



Since 2005, the Food and Health Network of South Central New York (FaHN) has united diverse stakeholders in Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Cortland, Delaware, Otsego, Tioga, and Tompkins Counties to develop a thriving, healthy and food-secure regional food system.

A few examples of FaHN's work in 2013 are highlighted in this report. We extend heartfelt congratulations and thanks to all of our members and partners.

As a non-profit coalition with limited resources, our success depends on community support and participation. We invite you to join us as a member or a sponsor!

www.FoodandHealthNetwork.org

Creating Community through Gardening

Throughout FaHN's eight-county region, residents of all ages are growing more of their own food. From 2010 to 2012, the number of active gardens grew by over 300 %, from 36 to 115! This includes community gardens, educational gardens and urban farms and is based on FaHN's annual survey. Tompkins County leads the pack with 55. *Go gardeners!*

Preschoolers Growing Their Own Food

Working in partnership with the Lisle Community Garden, AmeriCorps members with FaHN and the Rural Health Network helped expand gardens at the Whitney Point Preschool & Daycare. Young children learned about healthy eating through classroom activities and benefited from the garden's fresh produce which was added to lunches and snacks.

Kim Downs, Director, Whitney Point Preschool & Daycare: *"The children have thoroughly enjoyed the entire process of planting, growing, harvesting and eating the vegetables in our gardens. We all agree that the only*

thing more exciting than gardening is anticipating what we will grow next year! We can't thank our friends at the Lisle Community Garden, Rural Health Network, and Food and Health Network enough for helping us find our green thumbs!"

Seniors Growing Their Own Food

This year, seniors at three senior centers grew vegetables in *Grow Boxes*. From tomatoes and peppers to peas and herbs, seniors enjoyed planting, nurturing, harvesting, eating and even pickling their own produce. Congratulations to the

Grow Broome program of the Community Hunger Outreach Warehouse (CHOW) of the Broome County Council of Churches and their partners at the Broome County Office for the Aging. Residents with disabilities also benefit : The Care America program uses *Grow Boxes* as a form of recreational therapy for their patients with brain injuries.

Connor Mack, AmeriCorps member, CHOW:

"While working with seniors, I saw their faces light up as they were planting...telling me about their parents' gardens as kids".



Bringing Farms to Schools: Growing Healthy Children

Since the beginning of September 2013, Binghamton City, Johnson City and Owego-Apalachin school cafeterias have been serving fresh, healthy food grown in New York State. Tomatoes from Benton Berries in Penn Yan, N.Y. and apples from Reisinger's Apple Country in Watkins Glen, N.Y. successfully made their way to student plates thanks to a USDA Farm to School grant. Through the pilot program "Sustaining Farm to School in New York State," the FaHN is partnering with the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, Broome-Tioga BOCES food service and Broome County Cornell Cooperative Extension to procure more fresh, nutritious, local food for Binghamton area schools.

FaHN works to connect the schools with producers throughout FaHN's eight-county region and beyond who have the scale and product needed for a sustainable farm to school program. Collaboration co-facilitated by FaHN with FaHN members and partners like the Food Bank of the Southern Tier also help to overcome farm to school barriers like cost and transportation.

Estimated 12,000 pounds of local apples available to 6,000 students in 10 school cafes.

Rick Reisinger, Owner, Reisinger's Apple Country LLC: *"We are proud to provide apples for the children in Binghamton-area schools. The reduced costs associated with packing into returnable plastic totes and our partnership for delivery with the Food Bank of the Southern Tier have made this possible for us. Additionally, we have changed several of our agricultural practices and added refrigeration capacity to improve our ongoing efforts to provide quality apples as safely as possible."*



Farm to Institution Educational Meeting Series

Farm to Institution offers an exciting opportunity to strengthen the economic vitality of our regional food system. Connecting farms with institutional food buyers opens large new markets and allows consumers greater access to local, fresh, healthy food.

