



FOOD MATTERS: A COMMUNITY CONVERSATION SERIES

MAY 28, 2014

Panelists

JANE CHRISTOPHER

President

RI Raised Livestock Association (RIRLA)

Jane lives in Foster on the former dairy farm that has been in her family since 1918. She and her husband Chris raise sheep and sell lamb directly to customers and other producers. Jane has been active with RIRLA since 2007 as a board member and held the Treasurer position from March of 2009 to March 2013. She and Chris also produce the RIRLA newsletter.

Founded by RI farmers, RIRLA is a member-based, member driven non-profit organization, formed to create an in-state infrastructure for the production, processing and marketing of locally produced meats. Through collaboration with the RI Department of Health and the RI Division of Agriculture, the Association's Processing Scheduling service offers farmer members a convenient, local and cost-effective way to have their animals processed at USDA-inspected and approved processing facilities.

PHILIP TREVETT

Cooperative Council Member

Urban Greens Food Co-op

Philip has been involved with Urban Greens for over four years, serving as vice chair of the board for the past three. During his time on the board, he has been heavily involved in community outreach, financial planning, and site development. In the past, he has volunteered on a regular basis in the office of Farm Fresh RI and the fields of Red Planet Vegetables, and is currently involved with various other local farm projects. Philip also works at Harvard Medical School in the Center for Biomedical Informatics.

Urban Greens Food Co-op is a consumer-owned cooperative working to open a full-scale retail grocery store in Providence, RI. The store will provide and promote healthy, affordable, sustainably-sourced, and local food options. Their multi-pillar approach, based on the values of equal access, **local agricultural/economy**, cooperative principles/values, community partnerships, and social entrepreneurship can provide a comprehensive way to develop a sustainable solution. Urban Greens Food Co-op will be accessible to everyone and all members of the co-op will vote on organizational decisions, as it is the consumer ownership that will help shape the store, and ensure it meets local food needs.

SARA GRADY

Vice President of Programming

Glynwood

Sara is the Vice President of Programming at Glynwood, as well as the director of their Hudson Valley Food program, which works to support farmers and other food professionals in producing, marketing, and promoting distinctive regional food. For the past few years, she has produced the Cider Project, a series of efforts to galvanize a regional hard cider industry that is creating opportunities for orchards. Other projects Sara is involved in include creating support for regional agritourism, livestock processing and chef education.

Glynwood is an agricultural not-for-profit organization in Cold Spring, NY. Glynwood's mission is to ensure that farming thrives in the Hudson Valley region. The organization's work includes: operating a farm, training new farmers, promoting regional food, fostering producer networks, and serving as a hub of education and information for the sustainable food community. In her role as Vice President of Programming, Sara defines Glynwood's program strategies and activities.

HEATHER SNOW

Fresh Foods Account Coordinator

Roch's Fruit and Produce

Heather started at Roch's Market as a cashier in 2005 in their retail operation, quickly moving up to the wholesale distribution division. In 2006, Roch's became involved with the USDA's Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), which provides all children in participating schools with a variety of free fresh fruits and vegetables throughout the school day. Heather has spearheaded this effort at Roch's and developed a successful program that supplies produce to schools in 25 Rhode Island, Connecticut and Massachusetts school districts as part of the FFVP.

Roch's has been a family-owned and operated business for over 60 years. In addition to the Roch's Market retail grocery operations in West Warwick and Narragansett, the Roch's Fruit and Produce wholesale division distributes produce to a wide variety of restaurants, markets, hotels and other local businesses. As a result of its involvement with the FFVP, Roch's has expanded their fresh fruit and vegetable cutting and prep work area to accommodate a program that now services over 40,000 school children in New England public schools.

Panelists

HANNAH MELLION

Program Director

Market Mobile/Farm Fresh RI

Hannah is the Program Director for Food System Enterprise at Farm Fresh RI, a non-profit growing the local food system. She works with Farm Fresh RI's aggregation and distribution programs, including Market Mobile, Veggie Box, Farm to School/Institution, and value-added production through the Harvest Kitchen program.

Market Mobile was created at Farm Fresh in 2009 to facilitate buying relationships between RI producers/farmers and business buyers/institutions. It is a pooled farm-to-business delivery system that has been hugely successful for farmers and customers, and it continues to grow in scope and reach. In 2013, over 200 Market Mobile customers purchased nearly \$2 million of fresh, local produce, dairy, meat and seafood from over 50 local producers. Market Mobile sales are on track to move over \$2 million in 2014.

ALEX LINKOW

Program Director

Fair Food Fund

Alex directs the Fair Food Fund program, a new impact capital fund affiliated with The Fair Food Network in Detroit that is focused on combining business assistance and capital to help food businesses grow. It invests in ventures that connect small and medium-sized, sustainable farms with the growing demand for local and regionally produced food. Alex has assessed the opportunities to support farmers and local food entrepreneurs in the Northeast, built relationships with food system stakeholders in the region, raised grant and PRI capital, and launched the Fair Food Fund and two complementary business assistance programs.

The Fair Food Fund is helping to build the infrastructure in the middle of the supply chain (storage, processing, distribution, etc.). Fair Food Fund's business assistance consists of two programs: The Fair Food Consulting Corps provides business assistance services to early stage food system enterprises, helping them to develop business plans and growth strategies; and the Fair Food Business Boot Camp is an intensive three-day training session designed to support young, evolving food system ventures.

NESSA RICHMAN

Member

2014 LASA Advisory Committee

Nessa has been working to develop local and regional healthy food systems since 1992. Before founding Brightseed Strategies, which provides information and resources for people and organizations working to build healthy food systems, Nessa held positions with Wholesome Wave and the Healthy Foods Financing Initiative. She currently acts as Collaborative Development Coordinator for Farm to Institution New England (FINE) and as course advisor for the Council of Development Finance Agencies "Intro to Food Systems" course.

The Local Agriculture and Seafood Act of 2012 established a grants program within Rhode Island's DEM Division of Agriculture to support the growth and marketing of local food and seafood in the state. The LASA Grants Program Advisory Committee, established to advise and assist RIDEM in matters related to the LASA Grants Program, recently reviewed and scored 92 applications totaling \$1,474,822 in requested funds, awarding \$210,000 to 17 recipients.

LISA RAIOLA

Founder and President

Hope & Main

Lisa established Hope & Main in 2010 just prior to joining Roger Williams University, where she is presently the Vice President for Institutional Advancement. She has more than 25 years of experience in advancement and program development at non-profit organizations in healthcare and higher education. Prior to RWU, she held positions at Brown University and Harvard Pilgrim Healthcare.

Hope & Main is Rhode Island's first full-service culinary kitchen incubator. Its mission is to help entrepreneurs launch or expand their food-related businesses by providing low-cost, low-risk access to shared use commercial kitchens, training, networking and sales opportunities. Hope & Main's organizational goals are to: 1) Provide facilities, programs and assistance to support member companies; 2) Increase the availability of locally grown and caught food to the Rhode Island consumer; 3) Educate local consumers about food choices and preparations as part of a food-based community; and 4) Complement the efforts of local agencies and non-profits to accelerate RI's emergent food industry.