



## What's Growing On... Rhode Island Farm to School



May 2011

### What's Sprouting in Rhode Island?

#### "Planting" Ahead

We hope to see the following RI fruits and veggies planted specifically for school meals next autumn: Grape tomatoes, Swiss chard, colored cauliflower, broccoli and romaine. RI farmers are planning timelines and amounts right now. Please be sure to share your plans for menu-ing and serving RI Grown produce with either your produce distributor or Kids First so we can relay that information to the farmers. Good communication now will ensure plenty of RI fruits and veggies on school lunch trays this coming fall.

**ASPARAGUS** now!

&

**STRAWBERRIES**

(soon we hope!)

from

**Schartner Farms**  
in Exeter

**Jaswells Farm**  
in Smithfield

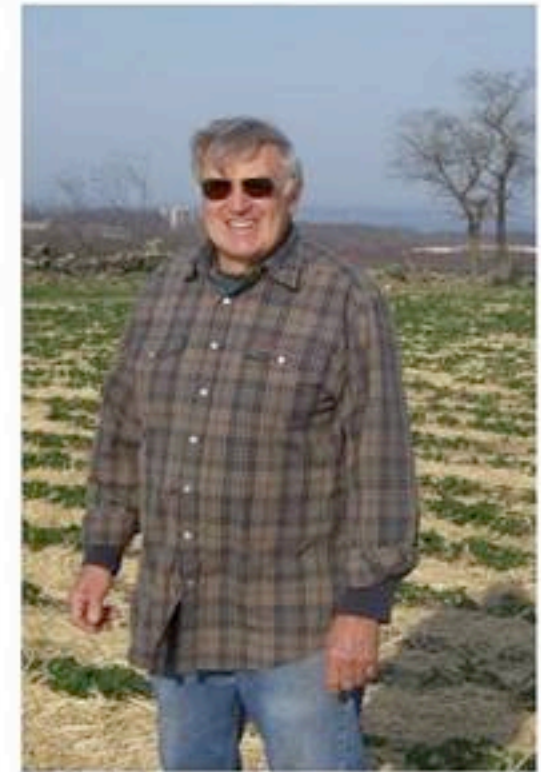
**LETTUCE** now!

from

**Confreda Greenhouses and Farms**  
in Cranston

**Send us your photos for publishing on Facebook!**

Due to the miserable weather we have been having, all produce is available in limited quantities. Make sure you check with your produce distributor that quantities are available before planning to menu any of the above.



**Dave Cotta**

of Quonset View Farm in Portsmouth in a field of strawberries. We hope to see ripe berries soon so we can celebrate strawberry season in school cafeterias

### Regional Farm to School Project Seeks to Bolster New England Food System

Kids First is happy to be working with the Farm to Institution in New England (FINE) team on a cross state collaboration to strengthen the regional food system. This multi-state project seeks to enhance the relationships and structure between New England Institutions and New England Farms to increase the quantity, value, and variety of local foods purchased and served by our institutions. The ultimate goals of this one year project are to help preserve New England farm-land, create jobs in rural areas, and support the local economies while at the same time providing health benefits to students and other consumers. Farm to School Regional state lead Dorothy Brayley and Farm to School Specialist Kimberly Clark have taken on the task of researching and documenting existing distribution channels within the region, including the regional Dept. of Defense Fresh program that delivers produce to public schools in all six states. The contracted vendor, AT Siravo has graciously agreed to cooperate. Our focus will be on understanding, piloting and sharing best practices for local product acquisition, distribution and traceability. Input and ideas from growers, distributors and purchasers in the region would be most welcome and appreciated. Please call Kids First to discuss.

For Farm to School programs and technical assistance, contact Farm to School Specialist Kimberly Clark at Kids First 401 475-9696

### Fresh Food, Fresh Ideas FUNdraiser a success!

Thank you to all of you who attended the first ever Kids First / Real Food First fundraising event last night! Our "Behind the Scenes" Market Tour gave participants the opportunity to connect with the fantastic growers and producers of their fresh food while learning about the economic, environmental and community benefits of supporting local agriculture. Everyone had a bite to eat compliments of Whole Foods Market and a sip of Greenvale Vinyards yummy wines while Kids First chefs whipped up a quick Carbonara. Alex & Ani attended in order to give folks an opportunity to further support Kids First by shopping for sustainably produced jewelry. The evening wrapped up after door prize winners claimed their decorative, edible gardens, generously donated by Confreda Farms. A good time was had by all!

A special thank you to our Rhode Island Farm to School funders for their generous support - The Sharpe Family Foundation, The Carter Family Charitable Trust, The Jessie B. Cox Charitable Trust, The RI Department of Environmental Management Farm Viability Grant, The van Beuren Charitable Foundation, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Rhode Island and Brown University Food For Thought. We love you guys!!!