

NY Sea Grant Brings Recognition of Seafood into Local Food Systems

In 2012, New York Sea Grant (NYSG) helped New York's fishing communities integrate seafood products into local food systems.

Support for local food systems has gained popularity in recent years largely due to programs successfully encouraging the public to "know where your food comes from" and that buying local can be better for the environment and the economy. Farmers' markets in New York's metropolitan and suburban communities enjoy strong support and public loyalty from spring through fall, and in some areas year-round. Although studies have proven the healthy benefits of eating seafood, seafood is underrepresented in local food systems.

NYSG worked to integrate seafood into local food systems, which ultimately improves the financial condition of commercial fishing businesses, consistent with Sea Grant's goals to establish profitable seafood businesses that depend on safe, high quality seafood products. Local food systems present many opportunities for farmers and seafood producers.

Activities NYSG facilitated to help integrate seafood products into local food systems include:

- administering a workshop about opportunities to start a shellfish business under the auspices of the Long Island Small Farms Summit
- administering a local seafood, wine, and chocolate food pairing event to teach versatile uses of seafood around the holidays
- developing information kiosks and poster displays about community supported fisheries (CSF), to inform the public about purchasing seafood shares directly from commercial fishing vessels, and



Fresh local fish was transformed into a chef's delight at a NYC "Seafood Throwdown" co-sponsored by New York Sea Grant. Photos courtesy of New York Sea Grant

- participating in two "Seafood Throwdown" events (NYC Greenmarkets, Grown on Long Island Day), showcasing chefs actively involved in the local food systems, preparing seafood cuisine.

These activities connected with more than 2,000 New York City/Long Island area residents and four new CSF businesses were launched over two years in New York through the local food systems movement. A new CSF, Dock to Table, successfully piloted in Montauk for six weeks in fall 2012 will expand in 2013.

This programming was possible through partnerships with several agencies, including the Long Island Small Farms Summit, Grow Long Island, Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance, NYC Green Market, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County, Long Island Farm Bureau, Long Island Wine Council and Casting for Recovery.

This project meets the performance goals of Sea Grant's Safe & Sustainable New York Seafood Supply Focus Area.

New York Sea Grant is a joint program of Cornell University, the State University of New York, and NOAA. New York Sea Grant Extension administration is located at 112 Rice Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853.

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