



HOT STUFFING: Events you don't want to miss

From Recipe to Market January 14, 2004 9:00 am – 5:00 pm University of Vermont Burlington, VT \$50.00 per person

This one-day seminar will provide future entrepreneurs with knowledge of critical issues needing consideration before launching a food manufacturing business.

Contact: Jody Farnham at 802-656-8300 or jfarnham@uvm.edu

#### Sharpen Your Selling Skills January 15, 2004 9:00 am – 4:00 pm University of Vermont Burlington, VT \$75.00 per person

This one-day seminar will begin to explain the nuts and bolts of the selling process. Discussions will cover exactly what one can expect in a variety of sales situations and offer suggestions on how to manage them. The presenters' experiences will provide the basis of presentation as we explore and explain the process of selling from initial contact to the ultimate object-getting the sale.

Contact: Jody Farnham at 802-656-8300 or jfarnham@uvm.edu

# **VENTURE**

# A Newsletter for the Small Scale Food Entrepreneur

Volume 5, No. 4

Winter 2003-04

# NECFE Accomplishments in 2003, Plans for 2004 and the Future By Olga I. Padilla-Zakour, Cornell University

Food entrepreneurship continues to be strong in the Northeast as reflected by the number of small-scale processors that contacted NECFE this year.

From January 1 to November 30, 2003, we received over 1,200 requests for assistance in a variety of issues related to food processing and marketing. More than half of those requests (55%) were specific to new products or product improvement. New York and New England ac-



Olga Padilla-Zakour

counted for 82% of the requests. The rest came from other states and a few foreign countries. The Center evaluated and issued schedule processes for 500 new product formulations submitted by 165 processors, averaging three products per client. Most of these foods (73%) are classified as acid, acidified or dressing/condiments.

We offered 22 workshops covering all aspects of food production and marketing, attended by 600 people. Workshop evaluations showed that participants are satisfied with the training offered as 97% stated that the program met their expectations. We also hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Food Business Incubation Summit in Northampton, MA (*see separate article in this issue*).

The newsletter was published on a quarterly basis and was mailed to over 1,500 people. We continue to maintain the complete archives in our website for easy access to previous issues. The NECFE manual "Small Scale Food Entrepreneurship – A Technical Guide for Food Ventures," now in its third revision/printing, was distributed to more than 800 entrepreneurs and interested parties. Our website was hosting approximately 21,000 visitors per year, with the busiest months being March, April and May. The busiest hour was 9 pm EST.

We conducted formal interviews to determine the impact of the Center's activities and to better understand clients' needs. We appreciate very much the willingness to participate in this survey and deeply thank all the participants for their time and support.

#### **Client Follow-up Survey**

The client follow-up survey was conducted from November 2002 to June 2003. The survey was administered using computer-aided telephone interviewing. A total of 1,285 people were called and 299 surveys were completed for a response rate of 23% with 95% confidence level. In summary, 94% of clients reported being satisfied with the direct assistance received from the center and 85% agreed that NECFE services provided the information and assistance needed. As far as information required: 32% gained knowledge in product safety/sanitation; 27% in labeling/packaging; 25% in processed foods; 23% in marketing/market research; and 22% in

HOT STUFFING continued on P. 3

#### **Entrepreneurship Profile**

# Jack Stone Stone's Smokehouse and Meat Market The Home of Zack's Venison Snacks



Jack Stone with samples of Jack's Venison Snacks

With the help of his family, Jack Stone owns and operates Stone's Smokehouse and Meat Market in Upstate New York's Clinton County near Plattsburgh. This is Jack's third successful career. While in high school, Jack worked as a cement mason with his father in the summers, and apprenticed in a butcher shop during the winter. He gave up

masonry in 1979, when his USDA-inspected custom butcher shop became successful. The business grew into a two million dollar a year enterprise. After a series of life changing events, Jack sold his business. Eventually, in 1985, he re-opened a small retail meat market, which again flourished. He had to close this business due to personal circumstances but, in 1989, relocated his meat processing equipment and started a custom meat-cutting shop for local hunters and farmers.

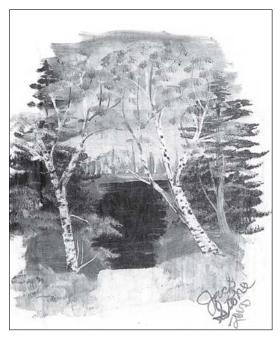
Today, Stone's Meat Cutting provides many services: wrapping, vacuum sealing, sausage casing, skinning, cutting any size deer, beef, pork and wild game; purchasing bear hides, gall bladders and claws, beef and deer hides.

