

Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Grant Grower/Farmer Report

1. Project name and contact information: FNE03-450: *Think Globally, Eat Locally* Festival

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2. Goals

The increased desire to eat naturally grown, healthful foods has provided the impetus for many people to join CSA's or buy locally grown fresh produce. Buying fresh vegetables is only the first step towards healthful eating. They must be prepared or cooked to be enjoyed. In today's world of fast food and frozen dinners, few people possess the skills necessary to prepare simple, healthful meals using fresh produce.

Charlestown Cooperative Farm had just completed its first year of operation in suburban Philadelphia as a CSA and a participant in and organizer of the newly created Phoenixville Farmers' Market. Many of our members and customers had a sincere desire to use all of the vegetables we grew, but they did not know how to cook them to serve them best on the dinner table. We published recipes in our newsletter, and we offered a vegetable cookbook for sale, but it was difficult for someone without a background in cooking to read a recipe and envision how it would taste.

A CSA is a partnership between the grower and the consumer. For this relationship to prosper, members must value the produce provided enough that they will continue membership from year to year. If consumers cannot properly prepare the produce they receive, they are less likely to remain members of the CSA. Education of the consumer is a key to sustainability of the partnership. In discussions with other local CSA farmers, we found that this was a common problem, particularly for many of the season-extending vegetables such as kale, chard, beets, turnips, and parsnips.

The specific goals of the *Think Globally, Eat Locally* festival were:

1. Increase appreciation of and demand for our locally grown produce.
2. Educate members of our CSA and other local CSA's, as well as shoppers at the Phoenixville Farmers' Market, about ways to use our fresh vegetables.

3. Create an event in which members and area residents would network and meet others who appreciate fresh food grown in a sustainable way to benefit the environment.

3. Farm Profile

Charlestown Cooperative Farm is a 501 c-16 non-profit cooperative operating on a forty-acre farm in Chester County, twenty miles west of Philadelphia. This part of southeastern Pennsylvania is rapidly changing from a rural to suburban environment with farmland bordering new residential development. Charlestown Cooperative Farm was established on land owned by the family who founded the cooperative to help preserve local agriculture in this community. The farm is described on its website: www.charlestowncooperativefarm.org

The farm is operated by fulltime farmers Aimee Kocis and John Good, who sell produce at the Phoenixville Farmers' Market each Sunday. They sold CSA shares to 85 families for the 2003 growing season. Prior to helping establish this CSA in 2002, Aimee and John worked on several farms in Massachusetts, most recently including the Food Bank Farm.

Sales of shares and produce cover the operating costs of the farm. This past year, approximately 10 acres have been planted in cash crops, 10 acres in cover crops, and 20 acres in hay. The CSA provides vegetables from June through November.

4. Participants

Ann Karlen, Coordinator of the Fair Food Project of the White Dog Foundation in Philadelphia, provided assistance in recruiting chefs who were willing to cook for the Festival. She also provided helpful suggestions about the logistics of the event, such as setting a date

Donna Pitts of the Food Trust provided technical assistance in planning the festival concerning compliance with health regulations.

Bunny Schnell, coordinator of the Phoenixville Farmers' Market, provided assistance by inviting Farmers' Market shoppers to the festival, as well as providing a Farmers' Market display table at the Festival so that participants could learn more about this local grower/producer market.

Sam Cantrell, of Maysie's Farm CSA, provided technical assistance regarding publicity and general event planning.

Greg Ling, chef of the *Rx Restaurant* in University City, *Sean Weinberg*, chef of *Rose Tattoo*, *Amanda MacWilliams*, chef of *Bella, an American Bistro*, and *Amy Naulty*, of *Cosmic Catering*, prepared the dishes, demonstrated their preparation, and supplied the recipes so that they could be included in the Festival folder for residents to take home. They also answered general questions that attendees had regarding cooking with various fresh vegetables.

Ruth Sullivan, of Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture, provided PASA newsletters to be included in each folder in an effort to raise awareness about local agriculture.

