

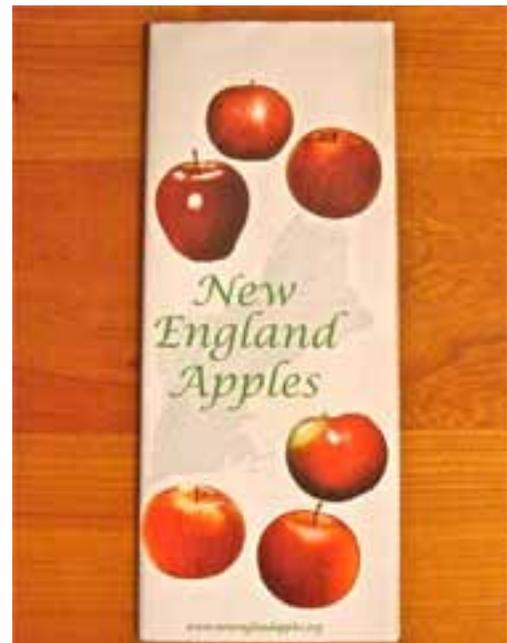
McIntosh News

The newsletter of the New England Apple Association

Orchards can add their imprint to 'New England Apples' brochure

The brochure/poster "New England Apples" is being revised this spring in a way that will enable member orchards to purchase quantities with their farm's information on the back panel. Other changes to the brochure will include new recipes, some supplied by the region's orchards, and new photographs of New England apple varieties on the poster side of the brochure.

All member orchards will continue to receive a supply of brochures regardless of whether they select the option of having their information imprinted on the back panel, and the brochure



Honeycrisp

will continue to be distributed by the association at such events as the Eastern States Exposition.

For those orchards that wish to order a supply with their imprint, the minimum order will be 1,000. The orchard information will be printed in green or black ink (to be determined), and can include a logo as well as the orchard's name, location, phone and website address.

Prices are as follows:

| Quantity | Price | Unit price |
|----------|----------|------------|
| 1,000 | \$300.00 | \$0.30 |
| 2,000 | \$500.00 | \$0.25 |
| 3,000 | \$600.00 | \$0.20 |

The deadline for ordering imprinted brochures is June 1. To order, send your information and a check for the appropriate amount (made out to "New England Apples") to: Post Office Box 41, Hatfield, MA 01038.



New England Apple Association

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Executive Director
Russell Powell

McIntosh News is published by the New England Apple Association and distributed free to apple growers, policymakers, agricultural organizations, and other friends of the New England apple industry. The nonprofit New England Apple Association is a grower-funded organization charged with raising awareness of apple varieties grown in New England.

For information regarding
membership, editorial submissions
or advertising, please contact:

New England
Apple Association
P. O. Box 41, Hatfield, MA 01038
413-247-9966
info@newenglandapples.org

www.newenglandapples.org

Orchard Run Russell Powell, executive director

New England apples: a (re)introduction

We work to promote New England apples in any way we can, supplementing the marketing efforts of individual states and the New England state departments of agriculture. Simply put, our goal is to educate people about how our fruit is grown, harvested, prepared and sold, and encourage consumers to eat more New England apples.

The nonprofit association began in 1935 as the New York-New England Apple Institute; in 1995 New York and New England decided to create separate organizations, so we became the New England McIntosh Growers Association, a name that was later shortened to the New England Apple Association. Originally, the association's mission was to promote apples for the wholesale market, but as the apple industry has changed to include more and more diversified farms and orchards that sell directly to consumers, we added a retail membership to acknowledge the fact that our promotions benefit the entire New England apple industry, large and small, retail and wholesale.

Our board of directors—whose names are listed on page 2—include two members each from Maine, Massachusetts and Vermont, plus representatives from Connecticut and New Hampshire. We have an office in Hatfield, Massachusetts, but no full-time employees; Bar Weeks and I administer the association and develop and implement promotions on a contractual basis, hiring subcontractors as needed for specialized projects like website development and video production.

We do promotions like an annual booth at the **Eastern States Exposition**, at the height of the fresh harvest, where we hand out thousands of our brochure/poster, "New England Apples," and recipe cards, and sell fresh apples, cider, cider doughnuts, apple pie pockets, and apple pies to a hungry and appreciative public—more than one million visitors attend the fair annually. We sponsor fundraising walks of the **Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation** throughout New England, and support organizations like Ag in the Classroom.