"If hunters prefer to butcher their own or at another shop, they can bring their meat and we will make what they want," Jack says. When he installed a smoker in the shop, "there wasn't a smoker within a100 miles for venison." This boosted business with hunters because they

enjoy the smoked products.

Since 2001, Jack has been working with NECFE to develop shelf stable recipes for smoked venison products. In 2002, his family business processed over 800 deer brought in from as far away as Canada and Vermont. Adding the smoked venison line, "Zack's Venison Snacks," named for his grandson, has turned Jack's business into a year-round operation.

Jack's entrepreneurial spirit has prevailed and helped him overcome many obstacles. In 1983, at the age of 28, Jack was injured in a stock car racing accident. He is paralyzed from the neck down and ventilator-dependent at night. In



"Landscape Through the Trees" by Jack Stone

1996, his wife Mary suddenly died at the age of 37. What has kept Jack going is his faith and remembering his wife Mary's encouraging words, "You gotta keep going, life isn't easy, it's all in what you make it, you can give up or fight and move on." And Jack is moving on.

In January 1989, Jack started painting art. He was accepted as a student of the Mouth and Foot Painting Artists Worldwide. Earlier this year, his painting "Landscape Through the Trees" was accepted for showing at the International Art Exhibition of the Association of Mouth and Foot Painting Artists Worldwide in Atlanta, GA. He received \$1,300 for exhibiting. Some day he hopes to earn his living as an artist.

It has been 20 years since his accident. Between the money from the family business and his artwork, Jack feels that he has accomplished his goal of living independently. Business is good and Jack is now considering using a co-packer to fill orders from one major sporting goods chain that wants to carry his products in 26 of their stores. It is a dilemma many wish they had! Most recently, his products will be included in a gift pack of Adirondack-made food items for sale throughout Western New York.

You can reach Stone's Smokehouse and Meat Market for a brochure of products and prices at this toll-free number: 866-OUR-MEAT.

#### Cheryl Leach

#### VENTURE

Winter 2003-04 • Vol. 5 No. 4 A Newsletter Published by NECFE, NYS Food Venture Center Geneva, NY

Editors Dr. Olga Padilla-Zakour oip1@cornell.edu Judy L. Anderson jla2@cornell.edu Sarah J. Lincoln sjl38@cornell.edu Phone: 315-787-2274 Fax: 315-787-2284 www.nysaes.cornell.edu/necfe Funded in part by USDA/ Fund for Rural America/ CSREES

# NECFE Hosts Food Business Incubation Summit 2003 By Cheryl Leach, Cornell University

The 2nd National Conference and Education Symposium was held Sept. 17-18, 2003 at the Clarion Hotel and Conference Center in Northampton, Mass. Professionals from across the United States including Oregon, Texas, North Carolina, Michigan, Alabama, New England, New Jersey and New York State who work with incubator kitchens, shared-use facilities and food venture centers attended

The two-day event was sponsored by The Northeast Center for Food Entrepreneurship (NECFE) at Cornell University and the University of Vermont, the Franklin County Community Development Corporation, in partnership with the Massachusetts Food and Agriculture Department and Rutgers University/NJAES Food Innovation Research & Extension Center (F.I.R.E.).

"The symposium re-united food processing technical and business support professionals to review the best practices for food venture centers and incubation facilities," said Olga Padilla-Zakour, director of NECFE and one of the summit's organizers.

Workshops topics included: labeling regulations, food safety, the Bio-terrorism Act relating to food processing, developing a stakeholder committee, assessment of documentation of facility policies and procedures, FDA Food Establishment Plan Review Guidelines, program evaluation methodologies and instruments for reporting.

A highlight of the conference was the tour of the Western Massachusetts Food Processing Center in Greenfield Massachusetts. Attendees were treated to a reception of specialty foods produced at the shared-use facility, including: Alvin's All-Natural Ice Cream Co. (gourmet ice cream, variety of flavors); Legere Nutritional Foods (Red Star nutritional yeast dressing); Chili Station (Beef, Turkey, and Vegan Chili); Bethel Farm (Kanghi Miso Sauces and dressings); Dessertworks (fine chocolate truffles and specialties); Dr. Gonzo's Uncommon Condiments (Pepper mash, mustards, condiments); Hillside Farm Pizza Co. (ready-to-bake pizzas with all-organic ingredients); and Real Pickles (naturally fermented dill pickles, Asian-style cabbage, and sauerkraut). Catering and complementary foods for displayed items was provided by Green Fields Market, a whole foods co-op in Greenfield, MA that carries most of the foods made at the Center.

