



FOODSHED ALLIANCE

STRENGTHENING FARMING AND COMMUNITY THROUGH LOCALLY-GROWN FOOD



SPRING 2008

"Come Grow with Us"

Vol.1, Ed. 1

CALLING ALL FARMERS

Fresh New Market

The Foodshed Alliance is seeking farmers within a 30 mile radius of Blairstown to participate in a unique Foodshed-run Farmers' Market for the Blairstown area. An important feature of the market will be cooperative selling booths, overseen by the Foodshed Alliance, where growers can share space and not have to attend each market day in person, making it easier for both large and small farmers to participate. We have several models in place to allow your farm to be a vendor. Individual vendor booths are also available! Contact us ASAP to find out more!



WE WANT YOU!

Volunteer Today

Volunteers are vital to the Foodshed Alliance's continued success. We are a grassroots organization, devoted to the community, and volunteers are the foundation on which the future of local food systems in Northwest New Jersey will be built. Whatever your abilities and interests, we'll do our best to find a volunteer position to meet your needs. So please, contact the office today, and lend a hand!

GOT LOCAL?

Take Control of the Food You Eat!

Our "Buy Fresh Buy Local" program is based upon the time-honored traditions of local economies, land stewardship and fresh, wholesome foods grown by farmers in your community. Certain things are beneficial to us all: food that isn't shipped over long distances; farmers who can make a viable living from the land using sustainable growing techniques; and food that is a fresh, delicious, healthy product.

Local foods are grown by neighbors, for neighbors. They are grown in ways which promote biodiversity, sustain wildlife habitat, decrease the use of chemical production methods and encourage relationships between farmers and eaters.

The cost of food in a local food system is based upon the actual costs of growing that food, and getting it to the table. There are no costs hidden behind the price tag. The

profit is returned directly to the independent farmer, helping local growers to stay viable, protecting our rural lands from development, preserving our rural vistas and lifestyles, and promoting strong communities.

Local food systems are an appetizing alternative to impersonal, corporate, industrialized agriculture. When you buy local, you're in control of the food you eat! Help us to build a local food system in Northwest New Jersey. Buy Fresh Buy Local.

Whether you are a farmer or consumer, if you are interested in learning more about any Foodshed Alliance program, don't hesitate to contact us.



WWW.BUYFRESHNJ.ORG • 908.362.7967

A NOTE FROM TARA

Sometimes life forces us to let go a little bit, and in return gives us more than we would have imagined possible. That's what becoming a mother did for me. As soon as Alice joined us, it became clear that life would not proceed as I had planned. I had expected to return to work fairly quickly, but when I couldn't, I worried about the future of the organization. Frazzled, I finally closed my eyes, held my breath and let go—it was a bit like free falling.



When I opened my eyes again, and looked around, I found an amazing circle of people had appeared in the place of all that worry. The Foodshed Alliance has gained some amazingly passionate, dedicated staff members: Tammy Scully is coordinating BUY FRESH BUY LOCAL and working to get locally grown food into local schools; Sandy Roberts is teaching school kids about food system and how to grow for themselves; Pam Schoenfeld is heading up the Garden State Raw Milk campaign for NJ; Judy Renna is the keeper of our massive database; and Vera DuMont presides over our books and lends her considerable experience to guide our work. Meanwhile, I'm working part-time to coordinate and guide the others' work and to build the Foodshed Alliance.

Together, we're making real change that you can see everyday, in your community. The Foodshed Alliance is working towards a vibrant future for food and farming, a goal we share with an ever-growing group of individuals and other great organizations. Now is the time to reconnect with the people we've gotten to know over the last six years and build new connections with eaters and farmers who share our vision.

We've quietly done some good grassroots work, but now we are ready to do more. This time, I have no worries.

Sincerely,
Tara Bowers, Director

GOOD THINGS GROWING! Program Overviews

We've been a bit out of touch, but we've been busy. Take a look at our current programs! For more information visit our website or call the office.

Buy Fresh Buy Local

You may have seen the gorgeous signs and labels over the past two seasons. Beginning with a small, select group of local farmers dedicated to building a local food system, the Foodshed Alliance developed the Northwest Jersey chapter of the national BFBL program in time for the 2006 growing season. The program website (www.buyfreshnwj.org) is being updated and will be totally revamped for the 2008 season. Held each September, the annual Farm and Food Open House spotlights local farming and great local food. 2008 membership guidelines and applications will soon be made available.

"Feedability" Study

The Foodshed Alliance, in conjunction with the FoodRoutes Network, is working on a study which will highlight our region's capacity to grow its own food. When complete, the study will be presented to communities around Northwest Jersey, helping municipalities to implement zoning rules and local ordinances that promote the growth of sustainable, local agriculture now and in the future.

Farm-to-School: Supply Side

The Foodshed Alliance has been working this winter with Maschio's Food Services to develop an ongoing supply of seasonally available local foods in our schools. This partnership agreement will work to provide the highest quality local produce to our school system. In conjunction with the educational aspect of Farm-to-School, this program provides the basis for a strong, local food system in Northwest Jersey.

Farm-to-Restaurant

The Foodshed Alliance is actively working to connect local farmers with local chefs. Depending on interest, we will spearhead a cooperative effort, making restaurants a viable outlet for local farm products.

Consumer Programming

Need information on local foods? Not sure what food



labels mean, or why local is better? The Foodshed Alliance is here to help. Coming this spring, informational handouts, presentations, nutrition workshops and more will now be available on the website.

Farmer Networking & Resource Library

We have a lending library for the Foodshed Alliance farmer members. Let us know what you are looking for, and we'll get it to you! We are establishing an online library list, and our farmer resources information can be found on our website. If you have a farming need, just ask and we'll connect you with the right resources to get you off to a good start!

