

Rutgers Food Innovation Center

e-nnovator News

March 2009

- Over 1000 food businesses and entrepreneurs assisted to date •
- Awarded *Incubator of the Year* by the National Business Incubation Association in 2007 •

Welcome to the March issue of the Rutgers Food Innovation Center's e-nnovator News. e-nnovator News is a quarterly email newsletter for our clients, colleagues and partners that highlights the latest news from the Food Innovation Center, a business incubation and economic development accelerator program of the Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station.

New Partnerships Formed, Benefiting Clients & Communities!

FIC Enters into Strategic Partnership with New Jersey Food Processors Association

The Food Innovation Center (FIC) has formed a strategic partnership with the New Jersey Food Processors Association (NJFPA), to strengthen and grow the organization, provide new services for its membership, and widen its reach within New Jersey. The Center will be taking on a portion of the association's administrative and marketing duties, will be managing their website and membership communications, and assisting with its long-term strategic planning.

The NJFPA (whose website can be found at <http://www.njfoodprocessors.org/>) is led by President Sam Pipitone, of F & S Produce Co., and members of the board include Steve Kiszely, Sr. of Delaware Valley Packaging Group, Brett Buatti of Campbell Soup Co., Sam Ragusa of Violet Packing, Peter Pappas of Clement Pappas & Co., Carmine Catalana, Sr. of Cumberland Dairy, Pearl Giordano of Limpert Bros., Cliff Johnson of Surfside Products, and Lou Cooperhouse of the Rutgers Food Innovation Center. A listing of the board can be found at <http://www.njfoodprocessors.org/officers.html>

FIC Partners with GCC to Provide Food Industry Training to Unemployed Community Residents

The Rutgers FIC has developed a three-hour course, designed to provide unemployed community residents wishing to enter the food production industry with an overview of best practices in food processing and food safety, as well as an introduction to Good Manufacturing Practices and hygiene and sanitation principles. This course is being offered free to community residents, thanks to funding received by Gloucester County College from a Community-Based Job Training grant from the US Department of Labor.

On Friday, February 20, 2009 the Rutgers Food Innovation Center hosted the second in an ongoing series of free food industry employee training courses at the Center's new business incubator in Bridgeton, NJ. At the conclusion of each course a test is administered. All who attend the class receive a certificate of completion, which can be a valuable addition to a resume and future job applications in the food industry. Additional classes are scheduled for April 7, 2009. There is no cost to attend, but individuals must register. Classes are filled on a first-come-first serve basis. Registration and course information can be found on our website: <http://foodinnovation.rutgers.edu/Brochure%20for%20RFIC.pdf>

In the coming months, the Food Innovation Center will be offering a curriculum of six classes that provide classroom and hands-on training, which will be made available to unemployed and displaced individuals, via referrals from county Workforce Investment Boards.

FIC Assisting Community Food Bank of NJ, with New Branded Business Models; Wall Street Journal Recognizes Student Team that Conducted Feasibility Study

The Food Innovation Center is assisting the Community Food Bank (CFB) of NJ in the identification and implementation of new sources of funding, derived from branded products that can be produced at the CFB facility in Hillside, NJ. The CFB developed and introduced two bagel crisps products in 2008, branded “Grains for Good”, and has received very favorable results in its market sales thus far. The FIC is currently assisting the CFB with a product manufacturing and commercialization plan to manufacture Grain for Goods Bagel Chips in greater volumes over the months ahead, which will also enhance job training opportunities that the CFB provides.

The CFB project was launched after a feasibility study was conducted by a team of graduate students from the Rutgers Business School (RBS) Team Consulting Program, which validated the receptiveness of this concept. This experiential student project was led by FIC Director Lou Cooperhouse, who is an adjunct faculty member of the RBS as well. This project recently received recognition in an article in the Wall Street Journal, which appeared on February 23, 2009 and was entitled “Class Action”. This article can be read at http://rbs-cms.rutgers.edu/files/classaction_wsj.pdf and information is also available on the Rutgers Business School website at <http://business.rutgers.edu/newsDetail.aspx?id=214>

Food Innovation Center Providing Internships to Local High School Students

The Rutgers Food Innovation Center has entered into a partnership with both the Bridgeton and Woodstown High Schools to provide a select group of students an exciting internship experience. The facility is an outstanding resource for students who will be provided a unique opportunity to gain practical, hands-on experiential learning in areas as diverse as business plan development, market research, economic analysis, food science, nutrition science, quality assurance, food safety and security, package engineering, industrial and process engineering, law and public policy. Student activities are supervised by FIC staff members, and have resulted in extremely valuable experiences for both the students and the FIC!

