

NESAWG NEWS

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NESAWG Partners with Just Food as New Fiscal Sponsor

As an unincorporated association, NESAWG partnered with the New England Small Farm Institute (NESFI) as its "host organization" since the network's founding in 1992. Effective July 1, 2009 Just Food took over as NESAWG's fiscal sponsor.

NESAWG is grateful for NESFI's support over the course of sixteen years. As NESAWG's host and fiscal sponsor, NESFI managed NESAWG's finances and provided administrative support. NESFI's executive director, Judy Gillan, represented NESFI on the NESAWG Steering Committee and served as NESAWG treasurer. NESAWG especially appreciates Judy's thoughtful contributions over the years.

NESAWG is extremely fortunate to have Just Food as its new fiscal sponsor. Just Food, located in New York City, is a nonprofit organization that focuses on developing a just and sustainable food system in the New York City region. Just Food was founded in 1994; it grew directly out of the work of its founder, Kathy Lawrence, with NESAWG. Just Food is a vibrant, food and farming systems-oriented organization that will bring new competencies and opportunities to NESAWG.

Fiscal Sponsorship: What, Why and How?

The early 1990's -- when NESAWG was founded -- were a time of uncertainty about what was often called "fiscal agency." Increasingly, groups wished to conduct charitable programs without incorporating and obtaining specific 501(c)(3) tax exemption. And, (c)(3) organizations were taking

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NESAWG 2008 Meeting – in 2009!

This year, NESAWG's Resource Harvest and annual meeting will be held... next year! NESAWG is pleased to partner with Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA) to co-hold our annual events. PASA's 18th annual Farming for the Future conference will be held February 5-7, 2009 at the Penn Stater Conference Center, PASA's usual venue in State College, PA. PASA anticipates over 2,000 attendees, making this the largest sustainable agriculture conference in the Northeast.

NESAWG will conduct a full-day pre-conference training on advocacy and regionalism on Thursday, February 5th. This will be an intensive, hands-on workshop to build the skills of organizations and individuals who want to be more effective policy advocates. We'll also explore regionalism as a policy analysis and advocacy framework, and focus on the food and farming system

characteristics and needs of the Northeast region.

Following this and other pre-conference trainings, PASA will offer over 80 workshops over two days, along with plenary speakers, entertainment, dozens of displays, and PASA's famous Friday night grazing banquet.

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on the “host” role, thereby accepting and managing grants and donations to support such projects. The agreements were wide-ranging and sometimes vulnerable to questions about their legitimacy.

In the ensuing decade, the term “fiscal sponsorship” has become the more appropriate label and the phenomenon has become “common, widespread and quite reputable,” according to Gregory Colvin in *Fiscal Sponsorship: Six Ways to Do It Right*. (2005, Study Center Press.)

Fiscal sponsorship is an affiliation between an unincorporated group or project and a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides such groups or projects with the benefits of tax-exempt status. It has become a popular ancillary activity for public charities, and in fact, several nonprofit organizations specifically offer fiscal sponsorship among their services. For example, Third Sector New England (www.tsne.org) serves as fiscal sponsor for The Carrot Project, a NESAWG member. TSNE's services include capacity building, HR support and compliance assistance. Community foundations, arts foundations and universities often support projects by serving as fiscal sponsors



NESAWG's new fiscal sponsor

The Tides Center is the nation's largest fiscal sponsor of progressive social change initiatives (www.tidescenter.org/fiscal-sponsorship/index.html). It states, “While practiced with different models and for various missions, at the most fundamental level, fiscal sponsors are nonprofits that enable the movement of resources from funders and donors to projects, activities, ideas, and organizations that share the fiscal sponsor's mission.” Sometimes fiscal sponsorship is especially suited to a short-lived project.

There are legitimate reasons why a group would not want to become its own 501(c)(3) organization. In the

case of NESAWG, it has always intended, in the sage words of founding member Judy Gillan, to “sit lightly on the landscape.” This means not creating burdensome organizational infrastructure – another competing mouth to feed. As a network, NESAWG focuses on supporting, coordinating and catalyzing groups and actions rather than conducting direct programs. This is another reason why fiscal sponsorship makes sense for NESAWG. At the same time, NESAWG's work attracts donors that would not be able to contribute to it without the tax-exempt umbrella.

Fiscal sponsorship is not a casual relationship. Organizations that might consider sponsoring one or more entities should carefully weigh the pros and cons, as Just Food has done, before entering into an agreement -- always in writing. Shared mission and organizational capacity are among the considerations.

