



August, 2012 Food For Thought

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Calendar

August is Eat Local Month

August 5-11: Farmers' Market Week

September 5: New England Apple Day

September 25-26: Belknap County School to Farm Days at Ramblin' Vewe Farm in Gilford

[Contact us to register](#)

Local Food Terms

Farming practices: Conventional -

A conventional farm uses a variety of practices which may include synthetic inputs such as chemical fertilizers, pesticides and/or herbicides.

Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO)
These are plants or animals that have had

Greetings,

I hope you are enjoying your summer and for those of you who are teachers, that you are getting a well deserved break from the classroom. Summer is a wonderful time to enjoy the best of what New Hampshire has to offer - lakes, mountains, the seacoast, and of course agriculture.

August is Eat Local Month and there is no better time to take the opportunity to connect with farmers in your region. You can learn about events, farmer's markets, workshops and farm tours at the website <http://www.nheatlocal.org/> or if you are on Facebook, visit the Eat Local NH page at: <http://www.facebook.com/nheatlocal> . A listing of farmer's markets and farm stands can also be found at the NH Department of Agriculture, Markets and Food website: <http://agriculture.nh.gov/>

In recent years there has been a surge of interest in eating locally raised food. New words and acronyms have entered our lexicon so quickly that folks may be confused by the amount of information available. In this issue I'll provide some tips for wading through the food related labels that aren't found on the back of boxes and cans. We'll also get you thinking about the fall with a story of how apples are produced.

We're excited to announce that we will be holding a goods and services silent auction in November at the NH Farm Bureau's annual meeting. Currently we are soliciting donations for that auction

their genes altered to produce a desired effect that is meant to benefit people. They are sometimes referred to as "genetically engineered". Animal genes may be added to plants and vice versa. Common foods that contain GMOs are sugar beets, rice, corn, and soybeans. In the U.S., there is no labeling requirement for foods that contain GMOs.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) -

This is a pest management process which includes a combination of biological, cultural and chemical tools to reduce crop damage from insects, diseases and weeds. Pesticides are used minimally.

Natural -

There are no official standards to define this term. It is worth inquiring about what farmers mean if they are using that label. A non-profit organization, Certified Naturally Grown does provide standards and certification based on peer reviews and local networks. Check the Naturally Grown website for a listing of NH farms: www.naturallygrown.org.

Certified Organic - Organic certification ensures that a farm has met the standards set forth by the USDA's National Organic Program. These include no use of persistent chemicals, synthetic pesticides, genetic engineering, antibiotics or growth hormones. For more information visit the Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA-NH) website: www.nofanh.org.

Some farms practice organic standards without being certified, often because of their small size.

Free range -

Animals are given daily access to the outdoors, but are not raised primarily on pasture.

100% grass-fed - Animals eat only grass, from start to finish.

Grass-fed with grain supplement -

Animals are raised on pasture and a

so if you have a product or skill that you'd like to contribute to help raise money for our educational programs, contact me for more information. Donations to NHAITC can be claimed for tax deductions because we are a registered 501(c)(3) organization.

The fall will also showcase some new resources and opportunities, so stay tuned. In the mean time, enjoy the rest of the summer.

Ruth

Ruth Smith, Statewide Coordinator
NH Agriculture in the Classroom

To Market, to Market

There are many reasons to consume locally raised food as part of your diet. The benefits include fresher, tastier and more nutritious food; helping your local economy and contributing to the perpetuation of open space and working landscapes which are such an important part of our state's character, history and beauty. There are also many ways to become active as a consumer of local food, sometimes called a locavore or localvore. Here in NH, it is easy to access a wide variety of produce, meat, dairy products, fruits and more. Compared to other parts of the country, including the large agricultural states in the Midwest, we actually have a much higher percentage of food that is sold directly from our farmers to consumers.

So how do you make sense of it all? How can your local food experience in the summer help students connect with agriculture during the school year? See the side bar to get familiar with the terminology.

NH Commissioner of Agriculture, Lorraine Merrill was recently interviewed on NH Public Radio's The

controlled amount of grain is later added to their diet (they may be "grain-finished").

Pasture-raised - Animals are raised outdoors on pasture.

Consumer Opportunities

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)

This is a partnership between consumers and farmers in which members purchase shares of the farms production up front. This provides important cash flow for farmers at the beginning of their season and establishes a known market for their products. Members share in the risk of the growing season but also reap the benefits of the harvest. Individual farms may operate a CSA or, as the case with the Local Harvest CSA based out of Concord, they may represent multiple farmers with diverse crops. Products, pricing and disbursement procedures vary so inquire with a specific farm or group if you are interested in becoming a shareholder.

