ability to earn higher returns

According to Ag and Markets, the study shows that a wholesale farmers’ market could complement other wholesale and retail markets in New York City. The City-owned Hunts Point Terminal Market in the Bronx is a vital component of the City’s food system that supplies large volumes of fresh produce from throughout the U.S. and the world to New York’s food buyers. While Hunts Point provides key access to major New

York State grown commodities like apples, cabbage, onions, and sweet corn, many other New York products grown in smaller quantities and sold in non-standard packages are not available there, such as local peaches, berries, grapes, lettuce, organic vegetables, "heirloom" and specialty vegetables, plants, and processed products.

Similar wholesale Farmers Markets could be evaluated in upstate cities and Long Island. Such markets already exist in Buffalo, Syracuse and Albany (Menands). The State should fund feasibility studies for such markets.

VI. State and Federal funding for Small, Sustainable Farming

An overview of existing state and federal grant programs compiled by Julie Dawson is attached as Appendix A.

Below is a brief profile of some of the main existing programs.

1. New York State

A. Grow New York's Enterprise Program

The Grow NY Enterprise Program is a joint initiative of the Governor's Office for Small Cities (GOSC), Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC) and the Department of Agriculture and Markets (NYSDAM). It provides \$3 million annually to increasing the demand for and expanding the use of New York's agriculture and forest products. The primary objective of the program is to provide funds to local governments who in turn use the dollars to assist qualifying businesses that undertake activities resulting in the creation of job opportunities for low- and moderate-income persons.

Generally, cities, towns and villages under 50,000 people and counties with an un-incorporated area population of under 200,000 people are eligible to participate in this program. Emerging or expanding businesses that are focused on producing, processing, marketing or expanding New York produced agricultural products are eligible.

Under the Grow NY Enterprise Program, funds are provided to eligible communities for the following purposes:

- To make loans for production agriculture and agribusiness development and expansion for an identified eligible activity which will result in the creation of permanent private sector job opportunities, principally for low-and moderate-income persons; or
- To construct publicly owned facilities or infrastructure which are necessary to accommodate production agriculture and agribusiness development and expansion that will result in the creation of permanent private sector job opportunities, principally for low-and moderate-income persons.

B. Expansion and Construction of Farmers Markets

Article 22 of the Agriculture and Markets Law authorizes the Department to make grants for the purpose of providing state assistance for the construction, reconstruction, improvement, expansion or rehabilitation of farmers' markets. Grants shall not exceed the lesser of fifty percent of project cost or fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) per project in any fiscal year

C. Food and Agriculture Industry Development (FAID)

Under FAID, the Department of Agriculture and Markets provides grants projects that will promote such strategic business undertakings as are necessary to assure the continued prominence of agriculture as a leading industry in the State and of the State as a supplier of quality foods.

Projects involving new product development; alternative production, processing, distribution and marketing methods or technologies; the introduction of high technologies; or organizational methods that further the development of the food and agricultural industry in New York State are eligible for funding. For the purposes of this program, food and agricultural industry projects shall include those involving farm woodland or fresh water aquatic products produced in either natural or man-made water bodies or controlled structures. Project are supposed to be completed within one year.

D. Farmland Viability Program

This program within Ag and Markets is designed to help ensure the continued economic viability of the State's agricultural industry and to preserve the environmental benefits associated with agricultural land use. The program purposes are to encourage farm operators and cooperative associations to develop and implement plans that can enhance the economic condition and environmental compatibility of their farm operations, and to encourage county agricultural and farmland protection boards (AFPBs) to implement components of their approved county agricultural and farmland protection plans.

2. Federal – United States Department of Agriculture

A. Farmer Direct Marketing

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/directmarketing/frmplan.htm>

Farmer direct marketing, or growers selling their farm products directly to consumers, has been gaining popularity in recent years. Direct marketing includes farmers markets, pick-your-own farms, roadside stands, subscription farming, community supported agriculture (CSA), and catalog sales. Farm products sold through direct marketing include fruits, vegetables, nuts, honey, meats, eggs, flowers, plants, herbs, spices, specialty crops, Christmas trees, and value-added products such as maple sugar candies, cider, jellies, preserves, canned food, and firewood.

Through this plan, USDA Agriculture Marketing Service AMS will facilitate cooperation and collaboration among agencies and organizations that promote direct marketing and help small farmers benefit from the growing consumer interest in direct marketing. The plan will enable AMS to:

- Identify farmer direct marketing issues and opportunities for small farmers.
- Promote the development and operation of farmers markets and other marketing activities which support small farmers.
- Serve as a one-stop information source for farmer direct marketing activities.
- Conduct, support, and promote research in farmer direct marketing.

Appendix A - Current Federal and State Programs
Compiled by Julie Dawson

I. Federal Programs:

Marketing Service Branch (AMS): Feasibility studies, research and other non-grant assistance for farm marketing activities, including cooperative agreements with states, other agencies, farm cooperatives, educational institutions, private non-profit organizations (\$10,000-\$50,000)

Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP) (AMS): Provides matching funds to state agencies for studies and research on innovative approaches to agricultural marketing, about 25-35 grants annually (\$45,000-\$50,000 each).

Farmers' Market Promotion Program: provides grants to establish, improve and promote direct marketing activities (authorized in 2002 farm bill, has not been funded).

Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (WIC and Seniors): provide low-income mothers with children and seniors with coupons to exchange for fresh produce at roadside stands, farmers markets and community supported agricultural operations.

Community Food Projects Competitive Grants (CSREES): one-time matching grants (\$10,000-\$30,000) to non-profit organizations for developing community food systems, including more regional production and consumption of fresh farm products.

Value-added Producer Grants (Rural Business Cooperative Service): matching funds of up to \$500,000 to help producers, cooperatives and commodity groups with developing business or marketing plans, feasibility studies, and obtaining capital for a value-added business venture.

Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Program (CSREES): requires USDA to provide outreach and technical assistance to farmers who have historically been subject to discrimination. It includes competitive grants of up to \$100,000 per year to community-based and tribal organizations and universities to help producers acquire, operate and retain farms through delivery of outreach and technical assistance.

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (CSREES): funds practical research and professional development programs on sustainable agricultural practices and marketing. Administered through 4 regional centers, northeast, north central, south and west. Section 32 funds (permanent appropriation up to 30% of US customs receipts) must be used for encouraging agricultural exports or domestic consumption of farm products, or for reestablishing farmers' purchasing power. Most are transferred to child nutrition, but could be used to fund programs on direct marketing or regional food systems.

Agricultural Management Assistance: requires CCC to spend \$20 million each year through 2007 to help develop new risk management approaches for producers. Market diversification, value-added, organic farming and conservation practices are eligible uses.

Conservation Security Program: encourages farmers to adopt whole-farm conservation practices through tiered incentive payments and cost share for practice establishment and maintenance. Farmers who participate in on-farm research and demonstration, or who go beyond what is necessary for basic compliance

and conservation are eligible for enhanced payments. This program promotes good stewardship and rewards farmers who make extra effort.

National Organic Program: the NOP oversees organic certification and provides cost-share to limited resource farmers who may otherwise have difficulty becoming certified

Integrated Organic Program (CSREES): research and education on organic systems and practices developed for organic producers, taking into account the different management and production needs of organic farms.

Farm and Ranchland Protection Program: provides funding to states for strategic agricultural easements to protect high-quality farm and ranch land threatened by development.

II. New York State Programs:

Pride of New York labeling: provides marketing materials and assistance and conducts promotional activities that highlight New York State Products. Currently includes dairy, fruits and vegetables, jams, jellies and relishes, maple syrup, beef, poultry and meats, wines, baked goods and candies, and Christmas trees.

Farm Fresh Guide: bi-annual directory available in print and on the web that lists farm stands, u-pick and other direct marketing outlets for consumers to purchase local foods.

Domestic Marketing: provides New York pavilions at trade shows and promotional events throughout the country

Business Development: helps agricultural producers and food processors locate public and private funding for business development and expansion, including assistance on evaluating laws and regulations, permits, implementation of cost saving procedures. The department facilitates the exchange of information and guidance on technical questions, and aids in business plan development and review by partnering with state and local agencies/organizations and providing connection to other resources.

Agricultural Workforce Certification Program: works to increase the number and improve the skills of agricultural workers in NY by providing training and employment placement for specialized commodity based farm employment. Current course offerings include: Dairy Manager, Crop Manager, Landscape Technician, Herdsperson, Nursery Specialist, Equine Specialist, Milker, Sheep Shearer, and Equipment Repairer. Many are offered in Spanish.

Agribusiness Child Development and Day Care: Serves children of farm workers (about 1,500-1,800 kids each year) in 11 childcare centers and 25-30 day care homes. Children from 6 weeks to 6 years are eligible for care, which includes health and dental care, meals, transportation and educational/physical activities for each age level. The program uses Head Start guidelines and parental involvement.

Agricultural Research and Development Grants: funding for new product development, alternative production, processing, distribution and marketing technologies, the introduction of new technologies and organizational approaches that develop industries.

Farmland Viability Grants: funds development of farm viability plans and implementation of projects that contribute to farm profitability and sound environmental management. Grants can be used by a county to implement part of a farmland viability plan or by individual farms to develop and implement business management plans.

Enterprise Program: provides funds for agricultural business development or expansion or for construction of publicly owned facilities and infrastructure needed to accommodate agribusiness development.

Non-Point Source Abatement and Control Grants: awards Soil and Water Conservation Districts funding to correct and prevent water pollution from farms through the development of water quality assessments, runoff buffers and waste management systems.

Farmland Protection Grants: awards grants to towns and counties for developing farmland protection plans and for purchasing farm conservation easements or development rights.

#8

**NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY
PUBLIC HEARING
NYS FOOD AND NUTRITION POLICY**

MAY 16, 2005

PRESENTED BY:

**MICHELLE BENNETT STIEGLITZ
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, URBGARDENS**

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Assembly members Ortiz, Magee, Gottfried and Glick it is my pleasure to be here today to speak to you on a subject which I believe holds the potential to make the most *positive* impact on the residents of New York State than any legislation in decades. I think you all know this, otherwise our State's Five Year Food and Nutrition Plan, and your Notice of Public Hearing, would not have been so articulate, and if I might say, so "right-on" , in expressing the food policy challenges which remain.

My professional experience has been in both Urban Planning and Health Administration. My professional goal has always been to ^{create} ~~great~~ healthier urban environments. I am testifying here today as Executive Director of Urbgardens, a not-for-profit organization affiliated with the Wellness Institute of Greater Buffalo and Western New York. Our mission is to assist organizations in the planning, development, design and implementation of gardens for the purpose of improving the health and well-being of a community. When creating my own business, I chose to focus on gardens as the key to addressing urban health needs for the reason that no other single initiative can so immediately, and so strongly, impact the overall well-being of many people. The benefits of urban agriculture, or community gardening, are multifaceted: decreased crime, improved nutrition and health, cultural awareness and expression, education, physical activity, spirituality, development of a work ethic, beauty, creativity, collaboration and team work, respect, environmental stewardship, etc. In his book "The Ecology of Commerce" author Paul Hawken wrote "that thousands of native cultures around the world have been destroyed by economic development. Lost with those cultures have been languages, art and craft, family structures, land claims, traditional methods of healing and nourishment, rites and oral histories." (The Ecology of Commerce, 1993, Page 135). I can only speak of my home, Buffalo, New York – and tell you that the diversity of cultures in our city is rich and growing. However, we too, are loosing all of the valuable "qualities of life" which our urban settlers bring with them. We have an economically and politically

struggling city – and we do not have a large number of parent corporations from which we receive financial support. How can we make our city a livable place for its growing number of low or no income, multicultural residents? In his book “When Work Disappears, The World of the New Urban Poor”, Mr. William Wilson states that “the problems associated with the absence of work are most severe for a jobless family in a low-employment neighborhood because they are more likely to be shared and therefore reinforced by other families in the neighborhood through the process of accidental or nonconscious cultural transmission. One of these shared problems is a perception of a lack of self-efficacy” (pg 75). They do not believe in their own ability to take the steps necessary to achieve their own goals. A requirement to creating livable communities is to first recognize the riches they bring, and then help them to hold on to those riches. We can enhance and support those qualities – instead of losing them. Most of these cultures have a foundation in agriculture. Economic development does not need to be negative – does not need to result in lost cultures. The question is, can we truly recognize that in the United States the primary criteria for successful “economic development” is quality of life?

Here in New York State we can begin now to create plans for a higher quality of life by first committing to building healthy communities with schools, arts, community centers, centralized community gardens and housing interwoven with small businesses (which sell the food and the artwork) - all within a walkable distance. Secondly, the creation of a supporting network of services, such as the farm-to-school program, is of importance to the sustainability of a healthy community. We need to develop transportation and logistical networks to respond to the challenges of locally grown produce from small farms to inter-intra-urban areas. Small farmers rarely can afford the trucks required to make frequent deliveries to urban centers feasible. These farms cannot compete for the larger competitive city-based contracts, even if partnering with another farm or business. Thirdly, public institutions serving meals and utilizing the farm-to-school program must be provided with financial resources to have in-house

storage ability in order to serve whole, fresh and healthy foods. This is true whether the produce is delivered from rural or urban farms. Freezing is the best means of storage and enables year-round supply for the institution. Finally, financial support is needed to allow schools to integrate fresh produce into their meal plans by improving kitchen facilities, prep areas increasing cafeteria staff size, and expanding or redesigning cafeteria spaces to allow for prep and serving of salad bars.

Summary

In order for our communities to be successful, they must coordinate three initiatives toward health and wellbeing: ***Education, People & Culture*** and ***Environment***. It is with a focus on these issues that health and nutrition can be addressed at the grassroots level. The intent is to bring “life” to the core of people – “life gives life”. This is not a religion or dogma, it is a way to reconnect to what people are at their “core” – all that has passed before them...their wisdom, experiences, knowledge, questions, fears...identity. And to say, you are part of our community, you are connected to us, and us to you. We are all also connected to the earth and all the environments surrounding us. We will not be well if we disconnect – from our culture, from our ancestors, from our families, from our loved ones, from our environment and from what is natural to nourish ourselves. We have a responsibility to learn this, incorporate it into our urban environments, and to teach it to our children.

#9

Testimony prepared by:

Diane Picard, Growing Green Program Director of the Massachusetts Avenue Project (MAP)
382 Massachusetts Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14213; 716/882-5327
for the Task Force on Food, Farm and Nutrition Policy
May 16, 2005

My name is Diane Picard and I am the Growing Green Program Director for the Massachusetts Avenue Project in Buffalo, NY. I want to thank this committee for holding this hearing and commend you for bringing issues of community food security and economic development to the forefront. I fully support Bill # A02651 to establish a Community Food Program at the State level.

The Massachusetts Avenue Project is a community based organization located on Buffalo's West Side. Our mission is to revitalize our community through food, gardening and economic development. We run two main programs, Growing Green an urban agriculture youth development program that trains teens ages 12-18 about urban growing, food systems issues and micro enterprise development, and Food Ventures a microenterprise development program helping low income people start food-based businesses. Food Ventures, which was initially funded by a federal Job Opportunities for Low Income people (JOLI) grant, has created 90 new jobs and over 40 new businesses in its first 3 years.

Growing Green, our youth education program, launched in 2003 is aimed at reducing the economic and social root causes of hunger and poverty by increasing economic and educational opportunities for at-risk youth and their families on Buffalo's West Side. Starting its third year, Growing Green has provided over 70 youth with marketable job and life skills, an increased knowledge of how to grow food, as well as business training experience.

Through hands-on activities in MAP's urban gardens, in the kitchen, on the farm, and at farmer's markets, youth gain knowledge about growing and preparing their own food, nutrition, sustainability, and food systems issues. Youth plant, maintain and harvest 30 garden beds with a variety of vegetables, flowers and herbs. They use some of this produce in weekly meals they plan and prepare in MAP's commercial kitchen. They are also able to take some of this produce home to their families. During the summer of 2004, youth began marketing produce they had grown in the garden to neighbors and area businesses, including the Lexington Coop and Solid Grounds restaurant. Youth are currently working on developing a hot sauce that they will be able to market year round.

In 2004, Growing Green received a 3 year \$265,000 Community Food Project grant from the USDA to expand our program to further meet the food security needs of our neighborhood. With this grant, and in partnership with local farmers we are establishing a market basket program to increase access and affordability of fresh fruits and vegetables to urban, low-income residents, a Community Food Resource Center that will provide training, resources and tools enabling community members to grow, prepare and process their own food, a garden bed building program to assist community members with starting their own gardens and a local food guide. We have started a Community Dinner

Cooperative which provides healthy, home-cooked meals twice a week at our community center. Dinner rates are affordable: members pay \$2.50, non-members pay \$3.50 and children are half price. In addition we are in the beginning stages of trying to establish a local food policy council to advise local government and community leaders on issues related to food security.

While this may sound like we have accomplished a lot we have only just begun to build the foundation of a community food system that can have regional impacts. Community Food systems and food security are not issues on the radar screen of most policy makers in the Western New York region, especially at the City and County level. Having leadership from State government on establishing a Food Policy Plan could help to change this.

Effective policy and program planning must begin with assessment at the local level and should include quantitative and qualitative research that looks at the networks, resources and assets of the existing food system. In the fall of 2003, MAP partnered with Dr. Samina Raja and 11 graduate students from the Department of Regional Planning at the University of Buffalo to conduct a food security assessment of Buffalo's West Side. This research, titled *Food for Growth* provided a strong base of identified need as well as recommendations that informed program planning for Growing Green. In 2004, the *Food for Growth* report won local, state and national awards from the American Planning Association. I believe this research was a key factor that allowed us to obtain \$265,000 federal dollars to expand our work in the community.

A Community Food Program at the State level could help facilitate and fund this kind of assessment in communities across the State and help inform State Food Policy. State policy must be informed by what is going on in local communities, not the other way around and must include attention to land use issues, distribution networks, transportation, access to training and the importance of involving youth. A Food Policy Council at the State level could also be a vehicle for gathering and disseminating "best practices" information that in turn could help build networks of community food programs across the state. Although there may always be a need for safety net services our focus and resources need to shift to providing real opportunity through, training, education and workforce development programs that work.

The last point I want to make is the importance of involving youth in the development of Community Food Systems including their involvement in creating food policy. Youth across the country, especially in urban areas are becoming increasingly involved in the food security movement. They are being trained as leaders and have become educators in their communities. They are the ones who will lead this movement for the coming decades. We need to provide them with real opportunities to continue to work on these issues, including opportunities for employment, training and policy development.

Rainelle Camp, a 16 year old, who has been involved in our Growing Green program for almost one year has come with me and would like to speak briefly of the impact learning about the food system has had on her.

#10

NYS Assembly Food and Nutrition Policy Hearing, May 16, 2005

Chairman Ortiz, Standing Committee Chairs Magee, Gotfried and Glick, I am speaking on behalf of NYSAGE, a coalition of 22 statewide food co-ops and over 40 csa's, organized toward the goal of labeling genetically modified organisms, i.e., seeds, crops, foods, and toward the regulation in general of gmo's aka transgenic crops and foods. We thank you for calling these hearings on food policy in NYS.

I also speak as a teacher of 34 years experience in NYC schools, as the owner of a large upstate farm who is closely watching developments in the farm and food community, and as the mother of an allergic, asthmatic child.

Twenty-one years ago my then daughter of three developed a sudden attack of itchy hives spread over most of her tiny body after she sucked the red dye off an Easter Sunday jelly bean. I knew that her reaction was to the artificial red coloring and that I could control her diet to avoid further reactions.

Last month an assembly staff person here in LOB told me of her four year old grandson having had a severe asthma attack while visiting her home and eating dinner with her, and this child having had to identify for his grandmother which of his three different asthma inhalers was the appropriate one to use for this emergency. His symptoms subsided quickly after taking the medication. She commented on how quickly the drug worked to halt so severe a reaction, and how young he was to have to take such strong medication and that she didn't know what specific food caused this severe allergic reaction.

Parents and doctors have a harder time today deciphering causes of allergic reactions because there are more additives in foods; indeed, highly processed foods can have almost as many additives or added ingredients by weight or percentage as the amount of the base food itself. And if the ingredient added to canned tomato sauce, e.g., is genetically modified soy, corn, canola, or cottonseed oil or any derivatives of these four main transgenic foods, which are contained in virtually all processed foods purchased in the US today, -if one of these is the cause of an allergic response, no parent or doctor can or will know because there is no labeling requirement for these ingredients in tomato sauce or anything else.

Again, there is no requirement that food we all buy at markets and co-ops, and even seeds farmers and gardeners buy and plant, be labeled for gm ingredients. Many enzymes used in processed foods and the bovine growth hormone added to diets of dairy cows are also genetically engineered. We repeat, genetically engineered or genetically modified or transgenic ingredients are unlabeled, unregulated, and untested for health and ecological hazards. But these additives and ingredients need not be hidden from parents and doctors who are charged with protecting children from food sensitivities and allergies and asthma.

There is new, but incomplete, science to indicate that gm genes put into food, like the pesticide-producing gene put into BT corn, can transfer or jump from the food a child eats to the gut bacteria in the child's stomach. If so, our children can conceivably have pesticide-producing cells growing and mutating within their tiny three and four year old bodies. Studies need to be done on such risks, but the FDA doesn't require such studies, even though the EPA has licensed BT corn as a pesticide.

Besides supporting gmo labeling bills in the assembly, there is an additional way your task force and committee heads can secure our children's food and health by getting these unregulated, unlabeled, untested gmo's virtually out of school breakfasts and lunches and vending machines. That is by supporting the farm-to-school program, and returning our NY schools to meals of yesteryear, meals that were full of whole grains and fresh farm vegetables and fruits, meals that were unprocessed, meals that didn't pre-add fructose and maltose or other corn syrup sweeteners which could contain gm corn, meals that didn't have gm corn starch or gm soy lecithin as thickening agents, or meals without inexpensive oils blended possibly from gm soy, cottonseed, corn and canola oils.

By supporting buy fresh, buy local, and a NYS farm-to-school and farm-to-table economy, we may be achieving more than better health and nutrition (and less obesity and diabetes). Yale University is concluding studies to back up the results of the Appleton School District of WI where seven years ago processed foods were removed from school meals, and where consistent year after year evidence has proven that students exhibit fewer behavior problems and better focus and higher grades. Food does more than just supply calories to students; this is common sense. And, in this business world of bottom-line thinking, alas converting school meals to non-processed foods actually turned out to be cost effective for this district.

We refer you to testimony by principals, teachers, coaches, parents, and students from this school district in WI if you want to learn more about this positive way to really leave no child behind. To this end, our food co-op coalition, NYSAGE, will make copies of *Hidden Dangers in Kids' Meals*, a dvd about potential hazards in gm food and about the Appleton WI model, available to you. And attached to this testimony you'll find a summary of some of the science available on hazards and problems, as compiled by Institute for Responsible Technology.

We also want to announce our forthcoming lobby day on June 15th to which we have invited guests such as scientists, farmers, and the filmmaker Deborah Garcia, wife of the late Grateful Dead Jerry Garcia. We have presented Ms. Garcia's dvd *The Future of Food* recently to members of the Assembly ag and consumer affairs committees.

Thank you for listening. We hope you will heed our request to secure the future of food in NYS by regulating gmo's in food and by returning school meals to nutritious, unprocessed, whole grains and produce.

Janise Johnson
Honest Weight Food Corp
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Protect Yourself from Genetically Engineered Foods

By Jeffrey M. Smith, author of *Seeds of Deception*

In a study in the early 1990's rats were fed genetically modified (GM) tomatoes. Well actually, the rats refused to eat them. They were forcefed. Several of the rats developed stomach lesions and seven out of forty died within two weeks. Scientists at the FDA who reviewed the study agreed that it did not provide a "demonstration of reasonable certainty of no harm." In fact, agency scientists warned that GM foods in general might create unpredicted allergies, toxins, antibiotic resistant diseases, and nutritional problems. Internal FDA memos made public from a lawsuit reveal that the scientists urged their superiors to require long-term safety testing to catch these hard-to-detect side effects.¹ But FDA political appointees, including a former attorney for Monsanto in charge of policy, ignored the scientists' warnings. The FDA does not require safety studies. Instead, if the makers of the GM foods claim that they are safe, the agency has no further questions. The GM tomato was approved in 1994.

According to a July 27, 2004 report from the US National Academy of Sciences (NAS),² the current system of blanket approval of GM foods by the FDA might not detect "unintended changes in the composition of the food." The process of gene insertion, according to the NAS, could damage the host's DNA with unpredicted consequences. The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), which released its findings a few days earlier, identified a long list of potentially dangerous side effects from GM foods that are not being evaluated. The ICMR called for a complete overhaul of existing regulations.³

The safety studies conducted by the biotech industry are often dismissed by critics as superficial and designed to avoid finding problems. Tragically, scientists who voice their criticism, as well as those who have discovered incriminating evidence, have been threatened, stripped of responsibilities, denied funding or tenure, or fired.⁴ For example, a UK government-funded study demonstrated that rats fed a GM potato developed potentially pre cancerous cell growth,⁵ damaged immune systems, partial atrophy of the liver, and inhibited development of their brains, livers and testicles.⁶ When the lead scientist went public with his concerns, he was promptly fired from his job after 35 years and silenced with threats of a lawsuit.

Americans eat genetically modified foods everyday. Although the GM tomato has been taken off the market, millions of acres of soy, corn, canola, and cotton have had foreign genes inserted into their DNA. The new genes allow the crops to survive applications of herbicide, create their own pesticide, or both. While there are only a handful of published animal safety studies, mounting evidence, which needs to be followed up, suggests that these foods are not safe.

Rats fed GM corn had problems with blood cell formation.⁷ Those fed GM soy had problems with liver cell formation,⁸ and the livers of rats fed GM canola were heavier.⁹ Pigs fed GM corn on several Midwest farms developed false pregnancies or sterility.¹⁰ Cows fed GM corn in Germany died mysteriously. And twice the number of chickens died when fed GM corn compared to those fed natural corn.¹¹

Soon after GM soy was introduced to the UK, soy allergies skyrocketed by 50 percent.¹² Without follow-up tests, we can't be sure if genetic engineering was the cause, but there are plenty of ways in which genetic manipulation can boost allergies.

- A gene from a Brazil nut inserted into soybeans made the soy allergenic to those who normally react to Brazil nuts.¹³
- GM soy currently consumed in the US contains a gene from bacteria. The inserted gene creates a protein that was never before part of the human food supply, and might be allergenic.
- Sections of that protein are identical to those found in shrimp and dust mite allergens.¹⁴ According to criteria recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO), this fact should have disqualified GM soy from approval.
- The sequence of the gene that was inserted into soy has inexplicably rearranged over time.¹⁵ The protein it creates is likely to be different than the one intended, and was never subject to any safety studies. It may be allergenic or toxic.

- The process of inserting the foreign gene damaged a section of the soy's own DNA, scrambling its genetic code.¹⁶ This mutation might interfere with DNA expression or create a new, potentially dangerous protein.
- The most common allergen in soy is called trypsin inhibitor. GM soy contains significantly more of this compared with natural soy.¹⁷

The only human feeding study ever conducted showed that the gene inserted into soybeans spontaneously transferred out of food and into the DNA of gut bacteria.¹⁸ This has several serious implications. First, it means that the bacteria inside our intestines, newly equipped with this foreign gene, may create the novel protein inside of us. If it is allergenic or toxic, it may affect us for the long term, even if we give up eating GM soy.

The same study verified that the promoter, which scientists attach to the inserted gene to permanently switch it on, also transferred to gut bacteria. Research on this promoter suggests that it might unintentionally switch on other genes in the DNA—permanently.¹⁹ This could create an overproduction of allergens, toxins, carcinogens, or antinutrients. Scientists also theorize that the promoter might switch on dormant viruses embedded in the DNA or generate mutations.²⁰

Unfortunately, gene transfer from GM food might not be limited to our gut bacteria. Preliminary results show that the promoter also transferred into rat organs, after they were fed only a single GM meal.²¹

This is only a partial list of what may go wrong with a single GM food crop. The list for others may be longer. Take for example, the corn inserted with a gene that creates its own pesticide. We eat that pesticide, and plenty of evidence suggests that it is not as benign as the biotech proponents would have us believe. Preliminary evidence, for example, shows that thirtynine Phillipinos living next to a pesticide-producing cornfield developed skin, intestinal, and respiratory reactions while the corn was pollinating. Tests of their blood also showed an immune response to the pesticide.²² Consider what might happen if the gene that produces the pesticide were to transfer from the corn we eat into our gut bacteria. It could theoretically transform our intestinal flora into living pesticide factories.

GM corn and most GM crops are also inserted with antibiotic resistant genes. The ICMR, along with the American Medical Association, the WHO, and organizations worldwide, have expressed concern about the possibility that these might transfer to pathogenic bacteria inside our gut. They are afraid that it might create new, antibiotic resistant super-diseases. The defense that the biotech industry used to counter these fears was that the DNA was fully destroyed during digestion and therefore no such transfer of genes was possible. The human feeding study described above, published in February 2004, overturned this baseless assumption.

No one monitors human health impacts of GM foods. If the foods were creating health problems in the US population, it might take years or decades before we identified the cause. One epidemic in the 1980's provides a chilling example. A new disease was caused by a brand of the food supplement L-tryptophan, which had been created through genetic modification and contained tiny traces of contaminants. The disease killed about 100 Americans and caused sickness or disability in about 5-10,000 others.²³ The only reason that doctors were able to identify that an epidemic was occurring, was because the disease had three simultaneous characteristics: it was rare, acute, and fast acting. Even then it was nearly missed entirely.

Studies show that the more people learn about GM foods, the less they trust them.²⁴ In Europe, Japan, and other regions, the press has been far more open about the potential dangers of genetic manipulation. Consequently, consumers there demand that their food supply be GM-free and manufacturers comply. But in the US, most people believe they have never eaten a GM food in their lives²⁵ (even though they consume them daily). Lacking awareness, complacent consumers have been the key asset for the biotech industry in the US. As a result, millions of Americans are exposed to the potential dangers, and children are most at risk. Perhaps the revelations in the reports released on opposite sides of the planet will awaken consumers as well as regulators, and GM foods on the market will be withdrawn.

This is the first in a series of articles by Jeffrey Smith. To learn more about GM foods and how to avoid them, to download a letter to food

manufacturers, and to receive a free monthly electronic newsletter with

the rest of the series, go to www.seedsofdeception.com.

Jeffrey M. Smith is the author of *Seeds of Deception: Exposing Industry and Government Lies about the Safety of the Genetically Engineered Foods You're Eating*, and the Director of the Institute for Responsible Technology. He has traveled to five continents to inform world leaders and the public on the documented risks of genetically modified foods and crops and the controversies surrounding their approval. See www.seedsofdeception.com for the current tour schedule.

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Got Hormones—The Controversial Milk Drug that Refuses to Die

By Jeffrey M. Smith, author of *Seeds of Deception*

"Effective December 1, 2004, as a current customer, you will have access to an increased supply of POSILAC." This news from Monsanto to its customers was disappointing for those around the world who understood its consequences. Back in January, the company announced that they would reduce their supply of the drug by 50%, after FDA inspectors discovered unacceptable levels of contamination. Many people hoped that Posilac would quietly disappear altogether. "If Monsanto gives this stuff up, it would be a godsend to both cows and people," said Rick North who heads up the campaign by Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility to fight the drug. But on October 8, 2004, Monsanto announced it would be increasing its supply back up to "at least 70%."

Posilac is a genetically engineered drug that increases milk production in cows by 10-15%. It is also known as recombinant bovine growth hormone, rbGH, Bovine Somatotropin, BST, and "Crack for Cows." Its controversial history has left fifteen years of frustrated whistleblowers strewn in its wake.

Early casualties were scientists at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) during the drug's evaluation. Chemist Joseph Settepani, in charge of quality control for the approval process of veterinary drugs at the Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM), testified at a public hearing about threats to human safety. Soon after, he was reprimanded, threatened, stripped of responsibilities, and relocated a trailer at an experimental farm. In later testimony before a congressional subcommittee, Settepani said, "Dissent [at CVM] is not tolerated if it could seriously threaten industry profits."¹¹

Division director Alexander Apostolou wrote an affidavit, "Sound scientific procedures for evaluating human food safety of veterinary drugs have been disregarded. I have faced continuous pressure from my CVM superiors to reach scientific conclusions favorable to the drug industry. . . . In my time at CVM I have witnessed drug manufacturer sponsors improperly influence the agency's scientific analysis, decision-making, and fundamental mission."¹² Apostolou was forced out after he began to express his concerns.

FDA Veterinarian Richard Burroughs said that agency officials "suppressed and manipulated data to cover up their own ignorance and incompetence."¹³ He also described how industry researchers would often drop sick cows from studies, to make the drug appear safer. Burroughs had ordered more tests than the industry wanted and was told by superiors he was slowing down the approval. He was fired and his tests canceled.

The remaining whistle-blowers in the FDA had to write an anonymous letter to Congress, complaining of fraud and conflict of interest in the agency. They described one FDA scientist who arbitrarily increased the allowable levels of antibiotics in milk 100-fold. This was necessary before approving rbGH. Since the drug increases the chance of udder infections, farmers inject cows with more antibiotics. This leads to a higher risk of antibiotic resistant diseases in cows and humans. According to the letter, Margaret Miller authorized the increased levels. She had formerly conducted research on rbGH while with Monsanto and then moved into the FDA department that evaluated her own research.

Dr. Samuel Epstein, Professor at the University Of Illinois School Of Public Health, cited numerous potential or theoretical health dangers from rbGH, including "hormonal and allergic effects . . . premature growth and breast stimulation in infants," and possibly cancer in adults.¹⁴ Epstein also received an anonymous box of stolen files from the FDA. Documents revealed that in order to show that rbGH injections did not interfere with fertility, industry researchers allegedly added cows to the study that were pregnant prior to injection. Also, blood hormone levels skyrocketed by as much as a thousand-fold after injections.¹⁵

Monsanto tried to silence Epstein. Their public relations firm created a group called the Dairy Coalition, which included university researchers whose work was funded by Monsanto, and selected "third party" experts and organizations. Representatives of the Dairy Coalition pressured editors of the *USA Today*, *Boston Globe*, *New York Times* and others, to limit coverage of Epstein.

Hormones in Your Milk

Several claims made by FDA scientists in defense of rbGH have not held up under scrutiny. For example, they said that bovine growth hormone does not increase substantially in milk from treated cows. The study they cited, however, shows a 26% increase in the hormone. Furthermore, researchers injected cows with only a 10.6 mg daily dose of rbGH compared to the normal 500 mg bi-weekly dose used by farmers. In fact, they didn't even use Monsanto's rbGH, but rather another version that was never approved. They then pasteurized the milk 120 times longer than normal in an apparent attempt to show that the hormone was destroyed during the process. They only destroyed 19% of the hormone. They then spiked the milk with powdered hormone—146 times the naturally occurring levels—heated that 120 times longer than normal, and were then able to destroy 90% of the hormone.¹⁶ FDA scientists reported that 90% of the hormone was destroyed during pasteurization.¹⁷

The hormone most critics are concerned about, however, is insulinlike growth factor 1 (IGF-1). Natural milk contains IGF-1. Milk drinkers increase their levels of IGF-1.¹⁸ Studies suggest that pre-menopausal women below 50 year old with high levels of IGF-1 are seven times more likely to develop breast cancer.¹⁹ Men are four times more likely to develop prostate cancer.²⁰ IGF-1 is also implicated in lung and colon cancer. *Milk from cows treated with rbGH has significantly higher levels of IGF-1.*²¹ (No comprehensive study has evaluated a direct link between rbGH and human cancer.)

This potential link between rbGH and cancer was one of the many controversial topics to be covered in a four-part investigative news series at a Tampa-based Fox TV station. But four days before the series was to air, Fox received a threatening letter from Monsanto's attorney. They pulled the show. The station manager reviewed it, approved the content, and scheduled it for the following week. A second letter arrived from Monsanto's attorney, this time threatening "dire consequences for Fox News."²² The show was postponed indefinitely. Jane Akre and Steve Wilson, the award winning investigative reporters who had created the report for Fox, say that they were offered hush money to leave the station and never speak about the story again. They declined. So Fox's corporate attorney led them in a series of rewrites, attempting to soften the language and apparently appease Monsanto. Six months and 83 rewrites later, the reporters were ultimately fired for refusing to write in the script that the milk from treated cows was the same as normal milk. The reporters argued that that Monsanto's own research showed a difference, such as the increased IGF-1 levels, and even the FDA scientists had acknowledged this.

The reporters sued. Akre was awarded \$425,000 by a jury that agreed that Fox "acted intentionally and deliberately to falsify or distort the plaintiffs' news reporting on BGH,"²³ and that Akre's threat to blow the

whistle was the reason she was fired. But an appeals court overturned the verdict on the grounds that the whistle-blower's statute only protects people who threaten to report a violation of a law, rule, or regulation. Distorting TV news, evidently, is not technically illegal. Akre and Wilson now have to pay a combined \$196,500 to cover some of Fox's legal costs. This is on top of the \$200,000 - \$300,000 they already spent on their case.

Attacks on rbGH whistleblowers are not limited to the US. In 1998, six Canadian government scientists testified before the Senate that they were being pressured by superiors to approve rbGH, even though they believed it was unsafe for the public. Their detailed critique of the FDA's evaluation of the drug showed how the US approval process was flawed and superficial. They also testified that documents were stolen from a locked file cabinet in a government office, and that Monsanto offered them a babe of \$1-2 million to approve the drug without further tests. (A Monsanto representative went on national Canadian television claiming that the scientists had obviously misunderstood an offer for research money.) The Canadian scientists later described how their superiors retaliated against them for testifying. They were passed over for promotions, given impossible tasks or no assignments at all, one was suspended without pay. Three of the whistleblowers, who also spoke out on such controversial topics as mad cow disease, were ultimately fired on July 14, 2004.

Most industrialized nations have banned rbGH. Within the US, many school systems have also banned it and several dairies refuse to use it. Oakhurst Dairy of Portland, Maine, for example, requires its suppliers to sign a

notarized affidavit every six months. The Oakhurst label stated, "Our Farmers' Pledge: No Artificial Growth Hormones." But on July 3, 2003, Monsanto sued the dairy over their labels. Oakhurst eventually settled with Monsanto, agreeing to include a sentence on their cartons saying that according to the FDA no significant difference has been shown between milk derived from rbGH-treated and non-rbGH-treated cows. The statement is not

true. FDA scientists had acknowledged the increase of IGF-1 in milk from treated cows. Nonetheless, the misleading sentence had been written years earlier by the FDA's deputy commissioner of policy, Michael Taylor. Prior to becoming an FDA official, Taylor was Monsanto's outside attorney. He later worked at the USDA on biotech issues, and later became vice president of Monsanto.

Visit www.seedsnofdeception.com for a list of non-rbGH dairies, article references, and a free newsletter.

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October 8, 2004

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Another Reason for Schools to Ban Genetically Engineered Foods

By Jeffrey M. Smith, author of *Seeds of Deception*

Before the Appleton Wisconsin high school replaced their cafeteria's processed foods with wholesome, nutritious food, the school was described as out-of-control. There were weapons violations, student disruptions, and a cop on duty full-time. After the change in school meals, the students were calm, focused, and orderly. There were no more weapons violations, and no suicides, expulsions, dropouts, or drug violations. The new diet and improved behavior has lasted for seven years, and now other schools are changing their meal programs with similar results.

Years ago, a science class at Appleton found support for their new diet by conducting a cruel and unusual experiment with three mice. They fed them the junk food that kids in other high schools eat everyday. The mice freaked out. Their behavior was totally different than the three mice in the neighboring cage. The neighboring mice had good karma; they were fed nutritious whole foods and behaved like mice. They slept during the day inside their cardboard tube, played with each other, and acted very mouse-like. The junk food mice, on the other hand, destroyed their cardboard tube, were no longer nocturnal, stopped playing with each other, fought often, and two mice eventually killed the third and ate it. After the three month experiment, the students rehabilitated the two surviving junk food mice with a diet of whole foods. After about three weeks, the mice came around.

Sister Luigi Frigo repeats this experiment every year in her second grade class in Cudahy, Wisconsin, but mercifully, for only four days. Even on the first day of junk food, the mice's behavior "changes drastically." They become lazy, antisocial, and nervous. And it still takes the mice about two to three weeks on unprocessed foods to return to normal. One year, the second graders tried to do the experiment again a few months later with the same mice, but this time the animals refused to eat the junk food.

Across the ocean in Holland, a student fed one group of mice genetically modified (GM) corn and soy, and another group the non-GM variety. The GM mice stopped playing with each other and withdrew into their own parts of the cage. When the student tried to pick them up, unlike their well-behaved neighbors, the GM mice scampered around in apparent fear and tried to climb the walls. One mouse in the GM group was found dead at the end of the experiment.

It's interesting to note that the junk food fed to the mice in the Wisconsin experiments also contained genetically modified ingredients. And although the Appleton school lunch program did not specifically attempt to remove GM foods, it happened anyway. That's because GM foods such as soy and corn and their derivatives are largely found in processed foods. So when the school switched to unprocessed alternatives, almost

all ingredients derived from GM crops were taken out automatically.

Does this mean that GM foods negatively affect the behavior of humans or animals? It would certainly be irresponsible to say so on the basis of a single student mice experiment and the results at Appleton. On the other hand, it is equally irresponsible to say that it doesn't.

We are just beginning to understand the influence of food on behavior. A study in *Science* in December 2002 concluded that "food molecules act like hormones, regulating body functioning and triggering cell division. The molecules can cause mental imbalances ranging from attention-deficit and hyperactivity disorder to serious mental illness." The problem is we do not know which food molecules have what effect. The bigger problem is that the composition of GM foods can change radically without our knowledge.

Genetically modified foods have genes inserted into their DNA. But genes are not Legos; they don't just snap into place. Gene insertion creates unpredicted, irreversible changes. In one study, for example, a gene chip monitored the DNA before and after a single foreign gene was inserted. As much as 5 percent of the DNA's genes changed the amount of protein they were producing. Not only is that huge in itself, but these changes can multiply through complex interactions down the line.

In spite of the potential for dramatic changes in the composition of GM foods, they are typically measured for only a small number of known nutrient levels. But even if we *could* identify all the changed compounds, at this point we wouldn't know which might be responsible for the antisocial nature of mice or humans. Likewise, we are only beginning to identify the medicinal compounds in food. We now know, for example, that the pigment in blueberries may revivethe brain's neural communication system, and the antioxidant found in grape skins may fight cancer and reduce heart disease. But what about other valuable compounds we don't know about that might change or disappear in GM varieties?

Consider GM soy. In July 1999, years after it was on the market, independent researchers published a study showing that it contains 12-14 percent less cancer-fighting phytoestrogens. What else has changed that we don't know about? [Monsanto responded with its own study, which concluded that soy's phytoestrogen levels vary too much to even carry out a statistical analysis. They failed to disclose, however, that the laboratory that conducted Monsanto's experiment had been instructed to use an obsolete method to detect phytoestrogens—one that had been replaced due to its highly variable results.]

In 1996, Monsanto published a paper in the *Journal of Nutrition* that concluded in the title, "The composition of glyphosate-tolerant soybean seeds is equivalent to that of conventional soybeans." The study only compared a small number of nutrients and a close look at their charts revealed significant differences in the fat, ash, and carbohydrate content. In addition, GM soy meal contained 27 percent more trypsin inhibitor, a well-known soy allergen. The study also used questionable methods. Nutrient comparisons are routinely conducted on plants grown in identical conditions so that variables such as weather and soil can be ruled out. Otherwise, differences in plant composition could be easily missed. In Monsanto's study, soybeans were planted in widely varying climates and geography.

Although one of their trials was a side-by-side comparison between GM and non-GM soy, for some reason the results were left out of the paper altogether. Years later, a medical writer found the missing data in the archives of the *Journal of Nutrition* and made them public. No wonder the scientists left them out. The GM soy showed significantly lower levels of protein, a fatty acid, and phenylalanine, an essential amino acid. Also, toasted GM soy meal contained nearly twice the amount of a lectin that may block the body's ability to assimilate other nutrients. Furthermore, the toasted GM soy contained as much as seven times the amount of trypsin inhibitor, indicating that the allergen may survive cooking more in the GM variety. (This might explain the 50 percent jump in soy allergies in the UK, just after GM soy was introduced.)

We don't know all the changes that occur with genetic engineering, but certainly GM crops are not the same. Ask the animals. Eyewitness reports from all over North America describe how several types of animals, when given a choice, avoided eating GM food. These included cows, pigs, elk, deer, raccoons, squirrels, rats, and mice. In fact, the Dutch student mentioned above first determined that his mice had a two-to-

one preference for non-GM before forcing half of them to eat only the engineered variety.

Differences in GM food will likely have a much larger impact on children. They are three to four times more susceptible to allergies. Also, they convert more of the food into body-building material. Altered nutrients or added toxins can result in developmental problems. For this reason, animal nutrition studies are typically conducted on young, developing animals. After the feeding trial, organs are weighed and often studied under magnification. If scientists used mature animals instead of young ones, even severe nutritional problems might not be detected. The Monsanto study used mature animals instead of young ones.

They also diluted their GM soy with non-GM protein 10- or 12-fold before feeding the animals. And they never weighed the organs or examined them under a microscope. The study, which is the only major animal feeding study on GM soy ever published, is dismissed by critics as rigged to avoid finding problems.

Unfortunately, there is a much bigger experiment going on—an uncontrolled one which we are all a part of. We're being fed GM foods daily, without knowing the impact of these foods on our health, our behavior, or our children. Thousands of schools around the world, particularly in Europe, have decided not to let their kids be used as guinea pigs. They have banned GM foods.

The impact of changes in the composition of GM foods is only one of several reasons why these foods may be dangerous. Other reasons may be far worse (see www.seedsofdeception.com). With the epidemic of obesity and diabetes and with the results in Appleton, parents and schools are waking up to the critical role that diet plays. When making changes in what kids eat, removing GM foods should be a priority.

A videotape on changing school meals, including footage from Appleton, will be available in the fall, 2004 at www.seedsofdeception.com. The website also describes how to avoid eating GM foods.

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Testimony of
Kate MacKenzie, Senior Policy Analyst
FoodChange (formerly Community Food Resource Center)

Task Force on Food, Farm and Nutrition Policy:
New York State Food and Nutrition Policy Hearing
Standing Committee on Agriculture
Standing Committee on Health
Standing Committee on Social Services

Monday, May 16, 2005

Coordinated, comprehensive State food and nutrition policies which could address problems, such as limited food options, poor nutrition, and loss of farms

Good Morning, Mr. Chairperson and Members of the Committee. My name is Kate MacKenzie, and I am the Senior Policy Analyst, within the Department of Food and Nutrition Services, at FoodChange (formerly Community Food Resource Center). FoodChange is a twenty-five year old non-profit organization that improves lives through nutrition, education, and financial empowerment.

Thank you for holding this hearing to provide insight into the need for a coordinated, comprehensive plan that will address State food and nutrition policies as well as request recommendations for the plan's structure and implementation.

FoodChange fully supports the development a State Food Policy Plan that is backed by legislation like Assembly Bill A 2651 and overseen by a Food Policy Council. Increasing rates of food insecurity and poor nutrition coupled with decreasing local farm profits present a significant threat to New York State's current food system. In tackling these challenges, a cohesive Food Policy Plan has the potential to transform our food system into one that is sustainable with mutual benefits for both consumers and producers.

In addition to our support, we'd like to offer a vision of achieving community food security within New York State. In short, this would mean that all persons would have access to adequate income as well as quality food. No longer would people need to rely on so-called "emergency" food for their daily meals. Such a broad vision is not as idealistic as it first may appear. In fact, the legislation that the Task Force is introducing to the Assembly will become the foundation for articulating this vision through policy.

FoodChange endorses a Food Policy Plan that emphasizes providing consumers with access to affordable and nutritious food and producers with increased sales of farm products. Our support for the plan stems from our experience with the federal food and nutrition programs, as we work to provide food access and nutrition education to New Yorkers. Founded in 1980 to feed hungry families, FoodChange has expanded our services over time to address the underlying financial barriers that compel people to depend upon soup kitchens and food pantries. In further pursuit of our mission, we aim to make wholesome eating a daily reality for all New Yorkers through the procurement of regional foods and strengthening of the New York food system.

Food Insecurity

The incidence of hunger and food insecurity is growing statewide, evidenced by the growing demand at soup kitchens and food pantries. However, the emergency food system alone neither can nor should be expected to shoulder this responsibility. Increased participation in the federal food and nutrition programs could significantly alter the situation. In light of this, FoodChange first recommends that the Food Policy Plan focus on statewide initiatives to improve access to the various programs and particularly the cornerstone Food Stamp Program (FSP). In February 2005, over 1.75 million New Yorkers participated in this nutrition and economic support program, receiving a combined total of \$179,572,879 in food stamp dollars. Since every five dollars spent in food stamps generate nine dollars in related economic activity, NYS residents' participation in the program presently contributes over \$330 million to the State's economy each month. Yet roughly thirty-five percent (35%) of New Yorkers who are categorically eligible for the program are not enrolled. Not only are these individuals missing the opportunity to improve their nutritional health as well as their financial situation, but also the State is missing millions in much-needed federal funds.

Second, FoodChange recommends the development of strategies to augment New Yorkers' enrollment in the FSP, specifically in modernizing NYS' delivery of the FSP. For example, a bill, Int. No. 0594, was recently introduced to the New York City Council that, if passed, will require the local FSP administration, the Human Resources Administration (HRA), to develop an on-line food stamp application. This measure will dramatically improve the enrollment process both for applicants, who will no longer have to visit a food stamp center to begin the process of applying, and for HRA's caseworkers, who will see a drop in the level of paperwork they must complete. Modernizations such as this will facilitate program enrollment and benefit redemption, thereby decreasing hunger and food insecurity while simultaneously boosting the State's food economy. In addition to supporting the efforts currently being undertaken in NYC, the Food Policy Plan must delineate ways to make similar improvements to FSP delivery across the State.

Third, FoodChange recommends legislation to ensure that emergency food providers (EFPs) become more involved in promoting food stamps and other forms of nutrition assistance. As a model for such legislation, the State Assembly could look to another bill, Int. No. 593, introduced to the New York City Council that proposes mandatory "distribution of applications for the Food Stamp Program to all city-funded emergency feeding programs." Linking the emergency food system with government food assistance, like food stamps, is a viable and necessary way to diminish the prevalence of hunger and food insecurity in New York State. FoodChange's first-hand knowledge in this area speaks to the necessity of food stamp outreach in kitchens and pantries, where people are already seeking food assistance.

Fourth, supplying the emergency food system with high quality food should be prioritized in the State Food Policy Plan. Even if food stamp participation increases, kitchens and pantries will continue to be an important food source for some individuals. FoodChange has experience with procuring, serving, and distributing regional produce through our Community Kitchen. We currently work with seven farmers and have developed a model for other institutions to replicate. The Plan could use this model and create others to facilitate delivery of farm products to kitchens and pantries.

Another means of increasing New Yorker's access to regional food is through the school system. NYC is the largest school district in the country, serving 1.1 million children, of which seventy-four percent (74%) are low-income. These students can consume as much as two-thirds of their daily calories from school meals. Further, forty-seven percent (47%) of elementary school students are not at a healthy weight. Twenty-four percent (24%) are obese, and nineteen percent (19%) are overweight.

Nutrition in School

FoodChange recommends several strategies to improve the nutrition environment in schools. These recommendations are based on experience we have had with the school meals' system. Despite the fact that our work is grounded in research, has buy-in from multiple parties, and is well-funded, several barriers prevent our School Food Plus Initiative (SFP) from realizing its full potential.

First, schools can play a vital role in providing children with a foundation of knowledge and skills that will promote their health and nutritional wellbeing as they grow into adulthood. Although nutrition education is currently mandated in schools, the time requirement is minimal and rarely achieved due to competing academic requirements. As both intuition and research suggest, children's ability to learn is impaired if they are hungry or malnourished. Furthermore, children are excited when given the opportunity to explore and cook with food, and research shows that the more children interact with healthful foods, the more likely they are to consume them. Food, being a common denominator for all of us, can easily be integrated into science and literacy as well as other subjects. In our experience, that most children are completely unaware of where their food comes from, let alone how what they eat affects their minds and bodies. In order to develop healthy and academically successful children we must provide them with quality nutrition education. **Educational standards must be expanded to provide children with a continual opportunity to develop food, nutrition and agricultural literacy.** A comprehensive, coordinated Food Policy plan could support this.

Second, school nutrition food standards themselves should be examined. As part of SFP, the city's Department of Education's Office of School Food (OSF) has raised the bar on nutrition standards. While all schools are required to meet USDA standards for foods served as part of the school meal program, **NYS should take the lead in exceeding these standards.** Given the health statistics previously mentioned, the Food Policy Council can support such work, not only in the development of enhanced food standards but also in the translation of those standards into buying guidelines and protocols, so that schools know which foods to procure and from where.

Third, the current federal legislation requiring school districts to create and implement Local School Wellness Policies has the potential to positively influence child nutrition. The coordinated efforts of State agencies can **ensure that this legislation is meaningful and the resulting policies are known, rather than just well-intentioned policy that is not actualized.** Because the legislation itself calls for a coordinated approach to plan and implement the policies at the local level, a similar approach should be taken at the state level to give local educational authorities support and to disseminate best practice models within the State.

A number of these strategies affect not only individual nutrition but also impact the larger food system. For example, shortly after Governor Pataki signed the New York State

Farm-to-School Bill in February 2002, the New York City Department of Education decided to solely source New York State apples, resulting in increased use of fresh and frozen vegetables in school meals. This city-wide initiative promotes good nutrition and healthy children, while also providing a significant new market for apple and vegetable growers in New York State. New York City school menus now include fresh New York fruits and vegetables everyday. The City participates in the project with the United States Department of Agriculture and the United States Department of Defense, which brought \$3.2 million of fresh fruits and vegetables into the school meal program in both 2003 and 2004.

A comprehensive Food Policy Plan would help support the development of needed food system infrastructure, including NYS food processors, to meet the increasing demand for NYS agricultural products in institutions, such as NYC's OSF.

Conclusion

These examples emphasize creating direct links between consumers and producers and bringing them both nutritional and economic support. Many people in this room are part of comprehensive, coordinated groups, such as NYCNEN, the New York City Food Systems Network, and Growing Home Partnership. These groups are proof not only that such approaches are crucial but also that they work. All of these groups are severely limited because they function on little, if any, funding. But nonetheless, such groups come together to sustain and engage in making necessary change. There are more than twenty groups and individuals providing you with recommendations for a Food Policy Plan for New York State. Even if one of these recommendations is fully adopted and achieved, the health, agricultural, and economic implications will be tremendously positive. We believe that the plan stands to transfigure the State's entire food system – and to the benefit of *all* New Yorkers. FoodChange, thus, fully supports the establishment of a Food Policy Plan, as well as the enactment of Bill A.2561 and the creation of a Food Policy Council. We appreciate your leadership to take on this ambitious but much-needed work. We look forward to working with you.

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Testimony of
Fern Gale Estrow, MS RD, CDN

on behalf of the

New York City Nutrition Education Network
NYCNEN

to the

New York State Assembly Task Force
on Food, Farm and Nutrition Policy
Standing Committees
on Agriculture, Health and Social Services

on

New York State Food and Nutrition Policy
Monday, May 16 2003

Good Morning. I want to thank Chairman Ortiz and Committee Chairs Magee, Gotfried and Glick for seeing the value of the former New York State Council on Food and Nutrition Policy and the having the foresight to convene these hearings. I am Fern Gale Estrow, a Registered Dietician who is here representing the New York City Nutrition Education Network (known as NYCEN). NYCEN seeks to improve the food and nutrition environment for a healthier New York City through:

- Creating a dynamic organizational environment that encourages members to actively participate, exchange ideas, contribute and network
- promoting food systems
- enhancing nutrition education practices that embrace cultural competency, empowerment and critical thinking
- providing a forum for professional development; and
- acknowledging policy impact on nutrition and health, recognizing the importance of research on nutrition practice

Founded in 1998, NYCEN is a collaborative network of approximately 75 organizations and individuals that are dedicated to food and nutrition issues in New York City. Members may be tax-supported, voluntary, or for-profit or not-for-profit. NYCEN includes health centers, emergency food providers, agriculture, advocacy groups, academic programs, government agencies, nutrition education programs and private consultants.

1. Does the State need a comprehensive, coordinated Food Policy plan?

As a founding and Steering and Envisioning Committee member, and Liaison to the Public Policy Working Group, I am very familiar with our groups work in this area. We have been seeking to create a similar forum for communication, project development and implementation since shortly after our experience of September 11th, 2001, when our food supply was threatened and the struggles of emergency food providers to address the needs of our city in an emergency, much less on an on-going basis were not sufficient. We subsequently responded to several requests for proposals to further explore the best mechanism to create such a council in New York City. We have enclosed our 2004 submission to the USDA Community Food Project Grants Program to provide insight to some of the information we have learned, and offer questions we believe require exploration as New York State approaches reinstating a food policy council.

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Is there a need for legislation to establish a comprehensive State Food Policy?

Based on our research, we believe programs that are legislated are destined to be the most successful, and believe an assessment is necessary of New York State's needs, so we are not confronted once again with the loss of such a valuable group as occurred in the 80's. With the efforts of the many parties that are participating in this process a great deal of the work is done. Additional citizen input at this point is critical.

A bi-partisan commitment from the State, that grounds the structure of on-going assessments, projects and evaluation, is needed so that the product is a comprehensive policy that benefits New York and all stakeholders. When a Council is appointed as a directive of a governor or commissioner, the change in administration may result in a potential loss of support for the Council. This creates an environment that wastes energy and time on trying to accommodate the philosophy of a different administration and not the people/state and their needs. This is counter productive and ultimately wastes taxpayer dollars when building the well-being of the State through improved health outcomes, expanded local agriculture and a strong regional economy should be the focus.

Given the successful models of food policy councils in such cities as Hartford , and Portland in the US, and Toronto in Canada, we encourage participation of all stakeholders in the greater food system, including government entities working side by side to address the food needs of all city residents in a sustainable fashion for the benefit of our region. Priority should be given to projects that impact food needs that relate to food access, quality and chronic disease prevention among the city's most vulnerable populations.

What issues and goals would need to be addressed by such a plan?

An advisory body involving every sector of the food system is needed to provide ongoing advice and input to government on food-related issues, including:

- a) Methods for building regional demand for locally produced foods and food projects;
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2. Is there a need for a State Food Policy Council?

We support the creation of a state food policy council. We need to create an environment in our state which encourages communication, and actions that support the health of the citizens, land and economy. This will only happen through membership from diverse parties of the State. The objective is that member agendas be set aside and the interest of food for all is the common denominator.

How should such a Council be organized? Does it need to be part of State government? If yes, how should it be established, who should be members?

Its existence should be through bi-partisan legislation and as part of the State government. It should contain representation from all sectors of the food system at least in an advisory capacity (please see the Stakeholder Considerations as offered through a Survey done by Drake University and Figure 2: Building Synergies of our 2004 Community Food Projects Application). When councils are too heavily represented in one area they become dysfunctional as noted by Ken Dahlberg in his analysis of the Philadelphia Food Policy Council. The primary Council members should be content experts (e.g. agriculture, nutrition, transportation, health, education, social services, children and elderly) identified through primary State departments with input from their representative stakeholders. Documents are available from a variety of sources but what will work for New York State may require modification therefore some assessment may be needed to match our operation. The previous council structure appears to have been productive in establishing need, and many of their recommendations have been addressed over time, and this may be in part because the dialogue began through the council, but it failed to have longevity. The whys of that need explanation and resolution. Council structure that offers pathways to implement projects is also a consideration.

We are also aware that Commissioners have little time to devote to on-going meetings and recommend when determining government involvement, that on the ground management continue to participate in inter-departmental communication and working with the public, as took place in the original Council.

What powers should it have?

We would like to see it have the ability to impact implementation and regulation. If it is only advisory, like the Institute of Medicine, change can easily be stifled. Having the ability to foster change through an interpretation component of legislation (e.g. USDA having a regulatory implementation component), would offer a much greater opportunity for impact.

Is there a need for local or regional policy councils?

There is a need for local/regional policy councils. As every state is different in its structure and needs, so are our localities and regions. They will be best served if they can examine and respond to the needs of their own food system.

3. What changes are needed in existing food, nutrition, and agricultural policies and programs that can benefit both consumers and producers?

Please see our 2004 Community Food Projects Grant Application. We believe items identified for New York City applicable to the State.

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We support the many projects put forward by our colleagues, and specifically speak to several in our 2004 Community Food Projects Grant Application. We recognize that the Taskforce sees the value of The Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs (FMNP), but also believe it can be improved in delivery, offering increased accessibility, affordability and improved nutrition.

- Support for Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) at farmers markets is needed. Markets that support wireless technology can bring in more people, thereby enhancing further food accessibility, affordability and improved nutrition, and expanding consumption and sales of local farm products. Wireless equipment has to be a standard option under Office of Temporary Disability Assistance (OTDA) as it is in California under the EBT contract, where it includes a subcontract for providing equipment. The state needs to provide matching funds for equipment and wireless service, just as they do for wired equipment.

- Support for program or established entity to offer food demonstrations across all 62 counties. Due to a recent ruling by the Food and Nutrition Service of USDA, through the Eat Smart New York Program of Extension is no longer able to do demos at farmers markets, because they are not programs that target food stamp recipients **exclusively**. This is a policy that is impacting all Food Stamp Nutrition Education Programs (FNSEP) of which the Eat Smart New York program is one and the new proposed legislation A.2651 could support programs that include food demonstrations at markets, critical to social marketing messages around the new Food Guidance System; teach immigrant populations about how to use foods they may not be familiar with; and for all, provide exposure to new foods and to prepare familiar foods in healthy ways.
- Continued funding for WIC and Senior FMNP needs to be advocated for at the state at the Federal level and to continue to be supported through funding and resources at the state level. Health, agriculture and the economy are impacted by the 5.5 million of redemption dollars (this includes approximately 900 fruit and veg farmers, ½ million participants and 320 markets)

5. Please comment on A.2651, which would create a Community Food Security Program (the Community Food Security, Empowerment and Economic Development Program --- SEED bill). This bill would help meet the food needs of low-income people and promote comprehensive responses to local food, farm and nutrition issues; provide grants for up to fifty percent of the cost of projects that would be available to non-profit organizations and local government with limited partnership with for profit enterprises. Ultimately, the purpose of this bill is to develop demonstration projects to increase the self-sufficiency of low-income communities in providing for their food needs.

There is a need to have funding streams to implement both incubator and seed funds throughout the foods system, as demonstrated above. These funds should be accessible by non-profit organizations and local governments as some of their projects can be exclusive to their area of work (i.e. Farm to School is a government-based entity). We also believe it important to set aside some funds specifically directed to reducing poverty, hunger and increased utilization of federally funded nutrition assistance programs. Offering some funds that would not have to meet the 100% matching grant has value for groups with strong ideas but limited building capacity. We support the New York City Coalition Against Hunger proposal, offering reduced matching requirements in the early years of a grant.

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Testimony of
Fern Gale Estrow, MS RD, CDN

on behalf of the

New York City Nutrition Education Network
NYCNEN

to the

New York State Assembly Task Force
on Food, Farm and Nutrition Policy
Standing Committees
on Agriculture, Health and Social Services

on

New York State Food and Nutrition Policy
Monday, May 16 2005

Good Morning. I want to thank Chairman Ortiz and Committee Chairs Magee, Gotfried and Glick for seeing the value of the former New York State Council on Food and Nutrition Policy and the having the foresight to convene these hearings . I am Fern Gale Estrow, a registered dietician who is here representing the New York City Nutrition Education Network (known as NYCEN). NYCEN seeks to improve the food and nutrition environment for a healthier New York City through:

- Creating a dynamic organizational environment that encourages members to actively participate, exchange ideas, contribute and network
- promoting food systems
- enhancing nutrition education practices that embrace cultural competency, empowerment and critical thinking
- providing a forum for professional development; and
- acknowledging policy impact on nutrition and health, recognizing the importance of research on nutrition practice

Founded in 1998, NYCEN is a collaborative network of approximately 75 organizations and individuals that are dedicated to food and nutrition issues in New York City. Members may be tax-supported, voluntary, or for-profit or not-for-profit. NYCEN includes health centers, emergency food providers, agriculture, advocacy groups, academic programs, government agencies, nutrition education programs and private consultants.

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The attached proposal was submitted in response to the 2004 USDA CSREES, Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program by the New York City Nutrition Education Network (NYCNEN). The project proposed a Council on Food and Nutrition Policy for the City of New York.

