

Growing Over to the Dark Side:

Building a Successful Enterprise with Winter Vegetable Production and Sales

Thursday, March 6, 2014

9:30 am to 5:00 pm

Publick House, Sturbridge, MA

University of Massachusetts Extension, University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension, Communities Involved in Sustaining Agriculture and Seacoast Eat Local

The demand for winter vegetables has grown dramatically in the past five years, and farmers' skills in growing and storing produce for winter sales has expanded with it. Everyone who builds a winter component into their farming enterprise has to adapt how they grow, wash, package, store, and move vegetables around to deal with conditions of the frozen and dark side of the calendar. Plus, they need to develop new marketing venues. In this program, experienced farmers and marketers will offer their insights, followed by plenty of time in each session for farmer to farmer discussion.

Sign up for a FREE one-on-one "Ask the Expert" session with marketing advisor Myrna Greenfield! See details below.

9:00 Registration with Coffee and Continental Breakfast

9:30 – 11:45 am: Putting It All Together: systems for winter production and storage. To meet the needs of winter markets, growers need to combine field production for fall harvest and storage, with various kinds of season extension enclosures and growing techniques. How do you put it all together? Two experienced year-round vegetable farmers will talk about planning and implementing these systems on their farm – their challenges, and what's working. Facilitated discussion will follow.

Skip Paul, Wishing Stone Farm, Little Compton, RI

Jeremy Barker-Plotkin, Simple Gifts Farm, Amherst, MA

Discussion moderated by Ruth Hazzard, UMass Extension

11:45 – 12:45 Lunch (see options below*)

12:45 – 2:40 pm: Managing Products for Winter Markets – Logistical issues are different in winter. How do you handle the unique challenges of harvesting, washing and packing the crop, managing storage facilities, moving heavy bins, and getting it all packed, transported, and set up at markets. Two growers will talk about how they have handled these issues. Facilitated discussion will follow.

Luke Mahoney of Brookford Farm, Canterbury, NH

Andre Cantelmo of Heron Pond Farm, South Hampton, NH

Discussion moderated by Becky Sideman, University of New Hampshire

2:40 break

3:00 – 5:00 pm: Current status of winter markets and where are we headed? Winter products are being sold through farmers markets, CSA, and wholesale channels. Which markets are growing and where are the best opportunities for the future? What has worked well to build the customer base for these markets? How do we match the market demand with supply as we grow? How do farmers build a successful market strategy for winter? Brief regional snapshots of what's happening will be presented by a panel with expertise in winter markets, followed by a facilitated discussion:

-Coastal New Hampshire: Leo Smock-Randall, Seacoast Eat Local, NH

-Pioneer Valley/ Western MA: Claire Morenon, CISA

-Rhode Island/Southeast MA: Sue Anderbois, Farm Fresh RI

-Boston Area: Jeff Cole, Federation of Massachusetts Farmers Markets.



For more information contact: Lisa McKeag, 413-577-3976 or lmckeag@umext.umass.edu or Becky Sideman 603-862-3203, Becky.Sideman@unh.edu

Website: <https://extension.umass.edu/vegetable/events/production-and-marketing-winter-vegetables>

***Lunch options:** Bring your own, box lunch pre-purchased from Publick House at registration (\$14), Publick House restaurant or fast food restaurants within a short drive.

Directions: Publick House, 277 Main St, Sturbridge, MA 01566. Near Exit 9 off I-84 just south of I-90, MA Turnpike.

Sign up for a FREE one-on-one "Ask the Expert" session!

Myrna Greenfield, owner of Good Egg Marketing, will be on hand during the day to hold mini "Ask the Expert" sessions to talk about your marketing challenges. Good Egg Marketing (<https://goodeggmarketing.com>) specializes in marketing for farms and food businesses.

Contact Lisa McKeag at 413-577-3976 or lmckeag@umext.umass.edu to reserve one of these 15-minute one-on-one sessions to talk about your branding, marketing strategy, website, social media, or displays. Myrna will also be available for informal conversation during lunch. Bring your printed materials, a printout of your website home page, or your Facebook page. There's limited availability, so sign up today!



Registration:

Send registration form with payment to Lisa McKeag Ag. Engineering Bldg, 250 Natural Resources Rd., UMass, Amherst 01003 - 9295 **or**

RSVP by February 27 to 413-577-3976 or lmckeag@umext.umass.edu and pay at registration.

Cost: \$30 per person, \$25 per person for 3 or more from same business.

Pre-Registration Deadline – February 27. Walk-ins welcome though space is limited.

All Names _____

Firm _____

Address _____

Email address _____ Telephone _____

No. Registrations x \$30.00/person = _____

No. Registrations x \$25.00/person (3 or more from same business) = _____



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