From Greenfield, many of the Summit attendees returned to Northampton for a "Dine Around" at local eateries. The group split between two restaurants and had more time to network. Many good associations were forged over the two days.

At the wrap-up session on Thursday, the attendees agreed to continue efforts to maintain the support network that developed as a result of this and the last year's Summit. The Shared Processing Center and Incubation Working Group was established and a steering committee was formed with Lou Cooperhouse of Rutgers Food Innovation Research and Extension Program volunteering to take the lead. Other steering committee members are Bob Weybright from NECFE; John Henry Wells, of the Food Innovation Center, University of Oregon, Portland; Glenn Gaslin, General Manager, Morrisville Auxilary,(Nelson Farm); Smithson Mills from the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. They have agreed to work together on a model for the group to maintain ongoing communication. Some suggestions were listserv and website postings.

The attendees decided that the networking and educational opportunities from the Summits have been important. Dave Evans, director of Nelson Farms, Morrisville State College, and Dr. Ray Cross, President of Morrisville State College, have volunteered to host Summit 2004 at Morrisville. They plan to highlight the new Nelson Farms food manufacturing facility. Dr. John Henry Wells has offered to host the following year, 2005, at the Food Innovation Center in Portland, Oregon.

Stay tuned.

Food Allergen Workshop "Is your company safe?" January 26, 2003 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm Nuestra Culinary Ventures Boston, MA \$15.00 per person Contact: Brett McCarthy at 617-522-7900 ext. 10, bmccarthy@nuestracdc.org or Bonita Oehlke at 617-626-1753, bonita.oehlke@state.ma.us

Food Allergen Workshop "Is your company safe?" January 27, 2003 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm Franklin County Community Development Corporation Greenfield, MA \$15.00 per person Contact: Herb Heller at 413-774-7204 ext. 108, herbh@fccdc.org or Bonita Oehlke at 617-626-1753, bonita.oehlke@state.ma.us

Making It Organic – A Seminar for Food Processors and Growers February 11, 2004 9:00 am – 4:30 pm \$35.00 per person Greenfield Community College Greenfield, MA

A panel of experts will outline the key steps to becoming a certified organic processor and getting your product to market. Topics will include an overview of the organic movement, navigating through the National Organic Program, and marketing organic products. Presenters include industry experts and experienced small and medium sized processors providing insights into working with the new organic standards.

Contact: Don Franczyk at 978-297-4171, dfranczyk@starpower.net or Bonita Oehlke at 617-626-1753, bonita.oehlke@state.ma.us

# Record Keeping – What & Why By Judy Anderson, Cornell University

Most food processors look at record keeping as a nuisance. It eats away at precious time and the records themselves take up space that is often tight, to say nothing of the cost of paper, file folders, cabinets, printing, etc. However, properly collected and maintained, records can save far more in time and money when an inspector visits or a product recall is indicated. Records are written proof that a food product has been manufactured in compliance with applicable federal and state statutes.

The management of a food manufacturing company is responsible for maintaining the necessary records. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) or the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) have the authority to bring both civil and criminal charges against a company or individual that fails to keep the proper production and distribution records, regardless of that individual's intent or awareness of regulations. In other words, what you don't know CAN hurt you.

#### Regulations: 21 CFR 113 & 114; 9 CFR 318.300-311, 9CFR 381.300-311

The regulations that spell out required basic records can be found in Title 21 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 113 (low acid foods) and 114 (acidified foods) for FDA regulated products. USDA regulations are found in Title 9, Part 318 and Part 381. Both the FDA and FSIS require that product safety related records be maintained on premises for at least one year, and in an easily accessible place for an additional two years.

#### Safety vs. Quality

Product safety records can indicate that a production lot was correctly formulated and received proper processing by showing adherence to scheduled process requirements. These records must be shown to inspectors when requested. Inspectors are also allowed to make copies of these records. Product quality records (i.e. taste, texture, color, etc.) are for company marketing purposes and not of interest to regulatory people.