While the proposal did not receive funding, the Task Force may find its content useful with respect to today's Food and Nutrition Policy Hearing.

Contact Information:

Fern Gale Estrow: fge2@earthlink.net
Kate MacKenzie kmackenzie@foodchange.org

**Council on Food and Nutrition Policy for the City of New York
Community Food Projects Grant, Request for Funding (2004-2006)**

(1) Community to be Served and the Needs to be Addressed

The Need. New York City is home to more than 8 million people, a quarter of whom have family incomes under 125 percent of the federal poverty level. These families include 36 percent of all New York City's children and 25 percent of its elderly (65+)¹. Over half of these low-income residents rely on the city's network of more than 1,000 emergency food providers for access to nutritious food with working poor families becoming the fastest growing population seeking emergency food.² for access to nutritious food with working poor families becoming the fastest growing population seeking emergency food. Their insufficient incomes are stretched to the limits, and they live in neighborhoods where healthful choices of affordable food are sometimes rare.

To meet this need, New York City has many resources—farmer's markets, wholesale markets, a network of emergency food providers and various neighborhood public health initiatives. Another resource critical to food security in New York City, though currently threatened by development and challenged by policy, is a thriving local agricultural base in the region and within the city itself. However, New York City does not have a governmental entity to coordinate the functioning of its resources to maximize food security and nutrition.

To fill this gap, we propose to create a **Council on Food and Nutrition Policy for New York City (CFNP)**. Following the example of successful food policy councils that have been established throughout the United States and Canada, a CFNP would bring together the diversity of organizations, agencies, projects and programs that address food and nutrition issues in the city. Structured within city government, the CFNP would build on existing resources to develop creative and effective long-term strategies for addressing the food and nutrition needs of New York City's population.

The City. Comprised of five boroughs—Brooklyn, the Bronx, Manhattan, Queens and Staten Island—New York City is a diverse and culturally rich city. However, neither resources nor opportunities are equitably distributed. In 2002, the median household income in New York City was \$39,000 per year. However, some neighborhoods, such as Morrisania/Belmont and Mott Haven/Hunts Point (both in the Bronx) had median household incomes at or below \$15,000 per year. Others neighborhoods, such as Manhattan's Upper East Side, had median household incomes more than 500 percent higher per year. This inequitable income distribution creates inequitable access to food, with some communities having extremely limited food choices.

A snapshot of New York City's challenged food and nutrition landscape:

- Emergency food providers have reported increasing requests for food assistance. In 2003 New York City's soup kitchens and food pantries fed 26 percent more people than in 2002, an increase of 46 percent from 2000. Of those served, 22 percent were in families with at least one working adult suggesting that wages are not keeping up with household expenses³.

¹ *US Census, 2000*

² The Food Bank for New York City: *Who Is Hungry?*; (www.foodbanknyc.org/go/nyc's-hungry/index.htm) accessed 05 February 2004.

³ New York Coalition Against Hunger: *Hunger Among Hidden Victims: 9/11 and Recession Victims Face Increasing Need for Charitable Food, 2002 Annual Survey of Food Pantries and Soup Kitchens*; November 2002.

- More than 1.6 million residents are eligible for Food Stamps⁴. However, recent figures from the city's Human Resources Administration (the agency responsible for administering the Food Stamp Program) indicate that more than 500,000 of those eligible are not participating in the program⁵.
- Although 72 percent of New York City's public schoolchildren are eligible for free and reduced-price meals, less than 67 percent of all students participate in the National School Lunch Program and less than 25 percent consume a nutritious school breakfast at the start of their day.⁶
- More than half of the city's adult population (or 2.8 million people) are overweight or obese. In some neighborhoods, up to 25 percent of the adult population is considered obese. Often, neighborhoods with the highest poverty levels are also home to high proportions of overweight or obese adults (see Figure 1).⁷
- Of all public school students in grades K-5, 43 percent are overweight or at risk of becoming overweight.⁸
- Diabetes has been diagnosed in 8% of New Yorkers: Hispanic (12%) and African-American (11%) adults are more likely to have diabetes than whites (5%) and Asians (7%).⁹
- There are currently no statistics on how many hours, if any, New York City's public schoolchildren are receiving in mandated nutrition education.

City Resources. New York City is world-renowned for its abundant and diverse food landscape. With its diversity of residents, city streets teem with exotic food aromas, produce from vendors, bodegas, and specialty retailers and diverse approaches to a delicious meal, as exhibited by a prodigious restaurant industry. Community gardens that grow food play a role in empowering individuals and neighborhoods to be more self-sufficient and less dependent upon organizations for access to food and hunger relief. When it comes to sources of nutritious fresh food, New York City is home to both one of the best-known direct producer-to-consumer market networks in the country, the Council on the Environment's Greenmarket Project, and the largest wholesale market in the nation, Hunt's Point. Established in 1976, the Greenmarket program has grown from a one-day-a-week operation in Union Square to a network of 42 markets in 31 locations throughout the five boroughs with 20 markets open year round. Other farm-to-city programs include independent farmers' markets and numerous Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) projects that have been established by local communities with the assistance of Just Food. Hunt's Point, home of the Cooperative Market (meat), the Produce Market, and the soon-to-be relocated Fish Market, is the largest food distribution center in the world. The Produce Market alone sells more than 2.7 billion pounds of merchandise a year and has annual revenue of more than \$1.5 billion.

⁴ Children's Defense Fund-NY: *Giving New York's Children a Fair Start in Life: SUPPORTS FOR WORKING FAMILIES*; March 2003.

⁵ NYC Human Resources Administration: *FACT SHEET: February 2004* (<http://www.nyc.gov/html/hra/pdf/facts0204.pdf>) accessed 29 March 2004.

⁶ NYC Department of Education, *Monthly Consolidated Reports*; December 2003.

⁷ New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH): "One in 6 New York City Adults is Obese," Vital Signs: A Report from the New York City Community Health Survey, Volume 2, Number 7; July 2003.

⁸ NYC DOHMH: "Obesity Begins Early: Findings Among Elementary School Students in New York City," Vital Signs: A Report from the New York City Community Health Survey, Volume 2, Number 7; July 2003.

⁹ NYC DOHMH: "Diabetes is Epidemic," Vital Signs: A Report from the New York City Community Health Survey, Volume 2, Number 1; January 2003.

Overtaxed Resources. Unfortunately, not all residents have the necessary means or proximity to purchase nutritious and wholesome foods either through a traditional retail store or a farmers' market. Instead, one in five New Yorkers¹⁰ must rely on food provided through another Hunt's Point facility—the Food Bank for New York City.

Amidst this imbalance between food resources and residents' ability to access and procure quality food, a growing awareness exists within city government and among community activists regarding the direct impact food and nutrition has on our local economy, public health and education systems, and residents' well-being. The following initiatives illustrate this:

- *Wholesale Farmers' Market Initiative:* The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets is currently investigating the feasibility of a wholesale farmers' market in the Bronx. Such a market could foster small business incentives for local food processing and production, increase jobs and expand the economy. Through this, the goal of creating a dependable outlet for farmers where they can supply the owners of small businesses, such as bodegas and restaurants, with fresh, affordable, regionally grown food, could be achieved. This initiative requires multiple city agency participation and coordination to gather the support needed to move past the research and development phase.
- *Take Care New York:* As part of its public awareness campaign to decrease mortality due to preventable illnesses, the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) recently launched a ten-point public health initiative. The initiative consists of specific action steps individuals can take to better their health, including increasing physical activity levels, eating a healthy diet, and maintaining a healthy weight. Yet, this initiative lacks any direct strategy for reversing the alarming growth of obesity in neighborhoods where access to fresh and nutritious foods is extremely limited.
- *Universal Free Breakfast:* In September 2003, recognizing the need for students to "start their day right," Mayor Bloomberg announced that school breakfast would be available to all New York City public school children, regardless of family income. A marketing initiative, in combination with the testing of alternative service delivery models, resulted in an increased number of breakfasts served. Between September and December 2003, the number of students participating in the School Breakfast Program increased by more than 17,000 each day.¹¹ This increased participation also represents more than \$4 million in federal and state food dollars for New York City.¹²

The Proposed Project. These initiatives indicate a growing climate for coordinated and decisive action to resolve imbalances related to food and nutrition. However, the city has limited capacity. Therefore, the inability to create dialogue among multiple sectors of the food system and initiate collaborative interventions leaves an intolerable void. The development of a permanent **Council on Food and Nutrition Policy for the City of New York (CFNP)** would ensure that city agencies, community organizations, farmers, educators, retailers, and individuals work together to promote a food system that benefits all New Yorkers. *Figure 2, NYC Food and Nutrition Council: Building Synergies* diagrams these partnerships, city agencies, activities, recipients, and economic benefits of a Council on Food and Nutrition

¹⁰ The Food Bank for New York City: *Who is Hungry?*; (www.foodbanknyc.org/go/nyc's-hungry/index.htm) accessed February 5, 2004.

¹¹ NYC Department of Education: *Monthly Consolidated Reports*; December 2003.

¹² Calculations based on 180 school days at current reimbursement rates for "Severe Need" Breakfast in New York: \$1.43 Federal + \$0.11 New York State.

Policy. In addition to creating a framework for more efficient policy-making that encompasses many stakeholders and their interests, Figure 2 also shows how the economic development resulting from such policies would yield significant economic benefits city-wide

(2) The Organizations Involved in the Project

Community Food Resource Center (CFRC) serves as the project grantee and will be responsible for directing the project, as well as meeting all funding requirements. The project will continue to be a collaboration between CFRC and the New York City Nutrition Education Network (NYCNEN). CFRC staff members will be Co-Project Directors, and a consultant will be hired to perform project activities.

Community Food Resource Center (CFRC). CFRC was founded in 1980 and has been dedicated to promoting access to nutritious food and adequate income for all New Yorkers. CFRC is recognized as one of the city's leading advocates for improved government policies and programs. In addition, CFRC has become one of the city's foremost direct service providers in the areas of emergency food assistance, food stamp access, nutrition services and income policy.

CFRC is committed to improving community food security for all of New York City's residents by addressing hunger, including its root causes. Since its inception, CFRC has been a strong and vocal advocate for improving the operations of the federal food programs and, through innovative strategies, has successfully expanded participation in School Breakfast, Summer Meals, the Child and Adult Care Food Program as well as other public benefits. In addition, in 2003, CFRC successfully—

- completed nearly 10,000 *pro bono* tax returns for low-wage workers resulting in more than \$18 million in tax refunds;
- persuaded the public school system to offer free breakfast to all schoolchildren; and
- pre-screened more than 13,000 residents to determine their potential eligibility for Food Stamps.

Founded with a \$6,000 grant for the School Breakfast Campaign, CFRC has grown into an organization of nearly 100 employees and an annual budget of more than \$9 million. CFRC relies on various funding sources and has successfully managed both federal and state grants for its programs, including a four-year grant from USDA that allowed CFRC to start the New York City Nutrition Education Network (NYCNEN, see below).

New York City Nutrition Education Network (NYCNEN). NYCNEN is a collaborative network of approximately 50 organizations and individuals from a variety of food and nutrition service settings in New York City, including:

Government	Emergency Food Providers
Health Care Facilities	Nutrition and Health Consultants
Community-based Organizations	Academic Institutions
Advocacy Groups	Educational Organizations
Non-profits	

Founded in 1998, NYCNEN operates independently through in-kind support from both individual members and organizational partners. NYCNEN holds bi-monthly meetings for information exchange among members and issue updates, hosts skill development sessions, engages members in specific activities in public policy and nutrition education, and manages a listserv to strengthen communications across member agencies. NYCNEN's Public Policy

Committee has been the driving force behind the effort to create a Council on Food and Nutrition Policy for the City of New York. During the past 24 months and through the generosity of hundreds of volunteer hours, the Policy Committee accomplished key objectives that have laid the foundation for this project. Thus far, the following NYCEN member organizations have committed to being active partners in the establishment of a CFNP: **City Harvest; Cornell University-Cooperative Extension; Just Food; New York City Coalition Against Hunger; World Hunger Year.**

A Growing Coalition. Representatives of different segments of the food system have demonstrated support for a CFNP, and have committed to the formation of a coalition that will be critical to its success. A sampling of membership is described below:

- **Added Value** promotes the sustainable development of Red Hook by creating opportunities for South Brooklyn youth to expand their knowledge base, develop new skills and positively engage with their community through the operation of a socially responsible urban farming enterprise.
- **Earth Pledge and Farm to Table Initiative's** mission is to educate consumers and food professionals to create demand for sustainable and local products, provide growers with information about innovative sustainable agriculture techniques and link these groups.
- **East New York Farms**, located in Brooklyn, has used farming as a tool for community revitalization while increasing health and food awareness. Working under the guidance of the East New York Local Development Corporation, they have started a farmers' market, created nutrition summits and established a youth program.
- **GRACE/Sustainable Table** works to educate consumers and create consumer demand for sustainable food through awareness campaigns, and promotional events and by offering viable solutions to factory-farming as a means of meat production.
- **Greenmarket** promotes regional agriculture and ensures a continuing supply of fresh, local produce for New Yorkers. Greenmarket is critical to preserving both New York City's food and water sheds; ensuring that local dollars are spent on local food; and providing low-income communities with quality produce that is often otherwise inaccessible.
- **The Hunter College Center on AIDS, Drugs and Community Health** works to bring together community, science, practice, scholarship, and policy to fight urban health threats and disparities. The Center will be actively involved in project evaluation.
- **Municipal Art Society (MAS)** is a private, non-profit membership organization whose mission is to promote a more livable city through advocacy on urban planning and design. In addition, MAS provides direct technical assistance to community-based organizations working to revitalize their neighborhoods. MAS will provide the project with the tools to bridge the gap between the city's food system and its current urban planning methodologies.
- **NY Food Museum's** mission is to get New Yorkers to think about the food they eat, including the City's food heritage. They have organized exhibitions on the National School Lunch Program and promoted the Lower East Side's heritage through its Annual Pickle Day.

(3) Project Goals and Purposes

The long-range goal of the Council on Food and Nutrition Policy for New York City project is to ensure a healthy functioning, food secure city. Funding through the Community Food Projects

Grants Program will allow the project to acquire both the staff and resources necessary to establish the Council as a permanent fixture within New York City government.

The project's goals are to:

1. Create an advisory body (the CFNP) involving every sector of the food system to provide ongoing advice and input to city government on food-related issues, including:
 - a) Methods for building regional demand for locally produced foods and food projects;
 - b) City food purchasing policies and practices;
 - c) Availability of healthy, affordable food to all residents;
 - d) Health disparities resulting from poor nutrition;
 - e) Capacity of local communities to promote and engage in healthy food practices;
 - f) Local land use policies and rules related to food production and distribution;
 - g) City's vulnerability to food supply shortages due to severe weather, transport disruptions or sabotage;
2. Develop a set of governing principles to guide future policy making within local government and community; and
3. Obtain a sanction for the CFNP through a city mandate (or other government equivalent) to provide legitimacy and long-term sustainability.

(4) Activities to Achieve our Goals

Laying the Groundwork. For more than 24 months, NYCEN's Public Policy Committee has researched and assessed the feasibility model protocols for a CFNP. The Policy Committee completed the following activities:

Research

- Assessed the issues and imbalances within the city's food system presenting a strong argument for a Council;
- Researched the establishment and functionality of existing food policy councils at the municipal, regional and state levels in the United States and Canada. This included many phone conversations and consultations with experts in the field, including Mark Winne (formerly of CT); Ken Dahlberg (MI); Wayne Roberts (Toronto); Christine Pardee (Iowa); Matt Emlin (Portland); and Jiff Martin (CT);
- Attended numerous conferences and workshops with agendas related to the food policy council concept, including: Iowa Food Policy Council; FRAC National Anti-Hunger Policy Conference; Community Food Security Coalition Conference; and East New York Farms' "Farm, Food & Healthy Families" summit.

Publications and Presentations

- Prepared the white paper entitled *Why New York Needs an Office of Food and Nutrition Policy* and distributed it to food and nutrition organizations and members of city government;
- Developed a PowerPoint presentation entitled *Nutrition in the City: NYC Food Policy Council Initiative*.

NYC Government Networking

- One-on-one meetings with the following government officials and their staff to present the concept of a CFNP for the City of New York:
 - Anthony Tassi, Health Policy Advisor to Deputy Mayor Dennis Walcott;
 - Terri Matthews, Council to Deputy Mayor for Operations Marc Shaw;
 - New York City Interagency Coordination Council on Youth & Health;
 - Policy development staff of City Council Speaker Gifford Miller;
 - Legislative staff of Councilmember Christine Quinn, Chair, Council Health Committee.

Coalition Building

- Workshop presentation at the Just Food conference "Food Justice and the Public Good: A New York City Summit on Farms and Food" in January 2004;
- Distribution of the PowerPoint presentation throughout the food and nutrition community and city government; and
- Stakeholder meeting on council concept resulting in nine new coalition members.

Proposed Project Blueprint: Key Strategies. After studying other successful models a strategic plan to achieve the proposed goals was developed. *Figures 3a-3c: Project Goals* illustrate the strategies and objectives, activities and outcomes, that make up this plan. The activities reflect the experience of other successful food policy councils throughout the United States and Canada. Community outreach and public awareness to gain a broad-based support system and the development of clearly defined guiding principles are clearly essential to the CFNP's long-term sustainability. In order to successfully fulfill the project goals, a consultant will be hired to oversee the daily operations of the coalition, including convening monthly meetings; researching relevant policy issues; and coordinating events.

The project coalition will convene a Food and Nutrition Summit with the dual purposes of bringing together all food policy-related industries and raising public awareness about the city's food system and food policy-making environment (see Figure 3a:Goal 1). The Summit will include workshops on food and nutrition policy issues in New York City; discussions on the formulation of the CFNP model; breakout sessions to further refine priority issues identified through outreach efforts; and the creation of a series of food and nutrition policy recommendations.

Summit outcomes, combined with assessment activities and results from community outreach efforts, will result in the production of a *Summary Report of Findings on New York City's Food System*. The report will also detail proposed ways in which a CFNP will highlight some of the city's most pressing needs, allowing the Coalition to begin work in priority areas. The report will also become a critical tool in increasing public awareness about the city's food system and gaining legislative support for the CFNP's creation.

After a comparison of several food policy council models throughout North America, we have determined that the development of principles to guide future decision making is critical to ensuring that the CFNP is effective in its efforts. The size and complexity of New York City's food system and the broad scope of stakeholder interests, may generate conflicting interests and/or impasses that will need to be resolved. The development of New York City-specific guiding principles, similar to those of the Portland Food Policy Council, will provide a critical reference point for comparison against initiatives or strategies that may be in opposition to the agendas of individual organizations. Guiding principles will ensure that the CFNP stays on its charted course.

Projected Outcomes. Major outcomes undertaken within the 24-month grant cycle will include:

- Food and Nutrition Policy Summit;
- Summary Report of Findings on New York City's Food System;
- Governing Principles;
- Government Approval of CFNP.

A number of additional logistical and organizing activities will be undertaken to ensure that the Coalition is able to obtain necessary community and government support, while also developing the proper infrastructure, to create a fully-functioning Council on Food and Nutrition Policy for the City of New York.

(5) Timeline:

The following timeline demonstrates both the long-term and short-term activities necessary to meet the project goals. Further detail is provided in Figures 3a-c, which articulate strategy utilization as well as projected outcomes.

		24-Month Timeline																										
Months		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24			
Activities to Achieve Goals																												
		Convene Monthly Meetings of Stakeholders																										
		Inventory City Food and Policy-Making Environment																										
		Outreach to Stakeholders & Community																										
		Plan and Convene Food and Nutrition Policy Summit																										
								Assess Council Logistics/Finances to Council Structure - Governing Documents																				
													Subcommittees Begin Work on Priority Issues															

- A. **Encourage long-term planning activities and comprehensive multi-agency approaches.** Through its creation and implementation, the CFNP will reflect the interests and needs of the diverse group of stakeholders who influence and benefit from New York City's food system. A multi-stakeholder approach to finding solutions to supply and demand shortages around food within a given jurisdiction is embodied within the very concept of a food policy council. Our long-term vision for the CFNP is that it will establish innovative New York City-specific solutions to "create additional outlets for local agriculture production, create name-brand recognition and community and economic resources through local food production, distribution and consumption."¹³ In addition, we anticipate participating in an ongoing dialogue with other food policy councils, which will allow us to exchange information about our experiences.
- B. **Increase the food self-reliance of communities.** Project partners include organizations that have established community-based models of urban agriculture projects in neighborhoods throughout the city with limited food access. The CFNP will help groups like these to share best practices with similar organizations throughout the city and/or provide communities facing similar food and nutrition issues with models for increasing food self-reliance. In addition, ongoing stakeholder meetings will likely include discussions of the city's food landscape and necessary steps that the CFNP can recommend to increase food access through both mainstream and alternate market venues.
- C. **Promote comprehensive responses to local food, farm and nutrition issues.** The city's current policy structure depends on decision making from within both the Office of the Mayor, as well as various committees within the City Council. Unfortunately, these two sides of government often differ on strategies to address issues of concern. The CFNP would bring together relevant facts and figures from within both branches into its ongoing dialogue for the purpose of identifying current policies that could be more comprehensive, as well as those that are inadequate or poorly implemented, and developing possible solutions.
- D. **Develop innovative linkages between the public, for-profit, and nonprofit food sectors.** Within the strategies for promoting local and urban agriculture would be an economic development component including economic incentives for small businesses to produce value-added products and capitalize on the locally grown or produced cache within the city's retail market. A recent study by the New York Industrial Retention Network (NYIRN) on the city's food production sector revealed much economic health and potential for growth. Such strategies would require collaborations between the city's small business department, non-profits that train youth, and the established leaders in the NYC food and agriculture communities.

(7) Evaluation

The focus of the evaluation will be to document the creation and development of the coalition, as well as ensuring that the CFNP achieves its long-range goals of citywide food security and residents' improved nutritional status. This includes planning for a future evaluation in which the CFNP's cost-effectiveness and health-promotion benefits are documented. Such an evaluation is beyond the scope of the current grant; however, it will be critical for long term strategic planning.

Evaluation of the Process. The evaluation of the process will seek to understand how effectively the grant was used to build a community of stakeholders around food and nutrition

¹³ Drake University Agricultural Law Center, State & Local Food Policy Council Project: *First Quarter Progress Report*, December 2003.

policy in New York City. Measurement tools that will be utilized, as well as the information they will propose to collect include:

Brief Participant Questionnaires: Brief end-of-meeting surveys will be adapted from reliable and valid questionnaires produced by the Educational Testing Service. The questionnaire will include questions on the physical environment and organizational qualities of the meeting; the composition of the group present (e.g., any important gaps in representation or expertise); the extent to which the specific goals of the agenda were attained; and the value of distributed materials. Participants will also be asked to rate the value of the meeting to the long-range goals of the CFNP.

Expert Review: Each product produced through or by the CFNP will be submitted for comment to an expert on another food policy council and an expert within New York City government as appropriate.

Focus Groups: Pending successful outreach, members of underrepresented constituencies will be contacted for focus group or one-on-one interview. Audiotapes or notes will be analyzed for thematic content specific to strategies to increase participation and leverage points (e.g., potential value of CFNP to respondent) for participation.

Structure and Business Plan: At two points throughout the course of the grant, CFNP members and selected stakeholders will perform an organizational and business plan assessment. A modified version of a self-assessment tool developed for the Altman Foundation by McKinsey Consulting, which is now in the public domain, will be used. The tool looks at strengths and capacity in seven areas of functioning and acts as both a diagnostic tool and a documentation of movement.

Evaluation of the Outcomes. Planning during the funding period will include evaluation of the long-range goals—food security and improved nutritional status. It is foreseen that cost-effectiveness (i.e., economic) as well as health indicators will be assessed. Specific milestones will include proposed outcomes detailed in *Figures 3a-c: Outcomes*.

(8) Self-Sustainability

A Community Food Projects grant will help support the operational capacity of this project as it transition into its own entity. Project activities will seek to increase public awareness about the purpose and benefits of a CFNP, while simultaneously building community and government support. Inherent to the project's success is ensuring that the CFNP is truly representative, supported by a cross-section of non-profit organizations, for-profit companies, government agencies, community groups, and academic institutions, which will continue to provide the necessary personnel and operational support necessary for the CFNP to pursue additional activities beyond the grant period.

As the CFNP is envisioned as a creative think-tank of a multi-faceted food system which will collaborate on win-win solutions to community, food business, agricultural and city government needs and concerns, at the core of its efforts will be the sustainability of the city and region's food system. Economic benefits will result when more of the local food is processed, baked or otherwise produced within the city and sold to its residents, keeping the city's "food dollars" within the same jurisdiction. This 'sticky-money' theory is a financial benefit that can continue to grow as the CFNP broadens the policy climate for such commercial ventures to thrive.

Figure 3a

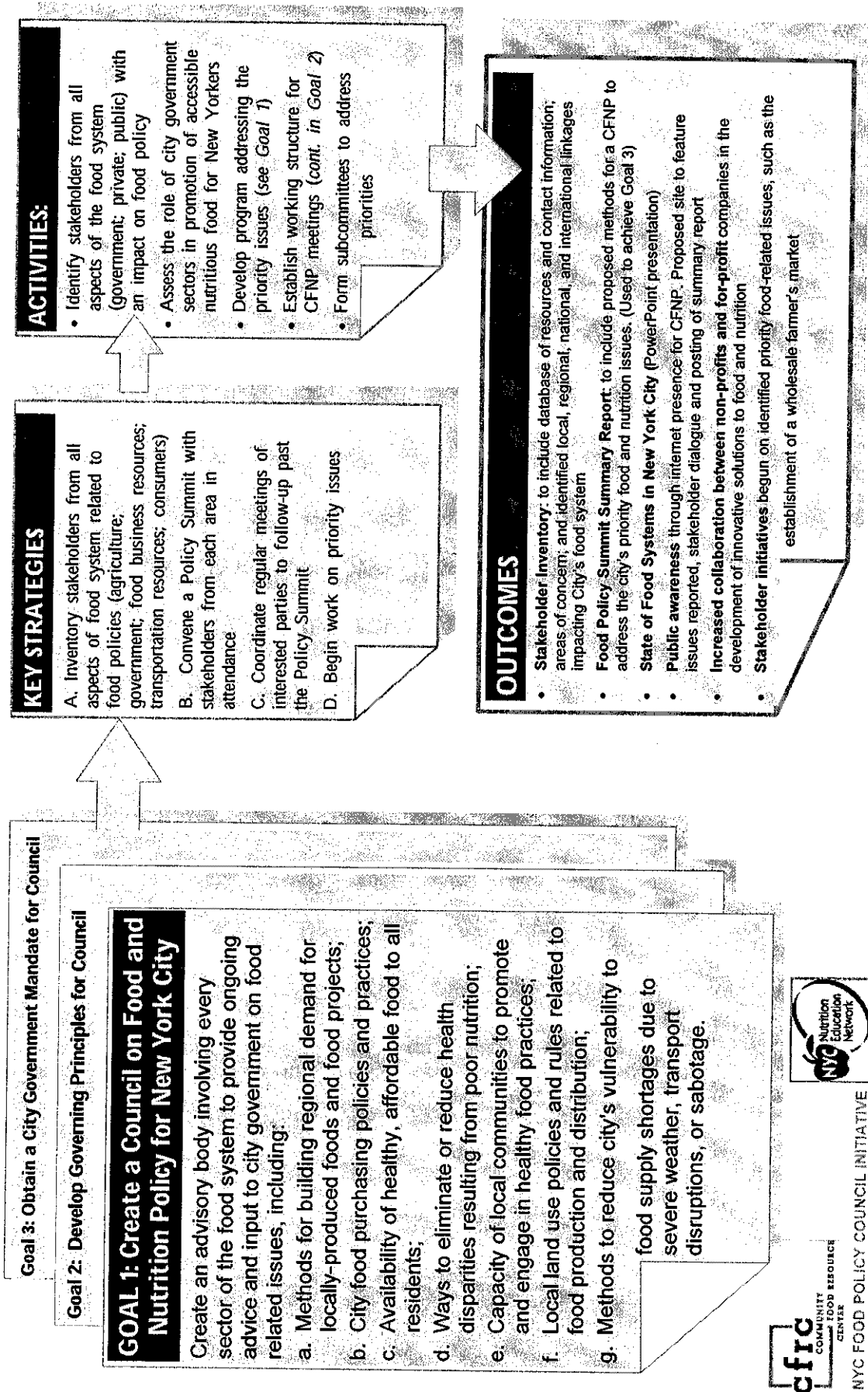


Figure 3b

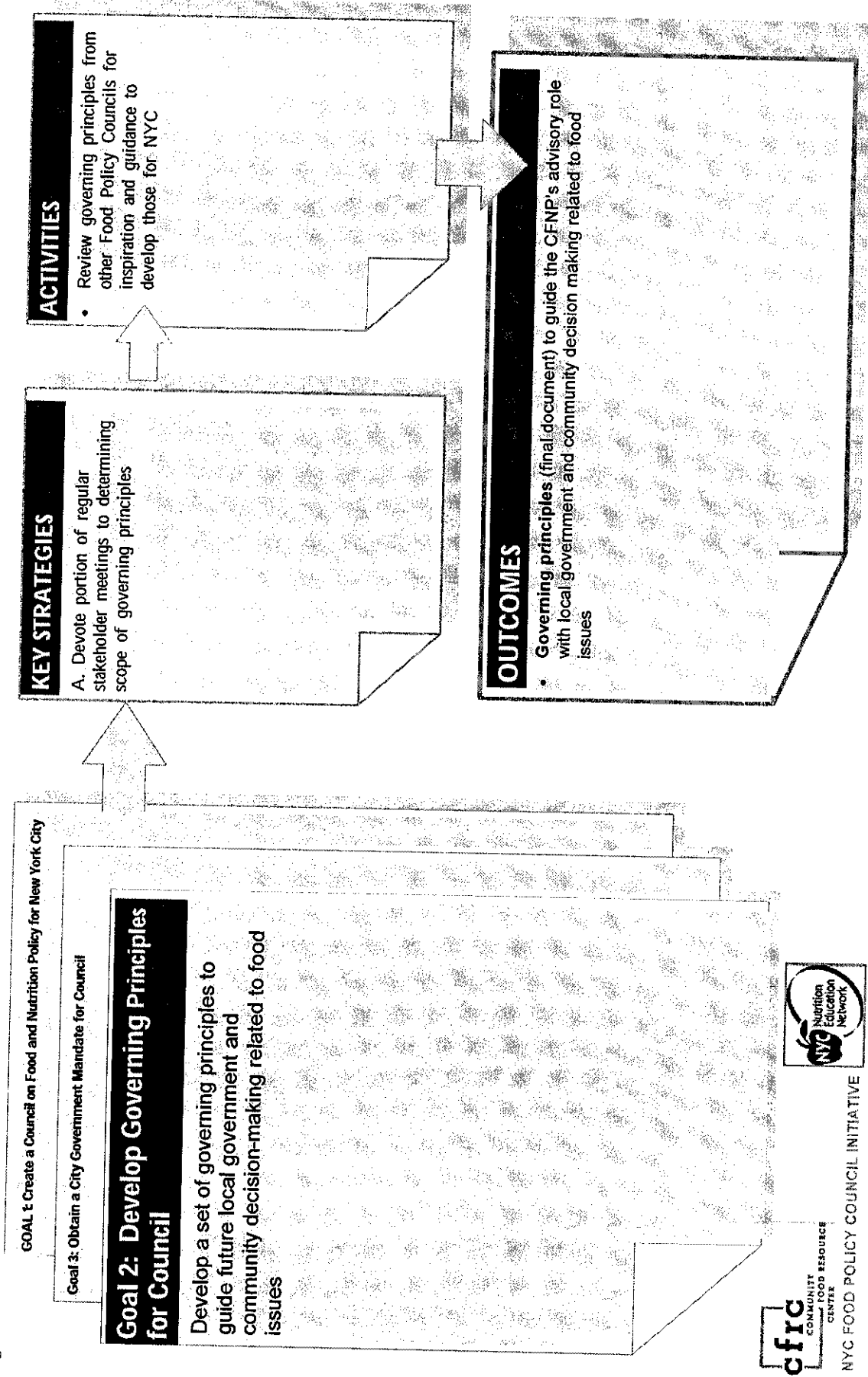
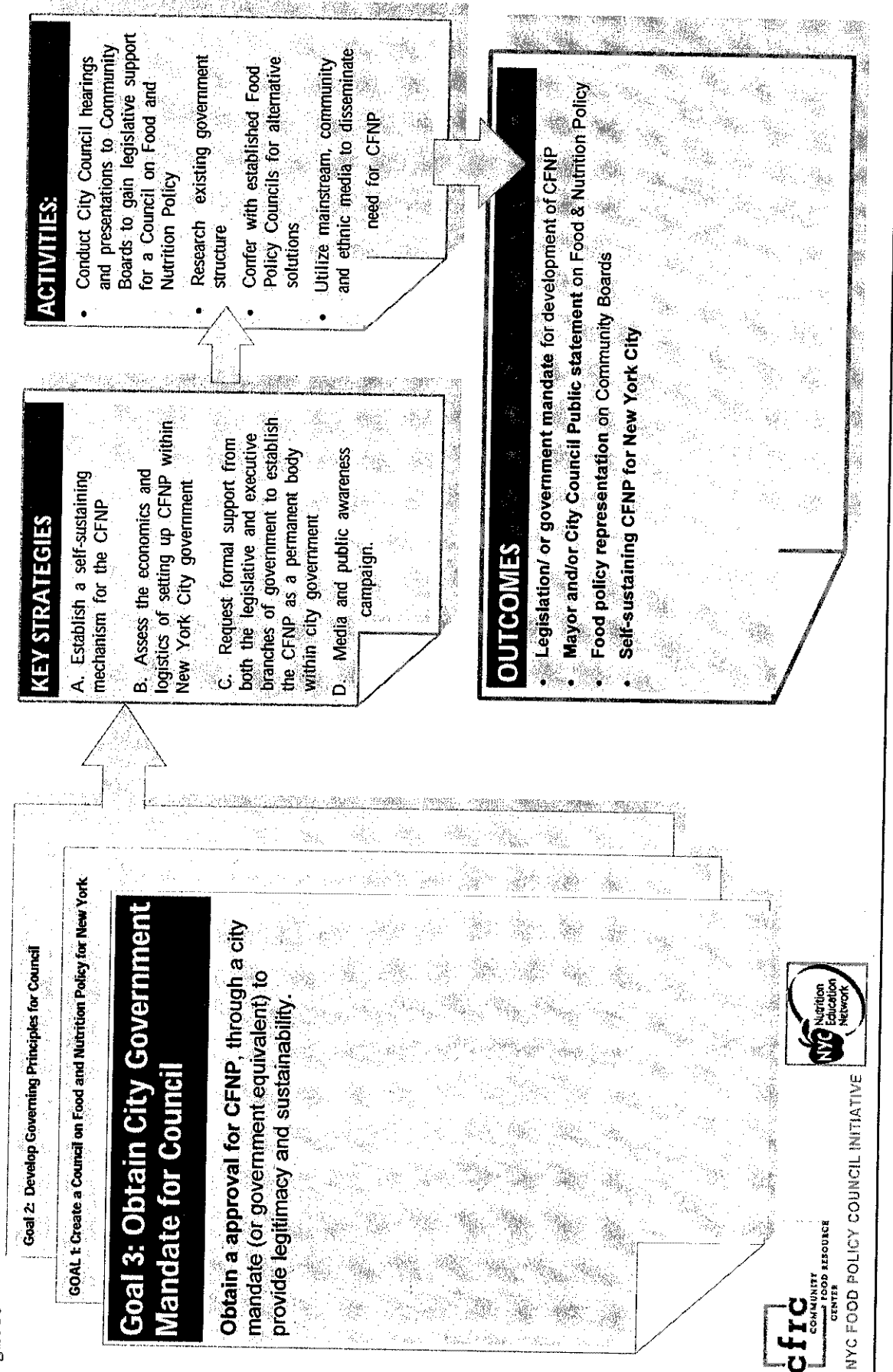


Figure 3c



#12

CSCS

COUNCIL OF SENIOR CENTERS AND SERVICES OF NEW YORK CITY, INC.



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Testimony for a State Food Policy Plan and Council

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Judy Zangwill

*In Memoriam



New York State Assembly Task Force on Food, Farm, and Nutrition Policy Chair, Assemblyman Felix W. Ortiz

Monday, May 16th 10:30 am
Roosevelt Hearing Room C
Legislative Office Building, Second Floor
Albany, NY

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the need for a State Food Policy Council. I am a registered dietitian currently consulting with the Council of Senior Centers and Services of New York City, Inc. (CSCS) as well as a number of other organizations serving older adults. My testimony addresses program funding and access to nutritious foods and nutrition education.

CSCS is the professional umbrella organization for the non-profit senior centers and service providers of NYC. CSCS acts as a social policy, advocacy, training, and technical assistance resource for members. Their 265 member agencies provide services to over 300,000 older New Yorkers including senior centers providing congregate and home delivered meals, transportation, case management, home care, housing and other community-based services. In NYC, most home delivered meals come out of senior centers.

Senior nutrition programs are funded by the federal Older Americans Act, the State's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), City dollars, participant contributions, and philanthropic support. Such services are targeted to those in greatest social and economic need and have proven to promote health and independence. Nutrition support for seniors also comes from USDA's Food Stamp Program, the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, and the Commodity Supplemental Nutrition Program. Medicaid waiver services may include home delivered meals and Medicare covers medical nutrition therapy for specific conditions. However, not all these programs are available in NYC. Organizations such as Citymeals, a private nonprofit, which raises funds for home delivered meals and the Food Bank are essential resources in NYC services providers.

To that end, a Food Policy Council is important at the state and local level because of the many players and funding streams that are or can connect with the program, to network and develop policies and systems that promote quality nutrition services. For example, the Senior Nutrition Assistance Program Workgroup, a project of the Nutrition Consortium of NYS and the Statewide Emergency Network for Social and Economic Security involves state agency representatives and service providers on issues concerning food stamp and farmers market access and participation. It is an opportunity to engage in dialog, particularly as we deal with changes in USDA's policies that may limit Food Stamp Program outreach and nutrition education to seniors. Likewise, small cuts in the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program may mean fewer individuals participate or smaller dollar amount vouchers are provided.

On behalf of CSCS, I joined the Public Policy Committee of the NYC Nutrition Education Network with a particular focus on increasing the visibility of senior nutrition programs. An increasing number of adults over 60 are now eligible to participate in the congregate meals program. We are also seeing more people living longer, a boom in the 85 plus segment, and many more are requiring home delivered meals. Their caregivers are also in need of assistance. In addition, the poverty rate of older adults in the City are twice that of the national average of 10%. This means many must depend on this program, food stamps, soup kitchens and food pantries as well as other economic assistance.

Despite the demographics, federal and state funding for services has remained fairly constant over the past years, although we truly appreciate this years \$1 million increase statewide in SNAP funds for home delivered meals. However, the increases are not enough to keep up with inflation and the increased cost of doing business, whether for food, gasoline to operate meal delivery vans, or replacing equipment. An integral piece of a state nutrition policy for the elderly must include adequate funding for SNAP to keep up with inflation, provide meals for seniors on waiting lists and improve the infrastructure. An updated elderly nutrition survey to document the need for home delivered meals would identify where the needs are statewide. A study of this nature was done by the State Office for the Aging and Department of Health in the 1990's. It reported that seven out of ten seniors eligible for home delivered meals were not receiving them. It would be valuable to see if the state has made progress since this report was done.

In response to the limited dollars available, CSCS has created the NYC Senior Nutrition Marketplace. About to be launched, the Marketplace, a group purchasing service, was created to aggregate the \$40 million purchasing power for senior meals to create costs savings. For its members, this will be a "supermarket" where they can find a wide assortment of choices in a single place. The Marketplace website will be operated by a large national healthcare group purchasing organization. Although its primary vendor is Sysco, local and regional purveyors are encouraged to participate and compete in this market. Linkages will also be established with the Food Bank of NYC and in the future, local and state agricultural producers may have direct links through this system.

For now, the connection between local agriculture and service providers is fragmented at best. Some programs prepare their own meals and purchase products through local and regional purveyors. Some receive food from community gardens or the Food Bank. Other programs use

caterers and/or purchase frozen meals. A Food Policy Council can address a greater connection to local markets.

Older Americans Act programs are required to follow the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and Recommended Dietary Allowances for planning menus. The *Guidelines*, also used for educating the general public, recommend consuming more fruit and vegetables, fiber and whole grain products, and foods with lower sodium and fat content. Products that comply with these recommendations are often not available wholesale at the price or portion or packaging size desired. A Food Policy Council could promote efforts to improve the availability of healthy foods, their packaging, labeling and affordability. This could impact not only senior nutrition, but all programs that receive products from food banks and commercial sources.

Nutrition education is important for people of all ages, including seniors and their caregivers. NYC Department for the Aging supported nutrition programs are mandated to offer nutrition education on diet and disease management and guidance in food selection, preparation, and safety bimonthly. However, without specific funding, the resources and personnel to provide these services are not readily available. A Food Policy Council could promote collaboration and funding to improve the delivery of nutrition education services.

Every effort should be made at the local, state, and national level to improve the health and nutritional status of the population. At the same time, we can promote the local economy by expanding market and food production opportunities, as well as improve the nutritional value of the food products available. Economies of scale are a reality and must be weighed in as to what is affordable and practical to purchase and beneficial to serve. The role of a state and local food policy council can bring all the players to the table to understand each others needs and desires and work towards a comprehensive system to improve the health and lively hood of all our citizens.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to testify today. Please call upon the Council of Senior Centers and Services should you need further information about the nutritional needs and services for seniors. You can contact Bobbie Sackman, Director of Public Policy, 212-398-6565, ext. 226 or bsackman@cscs-by.org



#13

Testimony of

Karen Schimke
President and CEO
Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy

Before the
Task Force on Food, Farm and Nutrition Policy
Standing Committee on Agriculture
Standing Committee on Health
Standing Committee on Social Services

May 16, 2005
Hearing Room C

Good afternoon, my name is Karen Schimke and I am President and CEO of the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy (SCAA). Thank you for the opportunity to present on the important issue of New York State's nutrition and food policies.

SCAA is a policy analysis and advocacy organization that seeks to promote the public interest by shaping policies to improve health, welfare and human services in New York State. Since 1872, SCAA has served as a voice for social and economic justice for children, the aged, the poor, the chronically ill, and the disabled in New York State.

This year SCAA organized our work specific to children under what we are now calling our Children's Policy Agenda. For many years, New York State led the way in protecting children and providing funding for their needs. Many states have been working systematically to improve children's lives and have now pulled ahead of New York. I raise this here because the state's nutrition and food policies have a direct bearing on the health and educational experiences of New York's children.

In 1969 the White House Conference on Food, Nutrition, and Health designated nutrition for young children and pregnant women as areas of high priority for our nation because of the severe consequences of hunger and malnutrition in these two groups. Thirty-five years later we find that nutritional deficiencies among preschool age children are still causing anemia, obesity, dental caries, heart disease and growth retardation. The rates of all these conditions are disproportionately high among poor children.

A large body of scientific research exists demonstrating that children who are undernourished suffer physical, cognitive, emotional and developmental impairments. These deficits directly impact their ability to learn in school, to explore the world around them and to create strong relationships. Undernourished children also suffer from recurring cycles of illness that impair their physical development, cause absenteeism from school and often lead to health problems later in life. As any teacher or pediatrician can tell you, sick and hungry children are never "school ready" – at any age.

In addition to our children's agenda, we are also concerned about the role of adequate nutrition in promoting the health and self-sufficiency of elderly New Yorkers. At a time when New York is looking for models that allow the elderly to stay in their homes and avoid expensive nursing home stays, it is vital that we support programs designed to help the elderly stay healthy.

As with children, there is a strong relationship between poverty and food insufficiency among the elderly. However, other factors common to the elderly, such as decreased mobility, inability to care for oneself and limitations with activities of daily living, mean that nutrition problems are not limited to the poor elderly. Therefore, outreach programs must reach all the elderly to ensure that they can remain healthy and live independently.

SCAA recognizes that there are good nutrition assistance programs in place for children and the elderly, and we have worked over the years to develop and promote some of these programs. However, food stamps, WIC, school meals, Meals on Wheels, farm

market programs and others are still not being fully utilized. The Nutrition Consortium has developed some specific measures to address the issues that have been identified as barriers to participation. As a member of that organization, we will work with them and the Legislature to achieve full utilization in these programs.

I want to mention another health issue that is integral to nutrition and food policy but is often overlooked. That is the relationship between good nutrition and good oral health.

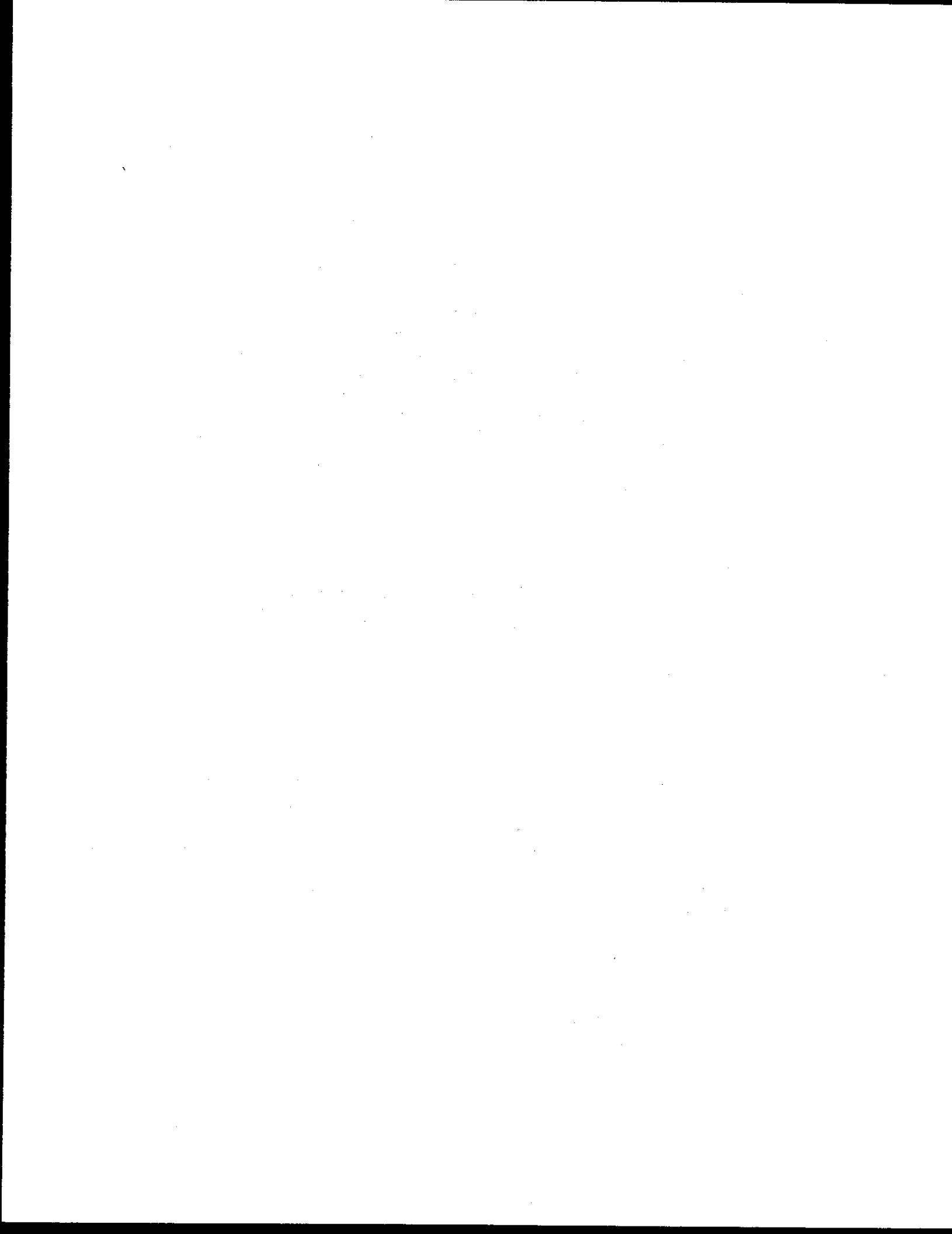
New York State has just completed the State Oral Health Plan. The Department of Health along with over 100 representatives from health, advocacy, academia, public health and government spent 18 months developing a comprehensive agenda for improving the oral health – and subsequently the overall health – of New Yorkers. Improving nutrition for vulnerable populations is critical to improving oral health. Like malnutrition, oral disease is now primarily a disease of poverty so the same populations who require additional outreach for nutrition are the same populations who require additional outreach for dental care. Children are directly impacted through baby-bottle tooth decay and an increase in caries caused by poor diets; the elderly are impacted because painful and missing teeth can restrict their intake of nutritious food. Studies have also connected oral disease with diabetes, premature birth and other health problems.

The Plan is in the final stages of review so we expect it to be released shortly. There are nutrition components among the recommendations, so we will be working with you as soon as it is available to see how we can develop initiatives linking nutrition and the prevention of oral disease.

At SCAA we are currently working to formulate our ideas about nutrition in relation to our work on the children's agenda, long-term care and oral health. I can share with you some of the areas we are interested in pursuing:

1. Policies to increase access to quality food in low-income and rural areas where options are few and transportation is a problem. We are particularly interested in finding ways to increase access to reasonably priced fresh fruits and vegetables in low-income neighborhoods.
2. Policies to increase the number of children participating in the school breakfast program and the summer food program.
3. Policies to increase the number of low-income households participating in the Food Stamp Program.
4. Policies that integrate nutrition education and nutrition programs into other aspects of health care so that the overall health of New Yorkers can continue to be improved.

Thank for the opportunity to raise some of the nutrition and food policy issues that we are considering as we move forward with our work to improve the lives of children and the elderly. We look forward to working with all the committees on these important issues.



#14

NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY

TASK FORCE ON FOOD, FARM AND NUTRITION POLICY
STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SERVICES

Public Hearing
New York State Food and Nutrition Policy
Monday, May 16th 10:00 am

Testimony of the Nutrition Consortium of NYS

My name is Edie Mesick. I am the Executive Director of the Nutrition Consortium of New York State ("the Consortium"), a statewide, private non-profit organization dedicated to addressing problems of hunger. The Consortium's mission is to alleviate hunger for poor and near poor residents of New York State, by expanding the availability of, access to, and use of governmental nutrition assistance programs, through outreach, education and advocacy. Thank you for the opportunity to make comment on the important issues you raise regarding New York's food and nutrition policies.

State Food Policy Plan & Council

As an organization dedicated to eradicating the very complex issue of hunger, we believe that there are a myriad of opportunities to make a positive impact. The development of a State Food Policy Council and plan has the potential for turning greater attention to the issues and could result in the development of more solutions to hunger in our state.

A state plan would need to address such issues as: access to food (including physical, socio and economic access) and improved nutrition opportunities (including access to farmers markets, quality of food in the schools, etc.).

One of the goals of such a plan should be to enhance the state's commitment to improving access to nutrition assistance programs – which would be implemented through new programs, policies and more coordinated operation among programs serving low income New Yorkers.

I would suggest that, to be effective, such a Council would need to have members from the top level of our state nutrition assistance program administering agencies (including NYS DOH, NYS OTDA, NYSED), and must include knowledgeable advocates and local providers as well.

It is pertinent to note, however, that New York State governing bodies and policy makers, as well as our administering agencies, already exhibit great commitment to

nutrition assistance programs and to improving access to these programs. New York is frequently a national leader in this arena. Therefore, it would be important to ensure that any new Council or planning process add to and not take valuable resources away from operation of these programs.

Changes Needed in Policies and Programs

The Nutrition Consortium of NYS has recently completed an involved process to develop a multi-year public policy agenda, designed to help New York to become a 'hunger-free' state. The particular focus of this agenda is on improving access to the Food Stamp Program, the School Breakfast Program and the Summer Food Program, because these programs are severely underutilized. We have identified a number of state strategies for implementation, outlined below.

We recommend the following strategies to increase the number of eligible, low-income households participating in the Food Stamp Program:

- *Provide annual incentive awards to local social services districts that achieve the largest increases in Food Stamp Program participation.*
- *Increase funds for Food Stamp Program administration. Increase funds to the State and the localities.*
- *Expand the state Nutrition Outreach and Education Program (NOEP) to every county.*
- *Distribute Food Stamp outreach materials through other services and providers that reach low-income populations, such as the food banks' network of pantries, hospital discharge planning procedures, and the mailing of checks and other materials to recipients of Unemployment Insurance, Social Security, and Disability benefits.*
- *Eliminate or minimize work requirements, to align the program more closely with other federal nutrition programs, to improve access for low-income families (including the newly unemployed and part-time workers), and to clarify that the Food Stamp Program is a nutrition assistance program.*
- *Rename the Food Stamp Program, thereby removing the obsolete reference to coupons, reducing stigma and providing opportunity for new outreach.*
- *Improve the State's Food Stamp telephone hotline (e.g., more time to speak and/or type, identification simpler than 19-digit card number, include languages other than English and Spanish).*

- *Change to direct State administration of the Food Stamp Program, thereby removing a layer of bureaucracy, assuring more uniform operation, and further distinguishing the program from welfare.*
- *Allow households to apply at any Food Stamp office within the state. – Households could apply at any office throughout the State instead of only in their home county.*
- *Assure provision of 5 months of transitional food stamps (TBA) to all households leaving TANF. Current practice results in termination of FS benefits for far too many households that leave TANF.*
- *Establish a State Food Stamp Supplemental Benefit for all Food Stamp households.*
- *Remove the asset test for households below 130% of the federal poverty level by extending categorical eligibility to this population. The current asset limit is \$3,000 for elderly or disabled, and \$2,000 for all others.*
- *Provide food stamps to all otherwise eligible legal immigrants. The federal government should restore federal Food Stamp eligibility to all legal immigrants. Until such legislation is adopted, the state should reauthorize the State Food Assistance Program (FAP), now scheduled to expire in September 2005.*

We recommend the following strategies to increase the number of eligible, low-income households with older adults participating in the Food Stamp Program:

- *Extend the New York State Nutrition Improvement Project (NYSNIP), under which SSI beneficiaries are automatically enrolled in the Food Stamp Program, and use applications for other means-tested programs serving older adults (e.g., the Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Program (EPIC), senior housing, senior meal sites receiving Child and Adult Care Food Program funds, heating assistance (HEAP), Medicaid as the basis for enrollment for Food Stamps.*
- *Implement a Food Stamp application referral process. Create a check-off box on the application forms for other public benefits commonly used by low-income older adults, such as those enumerated above, to authorize a referral to a NOEP or other organization that can provide more information about Food Stamps and assist with an application.*
- *Provide annual incentive awards to localities that achieve the largest increases in older adult Food Stamp Program participation.*

- *Increase NOEP funding so that projects in every county can target the objective of increasing Food Stamp participation among older adults.*
- *Provide the Food Stamp Prescreening Manual and Food Stamp training to every registered dietician in local offices for the aging (LOFA) and to every Meals on Wheels program not associated with a LOFA.*
- *Provide Food Stamp information to each person who receives food coupons under the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP), which serves older adults declaring income of less than 185% of poverty.*
- *Develop Food Stamp outreach TV commercials aimed at older adults.*
- *Re-open and conduct outreach for closed NYS Nutrition Improvement Project (NYSNIP) cases every 12 months. SSI recipients who did not use their benefit within 90 days and therefore had their NYSNIP case closed will have another opportunity to participate.*
- *Permit older adults to purchase prepared food with Food Stamps. This would especially help those living alone or in housing with limited cooking facilities.*
- *Increase the minimum monthly benefit from \$10 to \$25. -This could be accomplished by legislation at the federal level or, in the absence of federal action, by state legislation creating a State Food Stamp supplement.*

We recommend the following strategies to increase the use of the school breakfast program:

- *Strengthen the School Breakfast Program Expansion Law by requiring the approval of a majority of the voters before a school district can decline to operate a School Breakfast Program.*
- *Strengthen the School Breakfast Program Expansion Law by requiring schools to allocate a minimum of 20 minutes to the breakfast program.*
- *Provide classroom breakfast start-up grants.*
- *Permit recipients of public assistance and/or Food Stamps to authorize OTDA to certify their children's eligibility for free school meals by means of direct communication between OTDA and the school districts. Students are automatically eligible for free school meals if the household receives Food Stamps or public assistance. Current direct certification practice calls for OTDA to mail to each PA/FS household a letter certifying their eligibility for free school meals, and the household must then submit this*

letter to the school. Improving the certification process would facilitate school meal participation and reduce administrative costs by eliminating mailings.

- *Increase NOEP funding so that projects in every county can provide outreach and information about the School Breakfast Program to families with children.*
- *Create universal breakfast programs at all schools with 50% of students eligible for free or reduced-price school meals.*

We recommend the following strategies to increase the use of the Summer Food Service Program by low-income children:

- *Make the Summer Food Service Program available at or near every eligible elementary school, by requiring school districts to operate Summer Food Service Programs if any elementary school within the district meets the open-site eligibility criteria (unless another organization sponsors a site at or near the qualifying elementary school).*
- *Provide start-up costs to support Summer Food Program sponsorship and site development.*
- *Increase Nutrition Outreach and Education Program (NOEP) funding so that projects in every county can provide technical assistance and support to encourage local agencies to become sponsors or sites, and to perform outreach to inform families about the program.*
- *Provide funding to defray the cost of transporting children and, where necessary, meals to Summer Food Program sites.*

Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs

The Nutrition Consortium of NYS strongly supports the Farmer's Market Nutrition programs as an essential vehicle to improving access to fresh fruits and vegetables for low-income New Yorkers, while at the same time providing appropriate support to our essential agriculture community. State support for these programs should be continued and enhanced. We believe that the expanding funding for the Farmer's Market Nutrition Program will benefit both consumers and producers.

Assembly Bill A.2651

This bill sets forth criteria for the provision of grants for projects, with preference given to communities with a significant percentage of the population participating in government (and private) food assistance programs. It is pertinent to realize that there

is severe under-utilization of government programs among those eligible to participate, and thus you might want to consider other measures for targeting grants.

Thank you for your attention to these important issues and for providing us the opportunity to submit this testimony. My staff and I are available for further discussion about these issues and recommendations, at your convenience.

#15

New York Coalition for Healthy School Lunches
NYS Food and Nutrition Policy Public Hearing
May 16, 2005

Contact: Amie Hamlin, Executive Director
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amie@healthylunches.org

My name is Amie Hamlin, and I am the Executive Director of the New York Coalition for Healthy School Lunches.

Even before our organization incorporated as a non-profit, we were responsible for the introduction of a resolution for healthy school foods in the NYS legislature last year, which passed unanimously. Thank-you Assemblyman Ortiz and Senator LaValle. We were also responsible for the introduction and passage of a NYS PTA resolution for healthy school foods which is now their official policy and basis for action.

Our focus is on childhood obesity and the increased risk of chronic diseases. Type 2 diabetes, a disease once reserved for adults, has become epidemic in children. 50% of 2-15 year olds have fatty streaks in their arteries that are literally the beginning stages of heart disease.¹ This is a call for immediate and meaningful action.

Schools and the state can play a crucial role in addressing this problem, but there has to be a will to do it. Industry lobbyists are working overtime to scuttle any statewide regulations that would limit availability of soft drinks and junk foods in schools, just as big tobacco worked to prevent all laws in relation to smoking. PR giants are hired to make companies and their products look good, such as Burson Marsteller's work for McDonalds to get third party credibility from Olympic Athletes, Olympic Hopefuls, Moms and the International Olympic Committee.² Just as we say NO to drugs, we must also say NO to the companies whose fiscal health seems to be more important than our children's health.

While our focus is on school foods, these issues can be viewed in a larger context, applying to society at large. Nutrition recommendations should be made based on the overwhelming body of evidence that focuses on the benefits of a diet made up primarily of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and legumes. Let's tell people what we know about diet and disease, and let them make their own choices about how much they are willing to change. For example, what are we doing when we tell people that the magic number for cholesterol is 200? About 1/3 of all heart attack deaths occur with cholesterol levels between 150 and 200. The well respected Framingham Heart Study has shown that people are basically heart attack proof if their cholesterol is under 150. So why aren't we telling people this? It would be difficult to achieve this goal without significantly changing our diets to be more plant-based, and so industry influence helps to keep the recommended number at 200.

There is an overwhelming body of research which shows that an unprocessed diet made up primarily of vegetables, fruits, whole grains and legumes can prevent and even reverse heart disease. Approximately 40 insurance companies around the country are paying for their customers to go through Dr. Dean Ornish's Heart Disease Reversal program to prevent further cardiac events and to actually reverse disease. His program is based on a low-fat vegetarian diet, and saves the companies about \$30,000 per patient. There is also sufficient evidence that the same diet can reverse or sufficiently improve type 2 diabetes, and prevent 35% of cancers.

Thus, the NYCHSL believes that there is a need for legislation to establish comprehensive State Food Policy.

Much of our limited nutrition education dollar is spent on feel-good messages, but perhaps this has more to do with politics than nutrition. While it's true that small steps can help, what most people need to do is make big changes, and we need to tell them that. There are foods and components of foods that are damaging to health – and there are others that are highly protective. Messages like "All foods can fit" and "There are no good foods and no bad foods" might make sense if most of the diet was made up of healthful foods with an occasional treat. But children in our schools can consume deep fried entrees and potato chips, sodas, and ice cream every day.

State recommendations should go much further, helping people to enjoy a better quality of life, and the state to save large sums of money. Given that we can prevent about two-thirds of disease through dietary choices, nutrition policy should dictate that we must spend a proportional amount of health care dollars on meaningful primary prevention education.

In relation to school foods, it is necessary to have policy in order to reverse the trend of childhood obesity and adult diseases in children. The disconnect between the classroom and the cafeteria needs to be addressed.

Food service directors have told me that the average amount spent on food for lunch is 90 cents. While plant-based foods are often less expensive, it's really difficult to prepare any sort of meal for that amount of money, and we must remember that many of the most unhealthy foods consumed by children in schools are provided basically for free through the USDA commodities program, and as a result, schools rely on those foods. The most requested commodity foods by NYS schools are beef, cheese and potato products.

It is our position that schools should offer only foods which are protective of health, and not those that contribute to diseases. To do otherwise contradicts nutrition education, demonstrating an inconsistency that children find hypocritical, and not only sends the message to children that good nutrition is unimportant, but that the children themselves are unimportant, unworthy of whatever it takes to do what is right for them – no matter how much they might like French fries. To do so also undermines the efforts of parents and teachers in teaching their children about healthy foods. It is impossible to make healthy choices when healthy choices are not available. In addition, children will often

chose the less healthy foods even when healthy options are available. If you were eight years old, which would you choose – a baked sweet potato or French fries?

It should be noted that healthful meals and snacks will not only have an impact on children's health, but also on their grades and behavior.³ When we say we don't have the money to feed children properly, we must consider the money lost to absenteeism, extra help needed for children who are not doing well in school, and the cost to school districts of behavioral problems. According to Action for Healthy Kids, the cost is estimated at \$95,000 - 160,000 in lost state aid per year for school districts.

All foods sold or otherwise provided in schools must be considered, including meals, snack or a la carte foods, vending machine items, foods sold in school stores, snack bars and at school events, for fund-raisers, and those used as rewards.

Are school meals actually healthy? While schools are required to meet certain guidelines over the course of a week, it is not at all difficult for a child to make choices every day that don't come close to the dietary guidelines. Most children can consume either a deep fried or high-fat entrée on a daily basis, with an animal protein entrée virtually every day in most schools. Canned fruits and vegetables are common. Beef is on the top of the list of foods ordered by schools from the USDA commodities program in NYS. Yet we now know that one serving per day 5 days a week for men, and less than one serving 5 days a week for women is associated with colon cancer.

We must address the issue of competitive foods in schools. Many children are not going to choose to eat school meals when they can choose junk foods instead. Candy bars, potato chips, ice cream, cookies, and fruit drinks which contain barely any fruit juice, are not considered to be "foods of minimal nutritional value" and can be sold in the cafeteria line.⁴ Food service professionals defend this practice claiming that they need the sales to make ends meet. In Texas, it was estimated that schools raise \$54 million from vending sales, but that the schools food service operations may lose \$60 million per year to the sale of foods sold outside of the meal programs.⁵

However, schools that have switched over to selling healthier foods are not losing revenue, despite scare tactics from the food industry.⁶ In fact, many schools have reported increasing revenue with the introduction of healthy choices in vending machines and snack or a la carte lines.

