



GROWING NEW FARMERS POSTINGS

A FINAL REPORT ON THE GNF PROJECT

FEBRUARY 2005

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:
GNF IN A NUTSHELL
page 2

NOT JUST FOR
POLICY WONKS...
page 3

BUILDING
PROFESSIONAL SKILLS
page 4

DISTANCE LEARNING?
MAYBE NOT YET...
page 5

KEEP THAT
WEBSITE ALIVE
page 5

TO MARKET,
TO MARKET,
AND MORE
page 6

FARMER ADVISORS
GUIDE THE PROJECT
page 7

SHOW NEW FARMERS
THE MONEY
page 8

MORE THAN A LITTLE
KNOWLEDGE...
page 9

NEW FARMERS
ON THE LAND
page 10

RESEARCH ADDS
TO UNDERSTANDING
NEW FARMERS
page 11

SO, HOW DID WE DO?
page 12

THE GROWING NEW
FARMERS PROJECT
2001-2004
page 15

Inside...

**GNF DESK
REFERENCE**



MOVING FORWARD, LOOKING BACK

Four years? It's hard to believe that four years have passed since we launched the Growing New Farmers Project in January 2001. Since then, GNF has produced a cornucopia of products and services for new farmers. There is evidence of our many successes. We have raised awareness, created programs and products, promoted supportive public policies, developed tools and resources, produced research, and built our professional skills—all to help new Northeast farmers start and succeed in farming. You will read about all these achievements and much more in this final issue of Postings.

But the legacy of the GNF Project is far greater than the sum of its “deliverables.” The GNF Consortium and the unprecedented network of support for new farmers that we created together will live on, and will continue to make a difference for new farmers in the Northeast.

We have learned a lot, and we've shared what we've learned. We in the Northeast are leading the way in understanding and meeting the needs of new farmers. Farmers and service providers across the country look to Growing New Farmers. Several professionals have inquired about how to set up a comparable project in their region. (Answer: well, first you find \$1.7 million...) We've had requests for GNF materials from as far away as Australia and the Republic of Korea! One prospective farmer e-mailed,

“Fascinating that all that info on the GNF Website is available; however, I plan to farm out west. Too bad there isn't a comparable organization for that area.”

And, from a service provider in Oregon,

“I wish to re-subscribe to your “most excellent” listserv with my new email address. Keep up the good work! We out here in the Northwest are learning some great lessons from you!”

BUT WAIT! THERE'S MORE!

The best part is that the GNF Consortium will keep going. GNF's project evaluator, Trish Manfredi, an expert on consortiums, concludes that the GNF Consortium is well poised to continue to share resources, foster partnerships and seek new initiatives. (See related article, page 12)

Moving forward, the GNF Consortium will be led by a new Steering Committee, made up of a remarkable cross-section of service providers from all over the Northeast, as well as two of our GNF Farmer Advisors. As some of the leaders in the effort to support new farmers, these service providers and farmers are well prepared to provide stewardship and inspiration to GNF into the future:

John Berry, Penn State Cooperative Extension
Marion Bowlan, PA Farm Link

Rachel Dannefer, New Immigrant Farmer Initiative, Heifer International, NY

Ross Eddy, USDA Farm Service Agency, CT
Erica Fearn, Connecticut Farm Bureau

Judith Gillan, New England Small Farm Institute, MA

Deb Heleba, Land Link, VT

Beth Holtzman, VT Beginning Farmer Network

Dave Kimmel, NJ State Agriculture Development Committee and NJ Department of Agriculture

continued on page 2



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: GNF IN A NUTSHELL

THE HISTORY

Northeast new farmers became the focus of attention in 1998, when four Northeast service organizations created the Northeast New Farmer Network (NENFN). NENFN developed a conceptual framework for understanding who new farmers are and what they need to succeed. This work deepened our understanding of the diversity of new farmers and their broad range of assets and requirements. NENFN also produced an inventory of programs and services for new farmers in the 12 Northeast states, a process which pointed out the significant gaps in the existing service landscape. From this work, the NENFN partner organizations saw a clear need to strengthen the regional service infrastructure for new farmers of all types.

THE GRANT

In 2000, the New England Small Farm Institute (NESFI) collaborated with PA Farm Link, Cornell University, University of Massachusetts, and other key partners on a proposal to the Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems, a USDA/CSREES competitive grant program. A four-year grant for \$1.7m was awarded to NESFI.

THE PROJECT

As stated in the original USDA Grant proposal, the goal of the Growing New Farmers Project was *“to establish an effective, responsive and enduring service infrastructure that, through creative integration of research, extension and education provides future generations of Northeast farmers with the support and farming expertise they need to succeed.”* The project’s objectives were:

- ✱ To establish an ongoing Northeast service provider consortium and create a network of services, programs and activities that provide new farmers with the tools

they need for success.

- ✱ To enhance professional capacity of consortium members and expand participation.
- ✱ To produce science-based knowledge that will advance understanding of issues critical to the future success of new farmers.
- ✱ To educate policy makers and other stakeholders about policy issues that affect new farmers.
- ✱ To develop programs, products and tools that directly benefit new farmers.

THE PARTNERS

The GNF Project cast was truly operatic. All told, the GNF family included:

- ✱ Forty-seven sub-contracting organizations and consultants, including five land grant institutions
- ✱ Twenty-four Farmer Advisors
- ✱ Two hundred and forty-one individual Consortium members, representing 189 organizations.
- ✱ Ten Project Management Team members
- ✱ Eight Competitive Initiative Team leaders
- ✱ One hundred and eighty conference participants
- ✱ Fourteen mini-grant project leaders
- ✱ Four evaluators
- ✱ Over fifty GNF committee participants
- ✱ Two stressed-out business managers
- ✱ Three part-time core and support staff

THE OUTCOME

In a nutshell, the GNF Project overwhelmingly succeeded in meeting its goal and objectives. This final issue of *Postings* describes our successes as well as our lessons learned as we set about the business of growing new farmers. ✱

MOVING FORWARD, LOOKING BACK continued from page 1

Seth Kroek, Crystal Spring Community Farm, ME

Ginger Myers, Howard County Economic Development Authority, MD

Kathy Ruhf, Land For Good, MA/NH

Cathy Sheils, College of Ag and Life Sciences, Cornell University, NY

David Smith, Springfield Farm, MD

WHAT'S AHEAD?

Our most important priority is keeping the rich resources and networking ability of the GNF website alive and available to the region’s new farmers and service providers. As we’ve learned, websites are out of date as soon as you get them up. We’re working with consultants to revamp and refresh the site, while conscientiously updating the Directory information. To keep the website going takes funding. We’ll be continuing our website support campaign, drawing in Consortium members, other

service organizations and the commercial sector. Several commercial vendors such as Johnny’s Selected Seeds and Berry Hill Irrigation have signed on as founding sponsors. They understand that their future is tied to future farmers.

This spring we’ll be launching another major outreach effort aimed specifically at new farmers. We want to make sure that new farmers find GNF and our wealth of tools, information and connections. We’ll be reaching out through agriculture publications, the internet, and Consortium member organizations to be sure that “Growing New Farmers” remains synonymous with “one-stop-shopping” for new farmers.

We all should feel proud of all we’ve accomplished. Together, we’ve built a strong foundation. It’s up to all of us—as GNF Consortium members, service providers and new farmer advocates—to continue to serve and support our new farmers, the future of agriculture in the Northeast. ✱

NOT JUST FOR POLICY WONKS...

Jerry knew he wanted to farm in Vermont. He came from a farm background, but knew little about public policy. But it changed his life when he learned that the state of Vermont offered a tuition scholarship program for agricultural studies—funded by public dollars. And it made a crucial financial difference to Cheryl, a start-up farmer in Massachusetts, that the NRCS in her state offered a higher than standard conservation program cost-share rate for new farmers.



In addition to direct services, new farmers need supportive public policies that foster farming opportunities, remove obstacles to farm entry, and encourage farm development. By and large, new farmers fall below policymakers' radar screens. They often are not aware of the impacts on new farmers from certain policies in such far-ranging areas as land use, taxation, research and education, and financing. Ironically, sometimes the very policies put in place to help existing farmers may even have negative consequences for those trying to get started farming.