#### Review of records can spot potential problems

A regular review of production records can reveal impending problems or simply reassure the processor that things are going smoothly. At the end of each day's production, take a close look at the records generated that day. You may notice that a new brand of canned tomatoes produced a product lot with a slightly higher pH than previous lots. You may want to consider going back to the old brand or you will at least know that you will have to watch future lots of your product more closely to avoid a scheduled process deviation.

#### **Records needed**

Some of the items a processor should keep records on are:

1. Examinations of incoming raw materials, packaging materials, suppliers guarantees or certifications that verify compliance with FDA or USDA regulations, guidance documents or action levels for each lot of each ingredient used.

2. Critical factors box on the top right of NECFE issued scheduled process (pH, fill temp; Aw; refrigeration temp; mfg date, use by date). All critical factors mentioned in a scheduled process must be monitored and recorded. These factors will determine that a product was manufactured safely or that there was a process deviation.

3. Instrument calibration: You should be able to point out exactly when your pH meter was calibrated each day and what buffers were used. Also, keep records of each time you calibrate your thermometers.

4. Closure evaluation: The closures of your product containers should be evaluated to be sure that the bottles or jars have sealed properly. This also applies to heatsealed bags or other secure closures.

5. Scheduled Process: The scheduled process forms for all products that need them should be on file in or near the production area. These files should include the letter that comes with each scheduled process or batch of processes that you receive from NECFE. Inspectors will ask to see these forms as part of any inspection.

6. Bioterrorism Act (proposed but not yet in effect): "one forward-one back." For each lot of product, you must be able to trace the ingredients to your supplier and the finished product that you sell wholesale to the buyer. These records must refer to specific lots of ingredients and finished product. If there are major changes to this rule in the future, we will let you know.

#### How-to

All records should be written neatly, in ink as the readings are made. DO NOT keep figures in your head to be written down later. This practice can lead to disasters. Records should be made by the person responsible for the particular stage of the manufacturing process. This practice ensures continuity in the records.

It is easy to design your own form or forms to suit your own record needs and processing methods. Don't forget to include a place for the date and a box or line where you can sign or initial to indicate that you have reviewed the records in a timely fashion. Sample forms can be found in the NECFE manual on p 25-26.

#### **Deviation Records**

Any batch of product that does not meet the critical factors specified in the scheduled process (maximum pH, minimum fill temperature, etc.) is considered a process deviation. These product lots should be set aside and evaluated by your process authority for safety unless you already have a "remedy" scheduled process in place. Records of these deviations and how the product was handled must be maintained in a separate file.

#### **Record Availability**

Processors are required to make certain records available to duly authorized FDA or USDA-FSIS employees. These individuals are also authorized to copy records that verify process adequacy, container integrity or the container coding system.

			Pro	duct Name				
	oduction Code	Ingredients/Packaging Materials (supplier, code)	Container size/ # cases packed	Process Time and Temp. <u>or</u> Hot Fill Temp.	pH of sample (equilibrated)	Visual Closure Inspection	Distribution (# cases, destination)	
H Meter C	Checks: pl	H in buffer 4.00 and 7.00						
	Signed:							

#### References

Canned Foods: Principles of Thermal Process Control, Acidification and Container Closure Evaluation; Ed. Austin Gavin & Lisa M. Weddig, 1995 Chapter 6

Small Scale Food Entrepreneurship: A Technical Guide for Food Ventures, 3<sup>rd</sup> Revision, Ed. NECFE Staff, 2003, p.25-26 Code of Federal Regulations, Title 21, Part 113 & 114 Code of Federal Regulations, Title 0, Part 218

Code of Federal Regulations, Title 9, Part 318

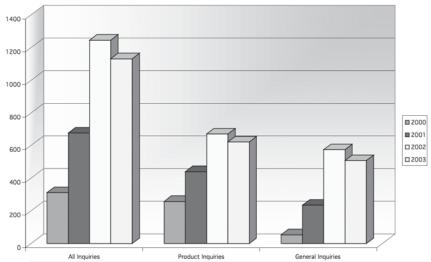
# **Toll Free Number No Longer Available**

Starting January 1, 2004, please use the direct phone lines available at NECFE Cornell University by calling 315-787-2274 or emailing sjl38@cornell.edu. NECFE Vermont can be reached at 802-656-8300 or jfarnham@uvm.edu. We apologize in advance for any inconvenience this may cause you.