New York State has a tremendous resource, and that is NYS agriculture. We grow beans, vegetables, fruits, and grains, the cornerstone of a healthy, disease-preventing diet. The New York State Department of Agriculture, Cornell University, and many dedicated Food Service Directors and farmers are involved with bringing healthy and fresh foods to school children. Thanks to Assemblyman Ortiz, the New York State Farm to School Law helps to make the process of buying foods from local farms easier without the cumbersome bidding process.

Another crucial aspect to this whole issue is that we would like to see the cafeteria workers get more respect. These hard working individuals play a large role in the health of our children. Let's put money into training them in nutrition and preparation of healthful foods, and treat them as professionals. Let's let them know how much we value them and let them be proud of their work. Let's also put money into adequate facilities – as some schools lack kitchens completely or at least the proper equipment and space for preparing healthful meals.

New York City is demonstrating that healthy changes can be implemented. While they have greater buying power than all other school districts in the country, their changes will result in making healthier foods available to other school districts. Currently, all breads are made from 50% whole grains. The salads are appetizing, colorful and delicious. The Schoolfoods Plus Initiative in NYC has a goal of providing delicious and nutritious plant-based recipes three times per week. Gardenburger veggie burgers have been a huge hit with the children there. They are also offering foods such as Southwestern tofu and beans chili, vegetarian sloppy Joes, nuggets, plantains and collard greens with good success.

It's not enough to just fix the food. Nutrition education is essential. What kids learn in school they take home with them. We've got to make nutrition education a priority. Health education needs to be as basic as reading, writing and arithmetic. Most children are illiterate when it comes to nutrition. Nutrition works well woven into all kinds of curriculums, including math, reading, science, language and social studies. We should be teaching children where food comes from, how it grows, how to prepare it, and how it affects our health. The Food is Elementary curriculum by Antonia Demas and the Cookshop program by FoodChange used in NYC are wonderful examples of how hands on experience with food can make all the difference in a child's willingness to try and desire health supporting foods.

We need to eliminate commercialism from schools. A recent district newsletter showed teachers dressed in M&M costumes. McDonalds provides free character education programs, complete with posters that have the golden arches and McDonalds name on them. Tootsie Roll provides free math curriculums.

A law to make school foods healthier could be relatively simple, and include the following:

1. Make available at each meal the option of a plant-protein entrée. This would mean an entrée that is cholesterol free, generally low fat, and high in fiber. A continued reliance on an animal protein option at nearly every meal in every school ignores the requirements to reduce cholesterol and saturated fats, and to increase fiber.
2. Eliminate all added trans-fats. What I mean by "added" is trans-fats that are not naturally occurring in foods. 20% of our trans-fats come from foods that come from ruminant animals – mostly dairy and beef products. The trans-fats we are talking about eliminating are in the form of hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils or shortening – and include foods that are cooked in such oils or contain them as an ingredient.
3. Eliminate all foods which contain sugar in any form as one of the first three ingredients OR contain more than 35% of its *weight* from added sugars per realistic serving.

4. Eliminate all deep-fried foods. I have learned that some schools are not aware of how many deep-fried foods they are serving, because they are deep-fried at the manufacturers, and then baked in the oven at the schools. Deep fried foods should be eaten rarely if at all, yet many school lunch menus allow children to consume them daily.
5. Any dairy foods that are not non-fat or very low fat or that are sweetened should be excluded, as they contain high amounts of fats, and in the case of some sweetened dairy products, more added sugars than soda. For example, one type of flavored milk produced in NYS is sold in 16 ounce bottles in vending machines in schools, and is promoted to athletic directors as a way to raise money for sports equipment. The nutrition information on these bottles states that it is 2 servings, but you can be sure that school students are not sharing their 16 ounce bottle of flavored milk with another student. The chocolate milk, per realistic serving, contains 16 grams of fat and 52 grams of sugars, while the vanilla flavor contains the same amount of fat and 66 grams of sugar –more than a typical 12 ounce soda's 40 grams of sugar.
6. Finally, let's not use our children as guinea pigs. Let's remove genetically engineered and irradiated foods from schools – since we still don't know the long term consequences of the use of foods treated in such a manner. The use of organic foods should be encouraged where feasible and financially possible.

We must summon the will and the money to make meaningful changes as soon as possible. We need to make healthy eating the easier choice. We need to create policy that will help all schools to do it, creating healthier and happier students. We need to reverse the trend that this is the first generation of children that will not live to be older than their parents.

Thank-you.

1. Bogalusa Heart Study
2. Burson Marstellar's website www.bm.com, see attached
3. NYS Schools and Professionals in Nutrition (SPIN), Appleton Schools in Wisconsin, USDA
4. Nutritional Integrity in Schools, CSPI, see attached
5. Texas Department of Agriculture. *School District Vending Contract Survey*. Accessed on March 5, 2004 at www.agr.state.tx.us/foodnutrition/survey/
6. Arizona Department of Education (AZ DOE) *Arizona Healthy School Environment Model Policy Implementation Pilot Study*. Phoenix, AZ: AZ DOE, 2005.

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Fact Sheet

- ✓ The American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Cancer Society, the American Dietetic Association, the American Diabetes Association, the American Heart Association, the United States Department of Agriculture and the National Institutes of Health all recommend a greater emphasis in the American diet on fruits, vegetables, whole grains and legumes with a reduction in the consumption of animal foods (which are the primary source of saturated fat and the only source of cholesterol.)

US Dietary Guidelines 2000:

"GET MOST OF YOUR CALORIES FROM PLANT FOODS (grains, fruits, vegetables)."

From the section that tells you to make "food choices low in saturated fat and cholesterol and moderate in total fat."

Unified Dietary Guidelines:

American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Cancer Society, the American Dietetic Association, the American Heart Association, and the National Institutes of Health created guidelines in 1999:

"According to the guidelines, the easiest ways to accomplish these goals are to:

- eat a variety of foods;
- **choose most of what you eat from plant sources;**
- eat five or more servings of fruit and vegetables each day;
- eat six or more servings of bread, pasta, and cereal grains each day;
- **eat high-fat foods sparingly, especially those from animal sources;**
- keep your intake of simple sugars to a minimum."

US Dietary Guidelines:

Available at: <http://www.usda.gov/cnpp/Pubs/DG2000/DietGd.pdf>

Unified Dietary Guidelines Available at:

http://www.cancer.org/docroot/NWS/content/NWS_1_1x_Uniform_Dietary_Guidelines.asp

- ✓ 25% of NY State (nearly half of NYC) children are overweight or obese, and the Surgeon General has reported that obesity is reaching epidemic proportions, particularly among children.

A special report from New York City's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and Department of Education, "NYC Vital Signs." June 2003, Volume 2, No. 5.

Available at: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/pdf/survey/survey-2003childobesity.pdf>

Surgeon General's 2001 Report on Overweight and Obesity -- Principles (David Satcher, MD, PhD)

Available at: <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/obesity/calltoaction/principles.htm>

- ✓ According to Marion Nestle in her recently published book Food Politics, a 1997 survey found that American children and adolescents were getting half of their calories from fat and sugar that had been added to foods, and only 1 percent regularly ate diets that resembled the food pyramid recommended by the government. In New York, a 2001 federal survey found that only about a fifth of high-schoolers reported eating as many as five servings of fruits and vegetables daily, the minimum government recommendation.

- ✓ Only 17% of children consume the minimum daily-recommended servings of vegetables, and 20% eat no vegetables on a given day.
Less than 15% of children eat the minimum daily-recommended servings of fruit, and 35% eat no fruit on a given day.
Gleason P, Suitor C. Changes in Children's Diets: 1989-91 to 1994-96. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, 2000. In press.
Available at (the first part of each statement):
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Healthy/healthyeatingchallenge.html>
- ✓ 90% of children consume amounts of saturated fat above the recommended level.
Should dietary fat recommendations for children be changed? - response to articles by Robert E. Olson and Ellyn Satter in this issue, pp. 28 and 32, Journal of the American Dietetic Association, Jan, 2000 by Johanna Dwyer
Available at: http://articles.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0822/is_1_100/ai_59200949
- ✓ 25% of children ages 5 to 10 have high cholesterol, high blood pressure, or other early warning signs for heart disease.
Freedman D, Dietz W, Srinivasan S, Berenson G. "The Relation of Overweight to Cardiovascular Risk Factors Among Children and Adolescents: The Bogalusa Heart Study." Pediatrics 1999, vol. 103, pp. 1175-1182. As reported in National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity Fact Sheet 2003.
Available at: http://www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/NANA_advocates_national_policies.pdf
<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/103/6/1175>
- ✓ "Adult Onset" Type 2 Diabetes, once limited largely to adults, is now seriously affecting children.
Rosenbaum, A.L., Joe, J.R., and Winter, W.R., "Emerging epidemic of type 2 diabetes in youth," Diabetes Care, 1999. As reported in Successful Students Through Health Food Policies (SSTHFP), California School Board Association and California Project Lean, 2003.
- ✓ A study, published in a June 1998 *New England Journal of Medicine*, showed that 50 percent of children 2- to 15-years-old have fatty streaks in their coronary arteries, a circumstance that sets the stage for further artery blockages and heart attacks later in life. Compounding the problem, the more meat and dairy children consume the fewer fruits and vegetables they eat.
New England Journal of Medicine, Volume 338:1650-1656 June 4, 1998 Number 23
Available at: <http://content.nejm.org/>
- ✓ Fruits, vegetables, whole grains and legumes are generally lower in fat and calories than meat and dairy products, contain no cholesterol and promote good health because they contain fiber and essential nutrients including vitamins and minerals, as well as phytochemicals, which are protective against diseases.
Available at: http://www.eatright.org/Public/Other/index_adap1197.cfm
- ✓ The number of school-aged vegetarians is increasing.
Nutrition services: an essential component of comprehensive health programs. J Am Diet Assoc. 2003;103:505-514
Available at: http://www.eatright.org/Public/GovernmentAffairs/92_8243.cfm
Vegetarianism on the Rise Among School Children - American School Food Service Association
Available at: <http://www.asfsa.org/newsroom/sfsnews/esource0101.asp>
- ✓ Children receiving appropriate education will order healthy plant-based foods at a rate up to 20 times more than children who do not have the appropriate education.

Demas, Antonia, Food Education in the Elementary Classroom as a Means of Gaining Acceptance of Diverse, Low-fat Foods in the School Lunch Program. Ph.D. Dissertation, Cornell University, January, 1995.

- ✓ Healthy plant-based recipes that utilize USDA ingredients and cost less than .45 cents per serving are available.
Food is Elementary Curriculum by Antonia Demas, PhD, www.foodstudies.org (recipes available through the New York Coalition for Healthy School Lunches)

Nutritional Integrity in Schools

Center for Science in the Public Interest

Childhood Obesity Is Skyrocketing. Over the last two decades, rates of obesity have doubled in children and tripled in adolescents.¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) surveys have found that children ages 2 to 18 years consumed an average of 118 more calories per day in 1996 than they did in 1978.² An extra 118 calories per day, if not compensated for through increased physical activity, translates into an average of 12 pounds of weight gain per year. The increases in calorie intake are driven by increased intakes of foods and beverages high in added sugars.³

Children's Diets Are Poor. Only 2% of children (2 to 19 years) meet the USDA's five main recommendations for a healthy diet.⁴ Three out of four children consume more saturated fat than is recommended in the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.⁵ Three out of four American high school students do not eat even the minimum recommended number of servings (five) of fruits and vegetables each day.⁶

Poor Diet and Obesity Are Causing "Adult" Diseases in Children. One quarter of children ages 5 to 10 years show early warning signs for heart disease, such as elevated blood cholesterol or high blood pressure.⁷ Atherosclerosis (clogged arteries) begins in childhood. Autopsy studies of 15 to 19 year olds have found that all have fatty streaks in more than one artery, and about 10% have advanced fibrous plaques.⁸ Type 2 diabetes can no longer be called "adult onset" diabetes because of rising rates in children. In a study conducted in Cincinnati, the incidence of type 2 diabetes in adolescents increased ten-fold between 1982 and 1994.⁹ From 1979 to 1999, annual hospital costs for treating obesity-related diseases in children rose threefold (from \$35 million to \$127 million).¹⁰

Nutritionally-Poor Foods Are Widely Available in Schools.

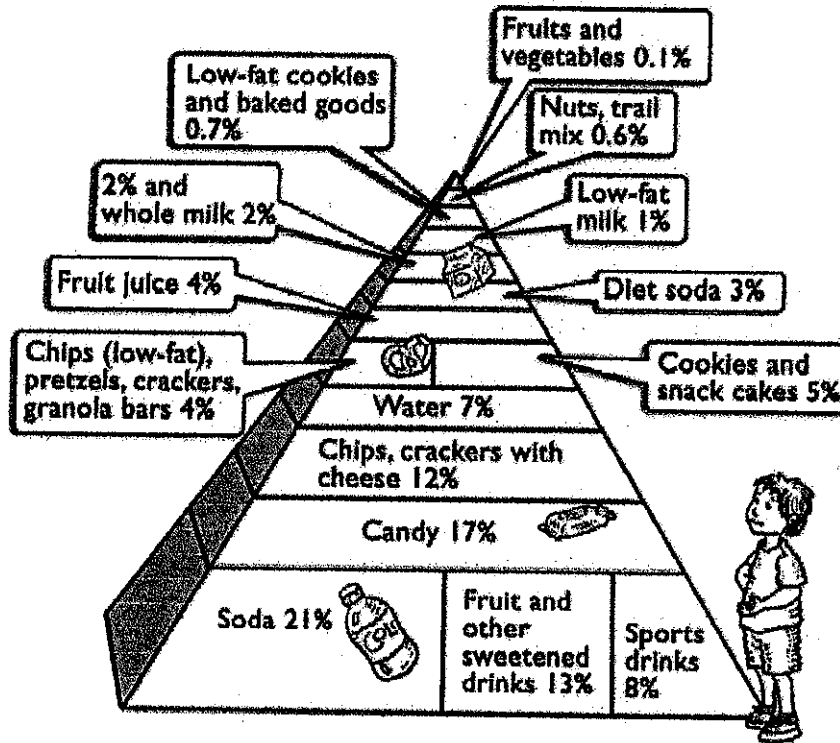
Nationally, 43% of elementary schools, 74% of middle/junior high schools, and 98% of senior high schools have vending machines, school stores, or snack bars.¹¹ The most common items sold include soft drinks, sports drinks, imitation fruit juices, chips, candy, cookies, and snack cakes.^{12,13} The sale of foods in schools outside of the meal programs can negatively affect children's diets, since many are high in calories, added sugars, and fat and low in nutrients.¹⁴ Some assert that if schools do not sell soft drinks, candy, and other low-nutrition foods and beverages, then children will go off campus to buy them. However, most schools have closed campuses: 94% of elementary schools, 89% of middle/junior high schools, and 73% of high schools have closed campus policies.¹⁵

Schools Should Practice What They Teach. Selling low-nutrition foods in schools contradicts nutrition education and sends children the message that good nutrition is unimportant.¹⁴ The school environment should reinforce classroom nutrition education by modeling and supporting healthy behaviors.

Nutrition-Poor Foods in Schools Undermine Parents' Efforts to Feed Children Well. Parents entrust schools with the care of their children during the school day. Without their parents' knowledge, some children spend their lunch money on low-nutrition foods from vending machines and a la carte lines, rather than on balanced school meals. This practice is especially problematic when children have diet-related illnesses, such as high cholesterol or diabetes. Long cafeteria lines, short lunch periods,

and activities held during the lunch period also lead some students to purchase foods from a vending machine rather than a nutritionally-balanced school lunch.

"I think we should use our vending machines in the schools – fill them with good food, with fresh vegetables, with milk and products that are really healthy for the body." – California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger²



School Vending Machine Pyramid

The above results are from a study conducted in fall 2003 in which 120 volunteers in 24 states surveyed the contents of 1,420 vending machines in 251 middle, junior high, and high schools. Both in middle and high schools, 75% of beverage options and 85% of snack options were of poor nutritional quality.

Empty Calories and Obesity. While obesity is a complex, multi-factorial problem, soft drinks and snack foods play a key role. Children who consume more soft drinks consume more calories (about 55 to 190 per day) than kids who drink fewer soft drinks.^{16,17} Sodas and fruit drinks are the single leading source of calories and added sugars in the diets of teenagers.¹⁸ A study conducted by the Harvard School of Public Health found that for each additional can or glass of soda or juice drink a child consumes per day, the child's chance of becoming overweight increases by 60%.¹⁹ Women who increase their intake of sugar-sweetened soft drinks are more likely to gain weight and have a higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes than women who decrease their

consumption.²⁰ A health-education program encouraging elementary school students to decrease soft drink consumption reduced rates of overweight and obesity.²¹

Consumption of soft drinks can displace healthier foods from children's diets, like low-fat milk, which can help to prevent osteoporosis, and juice, which can help to prevent heart disease and cancer.^{16,17,22,23,24}

In addition, the number of calories children consume from snacks increased by 120 calories per day between 1977 and 1996, from 363 calories in 1977 to 484 calories in 1996.²⁵ After the transition to middle school, when students gain access to school snack bars, students tend to eat fewer fruits and vegetables²⁶ and drink less milk and more sweetened beverages than they did in elementary school.²⁷

Schools Are Switching to Selling Healthier Foods and Are Not Losing Revenue.

More than a dozen schools and districts in Arizona, California, Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Pennsylvania, and other states have demonstrated that schools can switch to selling healthier foods without losing revenue. For example, eight schools in a recent pilot program in Arizona switched to selling healthier foods via vending, a la carte, or school stores and they did not lose money.²⁸ While school vending contracts appear lucrative, they usually provide only a small percentage of a school district's budget and, on a per-student basis, school vending contracts typically do not raise large amounts of revenue. A General Accounting Office study found that schools they interviewed raised between \$3 and \$30 per student per year from their soft drink contracts.²⁹ The Texas Department of Agriculture estimates that Texas schools raise \$54 million per year from vending sales, while the state's school food service operations may lose \$60 million per year to the sale of foods sold outside of the meal programs.³⁰

The School Foods "Playing Field" is Uneven. School meals must meet detailed nutrition standards set by Congress and USDA in order for a school food service program to receive federal subsidies. In contrast, foods sold individually outside the meal programs (sometimes referred to as "competitive" foods), including those sold in vending machines, a la carte (snack) lines, school stores, snack bars, and fund raisers, are not required by the USDA to meet comparable nutrition standards.

- During meal periods, the sale of "foods of minimal nutritional value" (FMNV) is prohibited by federal regulations in areas where USDA school meals are sold or eaten. However, FMNV can be sold anywhere else on-campus -- including just outside the cafeteria -- at any time.

- FMNV provide less than 5% of the Reference Daily Intake (RDI) for eight specified nutrients per serving.³¹ FMNV include seltzer, chewing gum, lollipops, jelly beans, and carbonated sodas. Many low-nutrition foods are not considered FMNV, such as chocolate candy bars, chips, cookies, snack cakes, and fruitades (containing little fruit juice), and therefore may be sold in the school cafeteria during meal times.

"All foods and beverages sold or served to students in school should be healthful and meet an accepted nutritional content standard."

— Institute of Medicine, *Preventing Childhood Obesity: Health in the Balance*, 2005. 4

School Food Has Long Been a Federal Issue. Since the Truman administration, foods sold and served through school meals have been regulated at the federal level.

Congress and USDA set detailed standards and requirements for the foods provided by the school meal programs. The federal government invests significant resources in the school meal programs (\$9.4 billion in FY 2004 for school lunch and breakfast, including cash payments and commodities), and has strong nutrition standards for those meals, as well as provides technical assistance and support for states and local school food service authorities to meet those standards.³² Selling low-nutrition foods in schools undermines that investment. The federal government spends large amounts of money treating diet-related diseases such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes, stroke, and osteoporosis through the Medicaid and Medicare programs and federal employee health insurance. Those diseases have their roots in childhood. According to the USDA, healthier diets could prevent at least \$71 billion per year in medical costs, lost productivity, and lost lives.³³ U.S. healthcare costs due to obesity are \$94 billion,³⁴ half of which (\$47 billion) is paid through Medicare and Medicaid. Most states and localities leave the development of dietary guidance to federal agencies. There is no scientific basis for nutrition standards for school foods to differ for children in different states. If nutrition standards for school foods are left to local action, then schools and school districts serving low-income students may have less-healthy food and beverage options. Fewer parents in such communities have the spare time, resources, and empowerment to advocate for change in their children's schools at the state or local level. As a result, disadvantaged children may be presented with fewer healthy snack and beverage choices than more affluent children, and health disparities may widen.

Support for Improving School Foods Is Strong.^{35,36,37} A national poll by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation found that 90% of teachers and parents support the conversion of school vending machine contents to healthy beverages and foods.³⁵ Similarly, a 2005 *Wall Street Journal*/Harris Interactive Health-Care poll found that 83% of all adults think that "public schools should do more to limit children's access to unhealthy foods like snack foods, sugary soft drinks, and fast foods."³⁸

The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity 2001 recommends that "[i]ndividuals and groups across all settings ... [adopt] policies specifying that all foods and beverages available at school contribute toward eating patterns that are consistent with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*." ⁵

For more information, contact Joy Johanson at the Center for Science in the Public Interest at <jjohanson@cspinet.org> or 202-777-8351.

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National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity (NANA) Model School Wellness Policy

II. Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold and Served on Campus

[View Additional Resources](#)

School Meals

[View Additional Resources](#)

Meals served through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs will:

- be appealing and attractive to children;
- be served in clean and pleasant settings;
- meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations;
- offer a variety of fruits and vegetables;²
- serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk³ and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives (to be defined by USDA); and
- ensure that half of the served grains are whole grain.^{3,4}

Schools should engage students and parents, through taste-tests of new entrees and surveys, in selecting foods sold through the school meal programs in order to identify new, healthful, and appealing food choices. In addition, schools should share information about the nutritional content of meals with parents and students. Such information could be made available on menus, a website, on cafeteria menu boards, placards, or other point-of-purchase materials.

Breakfast. To ensure that all children have breakfast, either at home or at school, in order to meet their nutritional needs and enhance their ability to learn:

- Schools will, to the extent possible, operate the School Breakfast Program.
- Schools will, to the extent possible, arrange bus schedules and utilize methods to serve school breakfasts that encourage participation, including serving breakfast in the classroom, "grab-and-go" breakfast, or breakfast during morning break or recess.
- Schools that serve breakfast to students will notify parents and students of the availability of the School Breakfast Program.
- Schools will encourage parents to provide a healthy breakfast for their children through newsletter articles, take-home materials, or other means.

Free and Reduced-priced Meals. Schools will make every effort to eliminate any social stigma attached to, and prevent the overt identification of, students who are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals⁵. Toward this end, schools may utilize electronic identification and payment systems; provide meals at no charge to all children, regardless of income; promote the availability of school meals to all students; and/or use nontraditional methods for serving school meals, such as "grab-and-go" or classroom breakfast.

Summer Food Service Program. Schools in which more than 50% of students are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals will sponsor the Summer Food Service Program for at least six weeks between the last day of the academic school year and the first day of the following school year, and preferably throughout the entire summer vacation.

Meal Times and Scheduling. Schools:

- will provide students with at least 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch;
- should schedule meal periods at appropriate times, *e.g.*, lunch should be scheduled between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.;
- should not schedule tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities;
- will schedule lunch periods to follow recess periods (in elementary schools);
- will provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks; and
- should take reasonable steps to accommodate the tooth-brushing regimens of students with special oral health needs (*e.g.*, orthodontia or high tooth decay risk).

View Additional Resources

Qualifications of School Food Service Staff. Qualified nutrition professionals will administer the school meal programs. As part of the school district's responsibility to operate a food service program, we will provide continuing professional development for all nutrition professionals in schools. Staff development programs should include appropriate certification and/or training programs for child nutrition directors, school nutrition managers, and cafeteria workers, according to their levels of responsibility.⁶

Sharing of Foods and Beverages. Schools should discourage students from sharing their foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack times, given concerns about allergies and other restrictions on some children's diets.

Foods and Beverages Sold Individually (*i.e.*, foods sold outside of reimbursable school meals, such as through vending machines, cafeteria a la carte [snack] lines, fundraisers, school stores, etc.)

View Additional Resources

Elementary Schools. The school food service program will approve and provide all food and beverage sales to students in elementary schools. Given young children's limited nutrition skills, food in elementary schools should be sold as balanced meals. If available, foods and beverages sold individually should be limited to low-fat and non-fat milk, fruits, and non-fried vegetables.

Middle/Junior High and High Schools. In middle/junior high and high schools, all foods and beverages sold individually outside the reimbursable school meal programs (including those sold through a la carte [snack] lines, vending machines, student stores, or fundraising activities) during the school day, or through programs for students after the school day, will meet the following nutrition and portion size standards:

• **Beverages**

- **Allowed:** water or seltzer water⁷ without added caloric sweeteners; fruit and vegetable juices and fruit-based drinks that contain at least 50% fruit juice and that do not contain additional caloric sweeteners; unflavored or flavored low-fat or fat-free fluid milk and nutritionally-equivalent nondairy beverages (to be defined by USDA);
- **Not allowed:** soft drinks containing caloric sweeteners; sports drinks; iced teas; fruit-based drinks that contain less than 50% real fruit juice or that contain additional

caloric sweeteners; beverages containing caffeine, excluding low-fat or fat-free chocolate milk (which contain trivial amounts of caffeine).

- **Foods**

- A food item sold individually:
 - will have no more than 35% of its calories from fat (excluding nuts, seeds, peanut butter, and other nut butters) and 10% of its calories from saturated and trans fat combined;
 - will have no more than 35% of its *weight* from added sugars;⁸
 - will contain no more than 230 mg of sodium per serving for chips, cereals, crackers, French fries, baked goods, and other snack items; will contain no more than 480 mg of sodium per serving for pastas, meats, and soups; and will contain no more than 600 mg of sodium for pizza, sandwiches, and main dishes.
- A choice of at least two fruits and/or non-fried vegetables will be offered for sale at any location on the school site where foods are sold. Such items could include, but are not limited to, fresh fruits and vegetables; 100% fruit or vegetable juice; fruit-based drinks that are at least 50% fruit juice and that do not contain additional caloric sweeteners; cooked, dried, or canned fruits (canned in fruit juice or light syrup); and cooked, dried, or canned vegetables (that meet the above fat and sodium guidelines).⁹

- **Portion Sizes**

- Limit portion sizes of foods and beverages sold individually to those listed below:
 - One and one-quarter ounces for chips, crackers, popcorn, cereal, trail mix, nuts, seeds, dried fruit, or jerky;
 - One ounce for cookies;
 - Two ounces for cereal bars, granola bars, pastries, muffins, doughnuts, bagels, and other bakery items;
 - Four fluid ounces for frozen desserts, including, but not limited to, low-fat or fat-free ice cream;
 - Eight ounces for non-frozen yogurt;
 - Twelve fluid ounces for beverages, excluding water; and
 - The portion size of a la carte entrees and side dishes, including potatoes, will not be greater than the size of comparable portions offered as part of school meals. Fruits and non-fried vegetables are exempt from portion-size limits.

Fundraising Activities. To support children's health and school nutrition-education efforts, school fundraising activities will not involve food or will use only foods that meet the above nutrition and portion size standards for foods and beverages sold individually. Schools will encourage fundraising activities that promote physical activity. The school district will make available a list of ideas for acceptable fundraising activities. View Additional Resources

Snacks. Snacks served during the school day or in after-school care or enrichment programs will make a positive contribution to children's diets and health, with an emphasis on serving fruits and vegetables as the primary snacks and water as the primary beverage. Schools will assess if and when to offer snacks based on timing of school meals, children's nutritional needs, children's ages, and other considerations. The district will disseminate a list of healthful snack items to teachers,

after-school program personnel, and parents.

- If eligible, schools that provide snacks through after-school programs will pursue receiving reimbursements through the National School Lunch Program.

[View Additional Resources](#)

Rewards. Schools will not use foods or beverages, especially those that do not meet the nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold individually (above), as rewards for academic performance or good behavior,¹⁰ and will not withhold food or beverages (including food served through school meals) as a punishment. [View Additional Resources](#)

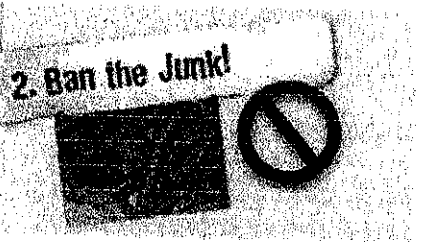
Celebrations. Schools should limit celebrations that involve food during the school day to no more than one party per class per month. Each party should include no more than one food or beverage that does not meet nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold individually (above). The district will disseminate a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers. [View Additional Resources](#)

School-sponsored Events (such as, but not limited to, athletic events, dances, or performances). Foods and beverages offered or sold at school-sponsored events outside the school day will meet the nutrition standards for meals or for foods and beverages sold individually (above).

www.feedmebetter.com



It's meals that count. A lunchtime school dinner should give kids a third of their daily nutritional requirements. That's why it should be packed with not only fresh produce, but all the proteins, minerals and vitamins needed for health and growth. Diet also affects kids' behaviour, their physical and mental development, and their ability to learn - another good reason to ban the junk and go fresh and tasty.



Recently, many suppliers to Scottish schools had to re-develop their food products. Why? Because they weren't nutritious enough to meet their newly-introduced basic standard. So what does that mean kids in England are getting?

Schools urgently need clear nutritional standards to help them improve school dinners. Plus, a minimum threshold would automatically exclude a lot of junk foods from school meals. And Ofsted needs the standards if school meals are going to be included in their inspections from Autumn 2005. Kids need better food now!



This conscientious, dedicated but mostly invisible part of the workforce determine the health of our future adult population. Let's invest in them.

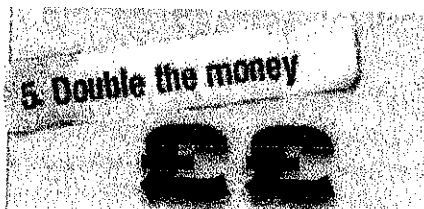
Let's make being a dinner lady into a true vocation. Introduce real qualifications. Commit money for core skills training.

Every new cook entering a school kitchen should have basic cooking and food preparation skills (many of the younger staff working in school kitchens don't). Training will also keep them motivated, in touch with each other, and up-to-date with new nutritional advice, healthy menus and kitchen management skills. In short, they'll feel proud of their work and feel like they're making a difference.

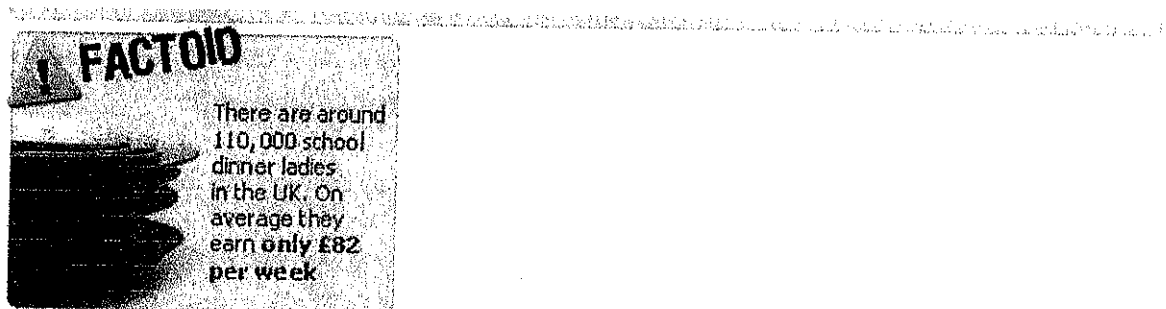


Introduce a whole school approach to food education. Many of the kids Jamie gets coming in for training at 15 can tell you about drugs but don't know what celery or courgette tastes like, let alone how and where they're grown and how to cook them. This is because they don't learn about food at school.

Put cookery back on the curriculum. Teach kids how food comes from farms, not packets. Link lessons to the school dinners menu. Train teachers, parents and carers. Take FMB home!



On average, dinner ladies have between 35 and 45p to spend on food per meal, the cost of a bag of crisps. They need at least double that, 70p per child, to provide a varied and nutritionally balanced menu. Why doesn't the government commit specific new funding for school meals? More money for overtime for dinner ladies. More money for training kitchen staff to keep them motivated. More money for kitchen upgrades and equipment. More money to put better food on the plate, basically.



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McDonald's Corporation

Situation Analysis

To support McDonald's desire to maximize its global sponsorship of the ATHENS 2004 Olympic Games, Burson-Marsteller conducted multi-tiered events, media relations activities and employee outreach efforts during the 2004 Olympic year, and on-site at the Athens games. The objectives were to: generate global media exposure for McDonald's as a top Olympic sponsor; leverage McDonald's sponsorship to highlight the company's commitment to active lifestyles; and, showcase McDonald's commitment to its menu, partners and employees through global Olympic outreach efforts.

Strategy & Implementation

The strategy was to create a multi-leveled media relations plan to carry McDonald's messages to global media and leverage McDonald's sponsorships to build third-party credibility for the company's messages.

B-M's Olympic activation plan showcased McDonald's Olympic support throughout the year:

February 2004

- Yao Ming Signs as McDonald's First True Global Brand Ambassador

Global press conference during NBA All-Star announcing partnership with the basketball superstar.

- McDonald's Announces Olympic Sponsorship Renewal in Beijing, China

Global press conference with McDonald's three top management executives, the IOC and Beijing 2008 Olympic Organizing Committee. Event reinforced the company's support, established the global partnership, showcased the company's business commitment to expansion abroad, especially in Asia.

May 2004

- McDonald's Launches Go Active! Web Site with International Olympic Committee

Marsteller created, designed and launched a global balanced lifestyles Web site call Go Active! Established with the support of the IOC and ACSM, site features health and wellness information from athletes and entertainers such as Yao Ming, Venus and Serena Williams and Justin Timberlake.

- McDonald's Signs Venus and Serena Williams as Global Brand Ambassadors

Introduced McDonald's extended global partnership with Venus and Serena on "Good Morning America," "Entertainment Tonight" and in interviews with the *Associated Press* and NBC Newsfeed. Venus Williams also unveiled the McDonald's Olympic Spirit Hat, designed for her exclusively for the Olympic Champion Crew.

June 2004

- Olympian Carl Lewis Salutes Olympic Champion Crew at McDonald's Spirit Day

McDonald's presented Carl Lewis with the inaugural Olympic Spirit Award and B-M booked Carl on the NBC and WGN morning shows and arranged a lunch for Carl with the *Chicago Sun Times*.

- McDonald's Unveils New Olympic Sports at Cannes Advertising Film Festival

McDonald's returned to the Cannes Advertising Festival to feature a series of Olympic commercials presented by McDonald's executives and starring Venus and Serena Williams, Yao Ming and Ronald McDonald.

August 2004

- McDonald's Olympic Champion Crew Big Mac Building Crew Exhibition

Olympians Venus Williams and Janet Evans served as honorary coaches to McDonald's Olympic Champion Crew as they raced against the clock to see who would build the most Big Mac sandwiches.

- Athletes Love McDonald's as the Official Restaurant of the Olympic Games

McDonald's operated three Olympic restaurants in Athens that often featured Olympians such as Michael Phelps, Maurice Green, Ian Thorpe along with the entire U.S. Women's Volleyball and Softball Teams.

- McDonald's and Venus Williams Make a Fashion Splash

in Athens

The Olympic Champion Crew presented hats to Matt, Katie and Al on NBC's "Today Show."

- McDonald's Honors Olympic Champion Crew at USA House Event

USOC executives joined Olympians Janet Evans, Misty May, Kerri Walsh and Steven Lopez in visiting with the crew and saluting their accomplishments, fueling local hometown stories on the Olympic Champion Crew.

- McDonald's Salutes Balanced Lifestyles with Go Active! Day

Olympic champions Carl Lewis and Jackie Joyner Kersee joined McDonald's executives and the Greek Health Minister in declaring Go Active! Day in Athens on August 24th.

McDonald's also announced a donation of 25,000 stepometers to the people of Greece to promote physical activity.

- McDonald's Donates the First Ronald McDonald Playroom to Pendeli Pediatric Hospital

A special ribbon cutting ceremony officially opened a new playroom donated by Ronald McDonald House Charities for use by patients and their families at Pendeli Pediatric Hospital.

Results

The series of activities, events and partnerships combined to generate more than **440 million media impressions**.

Moreover, the activity has laid the foundation for a protocol with McDonald's on moving their Olympic activity into a 365-day per year brand building initiative.

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Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York, Inc.

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Testimony before the
NYS Assembly
Task Force on Food, Farm & Nutrition Policy
Standing Committee on Agriculture
Standing Committee on Health
Standing Committee on Social Services

Presented by Sarah Johnston, Executive Director, NOFA-NY
May 16, 2005

NOFA-NY is an education and advocacy membership organization with farmer, gardener and consumer members across the state. We have seen our membership and interest in organic farming and food increase steadily over the years.

We support the establishment of a State Food Policy Plan that brings state resources together with people to work towards specific goals. We think the goals stated in the legislative intent of A2651 are well articulated. While there does need to be a State Food Policy Council, what is most important is for the State to enable the local work of locally active groups working in their communities.

The best thing NYS has done recently in relation to increasing the ability of people to feed themselves is pass an increase in the state minimum wage. Thank you for doing so last year. We urge you to continue to move NYS's minimum wage towards a living wage.

Farming, food processing, food distribution and sales are all big business. The committees holding this hearing are to be commended, but where is Economic Development? The state has a tremendous amount to gain in economic terms from increasing small business in NYS. A significant economic development commitment is needed to bring the ideas in this bill to fruition.

NOFA-NY believes that the most important component of strengthening our abilities to feed New Yorkers who are able to purchase their own food and those who must now depend on assistance is to provide improved state support for beginning, very small and small farms as well as small scale processors.

We need to encourage what I will call the 6-goat dairy. Very small operations such as six-goat dairies can produce enough cheese and milk to make it worth the while of the retired individual or the mom with 2 pre-school kids to make and sell the cheese. Very small farm operations add up. These small farms are adding the interest and appeal to farmers' markets that draw bigger crowds.

-Small farmers need access to no or very low interest loans for small capital investments. The State could create a revolving fund for small farmers to be administered by a county bank for farmers who are contributing to improving that county's Community Food Security.

Growing Organic for the Future

#16

-Small farmers need the NYS Dept. of Agriculture & Markets to conduct education and training sessions on how they can meet current on-farm processing regulations. Ag & Mkts inspectors need to continue to have as their goal excellent farm and home processing sanitation, but also approach barn or kitchen sanitation set-ups to allow there to be multiple ways of meeting rigorous sanitation requirements, in other words, regulatory flexibility.

- NYS needs to be certain that its laws, rules and regulations allow for a wide variety of high quality, healthy food. High quality, healthy food means different things to different people and these differences should be accommodated by flexibility in NYS regulations. Many people want access to raw milk, raw milk yogurt and raw milk cheeses. NYS's current regulations allow for the sale of raw milk under rigorous inspection at the farm, for farm store sales. NYS's current regulations provide the third party assurance of excellent on-farm sanitation. However, these same regulations limit how and where raw milk can be sold. Farmers need to be able to sell raw milk at retail outlets. Farmers also need the assurance that NYS will continue to allow the sale of raw milk.

- Other issues related to high quality food include the right to farm and produce crops that are not contaminated by adjacent fields of genetically engineered crops. This problem is growing and needs state attention, as does food labeling to allow consumers the right to easily determine just what they are eating.

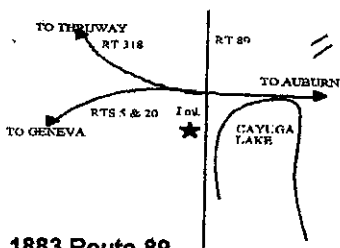
- The key element of Community Food Security is local production of what we eat. I assert that NYS could do this if we wished. However, the food industry as it is currently structured, is not interested in changes that would encourage local production and consumption. The planning process must consider that entrenched interests will need to be overcome when they are in the way of appropriate change.

- NYS need to expand and improve its farmers markets. NYS should seek to change the regulations, which currently do not allow WIC coupons to be spent on organic foods.

- NYS should increase support for the Farmers Market Nutrition Coupons and, as they do in Vermont and Maine, provide coupons up to \$100 per season per senior, allowing seniors to spend their coupons on farms (as a CSA share) and at farm stands in addition to farmer's markets.

- Encouragement of school systems to purchase foods from local farms has not gone far enough. The complexities of food service companies, BOCES multi-district buying and the usual practice of an annual bid for a single distributor do not allow for average farmers to participate in school food provision. What might? Perhaps incentives, perhaps the requirement that some percentage of fresh food be bid locally, we don't really know. NYS farmers can grow vegetables that can be delivered many months of the school year if they have a market that can guarantee them a price that covers the costs of greenhouse growing of salad mixes in December and storage of root crops in climate controlled facilities for distribution of carrots from November to spring. These practices, however, require small business investments and such investments need to be linked to some assurance of a market. Since salad mix can be grown in Mexico in the winter and shipped here now (but perhaps not economically three years from now), these assurances are particularly important.

During WWI, the US government appealed to the general public and asked everyone to plant victory gardens. The US Department of Agriculture estimates that more than 20 million victory gardens were planted. Fruit and vegetables harvested in these home and community plots was estimated to be 9-10 million tons, an amount equal to all commercial production of fresh vegetables. A successful Community Food Security program will require a similarly compelling marketing campaign that builds on the popularity of farmers markets and good food for all segments of society.



1883 Route 89
Phone 315 568-2978

SHUSTER FARMS

#17



Specializing in Soybeans

Peter C. Shuster

SENECA FALLS, NEW YORK 13148

May 14, 2005

To: NYS Assembly

Task Force on Food, Farm & Nutrition Policy	Chair, Assemblyman Felix W. Ortiz
Standing Committee on Agriculture	Chair, Assemblyman William Magee
Standing Committee on Good Health	Chair, Assemblyman Richard N. Gottfried
Standing Committee on Social Services	Chair, Assembly Member Deborah J. Glick

Honorable Assemblyman Ortiz and Task Force Members,

My name is Peter C. Shuster. I was born in 1929, on a family farm with no off-farm income. I was blessed with good parents who worked their way through the depression. Father could dig potatoes, pick apples or cut corn all day--this was all hand work--and out-spell most people at school board meetings! Mother was noted for excellence in teaching school before she married Dad, and helped him any way she could while raising 3 boys. I grew up working with all the animals and diverse crops you found in central NY. 4-H club was a real character builder and led me to a BS degree at Cornell University. In 1952, I began farming in partnership with my Dad and became a dairy farmer with registered Holsteins. Between my wife and me we have raised five fine children. Farm life gave them a rich background to excel. But not one of them is farming today! The herd was dispersed in 1972, and I changed my enterprise to selling and growing Certified seed, specializing in Soybeans. We now condition organic soybeans to ship to Japan. I am OMIC and OCIA certified. I have been President of Seneca County Farm Bureau and of the Cornell Seed Improvement Co-op. I try to be a faithful church goer.

My reason for being here is to paint a picture of the Crushing Burdens on Family Farms, and to try to persuade you to do something about it. You are to be commended for easing the farm real-estate tax load. You have authorized agriculture assessments, refunded a large portion of the school tax burden, and maintained Agricultural Districts. Our Federal Government has a whole program to subsidize Agriculture, **BUT** this is not enough to secure a sound economic future for the next farm generation.

In 1798, Thomas Malthus wrote an essay, "The principal of population to increase faster than its means of subsistence." This easily translates into: If now it takes 4 or 5 workers to pay our social security retirement check, how are 2 workers going to shoulder the cost in 25 years? Or, with a trade deficit of \$65 billion last month--importing beyond our means to export--how long can we maintain our living standard? Taking our food supply for granted, when 140 or more people depend on ONE farmer, should make some people anxious. Commercial farmers represent less than 1% of our population. What if something happened to them? In a time span of just a few months, our world could go from abundance to starvation caused by bad weather, crop diseases, terrorism, or loss of our Farming Class. This Farming Class has been steadily growing older, with the average age now 54 years old. I asked Cornell University's Dean of Agriculture a few years ago what he was doing to train young college students to learn modern farming technology. He replied, "Farm work is too hard. The hours are too long. The pay is too low. What student wants to be a Farmer?"

Who even wants to work on a farm when welfare will feed them for doing nothing ?

Agricultural illiteracy is overwhelming our country's ability to make good decisions in maintaining a sustainable agriculture. Most voters and legislators are born off the farm and have very little knowledge of what makes a farm tick! During the 2000 election, Al Gore met a student at an Agricultural College and spoke to him like this, "Son, why are you wasting your time here studying how to farm; in a few more years, we will be importing all our food." This sounds like **WORLD FOOD & GEOGRAPHY ILLITERACY!** IN 25 years, the world is expected to have 2 billion more mouths to feed. Some parts of Africa and Asia are starving already!

Huge changes have taken place in agriculture . Daniel Webster wrote in 1840, " When tillage begins, other arts follow. The farmers, therefore are the founders of civilization"



Look at the picture of some farm tools available to farmers 165 years ago. My Grandfather used some of these tools when he was a boy following a McCormick reaper that had to have each sheaf of grain raked off by hand.

Later on, when my grandfather started farming for himself, he was able to make more with a couple hundred dollars' worth of tools, a team of horses, and a \$6000 farm than a Gould's Pumps factory laborer could. Not true for average farmers today! Their average investment is \$1,708 per acre for real estate and buildings plus machinery and animals. Their incomes barely make ends meet even with wife and children all helping!

We call this a COST / PRICE squeeze!

Costs of a few inputs when I started farming in 1952 versus today's costs:

<u>Costs 1952</u>	<u>Costs 2005</u>
Acre (land & blds). \$ 100	\$1,708.
Milking dairy cow \$ 200.	\$2,000
37 HP Tractor \$3000.	\$35,000, most small tractors (<i>manufactured abroad</i>)
Gasoline \$ 0 .40/gal	\$2.25/gal
Farm Labor \$1.00 / hr.	\$12.00 / hr,
Repair Labor \$2.00 / hr	\$60.00 / hr

"B" farmer wanted to expand his dairy from 30 to 60 cows in 1970. His banker would lend him money *only* if he expanded to 120 cows. He made the plunge of growing *four times* as big faster than he could learn and adjust to the required new management techniques. The farm failed, and the banker foreclosed. He left our area with his seed corn bill never paid.

"C" farmer was building his farm business in the late 1960's and 70's by doubling the size every few years based on the strong price of soybeans. When the soybean market dropped from \$8.50 to \$4.50/bushel, his bankers foreclosed. He settled my account, but couldn't make ends meet with the bankers. During the last few years he ruined his health from overworking.

What should the New York State Assembly Task Force do to keep enough family farms in business to provide an adequate food supply?

EDUCATION:

- Include general agriculture in curriculum for upper class students with field trips to farms.
- Encourage and fund vocational agriculture education in our high schools.
- Fund agricultural colleges for training in farming technology.

LABOR:

- Simplify labor tax laws for farm laborers.
- Reduce labor costs through revising the minimum wage and liberalizing immigration laws for farm labor. Perhaps "workfare" could replace welfare.

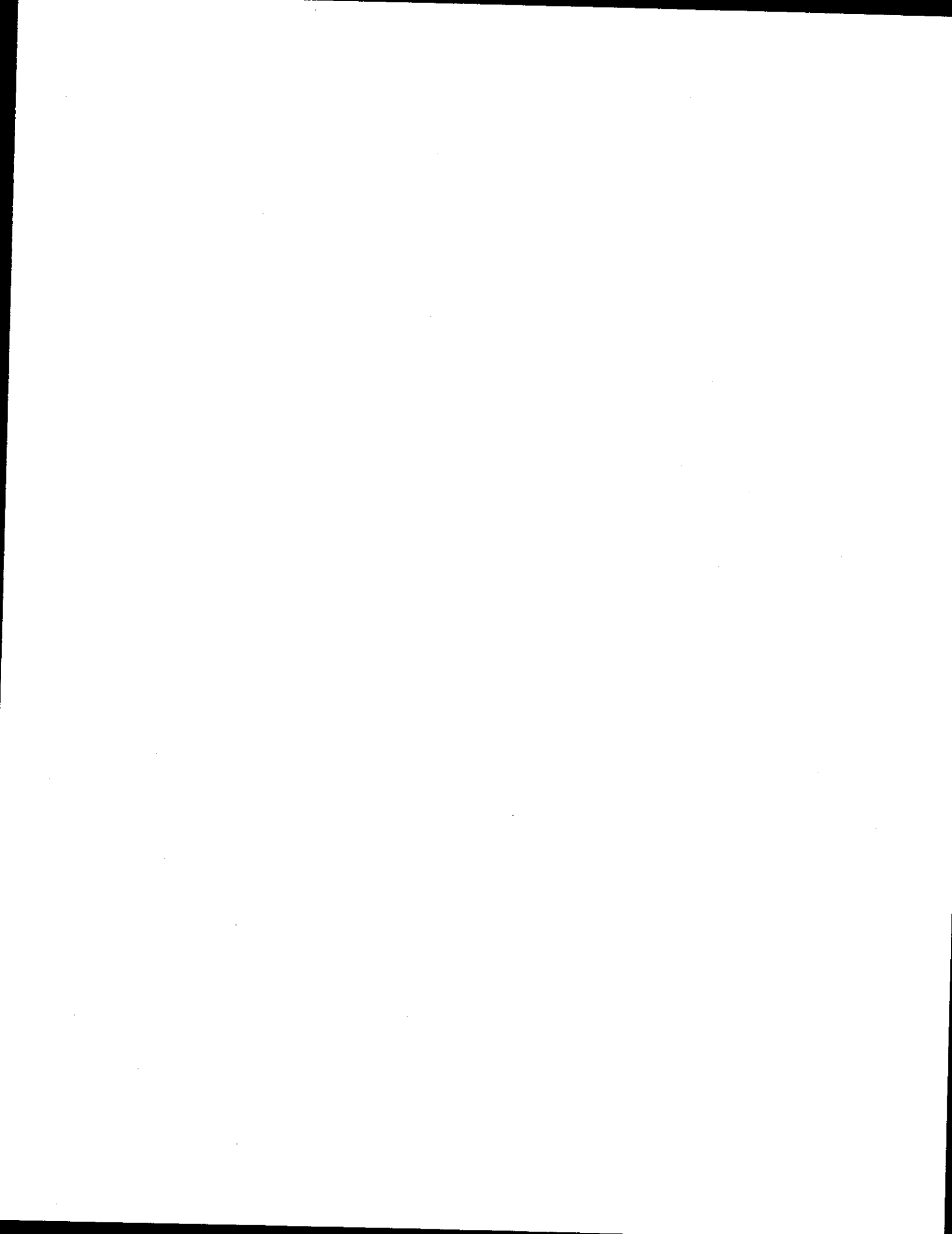
REGULATION:

- Environmental (including odor and water pollution) regulations should be 100% government funded.

TRANSFER OF FARMS TO SUCCEEDING GENERATIONS:

- Provide legal advice through the Cooperative Extension regarding Limited Liability Corporations or other cost-reducing means of transferring farms to the next generation.
- Provide Tax relief to farm estate transfers.

Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to speak today. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.





#18

Statement to the Task Force and Committees on NYS Food and Nutrition Policy
Monday, May 16, 2005

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Panel: Thank you for holding this Hearing on New York State Food and Nutrition Policy. Increasingly, proper nutrition is being recognized as central to a full and healthy life.

I am Dianne Woitkowski, Deputy Executive Director for Program and Planning at God's Love We Deliver in New York City.

For almost 20 years, God's Love We Deliver has been carrying out its mission of providing home-delivered meals and nutrition education and counseling services to our clients and their dependent minors. In that time, we have provided over **7.5 million home-delivered meals** and provided nutrition education and counseling services to over 47,000 people.

Our original purpose was to contribute to the fight on AIDS and provide this critical nutritional support to persons living with HIV/AIDS (PLWH/As), but in recent years, in response to persistent requests to do so, we have expanded our mission to include persons with other serious illnesses. We now serve persons with cancer, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, and other grave conditions that prevent them from shopping/cooking for themselves. The services we offer contribute enormously to the betterment of our clients' lives, affording them the security of an assured source of food and nutrition support, allowing them to avoid and/or shorten hospital stays, and enabling them better to manage their sometimes complicated regimes of medication and treatment.

It is a sad fact that the demand for our services continues to rise. During Calendar Year 2004, we provided 704,938 meals to 3,497 clients and 632 of their dependent children. Currently we are delivering to more than 1,500 clients daily in all areas of all five boroughs of the City. Among these are approximately 600 clients whose illnesses include: cancer, multiple sclerosis, Lou Gehrig's Disease, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's disease, diabetes, lupus, hepatitis, muscular dystrophy and heart disease.

Our clients are among the City's most vulnerable citizens. 54% are women and children, and 73% are members of minority groups. 75% report that they receive Medicaid. 69% of our New York City clients reside in the outer boroughs.

With increasing pressure on hospitals to discharge patients as quickly as possible and decreasing mortality because of improved medications, testing and more effective treatments, the number of people who live at home with serious illnesses is increasing at record levels. Not surprisingly, eating nutritious meals and obtaining nutritional counseling are increasingly recognized by the health care community as a vitally important tool in maintaining health, aiding in recovery from illness and fighting disease. Good nutrition is also one aspect of serious illness that the patients can control and, in doing so, often improve their health status thus decreasing their need for health care.

Yet because of lack of knowledge, time and – in too many instances – funds, caregivers are often unable to provide the nutritious food that their loved ones need to optimize their health. The Surgeon General reports that two-thirds of all deaths are due to diseases associated with poor diet and dietary habits. The cost of one year's home delivered meals for a person with serious illness can be equivalent to the cost of one day in the hospital. So, from a social and fiscal perspective, providing home-delivered therapeutic meals for the seriously ill makes sense.

The national and statewide response to the AIDS pandemic has provided a model for how to meet the food and nutritional needs of people living with other serious illnesses. Under the Ryan White CARE Act, federal funds exist to enhance and prolong the lives of people living with HIV/AIDS, through therapeutic meals and nutrition therapy, who live with AIDS and who are well enough to live at home but too sick to shop and cook for themselves. Yet, despite increasing need, there are **no** federal funds for anyone who needs these services who is under age 60 and suffering from an illness other than AIDS.

Accordingly, we would recommend that Assembly Bill A.2651 be amended to include the seriously ill, and, if possible, their caregivers as a targeted population in need of nutritional support under the Bill. The Fiscal Implication comment indicates that funding would be channeled through the New York State Department of Health's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), now known as the Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP). We regard this as an excellent suggestion. HPNAP has strongly promoted the use of fresh produce and fruit, New York State-grown as possible, in all its programs. It has superbly qualified professional nutritionists on staff and manages its programs with minimal bureaucratic encumbrance. God's Love We Deliver's experience with HPNAP has been a most rewarding one – especially for the clients we serve.

Professional nutritionists recognize that people suffering from a particular illness may have needs specific to that illness. Thus God's Love We Deliver nutritionists are producing manuals that specifically address the nutritional needs of, for example, a person with colo-rectal cancer, breast cancer, AIDS, MS, etc. It is important to realize that to really meet the needs of seriously ill people, their meal service must be targeted to their specific situation and condition. It is for this reason that a more generally designed meal program may not be sufficient for a seriously ill person. For example, the needs of a seriously ill senior citizen may not be met by a meal provided by a local Meals on Wheels program because that senior's illness entails special

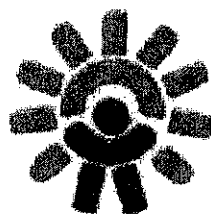
nutritional needs.

Because there are no mandatory reporting laws for illnesses other than AIDS, it is impossible to definitively measure the scope of the need of people living with cancer and other illnesses for home-delivered food and nutritional counseling. But it is estimated that there will be 32,751 New Yorkers and 1,368,030 people in the U.S. diagnosed with cancer this year alone. Our own numbers continue to grow. In April 2004, we served 478 clients with illness other than AIDS; in April 2005, the number was 597, a 20% increase. This, despite the fact limited funding makes it necessary that we correspondingly limit our enrollment of these clients.

In closing, let me reiterate the social and economic benefits of providing this important nutrition service: A reduction of even a few days in a hospital will result in tremendous savings. Proper nutrition enhances the effectiveness of medications and treatments, promoting a speedier recovery. And most importantly, it allows seriously ill people to remain in their homes, with their loved ones and in familiar surroundings, rather than in a residential or other health care facility.

On behalf of God's Love We Deliver, other nutrition programs in New York State and the clients we serve, I hope you will seriously consider the nutrition needs of the critically ill and their caregivers, and, again, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

#19



THE Children's
Health FUND

Public Hearing

New York State Food and Nutrition Policy

Monday, May 16th 10:00 am

Roosevelt Hearing Room C, Legislative Office Building, Second Floor

Albany, NY

The Children's Health Fund

Sandra Goldsmith, Registered Dietician/Director of Nutrition Services

Public Hearing
New York State Food and Nutrition Policy
Monday, May 16th 10:00 am
Roosevelt Hearing Room C, Legislative Office Building, Second Floor
Albany, NY
The Children's Health Fund

Good Morning my name is Sandie Goldsmith and I am a Registered Dietitian. I am here today representing the Community Pediatric Programs (CPP) of the Children's Hospital at Montefiore (CHAM) where I am Director of Nutrition Services and The Children's Health Fund (CHF), a national network of innovative health care delivery programs for children and families. Our comprehensive programs serve homeless families in the New York City shelter system and low-income, housed families at our community health center in the South Bronx. We appreciate the opportunity to present testimony at this hearing today.

The Children's Health Fund was founded in 1987 by singer/song writer Paul Simon and pediatrician, child advocate Dr. Irwin Redlener. CHF supports health care programs for homeless and medically underserved children and families in New York City, where its flagship is located, and in 17 programs across the nation. Over 300,000 medically underserved children have received medical care through our National Network.

There are an increasing number of children who are food insecure in New York State (NYS) and New York City (NYC). Of the children residing in NYS, approximately 340,000 are hungry and more than 1 million are hungry or at risk of hunger.¹ This

¹ The Nutrition Consortium of NYS. "Hunger In New York State: A Hunger Data Book, November 1999

number includes the working poor. According to one study of the households that access Emergency Food programs, 39% of households have at least one adult who is working.² In NYC, one quarter of the city's children rely on food assistance to avoid hunger.

Concurrently, members of low-income, minority communities, much like the population we serve, are also dealing with the issues of childhood obesity and the increasing prevalence of Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus. Homeless and low-income children in general have diets that are typically high in saturated fat and sugar and low in fruits and vegetables. Access to healthy foods is more difficult in many low-income areas and is especially difficult for families living in the shelter system.

The South Bronx community has one of the highest rates of obesity in NYC; as many as 1 in 4 adults are considered obese. A recent chart review of pediatric patients from six to 19 years of age at the South Bronx Health Center for Children and Families (SBHCCF) revealed that 44% are considered at-risk of overweight (BMI greater than the 85th percentile) or obesity (BMI greater than the 95th percentile), which is above the national average.

To help combat this issue, CPP and CHF created the Starting Right Initiative in 2001. This program is designed to create a new model of care for medically underserved pediatric populations, and increase awareness of pediatric overweight and its potential health consequences, including Type 2 diabetes. There are four components: the

² NYC Hunger Study, 2001

clinical component where we are creating new identification and screening protocols, developing new referral protocols to specialty care, developing nutrition curricula and creating education materials to be used with medical providers, pediatric patients, and parents; the research component; the public policy component and a component that focuses on public education/awareness.

The Starting Right program's family-focused primary care and nutrition services provide much needed quality care for this high risk population. Recently, we developed and implemented a 12-week family-centered weight management program for children ages 11 – 14 years that addresses the specific needs of this South Bronx community. The program consists of interactive learning sessions, guided physical activity, parent nutrition education and family activities. It also addresses emotional issues like body image, self-esteem and emotional eating.

Through our programs at CPP and CHF we are trying to positively impact the health and nutrition status of our patients. To date, the response from the community to our efforts has been very positive. However, the patients we serve reside in a community that does not have many healthy food options to support their efforts to change. Most of our programs have a nutrition component and discuss healthy eating guidelines. We try to provide education around choosing healthy foods yet, at the same time, it is challenging for the members of this community to access many of the foods that are beneficial to their health.

In a recent a focus group held at the SBHCCF, parents from the South Bronx discussed the difficulties they face in regard to purchasing fresh fruits and vegetables that are edible or meats that are not expired or close to expiration. Most participants, in order to purchase these foods, must travel outside of their immediate community. Additionally, participants revealed that when they do travel to purchase these foods, the cost of is often prohibitive.

Challenges

The absence of infrastructural supports in low-income communities like supermarkets, which offer fresh food options such as fresh fruit and vegetables, poses a real challenge for programs like ours that provide nutrition services to medically underserved children and families to combat obesity and promote a healthy lifestyle. Neighborhood food environments are correlative to dietary choices.³ As such, experts attribute long-term and sustainable dietary changes to lowering risk factors for chronic disease and achieving and maintaining good health.⁴ For children, in particular, whose dietary behaviors are shaped at a young age, the lack of healthy food choices has a profound effect on their current and future health. The paucity of quality food retail stores to support healthy diet choices is especially salient in low-income, Black and Latino communities, where children are developing diet related diseases like type 2 diabetes and risk factors for cardiovascular diseases at an alarming rate.

The relationship between food environment and overall health is further elucidated when a closer look is taken at the disparity of supermarkets in low-income communities

³ Mikkelsen L. *The Links Between Neighborhood Food Environment and Childhood Nutrition Draft*

as compared to wealthier communities. According to the Farmers' Market Trust, supermarkets are distributed according to income levels not by population density.⁵ Hence in low-income, communities of color there is a dearth of supermarkets. There are four times as many supermarkets in white neighborhoods than in Black neighborhoods.⁶ Residents in low-income communities are relegated to choosing from the food offerings of small neighborhood grocery stores, convenience stores or corner markets, which have fewer health food choices and, instead, have an abundance of calorie dense and high fat foods. Moreover, prices in those stores can exceed those of supermarkets by as much as 48%.⁷

Researchers posit that children who reside in low-income, communities of color are, in particular, at a disadvantage in terms of their ability to make sensible and healthy food choices. On a daily basis, traveling to and from school, for example, children in low-income communities are bombarded with a plethora of food choices, many of which are unhealthy. As more children eat meals outside of the home, it is imperative that they have good food choices available to them.⁸ Findings in an *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* article demonstrated that children will eat healthier foods like fruits and vegetables if it is easily accessible.⁹

⁴ Morland K, Wing S, Diez Roux A. Neighborhood Characteristics Associated with the Location of Food Stores and Food Service Places. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. 2002;22:23-29.

⁵ Shaffer A. "The Persistence of L.A.'s Grocery Gap: The Need For a New Food Policy and Approach to Market Development," Center for Food and Justice.

⁶ Morland

⁷ Weinberg Z. No Place to Shop: Food Access Lacking in the Inner City. *Race Poverty & the Environment*. 2000;7(2):22-24

⁸ Mikkelsen (Draft)

⁹ Morland

The disappearance of the chain supermarket from low-income communities is not the only barrier to accessing healthy foods. The concentration of supermarkets in the suburbs often requires low-income families to travel farther to buy food. Walking to the nearest supermarket for most low-income families is not feasible, as many supermarkets are not in walking distance.¹⁰ Additionally, low-income families are less likely to even own a car, preventing families from buying an adequate amount of groceries when they do travel the distance to shop at supermarkets.¹¹ Thus, the more viable option is to shop locally at small grocers or convenience stores for their food needs, compromising cost, quality and nutritional value. A 2002 study by the Center for Food and Justice, a Los Angeles based group, reported the stark difference between the few supermarkets located in low-income communities and supermarkets in suburbs. Shoppers entering a supermarket in one low-income community were met with an array of packaged "cookies, doughnuts, candy, etc." Conversely, shoppers who entered a supermarket from the same supermarket chain in a more affluent community were presented with healthier choices such as, "fresh deli meats, prepared sandwiches, etc."

As stated earlier in the testimony, the South Bronx has the highest rates of obesity in New York City. A study entitled *Food for Every Child*, published by the Prevention Institute, which assessed the need for more supermarkets in Philadelphia, indicated that the location and accessibility of supermarkets was related to the high obesity rate.

¹⁰ Crockett SJ, Sims LS. Environmental Influences on Children's Eating. *Journal of Nutrition Education*. 1995;27(5):235-249

¹¹ Food Stamp Participants' Access to Food Retailers: Summary of Findings. USDA Food and Nutrition Services. July 1999.