To increase awareness about policy barriers and opportunities, GNF produced the *GNF Policy Tool Kit*. The *Tool Kit* is a unique 80-page treasure trove of information and guidance for new farmer supporters and public policy educators. It offers ways to discuss and promote new farmer policies within states. It also asks some tough questions, such as:

- ✱ Should there even *be* public policies to support new farmers?
- ✱ For public policy purposes, who *is* a new farmer?
- ✱ What is the role of the public sector in supporting and assisting new farmers?
- ✱ In what ways do or should public policies limit, shape, and promote opportunities for new farmers?
- ✱ Should state revenues support new farmers?
- ✱ To what degree should new farmers be given preferential treatment?

Even among GNF Consortium members, there is a wide range of opinion about these issues. What do you think?

As lead author, Massachusetts consultant Mary Greendale brought her years of experience in state government to producing the *GNF Policy Tool Kit*. The publication includes many examples of policies that impact new farmers, gleaned from across the twelve Northeast states, and some innovative ideas that supporters might want to introduce. It offers concrete guidance about how to interpret policies, and how to reform them. Here's an example of the *Tool Kit*'s practical advice for policy advocates:

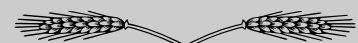
You are looking for "disconnects" between what policymakers declare in general information ("we want future farmers") and how a program works in reality (eligibility criteria that new farmers cannot meet).

The *Tool Kit* includes a "Policy Checklist," a primer on how to influence policy development, and a state-by-state, topic-by-topic inventory of policies that directly influence new farmers. The *GNF Policy Tool Kit* is available in hard copy, and online on the Tools and Resources page of the GNF website. ✱

WHY CARE ABOUT NEW FARMERS...

- ✱ Because between 1964 and 1997, the number of Northeast farms decreased by 46%.
- ✱ Because without new farmers, it is likely that farms will be lost to non-farm uses, like development.
- ✱ Because there are twice as many farmers over the age of 65 as under 35.
- ✱ Because only half as many people are entering farming as are exiting.
- ✱ Because 70% of U.S. farms will transition over the next 15 years, and without new farmers, our region is likely to lose those productive farms forever.
- ✱ Because up to 400 million acres of U.S. farmland will change hands in the next 20 years. Who will farm?
- ✱ Because to maintain our food and fiber production and increase regional food self-reliance, we need a continuing supply of farmers.
- ✱ Because we need energetic, well-trained agricultural entrepreneurs to protect the agriculture sector of our economy.
- ✱ Because new farmers will preserve and actively manage open land as working agricultural landscapes and maintain the beauty, wildlife habitat, water quality and general environmental benefits.
- ✱ Because we want to preserve, sustain and enrich our rural heritage and farm history.

—from the *GNF Policy Tool Kit*



BUILDING PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

As service providers we are often cautioned against a “one size fits all” approach to service delivery. We are constantly reminded that we (and our organizations) “can’t do it all.” And we’re frequently invited to attend professional training events. But it’s far less common to *systematically identify and address professional skills and knowledge gaps* to help us be more effective with particular audiences.

The Growing New Farmers Project offered such an opportunity to over 200 Northeast professionals drawn from GNF Consortium member organizations. Cathy Sheils designed and led GNF’s extensive Professional Development activities. Formerly the director of Cornell’s FarmNet Program, Cathy now works in the Admissions Office of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, where one of her focuses is to recruit future farmers to the school.

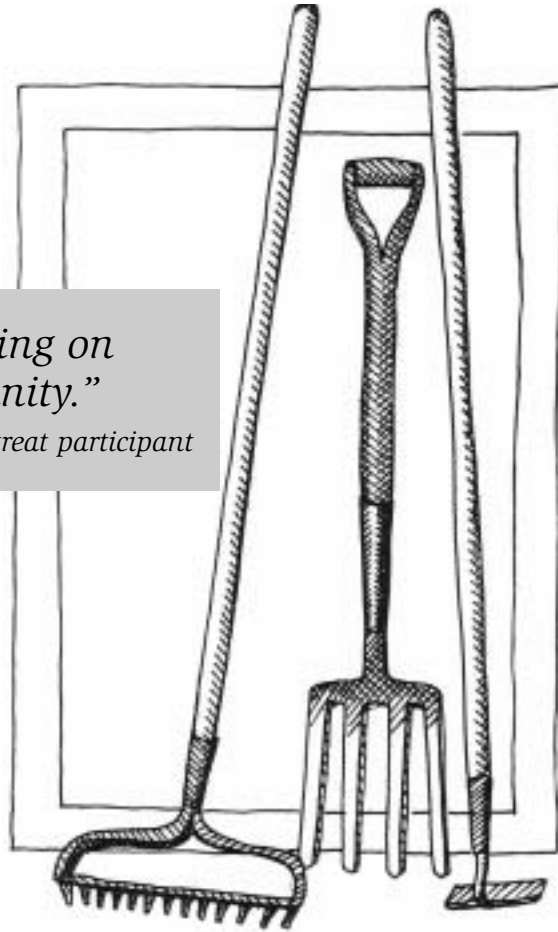
“I intend to do more public speaking on behalf of the new farmer community.”

—retreat participant

Cathy helped Consortium service providers prioritize their own training needs to work more effectively with new farmers. Providers felt that facilitating innovative learning, program development for new farmers, and networking, information and referral were top skill-building priorities. As to content, business planning, farm decision-making, and marketing were ranked highest. Professionals told us that face-to-face workshops and printed materials were the top methods to receive training, while web, phone and video-conferencing ranked low. Good to know (and relevant to another GNF activity): web-based distance learning was not the way to go.

Armed with this data, the GNF Professional Development staff and its 21-member Advisory Committee charted a training curriculum. Over 70 service providers attended four regional retreats in MA, NY, VT, and PA. The retreats focused on development of targeted programs for new farmers. Ninety percent of retreat participants said they used what they learned in their work with new farmers; 80% reported enhanced understanding of how to work with new farmers. “The retreat helped me think about adult learning models when planning and developing programs for new farmers,” said one participant. “I intend to do more public speaking on behalf of the new farmer community,” said another. Nearly every participant planned to develop a new program targeted to prospective or beginning farmers.

The Project’s two service provider conferences were another opportunity for professionals to come together—and so they did. At GNF’s second conference, held in March 2004, over ninety participants immersed themselves in two days of workshops and networking, and were treated to a heart-warming parade of new products, tools, and resources, literally handed over to the new farmers on our Farmer Advisor Committee. Thirty more service providers built their referral skills at a conference workshop on this topic.



One of the best ways to learn about program development for new farmers is to find out about successful programs. *Northeast New Farmer Profiles*, a GNF Professional Development publication, contains descriptions of twenty-three programs in nine states *specifically targeted to new farmers*. Responding to requests from Consortium service providers, GNF also produced a series of articles on topics such as “Addressing Gaps in New Farmer Programming,” “Making Effective Referrals to Help New Farmers,” and “Gathering and Using Case Studies.” These were posted on the GNF list serve, and are available in

the Tools and Resources section of our website.

Throughout the Project, Consortium members helped one another to design and strengthen programs for new farmers. As GNF Professional Development Coordinator, Cathy Sheils provided technical assistance to 23 GNF Consortium members. We produced the *GNF Technical Assistance Resource Directory* that lists 63 professionals who agreed to offer assistance in program development and delivery, and in specific content areas such as business planning or farm transfer. Nearly seventy percent of Consortium members participated in one or more GNF professional development activities. As a consequence of the GNF Project, over two hundred Northeast service providers are better able to serve new farmers. 🌱

DISTANCE LEARNING? MAYBE NOT YET...

Everybody's doing it... web-based education, that is. Well, maybe not everybody quite yet.

Everybody's doing it... web-based education, that is. Well, maybe not everybody quite yet. While there may be some audiences that actively seek and use online learning, Northeast new farmers and their service providers don't seem to be among them. The Growing New Farmers Project explored and promoted the use of distance learning for service providers to reach farmers and other providers, as well as for farmers to

share with each other. Although the response was less than overwhelming, we were pleased to work with several "early adapters."

With our innovative work with distance learning, the GNF website is ready when farmers and providers are! Our website has "conferencing capability," which allows people to create e-groups and to conduct threaded conversations around specific topics. For example, during the project, one group used this function to meet on the topic of adult learning. And, there has been a steady trickle of online exchange among new farmers in the "Community Conference."