In addition to receiving and managing funds, fiscal sponsors can and do offer other support services such as payroll, accounting, office space, and technical assistance – either for a fee or at no cost. There are several variations on the fiscal sponsorship model. Selecting and adapting the right model is crucial to the success of the relationship. The Colvin book and the Tides Center are excellent resources.

Groups considering becoming fiscal sponsors or seeking fiscal sponsorship are encouraged to contact NESAWG. We'll help with making decisions and crafting agreements.

NESAWG NEWS

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NESAWG wants to hear from you. Send your news and article ideas to P.O. Box 11, Belchertown, MA, 01077 or e-mail to: nesawg@nesawg.org.

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In addition, NESAWG will hold its annual meeting, open as always to all interested comers. As a partner and co-sponsor of PASA's conference, we have a great opportunity to let people know about NESAWG, and to showcase the amazing work of PASA to the NESAWG network.

So mark your 2009 calendar and stay tuned for more information.

New Project Promotes "Good Food for All" in Southern New England

The intersection among food, agriculture and health and is fertile ground for community development projects. An exciting new project aims to strengthen local and regional markets for farm products while improving access to and consumption of good, regional food for vulnerable populations in urban and rural Massachusetts and Connecticut.

With a one-year planning grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture(CISA) is partnering with NESAWG and others to conduct research and planning focused on the western counties of the two-state region -- from rural Franklin County, MA to urban centers including Springfield, Holyoke, Hartford and New Haven.



The project team is investigating the region's food system, with a focus on retail and institutional outlets and the relationships critical to getting food from farm to market, in order to improve channels for delivering good food to residents. It is working with community members to better understand the food-related habits and needs of lower-income families, and assess existing models for effective marketing and communications to

these communities. In addition, the project team will set the stage for an innovative, targeted marketing and wellness campaign.

Margaret Christie, CISA's Special Projects Director and Kathy Ruhf, NESAWG Coordinator, serve as project co-directors. According to them, the strength of this project lies in its partners. They include Big Y World Class Markets, a family owned, regional supermarket chain with 59 stores in Massachusetts and Connecticut, and Baystate Health Systems, a regional health care system in western Massachusetts with three hospitals and 9,000 employees.



Other key partners are: Red Tomato (Massachusetts); City Seed (New Haven, CT); and the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts. Representatives from local community groups such as Springfield's Stone Soul, Inc. and Partners for a Healthier Community, Inc. join Health Care Without Harm, and the University of Massachusetts School of Nutrition on the project team.

Together, project team members are studying the challenges and opportunities surrounding the promotion good, regional food. They will examine the healthy, green, fair and affordable dimensions of good food, oversee on-the-ground research and develop criteria to evaluate findings and progress toward a shared vision. At the end of this one-year planning phase, the team will produce a strategic plan for continued work.

For NESAWG, this is a marvelous opportunity to foster – and learn from – on-the-ground regional food system development initiatives. For more information about this project, contact Margaret Christie (Margaret@buylocalfood.com) or Kathy Ruhf (nesawg@nesawg.org).

Farm Bill Update

What was commonly known as the “2007 Farm Bill” stretched into 2008 before passing both houses of Congress this past spring. The development of federal agricultural policy is said to be “more evolutionary than revolutionary” and the latest Farm Bill proved true to form.

Although there was no significant reform in the bill’s mammoth commodity title, there was a lot of evolution in other areas including a number of program areas critical to the Northeast. In the coming weeks and months, NESAWG will be taking a closer look at the outcomes of the Farm Bill as they apply to the Northeast and our priorities.

Much important work still lies ahead as we move from the bill’s passage into the complexities and opportunities surrounding implementation of the law. To help advocates NESAWG will produce a “Northeast Farm Bill User’s Guide.” Look for it this fall.

NESAWG

consultant, Larry Dixon, and NESAWG staff and colleagues will pull together information in user-friendly formats to explain what’s in the law, why it’s important to the Northeast, and what you can do next. In the meantime, here are some 2008 Farm Bill highlights:

Conservation Title:

The new Farm Bill offers a \$5.3 billion net increase over 10 years in mandatory conservation spending of which \$3.8 billion falls within the 5-year life of the new Farm Bill. Included among these increases are the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) — now the Farmland Protection Program —

whose funding will rise from \$97 million to \$200 million a year in 2012. The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) will also be expanded, going from \$1.2 billion to \$1.75 billion in 2012.