Farmers' Market - a gathering of farmers (legally must include at least two farmers) and sometimes other food producers and businesses where consumers can purchase directly from multiple vendors all in one place. New Hampshire now hosts more than 90 Farmers' Markets around the state. If your town doesn't have one, a town near you certainly will. Visit the NH Department of Agriculture, Markets and Food website for a listing of markets: <http://agriculture.nh.gov/>

Farm Stands - a store or venue at a farm where products from that farm (and other items) are sold. This enables consumers to visit farms and see first hand where and sometimes how their food is being produced. Some farm stands offer pick-your-own options as well.

Local - by definition from the NH General Court, any product labeled local, locally grown or native must be grown or produced within the state of New Hampshire. Other groups or businesses may define local differently, such as within a 100-mile radius of where it is produced. It's always worth

Exchange. She spoke about the rise in interest in local food, farmers' markets and many other topics related to the state of New Hampshire's agriculture. Listen to the program at: <http://www.nhpr.org/post/commissioner-lorraine-merrill-all-things-agricultural>



A great way to help students understand the importance of agriculture is to engage them in the local food movement. They can visit farmer's markets and farm stands with their families and meet the farmers who are raising their food. Encourage them to ask questions about the methods involved in planting, tending, caring for and processing crops and livestock. Consumers can also participate in the process through pick-your-own opportunities which are a great way for families to get outside, explore their communities and also bring home some wonderful food.

Teaching children about where food is grown can be easily integrated into geography lessons, economic explorations, environmental impact studies and more. Most farmers' markets run into at least early October so there is plenty of time during the start of the school year for a school sponsored, or family focused field trip.

The Apple Factory

by Deb Robie

This story is just one example of how teachers can use an



asking for clarification.

Pick-Your-Own (PYO) - Many farms offer an opportunity for consumers to harvest their own fruit or vegetables. This provides an even closer connection to your food, is often less expensive and can be a way to pick larger quantities for preserving. PYO comes with certain responsibilities as well. If you are unsure of the best way of picking a certain item, don't be afraid to ask and always respect the farmer's instructions about where and what to harvest. It's also important to call ahead for availability, ripeness and picking conditions.

A Sample of Local Food Resources

Capital Region including Concord and Merrimack County
Capital Area Farm & Community Connection
<http://www.merrimackccd.org/>

Kearsarge Area Eat Local (KAEL)
<https://sites.google.com/site/eatlocalkael/>

Lakes Region including Laconia, Wolfeboro, Belknap County and Grafton County:
Global Awareness Local Action (G.A.L.A)/Lakes Region Localvores
www.galacommunity.org

Pemi-Baker Valley Guide to Local Food - local food guide
<http://dacres.org/local/local-goods-guide/LGG2012.pdf>

Manchester area and Hillsboro County:
Manchester Food Co-op
<http://manchesterfoodcoop.blogspot.com>

Monadnock Region including Cheshire County, Peterborough and Keene :
Monadnock Farm and Community Connection
<http://www.cheshireconservation.org/MFCC>

Monadnock Localvores
www.hannahgrimes.com/Projects/Localvore

agricultural theme to teach science, math, geography, or even literature. NH Ag in the Classroom can help you find fun and exciting ways to teach your students in a way that will be engaging and memorable. Isn't that what teaching should be all about?

Somewhere near you, an apple factory is hard at work. We don't think of it as a factory because it's not a big building. No trucks rumble in with supplies. No smokestacks belch out gray clouds, and no whistles blow. Nobody even works there; the factory runs all by itself. Yet it keeps producing tasty little nutritious snacks year after year. It's that plain old apple tree, maybe right out in your backyard.

But it really isn't a "plain old apple tree"; it really is an amazing, efficient factory. Let me show you around. Around the month of October your apple factory is probably adding a last bit of sugar to this year's crop. Until then the apples (depending on variety) have been quite hard and may have tasted rather tart. Anyone touring the factory before mid-September or October (depending on where in the state you are) may have wanted to stop the assembly line to see what went wrong. But nothing has gone wrong; the visitors just came too early, that's all.

The sugars in the apples, until now, were complex sugars called carbohydrates. Now they're breaking down into simple sugars that taste sweeter to us. This break down of sugars, the last step in the apple assembly line, helps turn hard, tart apples into softer, sweet-tasting ones. The tree factory works this step best in the clear, crisp days of autumn.

If you look around the factory, you'll notice that the apples stored closet to the windows-those on the outer edges of the tree-are the reddest. That's because they get more sunlight than apples stored in the closets-close to the trunk.