Online learning has enormous potential. One of GNF's objectives was to build the capacity of service providers to use online learning in their work with new farmers. To do

this, we produced a workbook called *On-Line Learning: Sharing What You Know with New Farmers and Agriculture Service Providers*. This guide takes the user step-by-step through designing, constructing, and delivering an online course. And of course, the workbook is available online! According to NewStories, Inc., the web consulting firm who co-authored the workbook, this is the first tool of its kind.

The workbook was constructed with the help of a committee of GNF Consortium members who helped—yes, via online conferencing—make it completely accessible and user-friendly. In the process, we learned about the different types of distance learning formats: self-contained tutorial; lecture; seminar; and online learning group. We learned how to construct the curriculum and use the internet as part of course delivery.

It works! Ask Ora Rothfuss from the Wayne County (NY) Planning Department, who used the workbook to create his online course on agricultural easements. While we wished this component of the GNF Project had more fully "taken off," we did succeed in building both the human and technical capacity for new farmers and service providers to connect and communicate online. These resources live on at www.northeastnewfarmer.org, anticipating a future where more and more information-sharing takes place in cyberspace. ❄

KEEP THAT WEBSITE ALIVE

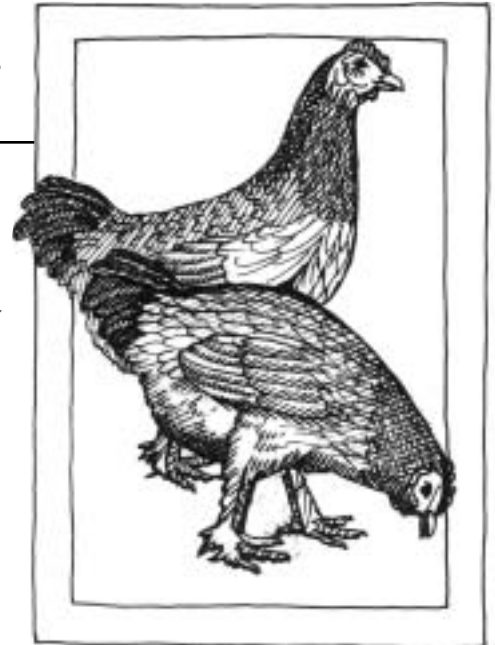
Of all the remarkable resources and services developed for new farmers through the Growing New Farmers project, perhaps the most important is our website, www.northeastnewfarmer.org. The GNF website is the only one of its kind in the U.S. Farmer after farmer tells us what a great resource it is. With annual visits by over 30,000 new farmers and service providers, the Growing New Farmers website is *the* place to find resources, help, and a supportive community.

As the original grant-funded GNF Project winds down, it's clear that we must continue growing new farmers. The best way to do that is to keep the website alive and thriving. To this end, the Project Management Team developed a multi-faceted strategy to sustain the site. As you might expect, we continue to seek foundation support, and are grateful to the Northeast Farm Credit AgEnhancement Program for their 2005 grant award.

Moving in a new direction, we are also turning to the service provider community and the commercial sector for support by launching a site sponsorship campaign. Members of the GNF Consortium have been invited to become site Supporters, backing up their programmatic investment in new farmers with a financial investment in the site. Our

new effort to recruit commercial vendors has already begun to bear fruit. Several companies have signed on as sponsors or advertisers.

By supporting the GNF website, service organizations and businesses can visibly demonstrate their commitment to new farmers. Not simply an advertisement, Supporter and Sponsor logos and linked "custom pages" on the GNF site let new farmers learn about the unique resources and services an institution offers for new farmers. In this way, these displays serve both an educational and an outreach function. To find out more about site Supporter and Sponsorship opportunities, please contact GNF at advertise@northeastnewfarmer.org! ❄



TO MARKET, TO MARKET, AND MORE

Marketing decisions are the cornerstone of new farm enterprise viability, while access to suitable markets is among new farmers' biggest challenges. All new farmers are faced with fundamental decisions about market strategy—which market(s) and products to develop and which market channels to utilize.

SELECTING MARKET OPTIONS

Now, there's a terrific new tool to help new farmers assess their market options. Dr. Robin Brumfield, Extension Specialist in Farm Management at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey has produced *To Market, To Market: A Workbook for Selecting Market Options and Strategies for Agricultural Products* for the GNF Project. This is a decision tool, full of "ask yourself" self-assessment worksheets covering the full range of market choices.

Wholesale and retail have advantages and disadvantages. Deciding which channel(s) to use to sell your products is important. You will want to match your belief system, personality, resources, goals, assets, market potential, and location with a market best suited to you. You may want to pursue some combination of wholesale and retail or more than one wholesale or retail market.

—from *To Market, To Market*

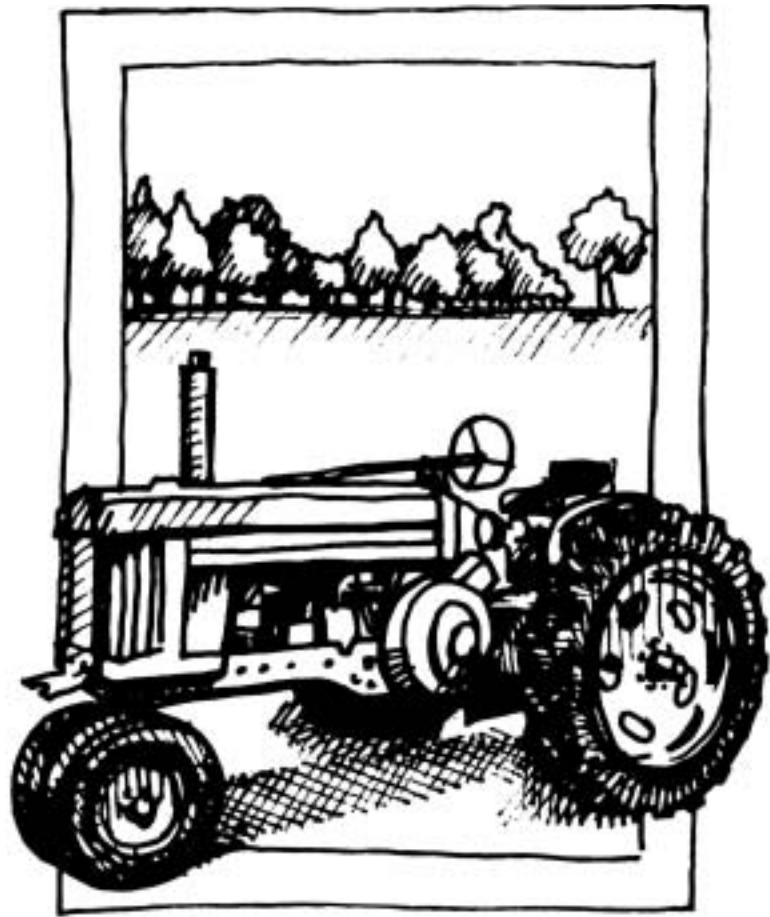
Terminal markets? Brokers? Distributors? Contracts? Auctions? Agri-tourism, CSA, pick-your-own, Internet sales? It's all here, plus more, with an analysis of advantages and disadvantages, a discussion of risk management, and plenty of resources to take the next step.

You will want to match your belief system, personality, resources, goals, assets, market potential, and location with a market best suited to you.

WORKING TOGETHER

New farmers, who often lack economies of scale, sufficient product volume, and network contacts, face considerable challenges breaking into new markets. By working together through group or collective strategies, new farmers can improve market access, increase efficiency, and help manage risks. GNF sponsored three pilot projects that explored innovative collaborative marketing efforts.

Beginner Farmers of NH increased market access for beginning farmers by creating a common table at area farmers markets, promoting use of farmers market coupons and investigating outlets for pooled product, including CSA's, natural food stores, specialty markets, and existing farm stands.



As new farmers, most BFNH members were producing small volumes which made it difficult to access markets. They saw the benefits that group buying offered in achieving price breaks unavailable to them individually. However, most BFNH members were not fully ready to take advantage of collaborative marketing strategies. They were still mastering the production end of farming.

Nonetheless, the BFNH Collaborative Marketing venture helped new NH farmers gain confidence in themselves and their products. They strengthened their support network and learned about their commodity and about farming as a business.