Milk Income Loss Contract (MILC):

The Farm Bill extends MILC to 2012 and includes a feed cost adjuster for Class two, three and four milk. The cap on annual milk production for MILC payments has also increased from 2.4 million pounds (equivalent to a 130-cow herd) to 2.98 million pounds (to a 165-cow herd) meaning

that more Northeast dairy farms will qualify.

Specialty Crop Provisions:

The Farm Bill’s new Specialty Crops title will assist Northeast producers of organic and horticultural crops such as fruits and vegetables. Lawmakers included funding for marketing and promotion of farmers’ markets and organic produce, plus programs to address fruit and vegetable food safety and pest management. It also dedicated \$230 million for the

Specialty Crop Research Initiative and another \$25 million for fresh produce safety grants.

Value-Added Producer Grants:

This competitive grants program helps farmers develop value-added businesses, including a new directive to support “mid-tier value chains” and local and regional food systems. It will be funded at \$15 million in mandatory funding over 4 years with an additional \$40 million a year authorized. It includes a new priority for small- and mid-sized family farms and beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers.

“Compared with any previous Farm Bill, there is more support in this new Farm Bill for local and regional food systems. The bill includes a new loan guarantee program for food enterprises that help rebuild a local and regional food infrastructure, and the Value-Added Producer Grants program is expanded to include mid-tier value chains and local and regional food businesses.”

-Aimee Witteman, Sustainable Agriculture Coalition

Community Food Projects:

This program was given \$5 million in mandatory annual funding. This grants program has proved popular in the Northeast. It enables communities to assess strengths, establish linkages, and create systems that improve the self-reliance of community members over their food needs. There is separate funding provided for the creation of Healthy Food Enterprise Development Centers to provide technical assistance for storing, processing and marketing locally produced agriculture products.

Interstate Shipment of State Inspected Meat:

Very small meat processing plants with state rather than federal inspection that meet strong food safety standards will be allowed for the first time to sell across state lines, increasing marketing options for sustainable livestock producers and improving regional food systems.

Energy Development:

The energy title provides \$1 billion to fund grants, loan guarantees and other incentives for developing renewable energy sources. Among the funded programs is one that will help agricultural producers and rural small businesses install renewable energy systems and improve energy efficiency. Other programs will encourage research and development of biofuel feedstocks, including farm and forest crops, animal manure and food-processing wastes.

Nutrition Title Changes:

Nearly two-thirds of Farm Bill funding traditionally goes to nutrition programs. This title takes into account rapidly rising food prices by increasing funding for such programs by more than \$10 billion. The food stamp program has been renamed the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Food stamp coupons will be replaced with a debit card to reduce fraud and abuse. And the bill boosts USDA's snack program that helps schools provide healthy snacks to students during after-school activities.

Sources: These Farm Bill highlights draw from reporting by the Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, the National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture, the Community Food Security Coalition and American Agriculturist magazine. Thanks to all.

Northeast Food and Farms Go "Social"



We've put out the welcome mat at NEFOOD.org

Have you ever noticed how most house parties end up in the kitchen? Nothing brings people together like delicious food. Northeasterners have long celebrated the social aspects of food and farming through harvest festivals, potluck suppers, clambakes and informal gatherings of friends and family. In our modern, go-go society, however, it can sometimes be challenging for people to make these types of connections and find others who share their interests and values when it comes to food.

Recognizing this and seeing the growth of online communities, NESAWG has started a new web-based project designed to bring likeminded people together both in the real world and virtually. The website - called the "Northeast Food and Farm Network" (www.nefood.org) - is a full-featured social network with all the digital bells and whistles that you'd find on larger sites like MySpace or Facebook but without any of the advertising.

Launched in late May, the site now has over 260 members sharing information and ideas on Northeast food and farming issues.

Here are just a few of the things you can do there:

- Create your own food & farm-related blog
- Start or participate in an online discussion
- Post job and internship opportunities
- Announce upcoming events
- Form an issue- or place-based virtual group
- Post food & farm-related photos or videos

Please join the fun and invite your food and farm loving friends. Together, we can build a better and better-connected food and farming system in the Northeast!

Summer Reading List

The dog days of summer are a time for kicking up your feet and catching up on your reading. A number of interesting food systems books have been published in the past year, including a couple by authors and contributors with connections to the Northeast. Here are some titles – along with reviews by us or others -- you just might want to take with you as you head to the beach, lake, or your own patio. No matter what your tastes might be, you're likely to find something nourishing among these recent releases.