### Summary of NECFE Product Evaluation Services from 01 January 2000 to 31 October 2003 By Sarah J. Lincoln and Olga I. Padilla-Zakour, Cornell University

**B** etween 01 January 2000 and 31 October 2003, the Northeast Center for Food Entrepreneurship (NECFE) has been in contact with 2966 clients from 48 states and 27 countries. Of that 2966, 1856 inquiries were product-related and 1110 were general. NECFE had 420 clients from 17 states and Canada filed for 1650 scheduled process approvals. They averaged four products per client. The graph below represents the number of requests NECFE had from 2000 – 2003. We must state that 2003 is not a complete year—the data represents the first 10 months. As the number of requests increased each year, it shows that more people became aware of NECFE and the services it provides to food entrepreneurs. The NECFE laboratory has analyzed 1832 samples for product safety and technical feasibility. Most food product prototypes were analyzed for pH and water activity to determine critical control points and food classification for federal and state compliance issues.

Throughout the four years the NECFE grant has been established, we have had 355 clients from New York file for 1422 scheduled process approvals. This number is high because of New York's regulations governing the production and sale of food. Thirteen clients from Vermont have filed for 27 scheduled process approvals. Thirty-eight scheduled process approvals have been filed for 13 client from Massachusetts. NECFE has approved 23 scheduled processes for nine clients in Connecticut. Three Rhode Island clients have had seven scheduled processes approved by NECFE. We have had two clients from New Hampshire and one client from Maine file for 31 scheduled process approvals.



# Number of Requests from 2000-2003

#### Products Evaluated and Approved for Safety per State

					11		J 1	
Product Category	Total	NY	VT	MA	CT	RI	NH/ME	Other States* & Canada
Acidified	501	449	11	16	5	2	0	18
Acid	451	374	5	3	11	4	31	23
Dressings/Flavorings	308	257	7	12	1	0	0	31
Meats	102	102	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other**	97	86	0	1	6	1	0	3
Low Acid	83	59	0	1	0	0	0	23
Confections/Syrups	48	37	3	5	0	0	0	3
Fish/Seafood	34	34	0	0	0	0	0	0
Baked Goods	26	24	1	0	0	0	0	1

\*Other States and Canada; NECFE has had 1 client from each of the following states and country: Alaska, Canada, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, and Virginia file for 24 scheduled process approvals.

\*\*Other includes Beverages, Dairy, Fats/Oils, Frozen, Fruit Preserves, Grains/Flours/Mixes, and Low Water Activity.

# Marketing Assistance for New York State Food Producers

By New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets

# "Helping to promote New York food and agricultural products in the region and around the world."

#### **OPPORTUNITIES IN NEW YORK STATE**

**Pride of New York** - New York farmers and food processors provide consumers with top-quality, wholesome, fresh and healthy products. Shoppers are able to identify these products when they see the Pride of New York symbol. Participants in the program include growers, manufacturers, retailers, direct marketers, whole-salers, and producers.

**Direct Marketing Program** - Designed to promote the marketing of New York State agricultural products direct from producers to consumers and wholesale buyers, this program provides technical assistance to community groups and organizations interested in organizing community farmers' markets, as well as farmers operating roadside stands and pick-your-own operations. The New York State Farmers' Market Nutrition Program provides more than \$5 million special checks to low-income, nutritionally at-risk people for fresh fruits and vegetables at participating farmers' markets.

**Grow New York!** Emerging or expanding businesses that are focused on producing, processing, marketing, or expanding New York produced agricultural products may be eligible for funding under this program: Agricultural Research and Development, Enterprise Program, and Farmer's Markets. For more information, please visit www.agmkt.state.ny.us/RFPS.html

**New York State Fair** - Each year, the Department organizes an exhibit at the Fair featuring New York State produced and processed foods and beverages. This enables the one million consumers who visit the Fair an opportunity to learn more about your company and taste your products.

**New York Showcase Day at Belmont Racetrack (October) -** A family-oriented event that highlights two of our top industries: food and agriculture, and thoroughbreds.

**New York Harvest Festival (November)** - A two-day celebration of New York State food and wine products featuring seminars, exhibits, and a gala dinner-dance.

#### Publications

New York State Farm Fresh Guide New York Food & Agricultural Export Directory New York State Specialty Food Directory

# FEDERAL PROGRAMS AVAILABLE TO NEW YORK AND NEW ENGLAND PRODUCERS

If you meet eligibility requirements regarding product content, small business designations and other criteria, you may receive financial assistance from the government. The United States Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Services (USDA-FAS) has several programs available to help US food companies export their products.