Nuestras Raíces, in Holyoke, MA, recently completed its Centro Agricola, an inner-city community center including a restaurant and market that features Puerto Rican specialty crops grown by new urban farmers. GNF supported the Centro's collective marketing efforts to develop relationships with local businesses to purchase crops through the Centro and produce bilingual point-of-sale promotional materials.

Nuestras Raíces succeeded in getting produce grown by new farmers into four local markets, as well as negotiating a produce-buying contract with the Centro's restaurant. The organization also helped new farmers by promoting local agriculture and the Centro Agricola through Spanish- and English-language posters, radio programs and newspaper articles.

continued on next page

FARMER ADVISORS GUIDE THE PROJECT

From the very beginning of the GNF Project, we knew we would succeed only if our work remained grounded in the real life experiences of the farmers we sought to serve. The GNF Project included farmers in planning and overseeing all project activities. We invited 24 farmers—aiming for two from each of the 12 Northeast states—to serve as a Farmer Advisory Committee to guide our work. No aspect of the project was considered complete without the review and comments of the Farmer Advisory Committee.

GNF's Farmer Advisors were a diverse, lively, and dedicated group. Most were new farmers; a few were well established. There was an operator of a 200-head, fourth generation Pennsylvania dairy farm, and a recently established Maryland farmer raising ducks, rabbits, goats, geese, turkeys, beef, lamb, pork—and grandchildren! A Massachusetts farmer on the Committee went from employed farmhand to a farm owner-operator over the four years she worked with GNF. Another has been farming and teaching animal science for over 30 years, and teaching and hosting workshops for new farmers on his upstate New York sheep farm. From flowers to honey, Jersey tomatoes to Jersey cows, GNF's Farmer Advisors represented a broad spectrum of enterprise type, size, management practices, and farming experience—just like our population of new Northeast farmers!

Farmer Advisors provided a sounding board for every aspect of the GNF project. In addition to offering feedback and insights on general issues facing the Project, individual Farmer Advisors were paired with every GNF project component. They offered input and a critical perspective against which to test assumptions, methods, and outcomes. They reviewed grant applications and made recommendations for our Competitive Initiative grants. They read and commented on drafts of workbooks, research surveys, website content, and policy recommendations. They spoke at GNF conferences. Three served on the GNF Project Management Team.

Every aspect of the Project and every product was influenced and improved by Farmer Advisors. We are grateful to each of them. 🌱

TO MARKET, TO MARKET AND MORE

continued from previous page

Taking another approach, **NOFA-VT** used GNF dollars to explore cooperative marketing through Community Supported Agriculture. In this approach, a new farmer could become part of a cooperative CSA, concentrating on gaining experience and expertise by producing only a few crops. NOFA-VT reviewed existing models, identified participating farms and products, evaluated distribution mechanisms and analyzed quality control issues.

The new farmers involved with the project learned a lot. “The most useful information ... was on how each CSA was structured and who did the organizing,” commented one new farmer. Another responded, “... working together creates opportunities. The extensions of cooperative farming are exciting, such as equipment sharing.” Though the case studies demonstrated many innovative possibilities for multi-farm CSA, the project found that in fact, farmers' markets might be a more viable cooperative model for new farmers than CSAs. Operating a successful CSA depends on quality and consistency, which new farmers may not yet have established. Shared tables at a farmers' market, by contrast, offers a more flexible way for new farmers to gain market share, identify profitable or popular crops, and relieve the pressures of consistent yield and quality incurred by a CSA farm. 🌱

Michael Baki
Genesis Farm, NJ

Ellen Clement
Highlands Sheep Dairy, NH

Amanda Ellis-Thurber
Lilac Ridge Farm, VT

Margo & Mike Ghia
Ewetopia Farm, VT

Sonia Gonzales
Rancho Gonzales, CT

Karen Grybko
Maple Lane Farm, NH

Les Guile
Walnut Grove Farm, NJ

Mark Guzzi
Peacemeal Farm, ME

Bill Harris
Harris Orchards, MD

Dr. Jim Hayes
Sapbush Hollow Farm, NY

Clair Hershey
Hershey Brothers Dairy, PA

Bryan Huff
Shyrwood Farm, PA

Barry & Nancy Kapplan
Bush Meadow Farm, CT

Chris Kelder
Kelder's Farm and U-Pick, NY

Seth Kroeck
Crystal Spring Community Farm, ME

Shane LaBrake
Accokeek Foundation
Ecosystem Farm, MD

Michael Lydon
Lydon Family Tomatoes, RI

Jennifer Mayo
Arbutus Hill Farm, NH

John Mitchell
Heirloom Harvest
Community Farm, MA

Beth Myers
Swallow Song Farm, ME

Adelia Pimm
Pimm's View Farm, NY

Stewart Ramsey
Ramsey's Pumpkin Patch, DE

Desiree Robertson-DuBois
Crabapple Farm, MA

David R. Smith
Springfield Farm, MD

SHOW NEW FARMERS THE MONEY

“I’m looking for grants or other programs that will help financially to start up my own farm.” “I’m interested in literature on assisting with financial start-up.” “We are interested in any agricultural loans, grants, etc.” “What opportunities would we have as beginning farmers to access low interest loans and other financial assistance programs to purchase a working farm? I’m finding this to be a confusing topic...”

Confusing topic? From these inquiries to the GNF website, it seems that new farmers might be having a hard time finding information about and obtaining financing to start new agricultural enterprises. And it turns out that service providers too could use more information to help their new farmer clients in the area of credit.

Lack of equity is an enormous barrier to many beginning dairy farmers.

A GNF REPORT

The USDA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Advisory Committee encourages the establishment of state beginning farmer loan programs. Yet, according to Don Hering at ACDS, a Maryland consulting firm, “Obtaining credit is not a significant barrier”—*except for new farmers with very limited resources.* ACDS examined access to credit for beginning farmers in a study commissioned by the GNF Project. The purposes of the *Access to Finances Report* were to stimulate state government to play a role in helping new farmers access financing and to encourage non-traditional methods of financing farm start-ups for those farmers who are not able to access traditional sources of credit.

In its report, ACDS assembled a comprehensive listing of funding sources—by category and by state—that are available to beginning farmers. While the list is long, it does point to gaps in funding availability, particularly in the area of higher risk capital. It recommends improving the knowledge and network for various sources of financial capital, and creating a process to continually evaluate funding programs. It recommends a higher profile involvement in agriculture by state economic development agencies, and encourages stronger federal-state partnerships by, for example, providing bridge loans in cases where FSA funds are not available.

PILOTS, MODELS AND INNOVATION

GNF offered small grants to four organizations to develop non-traditional financing opportunities for new farmers.

The grantees worked with agency, lending institution, advocacy organization, and farmer group partners. Their collective work is among the most creative and innovative in the world of farm financing.

Greenmarket’s New Farmer Development Project (NFDP)

reached out to immigrants in the New York City area who are interested in reestablishing themselves as farmers in this region. Often lacking in capital, language skills, and credit history, these farmers need assistance in obtaining relatively small but crucial purchases such as rototillers or fencing to launch successful agricultural enterprises. NFDP used GNF funds to create a peer-monitored New Farmer Revolving Loan Fund with \$15,000 in loan funds provided by Heifer International.

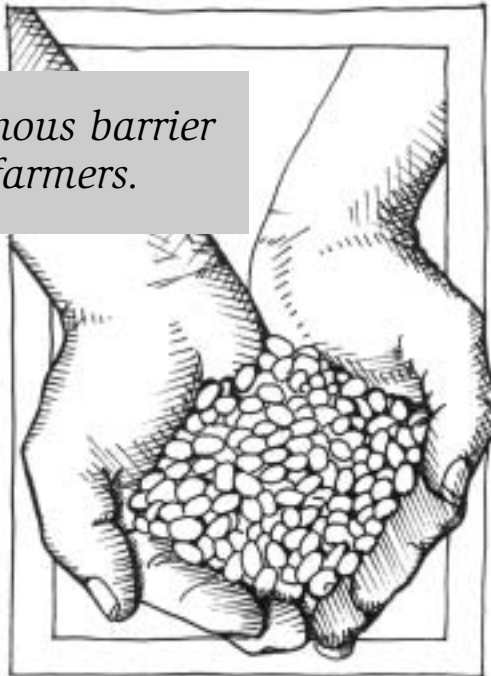
The NFDP and its Farmer Advisory Committee developed loan procedures and contracts—a complex and challenging process. As of this writing, two new farmers have completed applications for NFDP micro-credit loans—one to help pay for a nine-week course in biodynamic food production,

the other to purchase materials to build a chicken coop to launch an egg business.

