

DRAFT FOR CLIENT REVIEW (Revised March 8, 2014)

Fact sheet for press kit or online news room; the goal of this fact sheet is to highlight the diverse agricultural bounty of the region and other fun facts.

Agriculture in the Finger Lakes Region Facts at a Glance

Historical Facts:

- About 2 million years ago, a series of glacial flows retreated across what is now New York State. These massive bodies of ice carved out areas within the earth, causing gorges. Today, the gorges throughout the Finger Lakes region have become popular attractions.
- The Native Americans who lived in the area believed that the Finger Lakes were the fingerprints of the Great Spirit, who reached down and touched the earth, transforming it into sacred ground.
- The Finger Lakes region has always been known for fertile land as the Seneca, Cayuga and Onondaga Native Americans were historically very successful at growing crops. In particular, they grew corn, beans and squash, which are still grown in the region today.
- During the American Revolutionary War, many soldiers who were sent to the area and commented on the fertility of the land and great crops, and ended up returning to the region after service to farm.
- There are 11 Finger Lakes: Canadice, Canandaigua, Cayuga, Conesus, Hemlock, Honeoye, Keuka, Otisco, Owasco, Seneca and Skaneateles.

Modern Day Facts:

- Agriculture is currently New York's No. 1 business
- New York is the second largest apple-producing state
- Central New York and the Finger Lakes region span 9,000 square miles, including 2 million acres of dedicated farmland. The Finger Lakes Organic Growers Cooperation allows people to enjoy great tasting, certified organic vegetables, herbs, fruits and nuts grown on small family farms using sustainable practices. The vegetables, fruits and other organic products are fresh and don't take a lot of fuel to get where they need to go.
- Buying organic helps keep the organic farmers in business and keep the land productive as well as the rural communities alive.
- The products are nutritious and great tasting because

of the healthy soil.

- Organic refers to produce grown without the use of pesticides, synthetic fertilizers, sewage sludge, genetically modified organisms or ionizing radiation.
- It is grown without the use of synthetic pesticides, which benefits people who have a high sensitivity to environmental toxins. Organic farming is also good for farmers and farmworkers, as they don't come in contact with pesticides.
- The lack of pesticides is also much better for the environment.
- The Finger Lakes is the region responsible for the majority of the wine that comes out of New York. The Finger Lakes region also has recently been noticed as producing incredible apple cider and, even more recently, microbrews.

Finger Lakes Produce:

The Finger Lakes produce an abundance of vegetables, fruits and herbs.

- Spring
 - o Asparagus, garlic greens, garlic scallions, culinary herbs, mesclun, snap peas, snow peas, parsley, radishes, ramps, rhubarb and spinach.
- Summer
 - o Basil, blueberries, green beans, yellow wax beans, dragon tongue beans, cantaloupes, cilantro, corn, culinary herbs, broccoli, carrots, great and red chard, cucumbers, dill, edamame, edible flowers, peppers, kale, leeks, lettuce, melons, mint, tomatoes and more.
- Fall
 - o Apples, basil, bell peppers, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, grapes, cucumbers, kale, cranberries, winter squash, potatoes, eggplant, garlic, hot peppers, cilantro, pumpkins, radishes, rutabaga, shallots, spinach and many more.
- Winter Storage Crops
 - o Beets, burdock root, cabbage, carrots, garlic, onions, parsnips, potatoes, rutabagas, turnips, winter radishes and winter squash.

Agricultural Experiences:

The Finger Lakes region offers agricultural experiences for visitors and tourists.

- Farmers markets thrive in many communities and farm stands are set up through the region in spring and fall.
- Many farms offer U-pick, where people get to pick their own fruits and vegetables.
- There are many experiences people can take part in that give insight into local agriculture in the Finger Lakes, such as the Cheese Trail or the Beer Trail.
- Many local grocery stores also sell local produce and meats.
- Many agricultural events are held throughout the year, such as Apple Fest, Chili Fest, Oktoberfest and Chili Fest in Ithaca that highlight local produce and cooking.
- Edible Finger Lakes publishes annual issues on Summer Cooking and Grilling, Good Meat, Local Heroes and Wine, as well as a new Holiday issue. In addition, regular features provide information on the agricultural scene throughout the region.

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