



# Selling in the Food System

September 5, 2013

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## *Improving Marketing Technical Assistance for New Farmers*

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**9:00 Registration and coffee.**

**9:30 New Farmer Panel: Finding a marketing niche.** Mari Omland of Green Mountain Girls Farm, Lee Blackwell of Blackwell Roots Farm and Calley Hastings of Fat Toad Farm discuss finding their markets, the opportunities and challenges ahead, and the key decisions they've made in their business development.

**10:45 Market Channel Assessment: Lessons learned helping farmers evaluate market opportunities.** Matt LeRoux Cornell EXT. How are farmers thinking about marketing channels and what factors influence their marketing decisions? Through NESARE funded research LeRoux has worked closely with both vegetable and livestock producers to explore this issue. He'll share what he's learned, the questions that remain, and how new market financial analysis tools can aid service providers in talking about marketing options with farmers.

**12:00 Lunch**

**12:45 Market Assessment to Marketing Investment.** Nicole L'Huillier Fenton, Skillet Design & Marketing. With limited budgets and limited time, what is the key information new farmers need to know about their market opportunities, and how can they use it to make marketing decisions? Fenton has over 20 years of experience in media and marketing and a passion for supporting and promoting local and regional food businesses. She's worked with farms, food processors and food organizations all over Vermont to build their brands and help them access new markets. With this perspective Fenton will share the key research new farmers should include in their market planning and how this information can guide farmers' investment in marketing activities.

**2:00 Break**

**2:15 Identifying Opportunities, Understanding Trends-- preparing VT farmers to access emerging markets in New England's food system.** David Conner, PhD, Assistant Professor Community Development & Applied Economics, UVM. Through research in Vermont and beyond, Conner has been exploring institutional markets for locally and regionally sourced farm products, as well as new market opportunities for differentiated farm products like pasture-raised milk. Conner will share how farmers can explore market opportunities, track emerging trends and better understand the shifting nature of local food marketing.

**3:15 Round Table Discussion.** The role of service providers in helping farmers understand market opportunities. As farms progress from start-up to established businesses, how should service providers assist farmers who are exploring markets? When is the right time to evaluate the financial performance of a farm's existing markets? Should service providers be involved in presenting new market opportunities to farmers? What approach to marketing TA is the right one for your clients?

**4:00 Report Back, Concluding remarks**

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