FIC Launches Online Food Industry Courses!

Food Innovation Center Now Offering Online Courses!

Thanks to funding that originated in-part from the USDA Distance Learning and Telemedicine program, FIC is now offering three series of online courses: Food Business Basics, Growing Your Business, and Farmers Market Best Practices. “Food Business Basics” is a series of three courses developed for a small or start-up food business, which focus on Market Planning, Manufacturing and Business & Finance. The “Growing Your Business” series was developed as a follow-up to Food Business Basics. These five, pre-recorded seminars focus on the topics of Trends in the Marketplace, Competitors and Competition, Distributors and Distribution, Product Development Process, and Business and Business Plans. Our third set of courses, “Farmers Market Best Practices” is largely based on a study the Food Innovation Center conducted over the past year, thanks to funding from USDA Rural Development and the NJ Department of Agriculture. There are two courses available; one geared to Market Managers and Sponsors and the second designed for Farmers and Vendors. All of our courses can be found on the Center’s website and are available for a cost of \$25 - \$79, depending on the course you choose. To view more information

on these online courses, please see:

http://foodinnovationcenter.rutgers.edu/educational_resources/

Incubator Facility Updates

FIC Facility Receives Federal Authority to Produce both USDA and FDA Products!

The Food Innovation Center has received a Grant of Inspection from the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), so that it can now produce products that contain meat and poultry on behalf of its clients. Previously, the Center has been reviewed by the leadership of the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services Food and Drug Safety Program, as well as the Cumberland County Public Health Department, which provided the authority for the Center to produce retail and wholesale products that fall under inspection of the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA). As a result, all types of prepared food products – produce, meat, poultry, seafood, etc. – can now be produced at the FIC incubator facility in Bridgeton! The first USDA-inspected products will be manufactured by a client at the FIC facility during this coming week!

New Bottling Line Debuts!

The Food Innovation Center has purchased new equipment that can continuously package hot-filled or cold-filled beverages, ciders, soups, sauces, condiments, jams, and jellies. This semi-automated, small scale production line can fill 10-20 bottles or jars per minute, depending on the size and shape of the container. Tremendous interest has been expressed in this new line of equipment from a number of FIC clients, and this line will be completely installed and tested during April. A photo of this bottling line is viewable on our website, at

<http://foodinnovation.rutgers.edu/bottlingline.jpg>

Center Tour Dates Posted for April and May

Due to tremendous interest in the capability of the Food Innovation Center's new business incubator facility, regularly scheduled tours and open houses have been organized. These will take place 1 – 2 times per month, beginning at 1:30 pm on selected dates. Tour dates for April and May are now available on our website. All are welcome for these tour events, but advance registration is required for attendance. To register for your tour of the Food Innovation Center's new business incubator, please fill out the form found here:

<http://foodinnovation.rutgers.edu/fictour.html>

FIC Hosts an Array of Meetings for Community, State and Federal Partners

The Food Innovation Center has hosted a number of community, state and regional meetings over the past few months. These have included a meeting of the NJ State Board of Agriculture, meetings with the Gloucester County and Cumberland County Economic Development agencies and the Cumberland Development Corporation, meetings with the NJ Food Processors Association, a meeting of the NJ Soil and Water Conservation Society, a regional meeting for USDA Rural Development, a delegation from China, a meeting of faculty and students from the University of Pennsylvania, and a busload of attendees that visited the facility during the Mid Atlantic Direct Marketing Conference and NJ Vegetable Association. In addition, Jim Prevor, Publisher of *Produce Business* and also *Deli Business* magazines, and the *Perishable Pundit* e-newsletter, visited the FIC facility in January, and expressed great enthusiasm for what the Center offers to clients and to industry in general. The FIC is pleased to offer its conference room to community, state and federal agencies and non-profit institutions at no charge, so long as space is available.