Slow Food

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Seacoast Region including Portsmouth, Rockingham and Strfford Counties and parts of southern Maine:

Seacoast Eat Local

www.seacoasteatlocal.org

Slow Food Seacoast

www.slowfoodseacoast.com

Upper Valley including Hanover, Lebanon, Grafton County and parts of Sullivan County:

Shared Choices/Sunapee Localvores

Upper Valley Localvores

Valley Farm and Food

www.vitalcommunities.org

White Mountains including Carroll and Coos County:

Sustainable Tamworth

Sustainable_Tamworth@yahoo.com

State-wide:

NH Farm to Restaurant Connection

<http://www.nhfarmtorestaurant.com/>

Books

A Visit to the Farmers' Market

by Peggy Sissel-Phelan

This is a simple book that introduces readers to the idea of a Farmers' Market and what can be found there. Appropriate for grades P-2. ISBN: 0-9771010-0-2

All About Farmers' Markets - A Teaching Guide for Classrooms, Camps and Community Programs

by Peggy Sissel-Phelan

This guide provides lessons that address nutrition and agriculture by developing math and reading skills. It offers tips on planning a field trip to a farmers' market. Appropriate for grades P-3. ISBN: 0-9771010-2-9.

This apple factory is far busier than it looks at this time of year. Besides putting the final touches on this year's product, it's also making plans for next year. It's beginning to store supplies so that it will be ready to work next spring.

Look closely at the point where the apple stem is connected to the branch. Nearby you should see a little bud. That's the fruit bud for next year's apple. Everything needed to grow an apple is tightly packed inside. The supplies simply haven't been unpacked yet.

You see, this apple factory usually takes time off in the winter. The machinery needs a rest. But before it closes shop completely, it packs its next-year's supplies into weatherproof containers that we call buds. They won't be damaged when the heat is turned down. Buds on the apple tree have scales wrapped tightly around them to protect them from snow and ice. Deep within the buds lay all the apple-flower and leaf parts, just waiting for spring.

When spring warms the apple factory, the machinery turns on once more. Sap begins to flow inside the tree. Then supplies are unpacked; flower buds and their leaves begin to swell open. We know that the factory is working because small green leaves and clusters of apple blossoms dot the tree.

If you'd tour your apple factory in the spring, you'd be amazed at how efficient it is. Nothing is wasted. Every supply is there for a purpose.

First, a little cluster of leaves opens up. These are needed to make food for the tree, using sunlight.

As the leaves spread, little blossom buds appear. Each bud is enclosed by five tiny, green, leaf-like things called sepals. They protect the precious inner package. Soon the sepals push back,



At the Farmers' Market with Kids: Recipes and Projects for Little Hands

by Leslie Jonath and Ethel Brennan

This book profiles the fruits and vegetables available at most farmers' markets. With age-specific tips catering to children of all ages, plus 65 nutritious and kid-pleasing recipes, this cookbook makes it easy for everyone in the family to eat healthfully and live well. ISBN: 978-0811875028.

Farmers Market

by Carmen Parks

This short story tells of a child whose family brings their food to a farmers' market to sell it to customers. The American Farm Bureau has produced an accompanying educators' guide. Appropriate for grades P-K.

To Market, to Market

by Nikki McClure

Alternating between story and fact, this lovingly crafted picture book follows a mother and son to the weekly market. As they check off items on their shopping list, the reader learns how each particular food was grown or produced, from its earliest stages to how it ended up at the market. Appropriate for grades P-2. ISBN:978-0810997387

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and you can see scarlet petals that quickly turn pink or almost white as they grow.

Petals help make the apple flowers noticeable and attractive to bees. Apple flowers also produce a sweet juice called nectar to help attract bees. You'll see later where bees fit into the plans.

At the center of each apple blossom grow the supplies for making apples. Twenty little stalks grow in a ring around the base of the petals. On top of each stalk is a little, two-sectioned bag. These stalks-with-bags are called stamens. The bags hold pollen.

Right in the middle of the stamens grows a part called the pistil. The thick bottom part of the pistil, the ovary, will become the apple. Inside it are ten ovules, or seeds-to-be. The top part of the pistil is divided into five little tubes called styles. Each style has a sticky top called a stigma. The sticky stigma must be brushed with pollen. The pollen then travels down a tube to the ovary and join the ovules to make apple seeds. The fruit grows around the seeds.

Sounds complicated, doesn't it? But then most factories are.

Anyway, this is where the bees come in. By springtime their winter supply of honey is used up, so they're eagerly looking for more food. They visit the apple blossom to collect the nectar and to gather pollen to feed their little bees. As they move from flower to flower, their bodies become dusted with pollen. They brush against the sticky tips of the pistils, and some pollen rubs off. This is the process of pollination and it is essential for the development of apples.

If the pollen is from different varieties of apple blossoms, cross-pollination has taken place. Most apple flowers must be cross-pollinated, so the bees are really important. I suppose that you

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could say the apple factory does have
a few workers-the bees.

[Read more](#)