Lack of equity is an enormous barrier to many beginning dairy farmers. **NY FarmNet** tested a cooperative-financed milk marketing contract. The contract creates bridge-type financing by fixing a moderate, stable price during the critical “start-up” period. If determined to be successful and self-sustaining, the model will be expanded to other new dairy farms in the Northeast.

NY FarmNet learned some important lessons from its investigation. Both producers and agribusiness providers need more milk marketing education. For a variety of reasons many agribusiness providers—including lenders—do not trust contracts. Lack of understanding or mistrust of the process proved a major barrier in recruiting both farmer and lender participants to this project. Milk price volatility proved to be another factor undermining the pilot project. Despite the challenges encountered by this innovative initiative, project leader Steve Richards remains committed to testing the model beyond the GNF grant period.

continued on page 14



MORE THAN A LITTLE KNOWLEDGE...

How will new farmers learn to farm? The rapid decline in farm numbers has disrupted the traditional inter-generational transfer of farming knowledge and skills. At the same time, most of our region's educational institutions are no longer in the business of "teaching farming."

Training and education programs for new farmers must be grounded in the day-to-day reality of farming. They must accommodate the entering farmer's existing level of knowledge, experience and skills. And they must be designed in formats that meet new farmers' diverse learning needs and preferences.

This is a tall order, but one that several GNF Project partners tackled with great success. Under the leadership of Judy Gillan, the New England Small Farm Institute (NESFI) recognized that prospective farmers—those exploring the possibility of a farming career—had very few tools to help them gather information and make decisions. The *Exploring the Small Farm Dream* suite of products is the first of its kind for this audience. The *Explorer* workbook has been flying off the shelves at the Institute; also offered were three four-session *Explorer* courses and several two-hour introductory sessions.

NESFI's ambitious staff also focused on the other end of the learning equation: the teachers. Organizations may become *Explorer* "service delivery partners" and, using the *Explorer Course Delivery Guide*, receive instruction and support to offer the *Explorer* course for their prospective farmer clients. Two train-the-trainer sessions were conducted.

NESFI also convened and launched a formal network of Northeast on-farm mentors and produced *Cultivating a New Crop of Farmers: Is On-Farm Mentoring Right for You and Your Farm?* and *On-Farm Mentors Guide: Practical Approaches to Teaching on the Farm*. The mentoring network employs a more structured approach on on-farm training and offers direct assistance to farmers who choose to become on-farm mentors.

MORE TOOLS IN THE BOX

Four other organizations produced educational tools for people who are considering a farming career but lack the tools or experience to make effective decisions about farm entry. These tools can be added to the shelf to help prospective farmers clarify their goals and values, technical skills, resource needs, and level of commitment before making the choice to enter farming.

CT Farm Bureau designed an educational program for prospective farmers, using and adapting the existing *Exploring the Small Farm Dream* self-assessment tools described above, developed by the New England Small Farm Institute. Called *Farming for Me*, the CT Farm Bureau conducted innovative prospective farmer-led study groups assisted by mentors and resource leaders. These working peer groups fostered both action and networking among prospective farmers.

One new farmer developed her business logo; a couple looking for land got some great ideas about what to look for and where. By the end of the workshop series, one beginning farmer had e-mailed to say that he was moving and starting his own organic farm.

The *Farming for Me* model will be packaged and promoted through the Farm Bureau organizations in each Northeast state.

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County expanded its popular *Farming Alternatives: A Guide to Evaluating the Feasibility of New Farm-Based Enterprises* to incorporate decision-making tools for prospective and start-up farmers. The expanded two-book series is now directed to several stages of farm business development, and addresses feasibility/business planning as well as re-strategizing, business expansion and farm business appraisal.

One significant impact of this project has been the tremendous interest of extension educators in the *Pre-Planning Guide*. Over 40 educators are using the guide as a teaching tool in workshops for beginning farmers and for one-on-one consulting. As of Fall 2004, over 160 farmers had participated in workshops introducing the new workbook.

The Savory Center offers farmers a comprehensive decision-making, goal setting, and enterprise-monitoring process known as Holistic Management (HM). This model considers the social, environmental, and economic consequences of decisions on present and future generations. The Savory Center produced a publication of case study summaries from 14 Holistic Farm Plans developed by new and established farmers in the Northeast. This document will be a resource for prospective farmers interested in learning how new farmers are using HM to plan and manage their farm enterprises.

Already, over 200 hard copies of *Improving Whole Farm Planning through Better Decision-Making* have been distributed. The publication is also available for free download on the Savory Center and GNF websites.

continued on page 14

NEW FARMERS ON THE LAND

Among the most frequently asked of “Frequently Asked Questions” through the GNF website are those from prospective or beginning farmers trying to find and get onto farmland: “Where can I find land?” “How will we ever be able to afford to buy a farm?” “Are there grants to help me buy land?” “Can you help us find a farm to rent?” While there are no silver bullet answers, there are—thanks in part to GNF—more possibilities.

Without new farmers to manage our region’s farms, our productive landscapes are lost to non-farm uses. Yet the obstacles to accessing farmland are substantial. No one knows this better than Marion Bowlan, executive director of Pennsylvania Farm Link. One of PA Farm Link’s GNF-supported tasks was to strengthen the region’s land linking programs.

There are six “farm linking” programs in the Northeast, more than in any other region of the U.S. While they differ in organizational structure, each facilitates farm transfers by linking farm seekers and owners. PA Farm Link conducted two training programs for them, focusing on topics ranging from database management to developing case studies, from coaching and referral skill-building to fundraising. A resource database of over 300 titles relating to farm transfer was produced.

The farm transfer process is complex and each situation is unique. One of the best ways to learn about farm transfer is with case studies. The linking programs produced six case studies about Northeast farm transfers that are now available on line. Each program also carried out specific activities to build capacity. For example, Land Link Vermont’s Advisory Committee attended a national meeting on farm transfer. NY Farm Link developed a promotional campaign. New Jersey Farm Link trained professionals in farm transfer and published a case book featuring nine NJ farm transfer stories.

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

Sometimes, farmers face tensions between short-term economic realities and longer-term land stewardship objectives. This dilemma can be especially problematic for new farmers for whom economic survival during development is especially pressing. Three competitive initiative mini-projects helped new farmers address both economic viability and environmental sustainability.

The Intervale Foundation (IF) in Burlington, VT believes that alternative farmland tenure agreements that focus on equitable non-ownership, gradual asset transfer, and affordability can also meet stewardship objectives. In collaboration with farmland owners and new farmers, IF produced *Holding Ground: A Guide to Northeast Farmland Tenure and Stewardship*, a comprehensive guide that links alternative tenure models with land stewardship standards to address a range of sustainability goals. The guide includes chapters by fourteen authors, worksheets, case studies and sample documents.

continued on page 14



DREAM COME TRUE...

Ray wanted to grow ethnic specialty vegetables for farmers’ markets in Danbury. CFT matched him with the Weantinogue Land Trust, which is leasing him 10 acres of land at no cost for five years. He also obtained a lease on a privately-owned eight-acre parcel near his home. The project provided Ray with technical assistance from NOFA, First Pioneer Farm Credit, and NRCS. The project enabled Ray to reach a long held goal. He writes, “The project has made a life long dream possible ... I’m doing what I always wanted to do: be a farmer.”

—from the Hartford Food System

RESEARCH ADDS TO UNDERSTANDING NEW FARMERS

by Sandy Bell, Gil Gillespie, and Sue Ellen Johnson

Three GNF-supported research projects investigated several factors that contribute to the establishment and success of new farms. They focused on: learning approaches; effective decision-making; and a comparison of farm transfer systems.