National Publicity

Center Director Quoted in *Progressive Grocer*

Lou Cooperhouse, Director of the Food Innovation Center, was interviewed for an article that appeared in the March 2009 edition of *Progressive Grocer*. The article, "Grocery Futureview: Magnetic Core," discusses what the center of the supermarket might look like in 2019. To read this article, see: http://www.progressivegrocer.com/progressivegrocer/content_display/in-print/current-issue/e3i01058b4cfb43337644c1909f6a52c089

Food Innovation Center Featured in *Food Technology* magazine

Food Technology magazine ran two articles about the Food Innovation Center in their December 2008 issue. The first article appears in their News section and talks about the opening of the new FIC incubator facility. In their Laboratory section they discuss university development facilities, and feature two national Centers for innovation: the Rutgers Food Innovation Center and UC Davis. To view these articles, please see:

<http://foodinnovation.rutgers.edu/foodtech1208njaes.pdf>

<http://foodinnovation.rutgers.edu/foodtech1208miniature.pdf>

Upcoming Events

New Jersey Farm to School Network Holding First Conference on April 18

Josh Viertel, president of Slow Food USA, will be the keynote speaker at the New Jersey Farm to School Network's conference on April 18, which will be held at The Lawrenceville School from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. As the first convocation of its kind in the state, discussions will focus on how to start school gardens, increase the use of farm-fresh produce in school lunches, and policy strategies needed for success. More information about this outstanding event, including registration information, can be found at <http://www.njfarmtoschool.org/>

Food Innovation Center Director to Speak at State and National Conferences

Lou Cooperhouse, Director of FIC and a member of the Board of Directors of the National Business Incubation Association (NBIA), will be a speaker at an opening session of the 23rd international conference of the NBIA, to occur on April 20 in Kansas City, MO. The title of Lou's presentation will be "A Roadmap for Incubator Development". In addition, Lou will be the moderator of a forum on Food/Agricultural/Kitchen Incubation at the NBIA conference, in which global food incubator programs can exchange ideas and forge new collaborative relationships. More information about this conference can be found at

http://www.nbia.org/nbia_events/conf2009/

Lou Cooperhouse, Director of FIC, will be a featured speaker at the Spring 2009 Analysts meeting of the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, on May 27th where he will talk about the role that business incubators have in business attraction, business retention, job creation and workforce development. To view an agenda for this event, please see: <http://foodinnovation.rutgers.edu/2009SpringAgendaTextOnly.pdf>

Lou Cooperhouse, Director of FIC, will be a keynote speaker at the 2009 Michigan Land & Prosperity Summit, sponsored by the Michigan State University Land Policy Institute, which will be held on April 13-14. The title of Lou's presentation will be "Business Incubation as a Catalyst for Regional Economic Development". More information about this summit can be found at http://www.landpolicy.msu.edu/modules.php?name=Pages&sp_id=215

http://www.landpolicy.msu.edu/modules.php?name=Pages&sp_id=426

Lou Cooperhouse, Director of FIC, will be a speaker at the closing general session of the CSP Foodservice at Retail Expo (FARE) to be held August 17-19, 2009 in Schaumburg, IL. The title of this panel session will be “Mandates, Regulations & Social Causes: How will your foodservice program be affected?” Lou is also a member of the national Advisory Board to the Foodservice at Retail group. More information about this conference can be found at <http://www.foodserviceatretail.com>

Staff News

Bernadette Gill Retires!

We are excited, and also saddened, to announce the retirement of Bernadette Gill, our wonderful Administrative Assistant! Bernadette has been with the Food Innovation Center since our opening in 2001, and was the Center’s first employee. She has been a tremendous asset to our entire team, and was with us every step of the way as we transitioned from our former office on East Commerce Street in Bridgeton to our new 23,000 sq. ft. incubator facility located a mile away.

Bernadette first joined Rutgers in 1988. Before joining the Food Innovation Center, Bernadette provided administrative support for Dianne Lennon and the NJAES Family and Consumer Sciences Education team, as well as technical support to statewide RCE faculty and staff associated with the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program. We will all greatly miss Bernadette and her tremendous can-do attitude. Her last day in the office was March 27. She and her husband, Hank, will be off on a cruise in the Caribbean in early April, so they will be immediately enjoying their retirement.

Sho Islam is Engaged!

We are happy to announce that Sho Islam, our Business Development Associate, became engaged on March 20th! The happy Bride-to-Be is Sonny, of Brooklyn, New York. They were introduced through a family friend and Sho knew she was “the one!” Sho and Sonny are planning their wedding for June 28, 2009. The FIC team extends their best wishes to Sho and Sonny as they prepare to begin their life together. Congratulations, Sho!!

Brief Feedback Survey

Your feedback is important to us. Please take a moment to answer just five questions regarding the Food Innovation Center’s **e-nnovator News**, so that we can tailor future issues to best meet your needs. To complete the survey, go to:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=aCOZSIWQTjymLqgsBnlHqQ_3d_3d

More information about the Rutgers Food Innovation Center can be found on our website at <http://www.foodinnovation.rutgers.edu/>