

Where Does Your Food Come From?

By: Phyllis Couture

Chair of the NYFB State Promotion & Education Committee

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If you're like many Americans, the answer is the grocery store. And frankly, that disturbs me. The grocery store isn't where food comes from – it is just from where it is distributed. In reality, far too many people are unaware of the role of American agriculture in their daily lives...and what it really takes to have food on their dinner table.

Just a few generations ago, most people were a part of – and had friends or relatives involved with agriculture. Today that is no longer the case. Agriculture is responsible for providing the necessities of life...food, fiber, clothing and shelter. And it's about time Americans recognize that contribution! "Right This Very Minute" by Lisl H. Detlefsen, tells the story of food and farming from farm to table. Are you hungry for breakfast? Then you need a farmer: for juice, for pancakes, for pure maple syrup, for milk – right this very minute. Need a snack? Then you need a farmer for nuts, cranberries, potato chips. Right this minute farmers till and test the soil for nutrients to make sure it's healthy to plant vegetables. Thousands of honey bees pollinate the blossoms of fruit trees and vegetable plants – a necessary step in producing food for humans and cattle. And it's not just the farmer who makes our food possible. The entire agriculture industry, all the way to the grocery store, are vital links in a chain that brings food to every citizen – and millions of people abroad.

American farmers are working harder than ever, and it shows. Today each American farmer feeds more than 165 people. And the need for food produced in the United States is dramatic. Agriculture is this nation's #1 export and vitally important in sustaining a healthy economy.

Frankly, it is easy to take agriculture for granted in America. Our food is readily accessible and safe. For this, we're unbelievably fortunate...but that doesn't mean we don't have an obligation to recognize how it's made possible.

New York Farm Bureau celebrated March as "Ag Month". The second annual Agricultural Month Kickoff brunch was held on Friday, March 1 at the Bailiwick Café and Market in Elbridge, New York. Representatives from many parts of the industry including New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, FFA, Ag in the Classroom, the maple industry, dairy, poultry and others attended.

There will be many events held throughout the state in March – all focusing on agriculture. Volunteers will be reading accurate agriculture books in elementary schools, maple farms are holding open houses and dinners recognizing outstanding farming practices and farmers will be held.

What's that, you say? You want to grow your own food? Then you need to think like a farmer! School teachers are doing just that – and are helping students plan school gardens for the coming growing season. What can you do to help your community reflect on agriculture, be grateful for agriculture and think like a farmer?