Farm Volunteers. Members of the Andersen family helped in all aspects of the Festival. Additional volunteers from our CSA helped with setup, cleanup, and on the day of the Festival itself. Members of Great Valley High School Ecology Club also helped out on the day of the Festival.

5. Project Activities

Upon receiving the first payment of the grant, we began working on the project in mid-June. The following is a basic outline of the steps we followed to plan and hold the Festival:

1. **Initial Planning/Contact.** To begin planning the Festival, we contacted Ann Karlen of the White Dog Café Foundation in Philadelphia, who works with the Fair Food Project. The Fair Food Project connects local chefs and farmers, and it also publishes a guide for consumers that lists restaurants that use local foods. She was an ideal first connection, because she has connections with local chefs. Ann suggested that Saturday would be a difficult day of the week to find chefs, because it is their busiest day. She suggested that Sunday would be more feasible. She also suggested that four chefs would be more manageable than five.

2. **Set Date.**

We discussed with our farmers the availability of vegetables and times of other events, such as farm tours, to select a date. We sent this information to other CSA's so that more people would be able to attend. We set a date of Sunday, August 24th, from 4-6 pm. Our barn is not heated, so we could not hold the Festival in the early spring or late fall. August is also a month when many of our vegetables are available.

3. **Recruit Chefs.**

Ann Karlen was a big help in this part of the project. She emailed all of the chefs with whom she is in contact, to let them know about the opportunity the Festival provided them to gain some publicity for their restaurants. Three chefs expressed interest. We called the chefs to discuss the farm and the Festival. All chefs agreed to participate. The fourth chef was one of our CSA members, who runs a natural foods catering business and a stall at the Chestnut Hill Farmers' Market.

4. **Basic Logistical Planning**

a. During the months of July and August, we met with the chefs at the farm to plan what equipment they would need and to show them where they would be giving their demonstrations. The chefs reviewed the list of vegetables that we grow and they selected varieties and quantities for the Festival. The chefs

provided us with their recipes so that we could include them in the Festival folder.

- b. We ordered equipment for the chefs, purchased all paper supplies, and rented a special hand washing station to comply with health regulations.
- c. We designed invitations and flyers, wrote articles about the Festival for our newsletter, and met local reporters.
- d. We planned parking and made directional signs to guide visitors.
- e. We arranged for a bluegrass band to play during the Festival.
- f. We enlisted volunteers to help setup, cleanup, put up signs, make equipment signs, cut the maze, conduct children's activities, mow, and cook corn.

5. **Additional Participants/Activities**

In the course of planning the Festival, it became clear that we had an opportunity to let area residents know about other local agriculture in addition to community supported agriculture. We therefore added the following participants in an effort to support their agricultural ventures:

- a. *Milky Way Farm*, a local farm that recently opened a retail creamery, served ice cream at the Festival. Fruit for the ice cream was provided by another area CSA.
- b. *French Creek Ridge Vineyard*, located just north of our farm in Elverson, Pennsylvania, provided tastings of its award-winning wines.
- c. Bunny Schnell, coordinator of the *Phoenixville Farmers' Market*, prepared a table with information about the Market and samples from some of the grower/producers.

Recognizing that many families like to participate in CSA events, we chose to welcome children and provide them with the following activities:

- a. *Face Painting*. Local teenagers painted vegetables on many children's cheeks and hands.
- b. *Games*. Again, local teenagers led children in the games.

- c. *Cover Crop Maze.* We cut a maze in our sorghum sudan grass. The maze was near the barn, so children were never far from their parents. We posted information about the benefits of using sorghum sudan grass as a cover crop.

When we moved all of our farm implements out of the barn to make room for the chefs, we lined them up along the pathway to the barn. We labeled each implement describing its purpose so that attendees could learn more about the way we farm using cultivators and manure spreaders instead of applying chemical herbicides and fertilizer. The walk to the barn became a self-guided tour of the farm. We labeled cover crops as well.