Alexandra Bell's (University of Connecticut) "Effective Farmer Learning Models Study" is scheduled for publication in the *Journal of Extension* and will be presented at the American Educational Research Association annual conference. Bell, with Eileen Eckert, added valuable findings to our understanding of beginning farmer learning approaches:

- ✿ New farmers in the Northeast use a variety of learning programs during the course of their learning.
- ✿ Northeast new farmers are likely to be pragmatic, and both self- and other-directed in utilization of learning programs.
- ✿ New farmers in our region assess the value of a learning opportunity based in a perceived match between his or her personal mental model of farming and the mental model portrayed by an instructor and/or program.
- ✿ As currently designed, some programs excel at supporting specific types of learning, yet no one type of learning program in the Northeast excels at supporting the development of all the types of knowledge and skills new farmers need to be successful.

Bell recommends that to better meet the learning needs of new farmers, learning programs that have complementary or balancing characteristics form alliances and partnerships. For example, complementary programs for individuals entering farming as a first career include youth programs, a four-year college degree program, and an apprenticeship program.

Complementary programs for individuals entering farming as a second career or beginning farmers with no farming background include cooperative extension services, organization-sponsored workshops and conferences, and farmer-to-farmer programs.

Gil Gillespie (Cornell University) and Sue Ellen Johnson (New England Small Farm Institute) investigated beginning farmers' decision-making in a comprehensive study that involved a written survey and personal interviews. The data are being analyzed and will be available on the GNF website later this year.

A questionnaire to beginning farmers in the Northeast generated nearly 100 responses representing a wide diversity of farming models and experiences. Among respondents, twice as many farmers were in their first

five years of farming as in their second five years of farming. This suggests that the general perception of a new farmer may not extend to the full ten-year USDA definition.

In addition to the questionnaire, members of thirty-six beginning farm households were interviewed in person about their farm start-up decisions. Johnson and Gillespie originally sought to interview equal numbers of start-up farmers who were still farming and those who had left farming, but those who had exited proved difficult to locate and recruit. In general, more successful start-ups appear to have:

- ✿ obtained the needed information;
- ✿ devised enterprises that were appropriate in type and scale for the financial, natural, and human resource base and local context;
- ✿ discerned problems early and restructured effectively;
- ✿ received appropriate mentoring; and
- ✿ had occasional good luck.

Preliminary analysis of this study reveals great diversity of attitudes toward farming and farming experience among the respondents. This suggests that services need to be targeted towards specific types of new farmers.

Another finding is that for the most part beginning farmers do not perceive that

public policies at the state or federal levels effect their farming operation.

Jonathan Michael Thomas (a doctoral student at Temple University)

contracted to study farm succession.

Thomas failed to complete the work and the contract was terminated.

Bell, Gillespie and Johnson are now formulating a set of policy recommendations based on the research findings. Preliminarily, they suggest that there appears to be a need and reason for targeting particular services to specific types of new farmers, for example those with high levels of infrastructure investment or those with a well-defined/strict business orientation. These research-based policy recommendations will be posted on the GNF website and disseminated to professional and policy audiences. ✿

Preliminary analysis of this study reveals great diversity of attitudes toward farming and farming experience among the respondents.

SO, HOW DID WE DO?

by Trish Manfredi, project evaluator

How do you assess a project like Growing New Farmers? Spanning four years, the Project engaged service providers from government, education and non-governmental sectors in twelve Northeast states. More than 200 agencies are listed in the GNF Directory and nearly 200 people attended the two Project conferences. Dozens of activities were carried out across the region.

To evaluate the impact of GNF, we used multiple strategies—mail, e-mail and web-based surveys, observations, written analyses, etc. But rather than list just statistics, I'd like to share my reactions as I reviewed the evaluation materials. I was struck, for example, by some parallels between service providers and beginning farmers.

This is truly “seeding the earth”—growing both improved service from providers and empowered new farmers.

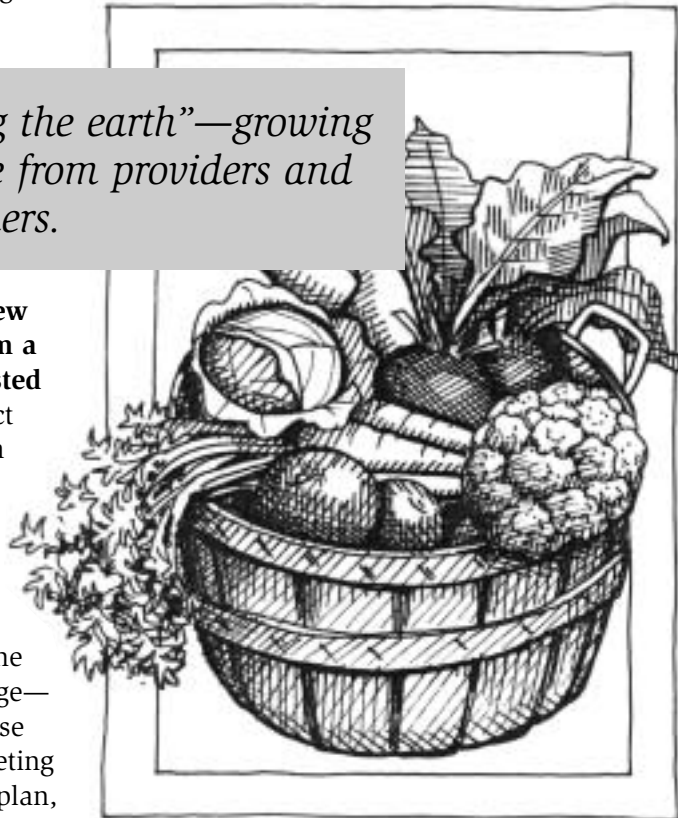
Both service providers and new farmers benefited greatly from a small amount of money invested in their work. The GNF project provided mini-grants through a competitive process to fourteen service provider organizations, resulting in new products, services and lessons learned. New farmers also benefited from small investments from the Project—resources or knowledge—which enabled them to purchase needed equipment, try a marketing approach, produce a business plan, lease land, etc., taking a needed step toward fulfilling their goal of farming. This is truly “seeding the earth”—growing both improved service from providers and empowered new farmers.

Both providers and farmers benefited from having a wide array of resources available. Service providers worked together to create new tools such as guidebooks, curriculums, and new loan programs. Sixty-three percent of those answering the final survey used the Directory of Programs and Services on the GNF website and 58% made more effective referrals. Among the lasting accomplishments of the Project noted by final survey respondents were “providing one-stop shop for new farmers” and “providing, via the website, the vast array of resources available.” Of all the ways service providers participated in the GNF Consortium, using the GNF website was noted by 84% of the respondents—the largest percentage by far.

Both providers and farmers benefited from networking among their peers. The final survey respondents rated the GNF goal of “Foster partnerships, networking and resource-sharing among an active, enduring network of service providers through the GNF Consortium” as nearly fully achieved (with an average rating of 3.7 out of 5), and noted the development of the network as a lasting accomplishment. As one respondent put it, “holding the network together long enough to give it legs.” This was echoed by another respondent: “There were those of us out there who had been offering focused services to new farmers, but GNF helped build the momentum and excitement about serving new and beginning farmers.” And another respondent noted that “the partnerships and networks are always the most lasting accomplishments of any project as they continue to grow after projects are completed.”

New farmers found an entry point into the networks of farming through participation on committees, at workshops, and through facilitated interactions with the range of agricultural agencies, businesses and lenders. Examples of Competitive Initiative projects where this was evident include the New Producer Milk Marketing Contract, Centro Agricola Project, and Growing Direct Markets in Vermont.

Both service providers and new farmers benefited from interactions between them. Service providers were quite emphatic that the most important thing learned was that “the new farmer audience is complex,” “how many variations there are of new farmer,” “‘new farmers’ is not a monolithic concept... you can't think of ‘new farmers’ as just one demographic type.” Other important learnings included: “finding and reaching [new farmers] is a challenge;” “new farmers may not know what they need;” and “engaging them in participatory learning...interactive education that is focused on their needs and questions.”



From the surveys of GNF Consortium members, I gathered that:

- ✱ Respondents were much more likely to be highly aware of issues facing new farmers (90% plus) as a result of GNF activities than before (60% or so).
- ✱ Over 95% now rated their knowledge of effective programming for new farmers as high, versus 60% or so prior to GNF efforts.
- ✱ Nearly 90% think that as a consequence of the GNF Project, the availability of services and resources for new farmers has greatly improved or improved somewhat.
- ✱ Of the five original project goals, “develop new programs, products and tools to directly benefit new farmers” was rated 3.82 on a 5-point scale where 5 indicated that the goal was fully achieved.