With Specialty Crop grants from four New England states and a grant from Northeast Farm Credit's AgEnhancement Program, we have produced a series of **video programs** about New England apples that are posted on the search engine **YouTube** and appear on our website, newenglandapples.org. This winter we completed a three-part series on **New England**

**People love hearing about
New England apples—
their history, their variety,
how they are grown,
and new ways to prepare
and enjoy them.**



Macoun

apple varieties, and it appears on our home page. We also have a three-part series on **apple pie-making**, from crust to oven (on our “Recipes” page), and **pick-your-own etiquette** (currently posted at “Find an Orchard,” it will move back to the home page August 1), which was viewed more than 6,000 times in September and October alone.

We are nearly finished with separate programs on **pruning** and **grafting**, and by August we will have completed short programs on **storage and handling**, **pollination**, the **packing house**, and **cider-making**. The videos are an outstanding resource for teachers and consumers, and tell the story of our fruit in a compelling way. People who visit newenglandapples.org and people who search for information about apples on YouTube will find these videos.

The website continues to grow. Last fall and winter we added photographs and descriptions of **more than 60 New England apple varieties** to our apple photo gallery, and we reorganized, copy edited and added to our **recipe section** to make it more attractive to visitors. Keeping this section of the site lively is an ongoing project.

We’ve added **new images to the slide show** on our home page, and added a **Facebook** account and a **blog** to get more consumers interested in New England apples and extend our reach at little or no cost.

Member orchards create and update their own listings, and visitors to the site can find them through a number of routes: by **zip code**, by **apple variety**, by **farm product** other than apples, such as cheese or maple syrup, with an advertisement on their state’s own page, and, of course, with their orchard listing.

We’re working behind the scenes to drive more traffic to the site, and it is working—the hits from last year to this show a dramatic increase every month. Even

now, we’ll get more than 40,000 hits in March. We’ve had the site listed prominently during fresh harvest on places like WBZ-TV’s website, health and food sites, and state tourism bureaus, and our web person is working to improve our **Search Engine Optimization**, or SEO, so that the site pops up more frequently and higher on the search list when people type in any of our apples. Member orchards can help with this by linking their sites to ours, as one criteria used by Google in ranking a website is to consider how many other sites link to it.

We are excited about our project to reprint the **brochure/poster “New England Apples.”** For years this has been our most popular printed item, and we give member orchards a supply of them each year in addition to handing them out at numerous public events like the Big E. We’re updating the brochure this spring, adding some new recipes and apple varieties, and for the first time we will be able to print them so that the back panel can feature the name and contact information of individual orchards. The minimum order will be 1,000 and they will cost just pennies apiece. The details and how to order can be found on page 5. This new feature was requested by several orchards, and we think it will be a great way to add value to what is already a great promotional piece about our apples.

We would love to have all of you become members so that you can be listed on our website and receive a supply of brochures, among a number of benefits of membership.

People love hearing about New England apples—their history, their variety, how they are grown, and new ways to prepare and enjoy them—and we are always looking to find new and imaginative ways to get this information to them. In this way we can play our part in ensuring a strong and profitable future for the region’s apple orchards.

Talks on Connecticut's 'Farm to Chef' program followed by tour

Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) food crop scientists will speak Monday, April 5, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., in Jones Auditorium, 123 Huntington Street, New Haven. The scientists will talk about their research and how to support the "Farm to Chef" mission to serve more locally grown crops in Connecticut restaurants.

Following the talks, there will be a tour of the Plant Disease Information and Insect Inquiry Offices and the Soil Testing Lab.

Connecticut farmers, chefs, restaurant owners, and food growers of all kinds are invited.

The event is free and open to the public.

RSVP to Tess Foley, Tess.Foley@ct.gov, or call 203-974-8459.

USApple offers free orchard membership

The USApple Board of Directors amended its by-laws to provide complimentary memberships to growers in states that pay USApple a full annual assessment. This currently includes Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont. To become a member, growers must register directly with USApple.

For additional information, contact Todd Hultquist, director, communications and membership, U.S. Apple Association, 703-442-8850.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name _____

Title _____

Company _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Fax _____

Email _____

Your complimentary USApple membership will become effective once USApple has received your completed form (or attach a business card). Send form or card to USApple by April 30, by mail, fax, or email. Use separate forms to add additional members from your business.

