



Annual Report 2008

Annual 2008 Edition

Visit us at www.RuralRI.org

Calendar of RIRDC Quarterly Board Meeting dates for 2008:

Fourth Friday of the month
January, April, July, October
8:30AM—10:00AM

Locations: TBA

Please RSVP your attendance plans by contacting the RIRDC at (401) 667-0071 or via email to Director@ruralri.org for upcoming locations and directions.

All meetings open to the public.

RIRDC Calendar

Executive Committee Meeting held monthly on 4th Thursday of each month 8:30 a.m. meeting locations vary.

All meetings open to the public

Featured in this report

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RI RDC — PROGRAMS AHEAD OF THE PACKAGE

by Geoffrey A. Marchant

The Rhode Island Rural Development Council is ahead of the trend. Since its inception, our state council's mission has been to lead efforts for economic stimulus in Rhode Island rural areas well before the nation's economic slowdown and the push for the nation's economic stimulus package.

Rural development has always offered creative ideas and searched for funding resources for Rhode Island's agricultural community needs. Our Council has found successes for its farmer groups and for other lesser-known rural projects. Our single major visible success remains the RI Dairy Farms Cooperative "Rhody Fresh" milk products which has proudly displayed its distinctive blue half gallon labels throughout 120 Rhode Island retail supermarkets for the last 5 years. When dairy farming in Rhode Island dropped from 90 dairy farms to 17 farms, a group of five farms came together with a plan to save the remaining farms. The 5 farms formed a cooperative and wholesaled their own milk statewide under the brand name "Rhody Fresh". This year, Rhody Fresh has also grown from its five original farms to eight farms within its Cooperative.

This single success story has spurred renewed interest in farming and agricultural economic sustainability. Over the last 3 years, The RI RDC has assisted the RI Raised Livestock Association in organizing itself from an initial small group of producers to over 70 participating members. Sales of local meat products have begun at several statewide Farmers Markets, through direct on-farm sales channels, and wholesaled to local institutions and restaurants.

And, RI Rural Development Council never forgets its "Ocean State" fishing industry. Aquafarming is agriculture and, in this State, our council has led in assisting native fishers who must transition to aquaculture. In recent years, the RIRDC assisted a group of lobstermen with a grant award from USDA Rural Development Warwick Service Center to explore the mussel beds in Narragansett Bay. This small research study in RI waters drew further attention and a small group of Rhode Island and Massachusetts lobstermen recently collaborated and were awarded a NOAA grant to do mussel aquaculture in Upper and Lower Cape Cod and Narragansett Bay. The outlook is posi-

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Farmers Market Grant to RIRDC

The USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP) was created through a recent amendment of the Farmer-to-Consumer Direct Marketing Act of 1976. The grants, authorized by the FMPP, are targeted to help improve and expand domestic farmers markets, roadside stands, community-supported agriculture programs, eco-tourism activities, and other direct producer-to consumer market opportunities. "Farmers markets are an increasingly popular source of fruits and vegetables," "Locally grown and locally known sales of fresh produce strengthen the connection between farmers and the community."

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Chairman's Letter— *Continued from Page 1*

by Geoffrey A. Marchant

tive and may yield an alternative crop and new revenues from mussel aquafarm harvests with minimal retrofitting of lobster boats or equipment.

Our Council's efforts are truly having positive impacts for Rhode Islanders. This local momentum and our nation's new focus on embracing the ideas of local, healthy foods and safe produce can only result in stimulating and strengthening our agricultural economic engine.

Let's continue together to lead local Rhode Island and, encourage efforts that support greater economic stimulus for our nation's rural and agricultural communities.