**Market Access Program (MAP) -** Food Export USE administers this fund for the USDA-FAS. This program reimburses up to 50% of your marketing and promotional activities related to export and international business. Additionally, some domestic shows are eligible for reimbursement. To apply, please visit www.brandedprogram.org

**Financial Guarantees/Insurance -** New and experienced exporters alike can benefit from these programs, which provide greater access to credit and credit risk protection for exporting. For more information, visit

www.fas.usda.gov/agexport/financing.html

AgExport Links<sup>sm</sup> - Use this free service to find companies who specialize in agricultural exporting. Examples of companies registered in the database include trading companies, trade associations, export marketing companies, freight forwarders, international bankers, and lawyers. www.agexportlinks.org

#### **TRADE SHOWS**

The New York Department of Agriculture and Markets sponsors a NYS Pavilion at two key food industry trade shows. The premier retail trade show in this country draws 30,000 buyers from supermarkets, gourmet stores, convenience stores and other food retailers around the globe, and is held in conjunction with the Winter Fancy Food Show. The US Food Export Showcase is held at the Food Marketing Institute in Chicago, May 2-4, 2004. Discounted space includes furnishings, carpet, signage, basic electricity and cleaning for \$2,500. New exhibitors may be eligible for reimbursement of up to half of their qualified, show-related expenses through the MAP Branded Program.

The American Food Fair of the National Restaurant Association, held May 22-25 in Chicago, is the leading food service trade show in the nation. In addition to restaurants and their suppliers, the show attracts over 60,000 buyers from restaurant chains, cruise ship lines, airlines, military, hospitals, schools, etc. The New York Pavilion includes furnishings, carpet, signage, basic electricity and cleaning for \$2,500. New exhibitors may be eligible for reimbursement of up to half of their qualified, show-related expenses through the MAP Branded Program.

For more information, please contact Kathryn Bamberger at the NY Dept. of Ag. & Markets, 518-457-4383.

#### **OTHER STATE CONTACTS**

Connecticut: www.state.ct.us/doag Massachusetts: www.mass.gov/dfa Maine: www.state.me.us/agriculture New Hampshire: www.state.nh.us/agric Rhode Island: www.state.ri.us Vermont: www.vermontagriculture.com

#### Accomplishments from P. 1

regulatory/licensing information. More statistics indicate that 65% reported that NECFE services aided in the success of their business; 57% of businesses operate in a rural setting; 39% are farm-based; and 57% are women-owned. Clients sell food products in specialty stores (48%), farmers' markets (46%), farm stand (39%), mail order (35%) and others. Business sales generated in 2002 had a mean of \$401,000 and a median of \$31,500. NECFE clients surveyed employed 969 full-time and 547 part-time workers.

Based on the survey results, we can estimate the total number of jobs created by companies that have been assisted by NECFE. New business established after January 2000 created 800 jobs while existing businesses supported 7,800 jobs.

#### Plans for 2004

NECFE has been funded for the last four years by a federal grant from USDA/ Fund for Rural America. We have been granted a no-cost extension (without additional funding) to continue the Center for 2004. This means that we will continue to provide the assistance to entrepreneurs but under budget restrictions. As funding depletes, we will be forced to recover the cost of the services we have been offering

#### HOT STUFFING from P. 3

Seminar and Food Expo Western New York Section Institute of Food Technologists March 23, 2004 Rochester Riverside Convention Center Rochester, NY

Seminar Program Noon - 3:00 PM Exhibitor Displays 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM Reception 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM Free admission to seminar and Expo **Register at** www.eventswithattitude.com Shirley Barber, phone (207) 839-3064

under sponsorship from the federal grant, by increasing fees. We are proactively looking for additional support to keep the same level of assistance and are hopeful that new funding opportunities will be available soon. Unfortunately, we will not be able to maintain the toll-free number any longer.

The two NECFE partners have been awarded separate grants to concentrate on specific efforts. The NYS Food Venture Center at Cornell University is now being partially funded for the next 18 months through the USDA grant "New York Farm Viability Institute: The Center for Value-Added Agriculture." This new Institute will be working with agricultural producers committed to implement value-added enterprises. The University of Vermont has received a three-year grant from the Merck Fund to support the development of a Vermont Artisan Cheese School, Research and Technical Center.

We will keep you informed of new opportunities and activities. We are committed to support small-scale food processors because we realize their critical role in local food system and economic development.

Happy holidays and best wishes for the new year!



NYSAES/Cornell University 630 West North Street Geneva, NY 14456



www.nysaes.cornell.edu/necfe