Stuffed and Starved by Raj Patel (Melville House)

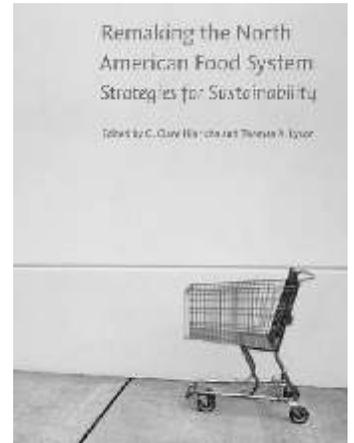
One evening in the 1930s, Henry Ford wore a new suit to a gala dinner he was throwing at his Dearborn, Michigan car factory. The suit, reportedly, was soft to the touch. It was also made from soybean fiber. What Ford saw in the hardy, adaptable beans was industrial potential, and over 70 years later, his vision has come to pass. Today, soy shows up in about 75% of the food on offer at the supermarket.



The soybean's ascendancy is one of many pieces of a global puzzle that author Raj Patel aims to fit together in his new book *Stuffed and Starved* — a sweeping look at the development of the international food chain that delivers calories from nation to nation with an alarmingly uneven hand. As its title promises, the book tackles one of the chief dysfunctions of our unique era in alimentary history: that 800 million people are getting too little to eat and are malnourished, while over 1 billion are getting so much they've become overweight or obese. It's a big conundrum, and Patel is obliged to rake through centuries and continents for the seeds — pardon the pun — of the world's dietary inequity. —Time Magazine, 27 September 2007

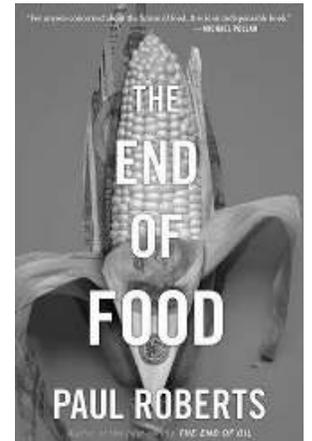
Remaking the North American Food System: Strategies for Sustainability, edited by Clare Hinrichs and Thomas A. Lyson (University of

Nebraska Press). This volume is dedicated to the late Tom Lyson whose views on “civic agriculture” influenced alternative food systems theory and action. It examines the resurgence of interest in rebuilding the links between agricultural production and food consumption as a way to overcome some of the negative implications of industrial and globalizing trends in the food and agricultural system. Written by a diverse group of scholars and practitioners (including NESAWG coordinator, Kathy Ruhf, and nine other Northeasterners) the chapters in this volume describe many efforts in the U.S. and Canada to craft and sustain alternative food systems that can improve social, economic, environmental, and health outcomes.



The End of Food by Paul Roberts (Houghton Mifflin).

Paul Roberts's aim in examining the global food economy is to show how seemingly disparate problems - obesity, the prevalence of food-borne disease, the persistence of hunger, the transformation of Third World wilderness into export-oriented farms - are interdependent. No single aspect of the system is at fault, but rather the way the system as a whole has come to operate. Roberts writes lucidly and dispassionately about human needs, natural resources and the economics and politics that bind them (his last book was called *The End of Oil*). He argues that although food shaped many of our economic systems (among them specialization and management, accounting, trade and speculation), food itself has proved unsuited to the high-volume, low-cost industrial model that we now impose on it. We have had to standardize, denature and re-engineer our plants and livestock to fit the technologies we use to harvest, process,



package, preserve and transport them. The externalities of this system are now so enormous - from greenhouse gases to the iniquities of cheap labor - that they threaten the population the system is supposed to serve. -The Guardian, 5 July 2008

Closing the Food Gap by

Mark Winne (Beacon)
Mark Winne (former Executive Director of the Hartford [CT] Food System) is the real deal. He's been working to end hunger in our country since before I was born, and trying just about every single tactic imaginable to do it. What's the food gap the book's title speaks of?

In the past, it was the fact that the rich ate and the poor didn't. Today, as Winne puts it, "the poor get diabetes; the rich get local and organic." Winne points out that Americans cannot seem to put a hunger program in place solely for the purpose of feeding hungry people. In the past it was because draftees were failing their military physicals due to malnutrition, or as a subsidy to Big Ag. But feed the hungry just to feed the hungry? Not so much. The book does not give the 100% perfect solution to ending hunger and/or poverty because there isn't one, but he does give a thoughtful explanation of the methods he's tried and the lessons he's learned in his over three decades of work on the subject. I think the best summary of the book is the quote from Jane Goodall on the front: "It's heartening to find a book that successfully blends a passion for sustainable living with compassion for the poor."

