CADE’s *Agriventure* Communications Plan

**Year 1: September 2002-August 2003**

**Goal of Agriventure**

Through the Agriventure project, CADE and its partners will provide the expertise necessary for our area farmers to successfully plan and commercialize new, environmentally sound, value-added agricultural products to significant new wholesale, retail and direct markets. These activities will result in the formation of a sustainable, community-based food system; an increase in the number economically successful locally owned and controlled farms and agricultural enterprises; the stabilization of our regional farm economy; and the support a systematic change in agribusiness in our region. We have organized the work of Agriventure in the components listed below.

**The Agriventure Communications Plan will advance the following objectives:**

1. Build capacity for local food producers and consumers.
2. Recruit farmers, farm related businesspeople and co-ops members for the business systems workshop series.
3. Recruit farmers, farm related businesspeople and co-op members for intensive Agriventure services.
4. Establish communication networks between farm product producers and local markets.
5. Identify to public at large the locally grow or produced farm products that are available and where you can get them.
6. Communicate to wholesale customers (restaurants, grocery stores and specialty shops) the locally grow or produced farm products that are available and where you can get them.
7. CADE will share its expertise and information through a comprehensive outreach and replication program to agricultural development organizations and on a national scale.
8. CADE will provide public policy recommendations that support sustainable agriculture and food systems to decision-makers.
9. Communicate Agriventure youth educational programming options to public schools and through public events/farm markets.

**Target Audiences**

In the production and processing of agricultural products, Agriventure will concentrate on four counties in Central New York State (Otsego, Delaware, Schoharie and Chenango). The geographical area of farmers served in Agriventure is limited to four counties, so that we can focus our work and cluster the products.

However, marketing, sales, dissemination of information, and our public policy work in Agriventure will reach a broader audience.

Below is a list of primary audiences in Agriventure:

**Producers** (increase number of farms. production output and profits)

- Farmers (Otsego, Delaware, Schoharie and Chenango Counties)
- Co-ops (Otsego, Delaware, Schoharie and Chenango Counties)
- Agricultural related businesses (Otsego, Delaware, Schoharie and Chenango Counties)

**Consumers** (promote increase in purchase of local products)
- Wholesale markets (Northeast US with emphasis on local counties)
- Retail stores (Northeast US with emphasis on local counties)
- Institutional (Local colleges and schools)
- Internet sales (National)
- Direct markets (local CSA’s, farmers’ markets, on-farm sales, farmstands)

Public Policy Leaders (enact policies that promote sustainable agriculture)
- Federal
- New York State
- County Economic Developers
- Local County Boards

Youth and Youth Educators (encourage young people to consider careers in agriculture and to form a partnership between rural and urban youth)
- Local schools
- New York City Schools

General Message (to reach all audiences)

Buying and selling locally produced food products benefits the entire community. Agriventure is a program that will connect farmers and consumers.

Talking Points of General Message

- Local foods taste better and are healthy.
- Buying local farm products supports family farms.
- Rural economies are strengthened by local agriculture—everybody gains, dollars are circulated, jobs are created, young people can take over the farm.
- Restaurants and retail stores will benefit by offering local farm products.
- Farming is a viable career for young people.
- The Agriventure program is important in connecting farm products to markets.

Message to Farmers and Businesspeople

Agriventure is a program designed to help your agricultural business to prosper. Chances for success for farms are greatly improved with solid business planning, marketing, production, and efficient day to day operations.

We offer professional business services, workshops, and conferences that support your farm, farm related business, co-op, etc. Agriventure will establish or enhance venues for producers to market their products. Farmers will be empowered through workshops and intensive consulting services on effective and efficient business practice.

Talking Points to the Farmers and Businesspeople

- Profitable farming alternatives exist in our area.
- Farming is important and your business is critical to the local economy.
- Many local markets are now available.
- Consumers for these products are concerned about product quality, healthiness and safety.
- Consumers are buying these products.
- There are new opportunities for your farm.
- Specialty products compensate farmers fairly for their effort.
Message to Consumers

Locally grown food products are healthy, taste great and are competitively priced. And, by purchasing local food products you are supporting your local economy and preserving the landscape.

Talking Points to Consumers

- Local foods taste better and are healthy (no antibiotics, pesticides, etc.).
- It is convenient to buy local foods.
- The farmers are members of our communities.
- Information concerning the production of the food is readily available.

Message to Public Policy Leaders

Current public policy favors large corporate farm production. In addition, most research is focussed on production and input economies, which further support large agribusiness. Small farms and local agriculturally related businesses need a level playing field to compete.

Talking Points to Policy Leaders

- Small farms are vital to the economic and social fabric of rural New York.
- Small farms offer employment opportunities.
- Small farms conserve the landscape.
- Small farm offer tourism opportunities (including heritage) for urbanites and the landscape is critical in the success of these programs.
- Our country was conceived on the premise of a small farming economic model.
- Contemporary society has lost sight of these virtues.

Message to Youth and Youth Educators

Agriculture is a viable career option for young people. A high level of skills focusing on the "entrepreneurial farmer’ need to be taught in the schools in order to produce a new generation of farmers.

Talking Points to Youth and Youth Educators

- The average age of farmers in our area is 59, so there is a great opportunity for young people to farm.
- Education is key to provide the skills for successful farm ventures.
- Marketing and business are just as important as production skills.
- A variety of agricultural programs are available at local schools and BOCES Occupational Centers.

Communication Elements

1. Expansion of a data base of the following (ongoing)
   - farmers and products
   - agricultural related businesses
   - markets
   - consumers
- schools
- public policy leaders
- media outlets

2. Creation of Agriventure logo (completed in December 2002)

3. Creation of Agriventure brochure for all audiences (will be completed in February 2003)

4. Media releases (ongoing)
   - Release announcing the Agriventure program and W.K Kellogg Foundation grant (release issued in January 2003)
   - Releases to announce elements of Agriventure (workshop series, restaurant project, retail store local product point-of-sales project, the Cuba study tour, announcement of web page, etc.)

5. Articles and Radio Show Interviews (ongoing)
   - At least 6 articles published during the year in a variety of journals, newsletters and newspapers.
   - At least 2 radio interviews to target consumers.

6. New Web Page (design phase will be completed by March 1, 2003)
   - CADE’s mission
   - CADE’s programs
   - Agriventure goals and programs
   - Where to buy local products?
   - Farmers’ markets
   - Workshop schedules
   - Publications, reports and studies for downloading

7. Presentations at Conferences and Workshops (ongoing)
   - At least 4 presentations will be made at conferences and workshops regarding Agriventure

8. Public Policy Recommendations
   - Written policy recommendations will be produced and sent to policy makers
   - Personal meetings, telephone conversations and/or presentations will be made to policy makers