



FarmFresh.org Finds New Connections

New England group connects farms and their locally grown food with food buyers. Tom Meade tells about one recent FarmFresh.org event in Connecticut.

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© Tom Meade New England farmers are going beyond farm stands and farmers markets to bring their locally grown food directly to food buyers and consumers.

In Rhode Island, Noah Fulmer and Louella Hill, formerly students at Brown University, founded FarmFresh.org, a resource for farmers, restaurateurs, retailers and consumers to connect with one another -- online and in person.

The group's website offers consumers an opportunity to find farms, restaurants and stores that sell locally grown food as well as farm stands and farmers markets.

Examples of Farm-Community Links

Last winter, FarmFresh.org hosted a food forum at Brown University where government officials met with consumers and food producers to strengthen their bonds.

FarmFresh.org also offers links to other New England farming groups that promote the benefits of locally grown food.

In New Hampshire and Vermont, for example, farmers are bringing the food they produce to restaurants where chefs prepare dinners, and diners meet the people who grow the food they are eating.

Connecticut Pair Bring Diners to the Farm

In Connecticut, two advocates of locally grown food have taken the idea of connecting farmers and diners to the next level: Jonathan Rapp and Drew McLachlan are bringing diners to the farm.

Rapp, the owner of River Tavern in Chester, and McLachlan, owner of McLachlan's Feast Gourmet Market in neighboring Deep River, have launched a series of Dinners on the Farms, Friday evenings from the end of June to the beginning of October.

They bought a 1953 flatbed truck and equipped it with a six-burner commercial stove and oven, a smoker and grill, and tables for food preparation.

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Restaurant owners in Connecticut bought a truck to be their mobile kitchen. More than 125 guests attended the first dinner at Ashlawn Farm in Old Lyme.

The menu included locally grown meat, dairy products, vegetables, herbs, shellfish from a nearby aquaculture farm, and fish landed by commercial fishermen in Stonington.

Diners sat at long communal tables only a few feet from the potato patch where their spuds had been dug a day earlier.

Each guest pays \$85 which includes tax and gratuity, and 20 percent of the proceeds benefit a good cause, including farm preservation, food pantries and community charities.

About the Author

Tom Meade is a writer, beekeeper and vegetable gardener in Rhode Island.