6. **Publicity**

We distributed flyers to local CSA's, and wrote articles for our own newsletter. We sent invitations to members of the community such as the Chester County Commissioner and Township Supervisors, and also to all of the people on our CSA waiting list. We included information about the Festival on our website, www.charlestowncooperativefarm.org. We also prepared a flyer for distribution at the Phoenixville Farmers' Market. All flyers requested that attendees RSVP so that we could give the chefs an estimate of the number of attendees. We wanted to ensure that attendees would be able to taste the dishes prepared.

7. **Weekend of event**

Saturday

- Picked, washed, packed, and delivered vegetables to chefs on Saturday morning
- Final cleaning of the barn and the area around it

Sunday

- Set up tables and cloths, grills, chairs, paper goods, reception table, folders
- Put up parking signs along driveway and in designated parking fields
- Picked and washed 500 ears of sweet corn to be cooked by a CSA volunteer during the festival

- Set up an heirloom tomato tasting station, manned by one of the chefs
- Met musicians and helped them setup
- Met each chef and helped him/her setup
- Greeted attendees, checked paper supplies, checked to make sure that each chef had everything he/she needed.

8. **After event**

- Cleaned barn, arranged for return of rental items
- Contacted chefs to thank them and get their feedback

6. **Results**

The Festival was clearly a success. The Festival attracted a large and enthusiastic crowd of well over 200 including members of our and several other CSA's, shoppers at the Phoenixville Farmers' Market, and local farmers and politicians. The cooking demonstrations were very popular allowing us to achieve our major objective of educating the public about vegetable preparation. It was also apparent that the Festival generated interest in local products. In fact, following the Festival, at least 20 individuals contacted us with an interest in purchasing a share for next year's growing season. Participants enjoyed asking many questions, observing the demonstrations, and tasting the foods. Many members of our CSA have mentioned preparing the recipes at home.

There were several unexpected benefits of the Festival. Many participants in the Festival discovered restaurants where the owners and chefs use locally produced ingredients to help build a sustainable food network. Although we cannot quantify this result, CSA members have told us that they have chosen to eat at these restaurants because their food is delicious, healthy, and supports local agriculture. We invited chefs to put information in our folder about other local food resources.

Networking provided unanticipated benefits of the Festival. We invited a small, local vineyard to conduct tastings. The vineyard is a member of PASA (Pennsylvania

Association for Sustainable Agriculture), and although its wines are excellent, it has had difficulty marketing its product to Philadelphia restaurants. The chefs at the Festival tasted their wine. One restaurant agreed to host a wine dinner where the chef and vineyard will serve courses paired with wines. Another benefit occurred when the chefs helped us discover a potential crop for next year at our farm. We grow sweet corn, and have always discarded ears containing smut. Two of our chefs requested Huitlacoche (corn smut) for their recipes. We discovered that this corn fungus is a delicacy that is almost unavailable for purchase. We are considering offering it for sale to chefs next growing season, as it commands a high price. This requires further research over the winter months.

The Festival appears to have boosted attendance at our monthly cooking workshops. Prior to the Festival, we had only one or two attendees. The Festival helped fellow CSA members meet and learn about cooking, and enjoy tasting food together. Attendance at the workshops after the Festival jumped to an average of 15 to 20.

Given the positive feedback from the Festival, we plan to hold it again next year. We feel we can charge participants a fee to cover our costs in our second year, because people will know what to expect. We will probably hold the Festival either earlier or later in the growing season to highlight different vegetables. With the right public relations, and marketing, a similar event could be held on a fee basis.

7. Conditions

An existing network of chefs who realize the importance of using local sustainably produced food made hosting the Festival much easier. The job of recruiting chefs was the key to hosting a successful event. This job was easy to accomplish in the Philadelphia area.

Hosting the Festival required many hours working with chefs, preparing and distributing flyers and invitations, and recruiting and coordinating volunteers. We were able to donate our time to help make the Festival a success.

We were lucky this growing season to have plenty of rain, so we had an abundance of vegetables for the chefs.