In 2013, FaHN held monthly educational meetings across the region to better understand the challenges and opportunities of Farm to Institution. Meetings explored topics such as GAP certification, farm to college, food hubs and procurement policies.

PLEASE JOIN US! BECOME A MEMBER OR SPONSOR TODAY!

Everyone is a stakeholder when it comes to healthy, locally grown food.

FaHN members represent the agricultural, food security, nutrition and public health, environmental health, sustainability, planning, economic development, business, educational, consumer and community sectors. Check out our website join us as a MEMBER or a SPONSOR.

FaHN is a coalition administered by the non-profit Rural Health Network of South Central New York, which is based in Whitney Point.

*Your investment in healthy local food through FaHN is tax deductible.
We welcome your support!*

Food and Health Network of SCNY

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Cultivating Knowledge, Building Networks and Catalyzing Collaboration

For the past two years in Delaware County, FaHN has helped organize a popular workshop for farmers and producers.

Andrew Flach, The Hatherleigh Foundation: *"In 2013, the Food and Health Network participated in the Growing Markets 2013 Conference and Annual Hobart Farmers Lunch, sponsored by the Hobart Rotary Club. More than 100 regional farmers and value-added producers attended the half-day event and enjoyed conversation, networking and panel discussions which featured leaders and innovators in the upstate food community who presented on such topics as food hubs and the opportunity for on farm value-added."*

The annual event is a vital component of the regional ag mission to exchange ideas and information and brings together partners from across the Catskills and Southern Tier, including FaHN, Farm Catskills, Pure Catskills and Rotary International."

Food Hubs: Agriculture's Economic Engines

We are excited about developing food hubs, which aggregate local foods and distribute them to buyers in the region. Hubs are creating win-win strategic partnerships with farmers, producers, distributors and purchasers, resulting in more jobs and better access to local food.

Finger Lakes Fresh, a Division of Challenge Workforce Solutions, is building a 18,000 square foot food processing facility in Groton, Tompkins County. The Finger Lakes Fresh Food Hub will purchase products from local farmers and producers, process and package the food, and use its marketing experience and distribution networks for sales to a range of customers. To reduce hunger and promote food security, the food hub will also connect local farms with the Food Bank of the Southern Tier, helping to bring healthy foods to low income residents.

In July, FaHN members toured **Lucky Dog Farm** in Hamden, Delaware County, to learn about the micro-hub being built in partnership with the **Center for Agricultural Development and Entrepreneurship (CADE)**. The micro-hub will allow small-scale producers to enter the growing New York City local foods market. CADE is currently working on Food Hub Development Projects in Delaware and Otsego Counties.

Healthier Food Procurement

Across the region the epidemics of obesity and chronic disease threaten to devastate our health and economy. These challenges are sparking new policies for institutions to serve healthier food. Broome County is a good example and is leading New York State in implementing nutritious food procurement standards developed by the NYS Council on Food Policy.

As part of a five-year grant awarded to the Broome County Health Department, Broome Central Foods, Meals on Wheels of Western Broome and YMCA of Broome County are working to ensure that the foods and beverages they serve are consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. FaHN and Broome-Tioga BOCES are also partners on the project.

FaHN developed a multi-faceted, year-long communications plan to spread the message and conducted a Community Assessment on Food Procurement Barriers. FaHN's August meeting also featured a panel discussion on "Food Procurement Standards Across Sectors." The meeting highlighted the success and challenges of several public and private institutions working to implement healthier procurement policies.

Claudia Edwards, Public Health Director, Broome County Health Department: *"Healthy eating starts with high quality, healthy foods that taste good, are reasonably priced and readily available where we live, learn, work and play. Agencies that purchase foods to provide or sell meals and snacks to the people they serve can help improve access to healthy foods and increase the demand for healthier options by adopting food procurement policies that are in line with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans."*



**Promoting Healthy Environments, Economic Vitality through Agriculture,
Strong Farm to Consumer Connections and Healthy People**