-Jill Richardson, www.LaVidaLocavore.org

Reviving America's Food Traditions by Gary Paul Nabhan (Chelsea Green). Some people would just as soon ignore the culinary potential of the Carolina flying squirrel or the Waldoboro green neck rutabaga. To them, the creamy Hutterite soup bean is too obscure and the Tennessee fainting goat, which keels over when startled, sounds more like a sideshow act than the centerpiece of a barbecue. But not Gary Paul Nabhan. He has spent most of the past four years compiling a list of endangered plants and animals that were once fairly



Closing the Food Gap

Rescuing the Taste in the Land of Plenty

MARK WINNE

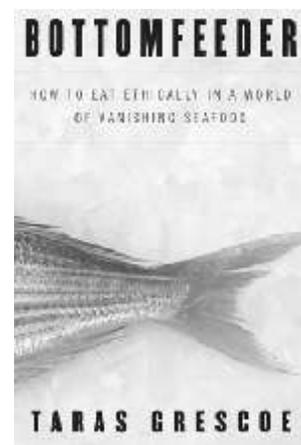


commonplace in American kitchens but are now threatened, endangered or essentially extinct in the marketplace. He has set out to save them, which often involves urging people to eat them. Mr. Nabhan's list, 1,080 items and growing, forms the basis of his new book, an engaging journey through the nooks and crannies of American culinary history. The book tells the stories of 93 ingredients both obscure (Ny'pa, a type of salt grass) and beloved (the Black Sphinx date), along with recipes that range from the accessible (Centennial pecan pie) to the challenging (whole pit-roasted Plains pronghorn antelope). - The New York Times, 30 April 2008

Bottomfeeder by Taras

Grescoe (Bloomsbury).

Grescoe, a Canadian nonfiction writer and respected food and travel journalist, takes us on an international tour of controversial cuisines -- shark fin soup in China, whale sashimi in Japan, monkfish tail in New York City -- meanwhile offering an overview of the corrupt practices that have put the oceans (and our health) in danger. The portrait he paints is grim: oceanic dead zones that, because of pollution and overfishing, can no longer support organic life; salmon farms polluted by pesticides and disease; ruthless bottom trawlers with nets that can destroy entire ecosystems.



A warning is not a death sentence, however. The book empowers consumers to ask the right questions -- if the halibut is from the Atlantic or Pacific, for instance, and whether the lobster pasta is actually made from monkfish, which is endangered. And asking these questions will make it possible to enjoy seafood for years to come. Eating has become about a lot more than mere nutrition or pleasure these days; it carries the burden of being environmentally and economically aware. Which means that we need to be not just well intentioned but informed as well. The future of seafood relies on knowing where -- and even if -- your salmon used to swim. -Salon.com, 29 April 2008

Farm Aid Back to Rock the Northeast



Music-lovers from the Northeast might not have believed their ears when it was announced that the Farm Aid Music Festival was coming back to our region for the second year in a row.

Last year's event took place in New York City while this year's is slated for the Comcast Center in Mansfield, Massachusetts on September 20, 2008, the first time the popular concert has come to New England.

"Bringing Farm Aid's unique concert event to New England creates an unparalleled opportunity to showcase the innovation and determination of the area's farmers," said Carolyn Mugar, executive director of Farm Aid.

We hope that NESAWG member groups will be there in force to enjoy the good food and music and celebrate the important work Farm Aid is doing on behalf of family farmers in the Northeast and beyond.

NESAWG Communications and Outreach Survey: Your Feedback Please!

One-way communication is a bit like a one-person game of tennis or ping pong. Sure, you can bounce any old ball off a wall, but there's little mystery in where it's headed and, consequently, little fun.

To continue the analogy, NESAWG sends a lot communications flying every year in the form of its paper and electronic newsletters, web communications, and publications and we're looking for you to return our volley. We receive a fair amount of informal feedback each year on our communications activities and services, but thought it would be useful to bring more of our members into the game this month through a communications and outreach survey which you will find enclosed, self-addressed, stamped and ready to send back to us.

Thank you for taking a few minutes to fill it out and send it back to us. Your input will help us "serve" you better!



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