

(11) Outreach:

We attended the NY Farms annual meeting, April 2, 2005 in Voorheesville with

- 1. Our display board "Join a Hometown Food Club"**
- 2. A printed copy of pages from our proposed bi-weekly web ordering site www.farmtocity.com/HometownFoodClub.asp.**
- 3. A brochure describing the Hometown Foods Club (See Appendix H)**
- 4. A catalog of Hometown Foods, LLC frozen and vacuum packaged products (See Appendix I)**

NYSAWG saw our display and is interested in our ideas. We are sharing with farmers and food processors, extension personnel, Regional Farm and Food Project in Albany, Hunger Action Network of Albany, Cornell's Nutrition Department connected to "Farm to School", economic development people in Schenectady and Columbia County, churches, newspapers, Columbia County Healthy Heart schools and more. Outreach to the consumer who wants to eat well is top priority.

Summary:

Finding a year round market for small scale processed regional canned, dried, fresh or frozen and vacuum packaged foods was the purpose for exploring small feeding venues of families and community groups.

The method used was to step into the childcare world to see the problems of food providers through observations, interviewing, and food sampling. We found that food providers wanted to buy our healthy convenience foods when the offerings included frozen and vacuum packaged meal kits, fruit snacks, soups, whole grain breads and fresh produce. Easy ordering, reasonable prices, and high quality foods delivered nearby are pluses that add value and meet food providers' needs.

Marketing with updated nutrition knowledge on a product website intellectually educates while membership in a Hometown Foods Club builds trust between participants in a regional food system. Here community nutrition educators facilitate club gatherings and activities connected to local farms, processors, neighbors and food. Club member pre-ordering balances production with demand so the system can grow carefully. Health conscious consumers can access the same system in the future from work sites, schools, senior centers or directly through health professionals where prevention of future health problems is a priority. A business plan is being created to continue this project in the near future.

Anna Dawson