

## Snowy Pastures



Photo by Troy Bishopp

Custom-grazed organic dairy heifers forage in stockpiled pasture at the Bishopp Family Farm in Deansboro, N.Y., earlier this week.

## RI Farm Rises From the Ashes

SARAH L. HAMBY

Connecticut Correspondent

**NORTH SCITUATE, R.I.** — It's been a difficult year for the Travis Family Farm. Last March, a devastating barn fire killed dozens of animals — puppies, newly born kid goats, pregnant goats, chicks and rabbits.

The tragic loss spurred immediate action in this tightknit farming community.

Dozens of friends, family members and local businesses, even old neighbors, pulled together to help the Travis family stay strong. Fundraisers were held, goats were "donated," supplies mysteriously appeared at no cost.

The memory of that day remains with family matriarch Lillian Travis.

"We can relate to people who have fires," she said on Wednesday. "Tragedy changes you. I look out the window every morning just to make sure everything's there. I didn't do that before."

But the Travis family has not let their heartbreaking loss stop them from moving forward. With the help of friends and family, and an unwavering faith, Lillian Travis says she strongly believes that, "Miracles happen all the time."

Sitting comfortably in the kitchen of the main house are Lillian Travis, Rachyl Travis, Auntie Hope — Hope Travis, Lillian Travis' sister-in-law —

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## Farmers, Industry Reps Share Perspectives on Local Food Networks

AMY HALLORAN

New York Correspondent

**GHENT, N.Y.** — About a hundred farmers, food distributors, chefs and other representatives of the food service industry gathered recently at Hawthorne Valley Farm to talk about local food systems.

The goal of the second annual

Sustainable Farm to Restaurant Producer Summit, sponsored by Slow Food New York City, was to highlight strengths of the current local food network and tackle solutions to expand production, distribution, and use of local, organic and sustainably grown food.

Jennifer Goggin, co-founder of

FarmersWeb, an online marketplace that acts as a storefront for regional farms and producers, led a panel discussion on scaling up production. Panelists included Ken Migliorelli of Migliorelli Farms, Jessica Ziehm from the New York Animal Agriculture Commission and Kathleen Harris from Northeast

Livestock Processing Service Co.

"I've been farming my whole life and I've never seen the opportunity in agriculture that I see now," Kathleen Harris said.

The Northeast Livestock Processing Service began in 2005 as a response to the need for infrastruc-

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## Trees for Troops NY Farms Participate in National Program

PAUL POST

New York Correspondent

**CHARLTON, N.Y.** — New York Army National Guard Sgt. Greg Martin has been deployed overseas three different times at Christmas.

So he understands the importance of supporting families of service members who can't be home for the holidays.

More than 150 evergreens were loaded onto a large FedEx truck Wednesday morning, headed to Fort Bragg, N.C., for distribution to spouses and children of enlisted U.S. soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines.

"It's a semblance of something

that usually the soldier may do, getting the tree, but that soldier's not there," Martin said. "I've seen soldiers come home and they're elated, they're happy that somebody cared for their family at Christmas time, just by giving them a simple tree."

Ellms Family Farm in Charlton, N.Y., is one of six pickup points throughout New York state under the nationwide Trees for Troops program that FedEx sponsors.

Last year, 140 New York growers provided 1,200 of the 17,000 trees donated nationwide for Trees for Troops. Sixteen tree farms in eastern New York donated to the collection made Wednesday.

"Trees For Troops is a great publicity program for Christmas tree growers all over the United States," said Mary Jean Packer, executive director of the Christmas Tree Farmers Association of New York. "But we love doing it. The No. 1 reason Christmas trees growers do this is not for the publicity; it's because we want to help our service members who are deployed and at home as well."

In 2013, 1,200 of the 17,000 trees donated nationwide came from 140 New York growers.

While trees collected at Ellms Farm go to service members' families

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Photos by Paul Post

More than 150 evergreens at Ellms Family Farm were loaded onto a large FedEx truck Wednesday morning as part of the Trees for Troops program. From left are New York Army National Guard Col. Richard Goldenberg; Mary Jean Packer, Christmas Tree Farmers Association of New York; and Ellms Family Farm co-owner Chip Ellms.



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**White House Tree**  
A7

**Markets**  
A34



**Cayuga Plant Tour**  
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**Mid-Atlantic Horse Section E**



# Conn. Takes Permanent Possession of Neglected Horses

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — State agriculture officials will take permanent possession of a Redding woman's two horses after she was charged with animal cruelty.

The News-Times reports that Lisa Lind-Larsen was found responsible for the emaciated and neglected conditions of her two mustangs in a civil suit filed by the state Department of Agriculture. Officials say the horses are doing well and are at the ag department's animal facility in Niantic.

Agents found stalls with manure 8 inches deep, water troughs filled with algae, and the horses emaciated and covered in fly bites.

Lind-Larsen argued in court that her facilities were not unsanitary.

Hartford Superior Court Judge Robert Vacchelli ruled the horses will be placed in the permanent care of the Department of Agriculture, which can seek compensation of expenses since the two horses were seized.

