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PRESS RELEASE

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Global Representatives Of Agriculture Visit With Schoharie County Farmers

Albany, NY - Monday, August 23, 2010 - The International Center of the Capital Region recently hosted a global delegation on the topic of Agricultural Trade and Food Safety, that included a visit to Schoharie County. Delegates came from around the globe as part of a U.S. State Department foreign policy International Visitor Leadership Program, administered under the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, designed for current and emerging leaders. Representing 22 countries by individuals in government positions related to agriculture, along with several members of the U.S. State Department, the delegation was touring the US for three weeks.

The agriculture delegation's visit to Schoharie County on Wednesday, August 18, coordinated by Regina Tillman, MS, RD, Resource Educator of Cornell Cooperative Extension Schoharie County, began with a lunch at the Carrot Barn followed by tours of two local farms. The tours, conducted by Richard Ball of Schoharie Valley Farms, and Raymond and Sara Luhrman of Fox Creek Farm CSA, allowed the delegates to observe different, yet viable, approaches to small-scale agriculture. The Capital Region was one of only four areas in the U.S. that each delegate would visit in during their stay, and it included time with officials of NYS Agriculture and Markets, the recently opened Local Oceans Aquaculture System, and at Price Chopper headquarters.

The focus of the Schoharie County visit was to allow the delegates from countries as varied as Jordan, Taiwan, Australia, Moldova, Kenya, and Peru, to enjoy the area's beauty and bounty while learning about the local Farm to School Program. Ms. Tillman and local farmers were joined by other "citizen diplomats" with ties to Schoharie Valley Farm to School Project, including Don R. Smyers, Cornell Cooperative Extension Schoharie County Executive Director, Barbara Moore-Cootware, Middleburgh Central School District School Food Service Manager, Amy Shaw Stuart, Cobleskill-

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Richmondville Central School District School Food Service Manager, and Winnie Nelson, Schoharie County Farm Bureau President.

“ We were pleased to help host the group of international agricultural officials and welcomed the opportunity for them to see two county ag enterprises and talk one-on-one about the farm to school program,” said Don Smyers. “They were very interested in food safety and market channels,” Smyers added.

Regina Tillman, MS, RD, was tapped as program developer and point person for the “Walk and Talk” event in Schoharie NY due to her position as Resource Educator at Cornell Cooperative Extension Schoharie County. Through Ms. Tillman’s leadership, the Extension’s Schoharie Valley Farm to School Project has developed and built collaborative relationships with area schools, agencies, and local farmers such as Richard Ball and Raymond and Sara Luhrman.

Marilyn Janiczek, Family and Consumer Sciences Program Leader and local *Eat Smart New York!* Coordinator for Cornell Cooperative Extension Schoharie County, also explains that, “the positive feedback that I have received from several folks hearing of this U.S. State Department delegation’s visit reinforces how proud we, in Schoharie County, are of our agriculture and our farmers and our educational efforts. It is satisfying to see this important work recognized locally as well as internationally. “

About Cornell Cooperative Extension:

The Cornell Cooperative Extension educational system, established in 1918, enables people to improve their lives and their communities through partnerships that put experience, and research knowledge, to work. Extension is the largest informal education network in the world. Cornell Cooperative Extension Schoharie County provides equal program and employment opportunities.

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