This offer is for growers only. Businesses involved with shipping, storage, processing and other extended areas of the apple industry are welcome to join as dues-paying members.

U. S. Apple Association
8233 Old Court House Road
Vienna, VA 22182
800-787-4443
Fax: 703-790-0845
thultquist@usapple.org

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FDA seeks comments on proposed fresh produce rules

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has announced that by the end of 2010, it will issue a proposed rule to establish safety standards for the production and packing of fresh produce. The usual process is for the FDA to issue a proposed rule and then take comments. But this time, the FDA wants to go one step further by actively engaging stakeholders while still in the development phase of such a rule.

The FDA has opened a docket (Federal Register notice location: <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2010/pdf/2010-3409.pdf>) to receive information before a proposed rule is written. This will help the agency develop the scope of the rule to reflect the realities of production and packing in produce operations.

Discussion on this complex and diverse segment of the nation's food supply needs to be fueled and informed by the expertise and on-the-ground knowledge of those who grow, harvest and pack fresh produce, according to the FDA. Comments may be submitted under this docket over the next 90 days. In addition, FDA hopes growers will "spread the word" to groups throughout their area of the country and of expertise—so that all sectors that may be affected by the rulemaking to come will know about this opportunity to get their views heard and take advantage of it.

The multi-agency website www.Regulations.gov serves as a clearinghouse for materials related to FDA rulemaking and is FDA's official on-line comment system. To submit comments to FDA electronically through Regulations.gov:

- The easiest way to get to the docket is to enter the docket number.
- On the Regulations.gov home page, enter the following in the "Keyword" field:
FDA-2010-N-0085
- This will take you directly to the docket, "Preventive Controls for Fresh Produce: Request for Comments."
- In the far right of the screen under Actions, click on "Submit a Comment."
- A page will come up asking for some

information about you or your organization. You can then type your comment directly into the field provided and/or you can attach any related documents to your comment. Press "Submit." You will be able to view your comment and comments others have submitted.

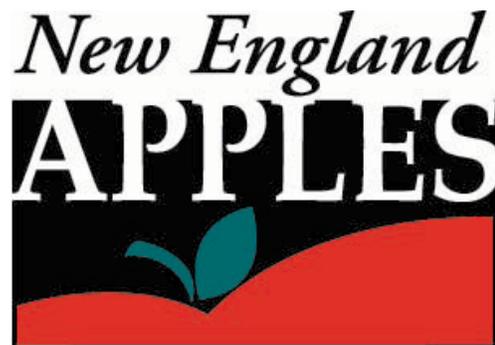
To submit written comments, be sure to include the docket number at the top of the pages in your submission. The docket number is FDA-2010-N-0085). Mail comments to:

Division of Dockets Management
HFA-305
Food and Drug Administration
5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061
Rockville, MD 20852

The comment period for this docket ends on May 24, 2010.

**Make sure
you are on our website!**

**Send in your
membership today.**



The Seal of Good Taste

**New England Apple Association
P. O. Box 41
Hatfield, MA 01038
413-247-9966**

PVGrows announces innovative financing for food system enterprises



Peter Baldwin, Proprietor
 P. O. Box 177
 Brooks, ME 04921
 Phone: 207-722-3654
 Fax: 207-722-3342

For agricultural/food enterprises located in the Connecticut River Valley region of Western Massachusetts, Pioneer Valley Grows is offering new loan options and creative financing opportunities for enterprises that help bring more local food to markets and fill food system infrastructure gaps in the Pioneer Valley. The program is now looking for committed entrepreneurs whose well-researched plans provide solutions for handling, processing or distributing local agricultural products, and improve sales for farm-related businesses. Plans can be in various stages of completion; you do not need to have a complete business plan to receive consideration for financing.

Eligible enterprises must be involved in agricultural activities and/or adding value to farm products grown in the Pioneer Valley region, and support the long-term viability of the local food system. PVGrows is particularly interested in post-harvest, market-oriented activities, including the processing, packing, storage and distribution of predominantly locally grown products. Eligible entities include start-ups, established enterprises, cooperatives, and nonprofits.

PVGrows's financing project is designed to provide businesses with \$10,000 to \$500,000 in financing opportunities.