Similarly, other low-income communities like those in the South Bronx experience a disproportionate rate of obesity and diet related disease.

However, the South Bronx is not the only region in NYS with high obesity rates, and it is also not unique to New York City or other cities around the state. Some have characterized the obesity rate statewide as reaching epidemic proportions. Over 32 % of low-income children between the ages of two and five years are overweight in NYS.¹² If the tide is not reversed, the future health of these children will be compromised, as diet related health problems will surely plague them, and the economic costs of treating these problems will be astounding. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the United States spends \$75 billion a year on obesity related illness.

Public Policy

Fortunately, many are answering the wake-up call to tackle the obesity epidemic, especially in children. Lawmakers have begun to implement obesity prevention programs. We thank the Governor and the Legislature for providing \$3 million from the Health Care Reform Act in the recently enacted State Budget to fund the Childhood Obesity and Prevention Act. The Act charges the Department of Health with developing media nutrition and physical activity promotion campaigns; implementing school and community-based programs to improve nutrition and increase physical activity; coordinating obesity prevention strategies in government nutrition and recreation programs; providing training to medical professionals; and, tracking the prevalence of the problem in the State. We applaud this effort and would like to offer our support as the state executes this groundbreaking initiative.

However, more needs to be done. We call on lawmakers to implement policies designed to secure access to fresh, affordable and quality foods. The State should expand or spearhead efforts to attract new supermarket development to low-income communities. The State's Economic Development Agency should actively recruit supermarket corporations and provide financial incentives in the form of tax breaks, for example, in exchange for locating to underserved areas. While there is precedent for this tactic in New York State, Rochester Mayor William Johnson brought a large supermarket chain to his city using financial incentives like public funding in 1995, a comprehensive, statewide undertaking is needed. Pennsylvania enacted a program called the Fresh Food Financing Initiative, a public-private partnership that provides up to \$40 million to supermarkets seeking to develop new stores in under-served communities.

As discussed earlier, low-income families have great difficulty accessing fresh, healthy food due to transportation barriers. Transportation policies that link low-income families to supermarkets and even farmer's market would increase healthy food options.¹³ Let us also not forget the effect transportation linkages would have on rural areas, where food insecurity is also pervasive and the relationship between sustainable health and food choices is just as precarious as that in the inner city. The state should study barriers to food access as it relates to transportation. The Federal TEA-21 reauthorization, which

¹² The Centers for Disease Control

¹³ Transportation and Food: The Importance of Access. A Policy Brief by the Center for Food and Justice: Urban and Environmental Policy Institute: October 2002

provides funds to states for transportation projects, provides an opportunity to address food access problems in rural and urban communities.¹⁴

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service charged the Institute of Medicine (IOM) of the National Academies to propose revisions to the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) food package. This past April, the IOM recommended that the food package include more fruit and vegetable choice for women and children by authorizing vouchers or coupons for fresh produce. Other recommendations included allowing only whole grain varieties of breakfast cereals to be purchased through WIC and offering no more than 2 percent milk for women and children over age two. These are just a few of the recommendations. However, it is widely recognized that it is time for a change, especially as a 2004 study published in the *American Journal of Public Health* reported 40% of low income young children in the New York City WIC program were overweight.¹⁵ . State lawmakers should advocate strongly for the implementation of IOM's recommendations to the WIC food package.

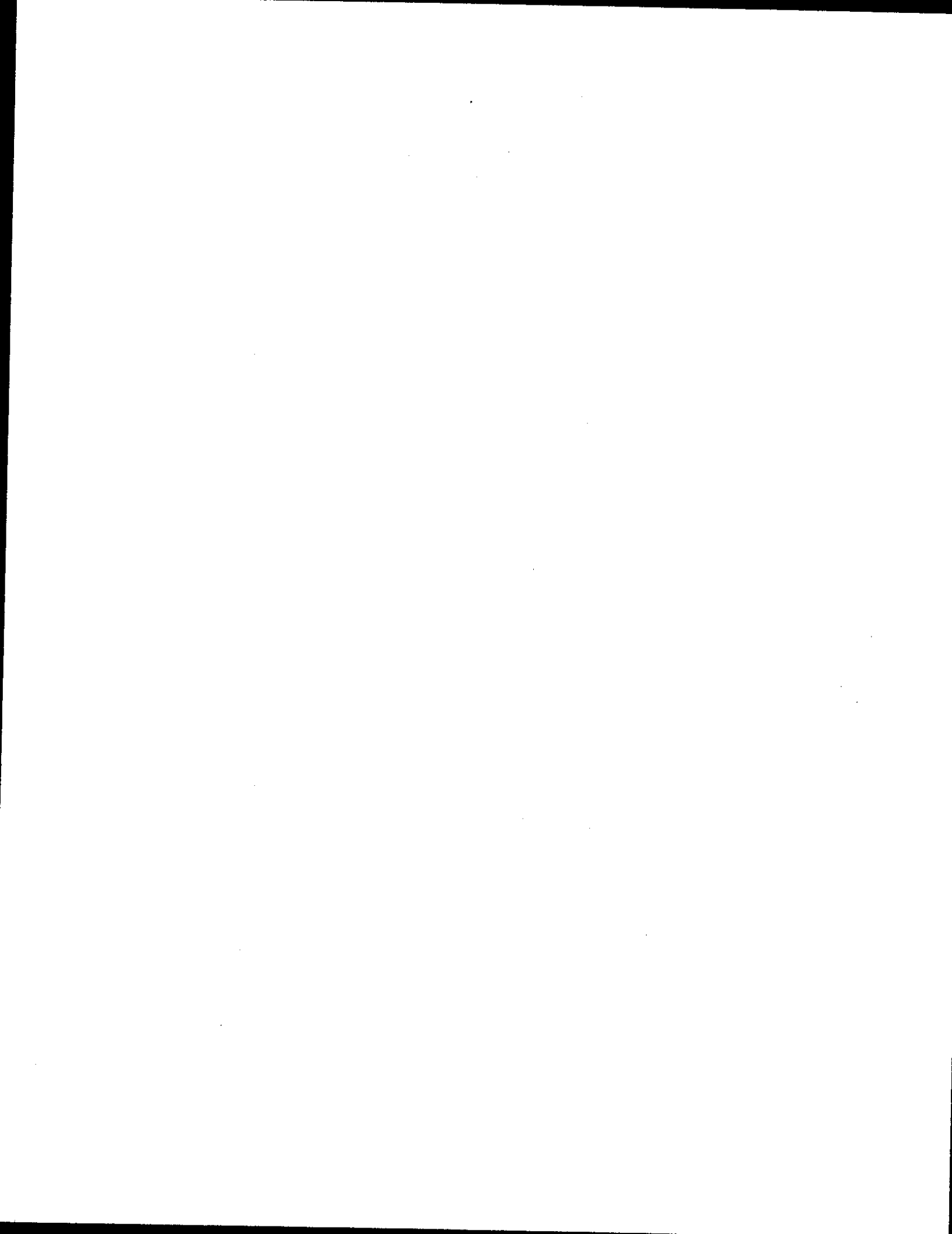
The aforementioned initiatives are preventive measures. However, for children and families who fell through the cracks and are struggling with being overweight or obese, there need to be policies to curtail the onset of chronic disease. An estimated 47 million American adults show signs of metabolic syndrome and are at risk for Type 2 diabetes. If we invest the time and energy in tackling pediatric obesity, there is hope that we will

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ *American Journal of Public Health*, 2004, 94:458-462

see the demise of these diseases in the future. One way to ensure this is to provide nutritional counseling and authorize Medicaid reimbursement for those services. This is achieved by making overweight or obesity a billing diagnosis. Currently, interventions for overweight and obesity cannot be reimbursed until they are considered secondary to preventable chronic conditions like diabetes or hypertension.

The Children's Health Fund is committed to improving the health and welfare of children, especially medically underserved children. Investing in our children now is an investment in our state's future. Many children are growing up with uncertain futures because they are in poor health, struggling with being overweight. Together we can change make a difference. Thank you



#20



Testimony Provided by:

Thomas C. Ferraro
Executive Director and Founder
Foodlink, Inc.

At the

New York State Assembly Hearing on
New York State Food and Nutrition Policy

Monday, May 16, 2005

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I. Introduction

Good Afternoon. I am Tom Ferraro, Executive Director and Founder of Foodlink, the food bank serving the Genesee Valley and Finger Lakes region located in Rochester, New York. Thank you for this opportunity to present testimony to the New York State Assembly on New York State Food and Nutrition Policy.

For nearly thirty years, Foodlink has strived to address community hunger and alleviate the pain of those suffering in poverty in Upstate New York. As an America's Second Harvest food bank, our core function is to rescue and redistribute over 7.5 million pounds of food annually to a network of 550 human service agencies in a 10 county area. We are a member of the Food Bank Association of New York State and I would like to recognize Aine Duggan, from the Food Bank of New York City who will be providing testimony on behalf of the Association later this afternoon.

My testimony here today will focus on three key areas of food and nutrition policy: 1) New York state food banks and our efforts to alleviate hunger and address food insecurity, 2) Child health and nutrition programs as unintentional barriers and necessary solutions to ensure the best possible future for our youth, and 3) the need to engage our agriculture community partners, who are an underutilized resource, to improve our community's overall health while providing an economic engine for the entire state.

II. Background

I speak to you today with over three decades of service in the food and nutrition arena. As founder of one of the first few dozen food banks in the nation in 1976, I have witnessed the continual growth in the demand for emergency food assistance. Our food bank continues to grow in size and total pounds distributed each year. The original concept of food banking was simple - provide the link between our corporate partners with excess food products and give it to community based organizations serving those in need. This original concept of food banking was meant to provide *emergency* food relief, yet has

now become an institutionalized part of our society as a primary mechanism to maintain community health. There has to be a better way.

Providing emergency food is an essential component of our work and we must ensure that vital public funds continue to support these efforts. Food banks are an essential safety net for people in need in our state. At the same time, we must acknowledge the emergency food network is only a reactive band-aid to the overarching health and nutritional needs of our communities. If we are going to truly impact on the problems of food insecurity, inadequate nutrition, and hunger we must take a proactive approach to combat the very causes of these social problems and creatively design public policies which support healthy communities, healthy residents and a strong economy.

III. Food Banks as an Essential Tool

First, on behalf of the Food Bank Association of New York State, I would like to thank the efforts of the Assembly for ensuring the restoration of \$350,000 to the Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP) in the recent budget cycle. The vital services of the eight state food banks would not be possible without the resources provided through the Department of Health HPNAP program. It is estimated that 3 million hungry New Yorkers rely on food provided by food banks each year. The public support of the food banks is essential to meeting the needs of these individuals.

I urge you to continue to fund the HPNAP program and to re-appropriate funds to keep the HPNAP granted dollars in line with inflation. Our costs of maintaining this essential nutrition program continues to rise with increasing fuel and transportation costs, changes in food donations to more perishable and frozen items which require a more costly infrastructure to store and redistribute, and the pressures to keep up with the demands of our progressive and changing food industry partners who make food banking possible.

The food industry is constantly evolving with consumer tastes and demands to ensure a healthy bottom-line. Two current food industry trends have greatly impacted the donation stream for food banks and will require a change in how we serve our communities. The

first is the current trend for more perishable, frozen, and ready-to-eat items at the retail grocery. As the food industry expands its offerings in these areas, the food coming through the donation stream to support the work of food banks has become more costly to handle. As the source of food changes, we are faced with the need to build up a larger and more costly infrastructure of coolers, freezers, and refrigerated trucks. In turn, the community-based organizations such as community cupboards, soup kitchens and shelters who receive the donated food items from the food bank must also build up their infrastructure to handle this more costly and most nutritious food source.

A second food industry trend impacting food banks is the decline of dry reclamation product into the food donation system. The food industry survives on very thin margins to make a profit. Historically, the retail damage product from a grocer would end up as a main source of excellent product for a food bank. In the Rochester area, our corporate partner Wegmans Food Markets, currently provides over 2 million pounds of usable unadulterated salvage product as part of our 7.5 million total distributed pounds annually through its reclamation donation program. This product is shelf stable, typically name brand items, and provides for a diverse product selection desirable by our community charities and their constituents. With increased competition in the retail food market, many retailers are now selling their reclamation items to a tertiary market overseas or at discount stores to try to cut their losses. This trend is a formidable threat to the food sources many food banks rely on.

With the supply of donated food product changing, food banks have been pushed further down the food chain to find the resources we need to service our communities. An untapped source of nutritious foods can be found in the rich agriculture community of New York State. Through our exploration of this donated food source we have learned that our state's farmers are struggling to make ends meet and often have barriers to provide donations to the food banks on a regular basis. Many farmers have shared with us that it is less costly for them to plow their perfectly good food under ground than it is to harvest it for donation. A **Produce Procurement Project** would be a great way to provide New York State farmers with a small value-added-processing fee (VAP) ranging

from \$.03-\$.13 per pound for donated produce to encourage farmers to harvest their surplus and process it in a form for use by a food bank and the emergency food network. Such an initiative has been extremely successful in Texas and Ohio and should be replicated in our great state. Such a program would invest in our state's farmers while increasing the amount of nutritious foods to our food banks to serve our needy citizens, many of whom have health risks due in part to poor nutrition.

I urge the Assembly to explore creative policy measures to assist food banks in the transition of handling more costly food items and simultaneously supporting grants to fund equipment for the emergency providers to receive such perishable food items. I also urge the development of increased tax incentives for food donors to donate their product to food banks rather than sell their valuable product to a tertiary market. Finally, I urge policy-makers to explore a pilot Produce Procurement Project whereby New York State farmers would receive a small stipend for harvesting and processing their healthy food for donation to state food banks.

IV. Child Health and Wellness Programs

The second key area of food and nutrition policy I would like to discuss is the child health and nutrition programs of our state which can act as unintentional barriers while remaining our necessary solution to improve the health of our youth.

In our *2001 Hunger in America Study* in partnership with America's Second Harvest, we documented through personal interviews and agency surveys, the fact that over 38% of people receiving emergency food assistance at Foodlink supported programs are children¹. Adding to this study, the City of Rochester ranks 11th worst in the nation for childhood poverty, and an average of 88% of our City School District children qualify for free and reduced meals during the school day². These striking statistics act as an

¹ America's Second Harvest 2001 Hunger in America local report – www.foodlinkny.org

² Children's Defense Fund, <http://www.childrensdefense.org/familyincome/childpoverty/default.aspx>, 5/14/05; Reduced meal stats <http://www.nysed.gov>.

indicator of high rates of poverty, malnutrition and poor health that threaten our community's children.

At the same time we are haunted by the statistics of childhood hunger, we also recognize the growing rates of childhood obesity in our nation. The Center for Disease Control states that a poor diet and lack of physical activity are closing in on tobacco as the leading cause of death in the U.S.³ Today, 1 in 5 children are considered obese. Childhood obesity is likely to persist into adult life and puts individuals at risk for stroke, hypertension, diabetes and other chronic diseases.⁴ More must be done to stop this growing epidemic.

Child nutrition and wellness is a priority for Foodlink. Building on our core expertise of using food to improve community health, in 1993 Foodlink established its first Kids Cafe program, a national program through America's Second Harvest, where children are provided a nutritious evening meal at established after-school sites that offer nutrition education, mentoring, tutoring and other activities. Currently, Foodlink sponsors 33 Kids Cafes – serving over 1,000 children each day through an extensive partnership with host community organizations and the NYS Child and Adult Care Feeding Program (CACFP).

In 2001, Foodlink established the Foodlink Kitchen and began serving hot and nutritious prepared meals in the summer of 2001. By the summer of 2003, its operations had grown to serve over 1,100 lunches and 500 breakfasts per day to children in need. The mission of the Foodlink Kitchen is to raise the bar on institutional meals for kids by providing the best nutritional menu possible to address childhood health issues such as that of malnutrition, obesity, childhood diabetes, and asthma. Our customized and unique food service program exceeds national nutritional standards, as well as the rigorous requirements for child nutrition programs at our schools, Kids Cafes and Summer Meals programs. We are committed to providing children access to nutritious, healthy foods that

³ "Fat, Cheap, and Out of Control," <http://my.webmd.com/content/article/84/98066.htm> 5/14/05

⁴ Center for Nutrition and Policy Promotion: Childhood Obesity Caused & Prevention. <http://www.usda.gov/cnpp/Seminars/obesity.PDF>, 5/14/05.

are culturally and ethnically appropriate. The Foodlink Kitchen works not only to meet the USDA guidelines for healthy meals, but to surpass them.

Our Kitchen provides meals through Kids Cafes during the school year with the financial support of the Child and Adult Care Feeding Program. During the summer months, our Kitchen provides over 40,000 meals for summer programs through the support of the Summer Meals program. Both of these public programs are essential and we are grateful for the opportunity to utilize these public resources to improve the lives of our community's children. We are making great progress in identifying and targeting areas in most need for our services. But I am here to tell you it has not been easy.

The CACFP program through the Department of Health and the Summer Meals Program through the Department of Education are two very different programs in philosophy and implementation. The program of CACFP is not designed in a manner to fully promote the potential for creative and healthy eating for our children. The reimbursement structure is cost prohibitive to invest in the use of fresh ingredients which is more expensive in acquisition and preparation labor costs. The CACFP program has not embraced the concept Foodlink has put forth of utilizing the food bank resources as a cost effective means to acquire perfectly healthy and nutritious food at minimal expense to be incorporated into our children's meals.

The Foodlink Kitchen has higher labor costs because we do not believe in opening up #10 cans with pre-sliced fruits and vegetables soaked in unhealthy syrup or sodium. We receive fresh produce right from the food bank and have our staff slice and dice the produce for our kids to eat. This small step is part of the larger philosophy to provide the most nutritious meals for kids we possibly can. We also utilize child-size salad bars as a way to engage children in meal time. On average, the children consume twice the amount of fruits and vegetables when they are able to serve themselves. However, we continue to have an on-going struggle with this state agency to understand our costs are different than typical food vendors because of our unique partnership of the food bank as a source for low cost nutritious food.

The Summer Meals program, by contrast, is a viable program and has provided top-notch technical assistance and training to help us implement a successful program right from the start. It would appear that the punitive approach of CACFP to sponsors such as Foodlink comes from a deep concern for protecting the integrity of the program which has experienced abuse in large metropolitan areas in years past. The restrictive approach has deterred community based agencies from joining CACFP and has caused our organization to reevaluate continuation of our child nutrition programs. The strict parameters and constrained approaches to improving child health have short-changed this vital program's potential for a large and lasting impact.

On the other hand, last year Foodlink was awarded the 2004 Building for the Future Award for Outreach and Community Partnership at the National Conference of the CACFP National Professional Association in Madison, Wisconsin. Foodlink was also awarded the National Model Program Award for Child Nutrition by America's Second Harvest in 2003. In addition, we have worked with USDA administrators in Washington, D.C. to incorporate federal provisions to include the food banking concept into a policy memorandum issued last year to state CACFP offices.

Recent policy changes are making it so our youth programs can not afford to keep their doors open to serve our youth. Foodlink's first Kids Cafe program was Cameron Community Ministries, located in one of the most impoverished areas of Rochester, and one of the first Kids Cafe programs in the nation. Recent policy changes from CACFP and HPNAP have threatened this essential program's survival. Cameron Community Ministries receives a daily hot nutritious meal for its after-school program from the Foodlink Kitchen. It also has received an annual \$3,000 grant from the competitive grant process of the Department of Health HPNAP Operations Support program to off-set staff costs. With a new July 2005 policy change, Cameron Community Ministries will no longer be eligible for the HPNAP funds while it receives CACFP meals through Foodlink. A loss of such a small amount for staff costs has put this model after-school program in jeopardy to continue its programming.

Similar challenges exist for two Kids Cafes hosted by the Salvation Army of Rochester who are now threatening to have to close as a result of the new policy change. Both of our Salvation Army Kids Cafes are self-prep and serve high-need youth in predominately Hispanic and African-American neighborhoods. The Kids Cafes not only provide nutritious meals for area youth, but the programs provide a safe place for the children to go after-school in a nurturing environment. The loss of access to the food bank HPNAP grants for food and staff support put the Salvation Army in a sudden position to replace over \$20,000 in lost value of food products and cash support – a heavy loss which is doubtful can be overcome to maintain current level of services.

I urge the Assembly to convene a State Food Policy Council with a particular focus on child nutrition programs barriers and successes. The key to the success of state supported child nutrition programs is to provide an on-going opportunity for program providers and implementers to have input in the design of program policy. It is also essential for providers to network with one another to share best practices, technical training and support. The current reimbursement structure and program policies must be reexamined for unintentional barriers to successful program implementation. We must continue to support child nutrition programs in a manner whereby community agencies on the front-lines are not forced to cut corners or close their doors due to a lack of resources. I contend that the intentions of the policies for these programs are positive but fail in accomplishing their intent by causing negative, albeit unintended, repercussions during implementation which are counter to the overall mission of feeding more children and thus improving upon their health and overall wellness.

V. Agriculture Community as an Economic Engine: The Fulfillment Center Concept

The third and final key for food and nutrition policy I will speak to today is the need to engage our agriculture community partners to improve our community's overall health while providing an economic engine for the entire state. New York has a vast and rich agriculture community that must be engaged to help identify and address the barriers for

their continued survival. From 1980 to 1995, 150,000 acres of farmland and 1,000 farms were lost every year in New York State - an astounding average of 20 farms lost each week.⁵ Passage of the Assembly Bill A.2651 to establish Community Food Security Program initiatives is a necessary step to provide resources to fund creative solutions to stop future loss of this untapped economic development tool while securing healthy food options for our schools.

It is the belief of Foodlink's well represented fiduciaries that good stewardship is to utilize the millions of dollars of assets bestowed upon our non-profit organizations to provide more than charity to our communities. As the regional food bank, Foodlink resides in a 120,000 square foot warehouse with a fleet of refrigerated trucks, coolers and freezers comparable to mainstream regional food distribution businesses. Our food bank services are essential at this point in time, but we would be remiss to not seek out additional ways to impact the nutritional and economic health of our communities in an effort to end the cycle of perpetual poverty by creating opportunities for ownership and jobs.

From this logic, Foodlink is in a position to build on our strengths and links with the food industry and agricultural community by leveraging our distribution network to provide a win-win for all concerned. We believe in being proactive to provide more than charity for our community, by building on the assets we are entrusted with, to provide a force for economic development to better our entire community.

Foodlink, in partnership with Hillary Rodham Clinton's office and her Cornell Agriculture Fellow, have begun to explore the notion of a **Fulfillment Center** to link New York State farmers with an opportunity for a viable marketplace. Through a series of focus groups, area farmers have articulated real barriers for their survival as a viable economic entity. Some of these barriers include: lack of resources to pay for cost-

⁵Best Kept Secret In New York: Farm Fresh Produce Delivered to NYC Neighborhoods, By Bette Cohen, Professor, Natural and Applied Sciences www.lagcc.cuny.edu/livewire/5/ on 5/15/05.

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Food, Farm and Nutrition Policy Testimony

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Introduction

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you, Assemblyman. Ortiz, Assemblyman Magee, Assemblyman Gottfried, and Assemblymember Glick, for your legislative actions and activities (such as this Public Hearing) in addressing the concerns of the poor, the less privileged, the infirm, and of the farmers struggling to make a living, provide for their families, and contribute to the quality of life in New York State.

My name is Duncan Hilchey. I am Senior Extension Associate and Agriculture Development Specialist with the Community, Food, and Agriculture Program in the Department of Development Sociology in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell University. I am also an advisor to the board of directors of the New York State Farmers' Direct Marketing Association. Before I present the key points of my testimony regarding "minimal raw product preparation" at direct marketing outlets to improve senior citizen nutrition, I'd like to take a minute or two to describe the work of the Community, Food, and Agriculture Program and briefly share with a some of our work which is particularly relevant to the activities of the Growing Home Partnership and its member organizations and agencies, and which may contribute to the critical work of this Task Force

The Community, Food, and Agriculture Program is a founding member of the Growing Home Partnership (which you will be hearing more of from my colleague Hank Herrera). Our role in the Partnership is to provide research based information on ways communities and regions in New York State can support the development of sustainable agriculture and food systems. Using surveys, case studies, geographic information systems, and advanced statistical techniques, and through educational programs, networking, and leadership in the academic community, we support front line educators and service providers who work in public and private agencies and organizations. Our focus is

primarily on building the capacity of Extension field staff, planners, economic development officials, agriculture development specialists, farmland protection boards, and similar public officials and institutions in analyzing farm and food system needs, identifying, implementing, and evaluating appropriate projects, strategies and policies which improve the economic wellbeing of farmers and agribusiness, protect the environment, and ensure quality of life for all citizens in New York State.

Two new areas of focus of our program include (1) developing reliable local and regional agriculture and food system indicators (including agriculture sustainability, civic agriculture, and food insecurity), and (2) a state of the art geographic information system called "MarketScape" for mapping, at the neighborhood level, the incidence of food insecurity, and its comorbidities such as poverty, unemployment, as well as mapping the location of critical food system infrastructure such as food pantries, food banks, congregate meals sites, community gardens, farmers markets, CSAs, bodegas, green grocers, supermarkets, hospitals, schools, and other public institutions and non-governmental organizations.

Having timely, reliable, and efficiently collectable indicators and being able to map this information along with the location of key food system infrastructure at the neighborhood level can inform public policy and provide insights about the local food system that is profoundly superior to simple charts and graphs.

One of the cutting edge research strategies we are exploring in MarketScape is the application of "fuzzy set theory" in identifying concentrations of food insecure households at the census tract level. Currently the USDA food security index is only available at the National and State level. However, using this new approach could allow us to take a complex demographic profile of a hungry family, and match that profile to every census tract in New York State. Mapping this data could reveal the incidence of food insecurity at the neighborhood level for the first time, thus making community food security planning and programming more efficient and effective. We would be pleased to

demonstrate the capability of MarketScope should any taskforce members or their staff be interested in seeing it.

Farmers' markets and Senior Citizens

Farmers' markets have a symbiotic relationship with senior citizens of NY State. [Mobile FM] While seniors are often the most loyal and educated patrons of farmers' markets, anecdotal evidence suggests that they have difficulty with peeling squashes and onions, husking corn, stringing peas, shelling beans or otherwise preparing fresh foods bought directly from farmers. Nutritionists are well aware that the inability of seniors to conduct these basic food preparation activities limits the intake of critical nutrients including vitamins, minerals, and trace elements that are essential to the health and quality of life of senior citizens. I am therefore testifying to the need for the Task Force on Food, Nutrition and Farm Policy in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture and Markets and the NYS Department of Health to explore the potential for clarifying, amending, or modifying articles 17 and 20-C of Ag. and Mkts Law to permit "minimal raw product preparation" of fruits and vegetables at the point of sale to enhance sales of needed nutrient-rich produce to senior citizens of NY State.

Rationale

The following are the facts in evidence to support this policy recommendation:

1. The US Census Bureau says that the number of senior citizens 65 and older is expected to rise 147% from 36.3 million in 2004 to 86.7 million by the year 2050. (http://www.census.gov/PressRelease/www/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/004210.html)
2. The New Senior FM Coupon program allows seniors 60 years and older receiving public assistance to receive coupons worth \$20 at participating farmers markets.
3. The new USDA Food Pyramid for Seniors recommends increasing nutrients through legumes such as peas and beans, and orange vegetables such as squashes.
4. Indeed, legumes provide Vitamin B-1, Vitamin C, and are an abundant source of choline, folate and pantothenic acid, which research has shown to benefit senior citizens.
5. However, peas require stringing; beans require shelling; corn requires husking; squashes require peeling and cutting; onions require peeling, etc. and many senior citizens (especially those with arthritis, or tremors caused by Parkinson's Disease) find many fruits and vegetables difficult to prepare prior to cooking.

6. Furthermore, some seniors may wish to only purchase a portion of a melon or squash because it is more than they can prepare at home, or it is too heavy to carry while shopping and going home.

7. New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets Law currently only allows washing and rough trimming of raw fruits and vegetables after harvest and before direct sale to consumers to make the raw products clean and presentable. Any further "processing" of the raw products require a food-manufacturing license (20-C license), the regulations of which are necessarily strict but perhaps unnecessary for the farmer who simply wants to husk sweet corn or pull the strings off of pees.

Possible Food Safety Protocols For Point of Sale Product Preparation

- Reasonable personal clothing and hygiene requirements of the worker.
- The use of disposable plastic gloves.
- Cleaning the raw product (such as full immersion).
- The use of mobile running water units.
- Regulations regarding utensil type, characteristics, and condition
- Utensil and container sanitizing protocols (e.g., sanitizer solution of 100 ppm chlorine, 200 ppm quaternary ammonium, or 25 ppm iodine to be positioned at produce stand or central produce preparation site. Utensils used continuously for slicing, (e.g., knives) shall be stored in container of sanitizing solution-while not in use.
- Sanitizing food contact surfaces such as cutting and wrapping tables.
- Product wrapping or container procedures.
- Rinse water, liquid waste, and solid waste disposal procedures.

Conclusion

Society is constantly evolving, consumer demographics are changing, and food safety laws and regulations should evolve to reflect the emerging needs of the citizens of New York. The growing senior citizen population coupled with their interest in and growing need for fresh, nutritious fruits and vegetables suggest we need to support (or at least not hinder) the State's thousands of direct marketers in helping seniors meet their special nutritional needs.

Wouldn't it be nice if farm youth, 4-H, FFA, and CFS program participants could make extra income for themselves or their organizations? Allowing children to accept tips for performing minimal preparation services such as husking, shelling, and stringing can help them not only make additional money, but also help seniors improve their nutritional status.

I ask the Legislative Task Force of Food Nutrition and Farm Policy to explore in collaboration with Ag and Markets Division of Food Safety Inspection Services, and the NYS Department of Health the wonderful opportunity we may have in point-of-sale “minimal raw product preparation” of fruits and vegetables, which has the potential to improve the health and quality of life for senior citizens, increase farmers sales and sustainability, and create opportunities for youth-senior cultural interaction.

Thank you.



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NYSAWG

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Recommendations on New York State Food and Nutrition Policies

Presented to the

New York State Assembly

Task Force on Food, Farm and Nutrition Policy
Chair, Assemblyman Felix W. Ortiz

Standing Committee on Agriculture
Chair, Assemblyman William Magee

Standing Committee on Health
Chair, Assemblyman Richard N. Gottfried

Standing Committee on Social Services
Chair, Assemblymember Deborah J. Glick

May 16, 2005

By

Henry R. Herrera, M.D.
Managing Director, NYSAWG

Katherine Mendenhall, M.A.
Program Manager, NYSAWG

Note of Appreciation and Outline of this Paper

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the New York Sustainable Agriculture Working Group, we would like to thank Assembly Members Ortiz, Magee, Gottfried and Glick for this opportunity to provide recommendations on New York State food and nutrition policy. This paper has four sections. The first section briefly provides background information on the New York Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (page 2). The second section (page 2) provides the rationale for our recommendations. The third section (page 5) provides our recommendations. The fourth section (page 10) provides additional background on NYSAWG and the framework for our recommendations. The appendices provide additional documentation.

About NYSAWG

The New York Sustainable Agriculture Working Group—NYSAWG—began in 1991 as part of the emergence of sustainable agriculture working groups across the country. NYSAWG brings together people from diverse agriculture and food system constituencies, including farmers, consumers, environmentalists, members of the faith community, labor activists, advocates from the anti-hunger community, and farmworkers.

The mission of NYSAWG is to foster and promote sustainable agriculture practices and sustainable local-regional food systems. NYSAWG envisions economically viable, environmentally sound, and socially just community-based food systems that provide community food security for all New Yorkers. We do our work through cross-constituency organizing, education and advocacy, bringing grassroots knowledge of the food system to the policy arena at local, state and federal levels. We seek to bring new resources and information to small family farmers, small-scale food producers, regional distributors, local retailers, consumers and communities in their efforts to rebuild sustainable community-based food systems throughout New York State.

Over the past three years NYSAWG has conducted research on the economic potential of local food systems, initiated the Growing Home Partnership, a statewide collaboration with over 25 partners focused on building regional food systems, and started education and outreach efforts for limited-resource farmers and ranchers and farmworkers.

Rationale for Policy Recommendations

Our research has focused on three main areas: Food insecurity, threats to New York State agriculture and local economic development potential based on local food systems trading networks or value chains. We find that these three areas represent intersecting trends of need and opportunity.

Need—Food Insecurity: The data indicate that a substantial proportion of New Yorkers—particularly people with low incomes—suffer from food insecurity. We use the definition of community food security provided by the Community Food Security Coalition: Access to affordable, nutritious culturally appropriate food for all people at all times from local non-emergency sources.

For the period 2000-2002, the USDA reported the prevalence of household food insecurity (with or without hunger) for New York State as 9.4%, below the average for the United States of 10.8%. For this same period the prevalence of food insecurity with hunger for New York was 2.9%, slightly below the US average of 3.3%.¹

¹ Nord, M., Andrews, M., Carlson, S. *Household Food Security in the United States, 2002*. Food and Rural Economics Division, Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Report No. 35. The data in this report do not compare with data for 1997-1999 reported by the Food Research and Research Center because of changes in screening procedures. The 1997-1999 data showed NYS with a prevalence of food insecurity with or without hunger higher than the US average. FRAC, "State-by-State Rates of Household Hunger and Food Insecurity, 1997-1999, www.frac.org.

effective transportation from their farms to viable markets, lack of a sufficient quantity of specific products at a specific time to justify the expense to travel to market, lack of staffing to travel and sell product at specific market locations, challenges of identifying viable market opportunities.

On the demand side, area school districts have found great frustration in locating sufficient locally grown produce supply for use in their meal programs. The time it takes to seek out several farmers to provide a sufficient quantity of a specific locally grown product for use is more costly than calling a food broker and being guaranteed a product for delivery. Despite the desire to implement farm-to-cafeteria programs to improve child health in our schools, school administrators are not finding a supply prepared to meet their needs.

The concept of a pilot Fulfillment Center is for Foodlink to operate as a central depot of information and locally grown food by providing the missing link between the small farm suppliers and the demand of the customers for fresh locally grown New York State products. The Fulfillment Center would be coordinated on a web based application for ordering and supplying local farm products to customers in the Greater Rochester Area. Utilizing Foodlink's excess capacity of trucks coming back from delivering to the local charity in one of our 10-counties, the Fulfillment Center will arrange for local farm grown products to be transported on Foodlink trucks and brought to Foodlink cooler and storage areas for first consolidation, value-added packaging and shipment to schools, other not for profits, chefs and restaurants in the Greater Rochester area, the Greater Syracuse area, the Greater Buffalo area and New York City. When volumes warrant, transportation will be scheduled directly from the farmer to the customer by the Fulfillment Center. By centralizing food products, several farmers' products may be consolidated to meet a school district's orders removing the need for the school administrator to call around to locate the product he or she needs. The goal is to make buying New York State grown produce easy, convenient and the preferred choice for the consumers.

The Fulfillment Center will target farmers to become involved on the supply side, and schools, chefs, and not for profits to become involved on the demand side. To help support the agricultural community's needs, the Fulfillment Center will do all the coordination between farmers and buyers including: 1) Centralized billing for buyers, 2) Disbursement of funds to farmers, 3) Scheduling pick up transportation from farmers and delivery to buyers, 4) Storage and consolidation when multiple farmers are needed to supply an order. Potential exists to replicate this successful model throughout the America's Second Harvest network of food banks across New York and the United States.

I urge the Assembly for the passage of Assembly Bill A.2651 which would create a Community Food Security Program to support creative solutions such as the Fulfillment Center concept. Additionally, I encourage the formation of the State Food Policy Council to explore such creative opportunities for a tandem approach of improving access to nutritious foods while investing in the economic viability of our farmers. Lastly, I urge the council to engage our working agricultural partners in on-going dialogue to identify more solutions.

VI. Summary and Conclusion

In closing, I would like to thank the Assembly and the Task Force on Food, Farm and Nutrition policy for the opportunity to share my thoughts here today. It is imperative for us to explore creative methods to address our food and nutrition needs of our great state.

In summary, I would like to restate the following requests:

- Encourage increased funds for the Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP) to keep up with the growing demand for hunger services and to keep up with the cost of inflation.
- Encourage additional investment dollars for food banks and emergency food provider organizations to develop the appropriate infrastructure to handle the change in food donations from dry to more costly fresh and frozen foods.

- Request development of a pilot Produce Procurement Project with New York State agricultural community which provides an incentive to farmers to donate their nutritious agriculture products to New York State food banks through a value added processing (VAP) program instead of plowing perfectly nutritious foods into the fields.
- Support the development of a State Food Policy Council to explore child nutrition programs barriers and successes. Request that practitioners of the child nutrition programs are engaged and involved in the creation of future program policy.
- Support the passage of Assembly Bill A.2651 to create a Community Food Security Program to support projects such as the Fulfillment Center to provide the much needed link for New York State farmers with marketable outlets - with a particular emphasis on farm-to-cafeteria programs. Encourage the State Food Policy Council to look to our working agriculture partners, farmers and practitioners to be engaged as part of a community food security solution.



TWIN POND FARM
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May 16, 2005

Statement For

Task Force on Food, Farm, Nutrition

It is somewhat encouraging that the Assembly Commission Chairs are doing this drill. I certainly hope that something constructive is derived from this effort.

If this truly is the Empire State, isn't it time to start acting as such? Take control of the issues and address them on behalf of NY farmers and consumers.

My main concern is the dairy industry. In 1980, New York had 19,000 dairy farms shipping milk to the commercial market. Presently we have fewer than 7,000 remaining.

We are still producing 12 billion pounds of milk with 12,000 fewer producers. The result of past and present pricing policy is an absolute disaster for rural New York. The Cornell big farm virus is largely responsible for the demise of 12,000 former dairy farms.

In theory you could make \$10,000 on 50 cows, so obviously you should make \$100,000 on 500 cows or a million on 5,000. That is pretty much basic mathematics.

The big farm virus has given us major water and air quality concerns. I object to the use of public funds to address these man-made problems, such as 13 million of environmental bond funds to plan and address solutions to these problems.

I propose that we in New York decouple Class I from manufacturing milk, set the price at \$20/cwt (and even index it) and allow New York consumers to support what's left of the small farm community. These funds should be distributed on a per farm basis throughout New York State.

Our market (Class I fluid milk) is the largest in the world and our farms have been denied the support of that market.

Our consumers are protected under the anti-gouging law. \$20/cwt class one would limit the one-gallon retail price to \$3.49/gallon, not a bad deal, versus recent class I price of \$24.50, resulting in a maximum retail price of \$4.25/gallon.

This action would not be subject to an adverse court decision since we are only pricing class I fluid milk.

Processors need to realize that this would increase their yields/cwt. The cost of processing \$20/cwt milk is no greater than the cost of processing \$15/cwt. The key is to decouple class I, which has been in the New York Farm Bureau policy book for a number of years and price it for survival of 80% of our dairy farms, which are in jeopardy.

National Dairy policy is a disaster and every change in the past 25 years has favored someone other than the producer. The current MILC program is the most recent illustration of the incompetence that prevails in Washington, D.C.

Task Force on Food, Farm, Nutrition
May 16, 2005
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The current House bill to raise the trigger price to \$17.10/cwt from \$16.94/cwt is an absolute disgrace! That number was \$17.40/cwt way back in 1990 to produce a yield of \$14.00/cwt, to cover cash cost.

We spend millions of dollars on staff at USDA (ERS-AMS) generating cost of production data that is totally ignored in the pricing policy. Why bother!

The free trade parade has been and continues to be a disaster for U.S. farms and farms around the globe... "the global market".

Co-operatives could have done a much better job for their producer members. Example, CWT was twenty years late in arriving...should have happened in 1985 after the buyout.

Bear in mind that New York has become a milk deficient region since we are no longer in an over-supply situation (supply side economics). We have closed three manufacturing plants in New York in the past year and one bottling plant in Brooklyn.

Isn't it time that we mustered up some leadership in this state and took the bull by the horns and allow the New York market to support New York producers on an equitable basis?

The beginning Farmer program could be promoted with a Farm gate price that made it possible to build a business plan. Not all Dairy Fellows out of Cornell want to farm 500 or 1000 or 5000 cows. They would be happy with 50 or 100 and be good stewards of the land and reclaim or maintain many of the good farms that are at risk due to age of current operators who's off spring have all left the farm and do not want to come back.

Call this a Farm Land Protection Program or a Conservation Program or Salvation. It may just be time to abandon the "Cheap Food" policy in favor of maintaining the rural environment.

Let's work together and address the pricing policy and hopefully help secure our food sovereignty.

Almost Retired,



Ken Dibbell
Member CC Farmland Protection Board
Member CC Farm Bureau Board

However, household food insecurity is strongly associated with income. In New York State the nation's largest metropolis and a string of upstate mid-sized cities demonstrate the relationship between poverty and food insecurity. Table 1 (next page) shows the population of New York States largest cities. We used the percent of related children under 18 years with 1999 income under the poverty level as a proxy indicator of poverty in each city. We then used the percent of children in each school district eligible for free lunch as a proxy indicator of food insecurity.²

For comparison with New York we looked at metropolitan areas and cities in the states of California, Georgia, Iowa, Michigan, Mississippi and Texas. The Bronx, Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse and Utica have higher rates of childhood poverty than Detroit, Los Angeles, Houston, Dallas, Sacramento and San Antonio. Only Fresno (36.5%), Atlanta (38.8%), Saginaw (40.0%) and Brownsville (45.0%) have similar or higher rates of childhood poverty.³

Table 1: New York Cities, Children in Poverty and Eligibility for Free School Lunch

Metropolitan Area	Total	Percent People of Color	Major city	Percent of related children under 18 years with 1999 income below poverty level	City and Borough Population	Percent People of Color	Percent eligible for free lunch
New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-CT-PA CMSA	21,199,865	43.6%	New York City	30.0	8,008,278	65.0%	
			Bronx County	41.5	1,332,650	85.5%	87.1
			Kings County - Brooklyn	34.0	2,465,326	65.3%	83.5
			New York County - Manhattan	31.8	1,537,195	54.2%	76.5
			Queens County	18.8	2,229,379	67.1%	60.7
			Richmond County - Staten Island	13.2	443,728	28.7%	37.6
Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY MSA	1,170,111	17.5%	Buffalo	38.4	292,648	48.2%	63.1
Rochester, NY MSA	1,098,201	17.8%	Rochester	37.5	219,773	55.7%	64.9
Syracuse, NY MSA	732,117	12.0%	Syracuse	35.1	147,306	37.6%	59.6
Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY MSA	875,583	11.9%	Albany	28.8	95,658	38.9%	60.2
Utica-Rome, NY MSA	299,896	9.5%	Utica	38.0	60,851	23.5%	62.3
Binghamton, NY MSA	252,320	8.2%	Binghamton	28.4	47,380	18.3%	47.0
Elmira, NY MSA	91,070	9.8%	Elmira	32.8	30,940	19.2%	37.2
Glens Falls, NY MSA	124,345	4.6%	Glens Falls	21.7	14,354	4.3%	19.8

From this analysis we conclude that in order to address food insecurity at either the household or the community level, we must also address poverty at its root—the structural

² U.S. Census, www.census.gov

³ This comparison does not include rural communities. Many rural communities in all seven states have extremely high rates of childhood poverty, ranging from 50% to 100%.

barriers to full participation in the economic life of the community that allows individuals, families and communities to build assets and enough wealth for true self-sufficiency.

Need—Threats to New York State Agriculture: New York State agriculture faces severe threats from global competition in the major grain markets that shape commodity policy and, as a result, every aspect of food production.⁴ Agriculture policy, at both state and federal levels, has a huge—and often negative—impact on food and agricultural systems. For the most part, current federal and New York State policy does not support diversified, integrated, sustainable farming systems that provide high quality food; it does not promote a good living for farmers and food workers; and it does not protect fertile resources for future generations.

In New York State between 1982 and 2002 the number of farms dropped by 11.7% and farmland acreage decreased by 19.3%. Over this period of time, the number of small farms grew. The number of farms between 1 and 9 acres grew 7.1% and the number of farms between 10 and 49 acres grew 27.1%. Large farms also grew. The number of farms between 1,000 acres and 1,999 acres grew 31.0% and those over 2,000 acres grew 28.99%.

Families and individuals own 87.6% of New York farms.

NYS farms generated \$3.1 billion in market value of agricultural products sold in 2002 compared to \$2.4 billion in 1982, a 29% increase.

Yet NYS farms and farmers in 2002 struggled to earn a living. Farms earning less than \$10,000 constituted 56% of all farms. A much smaller proportion of NYS farms earned more than \$500,000, only 2.8% of all farms.⁵

Opportunity—Consumer Expenditures for Food in New York State: The goals of community food security and community economic development converge to produce competitive advantage for local and regional food systems and enormous potential for building community self-reliance. The following information for New York State supports this argument.⁶

1. New York consumers spend 43.6 billion dollars annually for food at home and away from home.

⁴ D.E. Ray, D.G. De La Torre Ugarte, K. Fuller. *Rethinking US Agricultural Policy: Changing Course to Secure Farmer Livelihoods Worldwide*. Agriculture Policy Analysis Center, The University of Tennessee, 2003. Available at <http://apacweb.ag.utk.edu/blueprint/APAC%20Report%208-20-03%20WITH%20COVER.pdf>, May 15, 2005.

⁵ USDA, *2002 US Census of Agriculture: New York, State and County Data. Volume 1, Geographic Area Series, Part 32*. Available at <http://www.nass.usda.gov/census/census02/volume1/ny/NYVolume104.pdf>, May 15, 2005.

⁶ Herrera, H. 2004. *New York State Food System Fact Sheet: The Economic Potential of Regional Food Systems*. Rochester, NY: The Center for Popular Research, Education and Policy and NYSAWG. See Appendix 1.

2. New York farmers and food producers generate \$17.04 billion in revenues—and much of that revenue comes from export for out-of-state sales.⁷
3. The market gap between what New York consumers spend for food at home and away from home (restaurants, etc.) exceeds \$35 billion—money that New Yorkers export all over the world for food.
4. If New York food producers—both farmers and food manufacturers—captured just 10% of NYS consumer food expenditures, they would increase NYS food system revenues by over \$8.6 billion dollars.
5. If New Yorkers increased consumer food expenditures by 10% for food produced by New York farmers and another 10% for food produced by New York food manufacturers, that money could fuel local and regional economic development by generating \$16.5 billion in total income and over 17,000 jobs through regional multiplier effects.

Infrastructure building activities contributing to the development of local and regional food systems that meet the needs for healthy food for NYS consumers can also contribute to increasing the share of NYS consumer food expenditures captured by NYS food producers. Those activities include farmers' markets, community and school gardens, small-scale farming, the formation of local marketing systems and production networks including farm-to-school programs, community-supported agriculture, specialized agricultural production districts, community kitchens, specialty food producers, on-farm and off-farm small scale food producers.

Appropriate NYS food, farm and nutrition policy can provide resources for the people and seize the substantial opportunity in NYS to increase local and regional capacity for these activities.

In summary we see the convergence of several forces—the need to overcome food insecurity, threats agriculture, and finally tremendous opportunity for achieving community food security, social justice and community self-reliance. Through organizing focused on local people willing to build a regional food system for themselves and their communities we can achieve these goals.

Recommendations

The body of our work as described above and in the attachments leads us to make the following recommendations.

On the Need for a Comprehensive, Coordinated Food Policy Plan

1. New York State has a rich agricultural tradition and enormous capacity for building self-sufficiency for a substantial part of its food supply. To realize this potential, food system stakeholders at local, regional and state levels need a vision and a plan to

⁷ One estimate suggests that New York State food producers export 50% of production. The New York State Council on Food and Nutrition Policy included this estimate in its report, "5 Year Food & Nutrition Plan, 1988-1992. This Council no longer functions.

- guide the development of their own programs and interdependent programs. Thus we recommend the development of a comprehensive, coordinated food policy plan.
2. The development of this plan will benefit from legislative authority and the allocation of adequate resources to develop the plan on the part of state and local government officials, public interest and private enterprise organizations and ordinary citizens. Thus we recommend the development of legislation to authorize the development of New York State food policy planning.
 3. In order to be comprehensive and coordinated, the food policy plan must have integrative, systemic and restorative properties. It must guide the integration of food producers, processors, distributors and retailers into effective, profitable local food trading value chains and value networks. It must consider food systems issues from a *systemic* perspective, not from the position of food system elements isolated from each other. And it must restore the health of the land, the environment and the people of New York State. Thus we recommend the formation of the plan based on principles of integration, systemic analysis and restorative capacity.

On the Need for a State Food Policy Council

1. In order to produce a comprehensive and coordinated food policy plan, a defined, identifiable and recognized deliberative body must have the authority and responsibility for producing the plan and updating the plan on a regular basis. Thus we recommend the formation of a NYS Food Policy Council and furthermore the formation of Regional Food Policy Councils throughout New York State to foster and promote local and regional solutions to the challenge of building local and regional food system trading value chains and value networks.
2. A citizen-driven and citizen-responsive planning process must include representatives of a wide array of stakeholder groups, especially ordinary citizens. Thus we recommend that the NYS Food Policy Council and Regional Food Policy Councils have legislative authorization as non-profit public interest organizations with charters developed in partnership with key food system stakeholder groups in NYS and in each region.
3. Each food policy council must have wide representation from stakeholder groups, as mentioned above. It seems premature to define that representation at this time. However key stakeholders include farmers, food processors, packers, packagers and food storage operations, food distributors, food transportation operations, food retailers, farm workers and food workers, environmental organizations, and ordinary citizens from many walks of life—the vast majority of food consumers.
4. In order to promote creativity and innovation in New York State local and regional food systems, food policy councils and the state and regional levels should have powers to gather information, conduct research, and formulate policy and recommendations for regulatory authority on the part of appropriate governmental agencies.

On Needed Changes in Existing Food, Nutrition and Agricultural Policies and Programs to Benefit Consumers and Producers

To address this issue we have reviewed specific pieces of legislation now before the NYS Legislature. We base our recommendations on an overall framework calling for an alignment of local, state and federal policy. In addition we wish to bring to your attention the two proposals we have developed, one for regional food systems infrastructure and one for training new farmers (Appendices 4 and 5).

We also call for an alignment of policies designed to solve the problem of hunger in NYS and policies designed to solve the problem of poverty. We believe that food-based economic development based on local food trading value networks and value chains can both bring food security to the most food insecure neighborhoods in NYS but also provide opportunities for the citizens in those communities to fully participate in the economic life of the community.

Assembly Proposals

A1969 proposes to require persons who sell or distribute genetically engineered plants, planting stock or seeds to provide written instructions to purchasers or growers of such stock.

We support this legislation and further request the NYS Legislature to consider a ban on the use of such products in NYS on the precautionary principle that we simply do not know the long-term health and environmental effects of genetically-modified organisms. We furthermore call on the NYS Legislature to consider a declaration of freedom for all people to save seeds as a human right without consideration of any patent law or other private property right.

A2655 proposes to require the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance to apply to USDA for any federal food stamp program waivers that would make food stamps available to persons who would become eligible for food stamp benefits only under such waivers, such as individuals who live in counties without an adequate job base for employment.

Federal food stamps cost the state nothing and add tens of millions of dollars to consumer food purchasing power. These dollars can aid people to eat local, healthy food and also can help to realize the economic development potential of local food system value chain and value networks.

We support this legislation.

A4215 proposes to exempt meals served at farm labor camp commissaries from the sales tax.

We support this legislation.

A8005 proposes to require the commissioner of environmental conservation to develop a pesticide applicator certification program in Spanish, including a Spanish translation of the label and directions for use of pesticides.

We support this legislation.

On Assembly Bill A2651, to Create a Community Food Security Program and Complementary Legislation

A2651 proposes support for demonstration projects to increase the self-sufficiency of low-income communities in providing for their food needs (SEED Program).

This legislation would support the following activities according to the Bill Summary on the NYS Assembly web site:

This program will support projects designed to increase the availability of culturally acceptable, affordable, nutritionally adequate food, from local sources whenever possible; develop linkages between local farmers and communities served by the projects; support job development and training; support entrepreneurship; and encourage community collaboration and decision making in the development of projects.

The State will provide grants for up to 50% of the cost of program projects which will be available to non-profit organizations and local governments, with limited partnerships with for-profit enterprises. Preference will be given to communities with a significant percentage of the population participating in government and private food assistance programs. Projects will be designed to become self-sustaining. SEED grant applicants must apply for any federal community food security funding prior to applying for these grants.

An advisory council, composed of six members with expertise in community food security, shall assist the commissioner in the development of the programs and review of grant applications. Two members shall be appointed by the Governor, two by the Speaker of the Assembly and two by the Temporary President of the Senate

We support this legislation, which allocates resources to efforts to begin the development of local food trading value networks and value chains. As previously described, we believe that local value chain operations have enormous potential both for increasing access to healthy food to low-income populations and also for local economic development, the primary strategy to mitigate poverty, a root cause of community and household food insecurity.

In addition we consider A2651 the central piece in the set of complementary Assembly bills addressing the rebuilding of regional food system infrastructure.

A2543 proposes to support the purchase of land for community gardens.

We support this legislation. Access to land and land tenure are critical elements in building local food systems.

A3717 proposes legislation creating a kitchen incubator/shared-use kitchen facility grant program.

The NYS Assembly web site provides the following information:

The legislation defines these facilities as government-licensed food processing or preparation facilities, sponsored by not-for-profits or government agencies, and used by small emerging food businesses who are either full-time or temporary tenants. The sponsors must provide low-cost space and financing and business support services. Other services, such as technical, production, distribution and sales assistance to tenants, may be provided. The grant program could award competitive grants to sponsors for construction, rehabilitation, equipment, training, technical assistance and other approved purposes. Grant applicants must provide management plans for financial self-sufficiency, community needs assessment, and planning for providing technical assistance to tenants. The legislation would allow for one grant per applicant per year, up to \$250,000, with preference for applicants from distressed areas or economic development zones who can provide a local match; meet local needs; provide services not offered by local governments or business; provide a range of services and assistance to tenants; and have a plan for purchasing NYS farm products and promoting the facility to regional farmers.

We support this legislation. NYSAWG has long supported small scale food processing and played a key role in the formation of the NYS Small Scale Food Processors Association. Local and regional processing facilities are essential elements in regional food system infrastructure.

A8000 proposes to finance transportation projects to facilitate the delivery of New York farm products to institutional food service purchasers, such as restaurants and schools.

We support this legislation and the complementary legislation in A8001 to fund wholesale farmers markets. These bills will assist family farmers to access local markets for their products.

A8001 proposes to provide loans and grants to businesses, municipalities, IDAs, economic development corporations, not-for-profits, business improvement districts, regional marketing authorities, agricultural cooperatives and other entities to finance construction, reconstruction, improvement, expansion, or rehabilitation of wholesale regional farmers' markets.

A very comprehensive market study has documented the potential value of NYC wholesale farmers' markets.⁸ Local food value chains and value trading networks will require this essential element of food system infrastructure.

We support this legislation.

A8003 proposes to financing for projects to facilitate processing and packaging of New York farm products to meet the needs of institutional food service such as restaurants, schools and other food service operations. Local food value chains

⁸ A Study on Development of New York City Wholesale Farmers' Markets. Report prepared by Market Ventures, Inc., Karp Resources, Urbanomics of New York & New Jersey, Hugh A. Boyd Architects and Buckhearst Fish & Jacquemart, Inc., for the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets and the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service, January, 2005.

and value trading networks will require this essential element of food system infrastructure.

We support this legislation which will provide resources for local and regional packing and packaging facilities.

Taken together these Assembly bills will make a substantial contribution for rebuilding regional food systems infrastructure.

Recent NYSAWG Accomplishments and Framework for Action

To further support our recommendations we would like to provide a brief description of recent NYSAWG accomplishments and the framework for action that shapes our work.

NYSAWG has accomplished several significant achievements over the past five years. NYSAWG fostered and nurtured the formation the Small-Scale Food Processors Association of New York State under the leadership of Alison Clarke. The Association currently has a paid membership of almost 100 processors and a mailing list of over 1,000 people.

In January 2004 NYSAWG convened the New York State Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Summit. The meeting brought together stakeholders from multiple constituencies to address critical issues facing New York State community-based food systems and sustainable agriculture. Fred Kirschenmann, Director of the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture at Iowa State University participated in the meeting as the keynote speaker. Among other recommendations the participants focused on the importance of coordinated food systems policy and the need for local-regional food systems infrastructure.

In April 2004 NYSAWG provided research and staff support for first of a series of listening sessions across New York State in collaboration with the Hunger Action Network of New York State (HANNYS). This work produced a research paper on the economic development potential of local and regional food systems in New York State.⁹

Also in 2004 NYSAWG with its local, statewide and national partners took the lead in developing proposals for federal legislation to support the rebuilding of regional food system infrastructure and the formation of AgriCorps, a national service corps analogous to AmeriCorps. AgriCorps will recruit, train and support young people who have an interest in learning about farming and food production.

In July 2004 NYSAWG convened the Regional Food System and Sustainable Agriculture Summit with NYS stakeholders to participate in the development of regional food systems policy. Participants included farmers, Farm Bureau representatives, Cornell University and Cooperative Extension representatives, environmental advocates, farmworker advocates,

⁹ H. Herrera, A. Barnes, J. Smith. The Economic Development Potential of Regional Food System Capacity to Meet Consumer Demand in Two Regions of New York State. (2004). The Center for Popular Research, Education and Policy, in collaboration with The Common Good Planning Center and The New York Sustainable Agriculture Working Group. Rochester, NY. See Appendix 2.

CSA organizers, direct farm marketing operators, private sector business people and others. In preparation for the summit Julie C. Dawson prepared an excellent background paper on regional food systems.¹⁰ The participants reviewed our economic development research and policy proposals and provided suggestions for improvement and implementation. In 2005 NYSAWG submitted these proposals to members of the NYS Congressional Delegation for consideration.¹¹

These activities led to the formation of the Growing Home Partnership for Regional Food Systems Development (GHP), a NYSAWG initiative with over 20 partner organizations—including many providing recommendations to the Assembly Task Force on this occasion. GHP fosters and promotes vibrant, self-sufficient local and regional food systems development throughout New York State based on the natural and intimate relationship between rural food production capacity and the food needs of nearby large population centers. At one time agriculture and food production constituted the economic and cultural relationships so essential for survival. We believe that we can restore these relationships through rebuilding regional food systems and developing the small-scale trading networks that will make regional food systems work effectively.¹²

The Growing Home Partnership utilizes a framework for regional food systems development adapted from the elements of an entrepreneurship development system as described by the Center for Entrepreneurship Development. This framework includes a coordinated set of activities that create and support regional food trading networks in which the transaction points represent small-scale, locally owned and operated food businesses. These businesses require a range of services, technical assistance and supports to become self-sustaining small and micro-enterprises. The framework anticipates the need for comprehensive, flexible, culturally sensitive, integrated, and collaborative relationships with stakeholders in each regional food system. The regional food system development framework includes the following elements:

Food systems education: Promoting curricula in grades K-12, preferably using experiential learning techniques, encouraging student-created food production and consumption activities after-school and out-of-school, and integrating regional food systems learning opportunities into a wide range of courses and disciplines at post-secondary education institutions.

Training and technical assistance: Providing high-quality and accessible training, technical assistance and mentoring for product development, marketing advice, and business development training and technical assistance to aspiring and existing entrepreneurs.

¹⁰ Regional Food Systems: Seeking to Improve the Quality of Life for All. Background Paper Prepared for the Development of Regional Food Systems Legislation On Behalf of the Regional Food Systems Planning Group. Julie C. Dawson, June 2004. Please see Appendix 3.

¹¹ Rebuilding Regional Food Systems Infrastructure Act – Legislative Proposal, NYSAWG, February 2005; AgriCorps Act – Legislative Proposal, NYSAWG, January 2005. Please see Appendix 4.

¹² The Growing Home Partnership: Purpose, Partners and Structure. NYSAWG, 2005 Please see Appendix 5.

Access to capital: Supplying adequate and appropriate equity and debt financing to meet the needs of small-scale food businesses at different levels of regional food system development.

Access to networks: Offering mentoring and support networks that allow regional food system stakeholders to learn from one another and conduct business together, linking them to capital, workers, strategic alliance partners, and service providers.

Culture: Creating a cultural, social, and civic environment that encourages, nurtures, and raises the profile of the regional food system.

Policy Development: Developing regional food systems policy at federal, state, and local levels.

Appendix 1

New York State Fact Sheet

New York State Food System Fact Sheet
The Economic Potential of Regional Food Systems
Hank Herrera

The Center for Popular Research, Education and Policy and NYSAWG
May, 2004

The goals of community food security and community economic development converge to produce competitive advantage for local and regional food systems and enormous potential for building community self-reliance. The following information for New York State supports this argument.

1. New Yorkers spend over \$43 billion dollars annually for food.

2002 New York State Estimated Consumer Expenditures for Food			
State	Food at Home	Food Away from Home	All Food
New York	\$ 26,014,984,763	\$ 17,595,895,843	\$ 43,610,880,606

2. New York farmers and food producers generate about \$18.1 billion in revenues—and much of that revenue comes from export for out-of-state sales.¹³

State	2001 Farm Cash Receipts	2002 Food Production Estimated Value of Shipments	Estimated Statewide Food Production
New York	\$ 3,326,875,000	\$ 14,870,083,276	\$ 18,196,958,276

3. The market gap between what New York consumers spend for food at home and away from home (restaurants, etc.) exceeds \$34.5 billion—money that New Yorkers export all over the world for food.

State	NYS Consumer Expenditures for All Food	Estimated NYS Food Production Consumed in NYS	Estimated NYS Food System Market Gap
New York	\$ 43,610,880,606	\$ 9,098,479,138	\$ 34,512,401,468

4. If New York food producers—both farmers and food manufacturers—captured just 10% of NYS consumer food expenditures, they would increase NYS food system revenues by over \$8 billion dollars.

Projected Increase in Regional Food System Revenue With Capture of 10% of New York State Consumer Food Expenditures			
Food System Segment	New York State Food System Output Estimate	10% of NYS Consumer Food Expenditures, 2002	Projected Total NYS Food System Output
Farming	\$ 3,326,875,000	\$ 4,361,088,061	7,687,963,060.56
Food Manufacturing	\$ 13,717,789,000	\$ 4,361,088,061	18,078,877,060.56
New York State Total	\$ 17,044,664,000		25,766,840,121.12

¹³ One estimate suggests that New York State food producers export 50% of production. The New York State Council on Food and Nutrition Policy included this estimate in its report, "5 Year Food & Nutrition Plan, 1988-1992. This Council no longer functions.

5. If New Yorkers increased consumer food expenditures by 10% for food produced by New York farmers and another 10% for food manufactured in New York, that money could fuel local and regional economic development by generating \$16.5 billion in total income and over 17,000 jobs through regional multiplier effects.

	Projected NYS Food System Revenue With 10% Expansion	Size of Initial Increase in Regional Food System Revenue	Economic Multiplier Estimate	Change in Total Income From NYS Food System Expansion
Farming	\$ 7,687,963,061	\$ 4,361,088,061	2.00	8,722,176,121
Food Manufacturing	\$ 18,078,877,061	\$ 4,361,088,061	1.80	7,849,958,509
New York State Total	\$ 25,766,840,121			16,572,134,630

	Projected NYS Food System Revenue With 10% Expansion	Size of Initial Increase in Statewide Food System Revenues	Economic Multiplier Estimate	Job Creation Resulting from NYS Food System Expansion
Farming	\$ 7,687,963,061	\$ 4,361,088,061	1.45	6,324
Food Manufacturing	\$ 18,078,877,061	\$ 4,361,088,061	2.54	11,077
GFL Region Total	\$ 25,766,840,121			17,401

Appendix 2

**The Economic Development Potential of Food System Capacity to Meet
Consumer Demand in Two Regions of New York State**

The Economic Development Potential of Regional Food System Capacity to Meet Consumer Demand in Two Regions of New York State

Hank Herrera
Anna Barnes
Jenni Smith

The Center for Popular Research, Education and Policy

In Collaboration With

The Common Good Planning Center

And

The New York Sustainable Agriculture Working Group



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April, 2004

Introduction

Two lines of inquiry converge in this report. The first set of questions begins with the idea of community food security, the concept that all people at all times should have access to affordable, nutritious, culturally appropriate food from local and regional non-emergency sources. The community food security movement has a primary focus on access to food in low-income urban and rural neighborhoods that lack full service supermarkets. Food sources in such neighborhoods include small corner stores, convenience stores and other retailers such chain pharmacies that sell high calorie and expensive packaged foods. Access to fresh fruits, vegetables, meat, poultry and dairy is very limited. People often have to find transportation from inner-city or isolated rural neighborhoods to distant supermarkets and other big box retailers, adding the cost of transportation to the cost of the food. As people have tried to attract full-service supermarkets to low-income neighborhoods, they eventually have to ask how much money people in those neighborhoods spend on food.