Local Food Columns

Focusing on a variety of topics designed to connect the non-farming population to local farmers, and to discuss the impact of food issues on our region, free columns, written by the Foodshed Alliance are available free of charge to any newspaper. If your paper isn't yet running these columns, let us know. Articles will also be archived on our website.

GARDEN STATE RAW MILK Plenty of Progress

The bill to legalize raw milk sales, sponsored by Assemblywoman Marcia Karrow, R-23rd District, is scheduled to be heard by the Agriculture Committee shortly. A copy of the bill is available at www.gardenstaterawmilk.org. Testimony from both raw milk consumers and interested dairy farmers will be needed.

Over the past two years we have distributed brochures, presented at conferences, created a website, and collected petition signatures (we have over 1,800 so far). Working with other groups across the nation, we're helping the public understand the need for informed consumer choice.



A series of seminars, sponsored by the New Jersey Agricultural Experimental Station, with assistance from the Foodshed Alliance, is currently being presented at the Cook College Campus of Rutgers University. For more on these seminars, see <http://www.gardenstaterawmilk.org/events.asp>.

"COME GROW WITH US" APPEAL

As the Foodshed Alliance approaches its seventh year of serving Northwest New Jersey, we are launching our COME GROW WITH US annual campaign. Our goal is to raise \$25,000 to benefit a vibrant local food system for you and your family. We invite you join us as we begin our most ambitious season yet!

As we grow, our projects continue to expand, which is why we ask for your support. It will enable us to work with more farmers, more community members, and more local and state agricultural leaders to develop effective projects that foster the growth of a sustainable local food system.

Your gift will help expand our efforts to connect farmers and eaters directly; promote community awareness of healthy, fresh and safe food to the general public; educate school children through our innovative programs, and much more.

You can become part of our vision — the vision that has connected eaters and farmers for the last six years -- by making a donation today.

Your gift of \$100, \$50, \$25 or whatever you can afford will make a difference! An envelope is attached for your convenience and all contributions are tax-deductible. Thank you for your support!



DOWN ON THE FARM What's New with You?

Fellow farmers, let us know what's going on at your farms! This way The Foodshed Alliance can accurately represent your farm activities to the general public. We provide this information through our website (www.foodshedalliance.org), by making your business cards or farm brochures available in our office and at events, and by answering inquiries from consumers, others in the farming community, chefs, food service providers, etc.

The best way to update us is through e-mail (info@foodshedalliance.org). Please include: what you're growing or raising, future plans and contact information, or send a copy of your brochure. We are looking forward to hearing from you!

NJ AUDUBON SOCIETY PARTNERSHIP Ecotourism at Work!

The partnership between the Foodshed Alliance and New Jersey Audubon Society has resulted in many opportunities for Foodshed Alliance farmers. John Parke, NJAS Conservation



Planner and Restoration Ecologist, is our contact and is running ecotourism programs for qualified Foodshed Alliance member farms.

Thus far, ecotourism events, have visited DanaRay Farm, Bobolink Dairy and Howling Wolf Farm. Event participants are treated to a wildlife tour on the farm, exploring a variety of habitats and the flora and fauna that reside there. The role of the farmer as a steward of the land is made clear, and participants are educated that where food comes from and how it is grown has a profound effect on our landscapes, our health, and the communities where we live. They learn that sustainable farmers know that healthy ecosystems are an asset to every farm. Participants are encouraged to purchase items from the farm and to develop an ongoing relationship with the farmer.

NJAS is also available for conservation assessments of your farmland. Take advantage of government programs that can help your bottom line. Get a preliminary assessment today!

FARM-TO-SCHOOL Teaching a New Generation

Last year, the Foodshed Alliance kicked off extended Farm-to-School programming, funded by Hooked on Nature and The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation. Staff is presently working with children, hands-on, in the classroom and in the garden.

At Stony Brook Elementary in Rockaway, NJ, we have worked with parents and teachers to revitalize the school's large courtyard space and opened new doors for learning. Now, agricultural and environmental lessons are explored weekly in the classroom and the outdoors, by students in grades 1-6.

The Foodshed Alliance also connected with Unity Charter School in Morristown, NJ where weekly educational programs combine with student gardening to provide healthy, fresh produce for the kitchen. Most recently the Foodshed Alliance has begun work with Ridge and Valley Charter School in Blairstown to support their gardening programs.

The Foodshed Alliance is searching for summer volunteers to help maintain gardens, as well as new schools interested in starting garden programs.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Free Consumer Seminars: Held at the Catherine Dickson Hofman Branch of the Warren County Library, Rt. 94 in Blairstown, from 7 to 9 pm. **Reservations are requested.**

- **May 8: "GMOs You Ought to Know"** An introduction to genetically modified organisms, what they are, how they are produced and how they are used in our food system.
- **May 22: "What is Good Food?"** This nutritional primer will help you decipher the ins and outs of whole foods and more.

Farmer Mini-Workshops: Seeking topic suggestions for upcoming workshops.

Farm and Food Open House: Volunteers are needed to help host our exciting annual event on **Saturday, September 6.**

Genesis Farm Programs: In Blairstown. See <http://www.genesisfarm.org/> for information or call 908-362-6735 to register.

- **May 2-5:** Gardening Like the Forest: A Backyard Permaculture Workshop with Dave Jacke
- **May 14:** Film Series: The End of Suburbia
- **May 18:** Sunday Brunch at the Farm with Mark Warner of Sun Farm Network

THE FOODSHED ALLIANCE
P.O. BOX 713, 16 MAIN STREET
BLAIRSTOWN, NJ 07825

PHONE 908-362-7967
FAX 908-362-7907

WWW.FOODSHEDALLIANCE.ORG

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