



Northern New York Agricultural Development Program News

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Northern NY Food Hub Survey Preliminary Results Available

Northern New York. The Northern New York Agricultural Development Program has posted preliminary results of a survey asking regional consumers, food buyers, and farmers about their interest in developing a local food hub.

“The goal is to gauge interest by the key players needed to make a local food hub successful. A food hub that efficiently coordinates ordering and delivery of local products can increase farmers’ sales, while reducing costs, and the number of miles food travels to its destination,” said project leader Anita Deming, executive director of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Essex County.

The USDA identifies a regional food hub as ‘a business or organization that actively manages the aggregation, distribution and marketing of source-identified food products primarily from local and regional producers to strengthen their ability to satisfy wholesale, retail, and institutional demand.’

One hundred and twenty-five farmers, 25 buyers and 254 consumers completed the confidential survey conducted by the Cornell Cooperative Extension associations in NNY. Cornell University Cooperative Enterprise Program Director Roberta Severson with the Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management is analyzing the survey data.

Sixty-six percent of the farmers surveyed indicated they sell 75 to 100 percent of their products within the Northern NY region that includes Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence counties.

Major food marketing areas identified were Canton, Lake Placid, Lowville, Malone, Plattsburgh and Watertown.

The types of market channels used by the farmers responding to the survey include farmstands, farmers’ markets, wholesalers or distributors, CSA, restaurants, food co-ops or buyers clubs, grocery stores, auctions, and institutions.

The types of services producers indicated they were interested in receiving from a food hub include pickup, washing, grading, packing, cooling of products; freezer storage; processing; and handling of sales and marketing so they can focus on food production.

Nearly 100 percent of the farmers reporting more than \$100,000 in sales indicated they are full-time farmers, with a high percentage of those farmers indicating they have more than 30 years' experience in agriculture.

Overall, consumers responding to the survey considered local as food produced in Northern NY or in their home county. The most frequently purchased products were vegetables and fruit. Nearly 60 percent of the consumers surveyed indicated they purchase local products at least once a month. The largest group of consumers responding to the survey was 50 to 69 year olds; the second largest group was 30 to 39 year olds.

Preliminary results are posted on the Northern New York Agricultural Development Program website at www.mnyagdev.org. Data from the food buyers survey that included stores, restaurants, co-packers, and schools will be available later this year.

The Northern New York Agricultural Development Program is a farmer-driven research and technical assistance program serving Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence counties. Funding for the Northern New York Agricultural Development Program is supported by the New York State Senate and administered through the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets.

This survey project also received a USDA Specialty Crops Block Grant administered by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets.