



EarthWatch Rhode Island



Topic: Enjoy the Bounty of Products Made with RI Grown Apples

Date: October 15, 2010

Location: Appleland Orchard
135 Smith Avenue, Greenville

Background

The beautiful weather Rhode Island experienced this summer was perfect for growing this year's fall harvest of apples. Rhode Island apple growers are harvesting an excellent crop of apples, which are available at orchards throughout the state. Right now an abundant variety of apples including Macoun, Cortland, Macintosh, Mutsu, Honeycrisp, Empire, Red and Golden Delicious, are available for purchase and fresh, locally-made cider is also available at many orchards.

For pick-your-own apple enthusiasts, orchard information is available at the DEM website <http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/bnatres/agricult/pdf/riapples.pdf>, and the RI Fruit Growers website, <http://www.rifruitgrowers.org>

Appleland Orchard in Greenville

Appleland Orchard in Greenville offers a large variety of freshly picked apples for purchase in its farm store, as well as many products made with apples from its orchard. The orchard was founded in the 1970s by the parents of the current owners, Joseph D'Andrea and his wife, Marylou, and has grown as a family business over the years. Today, Appleland Orchard grows many varieties of apples, as well as pumpkins and pears, and sells them along with freshly baked apple pies, cider, donuts and candy from its farm stand. Appleland also makes two unique food products that are very popular among its patrons: large gourmet chocolate-dipped apples, and apple wine. Owner Joseph D'Andrea has been making the apple wine for many years and operates the only winery in Rhode Island that makes apple wine.

Buy Local

Rhode Islanders can support local agriculture and treat themselves to the best the land has to offer. Buying locally-grown products provides many benefits, particularly during an economic downturn. It strengthens the local community by investing the food dollar close to home. It recycles money and keeps it local longer through local wages and suppliers. A dollar spent locally generates twice as much income for the local economy. And not only does RI's farming industry help fuel our local economy and protect our environment (saving on fuel costs and reducing the chances of contamination), it protects our physical resources and superior quality of life by preserving endangered farms, open space and our families' health and wellness.

The Department of Environmental Management's Division of Agriculture promotes and markets Rhode Island farms so that Rhode Islanders are aware of all the offerings provided by farms throughout the year. The Rhode Island agricultural business offers great activities for people of all ages. The fall season presents a perfect time for apple picking, hot apple cider, pumpkin picking and other fun activities such as hayrides and corn mazes.

Farms across Rhode Island have been a source of fresh locally grown fruits and vegetables for many years. Now, with the agri-tourism industry growing, many farms have diversified in order to offer their visitors fun and educational experiences of what farm life is like along with their fresh produce.

Interviewees:

Peter Susi of DEM's Division of Agriculture discussed the importance of buying locally-grown fruits and vegetables for healthy eating as well as supporting local farmers; the availability of these products at farmers' markets; how DEM works with apple growers and other farmers to promote their products and agri-tourism at local farms; and provided background on the importance of farming and how farmers have learned to diversify activities to stay in business.

Joseph D'Andrea of Appleland Orchard spoke about this year's apple crop and how the hot summer weather impacted the crop, apple wine, and the various apple products available at Appleland Orchard.
