

Weekly Market Bulletin

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Lorraine S. Merrill
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From Your Commissioner

Opportunity for Farm Marketers

University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension is partnering with Cabbige, online software designed to help small, diversified farms manage their business, on a project for the 2017 growing season. UNHCE Field Specialist Seth Wilner is looking for farms to participate in this opportunity, which is funded by a Northeast Extension Risk Management Education Grant. The project addresses the risks farmers face due to lack of data in making decisions on pricing, crop selection and planting, yields, and sales channels. “As farmers become more competitive, it becomes more important for them to make data-driven decisions based on their farm businesses,” notes Wilner, “--as well as understand regional market trends in local produce production and consumption.” The grant will sponsor the use of Cabbige through 2017 by 40 farms in New Hampshire, Maine, Vermont and Massachusetts. Cabbige will capture critical data about their farm operations, help the farmers to optimize pricing, and to better understand harvest and sales data so they can make better-informed decisions and reap higher revenues.

Cabbige enables farms to digitally record their harvest and sales data. They can access all that information in real-time on desktop, tablet, and mobile, facilitating informed management decisions and communication between farm management and workers. “Farms can identify what’s happening with their farm business from seed to sale, and monitor their business with crop, market channel, and CSA reports to know which varieties are most profitable throughout the season,” Wilner says. With detailed reporting and record keeping, farms can make informed crop planning decisions, improve farm efficiency, and maximize revenue year after year. Cabbige’s pricing tool makes price recommendations by determining the price that will yield the most revenue at a given point in time, for a select market or buyer, throughout the season. Wilner is enthusiastic about the potential of the software to boost profits. In the initial pilot, he says, “Cabbige users averaged 9.6% more revenue using the recommended prices, and this is just the beginning.”

For small-scale, diversified agriculture to be sustainable, it has to be profitable, and as our culture relies more and more on technology, it is critical that farms adopt best practices for managing their businesses. Wilner sees this tool as an example of how owners of small to medium-sized farms

can integrate technology into their daily lives to increase productivity and profits--thus helping to protect local food systems and support increasing global populations.

Learn more about Cabbige at www.cabbige.com, and contact Audra audra@cabbige.com or Pam Bruss at Pamela.Bruss@unh.edu for more information on joining the UNHCE 2017 Cabbige Program.

In the Upper Valley, Vital Communities Valley Food & Farm is serious about making fruits and veggies fun for kids. Families are invited to look for the Power of Produce (POP) table at participating locations. Participating farmers markets and farm stands are offering activities like scavenger hunts, chances to quiz the farmers, taste tests, cooking, and more. Kids who complete the activity are rewarded with POP Bucks--market money just for kids to spend on veggies and fruits at the market or farm stand.

The Power of Produce program is offered one day each week over eight weeks at two New Hampshire locations. Every Friday from June 30 to August 18 the Newport Farmers Market on the common will host POP Club activities from 3:00-6:00 pm. The market also accepts SNAP EBT benefits and doubles SNAP benefits up to \$10 per day with Granite State Market Match.

Edgewater Farm Stand, 246 NH Route 12A in Plainfield, provides POP fun every Wednesday from June 28 to August 16, 11:00 am-2:00 pm. Edgewater Farm's stand is open every day, but Wednesday is POP Club day, when all kids are welcome to join activities in the farm stand.

Lorraine Merrill, Commissioner