



**Cornell University**  
Cooperative Extension  
Schoharie County

173 South Grand Street  
Cobleskill, New York 12043  
t. 518.234.4303  
t. 518.296.8310  
f. 518.234.4305

**PRESS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release

Contact:

Regina M. Tillman  
Cornell Cooperative Extension Schoharie County  
173 South Grand Street  
Cobleskill, NY 12043  
Email: [rmt37@cornell.edu](mailto:rmt37@cornell.edu)  
Phone (Office): 518-234-4303  
Phone (Mobile): 518-229-1548

**Farm To School Project Coordinates Area Harvest Fest In Local Schools**

Cobleskill, NY - October 5, 2009 - This week, in collaboration with area school food service managers, the Schoharie Valley Farm to School Project celebrates Farm to You Fest! Officially known as New York Harvest for New York Kids Week, October 5<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> is designed by the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets as a focused time frame for connecting students to healthy locally grown foods. Additionally, it is intended for students to engage in discussions on the inter-relationship between agriculture, food and nutrition as schools support local farmers by making direct purchases of produce.

The School Food Service Managers involved in implementing area Farm To You Fest! activities, as members of a Farm to School Project Subcommittee, are: Amy Stuart (C-R CSD), Deborah Rosko (Berne-Knox-Westerlo CSD), Mary Jewell (Duanesburg CSD), Peggy Cammer (Gilboa-Conesville), Missy Simpson (Sharon Springs CSD), and Josie Ennist, Subcommittee Co-chairperson (Schoharie CSD).

In this harvest week observance, the local theme is “Try something new! Try something local!” To this end, school lunch menus are filled with numerous different types of locally grown produce; new recipes will be used that feature locally grown squash, potatoes, broccoli, garlic, and many more fresh items; farm and food facts are on display and are being distributed to students; and, new in 2009, PA announcements will herald the value of various fruits and vegetables each morning during the week. Featured produce items selected for the 2009 celebration in local schools are locally grown apples and potatoes.

Several local farmers will also visit a school in order to share their passion for growing food, including Raymond and Sara Luhrman of Fox Creek Farm in Gallupville NY, Kenyon Parsons of Parsons Vegetable Farm in Sharon Springs NY, and Richard Ball of Schoharie Valley Farm in Schoharie NY. Senator Seward is scheduled as a “guest server” at the lunch service at Schoharie’s elementary school, Thursday, October 8<sup>th</sup>, and NYS Ag and Markets Commissioner, Patrick Hooker, will read the Farm to School “PA Announcements of the Day” on Friday, October 9<sup>th</sup>, also at Schoharie CSD.

CCE Educator and Farm to School Coordinator, Regina Tillman states that, “the members of the Farm to

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School Project want to develop an appreciation in our youth for the value of a local food system.” She explains that the group chose to begin by making an abundance of produce available to students during Harvest Week, served in attractive ways. Menu items are identified as coming from local sources, often with the name of the farm listed right on the menu. “It’s our second year”, says Ms. Tillman. “One of our partner school food service managers is already taking this initiative from one week in duration to the entire month of October. This is substantial progress that benefits both our youth, and our farmers.”

For more information about the Schoharie Valley Farm to School Project, contact Regina Tillman at the Cornell Cooperative Extension in Cobleskill, NY, or call 518-234-4303.

**About Cornell Cooperative Extension:**

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