The second set of questions begins with the farm crisis in the United States, and indeed globally. This crisis has primarily affected small family farmers with loss of smaller farms and small farm family income. This crisis has received extensive attention from farmers, advocates, economists, academics and others.¹⁴

Preliminary data from the 2002 Census of Agriculture documents the persistence of these trends.¹⁵ A growing movement in the United States wants to address the farm crisis by re-connecting people living in discrete regional food sheds or bioregions with the small family farms and farmers who produce food in that same region. The advocates of this solution reason that small family farmers can increase their income by serving local and regional markets either directly (through direct farm marketing, community supported agriculture, etc.) or because local-regional supply chains can potentially bring greater return to local-regional producers.¹⁶ This focus reframes agricultural policy in terms of regional food systems policy.

The question of how much money people living in a particular region spend on food (the first set of questions) actually leads to estimates of how much money local-regional farmers and food producers might access if they produced food for the people living in their region (the second set of questions). In other words, what is the capacity of the regional food system to meet consumer demand in that region?

¹⁴ Streeter, D.H., Bills, N.L. Value Added Ag-Based Economic Development: A Panacea or False Promise? Parts One and Two of a Two-Part Companion Series: What is Value-Added and How Should We Study It? Working Paper 2003-07, and Working Paper 2003-08, February 2003. Department of Applied Economics and Management, Cornell University

¹⁵ See Appendix One, which briefly summarizes data cited in the 2002 Census of Agriculture, www.nass.usda.gov/census.

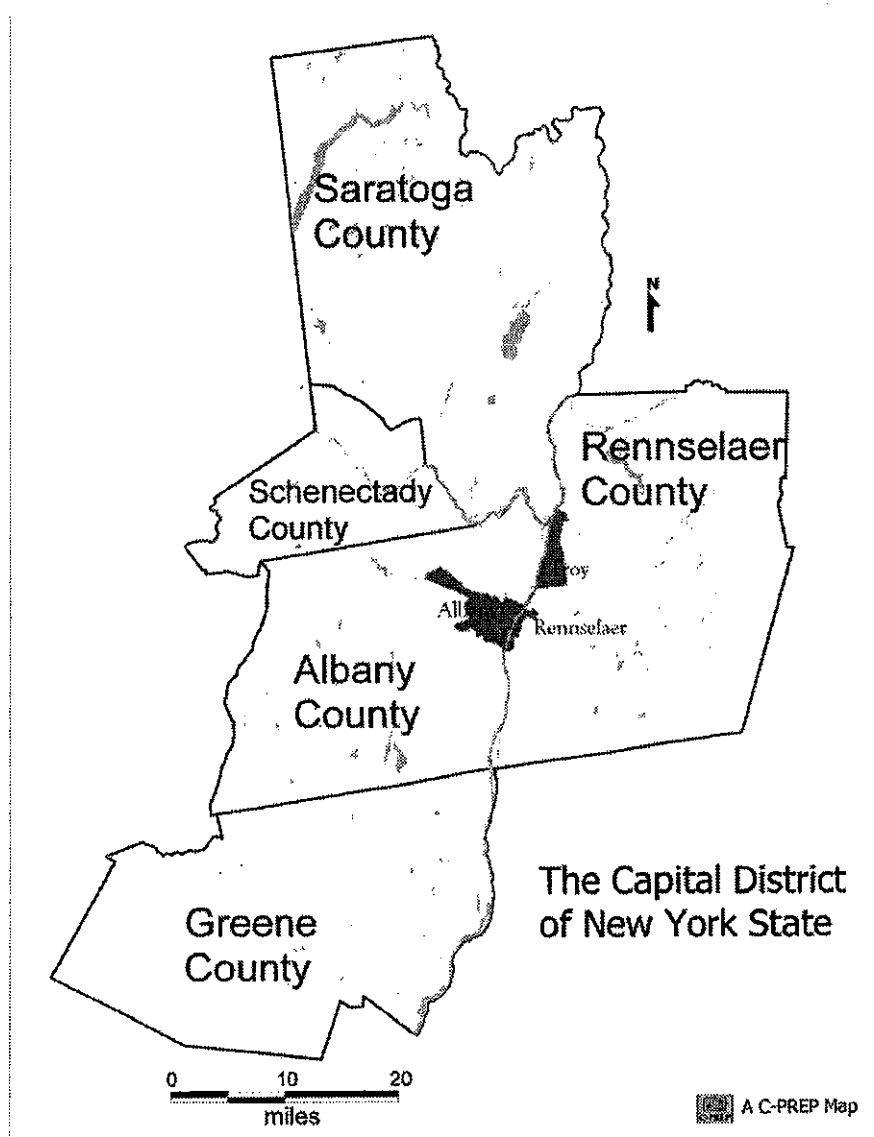
¹⁶ See the work of Kirschenmann and others on Agriculture in the Middle, www.agofthemiddle.org. Kirschenmann, Stevenson, Buttel, Lyson, Duffy and others have written "Why Worry About the Agriculture of the Middle? A White Paper for the Agriculture of the Middle Project," available on the website.

This paper examines these questions for two region of New York State, the Capital District and the Genesee Finger Lakes Region. The analysis sheds light on the potential for local and regional food systems to achieve sustainability and to drive local and regional economic development—by focusing on food production for local and regional populations.

The Capital District and the Genesee Finger Lakes Region

The Capital District of consists of five counties surrounding Albany, the capital of the New York State. These counties are Albany County, Greene County, Rensselaer County, Saratoga County and Schenectady County (Figure 1)

Figure 1: The Counties of the Capital District



The Genesee Finger Lakes Region

Fifteen counties comprise the Genesee Finger Lakes Region. Monroe County includes the City of Rochester, the center of the third largest metropolitan area in New York State, after New York City and Buffalo. The region extends from Lake Ontario south to the Pennsylvania border and from midway between Buffalo and Rochester to midway between Syracuse and Rochester (Figure 2).

Figure 2: The Genesee Finger Lakes Region of New York State

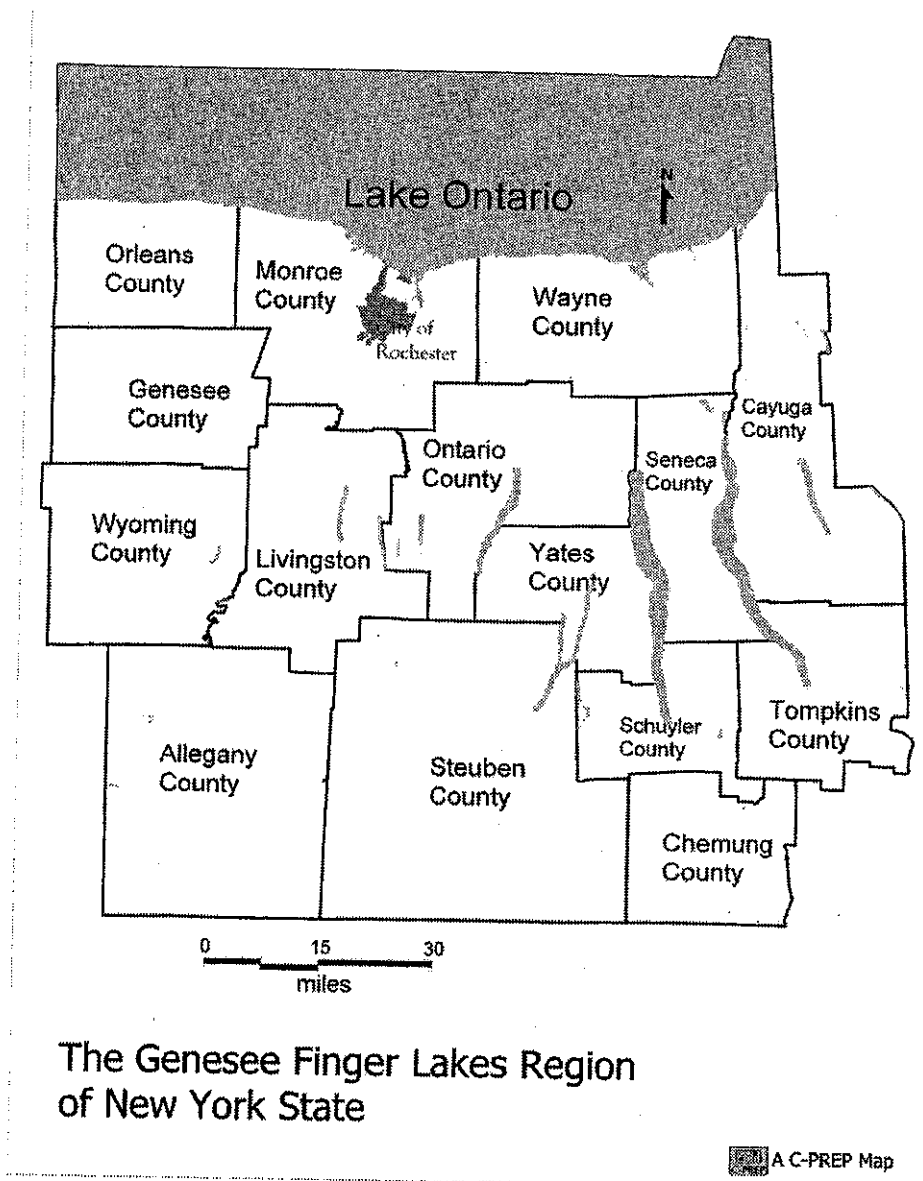
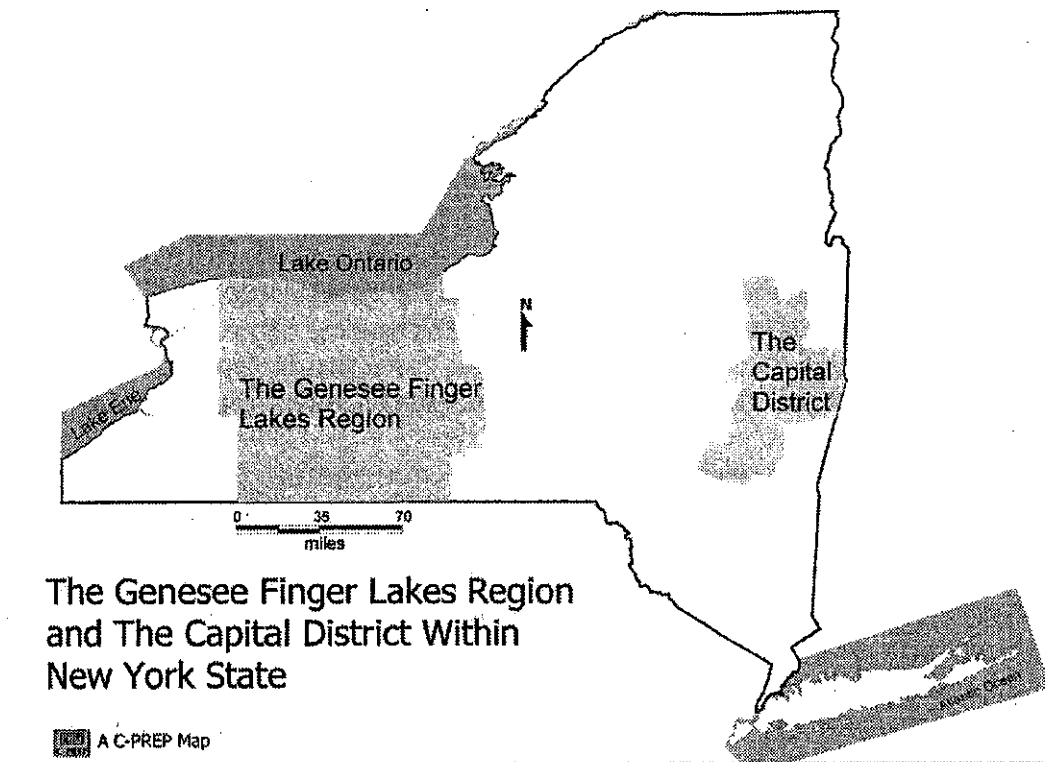


Figure 3 shows the location of the two regions within New York State. The Capital District is located in eastern New York, close to the border with Vermont. The Genesee Finger Lakes Region occupies a large area of central and western New York.

Figure 3: The Location of the Two Regions Within New York State



Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this analysis considers the regional food system as an *ecological system*, that is to say as a highly organized set of structures and functions in a specific locality. We can recognize and observe the regional food system in terms of repeated series of transactions between producers, intermediaries, retailers and consumers. Francis *et al* in 2003 provided a theoretical discussion of the ecology of food systems, addressing "...the wholeness and connectivity of systems,...a focus on uniqueness of each place, and solutions appropriate to its resources and constraints."¹⁷ This approach integrates an awareness of natural ecological systems and social systems. Natural ecological systems "...have evolved over centuries to take efficient advantage of natural

¹⁷ Francis, C., Lieblein, G., Gliessman, S., Breland, T.A., Creamer, N., Harwood, R., Salomonsson, L., Helenius, J., Rickerl, D., Salvador, R., Wiedenhoef, M., Simmons, S., Allen, P., Altieri, M., Flora, C., Poincelot, R. "Agroecology: The Ecology of Food Systems." *Journal of Sustainable Agriculture* (2003). 22(3): 99-118.

resources. Interacting plant and animal species survive well together in each given environment, including its climate and soils."¹⁸ Human beings organize themselves in social systems, "...open systems that result from human actions and are based on demands, wishes and vision."¹⁹ While their paper has an educational focus, the concepts apply just as powerfully to the practices and transactional characteristics of regional food systems: We "must shift emphasis from...how to maximize production of a single crop in a decontextualized environment with unlimited access to fossil fuels, toward a food systems level where the natural environment and society are recognized in all their complexity."²⁰

Streeter and Bills manifested an implicit systems approach in their assessment of the policy climate that promotes value-added agriculture and the potential for value-added agriculture to serve as a driving force for economic development.²¹ They focused on two issues. First, they argue that the level of analysis for studying value-added agriculture-based economic development should change from the farm business to households with farming interests. Second, they point out that the food system involves not only farm production activities but post-production marketing activities that take place downstream from the farm gate.

Streeter and Bills provided an operational description of elements within a model food system that informs the conceptual framework used in this paper.²² The food system in its simplest form has two segments, farm production and marketing activities. These segments correspond to the USDA Economic Research Service breakdown of the consumer food dollar into two components, farm value and marketing.²³ Farm production activities take place on the farm and include managerial practices that generate unprocessed food products for sale at the farm gate and thus create farm value.²⁴ Ideally these products meet the wants and needs of customers, and the farmer can use a variety of methods to produce food in response to consumer demand. Beyond or "downstream" from the farm gate the food system includes a range of marketing activities that (a) transform unprocessed food products into a wide range of food products through packing, processing, and food manufacturing, (b) bring food products to the attention of customers and (c) deliver food products from all production points (i.e., on farm and downstream) to all customers as they need or want those products.

¹⁸ Francis, *et al*, *op cit*.

¹⁹ Francis, *et al*, *op cit*.

²⁰ Francis, *et al*, *op cit*.

²¹ Streeter and Bills, *op.cit*.

²² Streeter and Bills, *op cit*.

²³ The Economic Research Service of the USDA breaks down the consumer food dollar into two main components, farm value and the marketing bill. The elements of the marketing bill include labor, packaging, energy, profits, depreciation, advertising, net rent, net interest, repair costs and business taxes.

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/FoodPriceSpreads/bill/components.htm>

²⁴ In this context the ERS-USDA "farm value" measure corresponds to the Bureau of Economic Analysis "cash receipts from marketings" measure (*vide infra*).

These activities involve repeated transactions or exchanges of products for cash that sustain the operation of the food system through wages, benefits and profits. This cash funds the purchases of land, buildings, homes, equipment and supplies. Because the cash exchanged in the primary transaction between the farmer and any one of the farmer's customers (and all secondary, tertiary and later transactions) funds these purchases, the cash "multiplies" in terms of revenues generated and jobs created by all business in these transactional chains.²⁵

Tables 1 and 2 list the elements the farm production segment and the marketing segment of the food system. In addition, these tables show the percentage of the consumer food dollar going to each segment of the food system.

Table 1: Farm Production Activities²⁶


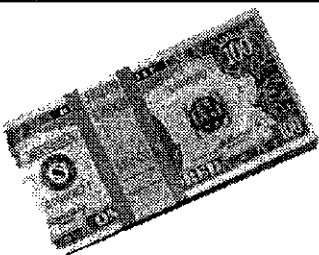
Managerial Practices	Products	Example of "Value Added" Sustainable Production	Share of the Consumer Food Dollar Going to Farm Production ²⁷
Cultivation Practices	Crops	Pesticide free, no till	 18.5%
Information Practices	Livestock	Local farm identity	
Livestock handling	Other products	Antibiotic-free, no BGH, free range	

Table 2: Food Marketing Activities²⁸

Major Activities	Products	Examples of "Value Added" Marketing	Share of the Consumer Food Dollar Going to Marketing Bill
Packing	All packaged, canned, bottled, frozen food products	Gifts packs	 81.5%
Processing		No additives	
Packaging		"Home made" design	
Manufacturing		Soy products that look like meat	
Advertising		Current "low-carb" craze	
Promotion		Toys, gifts for purchasing product	
Sales		Special sales and discounts	
Transportation			
Distribution			
Retail		Low prices	

²⁵ Coughlin, C. C. and Mandelbaum, T. B. (1991) *A Consumer's Guide to Regional Economic Multipliers*. Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis. Also see Sacks, J. (2002) *The Money Trail. Measuring Your Impact on the Local Economy Using the LM3*. New Economics Foundation. The Coughlin and Mandelbaum paper is available on http://research.stlouisfed.org/publications/review/91/01/Consumer_Jan_Feb1991.pdf.

²⁶ Based on Streeter and Bills, *op cit.*

²⁷ ERS-USDA *op cit.*

²⁸ Based on Streeter and Bills, *op cit.*, and ERS-USDA, *op cit.*

These activities and the transactions between farm, market and consumer constitute the food system in its simplest form as series of transactions with no reference to place or location (Appendix Two). However the food system is a much more complex system in which activities and transactions occur within and between regional, national and international or global levels of location. Figure 1 (next page) attempts to convey that complexity.

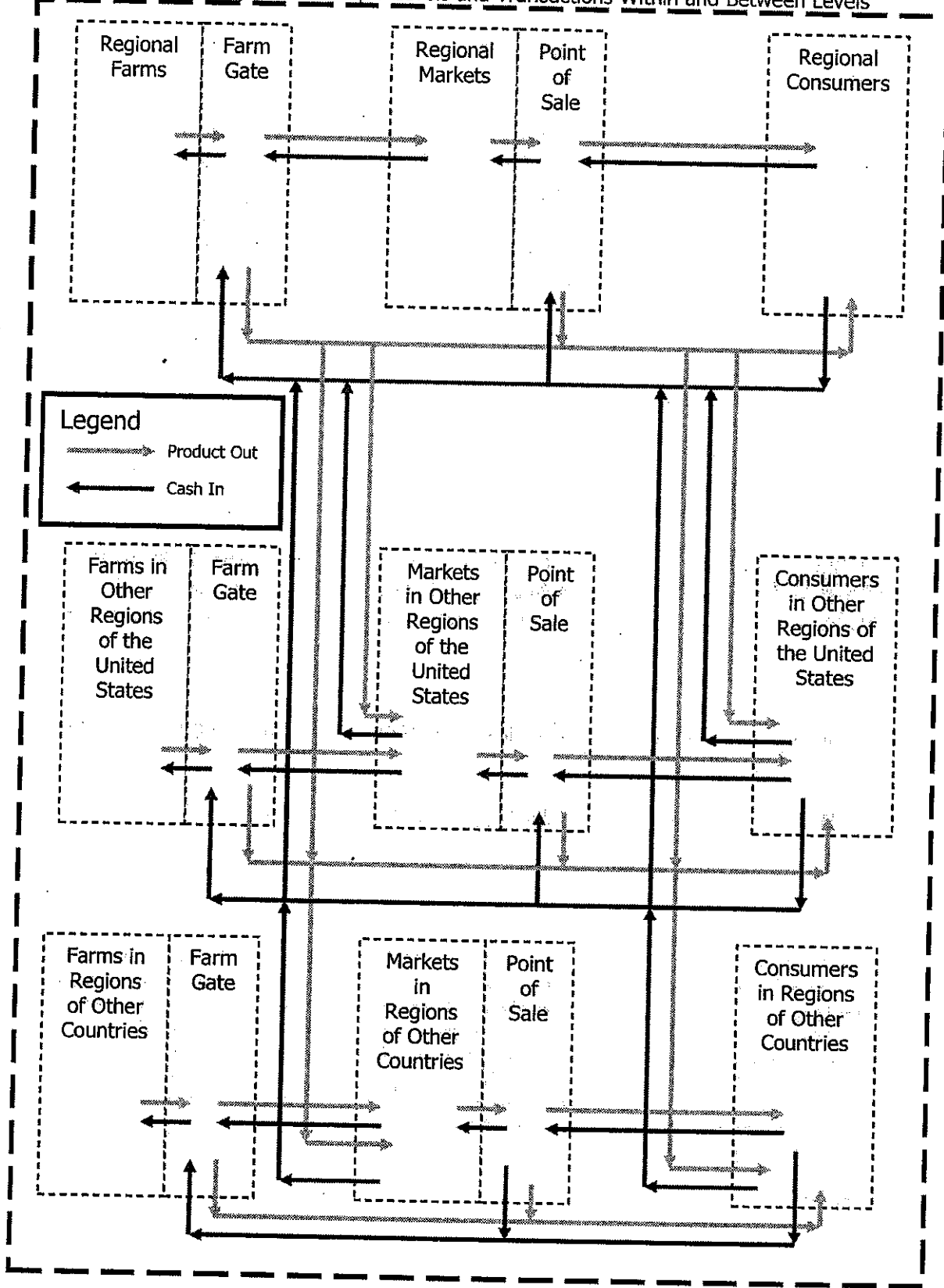
The regional food system—i.e., regional farms, markets and consumers and the transactions between them—is actually a subsystem within broader levels of the food system. Yet the regional food system constitutes the core subsystem of national and global food systems. All regional food systems trade with markets and consumers in other regions of the country and with markets and regions in other countries.

The diagram also suggests that in order to determine the economic development potential of the regional food system, the analysis must recognize and attempt to account for the fact that regional farm and marketing revenues represent the sale of products not only to regional markets and regional consumers but also to markets and consumers outside the region and outside the country. Regional farms and food producers sell a share of products within the region and receive a corresponding share of revenue from within the region. Regional food producers also sell a share of products outside the region and receive a corresponding share of products from outside the region. Regional consumers purchase products from within the region and therefore generate revenue for food producers within the regional food system. Regional consumers also purchase products from outside the region and therefore export cash to food producers outside the region.

From the perspective of the regional food producer, cash received from inside and outside the region has the same value. A dollar is a dollar. From the perspective of the consumer, a purchased product has its value whether produced inside or outside the region. The tomato you buy is what it is.

But from the perspective of regional economic development, regional food production aimed at selling products to markets outside the region diminishes the potential of the regional food system to capture a larger share of regional consumer food dollars. Furthermore, the expenditure of regional consumer food dollars for products imported from other regions to close the gap between regional consumer demand for food and regional food production represents a loss of wealth to the region.

Figure 1: The Food System: Multiple Levels and Transactions Within and Between Levels



Methods

The analysis employs emerging methodology to estimate the dynamics of a regional food market and the capacity of the regional food system to respond to regional demand.²⁹ The analysis uses data from a variety of sources: Farm income, production cost, and current population data provided annually by the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) for counties;³⁰ consumer expenditure survey data provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics for the northeastern United States;³¹ county level information from the 1997 Census of Agriculture;³² and data from the 1997 Economic Census.³³ County level data from the 2002 Census of Agriculture remains unreleased.

The methodology used in this analysis recognizes the limitations in the conventional economic analysis of farm income and expenses as currently practiced by the USDA and the BEA.³⁴

The analysis calculated net farm proprietors' income as described in Appendix Three, using data from the BEA county tables. The analysis uses 2001 data, the latest year available from the BEA.

The analysis calculated consumer expenditures for food at home, away from home and all food as described in Appendix Four. The analysis used 2001 Consumer Expenditure Survey data, the most recent year available with regional data.

The Gap Between Regional Consumer Food Expenditures and Regional Food System Production.

The analysis then estimates the difference between regional consumer food expenditure and regional food system production. Regional food system production or output consists of revenue from the two segments of the regional food system: Total regional farm revenue from the sale of livestock, products and

²⁹ Herrera, H. (2003). *How to Grow (A Regional) Food (System)*. The Center for Popular Research, Education and Policy. Meter, K., Rosales, J. (2001). *Finding Food in Farm Country: The Economics of Food & Farming in Southeast Minnesota*. Lanesboro, MN: Community Design Center. Published in cooperation with the Crossroads Resource Center and the University of Minnesota. Available at <http://www.crcworks.org/ff.pdf>. These investigators developed their methods independently. Meter and Rosales published their analyses for a 7-county region in Southeastern Minnesota in 2001. Herrera first presented his analysis for the 15-county Genesee Finger Lakes Region of Western New York in a short course at the 2001 Annual Meeting of the Community Food Security Coalition in Washington, DC. Meter organized and directs *Finding Food in Farm Country*, a national project for regional food system economic analysis in which Herrera and others participate as national partners and co-investigators.

³⁰ www.bea.doc.gov/bea/regional/reis/

³¹ www.bls.gov/cex/home/

³² www.nass.usda.gov/census/census97/highlights/ny/

³³ Economic Census, Manufacturing, Geographic Area Series, New York 1997

³⁴ Streeter and Bills, *op cit*.

crops plus total regional marketing revenue. Currently food manufacturing is the only element from the marketing segment with available data for the analysis.

A regional food system market gap (RFSMG) exists when food expenditures exceed food production. The size of this gap represents both lack of access to the regional market for regional farm products and food products produced by packing, packaging, processing, manufacturing and other marketing activities. The estimate of RFSMG results from the following calculation:

CALCULATION OF REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEM MARKET GAP

RFSMG
=
Regional consumer expenditures for food
-
(Total regional farm revenue from the sale of livestock, products and crops
+
Total regional food manufacturing revenue + Total revenue from other marketing activities [not yet available])

Projections for Closing the Regional Food System Market Gap

To very roughly estimate the capacity of regional food production and marketing activities to close the RFSMG, the analysis then uses the limited data available to calculate the value of the potential expansion of regional food system production capacity.

To make this rough estimate, the analysis first enumerates current farm production for selected fresh food products in each county using 1997 Census of Agriculture data. The sole purpose of this listing is to make a simple "yes or no" determination as to whether or not regional farms actually produce basic fresh food such as meats, poultry, dairy, vegetables and fruit—products that constitute 54.2% of consumer food expenditures.

The analysis then projects how much more revenue the regional food system could generate from a modest 10% increase in regional consumer expenditures for regional food products. The projection includes a 10% increase in farm cash receipts from marketings and a 10% increase in food manufacturing value of shipments (the only data available for the marketing segment of the regional food system at this time). Building more reality-based estimates will require future study of marketing or post-production activities in the regional food system supply chain.³⁵

To estimate the regional economic impact of increased capture of regional consumer food expenditures by regional food producers, the analysis used the

³⁵ For detailed discussion of the difficulties inherent in expanding value added food production, see Streeter and Bills, *op cit*.

economic multipliers for total income and for employment for production agriculture industries and agriculture manufacturing industries in New York State.³⁶ Because each segment within production agriculture and food manufacturing has its own multiplier, the analysis uses a “summary multiplier” in the middle of the range of multipliers for each segment. This assumed summary multiplier requires future empirical validation. The total income multiplier provides an estimate of how much additional revenue will result from each \$1 of increased revenue in farming and food manufacturing. The employment multiplier estimates the number of jobs that would result from an initial increase in output of \$1 million in response to “final demand.”

Results

Farm Income

Tables 3A and 3B present farm income for the two regions, the Capital District and the Genesee Finger Lakes Region (GFL). “Cash receipts in 2001 from marketings” refers to sales of crops, livestock and other products (e.g., fiber, wood products, etc.). Total farm cash receipts from marketings exceeded \$117 million in the Capital District and \$1.26 billion in the Genesee Finger Lakes region. In 12 of 20 counties, production expenses exceeded cash receipts from marketings. However other income offset these deficits, and in all counties total farm income exceeded expenses.

County	2001 Cash Receipts from Marketings (livestock, products, and crops)	2001 Total Production Expenses	2001 Gross Income from Marketings Alone	Other Income		Total Farm Income from Marketings, Government Payments and Imputed & Miscellaneous Income Received
				Government Payments	Imputed and miscellaneous income received	
Albany	\$ 21,978,000	\$ 22,064,000	(86,000)	\$ 675,000	\$ 1,662,000	\$ 24,315,000
Greene	\$ 11,730,000	\$ 11,646,000	84,000	\$ 937,000	\$ 1,624,000	\$ 14,291,000
Rensselaer	\$ 34,559,000	\$ 36,435,000	(1,876,000)	\$ 1,691,000	\$ 3,183,000	\$ 39,433,000
Saratoga	\$ 42,332,000	\$ 39,907,000	2,425,000	\$ 810,000	\$ 3,498,000	\$ 46,640,000
Schenectady	\$ 7,171,000	\$ 6,517,000	654,000	\$ 116,000	\$ 662,000	\$ 7,949,000
TOTALS	\$ 117,770,000	\$ 116,569,000	1,201,000	\$ 4,229,000	\$ 10,629,000	\$ 132,628,000

³⁶ Jack, K., Bills, N. and Boisvert, R. Policy Issues in Rural Land Use, Volume 9, No. 2, December 1996. Department of Agricultural Resource and Management Economics, Cornell Cooperative Extension

Table 3B: GFL Farm Income

County	2001 Cash Receipts from Marketings (livestock, products, and crops)	2001 Total Production Expenses	2001 Gross Income from Marketings Alone	Other Income		Total Farm Income from Marketings, Government Payments and Imputed & Miscellaneous Income Received
				Government Payments	Imputed and miscellaneous income received	
Allegany	\$ 53,308,000	\$ 46,142,000	7,166,000	\$ 2,075,000	\$ 3,424,000	\$ 58,807,000
Cayuga	\$ 147,481,000	\$ 140,338,000	7,143,000	\$ 5,518,000	\$ 6,510,000	\$ 159,509,000
Chemung	\$ 17,765,000	\$ 17,940,000	(175,000)	\$ 589,000	\$ 1,936,000	\$ 20,290,000
Genesee	\$ 176,106,000	\$ 168,907,000	7,199,000	\$ 4,123,000	\$ 9,493,000	\$ 189,722,000
Livingston	\$ 77,900,000	\$ 83,337,000	(5,437,000)	\$ 6,443,000	\$ 5,850,000	\$ 90,193,000
Monroe	\$ 61,600,000	\$ 59,269,000	2,331,000	\$ 3,392,000	\$ 3,365,000	\$ 68,357,000
Ontario	\$ 97,482,000	\$ 103,889,000	(6,407,000)	\$ 5,098,000	\$ 9,263,000	\$ 111,843,000
Orleans	\$ 81,229,000	\$ 81,208,000	21,000	\$ 6,980,000	\$ 3,952,000	\$ 92,161,000
Schuyler	\$ 17,224,000	\$ 17,725,000	(501,000)	\$ 397,000	\$ 1,439,000	\$ 19,060,000
Seneca	\$ 43,485,000	\$ 47,173,000	(3,688,000)	\$ 3,799,000	\$ 3,241,000	\$ 50,525,000
Steuben	\$ 95,379,000	\$ 99,364,000	(3,985,000)	\$ 2,366,000	\$ 7,548,000	\$ 105,293,000
Tompkins	\$ 61,068,000	\$ 61,829,000	(761,000)	\$ 1,381,000	\$ 3,462,000	\$ 65,911,000
Wayne	\$ 117,729,000	\$ 125,856,000	(8,127,000)	\$ 7,857,000	\$ 8,380,000	\$ 133,966,000
Wyoming	\$ 173,821,000	\$ 171,056,000	2,765,000	\$ 2,893,000	\$ 11,321,000	\$ 188,035,000
Yates	\$ 48,417,000	\$ 49,268,000	(851,000)	\$ 1,385,000	\$ 3,951,000	\$ 53,753,000
TOTALS	\$ 1,269,994,000	\$ 1,273,301,000	(3,307,000)	\$ 54,296,000	\$ 83,135,000	\$ 1,407,425,000

Net Farm Income

Net farm income exceeded \$15 million in the Capital District and \$103 million in the GFL region, as shown in Tables 4A and 4B.

Table 4A: Capital District Net Farm Income

County	Total Farm Income from Marketings, Government Payments and Imputed & Miscellaneous Income Received	2001 Total Production Expenses	Realized Net Income	Plus: Value of Inventory Change	Total net income including corporate farms	(Other Adjustments including net income of corporate farms and statistical adjustments)	Total Net Farm Proprietors Income
Albany	\$ 24,315,000	\$ 22,064,000	\$ 2,251,000	\$ 310,000	\$ 2,561,000	\$ 447,000	\$ 2,114,000
Greene	\$ 14,291,000	\$ 11,646,000	\$ 2,645,000	\$ 163,000	\$ 2,808,000	\$ 128,000	\$ 2,680,000
Rensselaer	\$ 39,433,000	\$ 36,435,000	\$ 2,998,000	\$ 580,000	\$ 3,578,000	\$ 431,000	\$ 3,147,000
Saratoga	\$ 46,640,000	\$ 39,907,000	\$ 6,733,000	\$ 390,000	\$ 7,123,000	\$ 736,000	\$ 6,387,000
Schenectady	\$ 7,949,000	\$ 6,517,000	\$ 1,432,000	\$ 71,000	\$ 1,503,000	(L)	\$ 1,501,000
TOTALS	\$ 132,628,000	\$ 116,569,000	\$ 16,059,000	\$ 1,514,000	\$ 17,573,000		\$ 15,829,000

"(L)" refers to sums less than \$50,000 but included in the calculation of total net farm proprietors income.

Table 4B: GFL Net Farm Income

County	Total Farm Income from Marketings, Government Payments and Imputed & Miscellaneous Income Received	2001 Total Production Expenses	Realized Net Income	Plus: Value of Inventory Change	Total net income including corporate farms	(Other Adjustments including net income of corporate farms and statistical adjustments)	Total Net Farm Proprietors Income
Allegany	\$ 58,807,000	\$ 46,142,000	\$ 12,665,000	781,000	\$ 13,446,000	\$ 961,000	\$ 12,485,000
Cayuga	\$ 159,509,000	\$ 140,338,000	\$ 19,171,000	1,438,000	\$ 20,609,000	\$ 2,954,000	\$ 17,655,000
Chemung	\$ 20,290,000	\$ 17,940,000	\$ 2,350,000	281,000	\$ 2,631,000	\$ 532,000	\$ 2,099,000
Genesee	\$ 189,722,000	\$ 168,907,000	\$ 20,815,000	536,000	\$ 21,351,000	\$ 13,055,000	\$ 8,296,000
Livingston	\$ 90,193,000	\$ 83,337,000	\$ 6,856,000	347,000	\$ 7,203,000	\$ 1,742,000	\$ 5,461,000
Monroe	\$ 68,357,000	\$ 59,269,000	\$ 9,088,000	(145,000)	\$ 8,943,000	\$ 4,481,000	\$ 4,462,000
Ontario	\$ 111,843,000	\$ 103,889,000	\$ 7,954,000	766,000	\$ 8,720,000	\$ 1,654,000	\$ 7,066,000
Orleans	\$ 92,161,000	\$ 81,208,000	\$ 10,953,000	(196,000)	\$ 10,757,000	\$ 4,284,000	\$ 6,473,000
Schuyler	\$ 19,060,000	\$ 17,725,000	\$ 1,335,000	247,000	\$ 1,582,000	\$ 516,000	\$ 1,066,000
Seneca	\$ 50,525,000	\$ 47,173,000	\$ 3,352,000	322,000	\$ 3,674,000	\$ 482,000	\$ 3,192,000
Steuben	\$ 105,293,000	\$ 99,364,000	\$ 5,929,000	2,190,000	\$ 8,119,000	\$ 1,416,000	\$ 6,703,000
Tompkins	\$ 65,911,000	\$ 61,829,000	\$ 4,082,000	572,000	\$ 4,654,000	\$ 610,000	\$ 4,044,000
Wayne	\$ 133,966,000	\$ 125,856,000	\$ 8,110,000	(264,000)	\$ 7,846,000	\$ 2,305,000	\$ 5,541,000
Wyoming	\$ 188,035,000	\$ 171,056,000	\$ 16,979,000	1,489,000	\$ 18,468,000	\$ 3,844,000	\$ 14,624,000
Yates	\$ 53,753,000	\$ 49,268,000	\$ 4,485,000	482,000	\$ 4,967,000	\$ 496,000	\$ 4,471,000
TOTALS	\$ 1,407,425,000	\$ 1,273,301,000					\$ 103,638,000

Consumer Expenditure Data

Tables 5A and 5B shows the 2001 population for each county in the Capital District, the number of consumer units and expenditures per consumer unit for food at home and away from home.

Table 5A: Capital District Consumer Expenditure Data

County	2001 Population	2001 Northeast Consumer Expenditure Survey			
		Average Number of People per Consumer Unit	Number of Consumer Units	Expenditures for Food at Home Per Consumer Unit	Expenditures for Food Away from Home Per Consumer Unit
Albany	294,865	2.5	117,946	\$ 3,399	\$ 2,299
Greene	48,373	2.5	19,349	\$ 3,399	\$ 2,299
Rensselaer	152,820	2.5	61,128	\$ 3,399	\$ 2,299
Saratoga	204,276	2.5	81,710	\$ 3,399	\$ 2,299
Schenectady	146,247	2.5	58,499	\$ 3,399	\$ 2,299
TOTALS	846,581		338,632		

Table 5B: GFL Consumer Expenditure Data

County	2001 Population	2001 Northeast Consumer Expenditure Survey			
		Average Number of People per Consumer Unit	Number of Consumer Units	Expenditures for Food at Home Per Consumer Unit	Expenditures for Food Away from Home Per Consumer Unit
Allegany	50,298	2.5	20,119	\$ 3,399	\$ 2,299
Cayuga	81,412	2.5	32,565	\$ 3,399	\$ 2,299
Chemung	90,704	2.5	36,282	\$ 3,399	\$ 2,299
Genesee	59,967	2.5	23,987	\$ 3,399	\$ 2,299
Livingston	64,710	2.5	25,884	\$ 3,399	\$ 2,299
Monroe	736,215	2.5	294,486	\$ 3,399	\$ 2,299
Ontario	100,898	2.5	40,359	\$ 3,399	\$ 2,299
Orleans	43,940	2.5	17,576	\$ 3,399	\$ 2,299
Schuyler	19,277	2.5	7,711	\$ 3,399	\$ 2,299
Seneca	34,845	2.5	13,938	\$ 3,399	\$ 2,299
Steuben	99,196	2.5	39,678	\$ 3,399	\$ 2,299
Tompkins	97,998	2.5	39,199	\$ 3,399	\$ 2,299
Wayne	93,902	2.5	37,561	\$ 3,399	\$ 2,299
Wyoming	43,070	2.5	17,228	\$ 3,399	\$ 2,299
Yates	24,525	2.5	9,810	\$ 3,399	\$ 2,299
TOTALS	1,640,957		656,383		

Tables 6A and 6B show that in 2001 consumers spent \$1.929 billion for food in the Capital District and \$3.74 billion for food in the GFL region. Of the Capital District total, consumers spent \$1.151 billion for food at home and \$778.5 million for food away from home—in restaurants, fast food outlets, cafeterias, etc. Of the GFL region total, consumers spent \$2.23 billion for food at home and \$1.51 billion for food away from home. These figures do not include institutional food purchases.

Table 6A: Capital District Consumer Expenditures for Food

County	2001 Total Capital District Consumer Expenditures for Food		
	Food at Home	Food Away from Home	All Food
Albany	\$ 400,898,454	\$ 271,157,854	\$ 672,056,308
Greene	\$ 65,767,931	\$ 44,483,811	\$ 110,251,742
Rensselaer	\$ 207,774,072	\$ 140,533,272	\$ 348,307,344
Saratoga	\$ 277,733,650	\$ 187,852,210	\$ 465,585,859
Schenectady	\$ 198,837,421	\$ 134,488,741	\$ 333,326,162
TOTALS	\$ 1,151,011,528	\$ 778,515,888	\$ 1,929,527,415

Table 6B: GFL Consumer Expenditures for Food

County	2001 Total GFL Consumer Expenditures for Food		
	Food at Home	Food Away from Home	All Food
Allegany	\$ 68,385,161	\$ 46,254,041	\$ 114,639,202
Cayuga	\$ 110,687,755	\$ 74,866,475	\$ 185,554,230
Chemung	\$ 123,321,158	\$ 83,411,398	\$ 206,732,557
Genesee	\$ 81,531,133	\$ 55,145,653	\$ 136,676,786
Livingston	\$ 87,979,716	\$ 59,507,316	\$ 147,487,032
Monroe	\$ 1,000,957,914	\$ 677,023,314	\$ 1,677,981,228
Ontario	\$ 137,180,921	\$ 92,785,801	\$ 229,966,722
Orleans	\$ 59,740,824	\$ 40,407,224	\$ 100,148,048
Schuyler	\$ 26,209,009	\$ 17,727,129	\$ 43,936,138
Seneca	\$ 47,375,262	\$ 32,043,462	\$ 79,418,724
Steuben	\$ 134,866,882	\$ 91,220,642	\$ 226,087,523
Tompkins	\$ 133,238,081	\$ 90,118,961	\$ 223,357,042
Wayne	\$ 127,669,159	\$ 86,352,279	\$ 214,021,438
Wyoming	\$ 58,557,972	\$ 39,607,172	\$ 98,165,144
Yates	\$ 33,344,190	\$ 22,553,190	\$ 55,897,380
TOTALS	\$ 2,231,045,137	\$ 1,509,024,057	\$ 3,740,069,194

Regional Food System Production Output

Tables 7A and 7B show the regional food system production outputs for the two regions. Capital District regional food system output exceeds \$355 million.

Table 7A: Capital District Regional Food System Production Output

County	2001 Fam Cash Receipts	1997 Food Production Value of Shipments	Estimated Regional Food Production
Albany	\$ 21,978,000	\$ 237,275,000	\$ 259,253,000
Greene	\$ 11,730,000	\$ -	\$ 11,730,000
Rensselaer	\$ 34,559,000	\$ -	\$ 34,559,000
Saratoga	\$ 42,332,000	\$ -	\$ 42,332,000
Schenectady	\$ 7,171,000	\$ -	\$ 7,171,000
TOTALS	\$ 117,770,000	\$ 237,275,000	\$ 355,045,000

The GFL regional food system output exceeds \$2.8 billion. The region has a long history of innovation in the food system. Jell-O®, French's Mustard® and Ragú® Spaghetti Sauce all originated in the region. Two counties have substantial levels of food manufacturing. For example, Monroe County is the home of Birds Eye® Foods, a multinational vegetable processor. Regional farmers first organized the Pro-Fac Cooperative to sell vegetables for processing to Curtice-Burns, the processing company owned by the cooperative. Curtice-Burns eventually became Birds Eye® Foods. Wayne County is the home of Mott's® apple products and other fruit processors serving international markets.

Table 7B: GFL Regional Food System Production Output

County	2001 Farm Cash Receipts	1997 Food Production Value of Shipments	Estimated Regional Food Production
Allegany	\$ 53,308,000	\$ -	\$ 53,308,000
Cayuga	\$ 147,481,000	\$ -	\$ 147,481,000
Chemung	\$ 17,765,000	\$ -	\$ 17,765,000
Genesee	\$ 176,106,000	\$ -	\$ 176,106,000
Livingston	\$ 77,900,000	\$ -	\$ 77,900,000
Monroe	\$ 61,600,000	\$ 982,057,000	\$ 1,043,657,000
Ontario	\$ 97,482,000	\$ -	\$ 97,482,000
Orleans	\$ 81,229,000	\$ -	\$ 81,229,000
Schuyler	\$ 17,224,000	\$ -	\$ 17,224,000
Seneca	\$ 43,485,000	\$ -	\$ 43,485,000
Steuben	\$ 95,379,000	\$ -	\$ 95,379,000
Tompkins	\$ 61,068,000	\$ -	\$ 61,068,000
Wayne	\$ 117,729,000	\$ 571,304,000	\$ 689,033,000
Wyoming	\$ 173,821,000	\$ -	\$ 173,821,000
Yates	\$ 48,417,000	\$ -	\$ 48,417,000
TOTALS	\$ 1,269,994,000	\$ 1,553,361,000	\$ 2,823,355,000

The Regional Food System Market Gap (RFMSG)

Tables 8A and 8B show the Regional Food System Market Gaps for the two regions. The Capital District RFMSG exceeds \$1.57 billion.

Table 8A: Capital District Regional Food System Market Gap

County	Consumer Expenditures for All Food	Estimated Regional Food Production	Regional Food System Market Gap
Albany	\$ 672,056,308	\$ 259,253,000	\$ 412,803,308
Greene	\$ 110,251,742	\$ 11,730,000	\$ 98,521,742
Rensselaer	\$ 348,307,344	\$ 34,559,000	\$ 313,748,344
Saratoga	\$ 465,585,859	\$ 42,332,000	\$ 423,253,859
Schenectady	\$ 333,326,162	\$ 7,171,000	\$ 326,155,162
TOTALS	\$ 1,929,527,415	\$ 355,045,000	\$ 1,574,482,415

The GFL RFMSG exceeds \$916 million. In Genesee, Wayne and Wyoming Counties food production exceeds county consumer expenditures for food. In all likelihood these counties distribute food products beyond the region in national and global markets. However, the analysis lacks data to determine the volume of sales within the region and beyond the region.

Table 8B: GFL Regional Food System Market Gap

County	Consumer Expenditures for All Food	Estimated Regional Food Production	Estimated Regional Food System Market Gap
Allegany	\$ 114,639,202	\$ 53,308,000	\$ 61,331,202
Cayuga	\$ 185,554,230	\$ 147,481,000	\$ 38,073,230
Chemung	\$ 206,732,557	\$ 17,765,000	\$ 188,967,557
Genesee	\$ 136,676,786	\$ 176,106,000	\$ (39,429,214)
Livingston	\$ 147,487,032	\$ 77,900,000	\$ 69,587,032
Monroe	\$ 1,677,981,228	\$ 1,043,657,000	\$ 634,324,228
Ontario	\$ 229,966,722	\$ 97,482,000	\$ 132,484,722
Orleans	\$ 100,148,048	\$ 81,229,000	\$ 18,919,048
Schuyler	\$ 43,936,138	\$ 17,224,000	\$ 26,712,138
Seneca	\$ 79,418,724	\$ 43,485,000	\$ 35,933,724
Steuben	\$ 226,087,523	\$ 95,379,000	\$ 130,708,523
Tompkins	\$ 223,357,042	\$ 61,068,000	\$ 162,289,042
Wayne	\$ 214,021,438	\$ 689,033,000	\$ (475,011,562)
Wyoming	\$ 98,165,144	\$ 173,821,000	\$ (75,655,856)
Yates	\$ 55,897,380	\$ 48,417,000	\$ 7,480,380
TOTALS	\$ 3,740,069,194	\$ 2,823,355,000	\$ 916,714,194

In the current consumer food marketplace, food imported into these regions from other regions of New York State, from other states or from foreign countries closes these sizable regional food system market gaps. To acquire this food, the people of the Capital District at minimum export \$1.57 billion of regional wealth. The people of the GFL region at minimum export almost \$1 billion of regional wealth.

The regional food system market gap also represents the potential of regional farmers, food producers and food manufacturers to capture a larger share of the regional market through expansion of regional food system production to meet regional consumer demand for food. Expansion of farm production would require increased regional production and sale of fresh food to regional consumers. Expansion of marketing activities would require increased food manufacturing capacity within the region, including value-added activity such as small-scale food processing and manufacturing. Streeter and Bills provide a very thorough discussion of the complexities, risks and requirements of entering value-added agriculture enterprise.³⁷

Regional Production Capacity

Tables 9A and 9B provide information on the number of farms, farmland acreage, cropland acreage, and the number of farms producing various livestock, crops, vegetables and fruit. This information does not enable a comparison of the production volume of each product in relation to consumer consumption. Peters

³⁷ Streeter and Bills, *op. cit.*

et al have developed methods for such comparison.³⁸ However, a subjective examination of this information does indicate that farms in the two regions can produce a wide range of fresh food products and may have unused farm production capacity.

Table 9A: Production Capacity of Capital District Farms

County	Number of Farms 1997	Land in Farms (acres)	Harvested Cropland (acres)	Farms - Beef	Farms - Milk	Farms - Hogs and Pigs	Farms - Chickens	Farms - Vegetables	Farms - Orchards
Albany	396	56,782	25,651	107	34	26	3	42	8
Greene	244	48,770	17,689	117	39	13	1	13	11
Rensselaer	459	98,965	47,805	131	91	26	4	49	16
Saratoga	472	72,928	35,903	98	79	37	2	56	20
Schenectady	151	18,168	7,746	26	10	9	1	17	9
TOTALS	1,722	295,613	134,794	479	253	111	11	177	64

Table 9B: Production Capacity of GFL Farms

County	Number of Farms 1997	Land in Farms (acres)	Harvested Cropland (acres)	Farms - Beef	Farms - Milk	Farms - Hogs and Pigs	Farms - Chickens	Farms - Vegetables	Farms - Orchards
Allegany	724	157,744	61,426	199	185	53	2	30	9
Cayuga	846	251,820	166,880	144	214	35	2	88	27
Chemung	313	59,272	23,848	80	57	21	-	16	12
Genesee	516	170,878	128,517	86	117	25	-	100	10
Livingston	625	197,408	127,478	153	100	29	5	86	13
Monroe	480	103,097	74,809	51	35	8	1	109	51
Ontario	692	185,924	129,141	109	112	19	1	77	54
Orleans	456	143,397	101,698	98	42	17	5	106	98
Schuyler	318	65,281	27,170	84	59	18	-	12	40
Seneca	413	117,426	84,575	69	92	22	-	35	46
Steuben	1,295	348,971	164,745	373	373	65	6	50	74
Tompkins	447	95,451	49,671	93	103	24	1	43	10
Wayne	840	167,190	105,272	120	103	24	2	97	255
Wyoming	702	194,902	115,438	130	289	31	7	45	18
Yates	657	104,790	59,692	76	182	17	2	59	169
TOTALS	9,324	2,363,551	1,420,360	1,865	2,063	408	34	953	886

³⁸ Peters, C., Bills, N., Wilkins, J., and Smith, R.D. Vegetable Consumption, Dietary Guidelines and Agricultural Production in New York State – Implications for Local Food Economies. Research Bulletin 2002-07, May, 2002. Department of Applied Economics and Management, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Cornell University. Peters, C., Bills, N., Wilkins, J., and Smith, R.D. Fruit Consumption, Dietary Guidelines and Agricultural Production in New York State – Implications for Local Food Economies. Research Bulletin 2002-07, May, 2002. Department of Applied Economics and Management, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Cornell University.

The Economic Development Potential of Regional Food System Capacity to Meet Consumer Demand in the Capital District Region of New York State

Tables 11A and 11B show projected increases in regional food system revenues based on the 2001 baseline and a 10% increase in the capture of regional consumer food expenditures. Capital District food system revenues would increase by almost \$400 million; GFL Region food system revenues would increase by over \$700 million. The increase in regional food production costs to accomplish these increases in revenue is a topic for future development in this analysis.

Table 11A: Projected Increase In Regional Food System Revenue With Capture of 10% of Capital District Consumer Food Expenditures

Food System Segment	Capital District Regional Food System Output Estimate	10% of Capital District Consumer Food Expenditures, 2001	Projected Total Regional Food System Revenues
Farming	\$ 117,770,000	\$ 192,952,742	\$ 310,722,742
Food Manufacturing	\$ 237,275,000	\$ 192,952,742	\$ 430,227,742
Capital District Total	\$ 355,045,000		\$ 740,950,483

Table 11B: Projected Increase In Regional Food System Revenue With Capture of 10% of GFL Consumer Food Expenditures

Food System Segment	Genesee Finger Lakes Region Food System Output Estimate	10% of GFL Consumer Food Expenditures, 2001	Projected Total Regional Food System Revenues
Farming	\$ 1,269,994,000	\$ 374,006,919	\$ 1,644,000,919
Food Manufacturing	\$ 1,553,361,000	\$ 374,006,919	\$ 1,927,367,919
GFL Total	\$ 2,823,355,000		\$ 3,571,368,839

Tables 12A and 12B show the regional multiplier effect on income resulting from these projected increases regional food system revenue. Expanded regional food system revenue from a 10% capture of regional consumer food expenditures would add \$733 million dollars to the Capital District regional economy and \$1.42 billion dollars to the GFL regional economy through employee compensation, propriety income from self-employment and other property income.

Table 12A: Projected Increase in Total Regional Income from Capital District Food System Expansion

	Projected Capital District Food System Revenue With 10% Capture of Consumer Food Expenditures	Size of Initial Increase in Regional Food System Revenue	Economic Multiplier Estimate	Change in Total Income From Regional Food System Expansion (employee compensation, proprietary income and other property income)
Farming	\$ 310,722,742	\$ 192,952,742	2.00	385,905,483
Food Manufacturing	\$ 430,227,742	\$ 192,952,742	1.80	347,314,935
Capital District Total	\$ 740,950,483			733,220,418

Table 12B: Projected Increase in Total Regional Income from GFL Food System Expansion

	Projected GFL Region Food System Revenue With 10% Capture of Consumer Food Expenditures	Size of Initial Increase in Regional Food System Revenue	Economic Multiplier Estimate	Change in Total Income From Regional Food System Expansion (employee compensation, proprietary income and other property income)
Farming	\$ 1,644,000,919	\$ 374,006,919	2.00	748,013,839
Food Manufacturing	\$ 1,927,367,919	\$ 374,006,919	1.80	673,212,455
GFL Region Total	\$ 3,571,368,839			1,421,226,294

Tables 13A and 13B show the projected increase in regional jobs (part-time and full-time) from the projected increase in regional food system revenues. Expanded regional food system revenue from a 10% capture of regional consumer food expenditures would add 770 jobs to Capital District regional employment and 1,492 jobs to GFL regional employment.

Table 13A: Projected Increase in Regional Jobs from Capital District Food System Expansion

	Projected Capital District Food System Revenue with 10% Capture of Consumer Food Expenditures	Size of Initial Increase in Regional Food System Revenue	Economic Multiplier Estimate	Job Creation Resulting from Each Million Dollars of Initial Increase in Regional Food System Revenues in Response to "Final Demand"
Farming	\$ 310,722,742	\$ 192,952,742	1.45	280
Food Manufacturing	\$ 430,227,742	\$ 192,952,742	2.54	490
Capital District Total	\$ 740,950,483			770

Table 13B: Projected Increase in Regional Jobs from GFL Region Food System Expansion				
	Projected GFL Region Food System Revenue With 10% Capture of Consumer Food Expenditures	Size of Initial Increase in Regional Food System Revenues	Economic Multiplier Estimate	Job Creation Resulting from Each Million Dollars of Initial Increase in Regional Food System Revenues in Response to "Final Demand"
Farming	\$ 1,644,000,919	\$ 374,006,919	1.45	542
Food Manufacturing	\$ 1,927,367,919	\$ 374,006,919	2.54	950
GFL Region Total	\$ 3,571,368,839			\$ 1,492

Discussion

This analysis suggests strongly that regional food system expansion can serve as a significant driver of regional economic development, adding over \$2 billion to the economies of the two regions and over 2,000 jobs. Few if any sectors of the economy have as much immediate potential for adding wealth and jobs as the regional food system, where key elements of the required production infrastructure—such as farmland—already exist. The problem lies not in developing this sector of the economy. Our challenge is actually to protect and expand the output of the regional food system and to capture more of the consumer expenditures that people of these regions already make every day—expenditures essential for literal daily survival as well as the more celebratory dimensions of eating.

The “Agriculture of the Middle” project offers important motivation to pursue economic development based on regional food system expansion.³⁹ Kirschenmann and his colleagues address the market access challenges of “...those farms and food enterprises that currently fall between the supply chains that move bulk commodities and the linkages that feature various forms of direct farm marketing....It is the mid-sized⁴⁰ farms which are the most vulnerable in today’s polarized markets and it is those same farms that have the greatest potential to produce the products that are suitable for *the market of the middle....*” (emphasis added).

The “Agriculture of the Middle” white paper describes a range of opportunities to “regenerate” a thriving agriculture of the middle.⁴¹ The key dimension of opportunity resides in building supply chains and value chains based on unique relationships, trust and partnership between food consumers and producers.

Imagine a large number of small and mid-sized family farmers, producing food products for regional food sheds, using sound conservation practices, providing their animals with the opportunity to perform all their natural functions, and preserving the identity of such food products by processing them in locally-owned processing facilities, and making them available in the market place with opportunities for consumers to access the entire story of the product’s life cycle....*It is this nation’s larger small farms and mid-sized farms that have the comparative advantage in developing this new agriculture since they have the flexibility to implement innovative production and marketing systems and can produce the volume necessary to supply significant quantities of food into these new food chains.* [Italics in the original]⁴²

³⁹ Kirschenmann, et al, *op cit*.

⁴⁰ Kirschenmann et al use the USDA definition of intermediate farms to define mid-size farms, i.e., farms with incomes between \$100,000 and \$250,000 and where farming is the primary occupation of the owners. This discussion follows the Kirschenmann definition.

⁴¹ Kirschenmann, et al, *op cit*.

⁴² Kirschenmann, et al, *op cit*.

As Kirschenmann et al point out, seizing these opportunities will require research, evaluation education and policy to support regional, ecologically sound production practices and new market models and marketing relationships “to increase the viability of local and regionally-based food processing and distribution enterprises, and/or develop such value chains within existing enterprises.”⁴³

The Capital District and the Genesee Finger Lakes Region of New York State have the capacity to respond to these opportunities. Tables 14A and 14B show the number of farms in each of the two regions that reside in “the agriculture of the middle.” Over 1,260 farms in these two regions have the size that both signifies threat to their continued existence because of changes in the structure of agriculture and also signifies the capacity to respond to regional food system expansion and food system-based regional economic development opportunity.

Table 14A: Capital District "Farms of the Middle"

County	Number of Farms 1997	Number of Farms with Incomes Below \$100,000	Number of Farms with Incomes between \$100,000 and \$250,000	Number of Farms with Incomes Over \$250,000
TOTALS	1,722	1,531	107	84

Table 14B: GFL Farms of the Middle

County	Number of Farms 1997	Number of Farms with Incomes Below \$100,000	Number of Farms with Incomes Between \$100,000 and \$250,000	Number of Farms with Incomes Above \$250,000
TOTALS	9,324	7,260	1,161	903

The time is ripe to begin the research, education, model building, model testing and policy development work to bring these opportunities into reality and to accomplish a fundamental goal for the health of every region of New York State and indeed the nation and every country on our planet: To rebuild and revitalize the regional food systems that provide community food security for everyone and sustain not only life but the richness of community life.

⁴³ Kirschenmann, et al, *op cit*.

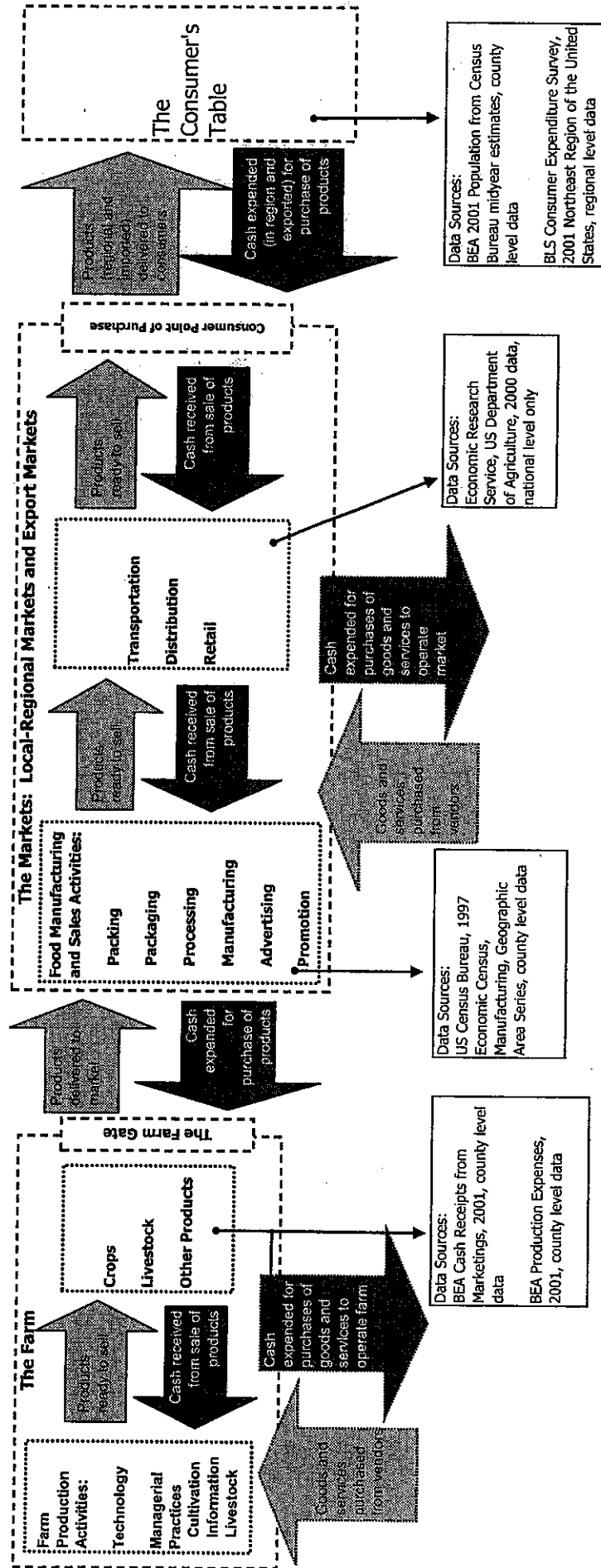
Appendix One

Summary of Data from the 2002 Census of Agriculture

Between 1997 and 2002, the number of farms in the United States dropped by 3.91% but farmland acreage decreased by only 1.60%. Only two classes of farms by size of operation showed an increase in number between 1997 and 2002 in the US, those between 10 and 49 acres (+6%) and those over 2,000 acres (+5%). In the US in 2002, farms earning less than \$10,000 constituted 59% of all farms, but farms earning more than \$100,000 constituted 14% of all farms in 2002.

In New York State between 1997 and 2002 the number of farms dropped by 2.67% but farmland acreage decreased by only 1.69%. Three classes of farms by size of operation showed an increase in number between 1997 and 2002 in NYS, those between 10 and 49 acres (8.12%), those between 1,000 and 1,999 acres (11.1%), and those over 2,000 acres (28.99). In NYS farms in 2002, farms earning less than \$10,000 constituted 56% of all farms, and farms earning more than \$100,000 constituted 17.27% of all farms.