Allen-Madison House A Journey at the Crossroads

Two major paths undertaken by the Friends of Allen-Madison House were the development of a comprehensive master plan and the concept of community-supported gardening. The **PRESERVATION MASTER PLAN**, researched and written by Newport Collaborative Architects and Bradford Associates, was completed in January 2008. This Master Plan provides a comprehensive assessment of the condition of the house as well as priorities and estimates for her restoration. The **COMMUNITY-SUPPORTED GARDEN** concept, the inspiration of FAMH member Dan Urish, has become the focus of FAMH's recent interest and efforts. The concept of the property returning to agriculture with a cluster of "victory gardens" sponsored by organizations or individuals has appeal as a functional use consistent with the history of the house. Both paths moving forward under FAMH's stewardship are contingent on a formal agreement with Quonset Development Corporation (QDC), who manage the property, and the Navy, who owns the property. This presents an opportunity and a challenge to all parties and will define the role of FAMH, either as a steward or as an advocate for future progress with the house. In this way, we now find ourselves at a crossroads. The continued planning and momentum in restoring this historic RI homestead depend on your support – please consider a donation or \$20 membership to join us in continuing these our efforts! As each journey offers its unique surprises, FAMH was thrilled when two members, Rachel Peirce and Marie Lucas created notecards featuring the Allen-Madison House.

We now offer for sale our first **FAMH NOTECARDS**, featuring historic photos of the Allen-Madison House and property. Proceeds from notecards go toward continuing preservation efforts. In support of our efforts we have many to acknowledge including Jerry Bertrand, Director of the RI Rural Development Council who has tirelessly lent his expertise and enthusiasm to our visions, helping FAMH to move forward in it's efforts to preserve the Allen-Madison House and property. Send your tax deductible donations in any amount to: Friends of Allen-Madison House, c/o Otis Wyatt, 38 Homeland Avenue, Narragansett, RI 20882.

Kathy Fandetti, President, FAMH.

Farmer's Market Grant— *Continued from Page 1*

On September 19, 2008, the USDA AMS announced 85 grants totaling \$3,445,000 directed by the new farm bill to spread the use of farmers markets. Eighteen of the 85 grants promote a new electronic benefit transfers (EBT) system to help low-income consumers buy locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables.

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service helps increase domestic consumption of agricultural commodities and improve farmers' income.

In Rhode Island, the RI Rural Development Council, North Kingstown, R.I. received a USDA FMPP award of \$50,000 to conduct educational seminars for new vendors to sell at farmers markets and other direct-marketing venues; and, to support a new statewide "Rhode Island Grown" marketing campaign to promote local agricultural products. Program plans are now being organized, and full announcements will be forthcoming through the partnering farmer's market groups. Entities eligible to apply include agricultural cooperatives, producer networks, producer associations, local governments, nonprofit corporations, public health corporations, economic development corporations, regional farmers market authorities and Tribal governments. The maximum amount awarded for any one proposal cannot exceed \$75,000.

WELCOME NEW DIRECTOR

The RI RDC wishes to welcome to Kim Ziegelmayer as the new Director of the Rhode Island Raised Livestock Association.

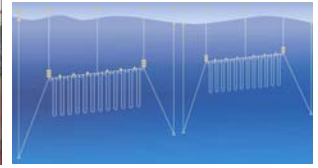
Since starting in May, 2008, membership has risen to 70 members of the Association. Welcome and congrats on a job well done! Kim says "One of the things that I personally am very excited to be working on is the development of a list of potential workshops and/or seminars for Association members". Topics already suggested include: processing seminar at Westerly Packing; How to Obtain Sales and Health-Permits; How to Price Your Meat Products; and Figuring the Cost of Raising, Processing and Selling Livestock. It is my hope that we will be able to offer at least one seminar to our members soon. If you have an idea for a workshop or if you have an area of expertise that you would like to share with other members, call me at (401) 575-3348 or email me at Director-RIRLA@cox.net with your ideas.



This year's RIRLA Annual meeting will be held on March 18, 2009 starting at 6:30pm at the Coventry/West Greenwich Elks Club. Come join the RIRLA !

