



The pleasure of eating  
delicious, wholesome food  
belongs to  
everyone. . .

*Good food, served right, nourishes our bodies*  
and helps us celebrate our connections with each other.

Good food begins with clean air, unpolluted land, and pure water—and it grows into harvest through humane and sustainable farming practices. In the kitchen, good food emphasizes locally grown, seasonally fresh, and minimally processed ingredients, brought to the table mindfully, with a grateful heart.

*But not everyone has a place at the table.*

Poverty and food insecurity in North Country counties rank among the highest in New York State, behind only the Bronx, Kings, and Manhattan.

In St. Lawrence County, 17 percent of the population lives in poverty, including 23 percent of our children. Our county's food pantries distribute nearly 800,000 meals each year.

Meanwhile, our state's farmers are twice as likely to qualify for food assistance programs as the average low-income New Yorker.

Over the past decade, GardenShare's work to end hunger has led us to broader issues of food security—strengthening small farms and revitalizing a community-based food system.

Today GardenShare embraces a vision of a secure and fair food system that serves us all. Here is some of what we're doing to transform that vision into reality:

**Empower...** GardenShare opened the Canton Farmers' Market to shoppers using EBT/food stamp benefits and pioneered a shuttle bus to bring seniors to the market.

**Inform...** GardenShare distributes 35,000 copies of its annual *Local Food Guide* to promote locally grown food.

**Connect...** GardenShare is spearheading the expansion of Community Supported Agriculture in our region.

Learn more about GardenShare activities in this issue. ☉

## 📅 SAVE the DATE:

**November 13, 2008**

**GardenShare Annual Dinner**



**Wes Jackson**, founder of The Land Institute in Salina, Kansas, and longtime advocate of sustainable agriculture, will be the featured speaker at this year's annual local foods potluck. Jackson is the author of many books including *New Roots for Agriculture* and *Meeting the Expectations of the Land* (edited with Wendell Berry). Watch for details in the next newsletter.

## Update: Food Storage Facility

More than seventy people attended GardenShare's April 3 forum entitled "Food Storage and Processing Opportunities for Small-Scale Farmers," held on the campus of SUNY Potsdam.

The forum was the latest phase in GardenShare's ongoing exploration of ways to widen the market for food raised by North Country farmers.

Last year GardenShare won a Sustainable Community Grant from the Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program of the USDA for this exploration. Subsequently, GardenShare has used surveys and focus groups to ask the advice of more than a hundred key people in local agriculture and food retailing.



A project advisory committee made up of representatives from these sectors has taken field trips to visit food-processing operations elsewhere.

The April forum presented the suggestion that a refrigerator-freezer storage facility could help farmers expand their sales beyond the growing season.

After a panel presentation about the potential benefits of such a facility, the audience of farmers, food retailers, and others interested in local food contributed questions and comments.

The challenges of agriculture in the North Country—weather, distances, labor—were clearly articulated by a number of participants. But opportunities also emerged, as several food distributors expressed an interest in collaborating with GardenShare to help move the project forward.

An afternoon session at the forum was geared toward people who want to develop their own food products. Dave Evans of Nelson Farms in Morrisville and Olga Padilla-Zakour, director of the Northeast Center for Food Entrepreneurship, presented the services their organizations offer to beginning and established food entrepreneurs.

GardenShare is now pursuing the next phase of this project: a feasibility study by a third party examining in detail whether such a facility would be financially viable.

This study is expected to begin this summer and, depending on its outcome, may lead to the development of a formal business plan. ☺



# GardenShare@work

## ► NEW YORK • NY Fresh Checks

A new state program enables EBT/food stamp shoppers to double their buying power of locally grown food at participating farmers' markets this summer. Shoppers who spend at least \$5 in EBT benefits receive a "NY Fresh Check" for an additional \$5 to spend on local food. The program is designed to make it affordable for food stamp recipients to add more fresh foods to their diets and also to increase sales at farmers' markets. Market vendors redeem the checks for full value. GardenShare is offering the checks at the Canton Farmers' Market.