The PVGrows Infrastructure Finance Project comprises several components, currently in varying stages of development:

Western Massachusetts Enterprise Fund (WMEF)

WMEF is offering a pre-development loan fund—up to \$50,000 per project—to provide selected businesses with capital to move from feasibility into operations. Recipients pay interest only as the project moves through development, and the loans are rolled into a final financing package for enterprises that proceed to launch. Interest rates are currently 8 percent, but are subject to change based on prime.

Loan pool

PVGrows is developing a loan pool targeted at the specific needs of food systems enterprises that may not find a match with conventional bank loans.

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Photograph submitted by Thuy Dong.

The pool will be funded and administered in partnership with WMEF, the Cooperative Fund of New England and the Franklin County Development Corp. Favorable loan terms are supported in part by the Lydia B. Stokes Foundation, The Frances Fund, and other philanthropic partners with an interest in bringing capital to the local food system. Loan terms will be between three and 10 years, with interest rates anticipated at 7 to 10 percent.

Equity fund

PVGrows plans to offer a highly competitive equity fund for interested businesses with investments ranging from \$10,000 to \$150,000.

Community capital

PVGrows is exploring options to raise community funds for the purposes of investment in food system ventures with social and environmental missions, drawing from national models being developed by Slow Money, RSF Social Finance and others. The goal is to provide community members with a means for directing some of their investment dollars into the local food system.

PVGrows will review potential participants on a monthly basis. To get started, send a description of the

enterprise, existing or planned, by answering the questions below (one paragraph each). Email pvgrows@buylocalfood.org, including your enterprise name and “Financing Inquiry” in the subject line. After initial review, PVGrows may request additional materials to better understand your enterprise.

1. Describe business activities for which you may be seeking financing.
2. Describe the enterprise history, management structure, and qualifications, including whether the activity is in start-up, growth, or mature stage.
3. What financing options have you explored for the enterprise? What financing options are you interested in exploring further? (Refer to PVGrows Finance Initiative for details.)

Questions and submission

Email pvgrows@buylocalfood.org or call 413-665-7100 for the PVGrows Coordinator.

PVGrows Coordinator

CISA, 1 Sugarloaf St., S. Deerfield MA 01373

Submission of information in response to this announcement does not create a binding obligation of any nature on the PVGrows working group members or the applicant.

Are you on our website?

If your farm is not listed on the New England Apple Association Internet website, www.newenglandapples.org, you are missing a golden marketing opportunity. The site attracts thousands of hits each month 21, even during the slowest part of the selling year. Visitors can search for your farm by zip code, by apple variety, or by produce and products at your farmstand.

Visitors to our home page can “Find An Orchard” and go directly to farm listings by state. Members are provided password-protected access to their listing so they can update and customize them from their home computer as often as needed, to advertise special events, the seasonal availability of apple varieties or other crops, new products, or changes in hours. Each listing includes a pop-up Google map with directions to the farm, and a link to its website. Orchards can purchase display advertisements to increase their visibility, with artwork and a quick link to their own website.

In addition to a customized web listing, membership comes with free supplies of the beautiful brochure/poster, *New England Apples*. The popular brochure, currently being revised, is full of information about apple varieties and their usage, how apples are grown, nutrition, storage and handling, and recipes. The poster side has a seasonal chart with photos of New England varieties.

So take advantage of our website and make it easy for your customers to find you. Send the form below with your check payable to the New England Apple Association to: New England Apple Association, P. O. Box 41, Hatfield, MA 01038. As soon as we receive it, we’ll send out your brochures and email you with password information so you can create your listing.

For additional information, contact us at 413-247-9966 or info@newenglandapples.org.

2010 New England Apple Association membership

Orchard name: _____

Email address: _____

Check one:

_____ BASIC: \$200.00

*Includes interactive listing on website www.newenglandapples.org, plus
100 New England Apples brochure/posters*

_____ FULL: \$500.00

*Includes interactive listing on website www.newenglandapples.org, plus
3½” display ad on website, plus 300 New England Apples brochure/posters*

New England apple industry leaders visit Washington



Ned O'Neill of J. P. Sullivan Co. in Ayer, Massachusetts, was among the apple leaders from across the country who met in Washington, D.C., March 25 for USAApple's "Capitol Hill Day," an intensive single-day campaign that includes visits to dozens of U.S. Senate and House offices to request support for key apple issues such as agriculture labor reform, fair food safety laws, Farm Bill programs and increasing apple exports.