Partnerships 2008

In 2007, the RI RDC was awarded a small grant from USDA-RD for aquaculture mussel study in Narragansett Bay. In 2008, an application filed by RI and MA fishermen received approval for a full \$225,000 NOAA grant proposal to grow and monitor mussels on aquaculture-grown rope cultures in the Bay. Shown at left is the mussel seed placed into a “sock” that is strung underwater over 2,000 ft. in length. Mussel grows within sock, safe from predators, until maturity when collected.



RI Rural Development Council



Started in 2007 and expanded in 2008, the RI RDC in partnership with the South Kingstown Chamber of Commerce organized the first indoor farmers market at the Statewide Business-to-Business Expo held at the Ryan Center, Kingston, RI. Our Council is thankful to Darlene Evans, Lisa Roy, and the Chamber staff for including 8 Farmers Market organizations into the Expo. It validates the contributions of local farms as small business partners in the community and again shows the “growing” popularity of Farmers Markets throughout Rhode Island .



HI ! TO LOWE'S — Welcome to North Kingstown !



Jeff Hudson, LOWE's North Kingstown Marketing Manager at the new Quonset Business Park greets Jerry Bertrand, RIRDC Executive Director at its grand opening event. Jerry was the grand prize winner of the “Kobalt truckload of tools” sponsored by LOWE'S. Upon hearing of his surprise win, Jerry said, “Big thanks to Lowe's for a wonderful grand opening luncheon for its Park tenants and business contractors — and for this delightful surprise! I entered the raffle hoping to win an assortment of drill bits and found out that I had won the grand prize of ALL the tools!” My first donation went to the RI Nursery and Landscape Association which held its RINLA Winter Conference with silent auction. The donation included a full-size Kobalt truck box and two push brooms. Monies raised from the RINLA silent auction are used for student scholarships under the RINLA Education Fund. Another donation is headed to the EWG 4-H auction.

Many thanks to LOWE'S for such a wonderful prize and, a very warm welcome to the Quonset Business Park and the North Kingstown community from RI Rural Development Council.



The Rhode Island Rural Development Council

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The RIRDC will continue its mission of maintaining the quality of life-both economic and social-for the rural communities of Rhode Island. As always, the RI Rural Development Council remains ready to provide resource assistance for new rural ventures. For more information contact the RIRDC Office at (401) 667-0071.



Support your local producers and statewide Farmers' Markets

Visit us online at www.RuralRI.org



The Rhode Island Rural Development Council is dedicated to improving the quality of life in rural Rhode Island, while preserving the characteristics that give rural communities their unique sense of place.

RIRDC Executive Committee

- Geoffrey A. Marchant** - Chair, RI RDC
E.G. Community. Development Consortium
- R. Larry Aker**, Rural Resident—Exeter
- Kenneth D. Ayars** - DEM Division of Agriculture
- Edward T. Baker, Jr.** - USDA RC & D
- Raymond M. Goff** - Town Planner, Glocester
- Harriet Powell** - Southern RI Conservation District
- Thomas Sandham** - Eastern RI Conservation District

Council Members

- Ben Bergantino** - RI Statewide Planning
- Lisa W. Bryer** - Town Planner, Jamestown
- Richard J. Burke** -USDA Rural Development
- Robert G. Driscoll** - Town Administrator, Portsmouth
- Darlene Evans** - Rural Business—Richmond
- James Hines** - RI Dairy Farms Cooperative
- James Pagliarini** - Central Nurseries
- Perry Raso** - Matunuck Oysters
- Richard C. Rhodes III**, Assoc. Dean for Research and Outreach,
Assoc. Dir, URI College of Environment and Life Sciences
- Raymond P. Robinson** - Rural Resident, West Kingstown
- Wayne L. Salisbury** - Local Official, Scituate
- Milton Schumacher** - Rural Resident—Scituate
- Matthew Thomas** - Chief Sachem, Narragansett Tribe
- Marc Tremblay** - Northern RI Conservation District
- Michael Walker** - RI Economic Development Corp.

Gerard N. Bertrand - Executive Director