Appendix Two Elements of the Regional Food System and Data Sources



Appendix Three Calculation of Net Farm Proprietors' Income

CALCULATIONS TO ESTIMATE NET FARM PROPRIETORS' INCOME

Step 1: Realized Net Income

Total cash receipts from marketings (livestock, products and crops)
+
Other income (government payments, imputed and miscellaneous income)
-
Total production expenses
=
Realized net income

Step 2: Total net income including corporate farms

Realized net income
+
Value of inventory change
=
Total net income including corporate farms

Step 3: Total net farm proprietors' income

Total net income including corporate farms
-
Net income of corporate farms
+
Statistical adjustment
=
Total net farm proprietors' income

Appendix Four Calculation of Regional Consumer Food Expenditures

CALCULATIONS TO ESTIMATE REGIONAL CONSUMER FOOD EXPENDITURES

Step 1: Determine the number of consumer units in each county

$\begin{array}{r} \text{The county population from the 2001 county population estimates published by the BEA} \\ \div \\ \text{The average size of consumer units in the northeastern US (2.5 people per consumer unit)} \\ = \\ \text{The number of consumer units in each county.} \end{array}$

Step 2: Determine the total county consumer food expenditure

$\begin{array}{r} \text{The number of consumer units in each county.} \\ \times \\ \text{The average consumer expenditure for food at home in the northeastern US} \\ \text{(\$3,799 per consumer unit)} \\ + \\ \text{The number of consumer units in each county} \\ \times \\ \text{The average consumer expenditure for food away from home in the northeastern US} \\ \text{(\$2,799 per consumer unit)} \\ = \\ \text{The total county consumer expenditure for food} \end{array}$
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Step 3: Determine total consumer expenditure for food

$\begin{array}{r} \text{Add the county consumer expenditure for food for all counties in the region} \\ = \\ \text{Total regional consumer expenditure for food} \end{array}$

Appendix 3

Regional Food Systems: Seeking to Improve the Quality of Life for All

Regional Food Systems: Seeking to Improve the Quality of Life for All

Background Paper Prepared for the Development of Regional Food Systems Legislation On Behalf of the Regional Food Systems Planning Group

Julie C. Dawson⁴⁴

June, 2004

In an era of plentiful food, available year round from any corner of the globe, why should we support the development of regional food systems? First, we must recognize that local food economies are not a return to the past, but the road to a sustainable future. Small and mid-sized family farms are better stewards of the land and wish to maintain its productive capacity for future generations. They are able to provide a higher level of management intensity per acre of land and are better able to adopt innovative sustainable practices than larger specialized farms. Diverse production systems usually use less water for irrigation, less fertilizer, and fewer pesticides. They are not as reliant on non-renewable energy sources and federal subsidies for support. Smaller farms produce fewer off-farm negative effects including sediment and pollutants in water, noise and odor than industrial livestock and row-crop operations. In most cases, these farmers want to pass on their farm and the farming lifestyle to their children or newly starting farmers.

Economically, regional food systems support many small farms and food-related businesses, creating stable employment and a robust regional economy that can survive the effects of a variable economy and global competition. Consumers develop loyalty to producers and local businesses and make the region self-reliant in meeting the needs of its citizens. Improved economic conditions, employment opportunities and working conditions mean that fewer families are dependent on welfare and emergency food assistance, relieving some of the burden on federal and community assistance programs.

Local food economies have less tangible benefits as well. They help maintain both urban and rural communities. Residents of many different ideologies, occupations and lifestyles are able to connect through the food system. Fresh local foods can provide better quality, nutrition and food safety through reducing the transit time, post-harvest spoilage and number of opportunities for

⁴⁴ The regional food systems core planning group includes Hank Herrera, Managing Director, NYSAWG; Evan Lowenstein, Executive Director, Common Good Planning Center; Anna Barnes, Intern, NYSAWG and Common Good Planning Center; Julie Dawson, Intern, Sustainable Agriculture Coalition; Sarah Borron, Policy Associate, Community Food Security Coalition; and Shana McDavis-Conway, Congressional Hunger Fellow assigned to the National Family Farm Coalition and the Community Food Security Coalition.

degradation or contamination. In addition, local food systems are a powerful teaching tool about the value of a healthy lifestyle for both students and adults.

Regional food systems are difficult to define. That is part of their strength: the diversity of strategies, products and connections between various members of the community leads to increased resilience and local leadership. In defining a region, state lines are an arbitrary boundary, not based on watersheds, soil types, climate, vegetation or other biological factors that define a "bio-region." However, state lines are not irrelevant and can be useful in targeting regional food system efforts. States are a major political unit, and state policies can have a great impact on food production, processing, distribution and consumption. Residents often identify with their state and may respond positively to state marketing efforts such as the "Pride of NY" label for foods grown in the state. Furthermore, the educational system is largely state-run, and there is great potential for educating young children through college students on the benefit of regional, seasonal diets, and for providing locally produced foods in the cafeteria and college dining halls.

Although it is not possible to delineate one set of criteria that all local food systems must meet, there are certain concepts that are common to many initiatives. For example, the new "Agriculture of the Middle" project envisions regional food systems providing citizens with wholesome, fresh and good tasting food, while restoring the ecological health of the land and revitalizing local communities. In this future food system, a large number of small and mid-sized farms produce food for their region, using sound conservation practices and good animal husbandry, supplying locally owned processing facilities, retailers and regional consumers. The underlying goal is to make a more equitable system of food production, processing, distribution, sale and consumption, one that meets the needs of all participants.

Some useful terms and concepts that have emerged from the literature:

- **Local Food Economy:** well-developed demand responses by local producers to regional consumer needs (Peters et al)
- **Regionally Competitive:** able to create wealth in a global marketplace, and in the process improve the social and economic well-being of regional residents (Mark Drabenscott - Center for Rural Studies, Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City)
- **Sustainable Diets:** diets composed of foods chosen for their contribution to health and to the sustainability of the agricultural system (Gussow and Clancy)
- **Community Food Security:** a condition in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice (Mike Hamm and Anne Bellows - New Jersey Urban Ecology Program)

- **Value-Added:** increased worth of products resulting from any business strategy, whether production-oriented or post-production marketing, which allows farmers and entrepreneurs to capture a greater share of consumer food expenditures than they receive for standardized bulk commodities (Streeter and Bills).

Background

Prior to the development of the interstate highway system and the centralization of food distribution networks, many states were more self-sufficient in food production, especially in growing fruits and vegetables for local consumption (Duxbury and Welch). When rapid transportation systems began to give a comparative advantage to southern states and Mexico, competition from out of state produce increased. In-state production shifted to crops where New York has a comparative advantage, such as sweet corn, cabbage, pumpkins, beets, cauliflower and snap beans. Since the turn of the century, there has been a substantial decline in NYS production of potatoes, dry beans, wheat, poultry, and many fresh vegetables such as tomatoes and lettuce. When regional markets dwindled, processing capacity shut down for all but a few crops. Foods that were once locally grown are no longer produced in commercial quantities and would not currently meet regional demand, even though the state has the productive capacity to meet regional needs (Herrin and Gussow).

Many economists praise this regional specialization and argue that it is the most efficient way to produce affordable food. It is likely that shifting to regional food systems would result in increased food prices during the transitional period because of the current economic system and the loss of local capacity. However, the way we produce food now is not environmentally, socially or economically sustainable. Our current food system is based largely on cheap fuel costs, public investment in transportation, subsidies for irrigation, industrial livestock facilities, row crop production and the externalization of many environmental costs. Transportation is responsible for 20% of the petroleum used in food production. As fuel costs rise, transcontinental shipping will become much more expensive. Western states are facing severe water shortages and unsustainable use of underground aquifers. As input costs rise, the comparative advantage these regions have will decrease. Over the long term local food production and processing will most likely lead to comparatively less expensive foods.

Any proposal that may increase food prices, even in the short-term, is usually criticized for jeopardizing the food security of low-income people. The logic of this argument is questionable. Americans spend less than 15% of our income on food, but low prices have not eliminated hunger as a serious problem (Herrin and Gussow). An estimated 10% of households lack food security in the US, and the northeastern region is no exception to this statistic. Because more equitable food systems will take time to develop, food assistance programs will still be very important for lower-income families and individuals. Linking regional producers to food assistance programs, school lunch and institutional food service can

improve the nutrition of low-income residents while maintaining support for the regional agricultural production capacity. Low-income people may not be able to afford organic produce or specialty items at high-end retail stores and restaurants, but there is no reason they should not have access to high-quality fruits, vegetables, meats and dairy from regional farmers. Investing in locally owned businesses for agricultural production, processing, distribution and retailing also creates a stronger economic foundation for the region. A diverse economy grounded in the region provides jobs to residents that are unlikely to move off shore due to lower labor costs or environmental regulations. This addresses poverty and food insecurity at its roots and is critical to long-term economic development and food security in any region.

Subsidies and concentration of market power among a few vertically integrated food companies and wholesalers means that food prices are often completely unrelated to the cost of production. Improving the market links between regional producers and consumers would decentralize production and pricing decisions. Smaller-scale farms linked to regional markets are better able to respond to regional market demands through personal innovation and changing production practices. This is difficult for larger, vertically integrated firms, and contract farmers (especially in the livestock industries) who may have very specific production criteria and high levels of capital invested in a certain production system.

Comparing the amount consumers spend regionally for food to the net income of local producers and food processors gives an estimate of the potential market for regional products. This "market gap" for regionally produced foods is substantial. For New York State's capital district alone, it exceeds \$1.811 billion annually (Herrera et al). The challenge is to connect production to consumption on a regional scale so this money remains circulating in the local economy. Many farmers are able to successfully market vegetables directly to consumers during the summer months, but there is a shortage of opportunities for mid-size farms that cannot survive on direct or niche markets. At present, supermarket chains prefer guaranteed year round supplies and deal with only a few wholesalers, so they import produce items even when regional production would meet consumer demand. For example, 75% of apples in New York City come from Washington, California or overseas, despite the fact that New York State produces ten times the annual apple consumption of NYC residents.

The system of nationwide distribution makes it difficult for consumers to find local produce and food products, even when they want to support their region and feel local foods are superior in quality. It is possible to address this through a combination of improved processing and distribution systems within the region, consumer education and promotion of regional foods. The primary barriers to regional food systems are issues of seasonality and marketing, not a lack of local capacity or demand. In a survey of Northeastern consumers, 88% believed that local fruits and vegetables were fresher, 62% said they tasted better and 60% thought they looked better than produce from non-local sources (Duxbury and

Welch). Nutritional models show that diets based solely on northeast regional, seasonal food products can be nutritionally sufficient, but due to climate and growing conditions in the northeast it best to continue importing grains (Wilkins et al). Regional food systems do not preclude trade among regions or nations, but they help foster trade that is mutually beneficial because regions provide for their citizens first and trade in surplus or high-value specialty items.

Due to the characteristics of the state, it is most effective to focus on fruit, vegetable and animal products when promoting a regional food system. New York is a top producer of winter vegetables, apples, grapes, cherries, and milk products. To meet dietary recommendations, consumers need to increase fruit and vegetable consumption and diversify their choices. High-quality fresh produce can help boost nutrition and provide incentive to make healthier dietary choices. There are also many specialty items, such as wines, cheeses, maple syrup and sustainably raised meats, which could capture a larger market share. However, a true regional food system would not focus exclusively on niche markets or large volume crop production, but would diversify production to meet the complete nutritional needs of all consumers in the region, including those with little purchasing power.

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Policy Recommendations

Near Term Proposals

These recommendations can be started in the next 1-2 years with significant results. They will require ongoing support and planning to ensure their sustainability in the long-term. Most can be done at either the state or federal level, but will be most effective if there is coordination across all levels of government. Some are best done at the local level but will require outside support.

Policy planning mechanisms to facilitate the development of regional food systems:

- Joint Federal-State-Local committee on the food system to develop model policy interactions at the different levels of government to minimize obstacles to creating a regional food system.
- Create State and Local Food Policy Councils that work across departmental and jurisdictional lines to develop solutions to policy barriers to regional food systems.
- Increase federal and state funding for programs that currently support the development of regional food systems (see attached). Encourage administrative use of these programs to fund initiatives that will benefit local producers and regional food economies.
- Actively encourage communities to zone land for agricultural use, grant farmland preservation easements, and provide stable land tenure for community gardens, urban agricultural production and farm markets within their jurisdiction.
 - Increase funding for the Federal Farm and Ranch Land Preservation Program, NYS Farmland Protection Grants, and Farmland Viability Grants
- Expand the NYS purchasing program for in-state fruits, vegetables, dairy and animal products to serve all state-run schools, colleges, hospitals, prisons, government agencies and other institutions. Use this as a model to encourage private institutions such as restaurants, hotels, caterers and others in the food service industry to purchase regional foods.

Research on marketing, production and procurement practices, evaluating programs

- Collect data from studies on the distribution of NYS products, where acreage has declined or increased and where competition from non-regional sources impedes local production. Identify key crops and areas for expanding regional productive and processing capacity.
- Conduct market surveys to determine consumer demand for various produce, meat, milk and ethnic food products to inform farmers' planting

decisions. Identify high-potential markets, both niche and wholesale, and work to create stronger market signals for regional production.

- Conduct research on alternative agricultural systems with a preference for serving small and mid-sized operations. Support breeding programs for crops and livestock well adapted to New York State growing conditions. Encourage farmer and consumer participation to identify real needs and develop a relevant research agenda.

Production - supporting sustainable farms that meet regional food needs:

- Provide technical support and business training opportunities to producers who wish to target local and regional markets, at both the wholesale and retail level.
 - Federal Small Business Loans and Grants, Value Added Development Grants
 - NYS Agriculture Research and Development grants, Enterprise Program and business development assistance programs
- Offer whole-farm revenue insurance rather than crop insurance by commodity, a policy that discourages diversification and limits insurance options for smaller farms.
 - Fully implement a national version of the Pennsylvania pilot program on whole farm revenue insurance to make this available to farmers in New York.
- Provide cost-share for certification, adoption of conservation practices and development of value-added enterprises (organic, IPM, Pride of NY, grass-fed, free-range etc). Coordinate federal and state grant and loan programs for farmers and ranchers.
- Provide support for the development of farmer cooperatives and links to retail outlets or consumers. Cooperatives can include groups of producers marketing the same product to improve the volume and reliability of their supply, or they can combine diverse agricultural enterprises to provide a wide range of products to stores, restaurants or consumers.
 - Increase funding for federal Rural Business Cooperative Services, Value Added Development Grants, SARE producer grants and New York's Enterprise Program, State Agricultural Research and Development Grants, and business development programs
- Support programs that link beginning farmers or immigrants that wish to farm with retiring farmers to facilitate farm succession and farmland preservation. Coordinate the efforts of New York state programs such as Growing New Farmers and Farm Link with USDA programs for beginning farmer and ranchers, and outreach for socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers to leverage funding and increase effectiveness
- Expand local processing capacity for preserving fruits and vegetables to buffer seasonal peaks in production, create locally owned facilities for

canning, freezing, processing of fluid milk and other dairy products, and creation of value-added agricultural products.

- Expand the NYS food entrepreneurship program based at Cornell, the NYS Enterprise Program, Agricultural Research and Development Grants, federal Value Added Development Grants and SARE grants for processing and marketing activities.
- Invest in a NYS transportation network to link wholesale markets to retail and restaurant businesses within the state, potentially including water transport on the Hudson River or Erie Canal. Promote the use of sustainable energy for transportation. Current activities include the Regional Access distribution company and NY FarmsExpress.
- Combine agricultural development programs with skills-training and youth employment programs, business courses, welfare-to-work and community service rehabilitation programs. Focus on making agricultural related enterprises a viable and desirable career path.
 - Incorporate principles of sustainable agriculture and regional food systems into the Agricultural Workforce Certification Program, support the AgriCorps youth program
 - Example: Tompkins County Satellite Farmers' Markets - Youth in the summer job training program with cooperative extension sell produce on consignment for farmers from the Ithaca Farmers' Market. Satellite markets are in low-income or rural areas and provide an additional market for farmers, skill development and marketing experience for youth, and high quality produce for residents, many of whom use coupons from the WIC or Senior farmers' market nutrition programs.
- Provide services to help integrate migrant labor into communities and pass legislation guaranteeing agricultural workers living wages and legal protection from workplace abuse.
 - Increase the scope and availability of the NYS Agricultural Workforce Certification Program and Agribusiness Child Development and Day Care.

Food Access - affordable and healthy food for all residents

- Expand the national Community Food Projects Grant Program and complement this with state programs for the development of local food systems. Increase support for farmers' market and direct marketing promotion grants, and youth agricultural entrepreneurial grants.
- Increase the use of WIC and senior farmers' market nutrition programs, and adapt the electronic benefits system for food stamps to minimize the barriers for local food retailers. Currently, the expense of scanning machines and the amount of paperwork required to accept food stamps limits participation by farmers markets, community supported agriculture operations, on-farm retail, cooperatives and other direct marketing outlets for farmers.

- Provide support for community gardens and encourage cooperative extension, community organizations and local government to provide land, tools, inputs and expertise to residents. Community gardens can facilitate links between diverse community members, farmers, youth, the elderly, rural and urban residents in addition to providing food for the gardeners.
- Build on successful farmers' markets and other retail outlets for regional food products to serve rural and urban areas with satellite markets. Producers may bring products to the central market for sale on consignment in a low-income area that could not otherwise support a market. These often require state or local government support through grants, links to food aid, community service, workforce training or youth programs. Satellite markets provide affordable food to low income residents who may rely on food stamps, to residents who have limited transportation and also provide training to the community members who serve as vendors. See Tompkins county example above
- Promote the use of regional foods in food pantries, soup kitchens, and other food aid programs. This can be through infrastructure development to make it easier for institutions to connect with local farmers who wish to donate surpluses, through provision of storage and kitchen facilities to handle fresh foods and through programs that make food stamp benefits worth more when spent on regional foods.

Education and market development: healthy food choices, local and seasonal produce

- Invest more effort in promoting the Pride of New York label, regional harvest festivals and agriculturally related tourism efforts (such as the wine trail). Promote the Northeast Regional Food Guide Pyramid (Wilkins) in schools and stores, in government publications and on the web to raise awareness of food produced in New York.
- Encourage and assist retailers to procure and promote locally produced foods, such as supermarket displays of "home-grown" produce. Partner with university and non-governmental organizations to provide guides for retailers to help reduce logistical barriers to marketing local foods. Include models for contracting with independent farmers and cooperatives, finding suppliers of produce, milk, meat and processed goods, and suggestions for promoting seasonal produce, specialty or ethnic crops. Provide advertising for retail stores that sell a large percentage of New York State products in the Farm Fresh Guide.
- Enhance the "Farm Fresh Guide" to include locally owned retail outlets for NY food products in addition to all direct marketing outlets for farm products. Make this available and easily accessible through the state website, schools, retail outlets, county chamber of commerce, farmers markets and social service offices. Encourage consumers to support local farms and businesses through state run advertisements on radio, television and paper media.

- Fund a publication highlighting successful regional food producers, processors and community based organizations, such as Iowa's *Renewing the Countryside*. Jerry DeWitt, the photographer for Iowa's book, is interested in giving a workshop/seminar on using imagery to promote regional farms and food in New York sometime this summer (end of July).
- Bolster support for Cooperative Extension programs on sustainable agricultural development, nutrition education focusing on sustainable regional diets, and outreach to farmers and entrepreneurs wishing to make the transition to producing food for regional markets.
 - Federal/ Northeast SARE professional development and sustainable agriculture training
 - State CCE Agricultural Development, Community Nutrition and Youth/4-H programs

Mid-Range Proposals

These initiatives will take time to get rolling, but if discussions start now they could be functioning and making progress towards regional food systems within the next 2-6 years. Again, many are possible at either the state or federal level, but would work best when coordinated. The Joint Federal-State-Local committee on the food system (see near-term recommendations) can facilitate this communication and become a vehicle for coordinating implementation. Of course, all the near-term recommendations should continue through the mid and long term.

Policy planning mechanisms:

- Establish mechanisms for the NY Department of Agriculture and Markets to collaborate with the department of transportation, commerce, environmental protection, health and human services in order to address barriers that arise in creating a more regional food system.
- Create statewide educational and technical assistance programs that facilitate sustainable and equitable development to support communities in dealing with land use decisions, environmental regulations, tax revenue and economic development challenges.
- Work on interstate collaboration with neighboring states to coordinate food system efforts, develop regional products, promote regional initiatives and deliver services to producers and consumers within the Northeast.

Education:

- Make use of the over 200 active two and four year colleges in Upstate New York and the many NYC schools as a resource for research and education about agricultural sustainability and the food system, and to train future farmers and business leaders for the state. Integrate sustainable agriculture and community development into courses for all agriculture, economics and food-related majors

Business Development:

- Develop NYS wholesale markets for regional distribution where processing companies can interact directly with producers or producer groups. In addition to a location in NYC, there should be other sites throughout the state to decrease transit time and transportation costs
 - Current Dept. of Agriculture and Markets feasibility study for a NYC wholesale market.
- Use tax incentives and economic development funds to encourage agricultural place-based businesses with living wages and community involvement

- Use zoning regulations and anti-trust laws to prevent confined animal feeding operations, monopoly control of food processing and distribution, and anti-competitive practices which push local producers, processors, suppliers and retailers out of business.
- Increase the number and availability of State and Federally inspected small meat lockers and processing units to meet the needs of alternative producers (such as grass-fed, free-range, organic and identity preserved livestock), including possibly a mobile unit that serves small farmers and communities on a rotational basis.
- Create value-added and agricultural development programs aimed at "family-sized" businesses and entrepreneurs with a commitment to the local economy.
- Give preferential treatment through tax incentives or other means of encouragement to companies that process, transport and sell NYS products within the state.
- Provide training for local economic development personnel and elected officials in agricultural economic development, food system issues and strategies for improving local economies through place-based businesses and community initiatives.

Long-term proposals

In the long-term, there should be continuing efforts to implement near and mid term proposals, including evaluation, refinement, and expansion. New York State should serve as a model for the development of state and regional food systems in other areas of the country. The food policy council and Joint committee should be established in legislation, along with other successful initiatives that promote sustainable, regional food systems and local food economies.

Current Federal and State Programs

Federal Programs:

Marketing Service Branch (AMS): Feasibility studies, research and other non-grant assistance for farm marketing activities, including cooperative agreements with states, other agencies, farm cooperatives, educational institutions, private non-profit organizations (\$10,000-\$50,000)

Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP) (AMS): Provides matching funds to state agencies for studies and research on innovative approaches to agricultural marketing, about 25-35 grants annually (\$45,000-\$50,000 each).

Farmers' Market Promotion Program: provides grants to establish, improve and promote direct marketing activities (authorized in 2002 farm bill, has not been funded).

Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (WIC and Seniors): provide low-income mothers with children and seniors with coupons to exchange for fresh produce at roadside stands, farmers markets and community supported agricultural operations.

Community Food Projects Competitive Grants (CSREES): one-time matching grants (\$10,000-\$30,000) to non-profit organizations for developing community food systems, including more regional production and consumption of fresh farm products.

Nutrition Information and Awareness Pilot Program: cooperation between USDA and states to increase consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables. Authorized but not funded

Value-added Producer Grants (Rural Business Cooperative Service): matching funds of up to \$500,000 to help producers, cooperatives and commodity groups with developing business or marketing plans, feasibility studies, and obtaining capital for a value-added business venture.

Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Program (CSREES): requires USDA to provide outreach and technical assistance to farmers who have historically been subject to discrimination. It includes competitive grants of up to \$100,000 per year to community-based and tribal organizations and universities to help producers acquire, operate and retain farms through delivery of outreach and technical assistance.

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (CSREES): funds practical research and professional development programs on sustainable agricultural practices and marketing. Administered through 4 regional centers, northeast, north central, south and west.

Section 32 funds (permanent appropriation up to 30% of US customs receipts) must be used for encouraging agricultural exports or domestic consumption of farm products, or for reestablishing farmers' purchasing power. Most are transferred to child nutrition, but could be used to fund programs on direct marketing or regional food systems.

Agricultural Management Assistance: requires CCC to spend \$20 million each year through 2007 to help develop new risk management approaches for producers. Market diversification, value-added, organic farming and conservation practices are eligible uses.

Conservation Security Program: encourages farmers to adopt whole-farm conservation practices through tiered incentive payments and cost share for practice establishment and maintenance. Farmers who participate in on-farm research and demonstration, or who go beyond what is necessary for basic compliance and conservation are eligible for enhanced payments. This program promotes good stewardship and rewards farmers who make extra effort.

National Organic Program: the NOP oversees organic certification and provides cost-share to limited resource farmers who may otherwise have difficulty becoming certified

Integrated Organic Program (CSREES): research and education on organic systems and practices developed for organic producers, taking into account the different management and production needs of organic farms.

Farm and Ranchland Protection Program: provides funding to states for strategic agricultural easements to protect high-quality farm and ranch land threatened by development.

New York State Programs:

Pride of New York labeling: provides marketing materials and assistance and conducts promotional activities that highlight New York State Products. Currently includes dairy, fruits and vegetables, jams, jellies and relishes, maple syrup, beef, poultry and meats, wines, baked goods and candies, and Christmas trees.

Farm Fresh Guide: bi-annual directory available in print and on the web that lists farm stands, u-pick and other direct marketing outlets for consumers to purchase local foods.

Domestic Marketing: provides New York pavilions at trade shows and promotional events throughout the country

Business Development: helps agricultural producers and food processors locate public and private funding for business development and expansion, including assistance on evaluating laws and regulations, permits, implementation of cost saving procedures. The department facilitates the exchange of information and guidance on technical questions, and aids in business plan development and review by partnering with state and local agencies/organizations and providing connection to other resources.

Agricultural Workforce Certification Program: works to increase the number and improve the skills of ag workers in NY by providing training and employment placement for specialized commodity based farm employment. Current course offerings include: Dairy Manager, Crop Manager, Landscape Technician, Herdsman, Nursery Specialist, Equine Specialist, Milker, Sheep Shearer, and Equipment Repairer. Many are offered in Spanish.

Agribusiness Child Development and Day Care: Serves children of farm workers (about 1,500-1,800 kids each year) in 11 childcare centers and 25-30 day

care homes. Children from 6 weeks to 6 years are eligible for care, which includes health and dental care, meals, transportation and educational/physical activities for each age level. The program uses Head Start guidelines and parental involvement.

Agricultural Research and Development Grants: funding for new product development, alternative production, processing, distribution and marketing technologies, the introduction of new technologies and organizational approaches that develop industries.

Farmland Viability Grants: funds development of farm viability plans and implementation of projects that contribute to farm profitability and sound environmental management. Grants can be used by a county to implement part of a farmland viability plan or by individual farms to develop and implement business management plans.

Enterprise Program: provides funds for agricultural business development of expansion of for construction of publicly owned facilities and infrastructure needed to accommodate agribusiness development.

Non-Point Source Abatement and Control Grants: awards Soil and Water Conservation Districts funding to correct and prevent water pollution from farms through the development of water quality assessments, runoff buffers and waste management systems.

Farmland Protection Grants: awards grants to towns and counties for developing farmland protection plans and for purchasing farm conservation easements or development rights.

Appendix 4

Rebuilding Regional Food System Infrastructure Act

Rebuilding Regional Food System Infrastructure Act

Regional Food Systems Legislation

A Proposal

New York Sustainable Agriculture Working Group

February, 2005

Henry Herrera and Katherine Mendenhall

Federal policy holds, as a public good, the assurance of a safe, nutritious, and affordable supply of food for all Americans. Commodity supports, agricultural subsidies, the land grant universities and the cooperative extension system all reflect this long-standing, well-established federal commitment. However, current commodity support system reaches only a small share of small family farmers and producers of specialty crops so vital to health and nutrition in every region of the country.

As we prepare for a more secure US future, we must reassess our food system. Homeland security is jeopardized by increasing dependence on few readily identifiable global supply chains vulnerable to off-shore attack. However, a food system that relies on multiple, redundant, independent local and regional food supply chains on American soil will strengthen our homeland security while simultaneously supporting local jobs and economies and promoting environmental stewardship.

Local-regional food systems and food supply chains have enormous, untapped economic development power. For example, currently New York State consumers spend (export) about \$35 billion to purchase (import) food from the global supply chain. Yet, NYS farmers and ranchers have the capacity to produce at least 60% of the food products now imported from global sources, a potential market opportunity with over \$21 billion in annual revenue. If NYS farmers and ranchers captured only 10% of the \$43 billion annual NYS consumer food expenditure, that new revenue would expand the NYS economy by over 17,000 jobs and \$16 billion in total income through regional multiplier effects. Preliminary market gap research has demonstrated this economic benefit in every region and state studied to date, including New York, Iowa, Minnesota, Louisiana and Hawaii.⁴⁵

Family farmers and ranchers strive to maintain the productive capacity of their farms for future generations. They are able to provide a higher level of management intensity per acre of land and with support from the land grant university and extension system, they can adopt innovative and diverse sustainable practices than larger specialized farms.⁴⁶ Diverse production systems usually use less water for irrigation, less fertilizer, and fewer pesticides. They are not as reliant on non-renewable energy sources and federal subsidies for support. Smaller farms also produce fewer off-farm negative effects like sediment and pollutants in water, noise, and odor than industrial livestock and row-crop operations. In most cases, these farmers want to pass on their farm and the farming lifestyle to their children or beginning farmers.

⁴⁵ Herrera, H. 2004. New York State Food System Fact Sheet: The Economic Potential of Regional Food Systems. Rochester, NY: The Center for Popular Research, Education and Policy and NYSAWG

⁴⁶ For example, the Small Farms Program, New York FarmNet and New York FarmLink at Cornell University provide such assistance.

Appendix 5

AgriCorps Act of 2005

The relative lack of state-of-the-art or even adequate regional food system infrastructure constitutes a major obstacle to seizing the multiple homeland security, economic development, and environmental opportunities presented by on local-regional food systems. Local and regional infrastructure for packing, processing, storing, distributing and transporting food along local and regional supply chains simply does not exist. Rebuilding this infrastructure will require a small but steady federal investment.

We ask that Congress allocate funds to rebuild regional food system infrastructure. We propose a funding stream indexed to the commodity price support programs. For example, an allocation of only 1% of aggregate funding for commodity support over 10 years as provide in the 2002 Farm Bill would provide approximately \$300,000,000 over 10 years for rebuilding regional food system infrastructure. This allocation would represent a very substantial new funding stream for rebuilding local-regional food system self-sufficiency.

We recommend the administration of this program by an appropriate unit of United States Department of Agriculture for the distribution of this funding to eligible organizations. Eligible organizations will include non-profit organizations and for-profit small businesses that would institute and uphold commitments to local and regional food distribution and promotion while also maintaining transparent fair trading for all parties involved. This grant program will support two kinds of grants, Planning Grants and Implementation Grants. The first competitive Planning Grant would support grantees for two years to create business plans for regional value chains and food system infrastructure. The business plans will serve as the key element of the application for the award of Implementation Grants. The Implementation Grants will provide seed money to implement the business plans and begin to rebuild local and regional food system infrastructure.

AgriCorps Act of 2005

A Policy Initiative for a Demonstration Project of National Significance for America's Farms and Community-Based Food Systemsⁱ

**AgriCorps Legislative Proposal on Behalf of
The New York Sustainable Agriculture Working Group
Hank Herrera, Managing Director
Katherine Mendenhall, Program Manager
And
Evan Lowenstein, Environmental Planner**

January, 2005

As globalization and sprawl combine to devastate America's agriculture, an increasing number of civil society organizations have called for action to rebuild community-based food systems. These organizations, devoted to community food security, the survival of small family farms, and environmental, economic and social justice, question the direction of current agricultural policy and programs. They recognize and seriously act on the economic, environmental, social, and cultural costs that stem from the loss of our nation's farms and farmland. They develop and propose new policies and programs to safeguard farming and farmland and to improve access to affordable food, nutritious for all people at all times. Yet one critical element of sustainable agriculture needs greater attention from the government, civil society and the private sector: Farmers. We need not only save farmland, we need to save farmers and small-scale farming as a profession.

Our nation's farmers are retiring and dying out. The average age of family farmers is near sixty in many states. Fewer of the children of these farmers want to stay in the family business. The small-scale family farmer is vanishing as family farming is devoured by development and agribusiness, and there are very few young people wanting to continue or start smaller-scale, sustainable farms.

We must do something about this situation. We must remember that while we try to preserve farmland and farm operations, we also need to create and sustain a new generation of farmers.

We believe that sustainable, local-regional agriculture is a potential economic driver almost completely ignored by the local, state and federal governments seeking to promote economic development in upstate, central and western New York. Although it is one of the oldest forms of trade and business enterprise, and even though the demand for its products will never go away, agriculture is not considered enough as a form of economic development. Yet even if we recognize that smaller scale, local-regional agriculture and food systems are keys to our economic future, we will not be able to realize its potential if no one wants or is trained to be a farmer.

We have few programs, policies, and incentives to create a new generation of sustainable farmers. With this in mind, we propose AgriCorps, a pilot project to create and support this new generation.

In the Genesee Finger Lakes Region, farms and farmland are being rapidly lost to development and forces of global trade. We propose to conduct a pilot project of AgriCorps in this region in order to demonstrate the value of engaging and training a new generation of sustainable farmers. This project will preserve family farms, provide a much-needed “people-power” boost to existing small-scale farming operations, and help this region realize the economic opportunity that can come from a local-regional, self-supporting, sustainable food system.

Modeled after the AmeriCorps national service program, AgriCorps would link small-scale sustainable farming, small-scale food processing and urban agriculture operations with young or not-so-young persons seriously wishing to enter farming and agriculture. The AgriCorps members would receive stipends from a mix of local, state and federal funding and benefits such as free lodging and meals from host farms. They will receive invaluable on-the-job learning and experience. They would receive an award akin to AmeriCorps’ Education Award, which would be used to invest in further sustainable agriculture education or to help start or expand a sustainable agriculture enterprise. The host farmer and farm will receive much-needed people-power in the form of the AgriCorps member(s) and funding to offset the member’s room, board and training costs. AgriCorps members would also have academic study and community service requirement in addition to their actual farm training and work.

The idea of AgriCorps is to grow sustainable agriculture and to grow the success of local-regional food systems. Our research indicates that 1.64 million consumers living in the Genesee Finger Lakes Region spend about \$4 billion annually for food at home and away from home (e.g., in restaurants). However our farmers realize only about \$1 billion in revenue for their farm products. The gap of \$3 billion represents the purchasing of imported food—and the exporting of those consumer food dollars to other regions and countries. If regional farms and food producers capture only 10% of regional consumer food expenditures—thereby closing the gap by \$400 million—they would generate 800 jobs in the agricultural and related sectors. They would generate an additional 800 jobs for each additional 10% of regional consumer food expenditures they capture.ⁱⁱ

But most importantly, AgriCorps will grow a new generation of farmers, willing and able to restore an economical, ecological, and equitable agriculture in our region and beyond. AgriCorps will not only encourage farming as a profession, it will provide a tangible outlet for the growing numbers of youth and adults who find themselves wanting to immerse themselves in sustainable agriculture. Through AgriCorps, they can learn and contribute simultaneously, and together reverse the distressing cycles we see in agriculture today.

We request that Senator Hilary Rodham Clinton take the policy leadership for this initiative and assist with the procurement of funds to pilot AgriCorps in the Genesee Finger Lakes Region of New York. Having been recently ranked the 11th most endangered farmland region in the country by the American Farmland Trust, this is an area that can benefit from such an initiative. We intend this pilot to succeed and serve as a model for replication in other regions and states in ensuing years, as the newest and freshest form of national service.

During the first year of the pilot, AgriCorps will organize its administrative infrastructure. Also AgriCorps will develop and implement a marketing and recruitment campaign for AgriCorps interns and host farms. The program will also develop a matching program to maximize the "fit" between intern's prior experience and interests and the needs of the host farm. Interns will receive a total compensation package that includes basic salary, health insurance and a contribution to an Individual Development Account (IDA) to use for either further education or as seed funding for purchasing a small farm. Host farmers will receive a compensation package that includes an allowance for providing lodging and meals for the intern plus a stipend to offset the cost to the farmer of providing training for the intern. In addition, AgriCorps will provide each intern and host farm with a mentor/consultant to facilitate the process of building a strong learning environment for both the intern and the host farmer. AgriCorps will build on the foundation of experience in training new farmers acquired over the past two decades by groups such as the Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York, the Small Farms Institute, and the Small Farms Program at Cornell. These partners will provide the consultation, training and technical assistance to the AgriCorps interns and farmers. Last but not least, the AgriCorps interns and host farmers will receive support to attend one national and two in-state educational meetings per year.

We have initially estimated the total cost of the pilot demonstration project as \$7,738,207 over five years. We anticipate that the start-up and implementation costs of this project will exceed the ability of partners to provide in-kind contributions. The five-year project period will allow ample time to develop, implement and evaluate the operation of the AgriCorps. The project cost will cover the expenses outlined in the budget table below.

We propose that the New York Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (NYSAWG) serve as the lead agency for this pilot project. NYSAWG has the leadership, operational capacity and collaborative relationships required to conduct the demonstration project. Collaborative partners include the Common Good Planning Center; New York Farms!; the Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York; the Growing New Farmers Program of the Small Farm Institute and the Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group; the National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture; the National Family Farmers Coalition; the Community Food Security Coalition; the New York Hunger Action Network; the Regional Food and Farm Coalition; and Cornell University's Small Farms Program and Community, Food and Agriculture Program.

AgriCorp Budget Outline	
Administrative Personnel	Total Cost Over Five Years
NYSAWG Managing Director	\$ 129,060
AgriCorps Project Director	\$ 309,744
AgriCorps Administrative Assistant	\$ 232,308
AgriCorps Director of T&TA	\$ 290,385
Total Administrative Personnel	\$ 961,498
General Administrative Non-Personnel Costs	
Computer equipment for AgriCorps staff	\$ 16,000
Other equipment for AgriCorps (copier, fax, postage, AV, etc.)	\$ 7,500
Annual equipment maintenance	\$ 3,903
Consumable supplies	\$ 26,020
Travel (2 national meetings annually + in-state travel per person)	\$ 46,836
AgriCorps Advisory Board (12 people, 3 meetings per year)	\$ 124,897
Marketing and communications consultant cost	\$ 520,404
Evaluation consultant cost	\$ 390,303
Program contingency cost	\$ 260,202
Administrative overhead	\$ 520,404
Total General Administrative Non-Personnel Costs	\$ 1,916,470
AgriCorps Intern, Host and On-Site Education Costs	
AgriCorp Intern stipends @ \$7/hr, 40 hrs/wk, 52 wks/yr	\$ 1,800,318
AgriCorp Intern fringe benefits @ 20% of stipend	\$ 360,064
AgriCorp Intern IDA deposit upon completion	\$ 600,000
AgriCorps Host Family Lodging, Meal and Training Allowance	\$ 10,000
AgriCorps On-Site Training consultant cost	\$ 618,241
AgriCorps Intern & Host meetings & travel (1 national, 2 in-state)	\$ 445,134
Total AgriCorps Intern, Host and Education Costs	\$ 5,060,239
Total Cost of AgriCorps Demonstration Project	\$ 7,938,207

ⁱ The authors wish to thank the following individuals for reviewing this proposal in its current form and for their contributions: Judith Gillan, the New England Small Farm Institute, Belchertown, Massachusetts; Joanna Green, the Small Farms Program, Cornell University; Elizabeth Henderson, owner of Peacework Organic Farm, Wayne County, New York; and Ora Rothfuss III, Agriculture Development Specialist, Wayne County Planning Department, New York. For future drafts we will seek additional review and comment from Cathy Sheils, NY FarmNet, R. David Smith, the Farm Viability Institute at Cornell, and others. We deeply value the contributions of these individuals and, of course, take full responsibility for all errors we may have made in the interpretation and inclusion of their suggestions.

ⁱⁱ Herrera, H., Barnes, A., Smith, J. (2004). The Economic Development Potential of Regional Food System Capacity to Meet Consumer Demand in Two Regions of New York State. The Center for Popular Research, Education and Policy in collaboration with the Common Good Planning Center and the New York Sustainable Agriculture Working Group. Rochester, New York.

#24

Testimony

Presented to

Public Hearing on NYS Food and Nutrition Policy

May 16, 2005

Conducted by:

New York State Assembly

Task Force on Food, Farm and Nutrition Policy

Standing Committee on Agriculture

Standing Committee on Health

Standing Committee on Social Services

On behalf of the

WIC Association of New York State, Inc.

Good afternoon. My name is Fred Newdom and I am here today to present testimony regarding New York State food and nutrition policy on behalf of the WIC Association of New York State. The WIC Association is an organization representing consumers, advocates and providers from New York's 103 WIC programs, serving nearly 500,000 women, infants and children at nutritional risk.

We appreciate the opportunity to come before you today to offer our support for a comprehensive, coordinated food plan for New York State and for the reinstatement of a State Food Policy Council. We see these initiatives as especially important at a time when we are witnessing decreasing federal support for nutrition programs, while state budget constraints place further strain on existing food resources.

In the absence of new funding options for programs such as WIC, it is evermore critical that there be a vehicle for collaboration among the various health and nutrition policies and programs that are aimed at addressing food insecurity. While recognizing the categorical nature of the federal food programs, opportunities for cooperation – administratively and programmatically – certainly exist and developing a coordinated and comprehensive food plan would provide a vehicle for advancing that goal. The WIC Association believes that greater collaboration among health care and nutrition service providers would increase the effectiveness and efficiency of programs and lead to better outcomes for program participants.

Having mentioned State Food Policy in the context of nutrition and health, it should be recognized that the inter-connectedness of nutrition, health and economic development must be central to our thinking. Surely we can develop and promote sound physical health while also recognizing the integral role that New York's agricultural and food industries play in the economic health of the State. The key roles played by New York's agriculture industry, for example, as producers of WIC foods – milk, eggs, cheese, and apple juice, among others – and the benefits of the Farmers Market Program, all point to the need to see food, nutrition and economic development as mutually supportive goals and core elements of a State food policy. Similarly, the partnership between the retail food industry and the food stamp and WIC programs, is a model for collaboration that serves everyone well.

As we envision the plan and the process leading up to it, we believe that it will be critical to subject food programs to a review that will look at the relationship between their costs and their measurable benefits as one factor in assigning priorities to various interventions. Program models could draw on the experience of WIC: programs that are locally based, link clients with existing primary health care services, and have demonstrated the ability to reduce health care costs, both long- and short-term.

One example of this is grounded in the current concern about the cost to the State and counties of the Medicaid program. Certainly there are modifications that can be made in the financing and delivery of health care. But, we also need to look at potential savings from prevention efforts, even if they require an up-front investment. Reducing childhood obesity, for example, is an investment with proven savings in lifetime health care costs. Similarly, WIC has been shown to save between two and three times its cost for the Medicaid program in the child's first hospitalization, the one accompanying the birth, alone. By improving birth outcomes and raising birth weights, WIC generates additional health care savings – not to mention savings in special education - over the course of a lifetime, but the return on the investment in WIC pays virtually immediate dividends.

Unless we view nutrition programs as investments in health care and not just as additional expenditures in the nutrition area, we will be constantly cutting costs in the nutrition budgets only to see health care spending either continue to grow or be reduced by cutting back on health services in ways that can only increase our long-term costs.

It is with this vision in mind that we support the reinstatement of the State Food Policy Council. Recognizing the usefulness of a state food plan leads us to support the establishment of a body whose role it would be to create such a plan. It is imperative that there be in place a structure that would bring together the key stakeholders in programs affected by and instrumental in a state food policy. It should be noted that a Council such as the one we envision would also provide a unified voice on federal issues at a time when federal programs are under attack and the need for unity is ever greater.

Our vision of a State Food Policy Council is that it would be an arm of State government – ideally organized as a joint Executive/Legislative structure – with the statutory authority to advise the Governor and Legislature on budgetary and programmatic matters. Membership should include relevant Commissioners, Committee Chairs, and representation from the public, including advocacy groups, industry groups, and professional organizations

In the brief time allotted to me today, I'd like to conclude by addressing the proposed legislation, A2561, the Community Food Security Program. It proposes one model to advance several positive goals of a comprehensive, coordinated Food Policy but we oppose A2651, as written, because there are no new funds provided and funding it initially out of SNAP will divert already tight funds. While we recognize the difficulty of creating and funding new programs, especially in the current budget climate, we are concerned that this approach will further dilute the capacity of existing programs to meet the critical needs for which they were created.

We appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today and offer our continued support for your commendable effort to view health, nutrition and economic development as worthy of a collaborative and planful approach to address the health and nutrition needs of vulnerable New Yorkers.



#25

201 S. Main St., Suite 302, N. Syracuse, NY 13212-2166
Phone: 315-452-6455 Fax: 315-452-1643
www.nysdfi.org

To:

The Honorable Felix W. Ortiz, Chair of the Task Force on Food, Farm and Nutrition Policy
The Honorable William Magee, Chair of the Assembly Standing Committee on Agriculture
The Honorable Richard N. Gottfried, Chair of the Assembly Standing Committee on Health
The Honorable Deborah J. Glick, Chair of the Standing Committee on Social Services

From: Bruce W. Krupke, Executive Vice President

Date: Monday, May 16, 2005

Subj: New York State Food and Nutrition Policy Hearing

Dear Chairpersons,

My name is Bruce W. Krupke; I'm Executive Vice President of New York State Dairy Foods, Inc., a full service trade association representing 125 dairy product processors, manufacturers and distributors. We have been in existence since 1928 and are located in Syracuse, NY.

New York's largest industry is agriculture and dairy represents approximately 50% of all agriculture business conducted in our state. New York is the third largest milk producing state in the nation. The milk, cheese and ice cream companies our association represents play a very important part of the linear distribution chain from farmer to consumer. I would like to comment on a few important aspects of the dairy processing and manufacturing industry I represent as it relates to the questions you have posed for today's hearing.

As you know, milk and dairy products play a very significant role in the overall nutrition and well being of individuals. USDA has recently supported that role in the release of the new Food Pyramid and guidelines. Through the past three decades the milk and dairy product processing and manufacturing industry have created and reacted to consumer demands for lower fat products such as 2%, 1% and skim milk and high nutrition food items like low fat cheeses and yogurt. We didn't wait for the obesity crisis, we take seriously the message of creating and manufacturing dairy products that are good for our consumers.

We support initiatives such as the expansion of the school breakfast programs, Farm-to-School program and Childhood Obesity Prevention Program. Dairy product foods and the role they play in consumer's diets can support many of the goals of your committees such as education of good nutrition.

Unfortunately in recent years, fluid milk consumption per capita, now about 21.5 gallons has been declining at the expense of increased consumption of other beverages such as soda. This decline has resulted in loss of sales for many milk companies and in fact has contributed to the decline in the number of milk plants, distributors and dairy farms in our state despite the proximity to one of the largest and most lucrative consumer markets in the world. Where there used to be hundreds of milk plants in our state as recently as the 1960s, we now only have about 30 left in the state. More alarmingly, where there were dozens of milk plants in New York City, there is only one remaining of major significance, Elmhurst Dairy located in Queens.

The reason I mention these facts relates directly to some of your concerns at today's hearing and the goals you are trying to meet. Future food policies and plans that may be adopted need to be sensitive to the milk and dairy product processing and manufacturing industry.

The availability of milk and dairy products to children and the general consuming population is at risk from a number of sources. With the decrease in the number of milk plants and distributors located in our state, the availability of milk sold to inner city neighborhood retailers, day care centers, private schools, community centers and nursing homes could be at risk. Without a sufficient number of milk plants and dairy product distributors competing to sell milk in all areas, the poorest neighborhoods may not have easy access to purchasing quality milk because there aren't any milk companies left who can economically service the small stores that serve most of the poorer areas of the cities. Out of state suppliers can service the large stores, but it takes a local dairy to be able to reach the small stores and bodegas that can reach the poorer neighborhoods in the center of the city.

Policies and plans that are adopted should not inhibit the ability of a milk company through research, development and marketing to create new and exciting products. There needs to be good compromise when adopting policies that encourage consumption, and not discourage growth and innovation. Regulation should

not be adopted that mandates a specific size or package container. The federal government already provides direction for packaging and labeling and there is no need for state intervention. The retooling of a milk plant to accommodate mandates for packaging and portion concerns is prohibitive and unrealistic.

There needs to be a continued emphasis when considering policies that encourage locally processed and manufactured foods that support our local economies. Special consideration should be given to companies operating in our state who have the ability to supply a quality milk and dairy product to market, especially in the lower income areas where good nutrition is at risk. There shouldn't be policies and plans adopted that cause increases in costs, especially where the cost of doing business is already the highest, such as our urban business areas.

It is important for the dairy industry to have a strong producer/farmer base. Dairy farm numbers have decreased in our state and across the nation mainly due to the decrease in milk sales, but also because of increased costs and government mandates. Without local dairy farmers in close proximity to milk plants, the cost of milk increases because of lack of sufficient supply, availability and transportation charges. A strong emphasis need to be placed on curtailing any laws or policies that increase unnecessarily costs of doing business on dairy farms.

We support the school lunch program as written by the federal government. Any policies that might be adopted should not conflict with federal guidelines. Nor should the policies create mandates with out proper funding.

School food service operations and their ability to supply a nutritious breakfast and or lunch to school children have to be supported by state agencies. Milk consumption needs to be promoted not only in schools, but also in other areas where parents and adults can be reminded of the benefits of dairy products and good eating habits. School milk vending should be encouraged and supported. There should not be a school with out a flavored milk vending machine in our state. Milk sold in vending machines increases the nutritional well being of school children.

Consumption trends and comparative studies should be understood between different areas of our state. For instance, did you know that consumption of milk in New York City is far lower on average than the rest

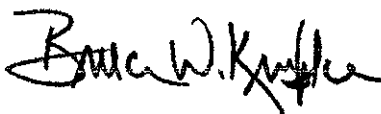
of the state or the nation for that matter? For the benefit of our farmers, and for the nutritional well being of our inner city residents, ways must be found to increase milk consumption in our largest cities.

The state should take a lead position on food safety not only for the well being of consumers, but to support the local processing and manufacturing industries. Consumers need to know the food they are purchasing is safe and backed by sound research, science and technology from reputable sources such as our leading agricultural colleges, medical associations and the federal government.

Milk from the time it is produced on the farm to the time it reaches the consumers mouth is never touched by human hands. Laws, regulations and policies need to be strengthened and adopted to continue these policies. State and local agencies should continue to rigorously enforce policies that insure fresh quality dairy products be available for consumers. Milk should never be allowed to be out of refrigeration at any point in the distribution line. There are places right now around the state that milk is being transported in non-refrigerated vehicles intended for resale.

Finally, please remember that any policies or programs you create will affect the linear chain from farmer to consumers. Be cautious about policies that unnecessarily increase costs of milk for consumers. Milk processors and dairy product manufacturers are a very important middle link in that distribution chain. Without the middle person buying from the producer and selling to the consumer, dairy products would not be as available in the many varieties they are today. Thank you for supporting our milk and dairy industry here in New York State and for consideration of my comments today.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bruce W. Krupke". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized font.

Bruce W. Krupke
Executive Vice President

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#26

Testimony NYS Assembly Task Force on Food, Farm and Nutrition
May 16, 2005 Albany, NY
Kathy Youngers, Pres.
Farm Wives United

I truly wanted to be there today to speak to you in person, but due to recent back surgery, I am happy that Sjana will speak for me.

There are some Very Pressing issues facing NYS farmers, as well as all farmers in the USA. First and foremost is the question; will our children and grandchildren be assured of a safe, secure and plentiful food supply? With farmers' going out of business, faster than we can count, vacant land sitting idle or being developed into housing projects, there will soon be very few or no farms left in NYS!

I have lived in Wyoming County (the top Dairy County in NYS) all my life and have never seen so many vacant and idle farms. This is truly scary! Where will our food come from? Who will assure our families of a safe food supply? Are we to be the next North Korea, with our children starving and product grown on the land for greed only? This sounds far fetched, but is it? **Think!** We rely on foreign oil! We already have our store shelves filled with unregulated imported food or so called food! While our farmers are broke, or hanging on by a thread!

America better wake up and soon!

Food Safety and Sovereignty are a major National Security issue. We are losing!
Remember the Onion Scare or rather the Onion Poisoning of citizens of the USA!
People Died! It was very quickly covered up in the news, why? I believe that our Government and Big Multi-National Corporations want us, the U.S. Citizens to think Imported food is safe and regulated.

Remember the Anthrax in the mail, U.S. Citizens became very ill or died!

What will happen if Terrorists Poison food before it gets to our border? **Think!**

What will happen? This is a Catastrophe waiting to happen! What will YOU tell the dying children and the grieving Moms & Dads just like you and me! This is possible! I will give only one example: MPC's (Milk Protein Concentrate), coming into America and NYS, labeled "For Animal Use Only" in tens of thousands of pounds! MPC's are a dry non-food by product of milk, used as a filler for many foods on the store shelf today. One these foods MPC's are in is Baby Formula! Other foods are some "Macaroni and Cheese" mixes, only not real cheese; sauces and pre-made boxed foods, ready to eat! These so-called foods are putting the Dairy Farmer out of business! They are also putting our Nations Citizens at risk every single day!

We need to act now, while there are still farmers viable enough to continue producing regulated, safe and nutritious food for Americans!

Farmers cannot continue to produce food, whether Dairy, Fruits, Vegetables or other food products at a loss! We **NEED COST of PRODUCTION**, and maybe something to live on! Minimum Wage, there is NO minimum wage for farmers or their families.

Farmers go under, and with them goes our safe food supply. Not only do we risk our foods safety food, but there is a **Domino** effect. Agribusiness in our State is in trouble, agribusiness goes out and so do many jobs! This is of MAJOR consequence to our State's Economy.

STOP and ask the Farmer, NOT some Multi-National Corporation! **STOP** and ask the Farmer, NOT some Land Grant College, like Cornell University; **STOP** and ask the Farmer, NOT some Spokesperson Organization supposedly "looking out for what's best", best for who? Who's job will be lost if Cornell University doesn't get to do a study?

Maybe if you ask the Farmer, some huge Corporation won't make such a huge profit off the backs of the Farmers and the Consumers of NYS!

FOOD, safe, regulated food is something everyone needs to survive!

Please do something before it's too late, help everyone by keeping us viable. We **NEED** a guaranteed fair price for our milk. A pay price that covers our costs to produce raw milk. A payment to farmers that at least covers the cost of production. Farmers cannot continue on the way we are. The very **HEART** of the State of New York is being crushed!

Regulations that NYS Dairy Farmers must meet are very high. Our MILK Product must meet very high standards, and we do meet these standards and follow all the regulations put to us. Why then do grocery store shelves have product grown and packed from such countries as China, India and many more unsanitary, unregulated countries. Who is safeguarding our Children?

The terrorist attacks in NYC and Washington were horrendous and we need to have a Strong National Security Program; but who is safeguarding our food supply!


Let's start in NYS. Protect our Food Supply. Protect our Farmers! Protect the citizens Of NYS! NYS, the **FIRST** to guarantee our Farms stay viable! The first to guarantee our consumers have **SAFE, USA** grown food!

The Biggest Threat to our Country is to **NOT BE ABLE TO FEED OUR CITIZENS!**

Think of the consequences! Act **NOW!** Before any more farms go under.

Thank You for listening.

Sincerely,


Kathy Youngers

MAY 16 2005

To: NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY TASK FORCE
ON FOOD, FARM, AND NUTRITION POLICY

FROM: ~~Suzanne~~ McClure-Berry, Farm Wives United

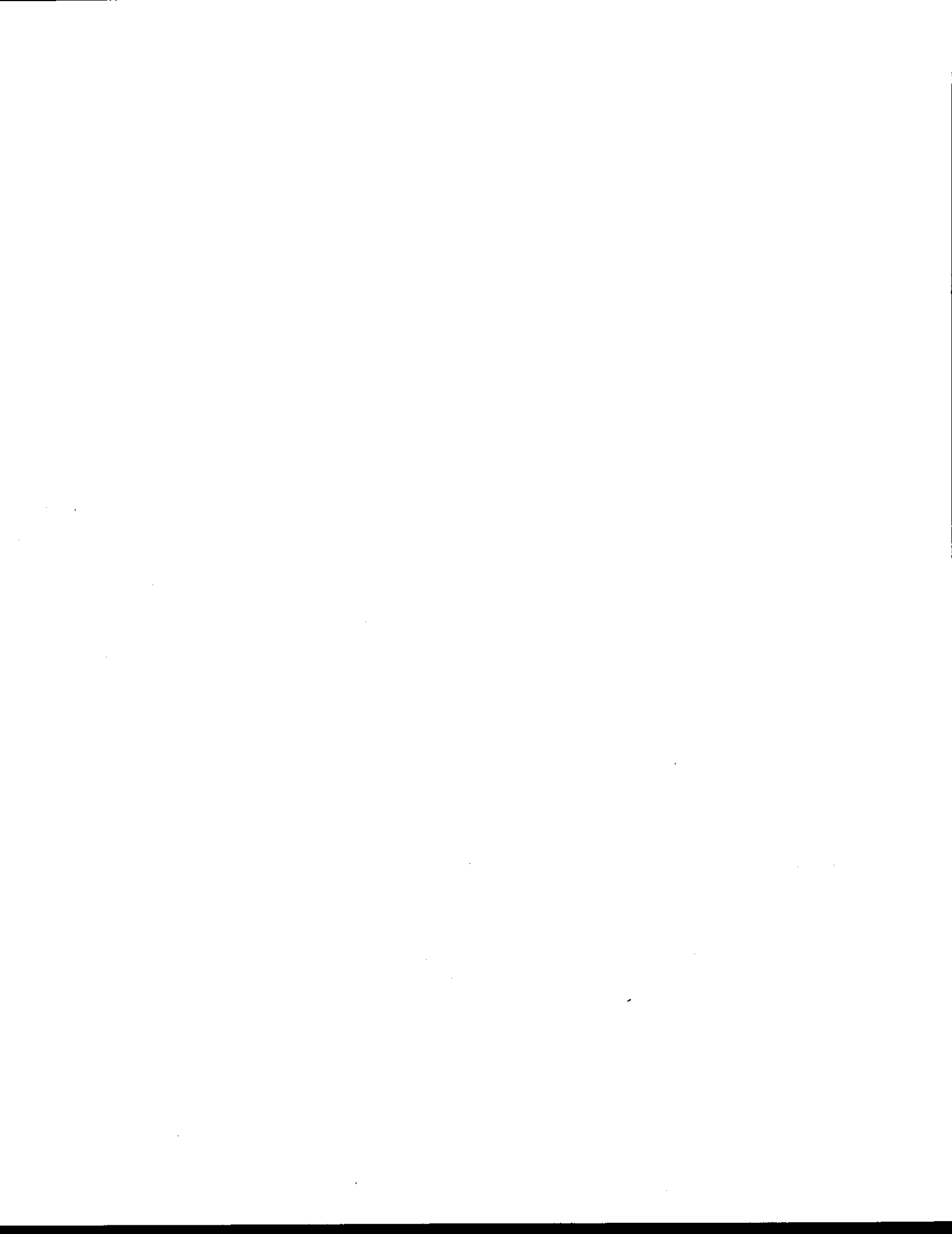
Simple Solutions To help REVERSE the Trend
of OUR EMPIRE STATE'S MASS LOSS of
Farms

- (1) BEFORE MAKING Policy evaluate the Actual
NUMBER of Farms still existing in
NEW YORK State and what they are
actually Producing
- (2) Audit Local, State, and FEDERAL
PROGRAMS to see how the monies
Allocated are actually Being Spent
- (3) Hold Banks and Economic Development
Funds to their Fiduciary Responsibility
- (4) ASK MR. Walker of the GAO
Office of Congress To Audit FEDERAL
PROGRAMS
- (5) Please take the Political Aspect out
of Farm Policy
- (6) Compare NUMBER of GOVERNMENT
Employees To NUMBER of Actual
Farms Being SERVED

(5) A TASK FORCE should get Results -
Follow-up - Follow-up

(6) The Farm System is BROKEN in NY
State - ASK REAL FARMERS who
have BEEN Paying the Bills for
the Last fifty years to help
with SOLUTIONS to Fix the
System

Respectfully
Sjane McCLURE - BERRY
Farm WIVES United



#27

Testimony

Hearing on New York State Food and Nutrition Policy

**New York State Assembly Task Force on Food, Farm, and Nutrition
Policy**

Chair, Assemblyman Felix W. Ortiz

May 16, 2005

**25 Roosevelt Hearing Room C
Legislative Office Building, Second Floor
Albany, New York**



**Charmaine Ruddock, MS
Project Director, Bronx Health REACH
212-633-0800 ext. 291
cruddock@institute2000.org**

Introductions

Good afternoon. I wish to thank the task force for this opportunity to provide testimony in this hearing on New York State's food and nutrition policy.

Background

I am Charmaine Ruddock, the Project Director of Bronx Health REACH, a coalition of 40 community and faith based organizations in the southwest Bronx led by the Institute for Urban Family Health. Our focus is the elimination of racial and ethnic disparities in health outcomes. Much of our work in the community has focused on diabetes, which disproportionately impacts Bronx residents for a number of reasons, including access to health information, access to healthy lifestyle choices and access to health care. In a 2002 community health survey done by the New York City Department of Health, 27 % of the population of the South Bronx was obese and almost 14% had diabetes.

The work of the Coalition has involved multiple focus groups with community residents to determine the obstacles they encounter in getting good health care. The findings were used to develop community-based initiatives on nutrition, fitness, and diabetes education among others. Specifically, there is a Grocer/Bodega Outreach and Education initiative; a Faith-based Culinary initiative; a Restaurant Outreach program; and, after-school and school-based nutrition education programs. Finally, recognizing that an integral component to effecting the needed change would be through legislative and regulatory changes, the Coalition developed a legislative agenda to address the barriers to good health that people experience.

The Coalition's community activities around nutrition and fitness have revealed that there needs to be a coordinated and concerted public policy effort that would involve the following:

1. ***School based interventions***, including:
 - Eliminating junk food (candy, high fat snacks and high sugar drinks) from vending machines.
 - Establishing and enforcing nutritional standards for school meals.
 - Banning unhealthy snacks for classroom events
 - Incorporating a nutrition curricula in schools and after-school programs in which children are taught to read food labels, the how-to of constructing healthy meals and the consequences of obesity on their health.

Bronx Health REACH has successfully run an after-school nutrition program at MARC after school program for more than 70 children. However, to replicate this in other schools has been problematic because of a lack of resources. Also, though our Healthy Hearts

program successfully mounted a 1% or less milk campaign, it was done in only three (3) schools. Again, lack of funding made it impossible to do it in greater numbers. It is important to note here, that while this hearing is specifically focused on food and nutrition, any school-based intervention must include a renewed emphasis on physical education in school at every level.

2. **Advertising snacks and other foods to children** - Bronx Health REACH advocates for legislative bans on the advertising of unhealthy snacks, candy and soda from children focused television programming.
3. **Obesity Treatment Programs** - Provide Government support through Medicaid and Medicare reimbursement policies for evidenced based obesity treatment and prevention programs that produce long term results
4. **Requiring restaurants to list the nutrition content of their food on their menus** – First affected will be the franchised chains but eventually it should be the standard for all restaurants. Ruby Tuesdays – a chain of about 600 restaurants nationally already does this and so does TGI Fridays. When you see that a slab of ribs meal is 1450 calories, 90 grams of fat and 75 grams of carbohydrates – the effect of that menu choice with its nutrition information printed below the picture is one that then becomes much less appealing. Bronx Health REACH through its Healthy Hearts program has been working with six neighborhood restaurants to modify menu items and to include and promote more healthy dishes on their menu.
5. **Raising the necessary funds to mount an effective public health nutrition education campaign** – Impose a tax on high fat, high sugar food as a means of discouraging their purchase. Use the funds received from the tax to fund anti-obesity campaigns. In 1998, the food industry spent \$22 billion on advertising. McDonalds alone spent \$1 billion. In that same year, the National Cancer Institute spent only \$1million on its 5-a-day campaign to increase fruit and vegetable consumption.

Closing

In conclusion, let me say that we have a long struggle ahead of us. Racial and ethnic health disparities will widen and worsen with the increasing obesity epidemic. Communities of colour with the fewest resources will be the hardest hit. While there are multiple efforts underway (many successful), in the affected communities to combat this epidemic, for the most part, they are very small, isolated, and gravely underfunded. A coordinated, comprehensive and overarching State food and nutrition policies with resources is vitally necessary. It should be one informed by, responsive to and, respectful of the community.



#28



Small Steps...Big Change

Cassandra Daigle, Coordinator

Feed the Solution Campaign

Testimony

New York State Assembly Hearing

Food and Nutrition Policy

May 16, 2005

Introduction

Good afternoon. My name is Cassandra Daigle and I am the Coordinator for the Feed the Solution Campaign. Feed the Solution is a new anti-hunger initiative based out of the Episcopal Diocese of New York. The Campaign is a collaboration between Episcopal organizations, including Cathedral Community Cares at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Episcopal Charities and Holy Apostles Soup Kitchen (which is the second largest soup kitchen in the country), and leading anti-hunger organizations in New York City, such as the New York City Coalition Against Hunger and FoodChange, both testifying here today. The Campaign represents over 60 Episcopal emergency feeding programs (EFPs) in Manhattan, the Bronx, and Staten Island as well as Putnam, Rockland, Westchester, Dutchess, Orange, Sullivan and Ulster counties. Collectively, these programs served more than 800,000 meals last year. While initially begun as an Episcopal Campaign, Feed the Solution is slowly beginning to expand its borders to incorporate food programs run by other denominations and organizations. Interest in the Campaign has also been expressed by programs in other areas of the country, including Raleigh/Durham/Chapel Hill, NC; Philadelphia, PA; Chicago, IL; and Longdale, CA.