One of the most often mentioned “important things learned” as well as “lasting accomplishments” of GNF was “establishing a common language to differentiate between the various stages of new/beginning farmers.” This was described as important because it helped providers develop more specific curriculum and other products and programs, and because it helped farmers identify stages in their own development.

As with any project, not everything planned is accomplished or accomplished the way it was planned. The final reports of the competitive initiatives ended with a section on lessons learned. Several providers discovered that their projects were much more complex than they had anticipated. Several projects found recruiting new farmers challenging; other discovered that a successful model, such as a CSA, may not translate into a successful enterprise for new farmers. Some projects—like some beginning farm operations—were just too small to be viable in the long term. Other projects, much like farming, discovered that more time must be spent in research, planning, marketing, than in actually delivering the program (or growing the crop). Several projects discovered that new farmers did not have the time to volunteer to develop a collaborative or a new group market. And while traditional agencies were learning more about new farmers and their unique needs, barriers still exist that deter new farmers.

And that brings me to the final lesson—time. In all most all the reports from the Project components, time was a major factor in completing the activities. Everything took longer than expected! Providers and farmers were busy with multiple demands on everyone’s time. In some cases, the project implementers ran into unforeseen barriers that meant that new paths had to be tried in order to reach the stated goal. Such changes took more time. Another aspect of the time issue is that although activities may have been completed, the true impact was not measurable within the project timeframe—if measurable at all. The true outcomes of GNF will be seen over the coming years:

more new farmers able to get into markets and onto farmland; farmers more able to finance their new operations; more people entering farming in the Northeast.

At the first GNF conference, we grappled with the concept of Consortium. Was it with a small ‘c’ or a large ‘C’? Did we mean *information sharing, cooperation, coordination, or collaboration*? When I examine the myriad activities undertaken by the members of the GNF Consortium, I find many would be classified as information sharing and cooperation. There are fewer activities that I would describe as coordination, probably due to the breadth of the Northeast region. Even harder to achieve is the “seamlessness” that leads to a true collaboration being greater than the sum of its parts. Collaboration is an elusive goal—something to always keep striving for.

Throughout all the reports, the surveys and the interactions, there emerges a **tremendous sense of community** which is one indicator of a successful consortium. One Consortium member expressed what was important for the future: “Maintain a collaborative spirit and continue to work together...to ensure efforts to continue to move forward.” It is this spirit that expresses what the GNF Consortium is, and what it will continue to be. Just as a farmer’s work is never done, the work of the Consortium will continue—to “stay in touch, keep meeting, keep the information flowing, utilize the resources that came out of this Project and keep passing them on to other new farmers and those who want to see them succeed.”

In closing, I think the following comment from the final survey sums up the impact of the Growing New Farmers Project and the GNF Consortium: “Loudest voice in the country for new farmers.” ✱

DID YOU KNOW...

**Number of Northeast farmers
under 35 years old: 9,980**

**Number of Northeast farmers
under 25 years old: 1,234**

**Number of Northeast farmers on current farm
for 10 years or less: 46,251**

**Number of Northeast farmers on current farm
for 2 years or less: 5,971**

SHOW NEW FARMERS THE MONEY

continued from page 8

Chester County (PA) Economic Development Council (CCEDC) sought to direct existing (“traditional”) state loan programs to non-traditional (new farmer) customers. It also worked with local banks and other community partners to develop two new loan programs for new agricultural entrepreneurs.

In its New Farmer Enterprise Loan Program, CCEDC created a total marketing package of lending opportunities for new farmers. It packaged the Pennsylvania Next Generation Farmer Loan Program with three other loan programs whose parameters had previously eliminated beginning farmers from the playing field. These loans are: *The Machinery and Equipment Loan Fund for New Farmers* (MELF); *Small Business Administration 504 for New Farmers* (SBA 504); and *Small Business First Fund for New Farmers* (SBFF). CCEDC was thus equipped to provide four new loan programs to new farmers. CCEDC developed a brochure and informational materials and promoted this loan program package through Pennsylvania.

The **Maine Department of Agriculture** brought together its partners from non-profit and private lending institutions in Maine to explore ways to provide operating loans to new farmers. They focused on developing a new revolving operating loan program through the Community Reinvestment Act. They created a vibrant brochure that details financing options for beginning farmers and outlining how new farmers can become credit-worthy. ❁

MORE THAN A LITTLE KNOWLEDGE...

continued from page 9

Where *do* new farmers find information? How about the library? **Cornell Cooperative Extension of Washington County** set out to test the utility of local libraries—and librarians—as fact-finding resources for new farmers in the Hudson Valley (NY) region. CCE Washington partnered with the Southern Adirondack Library System to create a readily duplicable agriculture library section of materials and references focused on farm start-up. They also developed a training protocol for librarians to assist new farmers to develop their research and information retrieval skills.

The result is an incredible on-line compendium of hundreds of linked resources designed in a course format. The *Introduction to Farming with Growing New Farmers* course is also available as a CD. There is a section for librarians on ag libraries and how to set up an agricultural collection. The course includes sections on “an introduction to farming in your area,” “running a small agricultural business,” introductions to various enterprise types, and an extensive glossary. The participating libraries hosted workshops to introduce new farmers to the library and to farming resources. Participants were enthusiastic about the library materials once the SALS library loan system was explained. The workshop series is easy to replicate. The advantage of the web-based information and CD over a book is the information can easily be customized, updated, and changed. ❁

NEW FARMERS ON THE LAND

continued from page 10

This publication is the most comprehensive of any literature on the subject, and the only work of its kind to address non-ownership tenure and stewardship standards. The farmer reviewers were extremely positive about the publication. At the same time, private land holders, land trusts, and municipalities will have the opportunity to consider new win-win solutions to make farmland accessible, affordable and well cared for.

The Hartford Food System created the Connecticut Sustainable Farming Initiative that engaged CT land conservation and farming groups, USDA, and Farm Credit in a partnership to connect new farmers with farmland protected by area land trusts. The partners recruited new farmers and created long-term lease agreements, sustainable farming practices, and farm management plans. The Initiative demonstrated a multi-sector team approach to preserve working lands, help new farmers develop new skills and resources and economically viable new farming enterprises, and to promote sustainable agricultural practices.

Pennsylvania Farm Link conducted twelve “Passing on the Farm” educational workshops on farm succession planning. Most farm families have not adequately prepared to transfer their farms. For participating farm families, the workshop “made us realize we need to start working on transferring the farm NOW!” Other participants stated, “It opened our eyes to what’s involved;” and “It got the ball rolling; we got a new lawyer!”

PA Farm Link also wrote 24 monthly columns on farm start-up and farm transfer for *Lancaster Farming*, and in partnership with NRCS, American Farmland Trust, and Penn State Cooperative Extension, created several new publications on farm transfer issues, focusing on the relationship among farm transfer, farmland preservation and conservation practices and programs. These products are available on GNF’s website. PA Farm Link also produced three new fact sheets on “Treating Children Equitably,” “Selecting an Attorney,” and “Farmland Protection Programs.” ❁



THE GROWING NEW FARMERS PROJECT 2001-2004

PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM

John Berry, Penn State Cooperative Extension
Marion Bowlan, Pennsylvania Farm Link
Robin Brumfield, Rutgers University, NJ
Valerie Gonlon, Maryland Department of Agriculture
Seth Kroek, Crystal Spring Community Farm, ME
Trish Manfredi, project evaluator,
University of Massachusetts
Beth Myers, Swallow Song Farm, ME
Cathy Sheils, FarmNet, Cornell University
David Smith, Springfield Farm, MD

PROJECT STAFF, NEW ENGLAND SMALL FARM INSTITUTE, MA

Kathy Ruhf, project director
Gaby Immerman, project assistant
Warren Hubley, administrative assistant
Kim Gromko and Joanne Sunshower,
business managers

WITH DEEP APPRECIATION TO GNF PROJECT PARTNERS:

Ann Adams, Cynthia Barstow, Sandy Bell,
John Berry, Rachael Bothwell, Marion Bowlan,
Thomas Bunnell, Jody Butterfield, Robin Brumfield,
Lindsay Carter, Anita Cassard, Rick Chandler,
Mary Child, Colleen Converse, Jerry Cosgrove,
Rachel Dannefer, Rick DeMark, Marsha DesCartes,
Eileen Eckert, Erica Fearn, Cole Genge, Ann Gibson,
Stephanie Gilbert, Judith Gillan Gil Gillespie,
Kate Granger, Mary Greendale, Deb Heleba,
Don Hering, Fred Huneke, Dave Kimmel,
Robert Kittle, Eleanor Jacobs, Sue Ellen Johnson,
Karen Kerney, Lindsay Ketchel, Ruth Maltz,
Trish Manfredi, Bill Maxwell, Maureen Maloney Robb,
Vachel Miller, Peter Nitzsche, Rich Parker,
Susie O'Keefe, Steve Richards, Daniel Ross,
Monika Roth, Sujata Roy, Matt Rulevich,
Anne Marie Sands, Barry Sands, Barry Scheckley,
Cathy Sheils, Gabriel Shirley, Gary Smith,
Bob Stilger, Eric Toensmeier, Elizabeth Wheeler,
Cameron Weimar, Michelle Wiggins,
Andrea Woluschuk, and Enid Wonnacott.

