

September 14, 2004

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Commissioners Hi-Light The Small Farm Expo

Surrounded by the bounty of the late summer harvest at Wallkill View Farm on the outskirts of New Paltz, New York State Agriculture Commissioner Nathan Rutgers reminded a gathered audience of the importance of small farms and rural living throughout the Northeast. Commissioner Rudgers told the audience " the Small Farm Expo is an important opportunity to learn about many aspects of farming and rural life". He also pointed out that over 30 organizations from three states are sponsoring this two-day event.

New Jersey Secretary of Agriculture Charles Kuperus and Pennsylvania Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Cheryl Cook echoed Commissioner Rudgers' comments. All three-department heads attended the press conference for the Small Farm and Rural Living Expo urging people to attend the tri-State event on September 18 and 19, 2004 from 9 am to 4 pm.

Education for small farmers or those thinking of going into farming is the focus of the 2004 Northeast Small Farm and Rural Living Expo at the Ulster County Fairgrounds in New Paltz, New York. With over 60 educational workshops and demonstrations, the Expo will present sessions on a wide variety of topics including rural living; commercial horticulture; risk management; business management; livestock and natural resources.

Chris Campany, Co-chair of the Orange County Ag and Farmland Protection Board is excited that the Expo will be in the Hudson Valley this year. He points out that "education is one key element in keeping farms viable in a rapidly urbanizing area."

In addition to classes and demonstrations, many exhibitors will be on hand to take part in a two-day agricultural trade show. Staff of agricultural business and organizations will answer questions on topics from beekeeping to tractor safety.

The Expo is more than just a program for those interested in a farm business; with activities for children, live music from three country bands, a farmers market selling local fruits, vegetables and prepared foods, workshops for home gardeners and demonstrations of sheep shearing and herding, horse breeds, carriage rides and more the Expo will appeal to anyone interested in country living. The 2004 Expo chair Les Hulcoop explains "This is an agricultural fair without the rides; focusing on farm and rural living education for the entire family"

The site of the Small Farm and Rural Living Expo is the Ulster County Fairgrounds, two miles west of the village of New Paltz. Admission is \$5 per adult with children under 14 admitted free. The most current information can be found at www.smallfarmexpo.org.