Matthew Newton, GardenShare intern, with NY Fresh Check

## ► NORTH COUNTRY • Share Your Harvest

With food costs on the rise, many people in the North Country must combine their trip to the grocery store with a visit to the food pantry. If you have a home garden, you can share your harvest by delivering fresh fruits and vegetables to a pantry near you. For a list of St. Lawrence County pantries that will welcome your donation, visit [GardenShare.org](http://GardenShare.org).

## ► CANTON • Farmers' Market Partners

This spring more than sixty people contributed over \$5,000 to support GardenShare programs, especially our presence at the Canton Farmers' Market. Each summer the GardenShare booth there is a focal point for market information and services. Our new state-of-the-art wireless terminal gives fast, convenient authorization of EBT purchases. GardenShare is also collaborating with the market on a Rapid Market Assessment, designed to gather data that will help vendors attract customers and increase sales. GardenShare's presence at the market is also supported by a generous grant from the Canton Community Fund.

❶ **Percentage of New York residents who say they go out of their way to buy local food: 37**

## ► ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY • Local Food Guide

GardenShare is distributing 35,000 copies of its third annual *Local Food Guide*. The guide lists over sixty farm stands, farmers' markets, U-pick farms, stores, restaurants, and other outlets offering food grown in St. Lawrence County. To receive a free copy, use the Response Form on the back cover of this newsletter.

## ► CANTON • Thank You Volunteers!

Anne Marsh, co-minister of the Unitarian-Universalist Church of Canton, recruited thirteen community volunteers to help staff GardenShare's information booth at the Canton Farmers' Market this summer. Thank you, Anne and crew: Barbara Beckman, Tedra Cobb, Maria Corse, Judy Gibson, Debs Kalicin, Esther Katz, Joan Kepes, Carol Pynchon, Anne Richey, Winny Sachno, Pam Short, and Wade Wheelock. GardenShare's Katherine Lang oversees the project, with able assistance from intern Matthew Newton, a student at St. Lawrence University. And thank you to the Potsdam Food Co-op for once again giving a shopping discount to its members who volunteer. ☺





# GARDENSHARE AND BION

A statement adopted by GardenShare's Board of Directors regarding the St. Lawrence County Project proposed by Bion Environmental Technologies

We have listened with interest to the ongoing discussion about a proposal from Bion Environmental Technologies to develop an integrated beef cattle and renewable energy project in St. Lawrence County. Bion's project aims to produce ethanol and other saleable products from the manure of 84,000 cattle concentrated on six farms.

Because of GardenShare's focus on food and farming, we wonder how Bion's project might impact working people, small-scale farmers, and families living on low incomes in St. Lawrence County. With these people in mind, we suggest that all of us in the county consider the following questions about Bion's proposal:

**Does ethanol production drive up the cost of food?** As has been noted in the *Watertown Daily Times*, some analysts suggest that shifting farmland from growing food to growing corn for ethanol production is driving up the cost of groceries. A study in 2007 by Iowa State University calculated that increase to be \$47 per person in one year. The last thing working people in our county need is an increase in food costs. Our county's food pantries already distribute nearly 800,000 meals annually to people who can't afford the food they need. Do operations such as Bion proposes make food even less affordable for people living on low incomes?

**Will the Bion project create decent jobs at livable wages for local people?** The trend in large-scale agriculture is to import farm laborers from Mexico and Central America. While helpful to these migrant laborers, such jobs have little impact on local employment needs. In addition, Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations elsewhere have been criticized as unhealthy workplaces. Will

Bion's project provide the kind of safe, fair-paying jobs that are so badly needed by people who already live here?