The Growing New Farmers Project gratefully acknowledges the support of the USDA Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems grant program.

The material in this report is based upon works supported by the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture under Agreement No. 00-52101-9706. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the view of the USDA.

CONTACT INFO:

Growing New Farmers
P.O. Box 11
Belchertown, MA 01007

Phone/fax 413-323-9878

info@northeastnewfarmer.org
www.northeastnewfarmer.org



Printed on recycled paper

THE GROWING NEW FARMERS CONSORTIUM

CONNECTICUT

CT Agricultural Experiment Station
CT Farm Bureau Assoc.
CT Farmland Trust
CT State Department of Education
Foodshare, Inc.
Hartford Food System
NOFA-CT
UConn Cooperative Extension System
UConn Soil Nutrient Analysis Lab
UConn, Adult Learning Program
USDA Farm Service Agency

DELAWARE

DE State Univ., Small Farmer
Technical Assistance & Outreach
Program

MAINE

Hancock County Planning
Commission
ME Dept. of Agriculture, Food,
& Rural Resources
ME Farm Bureau
ME Organic Farmers & Gardeners
Assoc. (MOFGA)
ME Women's Agriculture Network
The Morris Farm Trust, Inc.
New American Sustainable
Agriculture Project
Univ. of ME Cooperative Extension
Wayback Farm

MARYLAND

Accokeek Foundation
Garrett County Econ. Devel. Authority
Howard County Econ. Devel.
Authority
MD Dept. of Agriculture
MD Organic Food & Farming Assoc.
The Small Farm Institute, UMD
So. MD RC & D
Univ. of MD Eastern Shore
Coop Extension
Worcester County Econ. Devel. Corp.

MASSACHUSETTS

Bakewell Reproductive Center
Berkshire Grown

Biodynamic Farmland Conservation
Trust, Inc.
Cape Cod Cranberry Growers Assoc.
Chefs Collaborative
Codman Community Farms
Community Involved in Sustaining
Agriculture (CISA)
Community Farms Outreach
The Farm School Apprentice Program
Federation of MA Farmers Markets
Field to Table
The Food Project
Garden Futures
MA Dept. of Food & Agriculture
Mt. Wachusett Community College
New Entry Sustainable
Farming Project
NOFA-MA

Nuestras Raíces, Inc.
Pioneer Valley Enterprise
Program/UMDI
Stockbridge School of Agriculture
at UMass, Amherst
UMass Extension
UMass, Microbiology Dept.
UMass, Plant & Soil Science Dept.
USDA Farm Service Agency
USDA FSA, Bristol County
USDA FSA, Middlesex County
USDA NRCS

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Beginner Farmers of NH
Digging Roots
Land for Good
NH Dept. of Agriculture, Markets,
& Food
NOFA-NH
Southern NH RC & D
Univ. of NH Cooperative Extension
USDA Farm Service Agency
USDA NRCS
Yankee Farm Credit, ACA

NEW JERSEY

Grasslands Cheese Consortium
NJ Council of Farmers &
Communities
NJ FarmLink

NJ Dept. of Agriculture
NJ State Ag. Devel. Committee
NJ Urban Ecology Program
NOFA-NJ
Rutgers Cooperative Extension:
Hunterdon, Morris, and
Warren Counties
Rutgers Univ., Dept. of Food, Ag.,
& Resource Econ.

NEW YORK

Agricultural Consulting Services
CAO/NSD United Neighborhoods
Center for Agricultural Devel.
& Entrepreneurship
Central NY RC & D
Cornell Cooperative Extension:
Broome, Cattaraugus, Columbia,
Delaware, Dutchess, Essex, Lewis,
Madison, Oneida, Ontario, Otsego,
Steuben, Sullivan, Tompkins,
Washington, and Yates Counties,
and New York City
Central NY Dairy, Livestock, and
Field Crops Team
Cornell Univ., NYS IPM Program
Cornell Small Farms Program
Cornell Univ., Community, Food &
Agriculture Program
Cornell Univ., Dept. of Devel.
Sociology
Cornell Educational Resources
Program
Cornell Univ. Northeast Sheep
& Goat Marketing Program
Cornell Univ. Sheep Program
Cornerstone Farm Ventures
Fresh Beginnings
Montgomery County Agricultural
Econ. Devel. Project
Nelson Inn Ag Resource & Training
Center
New Farmer Devel. Project
NOFA-NY
NorthEast Neighborhood Alliance
NY Agriculture in the Classroom
NY Farm Bureau, Inc.
NY FarmLink, Cornell Univ.

NY FarmNet, Cornell Univ.
NY Future Farmers of America Assoc.
NY Future Farmers of America
Leadership Training Foundation, Inc.
NYS Dept. of Agriculture & Markets
NY Sustainable Agriculture
Working Group
Otsego County Devel. Corp.
Phillies Bridge Farm Project
Regional Farm & Food Project
Yankee Farm Credit, ACA

PENNSYLVANIA

Chester County Devel. Council
The Food Trust
Fulton Center for Sustainable Living,
Wilson College
Greensgrow Philadelphia Project
Kutztown Produce Auction
Education Committee
Monroe County Conservation
District, PA Association for
Sustainable Agriculture (PASA)
PA Farm Link
Penn State Cooperative Extension:
Chester, Elk/Cameron, Lehigh,
and Northampton Counties
Penn State Univ., Dept. of Dairy
& Animal Sciences
Penn State Univ., High Tunnel
Research & Education Facility
PA Young Farmers Assoc.
Philadelphia Fair Food Project
Rural Urban Board Invites Econ.
Success (RUBIES)
USDA Natural Resource
Conservation Service, Harrisburg
USDA Natural Resource Conservation
Service, McConnellsburg

RHODE ISLAND

RI Division of Agriculture
Southside Community Land Trust
USDA Farm Service Agency

VERMONT

Intervale Foundation
NOFA-VT
Rural Vermont
USDA Natural Resource
Conservation Service
UVM Center for Sustainable
Agriculture
UVM Center for Sustainable
Agriculture, LandLink VT
UVM Extension
UVM Extension/Women's Ag
Network
VT Agricultural Credit Corp.
VT Community Loan Fund
VT Farmers Market Collective
VT Farms Assoc.
VT Small Business Devel. Center
Vital Communities
Yankee Farm Credit, ACA

WEST VIRGINIA

Center for Sustainable Resources
Mountain State Organic Growers
& Buyers Assoc.
Potomac Headwaters RC & D Council
WV Univ. Extension Service

REGIONAL

American Agriculturalist Magazine
American Farmland Trust,
Northeast Regional Office
American Farmland Trust,
Mid-Atlantic Regional Office
Dairy Practices Council
Future Harvest—CASA
Heifer Project International
New England Alpaca Fiber Pool
New England Livestock Alliance
New England Small Farm Institute
Northeast Center for Food
Entrepreneurship
Northeast Regional Center for Rural
Devel.
NCAT/ATTRA
The Rodale Institute
Allan Savory Center for Holistic
Management
USDA Risk Management Agency
USDA Natural Resource
Conservation Service

P.O. Box 11 * Belchertown, Massachusetts 01007

GROWING NEW FARMERS

