

**Organizational Sign On Letter  
in Support of the Local Farm, Food and Job Act  
(S.1773 and H.R. 3286)**

Please add your organization's name to this letter to the Northeast Congressional delegation. The letter urges the delegation to become a co-sponsor to the Local Farm, Food and Job Act of 2011 (LFFJA). The letter is being circulated by the New England Farmers Union and to sign on please add you name below or send an email to [Annette@NewEnglandFarmersUnion.org](mailto:Annette@NewEnglandFarmersUnion.org) and include your organization's name and state.

**To the Northeast Congressional Delegation:**

The undersigned organizations urge every member of the Northeast Congressional delegation to join us in supporting the *Local Farms, Food and Jobs Act of 2011* (S. 1773 and H.R. 3286) introduced by Congresswoman Chellie Pingree of Maine and Senator Sherrod Brown of Ohio. The Act will expand market opportunities for farmers, create new jobs and increase access to fresh and local fruits, vegetables, meat and dairy products for Northeast consumers. It is comprehensive legislation that includes many crucial reforms to federal food and farm policy necessary to strengthen local and regional food systems.

*The Local Food, Farms, and Jobs Act* includes provisions that would:

- Invest in critical infrastructure to enable farmers and food-businesses to aggregate, store and distribute their products.
- Increase food safety training and technical assistance resources for small and mid-sized farming operations as well as to small slaughterhouses.
- Reduce barriers to institutional purchasing; better linking local farms with schools, hospitals, and other institutions.
- Enable SNAP recipients to purchase fresh, Northeast-grown food by helping farmers, fisherman and direct sales markets acquire the technology necessary to accept electronic benefits.
- Improve crop insurance products available to small and diversified family farms.
- Open new sources of farm credit for farmers producing for local and regional food markets and to farmers engaged in value-added enterprises.

- Allow rural development loans to go to projects located in urban and periurban locations as long as the primary beneficiaries are agricultural producers and rural employees.

A recent report by the Economic Research Service, *Direct and Intermediated Marketing of Local Foods in the United States*, highlights the importance of local and regional markets to farms of all sizes and for job creation. For example, it notes that 40% of all fruit, vegetable, and nut farmers in the U.S. sell into local and regional markets and that on average they derived 61% of their total sales from those markets.

Clearly, local and regional markets are essential to the viability of the more than 32,000 fruit, vegetable, and berry farmers in the Northeast. Equally important is the need to build the processing and marketing infrastructure for local beef, pork, poultry, small ruminants, dairy, and local and regional grains. The ERS report notes that sales from mid-sized farmers to regional distributors, grocers and restaurants are an increasingly important share of the local food market. This bill provides an exceptional opportunity to enhance the profitability of mid-sized farms in the Northeast.

The 2012 Farm Bill needs to reflect the importance of these markets and crops to our Northeast producers and consumers. We urge you to become a sponsor of the *Local Farm, Food and Jobs Act of 2011*.

For further information please contact Claire Benjamin in Rep. Pingree's office at (202) 225-6116 or [Claire.Benjamin@mail.house.gov](mailto:Claire.Benjamin@mail.house.gov) or Kristin Vennekotter in Sen. Brown's office at (202) 224-2315 or [Kristin\\_Vennekotter@brown.senate.gov](mailto:Kristin_Vennekotter@brown.senate.gov)

Sincerely,

New England Farmers Union  
 Belfast Co-op  
 Berkshire Co-op  
 Berkshire Grown  
 Cambridge Farmers Market  
 Concord Cooperative Market  
 Equity Trust  
 Farm Fresh Rhode Island  
 Field to Table, Inc.  
 Franklin County Community  
 Development Corporation  
 Hanover Consumer  
 Cooperative Society  
 Hawthorne Valley Farm  
 Intervale Community Farm

Belfast, ME  
 Great Barrington, MA  
 Great Barrington, MA  
 Waltham, MA  
 Concord, NH  
 Turners Falls, MA  
 Pawtucket, RI  
 Turners Falls, MA  
  
 Greenfield, MA  
  
 White River Junction / Lebanon VT and NH  
 Ghent, NY  
 Burlington, VT

Just Food  
Manchester Food Coop  
New England Farmers Union  
New Entry Sustainable  
Farming Project  
NOFA Interstate Council  
Organic Valley Cropp Co-op  
Putney Food Co-op  
Real Pickles  
Rural Votes  
Sea Cost Eat Local  
Small Scale Food Processors  
Association of New York  
The Carrot Project  
Upper Valley Food Co-op  
Vermont Vegetable and  
Berry Growers  
Wholesome Wave

New York, NY  
Manchester, NH

Lowell, MA  
MA, VT, NY, CT, NH

Putney, VT  
Greenfield, MA  
Chesterfield, MA  
Newington, NH

NY  
Somerville, MA  
White River Junction / Lebanon VT and NH

VT