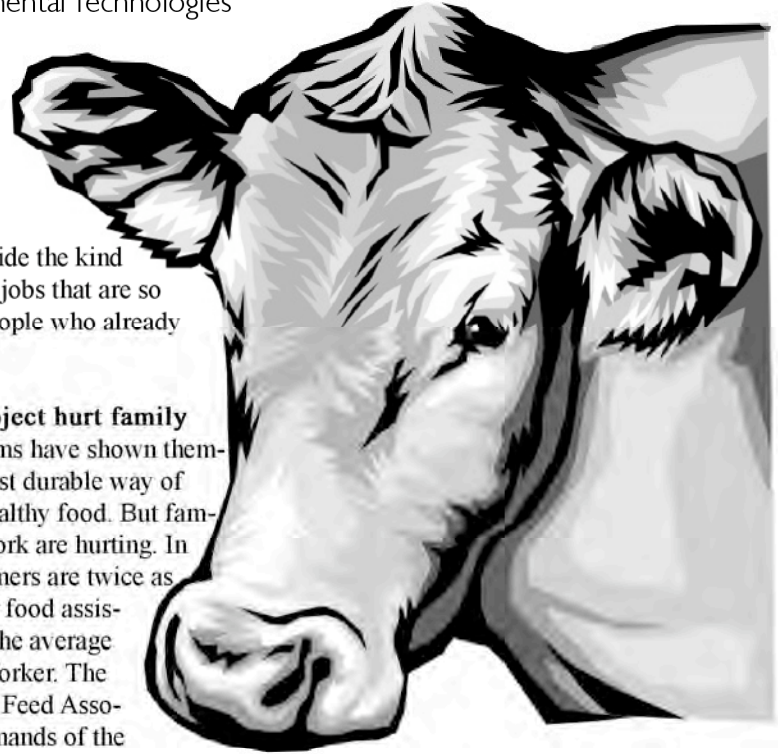
**Will Bion's project hurt family farms?** Family farms have shown themselves to be our most durable way of producing good, healthy food. But family farms in New York are hurting. In fact, New York farmers are twice as likely to qualify for food assistance programs as the average low-income New Yorker. The National Grain and Feed Association says the demands of the ethanol industry have increased farmer's feed costs by 25 to 30 percent in the last year. Some local farmers worry that a large livestock feeding operation could deplete the local supply of hay and grains, driving up costs and creating more hardships for family farms. What will be this project's impact on hard-working, small-scale farmers in our county?

**Do Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations make our food safer?** Headlines about manure spills, *E. coli* contamination, and overuse of antibiotics in livestock have shaken public confidence in industrial agriculture. Understandably, we all want to know who raises our food and how safely they raise it. How will these enormous livestock feeding operations make our food safer than the food produced on farms run by our neighbors?

**Is Bion's project good for our communities?** One of the troubling weaknesses of industrial agriculture is that our food supply is increasingly controlled by corporate interests—making

us dependent on the whims of businesses with no local ties or commitments. In contrast, family farmers in St. Lawrence County have worked hard for decades to build public trust and goodwill by being responsible neighbors who participate in our communities. They attend our schools, go to our churches, volunteer with our fire departments. Are we better off living next door to these family farms—or to mega-farms owned by absentee investors?

**Will Bion's project move us toward a secure and sustainable food supply?** GardenShare believes that the pleasure of eating good food belongs to everyone. We think that one of the best ways of getting good food to everyone is by strengthening our local food supply lines. A strong community-based food supply—built on a network of small-scale farmers—would cut out wasteful long-distance travel, put local people in charge, and help build our local economy. How does Bion's proposal move us in that direction? ☉



## Response Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_



Check all that apply:

- ☐ Please send me the free Local Food bumper sticker shown above.
- ☐ Please send me a free subscription to this newsletter.
- ☐ Please send me the free *Local Food Guide*.
- ☐ This is a change of address (I am enclosing the label from below).
- ☐ I wish to make a tax-deductible donation to GardenShare: \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ The name above is a friend—please introduce them to GardenShare.

Mail to: GardenShare  
860 Maple Ridge Road  
Richville NY 13681

## GardenShare

The GardenShare Newsletter is published four times a year, one issue being the *Local Food Guide*. Subscriptions are free.

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GardenShare works to build a North Country where all of us have enough to eat and enough to share—where our food choices are healthy for us, for our communities, and for the environment.

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

- GardenShare & Bion
- The pleasure of good food
- Wes Jackson coming to GardenShare

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