

OVER \$30,000 RAISED IN SUPPORT OF FARMER FLOOD RELIEF THROUGH RAISE THE ROOF FUND

Since mid-September, staff from the Watershed Agricultural Council have provided administrative support to a group of Catskill region farmers working to raise funds for farms impacted by late summer flooding. It's been an incredible experience to participate in, as hundreds of community members and a dozen local organizations have contributed over \$30,000 to the fund. The local businesses and organizations who provided contributions included Catskill Harvest Market, Slow Food Upper Delaware River Valley, The Catskill Center for Conservation & Development - Lark in the Park Fund, Heather Ridge Farm, The Ashokan Center, Story Laurie, the Center for Agricultural Development & Entrepreneurship, The Livestock Foundation, Gowns for Greenbacks, Catskill Heritage Alliance, Kiwanis Club of Delhi and the Omega Institute.

Morgan George from Sherman Hill Farmstead in Franklin initiated the effort and has continued to be a leader in promoting and distributing funds to farmers in need. Morgan gathered a review panel of local farmers and community members that decides fund allocations.



Bucket raffle prizes drawn at the Raise the Roof Fundraiser on September 18 at the Hamden Inn in Hamden, NY. The event alone raised over \$8,000.

A first round of \$15,000 in awards was distributed last month. A second round of flood relief funding is currently available for Catskill region farmers through the Raise the Roof Fund. These small grants are available to farms that suffered flood damage or product loss during Hurricane Irene and/or Tropical Storm Lee. The second round of funding is open through January 15, 2012. Applications may be obtained from the Scholarships & Grants section of the Pure Catskills webpage online at www.buypurecatskills.com or by contacting Challey Comer at ccomer@nycwatershed.org or (607) 865-7090.

The Raise the Roof Fund is managed by a committee of local farmers and community members with administrative support from the Watershed Agricultural Council. Distribution of funding is the decision of the fund committee. One-hundred percent of donations collected have been awarded through the fund. General inquiries about the fundraising effort may be directed to Morgan George of Sherman Hill Farmstead at (607) 829-6886 or Target409@Hotmail.com.

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Hikers headed to Giant Ledge gather sponsorships from friends who support their trek while dressed in formalwear. This group of hikers dedicated their "greenbacks" to farmer relief efforts. Photo courtesy of Beth Adams.



PURE CATSKILLS UPDATE WINTER 2011



A wreath of hemlock, juniper, rhododendron and white pine from Karin Ursula Landscapes in West Kill, Ulster County.

As we wrap up another year, we'd like to thank our business members and organizational partners. We're proud to have participated in the launch of new initiatives this year. These efforts rely on the support of farmers, educators and volunteers across the Catskills.

Of particular importance this year were the launch of Catskills FarmLink and Catskills CRAFT, the beginning farmer networking and education group. Programs to support beginning farmers have been increasing nationally in recent years, and we are pleased to bring them to our region through partnerships with farmers and organizations.

Pure Catskills is a Buy Local campaign and economic initiative of the Watershed Agricultural Council. The WAC is funded by New York City Department of Environmental Protection, U.S. Department of Agriculture and other federal, foundation and private sources. The WAC is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.

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INAUGURAL SULLIVAN COUNTY AG SUMMIT STARTS A COUNTYWIDE CONVERSATION

By Jennifer Mall, Sullivan County Division of Planning and Environmental Management

The 2011 Agricultural Summit, held on November 28 at the Villa Roma Resort and Conference Center, brought together approximately 200 farmers, agri-business people, agency and organization representatives. The Summit featured an array of local, regional and national speakers, and a series of workshops on various agriculture-related topics. The day's overarching goals were to identify the biggest challenges facing Sullivan County agriculture and, to identify solutions for overcoming those challenges. Some high-priority solutions included creating a "one-stop shop" for assistance with business planning, funding and financing, and other available resources; fostering collaboration among farmers to prioritize initiatives and leverage political and economic power; focusing on sustainable energy practices; and advocating for agriculture within the political system.

The Summit was a collaborative effort of the County of Sullivan, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Pure Catskills, the Sullivan County Farm Network, Catskill Mountainkeeper, FarmHearts, Sullivan Renaissance, the Sullivan County Economic Development Corporation, SUNY Sullivan, the New York Farm Bureau, and several farms and businesses. As an outcome of the Summit, the Sullivan County Economic Development Corporation has created an agriculture subcommittee, which will build upon this collaboration and work to implement priority initiatives. Together with the Sullivan County Division of Planning and Environmental Management, the subcommittee will meet in January 2012, to prioritize its work based on the Summit outcomes, and to develop a reporting and feedback system to stay connected with Summit participants and other agriculture stakeholders. For more information on the Summit and next steps, contact the Sullivan County Division of Planning and Environmental Management at (845) 807-0532.