Addressing the "Emergency"

Begun as an emergency, temporary response to widespread hunger in the 1980s, food programs find themselves struggling to keep up with a "temporary emergency" that has lasted for more than two decades, with no end in sight. The Feed the Solution Campaign was initiated in response to the increasing need for food in New York for not only homeless single adults and unemployed persons but now also for working families, as well as children and the elderly. As time passes and the need continues to increase, emergency food programs are realizing that a successful response to hunger requires more than just a meal. A successful response means:

- Addressing the root causes of hunger and poverty and providing services that promote self-sufficiency- the state of not having to rely on emergency services to survive and

- Requiring action by the government to change the systemic problems that perpetuate hunger and poverty in our cities, states and in our country as a whole.

Thus, the goal of the Feed the Solution Campaign is twofold:

- To enable food programs, through technical assistance, training and financial assistance, to provide more extensive services that lead to self-sufficiency &
- To organize program staff, volunteers and guests to advocate for governmental and economic policies that impact EFPs and consumers.

The State of Emergency Food Programs in New York City and Surrounding Areas

However, in order for food programs to continue their basic meal programs and even consider expanding services, serious issues need to be addressed. Over one million New Yorkers currently receive food from the more than 1,200 emergency food programs in New York City. According to a 2003 survey by the New York City Coalition Against Hunger (NYCCAH), 89% of these programs have annual budgets of less than \$100,000. Eighty-one percent have no full time paid staff; 60% have no paid staff at all. Twelve percent of these programs have no full time paid staff AND have annual budgets of less than \$1,000. At more than two-thirds of these programs, people who run the programs have used their own personal money to pay for food. These programs have seen a 9% increase in demand from 2003-2004, on top of a 48% increase from 2000-2003. Yet, although demand has increased, only 22% of agencies obtained more food and/or funding in 2003. A record 48 agencies were forced to shut down completely, while more than half (53%) had to turn people away, reduce portion sizes or limit hours of operation. These programs, feeding one-eighth of the population of New York City, are struggling to meet these demands on a daily basis, relying on mostly volunteer staff to stay afloat. And this is just for New York City. Poverty and hunger have traditionally been thought of as urban problems. However, as our work with programs in the suburban and rural counties has shown us, these

issues are comparable to those in the city. The network of services that city programs can take advantage of does not exist to the same extent in suburban and rural areas.

Some Obstacles for Emergency Food Programs

Regardless of geographical location, these programs depend on government funding for continued survival. The NYCCA survey reports that seventy-five percent of the programs in NYC received food from the federal TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program); 41% from the FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Administration) EFSP (Emergency Food and Shelter Program); 78% from the state HPNAP (Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program); and 64% from the City EFAP (Emergency Food Assistance Program). Yet at the beginning of this month, the Mayor Bloomberg of New York City proposed cutting \$670,000 in EFAP funding to these programs for the 2006 Fiscal Year. Governor Pataki proposed providing \$2 million less in HPNAP funding this year than in 2002. While we are pleased and thankful that the State legislature added \$350,000 back into HPNAP, this still means \$1.65 million less in funding than two years ago. At the beginning of this year, Senator Hilary Clinton called on President Bush to increase funding for the federal EFSP program; New York City's share of this program was cut by \$143,000 this year. He didn't. At a time when food programs are most in need, funding is being cut at ALL levels of government.

In addition to decreasing funding, another problem that our programs face is a lack of spending flexibility with the funding that they do have. This is evidenced in two ways. The first is a lack of choice in vendors. As HPNAP is the state grant program, please allow me to focus on it as an example. The HPNAP funding is administered by a number of agencies around the state. Each administrator contracts with ONE particular food vendor that his or her grant recipients are allowed to purchase food from. This eliminates healthy competition between vendors. Food programs are at the mercy of their specific vendor in terms of what products they have available and the prices that they set. These vendors also do not necessarily support local agriculture and

businesses, yet food programs do not have the flexibility to use their grant monies to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables from local farmers or other supplies from local businesses.

The second inflexibility in spending is evidenced by the low percentage of funding allocated for operations/administrative costs. As previously stated, the majority of these programs have few or no paid staff. It is especially hard to keep volunteers for an extended period of time and programs do not have the resources to offer them incentives to stay. With more money for staffing and technical expansion, programs would be more stable and many could begin offering expanded services to their guests.

Some Obstacles for Emergency Food Program Guests

One of the services that Feed the Solution is specifically promoting is entitlement and public benefits outreach in food programs. In New York City alone, there are between 600,000 and 700,000 people eligible for Food Stamps who do not receive them for a multitude of reasons. Besides bringing tens of millions of dollars in economic activity into the city and state, Food Stamps provide families with some leverage every month to use their limited resources for other necessities, such as rent, clothing, utilities, etc. In comparison to a food pantry bag that guests usually receive once a month (a value of approx. \$70) the average monthly Food Stamp allotment is \$200. While New York City has taken steps to make Food Stamps more easily accessible (i.e. shortening the application form from 13 pages to 4 in accordance with state regulations and providing outreach materials in multiple languages) there are still many obstacles that exist for people trying to obtain the benefit. Poor treatment at Food Stamp offices, extremely long waits, incomplete screening processes, and denials for erroneous reasons are just some of the problems that continue to plague the Food Stamp application process.

In addition to these existing problems, Mayor Bloomberg recently rejected the ABAWD, or Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents, waiver for the fourth year in a row. This waiver would allow single adults without dependants who live in areas of high unemployment to

continue receiving Food Stamps while they actively seek work. This waiver is widely allowed by the federal government and has been made available, but not required, throughout New York State. Again, the waiver would not only increase economic activity in those regions that accept it but would provide unemployed adults with the means to survive while seeking employment. Looking for a job is hard enough without having to spend precious time at emergency food programs in order to obtain food.

Proposed Tasks of a State Policy Plan and Food Policy Task Force

Feed the Solution would like to offer its support for the testimonies of the Hunger Action Network of New York and the New York City Coalition Against Hunger. In particular we support the creation of State and Local Food Policy Councils/Task Forces that would coordinate cross-agency food security and anti-hunger efforts, as well as the incorporation of local farmers and agriculture into the anti-hunger efforts of New York through Farmers' Markets, CSAs and other programs. In regards to the needs specific to our food programs as previously stated, a Food Policy Council/Task Force should also include the following as its goals:

- Increase the State HPNAP Program to a level that would support an increase in food distribution by 20%, while also promoting and supporting the involvement of food programs in outreach on government benefits. Promote better targeting of food distribution to people who are ineligible for certain government programs or for whom such programs are inadequate.
- Increase the percentage of state funding that can be used for operations/administrative costs and promote a higher percentage in federal and city funding sources as well
- Modify the existing HPNAP administrator/vendor conduits to allow for competition between vendors, which would include the incorporation of CSAs (Community Supported Agriculture) and local businesses and farmers as vendors
- Vigorously oppose federal, state and city cuts in all anti-hunger and anti-poverty funding

- Utilize other HPNAP grants to promote entitlement and public benefits outreach, in addition to food and nutrition programs
- Work to ensure Food Stamp access to all eligible New Yorkers by addressing existing inequities and taking steps to correct erroneous screening processes
- Advocate for the acceptance of the ABAWD Food Stamp Waiver on a state wide level

Conclusion

As the Feed the Solution Campaign continues to grow, we hope to be an active participant in addressing the needs of hungry New Yorkers. We are heartened by the Assembly's recognition of the need for change and their leadership in sponsoring this hearing. Thank you.

Supported By:

WHY (World Hunger Year)

Rev. Dr. Earl Kooperkamp, Pastor of St. Mary's Episcopal Church, West Harlem

Janet Dorman, Director of St. Mary's Soup Kitchen & Food Pantry Program, West Harlem

St. Mary's Episcopal Church, West Harlem

Rev. Kevin Bean, Vicar, St. Bartholomew's Church, Manhattan

Rev. Deacon J.D. Clarke, Director Community Ministry, St. Bartholomew's Church, Manhattan

Rev. María Isabel Santiviago, Vicar, Misión San Juan Bautista, Bronx



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NY Farms!

Building Farmer-Consumer Relationships in the Empire State
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STATEMENT TO:

THE NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY TASK FORCE ON FOOD FARM AND
NUTRITION POLICY AND
STANDING COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

BY:
SHERRY ALPERN, VICE PRESIDENT, NY FARMS!*

MAY 16, 2005

We at *NY Farms!*, like many others who, in expectation of this hearing, dusted off and reviewed the Five-Year Plan published by the NYS Council on Food and Nutrition Policy in 1988, were surprised at how comprehensive and relevant it continues to be today.

We were also gratified, as we read, to realize how much of what was cited in the Plan has been accomplished by government and non-government entities in the intervening years between 1988 and 2005.

But preparing for this hearing also reminded us of how brief a life the fledging Council had, and of how much more could have been accomplished had it been in place and at work in the years since 1988 –

- researching and monitoring food access and nutrition-related health conditions and pinpointing gaps in the system;
- influencing legislation and executive and agency policies and programs to improve food access and keep farmers on the land;
- directing and keeping the attention of decision makers and the public on the interrelatedness of components of the food system, particularly the linkage between high quality local food and a healthy NYS farm economy;
- reinforcing the understanding among policy makers and the public of the interdependence of New York's urban and rural economies, the need for efficient

- food transportation and distribution systems, and the desirability of developing modern processing facilities and markets for our farm products;
- assuring that food, farm and nutrition education, information and promotion are coordinated statewide;
 - aiming a spotlight on the issue of the safety and security of our food supply in light of the relatively recent awareness of our vulnerabilities in that sphere;
 - and fighting for resources at federal, state and local levels to keep capable organizations and proven or promising programs functioning effectively.

So we are here to ask the question that Robert Wilson, the prescient University of Tennessee professor asked almost 30 years ago, which some of our colleagues have alluded to already today: "If food is a basic human need – on a par with water, housing and health services – why don't city governments have a department of food?" The professor might have said State Governments instead of City, and he might have called the entity a Food Policy Council rather than a Department, but clearly he would also have said that such an entity **must be funded, organized and staffed so as to guarantee its existence over time.**

The mission of *NY Farms!* is to strengthen New York agriculture and food systems; through public awareness of the importance of farming; promote agriculture and food system literacy; and foster consumer loyalty to New York farm products. Therefore in our remaining remarks we would like to **emphasize the place that education, information and communication about food, farms and nutrition must have on the agenda of a NYS Food Policy Council, and in the development of food, farm and nutrition policy updated to the 21st century.**

Our comments focus largely on **education of the general, the adult public** because we feel in-school food and nutrition education is being well addressed by other organizations and agencies submitting comments. We are happy to be able to say that many creative in-school food literacy programs (NY Harvest for NY Kids among them) are flourishing in schools that, in addition to educating, are expanding their purchases of foods directly from local farmers through farm-to-school programs. Our organization, *NY Farms!*, has had an important role in advancing farm-to-school, along with many other organizations and the Department of Agriculture & Markets, and it is a source of pride for all of us that the farm-to-school movement has come such a long way since 1988. We

expect that any future food and nutrition policy or plan will include maximum attention to food and nutrition education for children in all grades.

For the adult public we make the following suggestions that a NYS Food Policy Council could be instrumental in supporting, sponsoring or conducting:

- 1) **Assessments and monitoring to pinpoint gaps** in food and nutrition services should include identifying populations that are also underserved by information and education services.
- 2) **Information, education and promotion should be appropriately targeted to a range of audiences.** In addition to the general public, these should include parents, teachers, farmers, food manufacturers-purveyors-retailers, office holders and other public sector decision makers.
- 3) **The Policy Council should support development of a clearinghouse,** available on the web, that would include descriptions and critiques of existing education / information materials and programs, as well as a complete listing of groups and agencies that can be funded to develop or adapt existing programs to other geographic areas or to populations that are underserved.
- 4) **Maximum use should be made of all forms of communication:** news coverage and special interest stories in general and neighborhood press as well as trade publications; public service announcements; radio and TV news and interviews; videos circulated through community, business and professional groups; paid advertising on trains and buses; seminars and workshops; and widely distributed literature. With the upsurge of on-screen pre-feature advertising to the captive audiences in movie theatres, we believe there may be a rare opportunity through this medium to tell a story about good food that counters the ads for super size cheese nachos, candy and soda.
- 5) **Every project, law or regulation that addresses food, farming and nutrition should have an education / information component that is as fully integrated and properly funded as any other part of the project.** An example of one project is the study for a wholesale farmers market in New York City, which includes in its scope of work development of a plan for promotion, education and information at and through the market.
- 6) **Quality controlled statewide or regional branding should be considered a component of an education / information program, as well as a marketing tool.** As locally-grown and processed products increasingly carry an

identifiable local brand – Pride of New York, Hudson Valley Fresh, Finger Lakes Bounty, to name a few – they also carry a message of freshness, wholesomeness, environmental friendliness and nutritional value.

- 7) Effort should be made to develop educational programs and find outlets to **assist consumers in reading labels and evaluating nutritional content**, as well as to help people become intelligent consumers of food advertising.

In closing, we urge a NYS Food Policy Council to have as a vital part of its mission *communicating on a regular basis with the many groups that are active and involved* in the fields of food, farming and nutrition so that the work of these organizations can be better coordinated to further the interests we all have in an improved food system.

Thank you for holding this hearing. NY Farms! would be honored to participate in follow up meetings or to assist this process in any way as it moves forward.

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NY Farms!

Building Farmer-Consumer Connections in the Empire State

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About NY Farms!

NY Farms! is a broad based statewide coalition of individuals, farms, businesses, organizations, agencies and institutions, committed to the future of New York's farms and families.

NY Farms! envisions

- A vibrant, profitable and diverse agriculture and food system that meets the needs of farm families, consumers and the environment;
- A New York public that actively supports New York farmers, farming and the protection of productive farmland;
- An agriculture industry that further enhances the environment, meets food needs, increases economic opportunity, and fosters community development.

The Mission of NY Farms! is

To strengthen New York agriculture and food systems through a partnership to:

- Create public awareness of the importance of farming;
- Promote agriculture and food system literacy;
- Foster consumer loyalty to New York farm products.

How does NY Farms! work?

As a guiding principle, NY Farms! enhances, and does not compete with or replace the work of its partners. The strategy of NY Farms! is to unify diverse efforts into a broad-based campaign of support for local farms and food systems.

What does NY Farms! do?

BUILDS FARMER-CONSUMER CONNECTIONS

- Coordinates efforts around the state by acting as a clearinghouse of information.
- Promotes agricultural events and conferences via an extensive electronic calendar.

CREATES PUBLIC AWARENESS VIA AWARDS and CONTESTS

- Coordinates the Taste, Face & Place of NY Farms! Photo Contest and Photo Exhibit.
- Conducts the NY Farms! I Love MY NY Farmer Awards.
- Partners with NYS School Food Service Association to present the NY Farms! and NYSSFSA New York Harvest for New York Kids Awards.

EDUCATES POLICY MAKERS

- Is an active advisor at the national, state and county levels of government.
- Helps to organize legislative on-farm tours.
- Participates in legislative receptions and tastings.
- Works with authorities to identify regulatory stumbling blocks and to suggest improvements.

HELPS TO CREATE RURAL-URBAN PARTNERSHIPS

- Is a *Renewing the Countryside* project partner.
- Participates in projects that will bring hands-on exhibits into children's museums and discovery centers.
- Encourages agricultural themes and outreach in NY museums and traveling historical exhibits.
- Encourages agricultural-tourism partnerships.

PARTNERS WITH MANY TO BRING NY AGRICULTURE INTO NY SCHOOLS

- Works to bring local, fresh fruits and vegetables into k-12 school cafeterias and provides resources and workshops for food service directors and farmers.
- Conducts outreach and provides resources to parent-teacher-student organizations.
- Distributes information and suggests activities to bring into the school during NY Harvest for NY Kids Week that connect teachers and students to NY agriculture.

PROMOTES AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEM LITERACY

- Works with partners to identify and implement ways to market and distribute NY products more effectively.

FOSTERS CONSUMER LOYALTY

- Directs consumers to local farms, farmers' markets, CSA's, and retailers and restaurants that carry or use NYS products.
- Highlights seasonal products and local recipes to consumers.
- Supports a Buy NY! Campaign and assists regional Buy Local projects across NYS.
- Partners with the NY Wines and Dines program, the Finger Lakes Culinary Bounty and the Adirondack Harvest to recognize restaurants that feature a "local" menu.
- Encourages dialog between producers and consumers.

Why join NY Farms!?

Visit www.nyfarms.info

Your Contribution Helps Support:

- A strong communications network among those in the farm and food industry
- News To Share, an electronic newsletter and calendar
- Contests and Awards
- An on-line photo gallery
- A seasonal recipe collection and recipe exchange
- Displays at fairs, events and conferences
- Agricultural Awareness exhibits
- Farm to Restaurant connections
- Farm to School partnerships
- Buy Local programs
- Marketing, distribution and regulatory projects
- Dialog between producers and consumers

MEMBERSHIP CONTRIBUTION

Regular membership is \$35 ___ Here is our additional donation of ___ \$25 ___ \$50 ___ \$100 ___ \$200 ___ \$500 ___

Name _____ Title _____

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Donations to NY Farms! are tax deductible as allowable under IRS regulations.

Return to NY Farms! 125 Williams Road, Candor, NY 13743

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Testimony to: New York State Assembly Task Force on Food, Farm and Nutrition Policy;
Standing Committee on Agriculture; Standing Committee on Health
From: Glenda Neff, consultant, NYS Farm to School
Hearing date: May 16, 2005

Thank you very much for the opportunity to give input to this Public Hearing on the important issue of New York State Food and Nutrition Policy "to address problems, such as limited food options, poor nutrition, and loss of farms". Food policy is about this and more. It affects all of New York's citizens. It's about food security, public health and the cost of disease, the health of our state's economy and the health of our environment.

In 1988, the 5-Year Food & Nutrition Plan addressed the needs of providing adequate nutrition for our state's low-income citizens. It provided a comprehensive look at New York's food and agriculture programs, production and capacities. The recommendations focused on programs such as Food Stamps, School Meals, WIC, and EFNEP (nutrition education), but also included enhancing our food production with farmland preservation, rural development, maintaining and expanding the processing and marketing system for New York farm products. Since 1988, progress has been made in some of these areas, and our understanding of the need for a systemic development of the "regional food system" has deepened.

I suggest we consider a "State Food Policy" to be our "Food System Policy". Its scope and goal is to re-build the "regional food system". We often hear the phrase "agriculture is an economic engine of New York State". We realize that does not mean just the farms themselves, but the myriad of businesses that supply farms and that take the "raw materials" of farms through the steps of grading, packing, processing, trucking, marketing, retailing, until the farm product reaches the consumer's table.

New York State is seeing a loss of what has been named the "Ag of the Middle" by researchers at several land grant universities including Tom Lyson at Cornell. In *A White Paper for the Agriculture of the Middle Project*, they describe what is happening to most of New York State's family farms:

"On the one hand, small-scale farm and food enterprises in many regions have successfully defined niches and developed direct marketing relationships that allow them to thrive and increase in numbers. This is an encouraging trend with benefits to the communities in which these new markets exist. On the other hand, consolidated food and fiber firms have reshaped the food system to meet their business interests by establishing contractual supply chains that move bulk commodities around the globe.¹ Increasingly left out as

¹ See Willard W. Cochrane, 1999. "A Food and Agricultural Policy for the 21st Century. (Unpublished paper available from the author.)

*this dualistic food system evolves are those farms and food enterprises that currently fall between the supply chains that move bulk commodities and the linkages that feature various forms of direct-marketing. Many of these farms fall into what the USDA's Economic Research Service calls "farming-occupation farms" and "large family farms."*²

Most of New York's farms find themselves in this group of "Ag of the Middle. They produce high quality foods and New York has markets for those products. For example, in the growing market of schools for fresh fruits and vegetables, it is very difficult to get a fresh farm product to local school cafeterias. Why? The "Ag of the Middle" analysis is equally descriptive of all the links in the food system chain. The food and dairy processors, packers, distributors, truckers, retail stores have all consolidated, leaving less and less choices for farmers to market their products.

A Food System Policy in New York State must address how we keep and expand our "Food System in the middle" – the packing, processing, marketing, distributing of products New York farm products. Rebuilding this food chain from farm to table – our "regional food system" – has enormous potential for economic development and rejuvenation of rural and urban areas. For example, a wholesale market for farmers in New York City could provide needed infrastructure for sales conservatively estimated at \$866 million per year of NY farm products to restaurants, grocery stores, and institutional food service.

A Food Policy Council could provide the vision and leadership and be the "glue" that holds brings together all levels of government with the business and non-profit sectors of New York State. A council needs the representation of the 1988 Council with the key addition of Empire State Development Corporation and regional advisory committees of consumers, businesses, and community-based organizations.

An example of what can be accomplished with strong collaboration among state departments is the recent purchase of the Kraft Foods' yogurt business and manufacturing facility in North Lawrence by CoolBrands International Inc. New York State Ag & Markets secured the financial support from Governor's Office for Small Cities as part of the project. Empire State Development and its other public financing partners, the Governor's Office for Small Cities, New York State Ag & Markets and the St. Lawrence County Economic Development Office in conjunction with County Planning, worked together as a team to encourage this acquisition in Northern New York.

This is the kind of collaboration we need for mid-size and small ag and food businesses throughout New York State. It could greatly strengthen existing programs such the Grow New York grant program in the Department of Agriculture & Markets and NYS Farm to School within the NYSDAM and State Department of Education.

The timing is right for a New York State **Food System** Policy Council.

² Doris Newton and Robert Hoppe, 2002. "Taking Charge in the 21st Century," USDA

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May 16, 2005

New York State Assembly Public Hearing Testimony
"New York State Food and Nutrition Policy"

- Standing Committee on Agriculture, Chair Assemblyman William Magee
- Standing Committee on Health, Chair Assemblyman Richard N. Gottfried
- Standing Committee on Social Services, Chair Assemblymember Deborah J. Glick
- Task Force on Food, Farm and Nutrition Policy, Chair Assemblyman Felix W. Ortiz

Thank you for holding this public hearing and for inviting us to speak before you today. My name is Billie Best. I am the Executive Director of the Regional Farm & Food Project. The Regional Farm & Food Project is a member-supported, farmer-focused, non-profit organization founded in 1996 to promote sustainable agriculture and local food systems. Our core constituency of approximately 3400 individuals and organizations includes 1200 member contributors and more than 700 farms.

The Regional Farm & Food Project brings the relationship between sustainable agriculture and a healthy planet to the table of public opinion, raising awareness of the connection between the food system, the environment, culture and community. We produce an annual curriculum of farmer-to-farmer education programs to promote self-reliance, innovation and entrepreneurship, and we educate the public about how their food choices shape their world. *The Farm & Food Show* is our monthly radio program on WRPI-Troy. The Troy Waterfront Farmers' Market and the New York State Farmstead & Artisanal Cheesemakers Guild were founded by and are sponsored by the Regional Farm & Food Project.

Today I would like to speak with you about some of the challenges of small farm profitability, the regulatory barriers to a healthier agriculture economy, and developing a policy of regionalism as a framework for our food system. At the Regional Farm & Food Project, when we talk about sustainable

agriculture, we mean the process of staying in sustained balance with nature; replacing and refreshing the natural resources —air, water and soil—consumed in the process of producing food. Unlike conventional industrial agriculture, sustainable agriculture does not externalize the cost of sales by dumping pollution into the environment or treating animals inhumanely. A food policy designed to improve human health would encourage innovations in sustainable agriculture and end subsidies to polluting industrial agriculture.

Our definition of “small farm” is one with annual revenues under \$500,000. We believe small farms practicing sustainable agriculture are essential to a diverse, competitive food system where the goals are food security, self-reliance, self-sufficiency and good health. There are two main obstacles to small farm profitability: consumer price perceptions that food should be cheap, and oversized regulatory barriers to small-scale methods and markets.

A food policy designed to improve human health would educate consumers to understand the hidden cost of cheap food, and realize they are being suckered into thinking their food is cheap while taxes, pollution, energy and healthcare costs rise. We need to teach consumers to look holistically at the price of food. Public policy needs to emphasize the social, environmental and economic benefits of paying a fair price for locally grown products. Consumers need to learn the impact of their food choices on their total quality of life. We need a consumer awareness campaign that teaches the connection between cheap imports and the triple malaise of lost jobs, environmental pollution and social injustice around the world.

A food policy designed to foster rural entrepreneurship and build rural economies would devise a system of food safety regulations that encourage diversity and competition in food processing markets without compromising public safety. Whether it is livestock, dairy or tomatoes, small batch food processing is essential to a vital agriculture and distinctive local cuisine. Yet today, our food processing regulations mandate equipment, facilities and processes which are cost-prohibitive to many small batch producers.

Our food processing regulations discriminate against small farms in favor of large factories, as though large batch production were inherently safer than small batch production, which we know it is not. Federal livestock processing regulations in particular favor factory-scale production processes and prohibit or hinder farm-scale production processes—as though factories are cleaner and safer than farms, which they may or may not be. Market access should not depend upon how or where food is processed, only that it is safely processed. Preventing food from crossing state lines because it has not been federally inspected has more to do with bureaucracy than food safety.

Dairy processing regulations discourage the production and sale of raw milk, although humans have been drinking raw milk for thousands of years, raw milk is an increasingly popular health drink, and raw milk sales represent a lucrative market opportunity for some farmers. For the record, factories are not cleaner, safer or more efficient than farms. Factories do not produce higher quality food than farms. And the environment is better served when the by-products of food processing are composted or recycled on the farm rather than trucked to another facility.

Another particularly frustrating livestock processing policy allows uninspected on-farm custom meat processing if the customer first purchases the animal alive, but it is against the law for the farmer to sell the same meat processed under the same circumstances to another customer after the animal is dead. This kind of arbitrary regulation costs rural communities jobs. It restrains trade and discourages farming. Clearly, food safety does not depend upon when the animal was purchased. It depends upon the conditions under which it is processed. In many cases, on farm processing is preferable to factory processing.

It is far more humane to kill an animal in its own pasture than to truck it to a foreign place, and have it handled and killed by strangers. Adrenalin ruins meat. Farmers can make their life's work raising quality animals only to have the product ruined by poor handling and undue stress in the last few seconds of the animal's life. Small farmers should have the choice to kill and harvest their animals at home. On-farm processing limits should be set for beef, pork, lamb and goat as they have been for poultry. On-farm livestock processing can be equally as safe or safer than factory processing. It can be more humane, more cost-efficient, less polluting to the environment, and result in a higher quality product. USDA and New York State food policy should be encouraging on-farm processing, training and certifying farmers in on-farm food processing safety, certifying food safety inspectors who specialize in on-farm processes, and cultivating innovation in small batch food processing.

The food safety inspection process constrains the growth of rural economies by arbitrarily limiting production of local food products. Food processing inspection needs to accommodate a wider range of production facilities and processes. Food safety inspectors need to be more mobile and more accessible. Becoming a certified food safety inspector needs to be opened up to include non-government agencies and part-time service providers similar to the National Organic Program's organic certifiers. And we should eliminate the redundancy in the system that requires small-scale producers already receiving state inspection services to also require federal inspection. As long as states meet minimum regulatory requirements, there should be a policy of reciprocity between state and federal inspection.

In this time of rising energy costs, financial market volatility and labor market uncertainty, the most cost-efficient markets for New York State food and agriculture businesses are the markets closest to home. New York State would benefit greatly from collaborating with our neighboring states to develop a Northeast regional food policy that focuses on broad import replacement and reducing regulatory barriers to interstate commerce. A frictionless regional market is essential to our regional food security and our regional economic growth.

Today, most of our food items travel an average of 1,500 "food miles" to our dinner table. We produce only about a third of the food we consume, and most of our farms sell their goods into an industrial food system where they are commoditized, packaged, branded and sold in a form unrecognizable as a local product. Most of our food dollar goes to manufacturing, distribution and retail shelf-space, not to the farmer, not to the farmer's local economy. The price we pay for those layers of business between our farms and our dinner table is reduced economic vitality, loss of cultural identity, an increase in diet-related diseases, and of course, the fuel costs, traffic and pollution that come with global transportation systems.

We need a better return on the investment of our food dollars and our tax dollars. Our region contributes billions of dollars each year to USDA agriculture subsidy programs that do little to support the small and medium-sized farms that anchor the Northeast regional food system. A New York State food policy designed to generate economic growth and reduce taxes would teach consumers to oppose federal agriculture subsidies for commodity crops which amount to a \$350 billion giveaway to rich industrial farm operations mainly outside the Northeast. The Northeast region legislative delegation could bring home a much larger piece of the next Farm Bill if we simply demanded our fair share of USDA funding and programs.

The Northeast is the most compact region in the country. We are just a day's drive access to the densest string of population centers on the continent. Regional self-sufficiency used to be our calling card. But today we depend upon California, China and South America to feed us. New York State agriculture could dominate the market for food in the Northeast. Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island and New Jersey can't possibly feed themselves. They are buying plane loads of food and flying them right over New York farms while television commercials tell them that California is the new dairy state.

Reducing regulatory barriers to interstate commerce would spur regional economic growth, particularly in rural communities. This could be accomplished by forming a pact with other Northeast states to standardize food transportation and safety regulations, especially those that impact small producers

crossing state lines for farm-direct sales, such as farmers' markets. Environmental management programs offer a precedent for this type of regional collaboration in that they enjoin government and non-government organizations to inventory regional resources, establish regional thresholds, standardize regulations, and manage regional assets.

The Northeast is geographically isolated and culturally distinct. A policy of regional collaboration would inspire the pride of place we know to be a powerful cultural influence over consumer food choices. A regional food policy would give food producers more confidence to invest in producing products for regional markets. Regional dairy policy would enable dairy farms to regain their independence from monopolistic processors and global pricing. Regional livestock policies would give livestock farmers incentives to grow their herds and diversify their product mix. Growing regional markets for cheese, wine, prepared foods and fiber products would make cottage industries more viable. Most importantly a regional farm, food and nutrition policy would provide a more holistic approach to developing the food system, acknowledging that farms don't just produce food, they provide jobs, economic growth, open space, ecological services, scenic views and community character—and they are a critical component of sustainable human health.



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*New York State Assembly Hearing on Food and Nutrition
Policies*

Presented by

Task Force of Food, Farm and Nutrition Policy
Chair, Felix W. Ortiz

Assembly Committee on Health
Chair, Assembly Member Richard N. Gottfried

Assembly Committee on Agriculture
Chair, Assembly Member William Magee

Assembly Committee on Social Services
Chair, Assembly Member Deborah J. Glick

Monday, May 16, 2005
Roosevelt Hearing Room C
Legislative Office Building
Albany, NY

Submitted by

New York State Dietetic Association
Sandra J. McNeil, MA, RD, CDN, FADA
Chair of Delegates for the NYSDA
Clinical Manager of Nutrition & Diabetes
Glens Falls Hospital

Good Afternoon, my name is Sandra McNeil, Chair of Delegates of the New York State Dietetics Association. I am the Clinical Manager of Nutrition and Diabetes at Glens Falls Hospital and am a New York State Certified Dietitian. On behalf of the New York State Dietetic Association, a professional membership organization comprised of over 5,000 specialty-trained health care professionals dedicated to advocacy for the dietetic profession, science-based information on nutrition, and serving the public through the promotion of optimal nutrition, health, and well being, I am grateful for this opportunity to address the panel regarding food and nutrition policies within New York State.

Rather than reading my testimony, I have submitted a copy for your review and will spend this time highlighting two aspects of food and nutrition policy, which the New York State Dietetics Associations believes warrants consideration.

To begin, the New York State Dietetic Association appreciates the Assembly's dedication to the Childhood Obesity Prevention Program put forth by Assemblymember Ortiz. The funding provided by this year's state budget is the first step in identifying the obesity problem facing New York's youth and providing the resources needed to inform parents of healthy alternatives.

Building on this initiative, the New York State Dietetic Association believes in the need for a comprehensive and coordinated food policy plan for New York State. Components of a nutrition policy should include:

- food labeling,
- nutrition monitoring,
- dietary supplements,
- nutrition education,
- dietary guidance,
- nutrition services,
- feeding programs,
- food security,
- access to food,
- nutrition standards,
- food safety,
- food technology,
- security of the food supply,
- food advertising,
- diet and chronic disease, and
- food, nutrition, and health research.

These issues are interrelated by more than being food, nutrition, and health issues that garner attention as individual and separate entities. Nutrition policy ties to the larger universe of food issues such as:

- agricultural production and controls,
- agricultural research,
- commodity surpluses,
- agricultural subsidies,
- farm income,
- food imports and exports, and
- food production, processing and sales.

Clearly, decisions made in agriculture policy influence the direction of nutrition programs and the state of public nutrition. Therefore, a coordinated effort by various stakeholders (e.g., farmers, dietitians, marketers, food pantries, retailers, etc.) is absolutely required to produce and maintain a viable statewide program on food and nutrition.

However, in dietetics and nutrition, standards must be established and maintained to ensure that New Yorkers have access to dietetic and nutritional therapy by a qualified professional. Currently, New York State provides for the title certification of dietitians and nutritionists. However, certification alone does not protect the services provided by professional dietitians and nutritionists. Anyone, regardless of training, may provide medical nutrition therapy, counseling, and care similar to that of a certified dietitians/nutritionists as long as they do not call themselves a "Certified Dietitian" or "Certified Nutritionist". This lack of regulatory oversight of the practice of dietetic and nutrition service leaves the public at risk.

In acknowledgement of the need for consumer and health care protection, Assemblymember Canestrari and Senator LaValle have sponsored legislation providing for the licensure of dietetics and nutritionists (S.2864/A.5795). Licensure identifies and

protects the scope of practice of dietetic and nutrition professionals as well as their title. This means that unqualified practitioners would no longer be able to hold themselves out as professionals in the field of dietetics or nutrition by simply avoiding the term "certified". Licensure would set educational and experiential standards and prevent individuals from providing professional dietetic and nutrition information, therapy, or counseling without meeting the necessary standards. Statutory recognition of the scope of practice of dietitians and nutritionists is vitally important to public health and safety. With the explosion of consumer interest in nutrition, it is vital that the public understands which individuals have the appropriate training and experience to provide nutrition services.

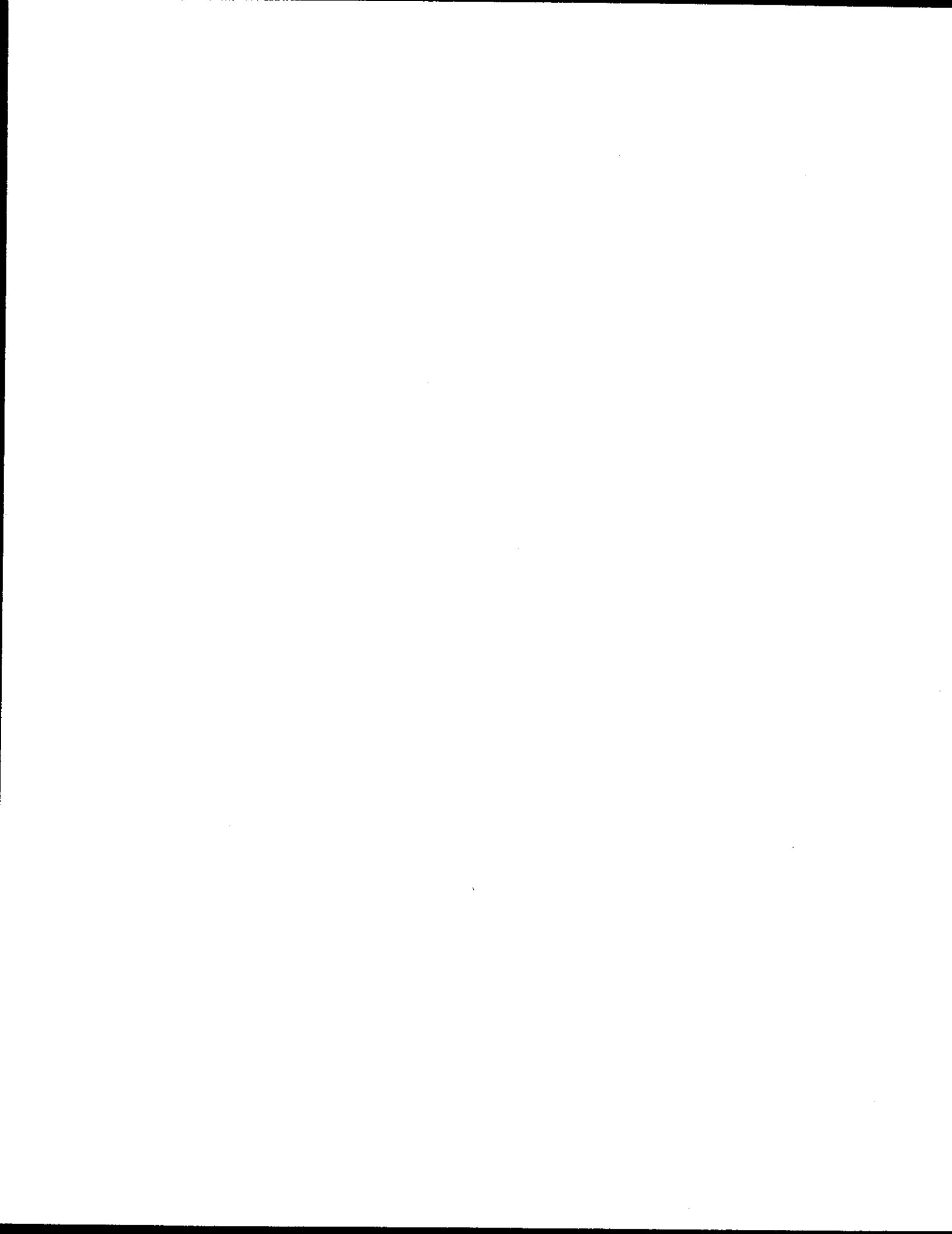
Any effort to develop a statewide food and nutrition plan must reflect the health needs of the populations. New York has a growing population of older adults, who are prone to more chronic disease, with different food, nutrition, and health needs. New York has its own increasingly diverse populations, and a disproportionate number of children who either are immigrants or have immigrant parents. Immigrant children more often live in poverty, overcrowded housing, and are three times more likely to lack health insurance coverage. Further, access to a variety of quality foods and the growing incidence of obesity among these children serves to further compromise these health concerns.

We believe that it is right that nutrition move to the forefront – that the public interest calls for that to happen and that the best approach is through a more integrated policy.

We need strategies to help New Yorkers make informed food choices for healthy lives and implement strategies for disease prevention and disease management through diet and exercise. Policies that tie producers closer to consumers have the greatest potential serving both groups for efficaciously. New York must have a comprehensive, coordinated food policy plan.

Once again, thank you for providing the opportunity to address the panel. The New York State Dietetic Association is eager to share its unique expertise, knowledge and

skills in the science of nutrition and food to New York as it develops its comprehensive food policy. I would be happy to answer any questions at this time.





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The New York State Dietetic Association, Inc.

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TESTIMONY

New York State Assembly Hearing on Food and Nutrition Policy

Presented by,
New York State Dietetic Association

The American Dietetic Association, with whom the New York State Dietetic Association is affiliated, undertook a review of the background, history, status, developments, trends and outlook affecting food, nutrition and health through the year 2015. That work led the Association to endorse the concept of a national nutrition policy in 2002. The Association sees public policies serving multiple purposes, while always seeking to improve the health of the public. ADA concluded that the foundation for good health begins with safe, nutritionally adequate and personally acceptable diets. The Association continues to embrace sound science and its applications to guide the development nutrition goals and policies.

For our testimony today, it is useful to have a concept of nutrition in mind. In the United States, we generally equate nutrition with abundance. By the turn of the 19th century, the average American not only consumed more calories, but also had achieved a diet richer in meat and fish than any other average citizen elsewhere in the world.

Today, more than one hundred years later, Americans have not reframed the perception that simple abundance of food translates into good nutrition. Our experience in going through the 20th century – going through the call-up of men in two world wars, the impact of Great Depression, the focus on poverty and hunger in the late 1950s and the 1960s, the creation of the national food stamp program and the Women, Infants and Children Supplement Food program in the 1970s, and the periodic reminders we receive that many people in the United States remain food insecure – is that if we address hunger in public policy, we have addressed nutrition. To put it another way, if you are NOT hungry, you are not malnourished. But as we know, it's not that simple. The paradigm breaker is that the largest manifestation of malnutrition in the United States today is not hunger, but obesity and overweight.

Today, the incidence of obesity and many associated chronic diseases are skyrocketing, and policies affecting food, nutrition and diet have become matters of a different kind of national concern. Indeed, obesity is second only to tobacco as a preventable cause of death in Americans. Poor nutrition and sedentary lifestyle threaten the nation's productivity and economic vitality, national security and the overall quality of life of its citizens. The rising costs of health care – often borne by taxpayers – underscore the need for policies that support healthful lifestyles.



AN AFFILIATE OF
THE AMERICAN DIETETIC ASSOCIATION

Furthermore, many consumers are no longer connected to the natural processes that neither produce food nor are they educated on the basics of food safety. Just take a city child to a New York dairy farm and watch their faces when they are shown a cow and told that's the source of the milk they drink.

The American Dietetic Association researches key trends affecting food, nutrition and health and their implications. The implications suggest that market and government attention to nutrition are clearly warranted. For example,

- The share of the population that is aged and in poor functional status will rise in the next seven to 10 years, leading to greater risk of chronic disease and creating different food, nutrition and health needs. By 2010, 120 million Americans – 40 percent of the population – will be diagnosed with a chronic condition or disease.
- Demographic shifts in U.S. ethnicity will produce changes in culture, values, lifestyles and food choices. Immigrants will make up nearly half of the total population growth over the next decade. This population relies disproportionately on food stamps, and most frequently goes without health insurance or affordable access to healthcare.
- 36.3 million people—including 13 million children—live in households that experience hunger or the risk of hunger. This represents more than one in ten households in the United States (11.2 percent).
- Absent major policy changes, disparities in health insurance coverage are expected to widen. The percentage of employers providing health insurance coverage is declining, making it likely that the number of uninsured will grow, even among the working.
- More food will be prepared and consumed away from home.
- Physical activity levels will continue to decline, unless steps are taken to reverse the trend. Today, only 29 percent of U.S. children participate in daily physical activity.
- Food and nutrition security will remain an issue, though the growth of entitlement food assistance programs will not be as dramatic as for social and health programs for the elderly. Spending on food stamps is projected to rise by 42 percent over the next decade. Spending on child nutrition programs is expected to grow 40 percent in that same timeframe, barring significant policy shifts. And these programs are not fully subscribed, especially among the growing segment of older Americans. In contrast, increase in spending on assistance programs for older Americans will double. Medicaid spending is projected to increase 123 percent; Social Security 67 percent and Medicare spending 111 percent.
- Obesity rates will continue to rise, and so will the related illnesses: heart disease, diabetes, kidney disease, cancer, and osteoarthritis. Particularly troubling is childhood obesity. It is linked to obesity in adulthood, because food and activity patterns established early in life tend to continue. Even more serious, is the development of

chronic conditions such as diabetes type 2, considered an adult disease, appearing among obese children. Nationwide, we are beginning to see public policy responses to this urgent concern.

- The US health care delivery system continues to be concentrated on episodic care and treating chronic conditions. An paradigm shift toward more preventive care in which nutrition plays a key role will be required to lower long term health care costs.
- Federal budget deficits of unacceptable and unsustainable levels are putting increasing pressure on Congress to cut virtually all domestic programs, including cuts in Medicaid and food assistance programs, creating new burdens on States.

With such challenges, a focus on food, nutrition and health policy will be necessarily broad and far-reaching. Globalization and progress in science and technology have led to the recognition that effective public policy must consider the interrelationships between agriculture, food science and technology, nutrition, and medical care.

Components of a nutrition policy might include food labeling, nutrition monitoring, dietary supplements, nutrition education, dietary guidance, nutrition services, feeding programs, food security, access to food, nutrition standards, food safety, food technology, security of the food supply, food advertising, diet and chronic disease, and food, nutrition, and health research. These issues are interrelated by more than being food, nutrition, and health issues that garner attention as individual and separate entities. In addition, nutrition policy ties to the larger universe of food issues such as: agricultural production and controls, agricultural research, commodity surpluses, agricultural subsidies, farm income, food imports and exports, and food production, processing and sales. Clearly, decisions made in the agriculture arena can and do influence the direction of nutrition programs and the status of the public's nutrition.

The role of the states in this national – and increasingly global – agriculture, food and nutrition system arguably is to serve the prescient needs of their citizens. New York's resources and its needs are substantial:

- A wide variety of climates and conditions for the production, marketing and sales of innumerable fruits, vegetables, grains, legumes, oilseeds, dairy products and meats.
- Immediate access to domestic and international sources of these and other foodstuffs.
- Diverse and efficient food handling and processing systems that deliver fresh, safe and desirable foods and products.
- And the vast majority of the population able to purchase foods of choice.

New York is reflective of these general trends. New York has a growing population of older adults, who are prone to more chronic disease, with different food, nutrition, and health needs. New York has its own increasingly diverse populations, and a disproportionate number of children who either are immigrants or has immigrant parents. Immigrant children more often

live in poverty, overcrowded housing, and are three times more likely to lack health insurance coverage. Further, access to a variety of quality foods and the growing incidence of obesity among these children serves to further compromise these health concerns.

In terms of public policy, how the state allocates resources, and regulates Older Americans Act programs, wellness and preventive medicine, licenses and oversees nutrition professionals in the general marketplace and in long-term care and assisted living services is critically important. How the state educates its children, administers the Ryan White CARE Act and Medicaid are key to serving diverse populations.

Addressing children's health is especially important, because the lack of access to health care has lifetime adverse consequences. The state's SCHIPs administration, Medicaid, and its educational offerings -- including school wellness, school meals, the presence of competitive foods on campuses, physical education, and nutrition education are key to making life better for these kids today and for their lives. How the state manages to attract and maintain successful businesses (the primary supplier of health insurance to most individuals) also matters enormously since the lack of insurance affects every segment of the population.

Clearly, there is significant potential benefit also in addressing agriculture, food, nutrition and health issues now, to ameliorate human as well as economic costs. There will be market needs for products and services that can help the public become more involved with their health and health care management.

NYS also endorses:

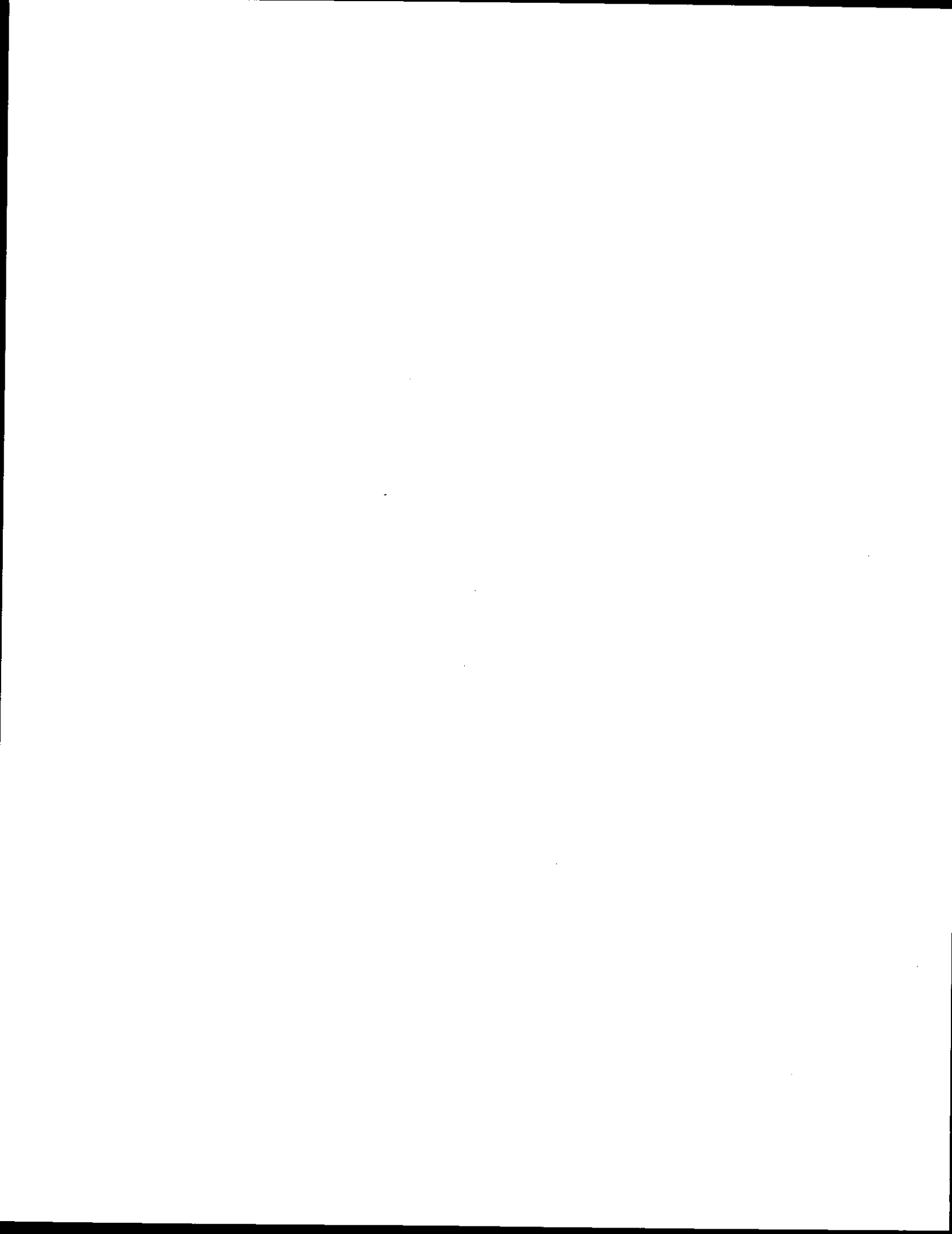
- Farmers markets nutrition programs integrated into programs targeted to pregnant women, mothers and young children, school aged children, those needing food assistance, older adults, people with HIV/AIDS and other conditions.
- Inclusion of medical nutrition therapy as a basic medical service available to individuals receiving care through the Ryan White CARE Act.
- School wellness policies, including policies that encourage healthy nutrition environments, nutrition and physical activity education and follow-up policy evaluations.
- Increased Medicaid coverage of preventive measures, including nutrition counseling where appropriate.
- Increased nutrition education from pre-K to 12.
- Fully funded congregate meals programs administrated through the Older Americans Act so that all eligible individuals have access to the program.
- Access to appropriate healthcare, including medical nutrition therapy

- Programs with clear objectives, measurable outcomes and an action plan and timetable to achieve those outcomes, including appropriate indicators and measures.

We believe that it is right that nutrition move to the forefront – that public interest calls for that to happen and that the best approach is through a more integrated policy. We need strategies to help Americans make informed food choices for healthy lives and implement strategies for disease prevention and disease management through diet and exercise. And policies that tie producers closer to consumers have the greatest potential for serving both groups for efficaciously. New York must have a comprehensive, coordinated Food Policy plan.

A New York state food policy council can facilitate the development of programs serving multiple and varied purposes, while always seeking to improve the health of the public and the viability of the food production and marketing system. The foundation for good health begins with safe, nutritionally adequate and personally acceptable diets for all individuals. Sound science and its applications should guide food and agriculture, as well as nutrition goals and policies.

The New York Dietetic Association appreciates this opportunity to provide comments and as a stakeholder in the health of all New Yorkers, offers to share its unique expertise, knowledge and skills in the science of nutrition and food to the state as it develops its comprehensive food policy.



New York State Small Food Processors Association
Statement May 16, 2005 Public Hearing
NYS Assembly Task Force on Food, Farm and Nutrition Policy

My name is Sharon Kroeger. I represent the NYSSFPA and I am the Chair of the Legislative Committee.

NYSSFPA is an association of small-scale food processors in 12 regions across NYS. (I emphasize "small" because all of our members have less than 20 employees - many only one or two.) Our purpose is to enhance our marketing, support our individual businesses, and add to economic development in our communities. Our goals include: facilitating cooperative purchasing of supplies and distribution of products; linking members throughout the state with each other, linking farmers/growers with each other and promoting the use of locally grown ingredients by our member processors wherever possible; and communicating information and providing forums for members to share needs and concerns with their respective legislators and policy makers.

Because we feel strongly about supporting local economies, NYSSFPA encourages members to use local products whenever possible. Some of our members are farmers adding value to their products, such as making jam from fruit, and salsa from tomatoes or making yogurt from their dairy milk.

Small-scale food processors are a growing segment of the food industry in the Northeast. Our association's primary goal is to assist these processors to make their businesses more profitable. While doing this, we are also building community food security as farmers add value to their products. As members process local farm products, profits are put back into the community.

The 1988 Governor's NYS Council on Food and Nutrition Policy was an initiative which was a leader in building what we now call "community food security", not only by the partnerships involved but also the 5 year policy plan that was developed and its many accomplishments. We would encourage the Task Force to continue to build on this initiative, to enact legislation to make it stronger and to increase participation from the diverse segments of our food community including small-scale farmers and food processors.

Furthermore, we recommend the inclusion of not-for-profit food system organizations on Councils along with the governmental agencies represented (Health, Education, Agriculture and Markets). As local Food System Councils are formed across the state, they, too, should have a liaison to this Advisory Committee.

It is recognized that a major step in building community food security is to shorten the distance between the food producers consumers. We urge the Task Force to recommend food policy that would make a priority of shortening this distance. The efficient distribution of fresh local farm products as well as and food products processed in NYS, should also be a priority since this has a substantial impact on food safety, food quality, and energy costs. NYSSFPA has already joined with others who are working towards building distribution systems to get farm products and

processed food from small businesses through local hubs to statewide distribution networks. This effort should be encouraged and supported by public policy.

NYSSFPA has sponsored regional meetings throughout the State and has identified a number of initiatives that we believe would greatly enhance the development of a food security system . Our regional processor groups are in need of grants to match local economic development monies and personal resources to support a "shared-use" kitchens. Many of our members start out as very small operations . As they grow they need additional space and equipment. The concept of a "shared use" kitchen is critical for processors who have grown out of their small home-based facilities. This has been an important stepping stone for many small-scale processors, and the ongoing need has been documented. Again, having these small certified facilities within our regions, close to processors, makes development possible and puts money back into the local economy where the food comes from. Such measures support the goal of a community-based food security system.

Assembly Bill 2651 offers matching grants for food system projects which build community food security. We support this bill, with one exception. Application for such seed grants should NOT be dependent upon first applying for the USDA Community Food Security grants. As written, this requirement puts a huge obstacle in front of the needed project grants. The time and energy required to prepare such national applications make it prohibitive for many small 501C3 organizations.

At a later date we look forward to participating in the proposed roundtable specifically for small-scale food processors to discuss the various issues related to methods to further enhance our segment of the food industry and to eliminate some of the barriers we face as small-scale processors.

On behalf of our members throughout the state, we thank you for your time, and the attention you continue to give in support of our regional food systems, which are too often not on the "radar screen". We look forward to the reformation of a NYS Food System Council and welcome participation on it.

NYS Small Food Processors
109 Brown Road
Oxford, N.Y. 13830

Legislative Contact: Sharon Kroeger
(845) 373-9201, Dodger@Mohawk.net

#35



Medical and Health Research Association of New York City, Inc.
Promoting the Health of the Community Since 1957

SUBMITTED IN WRITING

New York State Food and Nutrition Policy

Testimony of Ellen Rautenberg,
President and CEO
Medical and Health Research Association of New York City, Inc.
May 16, 2005

Submitted to

Assemblyman Felix W. Ortiz, Chair
Task Force on Food, Farm and Nutrition Policy

Assemblyman Richard N. Gottfried, Chair
Standing Committee on Health

Assemblymember Deborah J. Glick, Chair
Standing Committee on Social Services

Introduction

We would like to thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in writing. MHRA applauds Assemblyman Felix W. Ortiz, Chair of the Task Force on Food, Farm and Nutrition Policy, Assemblyman Richard N. Gottfried, Chair of the Standing Committee on Health, and Assemblymember Deborah J. Glick, Chair of the Standing Committee on Social Services for their leadership on this very important health and social welfare issue.

MHRA Neighborhood WIC Program

The MHRA Neighborhood WIC Program is the largest in New York State, providing diet evaluation, nutritional counseling, immunization screening and referrals, breast feeding promotion and support, referrals to social services, and food vouchers to some 46,000 individuals at 17 sites throughout New York City.

Medical and Health Research Association of New York City

Medical and Health Research Association of New York City, Inc. (MHRA) is dedicated to researching, developing, and managing innovative health and social service programs in response to public health needs. Founded in 1957, MHRA works with a wide array of government and private partners to address some of the city's most serious and urgent public health challenges: families in need of food and nutritional guidance; children at risk of developmental disabilities and chronic health problems such as asthma or obesity; women with little or no access to health care, prenatal services, and family planning; and people with HIV/AIDS in need of care and supportive services, as well as those at high risk of becoming infected who need preventive education. MHRA's community-based "safety net" services reach nearly 200,000 adults, children, and families each year. In addition, MHRA has a special ability to link the research it conducts to the services it provides – utilizing New York City's diverse neighborhoods as settings to develop, implement, and evaluate groundbreaking initiatives.

Recommendations for Change

The women and children we serve through the WIC Program are enthusiastic about the fresh fruits and vegetables they can buy using vouchers from the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP). One of our main recommendations for improving nutrition and reducing obesity—and at the same time promoting consumption and sales of local farm products—is to *provide access to fresh produce on a year-round basis*, rather than just the summer, as is the case under the current program. This recommendation also appears in the recent Institute of Medicine (IOM) report on revamping the WIC food package. Specifically, the IOM report recommends reducing by half the juice allowances in WIC food packages, and substituting a monthly cash-value voucher for fresh fruits and vegetables.

Furthermore, WIC participants would benefit greatly if the FMNP *increased the value of the fresh produce allotment* sufficiently to make it worthwhile for participants to make two trips to a farmers' market. The current \$24 allotment is too much for many families to spend at one time, but too little to encourage a second trip. Many WIC participants buy \$16 or \$20 worth of fresh fruits and vegetables on their first visit to a farmers' market, but may not be able to afford a

second visit if the carfare to the market costs almost as much as the remaining value of the voucher.

It would also be helpful if there were *more farmers' markets, and if the markets were open more days per week, earlier and later in the day*. There are too few farmers' markets, many markets are open only once a week, and some close between 2-4 p.m. Taken together, these factors can make the markets less accessible to WIC participants, who often have transportation difficulties and time conflicts with work. If voucher allowances were increased, and markets made more accessible, participants would use more vouchers, resulting in greater consumption of fresh produce, improved nutrition, and more sales of local farm products.

Assembly Bill A.2651 Community Food Security Program

We endorse Assembly Bill A.2651, which would support projects designed to increase the availability of culturally acceptable, affordable, nutritionally adequate food, from local sources whenever possible. MHRA has long been concerned about the lack of access to healthy food in the neighborhoods we serve, and recent MHRA research has found high rates of obesity among our program participants.

In response, MHRA piloted a project in 2004 to increase our clients' access to fresh, nutritious, local produce. Working with the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, Greenmarket, Queens Community Board #1, New York City's Community Assistance Unit, and the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, MHRA undertook an extensive effort in the summer and fall of 2004 to pilot a farmer's market near our Astoria WIC site, which is co-located with one of our prenatal and family planning sites.

The market ran from July through the first week of November 2004, and was a first in the Astoria community. It was a great success with our clients, providing easy access to fresh fruits and vegetables; cooking demonstrations to show families how to create healthy and flavorful meals with the produce available at the market; and connections with participating New York State farmers from Schoharie, Oswego, and Dutchess Counties. The Market also created the ideal forum to operate mini health fairs.

Unfortunately, we could not raise the funding to continue the program in 2005. If Assembly Bill A.2651 becomes law, the Community Food Security Program would allow non-profit organizations like MHRA to compete for grants to fund up to 50% of proven successful projects like our Astoria Farmers' Market—thereby improving the nutrition of New York State residents, and supporting local agriculture.

I will not be attending the State Food and Nutrition Policy Hearing. Please accept the statement provided below as written testimony.

Sincerely,

Donald

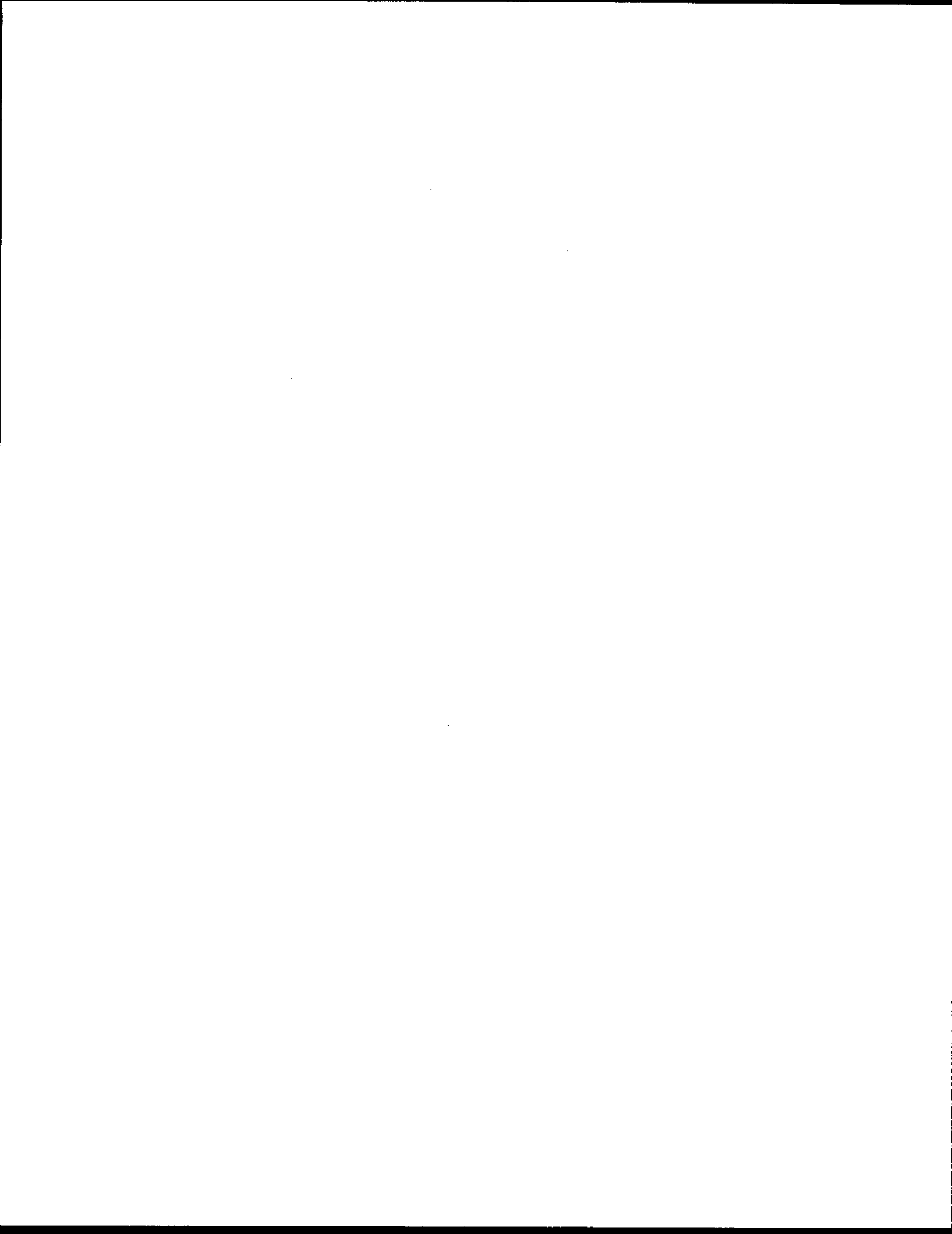
Donald L. Hassig, Director
Cancer Action

Statement for New York State Assembly Hearing on the Subject of State Food and Nutrition Policy

Submitted by Donald L. Hassig, Director, Cancer Action; 315 393-1975; 531 CR 28, Ogdensburg, New York, 13669

New York State needs to develop a State Food and Nutrition policy that will require state government agencies to take appropriate steps toward increasing the healthfulness of foods produced in New York State. The New York State Legislature should create a Food and Nutrition Council composed of stakeholders that would have significant powers in directing the development and implementation of future Food and Nutrition policy.

Persistent pollutant contamination of animal fat foods is an example of an environmental problem that could best be addressed by joint efforts of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the New York State Department of Health. State Food and Nutrition policy should set forth the basis for government action to solve environmental problems that are negatively impacting food supply quality.



