

September 15, 2010

To: New England Grassroots Environment Fund

I am writing on behalf of the First Branch Sustainability Network in support of the Pompanoosuc Agricultural Society's grant application to NEGEF. We have reviewed this proposal, and believe it deserves strong funding support. Facilities such as the one proposed here are exactly what is needed in Orange County--a rural area without large population centers or local food infrastructure--to move the idea of local food networks from concept to reality.

It will be noted that our group is also applying for a NEGEF small grant. The two grants are not unrelated. We hope to begin a process that will lead to the development of Regional Food Centers throughout the area. The Pompanoosuc Agricultural Society is proposing to move in this direction by establishing such a facility. This is exactly what we hope to see happen.

It is not an accident that both grants, though developed independently, have focused on the same challenges. The intent of our own project is to begin a strategic planning process, in partnership with the PAS and other groups in the area, leading to a viable action plan. This will assure that we are all working toward our common goals in a coordinated fashion. On the other hand, specific projects, if they reflect real needs and seem initially viable, give the planning process something tangible to work with.

Our two proposals, therefore, complement each other well. The PAS' grant proposal offers both a concrete step forward and a starting point for expanding the vision to all the rural areas of Orange County. We fully support the funding of this project.

For the First Branch Sustainability Network,

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