Congressman Fred Upton (R-MI) opened the morning with remarks about agricultural labor, food safety and other critical issues. USAApple President and CEO Nancy Foster then provided an update on legislation affecting apples and offered talking points for Congressional visits later in the day.

The day concluded with a fundraising reception for USAApple PAC, featuring Congressman Dan Maffei (D-NY), who represents Wayne County, N.Y., the second largest apple-producing congressional district in the nation.

Darrow, Libby attend meetings through 'Young Leaders' initiative

With sponsorship from J. P. Sullivan and Co., New England sent two representatives to Washington Thursday for USAApple's Capital Hill Day under a new apple industry program, the USAApple Young Leader Initiative. Casey Darrow of Green Mountain Orchards in Putney, Vermont, and Aaron Libby of Libby & Sons in Limerick, Maine, were able to attend the Washington meetings as a result of the program. Darrow and Libby were nominated for the honor and were unanimously supported by the board of directors of the New England Apple Association at their March 23 meeting.

Casey Darrow, 24, described the visit as "an awesome opportunity to get down to Washington and see how everything works, and to convey our issues and concerns." Among the issues he raised were labor—"access to a reliable workforce is always a concern, not only in Vermont and New England but across the country," he says—and food safety. In particular he urged members of the New England congressional delegations from Maine, Massachusetts and Vermont to support the AgJobs bill.

Aaron Libby, 26, felt that it was important to put apple growers from the region in front of the Congressional staffs, to be able to say, for example, "this is not just USAApple; this is Aaron Libby from Maine, who lives Spring 2010

in your district." He was appreciative of USAApple for the opportunity to be part of the program in its first year, and hopes to become more involved and play a positive role in legislative affairs in the years ahead. He also liked meeting with farmers and USAApple board members from across the country, to hear about how they operate. "In some ways they do things the same way we do," he says, even though his 40-acre family farm was the smallest among the growers he met with, "and in some ways we are very different."

The U.S. Apple Young Leader Initiative is designed to equip the next generation of American apple growers, and those involved with other aspects of the industry, with an understanding of federal regulatory and legislative apple issues, as well as apple marketing strategies, and to provide an opportunity to learn from peers and apple leaders from around the country.

Participation in the event—including all travel, lodging and food expenses—was made possible by the following sponsors, in addition to J. P. Sullivan: Belle Harvest Sales, Inc., and Jack Brown Produce, Inc. both of Michigan; Knouse Foods Cooperative, Inc., of Pennsylvania; New York Apple Sales, Inc., of New York; and Tree Top, Inc., of Washington state.

New features on website fuel growth

The New England Apple Association Internet website, www.newenglandapples.org, continues to grow, both in content and appearance and—more importantly—popularity with consumers. With several days remaining in March, the site already has attracted nearly 90,000 hits during January, February and March (typically a slow time of year), an increase of 15 percent from the same period in 2009. New changes to the site and improved Search Engine Optimization are expected to help the site grow even more in the months ahead.

(Traffic to the site fluctuates depending on the time of year; by comparison during September and October, the height of the fresh harvest, the site experienced nearly one-quarter of a million hits.)

A number of features have been added in the past year, including expanded search capabilities so that visitors can now find orchards by state listings, zip code, apple variety or other farm product, and the addition of photographs and descriptions of more than 60 New England apple varieties. The recipes section has been reorganized and updated, and it will be expanded in the coming months with new features, such as an apple recipe of the month and more recipes supplied by member orchards that will link back to the orchard's own website.

Video programs on visiting pick-your-own orchards, apple pie-making, and New England apple varieties are featured prominently on the website, with more in the pipeline. The association now has a Facebook page and weblog. (See related articles.)

Several dozen new images have been added to the slide show on the site's home page, adding interest and variety. The home page now includes icons that can link visitors to their own Facebook, MySpace, Twitter and blog pages among a host of options for sharing information from the site with their own friends, colleagues and social networks. We've also made changes to the navigation, so that visitors can find the various orchard searches and recipe section more easily.

