



Northern New York
Agricultural Development Program

PRESS RELEASE

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Organic Soybeans: Next NNY Crop?

Northern New York Agricultural Development Program research into developing an organic soybean production system suited to Northern New York growing conditions is perfectly timed to take advantage of growing consumer and retailer demand for and the interest of NNY's health food stores and two soybean processing plants.

"We have been testing and refining organic production systems for growing food-grade soybeans with Northern New York's climate, soils and harvest season," says Willsboro Research Farm Manager Michael Davis, who has studied food-grade soybeans grown on certified organic plots for Northern New York Agricultural Development Program research since 2001.

Davis says the next steps in making organically-grown food-grade soybeans a viable Northern New York crop are for farmers to adopt organic rotations, retool for mechanical weed control and develop markets. The task of developing markets for organic soybeans is made easier by the presence of both health food stores and soybean processors in the Northern New York region.

Lynn Moore, owner of Sweet Basil Natural Health Food Store, Lowville, says, "Products made with organically-grown soybeans, as long as they are not genetically-modified, bring a premium from health-conscious consumers."

Potsdam Food Co-Op Manager Scott Miller, general manager of the Potsdam Food Co-op, says he would be interested in buying fresh, dried or roasted and salted food-grade soybeans. However, the beans must be GMO-free and organically-grown.

The former McCadam Cheese Plant in Heuvelton is now home to Pro Soya, Inc., and CEO Rajendra Gupta says he wants to use locally-grown organic, GMO-free (non-genetically modified) soybeans. At its existing capacity, the plant will be able to process 10 to 15 tons a day. ProSoya is currently using Canadian-grown soybeans for start-up quality assurance testing at the new plant. The plant will make a soya milk base and ship the liquid product to copackers, sell to a third party, or package as a ProSoya label product for distribution as far west as Chicago, south to the Carolinas and into Canada.

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In Massena, the Ag Pro Soy Processors Ltd. plant converts organic and non-organic soybeans into meal for cattle feed and oil for human consumption products. Ag Pro President Fred Pollard says Ag Pro wants locally-grown soybeans and says the plant has room for growth before it reaches its 150-tons-a-day processing capacity. Merchandising Manager Keith Burnor has recently begun talking one-on-one with regional farmers about growing soybeans for Ag Pro.

For more information on growing soybeans, contact Michael Davis, Willsboro Research Farm, 518-963-7492; or your local Cornell Cooperative Extension office. For information on the Northern New York Agricultural Development Program that selects and prioritizes research for practical application to farms in the six-county NNY region, contact Program Co-Chairs Jon Greenwood, 315-386-3231, or Joe Giroux, Plattsburgh, 518-563-7523; or R. David Smith, Cornell University, 607-255-7286.

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