



For Immediate Release: March 4, 2013

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CITY AND STATE OFFICIALS HOST 2013 NEW YORK FARM-TO-CITY EXPO

Panel discussions focus on increasing local foods purchasing to grow agriculture industry

Empire State Development (ESD), the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, and New York City Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn today hosted the 2013 New York Farm-to-City Expo at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center. This half-day forum — “Growing the Local Food Economy: Trends, Infrastructure, and Purchasing” — provided food businesses, organizations and local food system advocates the opportunity to learn more about public and private initiatives designed to meet the large and growing demand for locally produced foods and beverages. Opening remarks were provided by ESD President, CEO & Commissioner Kenneth Adams.

“Under Governor Cuomo’s leadership, we have made great strides in promoting and growing the agriculture sector in our state,” said ESD President, CEO & Commissioner Kenneth Adams. “From providing new market opportunities for the state’s agricultural products to making it easier to distribute locally farmed food, we are committed to supporting our local farmers, creating jobs and growing the economy.”

“This Expo is another example of Governor Cuomo continuing his efforts to promote agriculture across New York State,” said State Agriculture Commissioner Darrel J. Aubertine. “New York City is one of the most important marketplaces in the entire world and we look forward to bringing New York agriculture to the forefront of this internationally-renowned marketplace.”

“The Farm-to-City Expo was born out of the City Council’s FoodWorks plan – a bold blueprint for our food system designed to improve health, support the local food economy and promote sustainability,” said Speaker Quinn. “One way that government can support the growth of New York’s vital agriculture industry is to better connect local producers, processors, and buyers in

order to strengthen and create new markets. Events like this will help New York City maintain its place as a culinary mecca, and I thank our partners and our participants for making this event such a success.”

The forum consisted of three panels: Infrastructure, highlighting the development of critical infrastructure that enables the growth of the food system; Institutions, featuring the advances of those who are adding more local produce into the menus of institutions like charter schools and city agencies; and Restaurants, focusing on restaurant owners who are successfully buying and cooking with local produce. Participants representing each of these categories discussed challenges and best practices of buying local and how to better make the connection across the food system to bring more local food to the greater New York City area.

Following the event, attendees were encouraged to network with each other and the Pride of NY MarketPlace farm and food company exhibitors. The event was held in conjunction with the 2013 New York International Restaurant and Food Service Show, a three-day trade show for New York’s restaurant and food service industry, and the Pride of New York MarketPlace, a Pavilion comprised of New York State farmers, producers and processors.

In 2009, the City Council laid out a bold, comprehensive food system plan to create jobs, improve health and protect the environment. The plan called for a regional food business-to-business networking event. The goal of the Farm-to-City Expo is to target both regional producers and local businesses to facilitate networking and distribution. By connecting businesses at every step of the food system, existing firms grow and add new jobs, while new opportunities are created for new and emerging entrepreneurs.

ESD is New York’s chief economic development agency (www.esd.ny.gov). The mission of ESD is to promote a vigorous and growing economy, encourage the creation of new job and economic opportunities, increase revenues to the State and its municipalities, and achieve stable and diversified local economies. Through the use of loans, grants, tax credits and other forms of financial assistance, ESD strives to enhance private business investment and growth to spur job creation and support prosperous communities across New York State. ESD is also the primary administrative agency overseeing Governor Cuomo’s Regional Economic Development Councils and the marketing of “I Love NY,” the State’s iconic tourism brand. For more information, visit www.esd.ny.gov.

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