New England Apple Growers Association

3/28/10 10:29 PM

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FEATURED APPLE VARIETY

Empire

- Learn about this variety
- Delicious recipes

<http://www.newenglandapples.org/index.php?id=37>

Page 1 of 6

Behind the scenes, the association is working to improve the site's Search Engine Optimization (SEO), so that it appears higher in searches by consumers using a range of words and phrases. Member orchards can help the site's SEO by adding a link to www.newenglandapples.org from their farm's website (see related article).

Member orchards create and update their own listings from the convenience of their own farm, and full members receive a preferred listing and a display ad on their state page, both linking to their own websites.

Next to come, in addition to the new videos and enhanced recipe section, will be a review of the site's editorial content to make it more concise and "web friendly." We welcome your feedback and suggestions as we continually explore new ways to educate consumers and connect them with our growers.

Join us on Facebook!

Come join New England apples on Facebook! We've created a Facebook page and added it to the home page of the association website, www.newenglandapples.org, as a way to get information out more quickly and more often to consumers, growers and friends of the New England apple industry. Just click on the Facebook icon on our home page to become a "friend" of New England apples.

Facebook is also a way to drive consumers to the website. If you already have a Facebook account, we ask that you send invitations to all of your Facebook friends to join New England apples, too. In this way, word spreads quickly, and we can reach thousands of people interested in knowing more about our apples—at no cost.

We've also started a weblog, or blog, about New England apples, which is accessible through the orange icon on our home page. Each time

there is a new post, the link to it will be sent to all of our Facebook friends, so they can get regular, timely information about New England apples. Topics for the blog will include a wide range of apple-related subjects, from recipes to descriptions of varieties to legislation. If you have ideas for a blog, let us know by emailing info@newenglandapples.org, or sending a message on our Facebook page!



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Read our blog!

New videos on pruning and grafting

Consumers, students and educators will soon have new tools to learn about the way commercial apples are grown, as the New England Apple Association completes video programs in pruning and grafting. The two-part program on pruning and the five-minute grafting video were both videotaped at Tougas Family Farm in Northborough, Massachusetts and are narrated by orchard owner Maurice “Mo” Tougas.

Like the previous video programs completed by the association since last September, the pruning and



Are you linked to our website?

As a way to drive more traffic to the New England apples website, www.newenglandapples.org, the association is working with Kevin Russell of Right Angle, Inc., its website development person, to improve the site's Search Engine Optimization, or SEO. The goal is to have the apple site pop up higher on the search list when consumers type in information about any of our orchards or apples.

You can help. One criteria used by Google in ranking a website is to consider how many other sites link to it. This helps “legitimize” the site and indicates its relative importance for the topic of the search. The more people that visit the association site, the more that will learn about our apples, how they are grown, ways to prepare them, and how to find them—including your farm's listing under “Find an Orchard.”

If your website does not already have a link to www.newenglandapples.org,

it's easy to add: Log onto your account from the New England Apples' site. You are presented with two options at the bottom of the page: the NEAA logo to use as a link or a code you can copy



and send to your developer to add to your site.

This simple step is a cost-free way to educate people about New England apples and your orchard.

grafting videos will be uploaded to the Internet search engine YouTube as well as available for viewing directly from the New England Apple Association website, www.newenglandapples.org. Any visitor to YouTube searching for information on either topic will have access to the pruning and grafting videos, which conclude by publicizing the association's website address.

By August 1, the association will complete several more programs, on cider-making, packing and processing, storage and handling, and pollination. The programs are designed to showcase the beauty of our apples and orchards while educating consumers about the fascinating, yet often poorly understood, ways in which New England apples are grown, harvested and processed.

YouTube and the association website already display three-part video programs on New England apple varieties (with footage from Apple Hill Farm in Concord, New Hampshire, and Rogers Orchards in Southington, Connecticut) and apple pie-making (from Green Mountain Orchards, in Putney, Vermont). They can be found on our home page and our recipes page, respectively.

A four-minute program on pick-your-own etiquette featuring orchards from Connecticut, Massachusetts and Vermont was viewed more than 6,000 times in September and October alone. Currently available for viewing on YouTube and on our “Find an Orchard” page, it will move back to a prominent position on the home page August 1.

The video project has been a regional effort, funded with Specialty Crop grants from Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont, and a grant from Northeast Farm Credit's AgEnhancement Program.