# Perspectives

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ture to meet the demand for local meat. Now that logistical problems between processing plants and farmers have been mitigated, the organization has shifted its work to focus on marketing. The processing service now has trucking and serves 155 farmers who raise beef, lamb and hogs.

Goggin asked each panelist to discuss how volume and price affects the purchasing practices of their customers. Harris said her company understands the constraints of budgets and is working with institutions to increase the percentage bought each year. In 2008, Northeast Livestock Processing Service was approved as a Compass vendor to facilitate institutional purchases. Without this level of vetting, farmers would not be able to sell to institutions.

Ziehm said that cooperative marketing has allowed farmers to focus on what they do best, farm, and not get distracted by the business of selling their products. She spoke as a lifelong dairy farmer and member of Agri-Mark Cooperative and its creamery, Cabot.

"Cabot Cooperative has volume," Ziehm said. "With 1,200 farms, we have a lot of products priced at an affordable level."

She commended the marketing people at Cabot for knowing how to meet consumers' needs and expectations, such as no rBST in milk.

Cabot is now implementing a program called FARM to ensure good animal welfare and sustainable farming practices.

"The co-op can say all of our producers follow this set of standards," Ziehm said.

Ken Migliorelli stood out because

he markets his farm solo, without joint efforts. Migliorelli Farm has 400 acres in vegetables and about 1,000 acres planted in grains, grasses, orchards and cover crops. He sells produce through a mixture of wholesale and retail outlets. His wholesale markets have grown over the last decade and he'd like to see that continue.

"In wholesaling, once the produce is sold, that's it," he said. Farmers markets are less predictable and unsold produce is difficult to manage. Migliorelli said he'd like to see more predictability, perhaps in the form of contracts. Nothing like that is on the horizon yet, but communication is developing in that direction.

"Conversations with distributors and other people help shape planting patterns," Migliorelli said, adding that the markets he serves know what they want and there's some room for dialogue on what he can do as a grower and what people can and want to use.

A panel of chefs and waste management professionals talked about using technology to manage food waste. Panelists included Sophia Johnson from LeanPath, a food waste prevention service that works with food services and restaurants across the nation, and Tony Vu from MintScraps, a technology platform that helps restaurants track and reduce food waste.

People attending the summit had the option to tour Hawthorne Valley Farm, a 400-acre biodynamic farm with a dairy herd, bakery and farm store. Participants saw the farm, processing facilities for dairy and fermented foods, the dairy barn, bakery, and store.

Another panel talked about institutional sales and large-scale accounts from the purchasers' perspective. Matthew Weingarten, cu-

linary director for Innovative Solutions, affiliated with Sodexo, led the conversation.

"We have 10 restaurants," said Adam Eskin, founder of Dig Inn, a small chain of farm-to-table restaurants. Eskin described how his company sets up supply chains by pursuing direct relationships with farmers.

"By working directly with farms, we are giving our customers a strong level of connection and transparency to the food they eat," Eskin said. "We're looking to build a menu that is supply driven and looking to tell the farm's story in the process."

Eskin said Dig Inn is working out "the bugs" in a local food system at both the production and consumption ends. This means, for instance, talking about aphid control with a kale farmer, and handling customer perceptions.

When a person who found a bug in her food threatened the restaurant with outing the offense if not given money, Dig Inn seized the opportunity and created an educational, social media moment, blasting the threat and countering it with a declaration. The gist of their message was that if you want real food, you'll find bugs.

"We have to help people understand that compromise is necessary," said Josh Brau from Chipotle, picking up the thread of customer education.

Chipotle has become a model for regional sourcing. The company uses distribution hubs within a set radius of its 1,700 restaurants across the nation; sourcing parameters are 350 miles between restaurant and producer. The company uses contracts with growers and producers, and leverages change in the food system by stating goals.

"We started talking about antibiotics because we wanted to drive the

national conversation," Brau said. Chipotle had an impact and drove demand for antibiotic-free poultry and other meats. Now, it is trying to advance grass-fed and pastured options for sourcing livestock.

Weingarten said Sodexo is responding to consumer demand by writing dates for changes — such as the elimination of gestation crates — into its contracts.

"Our company will use the leverage of volumes and dollars to get our suppliers to meet customers' desires," such as cage-free eggs, said Tim Buma from Restaurant Associates.

The last panel of the day covered distribution. Panelists included Camilla Abder from Sea to Table, a national company based in Brooklyn, N.Y., that distributes sustainable seafood; Daniel Del Coro from Fossil Farms, a New York City distributor of sustainably raised meats and wild game; and Mark Jaffe, founder of Fresh Connection, a last mile distribution company that serves the New York markets.

Ashley Mueller spoke about Greenmarket Co., a wholesale food hub and part of GrowNYC, an umbrella organization that oversees many food and environmental programs in the city, including Greenmarket farmers markets.

Aaron Grosbard, co-founder of FarmersWeb, the software tool linking farms and producers to restaurants and other customers, spoke about the company's work and partnership with Slow Food NYC's Producer Matrix Program.

*Amy Halloran is a freelance writer in eastern New York*

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