From Genrikh Vapne,
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Brooklyn, NY 11239
Ph.718-649-5610

#37

To Mr.Felix Ortiz – Chair of Task Force on Food, Farm and Nutrition Policy
Participants of Public Hearing about NYS Food and Nutrition Policy

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen:

This testimony is a result of my communication with NYS and NYC food stamps agencies for many years as a person eligible to get this federal benefit and protector of other consumers whose eligibility permanently violated by OTDA and HRA. **The general conclusion of my investigation is: OTDA and HRA supported by USDA manage the fraudulent policy with main goal to reduce government expenses on food and nutrition of poor people.** The best illustration to such policy is a OTDA definition of administrative error: *“Administrative error is an over-issuance of food stamp benefits caused by the local department's action or failure to take action”* (18NYCRR387.1(a)). Such OTDA position shows that for this NYS agency an under-issuance of food stamp benefits is not an error and contradicts to USDA position expressed in 7CFR271.2.

The following facts confirm my allegation:

1. For many years OTDA and HRA supported by USDA violate sec. 7 USC2014(d)(12) requested to exclude COLA income of SSI recipients from food stamp allotment calculation. This section says: . *“Household income for purposes of the food stamp program shall include all income from whatever source excluding only...(12) through September 30 of any fiscal year, any increase in income attributable to a cost-of-living adjustment made on or after July 1 of such fiscal year under title II or XVI of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 401 et seq.), ..if the household was certified as eligible to participate in the food stamp program or received an allotment in the month immediately preceding the first month in which the adjustment was effective,..”* [7USC2014(d)]. The idea of 7USC2014(d)(12) is absent in 7CFR273.9 and 18NYCRR387.11. That is means that annually in December for many years HRA and OTDA illegally reduced food stamp allotments to, *inter alia*, every NYS SSI recipients (more 600 000 persons). The violation of 7USC2014(d)(12) was considered on 01/23/01 on OTDA Fair Hearing N3447617P. On 01/29/01 OTDA Commissioner Wing's designee Jerilyn Anglei issued and signed the decision on 6 pages without any words on the subject of claim. Request to Wing to reconsider decision was ignored. The same request to SDNY District Court (case N 04cv565) was rejected by Judge Buchwald who with prejudice used anecdotal interpretation of this law.
2. For many years OTDA and HRA violate the food stamp eligibility of people with Assisted Living Program (Enriched Housing Program) by:
 - a) neglecting of functional meaning of food stamps expressed in 7USC2011 with wrong their equalization to congregate meals provided to ALP customers;
 - b) practical violation of 18NYCRR488.8;
 - c) wrong applying to ALP customers the rules and instructions about “group home” living conditions (03INF40 and Group living food stamp budget).

My attempts to stop such policy in Fair Hearings N3341368P, 3967124Y, 3951739H, 3381984Z was rejected by OTDA. As a result only my mother as ALP resident of Brookdale Residence in Brooklyn has wrong calculated food stamps. Other ALP residents of this facility have nothing.

3. For many years OTDA and HRA submit to food stamp beneficiaries the wrong budget report in form violating requirements 7USC2017(a), 18NYCRR387(15)(e), Worksheet LDSS-3115, Budget Narrative DSS-3961 (absence of two important actions: 0.3xnet income and subtraction of result from maximum of food stamp allotment for appropriate category of applicant). As a result it is intentionally created an obstacle to their clients to check the correctness of calculation.
4. For many years OTDA illegally ignored the right of clients on additional complaint procedure by neglecting of 7CFR271.6 which says: "*Complaint procedure. (a) State agency responsibility—(1) General scope. The State agency shall maintain a system of its choosing for handling program complaints filed by participants, potential participants, or other concerned individuals or groups. This shall not include complaints alleging discrimination on the basis of race, sex, age, religious creed, national origin, political beliefs or handicap; such complaints shall be handled in accordance with § 272.6. This procedure also need not include complaints that can be pursued through a fair hearing. Complaints regarding such areas as processing standards and service to participants and potential participants would generally be handled under this complaint procedure.*"
5. For many years OTDA violates Fair Hearing due process by:
 - a) separating hearing and decision actions between different OTDA officers;
 - b) holdings of "meaningless remand" and an absence in text of decisions of fact findings;
 - c) absence in DSS-4482 of reference on 18NYCRR358-6.6 (appeal to OTDA Commissioner);
 - d) neglecting of own two Memos and NYS "Manual for ALJ and Hearing Officers".As a result the "favorable" Fair Hearing decisions mentioned above are ignored by FS local offices and not executed.
6. For many years OTDA abuses its discretion pursuant 7USC2012(c) and 18NYCRR387.7(b) about prolonged (till 24 months) recertification period compelling old beneficiaries with permanent income and expenses conditions (SSI beneficiaries) to go to office and submit the same documents annually.
7. For many years OTDA supported by USDA (see 7CFR273.10(A)(iii)(c)(1)) violates in its internal documents the sec.8 of Food Stamp Act about rule of dollar rounding. The idea of sec.8 favorable to food stamp beneficiaries is reversed by USDA and OTDA. They try to repeal poor people just 1 food dollar.

All mentioned facts based on official documents are known to USDA, OTDA and HRA and ignored by these agencies. My goal is to make the facts are known to everybody. I am sure that tough investigation will discover many additional facts confirmed my conclusion.

Thanks for attention,

G.Vapne

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May 2nd 2005

Assemblyman Felix Ortiz
Task Force on Food, Farm and Nutrition Policy
Agency #4, 5th Floor
Albany, NY 12248

Dear Assemblyman Ortiz;

I am writing to let you know that I am disappointed that I will be unable to appear at the hearings on May 16th and present testimony at that time. Unfortunately, that is the day when our staff picks up and delivers food donated through the Postal Workers drive. It is a large undertaking for us to move the amount of food that they collect in the short time that we have and I need to be available to help coordinate the volunteers.

While I can only speak for Albany and Rensselaer Counties, I am concerned about hungry persons in our neighborhoods and worried about the food pantries that serve them. We are far from being a community where food security is a reality.

Our pantries have been asked to provide more food and more nutritious food to more people and to do it with fewer resources for too long. While more funding for food items remains the most critical issue, more attention needs to be paid to supporting the infrastructure of our programs as well.

As the pantries have grown larger, space issues have emerged. How many pounds of food can we reasonably ask a volunteer in his or her 70's or 80's to haul, load, pack and unpack? In 2004, Food Pantries for the Capital District delivered 520 tons of food to pantries. On 96 separate occasions, a pantry needed more than 3,000 pounds of food in a single delivery.

Pantries are being encouraged to provide more fresh foods including produce and low fat dairy products. While availability is always an issue, it is not the only one. Fresh foods require a different distribution system.

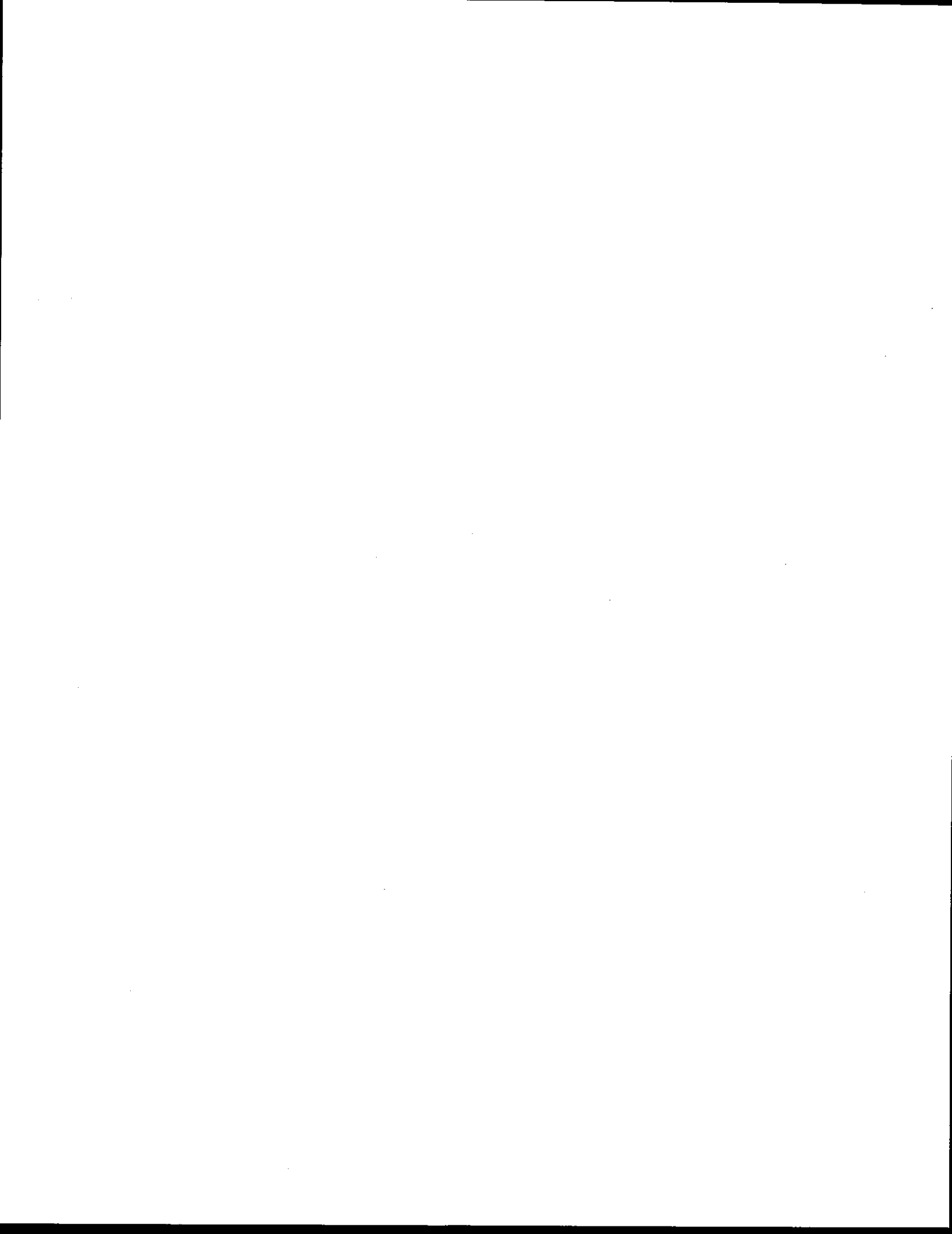
We have built a house of cards that may one day fall. Many of our programs are serving at full capacity and beyond. What will happen when a neighboring pantry closes?

You have been an advocate for the hungry in New York State for many years, and your efforts on behalf of those who serve the hungry are appreciated. Again, I am sorry that I will not be able to voice my concerns on May 16th. Please let me know if there is anything Food Pantries for the Capital District can do in the upcoming months to assist your efforts.

Sincerely,

Lynda Schuyler
Executive Director

Help us Feed the Hungry
32 Essex Street, Albany, NY 12206 458-1167



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By Mail and Fax

May 10, 2005

Robert Stern
Assembly Task Force on Food, Farm and Nutrition Policy
Agency #4, 5th Floor
Albany, New York 12248
FAX (518) 455-5573

Dear Mr. Stern:

Attached is the written statement of the Ichabod Crane Elementary PTA Nutrition Committee for the May 16, 2005, public hearing on New York State Food and Nutrition Policy. We thank the members of the Assembly for the opportunity to present our views on this important topic.

Very truly yours,

Nutrition Committee
Core Committee Members
Gina Armstrong
Laura Etlinger
Kimberly Gray
Mary Riley Jacome
Taitia Shelow
Cathy Tretheway

Contact Information

Kimberly Gray
phone: (518) 424-0198
email: kgray4@nycap.rr.com

Ichabod Crane Elementary PTA Nutrition Committee

Prepared Statement for the May 16, 2005 Assembly Public Hearing on New York State Food and Nutrition Policy

The Ichabod Crane Elementary PTA Nutrition Committee is a committee of the Elementary PTA at Ichabod Crane Central School District, a suburban-rural school district located in northern Columbia County. The Nutrition Committee was formed in 2004 by parents concerned with the growing trend of child obesity and related illnesses like childhood diabetes and heart disease. We represent parents, faculty and community members interested in improving the nutrition and health of our children at home and at school. We thank the members of the Assembly for this opportunity to present our views on this important topic.

Our statement will address the following questions: (1) The need for a legislation to establish comprehensive school food policies; (2) Changes in existing food and nutrition policies that can mutually benefit both consumers and producers; and (3) Suggestions for policy and program ideas that could address interrelated food policy concerns.

THE NEED FOR COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL FOOD AND NUTRITION POLICIES

We support creation of a State Food Policy Council. We would ask that such a Council look into ways to ensure that fresh and unprocessed foods can be served in schools. State policies that incorporate nutrition education into the school curriculum at all grade levels are also important. However, it is imperative that public schools receive adequate funding for any nutrition policies and programs enacted by the State Legislature. Changes in school food programs to incorporate healthier and fresher food sources, and expansion of nutrition education

programs, can be costly to implement initially, although they provide long-term economic benefits by reducing the incidence of nutrition-related diseases. The current system under which school food programs must be financially self-sufficient limits the ability of school food managers to voluntarily provide foods meeting higher nutritional standards. We support current state programs that provide funding for school-based nutrition research and education, such as the \$1.5 million budget appropriation to fund the Childhood Obesity Prevention Program and Activate Kids program and believe that such research and educational programs are essential to address current problems. However, our schools need to actively promote nutrition for all students as a preventative and long-term solution to the current health crisis among our children. The school food program is a logical place to implement programs that directly affect the nutrition and health of our children.

We believe the current federal nutritional standards for school lunch programs are not adequate. School breakfast and lunch menus are able to meet the current federal standards by relying on highly processed foods. Thus, the current standards do not ensure the availability of fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and other whole, natural foods in our schools. Additionally, there are currently no federal or state nutritional standards that apply to snack foods sold in our public schools (other than the federal requirement that foods of "minimal nutritional value" not be sold during lunch periods). Therefore, we support enactment of state nutritional standards for public schools, such as those in Senate Bill number S01805 (introduced Feb. 2, 2005), which address portion size and nutritional content (including calories, fat, sugar, artificial additives and preservatives) of foods and beverages sold in the cafeteria, through vending machines, and in other venues during the school day.

INTERRELATED FOOD POLICY CONCERNS: IMPROVING PROGRAMS THAT ENCOURAGE PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN LOCAL FARMERS AND SCHOOLS

We believe programs and policies that encourage partnerships between local farmers and public schools can be very beneficial in addressing both the sales of local farm products and the nutritional value of foods served in public schools. However, in researching ways to encourage the use of local produce in our school district, we have become aware of certain problems that have limited participation in programs like the Farm to School Program. These problems include (1) the need for local farmers to seek out large channels for sales and distribution, such as produce wholesalers, in order to maximize profit while lowering costs of delivery, (2) the school district's need for regular and frequent deliveries (because of difficulties associated with storing fresh fruits and vegetables) that cannot be easily met by small farmers, (3) the high costs associated with staff resources needed to handle and prepare fresh fruits and vegetables. These problems have inhibited the creation of partnerships between local farmers and our area schools.

We are also aware of programs that can address some of these problems including regional distribution centers, programs for the minimal-processing of farm products, and flash freezing centers for fresh produce and products that incorporate fresh produce. Some of these programs have been initiated in parts of New York State (New York City and the Binghamton and Syracuse areas) through funds available from the federal Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh Program. We understand that the state agencies administering New York's grant from the DoD Fresh Program have considered expanding the current program to include other parts of the State. We ask that the program be expanded to include all of New York, and encourage the

development of other similar programs. By providing funding and resources to overcome existing barriers to partnerships between local farmers and schools, programs like this demonstrate that such partnerships are a viable means of addressing interrelated food policy concerns.

In closing, we would like to thank the members of the Assembly for holding this public hearing and for giving us the opportunity to present our views on these important issues.



[Fwd: PUBLIC HEARING REPLY FORM 050405 NY Food Policy]

#40

Subject: [Fwd: PUBLIC HEARING REPLY FORM 050405 NY Food Policy]

From: Bob Stern <sternr@assembly.state.ny.us>

Date: Wed, 04 May 2005 17:30:52 -0400

To: pat piniasek <piniazp@assembly.state.ny.us>

----- Original Message -----

Subject: PUBLIC HEARING REPLY FORM 050405 NY Food Policy

Date: Wed, 4 May 2005 17:17:16 -0400

From: Elliot Brodsky <catalyst1@stny.rr.com>

To: <sternr@assembly.state.ny.us>

Dear Mr. Stern,

I support the testimony of Hank Herrera and Kate Mendenhall of the Growing Home Partnership; however, I have some other concerns that if factored in would help the potentials for economic growth here in New York State. Is there a cut off time as to when I could submit some testimony for the May 16 hearing?

These concerns would address Item 3-

What changes are needed in existing food, nutrition, and agricultural policies and programs that can mutually benefit both consumers and producers?

To grow the opportunity to provide more locally grown nutritious food, more small to mid-sized farms will be needed. A major concern is the high value of farm land in New York State. i.e. farm land in the New York watershed area goes for \$3-5000 per acre. Dutchess county it is more. In a neighboring state available farm land is close to \$25,000 per acre. One needs to think about what one can grow and sell to earn a "living wage" for a family. A second concern is that various New York State Ag regulations need to be re-scaled to the size of a specific a farming operation. In most cases, regulations are scaled for large farms. The state requires equipment that is cost prohibitive for a small to mid sized operation and therefore farmers don't produce and consumers miss out. I would like to address those issues, but I don't know if I will have the necessary back-up information in time for the hearing.

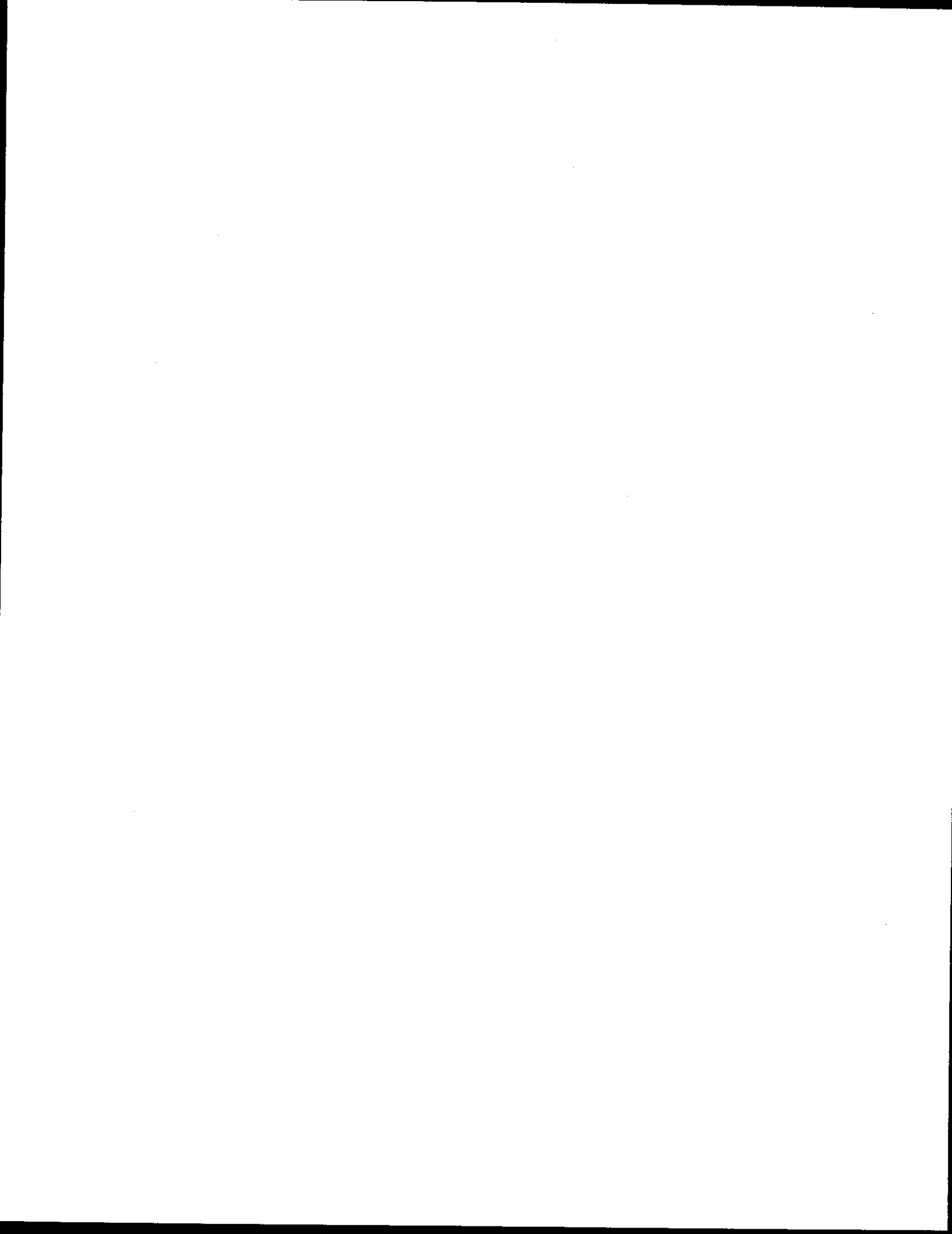
I strongly support the spirit and wording of A 02651. However the state needs to develop methods to make this effort doable.

I can be reached on my cellphone tomorrow and Friday - 607-7295-2858.

Thank you for your interest.

Elliot D. Brodsky

Managing Director



#41

Hometown Foods, LLC
362 Eichybush Rd.
Kinderhook, NY 12106
April 25, 2005

Robert Stern
Task Force on Food, Farm and Nutrition Policy
Agency #4, 5th floor
Albany, New York 12248

Dear Sir:

This letter is written for the May 16, 2005 hearing on NYS Food and Nutrition Policy. It addresses the question: What changes are needed in existing food, nutrition and agricultural policies and programs that can mutually benefit consumers and producers?

I am a small scale vegetable farmer and food processor. I am also a retired dairy heifer farmer and Ichabod Crane Home Economics Teacher trained at Cornell. For the past seven years I have pursued a question, "What can be done to save farms and make sure that consumers have the healthiest foods that can be processed?"

In pursuit of the answers, I have walked in the shoes of a small scale organic farmer, as an employee for three years at Roxbury Farm, the largest Community Supported Organic farm in my area. During my last year, I started my own small vegetable garden with tons of rotted cow manure incorporated into my soil. I brought left over lettuce transplants and put them in my raised beds. My lettuce was twice the size as Roxbury's because of the fertility. As a result, I helped a large farmer and a small compost provider set up a trial compost site using waxed cardboard shredded in a bale buster on a 1000 cow farm that was funded by a small SARE grant. The lesson of this story is "We need more "on farm" compost sites for organic farmers so NY farmers can expand organic produce sales."

My next step was to design and have built a 1400 sq. ft. farm kitchen to do value added processing. I started out by being educated about processing by the Northeast Center for Food Entrepreneurship. I learned that I could only do acidified foods if my kitchen was Ag. & Mkts. approved. I could bake products for retail farm market sales if the kitchen was Health Dept. approved. The difference was that I had to have a nitrate water test in addition to four bacteria tests. These tests cost \$160 per year. The cost of an Ag. & Mkts. license is \$200. When I let others use my kitchen, which has already passed inspection, the renters also have to pay for an Ag. & Mkts. license. They also have to have an inspector visit the premises to meet each renter. Is it possible to make this procedure more cost effective and efficient for beginning food entrepreneurs? I discovered that most of the renters did not become successful entrepreneurs. Perhaps Cooperative

Extension could use their demonstration kitchens to do more training of beginning food entrepreneurs. They might also explore teaching people about freezing and vacuum packaging—a simple process that could help fund incubator kitchens so they can pay overhead costs. The idea would be to create some of the convenience meals needed in communities by small groups: seniors, childcare settings, group homes, etc. Food would be purchased from local farmers and frozen year round from early May asparagus to late fall root crops.

After experiencing farmers markets and food fairs, I realized that selling fresh vegetables, jam, pickles and cookies was not financially rewarding. So, I wrote a SARE grant request to explore freezing and vacuum packaging. With the \$13,000+ grant I was able to hire help to create meal and fruit dessert kits. I explored selling to Independent Grocery Stores. I found that I was one of hundreds of frozen products. If I did demonstrations and offered tastes, the food flew off the shelf. However, the money flew into the grocer's pocket—not mine. I had to offer a low price so that their store market up would fit their customer. And, I spent hours promoting with little benefit. More creative marketing ideas needed to be tried.

My creative brain went to work and I decided I would explore marketing to small group feeding venues in my community—after school snack and preschool programs. Again SARE (www.uvm.edu/~nesare/) gave me a grant for 2004-2005 for \$9500. I just submitted my report FNE04-508—Marketing to Preschool and After School Programs and Parents. My major findings were

1. Small group feeding sites are a potential market for small scale food processors if the food is nutritionally rich, reasonably priced, convenient to prepare and easy to access.
2. Small group feeding providers need a dietitian's help planning nutritious meals using local foods. It is not enough to have a Child and Adult Care Food Program nutritionist check a provider's menus after the fact. Providers need a nutritionist's help planning meals and snacks.
3. The CACFP guidelines need to be updated. Funds need to be allocated for this revision. Food providers need to be involved in this updating. The recently changed Food Pyramid website www.mypyramid.gov can be a useful tool for training and assistance.
4. Parents and providers need updated nutrition and consumer education. Today's large-scale food processors take farm foods apart to make new food concoctions that they claim are better than real farm food. Free, food processing magazines and web newsletters need to be part of consumer education. Even professional dietitians need updating about the processed foods offered at the grocery store market place.

For example, Stoneyfield Farm yogurt (20% owned by Dannon) adds "inulin"—a fiber derived from Chicory Root. They claim if you eat 8 g. or 24 ounces of their yogurt, you will absorb calcium better. However, they fail to tell you it may cause gas also. How can consumers make the right choices for children if they do not know the whole story? (Marcia A. Wade, "Inulin and that "Gut" Feeling", Prepared Foods, July 2004 pp. 81-84.)

5. Pre-school and elementary children, parents and providers should receive programming assistance that focuses on palate change toward multiplicity of flavors rather than participating in the high sugar, fat and salt diet available. Obesity education needs to start in the young, food providers and their parents.

This grant experience raised a new question to explore. How might I up-date my potential customers' nutrition knowledge easily at their convenience? The web was my answer. Small scale food processors can have a product web site that educates potential consumers about the nutritional value of their products.

www.ourhometownfoods.com is currently being revised into a product education website that provides up-to-date, thorough nutrition information about our frozen foods. We use NutriBase, a nutrient analysis program. The government limits the nutrition information required on large-scale food processors required labels. Small-scale food entrepreneurs using programs like NutriBase (\$500) can explain to consumers about the value of the whole foods that they provide. Whole food nutrition information is a definite marketing plus.

The last question to answer is how can regional foods be ordered and delivered conveniently. My potential answer is with another website created with SARE funds in Pennsylvania. www.farmtocity.com/HometownFoodClub.asp is being created as I write. This is a year round, bi-weekly ordering website with weekly delivery by UPS or Fed Ex. Here frozen, fresh, canned and dried nutritious foods from other farmers, food processors and myself will be listed for ordering. A four day order window provides convenient access and record keeping. Farmers and processors in Philadelphia receive 70% of the consumer price. Store mark up is eliminated. Food is reasonably priced. Extra pages will be added to the product website to accommodate consumer education about the other products selected for the list. This idea could be duplicated on a regional basis.

Especially helpful would be funding for regional blast freezing and vacuum packaging facilities. Most farm produce freezer processing does not include vacuum packaging except for meats. Don Downing of NECFE has reviewed our processes and has informed Ag. & Mkts. that vacuum packaging frozen produce is a safe practice for licensed kitchens. It also helps maintain high quality.

Small kitchens like mine could access regional frozen foods year round instead of buying from United Natural Foods. For a small investment, senior food production centers could be repackaging regional frozen foods instead of freezing already cooked vegetables for senior meals. Actually, any approved kitchen, whether firehouse or church kitchen, could then produce consumer sized meal kits of superior quality with about a \$5000 investment.

Consumers need more than a web site. They need support from others interested in eating healthy. Consequently, membership in a Hometown Food Club is needed

as a pre-requisite for ordering. This allows for controlled growth and the support of a dietitian who can facilitate consumers becoming involved in a regional food system. Farm harvest visits, shared nutritious recipes, pot lucks and nutrition updates would be arranged via an email like ours hometownfoodclub@berk.com .

Iowa state professor Kay Palan, in a January 2005 report about regional food systems, found that consumers would become involved in a regional food system if the food was high quality, conveniently accessible and reasonably priced. Another plus would be if a nutrition professional were to be involved in the communication process. All income levels have healthy eating challenges. Unfortunately few extension programs are available because of government program rules limiting education to low income individuals.

Thank you for the opportunity to present these ideas. I hope you find some ideas of value.

Sincerely,



Anna Dawson

518 758 7342

annadawson@berk.com

April 30, 2005

Dear Nutritionally Challenged Members of the Human Race,

Thank you so much for including me in an opportunity to give ideas for NY Farm and Food policy for the future.. It makes me feel that finally I can offer a few thoughts to all of you when my mind is functioning well (6 a.m.). I search for answers to our mutual question of "How to provide healthy local and regional foods conveniently to families and groups". I have already sent a letter to the task force but here are some more ideas.

I believe we should consider recommending the following:

1. A consulting dietitian should be provided as a consultant to school districts to help with evaluating the meal and snack offerings provided at K-12 schools using a nutrient analysis program as an objective measure.
2. Consulting dietitians should be paid for by the state to help family day care providers and larger day care centers to plan healthier snacks and meals with product sourced locally.
3. Our county should set up a Healthy Food Task Force to work with community groups to facilitate the introduction of regional farm foods into all eating venues involving children--group homes, after school snack venues, restaurants, YMCA, etc. In our county all Healthy Heart schools could participate, child care supervisors, battered women shelters, farm representatives, farm support groups, Senior Citizens, food processors and distributors etc.

Goals might be to

A. Connect parents with information about local food home delivery services, CSA's, farm stands etc. Check out a web site partially up www.farmtocity.com/HometownFoodClub.asp . In the near future families and small group feeding providers will be able to order local fresh, frozen, canned, dried and baked foods online selected for their nutritional contribution as suggested on www.mypyramid.gov and have Fed Ex deliver the food in insulated coolers to the doorstep weekly--an idea that needs to be piloted to work out the bugs in the system with the help of consumers.

B. Encourage and establish summer local food cooking classes for children and families at schools, Cooperative extension offices, churches etc. (It is not enough to just grow a garden.) Mary Riley Jacome, Betsy Cashen and I have worked on a Dairy Grant application focused on the Ihabod Crane OK Kids summer and after school program that will empower children and staff to use dairy products in conjunction with local fruits and vegetables for snacks at home and at the school.

C. Assist Rensselaer and Columbia County VoTec culinary program and M.S. and H. S. Family and Consumer Science classes access local foods for their programs. Help find local shadowing and internship opportunities for high school students interested in food growing, preparation and sales. Assist NY Community College Culinary students, Dietetics, Nutrition and Food Science students, Agriculture and Business students in locating internships in our rural areas. We need young people committed to regional whole food growing and processing if there is to be future food security for our NY communities.

D. Locate Food Professionals as local speakers about meeting nutritional needs with local foods year round. SARE will offer funds starting in July 2005 to support speakers connected to sustainable agriculture such as farmers, food processors and dietitians. Applications will be posted in July 2005 to the Northeast SARE website at www.uvm.edu/~nesare.

E. Plan early to access for 2006 a new grant offering from SARE, "Sustainable Community Grants". The purpose of this new grant effort is to reconnect rural revitalization and farming on a local level. Projects can address issues like nutrition, employment, markets, education, farm and food processing labor, etc. A call for proposals will be available in print and will also be posted to the Northeast SARE web site by June 15, 2005. The applications deadline for the \$10,000 maximum award is November 18, 2005.

E. Encourage local not for profits to facilitate grants to fund farmer web pages plus nutritional and product information web pages for consumers about local food products such as the merits of grass finished beef, versus organic dairy beef or grain fed, conventionally grown beef. Community College students can assist not for profits to create web pages through their web design programs. They will learn about local foods at the same time.

F. Updated nutrition information about whole foods might be provided through monthly food club gatherings focused on local food access, pot lucks, shared recipes, product selection focus groups, meet the farmer opportunities, cooking contests and new product tastings. Understanding the latest marketing ploys of large food manufacturers can help consumers make wiser choices for their families. Large food manufacturers take farm foods apart, get patents and promote their latest chemical concoctions as being better than Mother Nature intended. Apples in a pile on the grocery store or farm stand shelf cannot tell consumers about their high antioxidant qualities but a web site could. Check out www.ourhometownfoods.com.

With a few dedicated community members, the hard working farmers and food processors in the area and young people. we can create a regional food system that creates healthy humans and communities. If any of these ideas find a home in your heart, mind or funding purse, feel free to use them in any way you wish.

Anna Dawson
Hometown Foods, LLC
362 Eichybush Rd.
Kinderhook, NY 12106
518 758 7342
annadawson@berk.com





Farmers' Market Federation of New York

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315-475-1101
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www.nyfarmersmarket.com

#42

New York State Food and Nutrition Policy Legislative Hearing, May 16, 2005

To: Task Force on Food, Farm and Nutrition Policy
Chair, Assemblyman Felix W. Ortiz

Standing Committee on Agriculture
Chair, Assemblyman William Magee

Standing Committee on Health
Chair, Assemblyman Richard N. Gottfried

Standing Committee on Social Services
Chair, Assemblymember Deborah J. Glick

Because of the importance of farmers' markets to a healthy lifestyle, local economies and the sustainability of local agriculture, any statewide food policy should consider farmers markets as a key component. Farmers' Markets are a cost-effective means for farmers' to bring fresh, locally grown fruits, vegetables and other farm products into urban areas providing easy access for community residents who might not otherwise have such access. The availability of these farm fresh foods provides a healthy choice of foods to our state's consumers, helping to combat diet related diseases such as obesity, heart disease and diabetes. In addition, they offer communities access to a consistent supply of safe foods that have not traveled long distances and gone through several changes of ownership before reaching the consumer.

At the same time farmers' markets provide profitable sales opportunities for farmers and helps to sustain small family farms. The higher retail profit margins they are receiving for their farm products and the entrepreneurial spirit they show at farmers markets with product line diversity, value-added products, and rapid response to consumer interest and demand allows the farmers to achieve the sales levels they need to not only maintain their farms, but to thrive and sustain their farms for future generations. Farms that are profitable remain in agriculture, maintain open spaces around our cities and provide for scenic vistas and the cultural heritage that we have come to equate with farming.

Farmers' markets are also economic engines for local communities. They incubate small businesses that grow into larger businesses that contribute jobs and increase the local tax base. Farmers markets also have a spillover effect. Customers that shop at a farmers' market typically visit other local businesses in the nearby community, spending additional dollars with local merchants. Add to that, the dollars the local farmers themselves spend with local businesses and farmers' markets contribute greatly to local economies.

Farmers' markets also add to the social fabric of a community. They are weekly events that consistently draw significant numbers of people to one location. Community groups, politicians seeking re-election,

Our mission is to offer services and programs to support and promote New York's Farmers' Markets!

etc, recognize that farmers' markets draw large gatherings of local residents and use the farmers' markets as a vehicle for disseminating their messages. Just as important, farmers' markets are a gathering place for friends and neighbors to meet and socialize. Markets foster the small-town feeling that includes a neighborly feeling toward one another and pride in oneself and in the community.

The following are suggestions that should be incorporated into a statewide food policy that would support local agriculture and farmers' markets, specifically.

Efforts of a statewide food policy should include an educational component that would include:

- The importance of local agriculture to the local economy. This will encourage local governments and consumers to understand the significance of supporting agriculture and local farms by purchasing local products in season, direct from the farmers.
- The connection between a health and a diet high in the consumption of fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables.
- The availability of fresh locally grown fruits and vegetables that are in abundant supply at our state's farmers' markets and roadside stands.
- How easy it is to prepare, serve and preserve fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables.

Another area that should be addressed in a statewide food policy that would assist local farms and farmers' markets would be land use issues for direct marketing farmers. Urban encroachment has forced many local zoning regulations on farmers that has made many of their direct marketing activities difficult, if not impossible, to perform. Many activities, while not falling into the "old-fashioned" agriculture category, are critical to driving customers to farms, maintaining farm profitability and maintaining land in agriculture. But most direct marketing activity is not a protected right under the Right to Farm Law. The NYS Farmers' Direct Marketing Association has done an excellent job of developing a model of zoning regulations, but this model needs to be incorporated into the Right to Farm Laws. This would help direct marketing farmers and farmers' markets to continue in to promote local agriculture and remain profitable.

Any funding that could be made available through a statewide food policy or through Assembly Bill A.2651 should focus on some key areas:

- Adding additional state dollars to the WIC and Seniors FMNP program, especially in light of the Federal cutbacks. This program provides coupons to low-income families and seniors to spend on fresh locally grown fruits and vegetables at farmers' markets. The availability of coupon sales make inner-city, low income neighborhood markets profitable for farms to set up at farmers' markets. Additional dollars put into this program could help to reach more families and allow additional markets to be developed in low income neighborhoods.
- Support local programs that mirror the FMNP program and provide farmers' market coupons to their local residents. An example of such a program is the Bronx District Public Health Office's (BDPHO) Farmers' Market Health Bucks Program. This gives nutritionally at-risk residents farmers' market coupons through their participation in nutrition and health programs offered by the BDPHO. They educate their residents on healthy diets and give them a reason to shop at the market and makes the market a profitable location for the farmers.
- Funding to help farmers coordinate efforts to pool products in order to cost-effectively bring their products into markets that are currently out of their individual reach – either as a result of distance, lack of distribution methods or insufficient quantities of product.
- A targeted Buy Local campaign. The Pride of New York program is under-funded. Their efforts could be significantly more effective at educating the public to buy local if they had a significant increase in their funding. It is crucial that consumers, institutional buyers, chefs, etc., are constantly reminded of the state's significant homegrown bounty and are encouraged to purchase local product.

- Additional dollars for the Farmers' Market Grant Program. This program is an excellent support program for farmers' markets. But with the number of markets exceeding 330, the program must select only a tiny percentage of the projects that apply for funding. By increasing the funding to this program, we can reach more markets each year and add marketing and promotional activity to the grant guidelines to help markets with consumer awareness campaigns.

In summary, a state food policy is essential to the support of local agriculture, as well as other nutritional goals. Developing a food policy council could be an effective means to carry out the work plan of such a policy. However, it is imperative that this council be free partisan politics. To that end, a food policy council should include members from non-profits, food and agricultural specialists and key industry people, who will be on an equal footing with governmental council members.

Diane Eggert
Executive Director





#43

TESTIMONY FOR THE TASK FORCE ON FOOD, FARM AND NUTRITION POLICY;
THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE; THE STANDING
COMMITTEE ON HEALTH; AND THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
SERVICES

MAY 16TH, 2005

MICHAEL F. BOPP, New York State Director of Advocacy

Obesity exacts an enormous toll on the State of New York each year, costing billions annually in lost productivity and health care costs, especially Medicaid. Those living below the poverty level suffer disproportionately from obesity-related chronic diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer, and live with a greater burden of food insufficiency.

In 2003, the American Cancer Society released the most comprehensive study to date on the relationship between excess body weight and cancer mortality. We found that body mass index (BMI) was significantly associated with higher death rates from 11 types of cancer in men, including liver and colon cancer, and 12 cancers in women, including uterine, kidney, cervical and breast cancer. Based on that study, we estimate current patterns of overweight and obesity in the United States could account for 1 in 7 cancer deaths in men and 1 in 5 in women.

The food supply being consumed in the US is providing us with nearly twice the calories we need. Mounting evidence suggests that we are increasingly living in environments that promote overeating of high sugar, high fat, and high calorie foods. At the same time, many communities do not have markets with fresh or affordable produce but have an abundance of heavily promoted fast food outlets. According to 2003 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) data on 23.5 % of reported eating 5 or more servings of fruit or vegetable a day,

The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) recently published a report documenting the preventative effect of vegetable and fruit consumption on cancer. The national 5 A Day program, a public-private partnership for nutrition education led by the National Cancer Institute, the Centers for Disease Control, the United States Department of Agriculture and numerous agricultural and voluntary health agencies and community based organizations to see results in its efforts to promote consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, and to enhance school lunch programs. That successful national model for collaboration can and should be replicated here in New York, with leading state agencies, agricultural associations and health groups engaged in nutritional policy and health promotion.

The American Cancer Society supports a comprehensive state food policy that complements and strengthens the State's efforts to fight obesity. The goals of such a policy should be to promote healthier diets and reduce food insecurity among NYS residents. The main strategy that should be

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pursued is to find new and creative ways to increase access to locally or regionally grown agricultural products with a focus on reaching lower socioeconomic groups in urban areas with poor access to fruits and vegetables. Legislation, regulation, and/or subsidies could help reduce economic and other barriers to establishing and maintaining farmers markets, consumer supported agriculture cooperatives, and urban markets that carry these products. In the community setting, nutrition access issues should be addressed by local and regional policy boards, which could evaluate project proposals, coordinate efforts, and overcome political and geographical barriers. ACS would recommend a variety of public health, nutrition, agriculture, community planning, and other representatives with limits on industry and trade groups to avoid conflicts of interest. The primary emphasis should be on making it easier for people to consume local fruits and vegetables rather than sustaining local agriculture although that would likely be an additional complimentary result.

In the school setting, there needs to be a more comprehensive approach to addressing the factors that contribute to poor nutrition and obesity among youth. The school environment needs to promote good nutrition by increasing access to fruits and vegetables while enhancing the quality of nutrition education and prohibiting food and beverage advertising. NYS has health education standards but we do not know if they are being met because there are no requirements for testing.

The American Cancer Society supports legislation requiring schools to establish nutritional standards for all school food service and school activities, including banning soda and non-nutritional snacks from school vending machines at all school levels.

In 2002, NYS passed legislation charging the Departments of Education and of Agriculture and Markets to facilitate the purchase of local produce by NYS schools and colleges. According to the NYS Farm to School web page, there are currently only 15 school districts out of over 700 that participate in the program. Although Cornell received a time-limited USDA grant to support the Farm to Schools program, what State resources are being dedicated to promote, disseminate, evaluate, and if appropriate to sustain the effort? Shouldn't this effort be part of a larger coordinated strategy to bring healthier foods into the schools by establishing strict nutrition standards for schools? Perhaps a Food Policy Board can help formulate and better coordinate a statewide strategy that spans various governmental agencies.

We endorse Assembly bill A.2651 in the belief that it would facilitate the development of useful local projects that increase access to local vegetables while empowering communities to identify and implement solutions to improving the community nutritional environment. However, a specific appropriation to support the program should be identified to avoid the risk that it may drain off resources from other health department programs. At such time as the Food Security Program is established at the DOH we also recommend a substantial evaluation component be incorporated to help assess project outcomes and identify best practices for future initiatives.



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May 16th, 2005

NYS Task Force on Food, Farm & Nutrition
Assembly Committee on Agriculture
New York State Food and Nutrition Policy Hearing

I am pleased to submit this written testimony to the Assembly Task Force on Food, Farm, and Nutrition, as well as the Assembly Agriculture, Health, and Social Services Committee, on behalf of New York Farm Bureau.

New York Farm Bureau (NYFB) is the state's largest general farm advocacy organization, whose mission is to "serve and strengthen agriculture". As such, our members have a strongly vested interest in improved nutrition and access to locally grown foods for all consumers. NYFB in the past several years has noticed an increased concern and attention paid by the Task Force on Food, Farm, & Nutrition, as well as the Assembly Agriculture Committee, on working with farmers to ensure that equal access is granted to NYS grown products that are purchased by state institutions and school districts. NYFB in particular appreciates the legislative enactment of the "Farm to School Act", which our members feel strongly has helped not only to raise awareness among school food administrators of locally grown produce, but has also helped meet the practical needs of matching available farm product with an interested school district.

While New York's agricultural heritage is quite strong, the industry itself has changed rapidly over the past decade, with more emphasis being placed by our farmer members on direct sale to consumers, production for the fresh market (as opposed to processing) and connecting to New York consumers. Unbeknownst to many New York residents, New York has a strong and vibrant fruit and vegetable industry, as well one of the largest dairy farm sectors in the nation. The recent acquisition of McCadam cheese by a farmer owned cooperative, AgriMark, as well as the increasing growth of other New York branded cheese and dairy products (Upstate Farms, for example) is encouraging to the future of the New York dairy industry.

Several changes have occurred in consumer attitudes which are resulting in increased optimism among the farm community. First, the development and placement of milk vending machines in certain school districts, spearheaded by Assembly Agriculture Committee Chair Bill Magee's efforts has demonstrated that students will make good nutritional choices when given an option of a healthy beverage that is attractively packaged and marketed. Second, the astounding success of McDonald's "apple dippers", produced with approximately 60% usage of New York apples and the quick introduction of another apple based salad at McDonalds has proven that a well known, nutritious commodity such as an apple, again packaged appropriately, can achieve great success in a mass commercial venue. For the first time, we have a fresh apple slice producer located in Keeseville, New York, who is interested in pursuing an apple slice bag specifically marketed for school districts. The trend among food processors to investigate consumer friendly, and kid friendly, packaging of healthy fresh fruits and vegetables will go a long way in allowing farmers to reach directly to the consumer and improve both farm profitability and consumer nutrition.

New York Farm Bureau has strong policy supporting additional placement of milk, and fruit and vegetable vending machines in schools. Our members also feel strongly that more schools should simply cancel existing contracts, or refuse to renew contracts with soda vending machine providers in favor of healthy vending options. Farm sales to state institutions like the prison system have been more inconsistent, with apple products leading the way but reported difficulties with the sale of vegetables and other commodities.

While the advent of consumer friendly packaging of nutritious goods has paved the way for what will hopefully become a life long change in consumer eating habits (especially for children), there still remains much work to be done to increase consumption of fresh fruits, vegetables, and dairy products that are locally grown. Farmers' markets and Greenmarkets have been and will continue to play an excellent role in connecting a consumer, particularly an urban resident, to a local farm but it is an impossibility to expect either every farm or every consumer to utilize this marketing channel. As a specific policy item, our members have found tremendous benefit from the Farmers Market Nutrition Program, although we would also like to see the inclusion of eggs, honey, and cider within the items eligible for purchase. It is extremely important for New York farmers to do a better job accessing urban markets, particularly those in New York City. At one point, farmers in New York were selling more apples to the United Kingdom and other countries than we were into New York City. This is a trend that needs to be reversed.

Farmers frequently face difficulties in marketing products into New York City. Hunts Point, while providing an excellent market outlet that is utilized by many of our members, lacks the refrigeration capacity and ease of access to trucks that would make the terminal market a more viable option for more of our members. It is also noteworthy that in an age when more consumers are eating many meals a week out of the home environment, there are few food warehouses in New York that have specific New York produce sections for restaurant chef's to find local produce and farm products. In addition, the relatively smaller volume of fresh foods and farm products from one farm may make it less profitable for a farm to send a truck of produce to a high volume wholesaler.

In short, New York farmers need to become better organized, most likely through the usage of cooperative ventures in order to compile sufficient volumes of produce and farm products to make accessing the massive New York City market economical. Similarly, New York City consumers need to start demanding fresh foods from locally produced farms from their supermarkets, bodegas, and restaurants. New York Farm Bureau appreciates the recent feasibility study conducted by the Department of Agriculture and Markets on the construction of a New York food warehouse in New York City, and supports the eventual construction of such a facility.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on behalf of New York Farm Bureau. Our members are very encouraged by recent trends in packaging and health consciousness, and strongly believe that increasing access to fresh, locally grown, nutritious fruits, vegetables, and dairy products will help promote better health for all New Yorkers. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Respectfully Submitted,
Julie C. Suarez, Manager of Governmental Relations
New York Farm Bureau

**Testimony for NYS Assembly Task Force on Food, Farm and Nutrition Policy
Public Hearing on "New York State food and nutrition policies"**

Hearing date: May 16, 2005, Albany

Testimony prepared by:

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Who I Am:

I am a Senior Extension Associate in the Division of Nutritional Sciences at Cornell University. Since joining the DNS faculty in 1993, I have developed an extension and applied research program in the area of community-based food systems. In the mid-1990s I developed the only regional food guide in the U.S., the Northeast Regional Food Guide, which promotes healthful dietary patterns through selection of locally produced fresh and processed foods. I developed and direct the Cornell Farm to School Program, which develops resources for food service directors, farmers and other stakeholders and provides technical assistance to communities wishing to establish or strengthen farm to school connections. My comments are in support of developing a Food Policy plan through the mechanism of a State Food Policy Council. I therefore am addressing the following:

1. Does the State need a comprehensive, coordinated Food Policy plan? Is there a need for legislation to establish comprehensive State Food Policy? What issues and goals would need to be addressed by such a plan?
2. Is there a need for a State Food Policy Council? How should such a Council be organized? Does it need to be part of State government? If yes, how should it be established, who should be members, and what powers should it have? Is there a need for local or regional policy councils?

Need for a coordinated Food Policy Plan and a Food Policy Council

Several public issues related to nutrition, food and agriculture are converging today: child obesity, hunger and food insecurity, and declining agricultural competitiveness. Comprehensive state level policy approaches hold great promise for addressing these problems in an integrated way to assure long term and sustainable solutions.

Several food and agriculture policy questions relevant at the state and local levels cannot, or perhaps should not be addressed at the federal level through national agriculture or health policy. These questions also may be entertained to a limited extent within individual state departments an integrated dialogue leading to comprehensive solutions and strategies requires cross-agency communication, cooperation and coordination that is unlikely and difficult to achieve, and perhaps reward.

Such questions might include:

- Where does the food we eat come from?
- How much of the food that we eat in New York State was actually grown and processed in the state?
- How much of the kinds of food that we need to eat to support health and prevent disease do our farms actually produce? How much of our food needs should come from our state's agriculture and food system?
- Does the state make an effort to buy food that is produced locally?
- To what extent do state or local officials working on agricultural and food issues, such as food assistance and economic development, or food safety, know each other and coordinate their efforts?
- To what extent do our public schools and State University of New York system use food produced and processed in the state? What would make it easier for them to do so?

Because many of the health and nutrition problems we see today are inextricably linked to the agriculture and food system, the most effective strategies will come out of an officially sanctioned body organized to look at the whole. Since food policy councils typically include representatives from key segments of a state or local food system, and selected public officials, the ideas and recommendations that come out of such a body generally reflect engagement of all components of the food system – consumers, farmers, grocers, chefs, food processors, distributors, hunger advocates, educators, food service personnel, and government – in a common discussion to examine how the local or state food system works and how it could be made better.

A New York State food policy council would have the capacity to integrate discussions of food, nutrition and health issues with agriculture issues while addressing the particular needs of consumers and farmers in the state. In order to create a stronger connection between consumers and farmers to improve health, food security and agricultural competitiveness, a state food policy is needed. State or local food policy constitutes “any decision made by a government institution which shapes the type of food used or available - as well as their cost, or which influences the opportunities for farmers and employees, or effects the food choices available to consumers” (Hamilton, 2003). Since federal programs can at times constitute an obstacle to the development of local and state agriculture and food systems (such as the provision of “free” commodities that are not locally produced to public schools for school meals programs), state policy is needed to provide a counterweight in support of local and state food systems.

The New York Agriculture and Food System

The past 100 years have brought tremendous change in the agriculture and food system of New York. A century ago, the grow value of all agricultural commodities in New York put the state among the top four states in the nation. Today, NYS is 25th in gross agricultural sales, and the state's agriculture is far less diverse (Lyson, 1999). There are several gaps in what our farms produce and what consumers need to support health and prevent diet-related chronic diseases.

In two reports that I co-authored with colleagues at Cornell three agriculture, food system and health questions were addressed (Peters et al, 2003; Peters et al, 2003). First, how does New York State vegetable and fruit production compare with the consumption by New Yorkers? Second, how does production and consumption of vegetables and fruits compare with the recommendations on the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Guide Pyramid? Finally, what implications, if any, do these comparisons have for New York State agriculture?

A crop-by-crop comparison revealed that New York produces a handful of vegetable crops (e.g., beets, cabbage, onions, pumpkins, snap beans, and sweet corn) in quantities that exceed the estimated in-state demand. But for all others the state produced far less of the vegetables that are consumed by New Yorkers. The deficit is even greater when taking into account that current consumption is lower than recommended levels. For example, New York is a minor producer of the dark green leafy and deep yellow vegetables, producing only 12 percent of the recommended number of servings (Peters et al, 2002).

The situation for fruit production, consumption and dietary guidelines is similar. Our analysis revealed that a few fruits (fresh apples, processed apples, and processed cherries) are produced in quantities that exceeded the estimated in-state demand. Overall, however, we estimated that New York produced enough fruit to provide 18 percent of all the fruit New Yorkers consume plus 256 million pounds of “surplus” of the aforementioned three commodities. Again, for current fruit consumption (1.9 servings per person per day) to meet the recommended level, New Yorkers would need to increase consumption by 63 percent. New York harvests enough fruit to provide 20% of this recommended intake, but production is not evenly distributed between the two fruit subgroups - “citrus, melons, and berries” and the catchall category “other fruit”. Almost all in-state production comes from fruits in the “other fruits” category (e.g. apples, grapes, and pears) while the production of melons and berries is insignificant relative to the recommended intake (Peters et al, 2003).

While we did not conduct similar analyses for other food groups – dairy, meats, and grains – such comparisons would shed light on the correspondence between food production in the state and food needs for health of its population. The critical policy question is, “how much of the food needs of the state should be supplied by the state’s agriculture?” Clearly, reliance on other regions for most of some commodities, such as grains for example, makes a certain amount of sense since other areas are far better suited for growing them, and the energy balance for shipping is more favorable. Further, there are some crops for which there is high consumer demand (bananas, for example are America’s favorite fruit) but no chance of producing locally given our particular climatic variability. A state food policy council would be the ideal body to entertain questions about the extent to which our state should depend on other regions and countries for each individual food crop.

While federal policy play a central role in creating the economic environment for much of agriculture, state and local policy decisions are just as important for addressing issues directly impacting farmers and consumers. Further, sustainability will not likely be

achieved if only resource issues, like soil and water quality, are considered both the human and social issues of how food is produced and marketed are ignored. Issues related to opportunities for farmers to produce and sell what they grow and the ability of communities, both local and regional, to support farmers are important and ones that a food policy council at the state level would be well-positioned to entertain.

The newly formed coalition of state partners that make up the NYS Farm to School Committee provides a useful model of multi-agency representation for an effective state food policy council. This committee includes a coalition at the core with representation from NYS School Food Service Association, Cornell University, NY Ag in the Classroom, FoodChange in NYC, NYDAM, NYSED, NYSDOH, Office of General Services, NYS Assembly Taskforce, and NY Farms!

The broader committee has representation from commodity organization, and other food and agriculture organizations. We have organized this committee and core coalition to represent the diverse and interdependent interests that need to be considered to build effective and sustainable farm to school connections across the state.

In closing, I believe that the agriculture and food system, including consumers, of New York State would be well-served by the establishment of a state food policy council.

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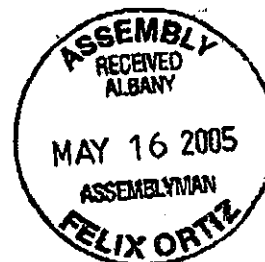
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George E. Pataki
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Robert Dear
Commissioner

May 13, 2005



Honorable Felix Ortiz
NYS Assembly
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Albany, NY 12248

Dear Assemblyman Ortiz:

Thank you for your recent invitation to present testimony at the Assembly Hearing on New York State Food and Nutrition Policy. As you know, the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) has administrative and general policy oversight of the Food Stamp Program (FSP), the Food Stamp Nutrition and Education Program (FSNEP) and FSP Outreach. While OTDA is not able to present oral testimony at the May 16, 2005 hearing, I would like to take this opportunity to highlight New York State's notable Food Assistance-related accomplishments over the past several years. It is worth noting that these achievements would not have been possible without the utilization of a coordinated and comprehensive partnership at the federal, state and local community levels.

As evidenced by the attached listing, OTDA has been extremely proactive in improving the food security, nutritional choices and overall health of needy New Yorkers. We would, however, like to particularly bring to your attention New York State's efforts in regard to our federally mandated State Nutrition Action Plan (SNAP). Under the Department of Health's administration, New York State has implemented a series of collaborative efforts with other state agencies designed to:

- Develop partnerships and collaboration to prevent obesity
- Promote fruit and vegetable consumption among low-income families.

One of the initiatives in New York's SNAP utilizes Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) dollars to pilot the Hispanic Health Initiative. This is a program targeting Hispanic youth, since they have been identified as the highest risk population for obesity and the resultant health risks. Because of its concentration of Hispanic children, the program is being piloted in Martin Luther King School in Rochester. This is a health lifestyle promotion program that includes healthy, affordable foods, coupled with fun and cardiovascular activities. Participating children attend a 10-week program on healthy lifestyles. The program is a collaboration between the Monroe County FSNEP project, the Rochester City School District

"providing temporary assistance for permanent change"

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and the physical education department in Martin Luther King School. The program began in October 2004 and is expected to run through the current school year reaching students in grades 2 through 6. This program has been selected to be highlighted at the 2nd National Nutrition Education Conference held in Alexandria, Virginia in September. OTDA is also exploring the feasibility of starting a similar program in the Utica City School District in the FFY 2006 Food Stamp Nutrition Education Plan. FSNEP funds will be used to target 7,800 low-income parents and children participating in child care programs currently funded by the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Six week nutrition education programs will be provided to parents and children. Additionally, nutritionists will work with the day care center staff to assess their nutrition and physical activity environment to promote positive behaviors in eating fresh fruits and vegetables and organizing physical activity.

New York State has also opted to use Food Stamp Nutrition Education (FSNE) funds to purchase the "Mobile Kitchen/Billboard." This mobile kitchen is in actuality a mobile home with full kitchen facilities. Registered dietitians travel throughout the State in this vehicle visiting food pantries and food banks providing instructions on good nutrition and cooking practices. They also offer referrals to ongoing nutrition education sessions. This is seen as the "first door" contact with clients.

New York State's annual FSNEP Plan targets all schools across the State with 80% or more of the student population in receipt of free/reduced lunch. Trained nutritionists and dietitians provide nutrition education/physical activity initiatives in these schools in an effort to increase students' knowledge of the essentials of human nutrition and the relationship among eating practices, fitness and health.

I sincerely regret that the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance is unable to present at the NYS Assembly Hearing on New York State Food and Nutrition Policy. I trust, however, that our accomplishments speak for themselves in regard to the direction of the Food Stamp Program in New York State.

Sincerely,



Robert Doar

Attachment

NEW YORK STATE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Program access in the Food Stamp Program (FSP) has been an important priority for the NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) for a number of years. Equal emphasis has been focused on payment accuracy.

While our efforts have been Statewide in scope, very significant State and local resources have been focused on the NYC FS application process. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has also conducted repeated compliance reviews in various NYC centers. To date, our combined commitment to improvement has resulted in meaningful changes to both the eligibility and benefit delivery process and program participation.

Program Access and Outreach

- NYS Food Stamp participation has increased steadily during the past three calendar years (CY 2002 - CY 2004), in both NYC and the Rest of State. During the twelve calendar months of CY 2004 there was a net increase of 149,028 FS households and 203,229 individuals. NYS Food Stamp program participants have increased by 449,442 since December 2001. This represents a 34% increase.
- The most recent reauthorization of the FSP by Congress enacted eight significant simplification options. NYS was the first state in the nation to implement all of the available options. Implementation was accomplished effective October 1, 2002, the earliest date allowed by Congress.
- A Statewide program is underway to increase Food Stamp participation among some of the state's most vulnerable residents - elderly and disabled people who receive federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and live alone. The New York State Nutrition Improvement Project (NYSNIP) will automatically open Food Stamp cases for these disabled and aged individuals who traditionally have had low Food Stamp participation rates. During 2004, as a result of this project, New York State automatically opened over 92,000 new Food Stamp cases, more than 56,000 of those cases in New York City. **This will make NYS and NYC national leaders in serving this vulnerable population.**
- Additionally, in cooperation with DOH and OTDA, New York is automatically providing higher medical deductions in the Food Stamp Program for all elderly EPIC/Medicare prescription drug benefit cardholders who are also Food Stamp recipients. This will result in higher monthly Food Stamp benefits for thousands of vulnerable elderly New Yorkers.
- Automated separate FS determination for Temporary Assistance (TA) and Safety Net Assistance (SNA) closings began in July 2003. This is a major improvement that has resulted in a significant program access enhancement.

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- NYS was the first state in the nation to implement the Food Stamp Transitional Benefit Option allowed by the federal government. This is an automated process in NYC that ensures that a household whose Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) case is closed will continue to receive FS for five months after case closing. Over 30% of families leaving TANF in NYC receive the transitional food stamp benefit.
- NYS received permission from USDA to automatically add newborns to the Food Stamp case of the parent(s) in NYC. This is an automated match with vital statistic records and ensures that the nutritional needs for the newborn child can be met with minimal client and local district administrative burden. Since implementation in September 2004, about 300 families each week have their Food Stamp benefit amounts increased to include their newborn children.
- Each of the Job Centers in NYC has a designated employee acting as a Food Stamp Liaison to ensure that proper attention is given to households transitioning from TA to self-sufficiency. Sixty percent of former recipients of temporary assistance are eligible for, and continue to receive, Food Stamp benefits two months after leaving cash assistance in NYC.
- Pursuant to federal restoration of Food Stamp eligibility for certain qualified aliens, approximately 10,000 alien individuals were activated in an automated fashion during 2003.
- New York State developed a simplified application form for households applying only for food stamp benefits to make the eligibility easier. This form is available on the Internet in English, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, and Russian languages.
- New York State is committing nearly \$3 million for the Nutrition Outreach and Education Program (NOEP), providing local community agencies with funding for Food Stamp outreach activities.
- New York State is also working on a \$3 million public/private partnership with the city and the United Way of NYC to do Food Stamp outreach in all five boroughs.
- New York State distributed thousands of Food Stamp brochures and informational posters to senior citizens centers, food banks, libraries, and other community agencies.
- More than 400,000 plastic handled grocery bags bearing the OTDA hotline number have been distributed to food banks across the State.
- In cooperation with the State Department of Labor, the Food Stamp toll-free telephone number was included with unemployment checks.

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- Both NYS OTDA and USDA FNS continuously monitor NYC Food Stamp program operations, and work collaboratively with the NYC HRA toward providing unfettered access to the Food Stamp program for eligible households that want to apply for benefits.
- NYC HRA is testing model Job Centers to improve customer service and program delivery.

Payment Accuracy and Customer Service

The New York State Food Stamp payment error rate is currently at an historic low. We believe the full implementation of the NYS Nutrition Initiative Project (NYSNIP) will ultimately have a further positive impact on the error rate. The automation of benefits, based on federal SSA data, will have significant QC protection and alleviate the worker caused errors that have traditionally contributed to our Statewide error rate.

Geographic Analysis	Current FFY 2004 10/03-9/04 State - Reported FS Error Rate	FFY 2003 10/02 - 9/03 State - Reported FS Error Rate	FFY 2002 10/01-9/02 Actual FS Error Rate
National	5.51	6.29	7.97
Statewide	4.12	4.75	7.39
New York City	3.92	4.34	8.31
NYC - TA FS	5.07	6.72	13.41
NYC - NTA FS	2.90	2.20	3.23
Rest of State	4.45	5.45	6.09
Big 8	3.16	6.06	6.27
Other ROS	5.88	4.61	5.89

Negative Error Rate

The negative error rate, the percentage of cases that have not been appropriately denied or closed, is a measure of customer service to the Food Stamp applicant/recipient population. Very significant improvement has been realized in this measure over the past three years. The Statewide negative case error rate for October-September 2004 was 3.78%. New York City was

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3.99% and Rest of State was 3.61%. The national error rate for the same time period was 5.08%. The negative sample is also subject to FNS sub sample and re-review similar to the FNS re-review for active cases. Historically, the New York State negative error rate is increased by federal regression analysis by 8 percentage points. We are hopeful that the final adjustment for FFY 2004 will result in a negative error rate of less than 10%.

Ongoing efforts by the State and New York City to improve the documentation retention and recovery processes continue to be reflected in the reduction of invalid negative case action findings. For the first eleven months of Federal Fiscal Year 2004, approximately thirty-nine percent (39%) of error cases were attributed to lack of documentation compared to sixty-three percent (63%) for the first eleven months of Federal Fiscal Year 2003.