8. Economics

The chefs loved participating in the Festival. Although we paid them to prepare their dishes and for their additional ingredients, several chefs appear willing to donate some portion of this amount at a Festival next year. We believe that we can make this event self-sustaining economically in future years.

9. Assessment

Think Globally, Eat Locally helped CSA members learn new ways to prepare and use vegetables from our farm, and it helped create enthusiasm about using CSA vegetables. This enthusiasm provided the impetus for increased attendance at our monthly cooking workshops. However, this is an ongoing process. We have some new members each year, and different vegetables come into season each month. We will continue to augment the Festival with monthly recipes and cooking workshops.

10. Adoption

As previously mentioned, the Festival was so successful that we will hold it each year. In addition, our local Phoenixville Farmers' Market, where we also sell our vegetables, has received grant money to use our Festival as a model for a series of three festivals to be held at the Market during the 2004 growing season. Each festival will highlight fruits and vegetables just coming into season, as well as the meats, cheeses and yogurts that other local farmers sell at the Market.

11. Outreach

I have attached copies of the recipe folder, flyers, invitations, and articles about the Festival. Visit www.charlestowncooperativefarm.org to see pictures of the Festival and recipes provided by the chefs.

Think Globally, Eat Locally



Please join us for a festival celebrating local foods with cooking demonstrations by four Philadelphia chefs and tasting of local wines. Admission is free.



Date: Sunday, August 24, 2003

Time: 4-6 pm

Place: Charlestown Cooperative Farm, CSA
2565 Charlestown Road
Phoenixville, PA 19460

www.charlestowncooperativefarm.org



RSVP by Monday, August 18, 2003

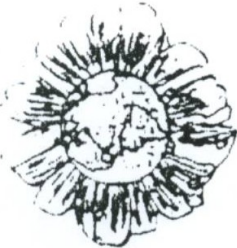
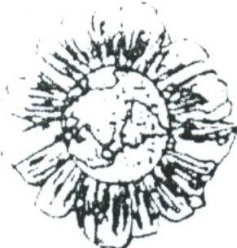
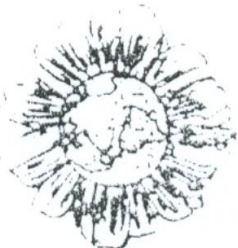

Katy Andersen

(610)933-0486

WMAndersens@msn.com

This event is funded by a SARE (Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education) grant.

Front of Invitation

<p>THINK GLOBALLY, EAT LOCALLY</p>  <p>AUGUST 24, 2003</p>	<p>THINK GLOBALLY, EAT LOCALLY</p>  <p>AUGUST 24, 2003</p>
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Please join us for a festival celebrating local foods with cooking demonstrations by four Philadelphia chefs and tasting of local wines. Admission is free. For more information, visit www.charlestowncooperativefarm.org.



Date: Sunday, August 24, 2003

Time: 4-6 pm

Place: Charlestown Cooperative Farm, CSA
2565 Charlestown Road
Phoenixville, PA 19460



RSVP by Friday, August 15, 2003

Katy Andersen

(610) 933-0486

WMAndersens@msn.com

This event is funded by a SARE (Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education) grant.

Back of Invitation

Think Globally, Eat Locally Organic Foods Festival
at Charlestown Cooperative Farm!

Mark your calendars today for our *Think Globally, Eat Locally* Organic Foods Festival on August 24th from 4-6 pm. Four skilled chefs from Philadelphia restaurants will demonstrate and prepare fresh vegetable dishes using our very own produce right in our barn. Members will taste the dishes and take home recipe booklets. This festival, funded by a SARE (Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education) grant, is free for members and interested guests, but we ask that you RSVP by signing up in the barn or emailing me (Katy Andersen) at wmandersens@msn.com by August 15th.

The chefs bring a wealth of experience and commitment to using locally grown food.