Recently elected Sullivan County Legislator Cindy Kurpil Geiger inspires the audience with an address about agricultural initiatives in the county.



Maria Grimaldi, Catskill-Hudson Valley region representative from the Northeast Organic Farming Association of NY, fields questions during the tradeshow.

SUNY DELHI OFFERS FOOD SERVICE TRAINING OPPORTUNITY

The Center for Business and Community Services at SUNY Delhi is hosting a ServSafe Food Safety Certification course on Monday, January 16 from 8 am to 4:30 pm. The ServSafe Food Safety Certification program is the most widely accepted food safety program among local, state, and federal health departments. Participants are required to successfully complete the final examination in order to receive certification. Certification is valid for five years. Protect your customers and your business. The course fee is \$139. For more information, visit www.delhi.edu/bcs/classroom_training.php or call (607) 746-4545.

UPCOMING EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

CATSKILL REGIONAL DAIRY, LIVESTOCK & GRAZING CONFERENCE

Registration is now open for this annual production-based conference. Taking place on January 12 from 10 am to 3:30 pm at SUNY Delhi the day will include workshops, a keynote address and a luncheon. Workshop topics will range from management intensive grazing to homegrown grain for dairy producers. Non-dairy livestock producers will also benefit from grazing education in addition to organic livestock production and targeted marketing workshops. The registration fee is \$25 before January 6 and \$35 thereafter. Contact Kim Holden of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Delaware County at (607) 865-7090 or visit www.nyc-watershed.org to download the registration form.



CATSKILLS TIME ORIENTATION POTLUCK

Catskills Time is a community-based system for free and fair labor exchange, part of an international decades-old time banking tradition. A local exchange system designed to inspire trust and reciprocity, Catskills Time aims to bridge people from different backgrounds by providing the opportunity for interaction through the exchange of services. On Sunday, January 15 from 3 to 5 pm, Catskills Time will host an Orientation Potluck at Stone & Thistle Farm, 1211 Kelso Road, East Meredith. Prospective members are encouraged to attend with questions on the project while current members are asked to consider bringing a small dish to share. For more information on Catskills Time, visit www.catskillstime.org or email catskillstime@gmail.com.

CHEESEMOBILE FOR SALE

Sullivan County is accepting expressions of interest for the purchase of its mobile cheesemaking unit. County and federal agencies worked with local farmers to design and build an affordable, functional, inspected, modular cheese plant that could be moved among several farms to enable those farmers to learn the art of cheesemaking.

In use for over five years by local farmers, Cheese Mobile is now for sale. The County seeks to divest itself of

the unit for financial and administrative reasons. The facility is built inside a 12' x 36' trailer and includes a two-axle heavy duty trailer; combination cheese vat/pasteurizer; stainless steel work table; stainless steel sink, drain table, and cart; compressor; evaporator; HEPA filtering unit and controls; oil boiler and tank; ultraviolet water purifier; water heater; roll-in stainless steel refrigerator; and related appurtenances. Prospective purchasers can see the Mobile unit on January 4 from noon to 2 pm. To participate in the viewing, or to ask questions about the mobile cheesemaking unit, contact the Sullivan County Division of Planning and Environmental Management at (845) 807-0532.

CONESVILLE FARMERS' MARKET IN THE WORKS FOR 2012 GROWING SEASON

Planning is underway for a farmers' market in the village of Conesville (Schoharie County) for 2012. Community members are currently conducting a survey of farmers and residents to assess the feasibility of the effort. To complete the survey or for more information, contact Linda Szeliga at lindas1253@localnet.com.

ONE YEAR OF FREE ONLINE MARKETING OFFERED TO FLOOD-DAMAGED FARMS

Was your farm or food business impacted by the recent flooding? If so, FarmPlate.com wants to help get you growing again with a free year of online marketing. FarmPlate's mission is to help sustainable food businesses expand their markets. Upgrading your FarmPlate profile provides an easy and effective way to promote your business to FarmPlate's highly targeted consumer audience. To claim your upgraded profile, register at FarmPlate.com. Then, contact Kaitlin Haskins at khaskins@farmplate.com.

SAVE THE DATE! THE FARM TO MARKET CONNECTION IS HAPPENING MARCH 4

We've listened to your feedback and moved up the date of our annual event this year! The location will remain the same at the CVI Building in Liberty. Keep your eyes peeled for the registration brochure in next month's mail.