

A Community Food Security Agenda for New York

**A Report by the Hunger Action Network of New York State
www.hungeractionnys.org**



**Mark Dunlea
Sheila McCarthy
Susannah Pasquantonio**

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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.