Greg Ling, chef of the **Rx Restaurant** in University City, has hosted PASA (Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture) meetings. **Sean Weinberg**, chef of **Rose Tattoo**, www.rosetattoocafe.com, in Philadelphia, spent two years apprenticing in Northern Italy and working with Slow Food, an organization committed to ecologically sound food production and to the proliferation of regional, seasonal culinary traditions. A chef will also be coming from **Bella**, www.bellaepicura.com, an American bistro in Philadelphia dedicated to serving fresh American fare. Finally, **Amy Naulty** of Cosmic Catering will participate. She is the sister of our own member **Peg Botto**, owner of Cosmic Catering who also sells prepared foods at the Chestnut Hill Farmers Market, will generously participate in the festival. Peg uses ingredients that are produced locally using sustainable agricultural practices.

I hope to see you at the festival!

Katy Andersen

Article that appeared in the August CSA Newsletter

Think Globally, Eat Locally

On August 24th, the farm hosted “Think Globally, Eat Locally,” a festival celebrating local foods. Chefs from four Philadelphia restaurants prepared delicious dishes using our own vegetables. The festival gave a new meaning to “taste test.” From cantaloupe coulis to grilled corn, every dish was spectacular. Special thanks go to: Greg Ling of Rx Café at 4443 Spruce Street, Amanda MacWilliams of Bella at 2000 Lombard Street, Amy Naulty of Cosmic Catering at the Chestnut Hill Farmers’ Market, and Sean Weinberg of Rose Tattoo at 19th and Callowhill Streets. They put so much effort into cooking foods with the farm’s vegetables so our members can try to reproduce these recipes at home; we cannot thank them enough. They participated because they recognize the importance of using local food. Their restaurants use locally grown ingredients whenever possible. If you have an occasion to dine in Philadelphia, consider eating at one of these restaurants. As anyone who was at the festival can attest, their food is amazing.

Food was not the only item for adults to sample. Janet Maki of French Creek Ridge Vineyards served her internationally award-winning wines produced at her farm in Elverson. If you did not get to the festival but would like to try her wines, visit her tasting room on Saturdays or Sundays between 11am and 5 pm. Directions to her farm are on the vineyard website, www.frenchcreekridge.com. For the children who missed out on wine, and everyone else, there was fresh ice cream made by the Creamery at Chester Springs. Peaches for the ice cream came from another Chester County CSA. We also served the farm’s own corn picked and husked that afternoon. Many thanks to members Kevin Murphy and Mary Ann Bucci for helping to set up before the festival and for cooking and serving all the corn.

If you did not make it to the festival, please feel free to take one of the green folders labeled “Think Globally, Eat Locally” in the barn. The folders contain all the recipes, as well as information about local agriculture. The afternoon was such a success that we plan to make it an annual event. Thank you for attending, and we hope to see you next year!

Article that appeared in the September CSA Newsletter

Think Globally



Eat Locally

2432 Charlestown Road
Phoenixville, PA 19360

August 30, 2003

Sean Weinberg
Rose Tattoo
19th and Callowhill Streets
Philadelphia, PA 19130

Dear Sean,

I cannot tell you how much we appreciated your participation in our "Think Globally, Eat Locally" festival. Your efforts in preparing our vegetables surpassed anything I could have imagined. Such commitment to supporting local agriculture is vital to the farming community of the greater Philadelphia region.

We have been getting rave reviews of your beet salad. Every night since Sunday, my mom has been grilling corn using the same mixture you accidentally left; it did not go to waste! It is really nice to have a second way to prepare corn, especially one more exciting than the traditional steaming. For a family whose staple food is corn throughout the summer, you have saved us from facing the same old preparation every day!

Feel free to stop by the farm anytime if you feel the need to get out to the country or would like some huitlacoche. Just give us a call beforehand so we can meet you there. My brothers would love to find you smut any day, it is literally a phone call away.

I hope to see you at Rose Tattoo soon. As soon as I can navigate Philadelphia, I will be sure to have dinner there. Best of luck finding a good location for your own restaurant; I am sure my father would be happy to be of any assistance. We will be contacting you next year when we begin planning the festival. Thanks for coming to "Think Globally, Eat Locally" 2004!

I have enclosed your check.

Best Regards,

Katy Andersen

Thank-you Note to Chef