



## Winter 2021 Newsletter

*The New York Small Scale Food Processors Association (NYSSFPA) was formed to represent and inform all small-scale food processors. The organization's workshops educate by mentoring, teaching marketing, connecting farmers and processors for value-added production, and guiding food-entrepreneurs in the use of current approved processing practices.*

NYSSFPA is composed of the following officers and committees:

President: Kathrine Gregory

Treasurer: OPEN position

Secretary: Deb Krajcik

Communication Committee: Ashley Rossi (Chair), Deb Krajcik, Andrew Dufresne, Kathrine Gregory, Beth Linskey, Kevin Byrne

Education Committee: Alicia Lührssen-Zombek (Chair), Maria Grimaldi, Stephen Hadcock

Membership Committee: Bob Bleistein (Chair)

Newsletter edits and design by: Bhavna Punjwani, Kathrine Gregory, Ashley Rossi

SmallScaleNY@gmail.com

Have a question?

Need some info?

Email us and you will receive a response from one of our board members within 72 hours (remember we are all volunteers and running a business also)

Please add this email address to your contact list to receive our Quarterly Newsletters

Bi-Weekly E-blasts with Time Sensitive Information

### CHANGE YOUR ADDRESS? OR EMAIL?

Please remember to let us know so that you don't miss receiving important information.

Send us an email with the update to

**SmallScaleNY@gmail.com**

## President's message

There is hope and there is support! That is our focus of this month's newsletter. What have we learned and how we are taking one step forward every day! Listen to the news with objectivity-no fears allowed, just a lot of common sense.

You all received a lovely gift from Deb Krajick in December-she is showing you the hope that is possible in the coming few months. Deb exemplifies what NYSSFPA is all about-

sharing information

sharing experiences

sharing a hopeful attitude

I hope you enjoyed the cup of tea-calming your busy mind for 15 minutes. And have a pot to plant the marigolds in the Spring.

S=sunshine

P=persistence

R=resilience

I=inspiration

N=nurture

G=good earth

The two questions posed to our board member and corporate members will give you inspiration to go forward, just like Deb's little packet brightened your day.

Stay safe/Stay positive

## Kathrine

\*\*\* Our **2021 annual meeting** will held via zoom on Tuesday, February 23rd, 2021 from 6 pm—7 pm EST. You will receive e-blast with specifics, so please mark your calendar!

In this meeting, we will go over our budget, financials, plans for the upcoming year, and confirmation for the current slate of board members.

The position of treasurer is currently open. If you are interested, please contact Kathrine directly at [MiKitchen1866@aol.com](mailto:MiKitchen1866@aol.com).

**Kathrine Gregory** *President, Corporate member NYSSFPA*  
*Mi Kitchen Es Su Kitchen: Consultant creating food incubators*  
*in partnership with not profits. Managing consultant of the*  
*entrepreneur space (NYC) a Food & Business incubator*

**1) what was your greatest challenge in 2020 and how did you overcome it?**

Creating a safe environment for the food businesses to manufacture and safety for our staff to operate the incubator. With the assistance of the staff, we came up with a set of guidelines. This included masks at all times for those entering the facility, sanitizing constantly and in general good food safety measures.



Our next task was to create opportunities for our clients to continue to generate revenue. we literally started this within one week after the Stay in Place edict.

We partnered with the Queens Borough President's office to supply the food for the program "Fuel the Frontlines". This kept several of our caterers and home meal delivery businesses busy. We created a delivery service and display promo on our website of products being prepared in the incubator for the immediate area. We advertised the products being manufactured in the kitchen with a link to individual websites for ordering.

The fact that we were able to remain open as the production facility enabled many of our business to continue manufacturing-to continue generating revenue.

**2) What is the top priority for you to accomplish in 2021?**

To assist our foodpreneurs to create revenue growth, new products, streamline their production process, operate more profitably. We are continuing with our online webinars and individual zoom consulting. We are creating more opportunities thru contacts and new ideas.

Most importantly we are fostering a can-do attitude which will require thinking "out of the box". People will always need to eat; there are many interesting new trends starting because of the shelter in place/work from home edicts. Technology has become our friend and has taught us new ways of doing things. We have been forced to change Many of our habits, replaced by more streamline operations-and this is a good change.

**Maria Grimaldi**, *Education Committee, Corporate Member NYSSFPA*  
*Farm to Table Consultant*



**1) what was your greatest challenge in 2020 and how did you overcome it?**

**2) What is the top priority for you to accomplish in 2021?**

I am so very lucky to be an individual who thrives on challenges and certainly 2020 has tested everyone's resilience including mine. The effects of the Covid-19 pandemic will be felt for many years to come and requires some serious thought in planning for the near and more distant future.

Almost forty years ago I made the decision to move out of New York City and renovate a small farmhouse in the Catskill region of New York state. I wanted to be surrounded by open space, forests, fields and access to clean water, clean air, reasonable neighbors, a parking space in my own driveway and being able to walk to the mailbox in front of my house in my nightgown. The pandemic has not changed any of this for me. It has just made me more grateful that I made that decision a long time ago and have adapted well to the rigors of living in the country 12 months of the year.

Since I am semi-retired, I will make a simple marketing plan for my "new" business venture in 2021. It will have emphasis on health for humans and the planet. I will charge modest fees to share the knowledge I have acquired in my lifetime as an educator and farmer. I am hopeful that by spring of 2021 we will have a degree of control over the pandemic and launch a new economy that will support small green enterprises. I want to grow medicinal plants and conduct workshops, ideally in person in small groups, to identify medicinal plants and prepare tinctures, syrups, and teas. There are also several tourist destinations which may be willing to host a small group events for educational purposes. This involves investigation and will be part of my marketing plan for 2021.

For now let me say I am grateful for the outcome of the 2020 presidential election and the record turnout of a diverse population of voters, who despite the pandemic, traveled to polling places, stood on line, voted by mail and insured that democracy will survive.

**Bob Bleistein**, Education Committee Chair, Corporate Member, NYSSFPA  
 Eastern Classic Coverage, Private Insurance Practice



**1) What was your greatest challenge in 2020 and how did you overcome?**

The greatest challenge.. well there were so many to choose from. I believe the greatest challenge this year was (and continues) is trying to make the safest environments for family, my dedicated employees, our clients and our client's environments. With insurance being a hot topic this year, as a trusted advisor, myself and my team has fielded thousands of questions around Covid, their businesses and their personal safety.

Although the hours have been longer than usual and the questions have been very diverse, we have helped many people maintain their business assets and hold a safe, healthy steady course.

**2) What is the top priority for you to accomplish in 2021?**

A top goal I for myself both personally and professionally is to keep on providing the best possible insurance options for our clients, and through our risk management training, help them not only get through any rough periods but help them thrive in their businesses. While we prepare to look for continued insurance potentials to better help our clients, make sure that our families and colleagues continue to be safe and well.

**Wendy Shutter**, Corporate Member, NYSSFPA  
 Glen Copack (a food copacking business owned and operated by The Arc Chemung-Schuyler)



**1) What was your greatest challenge in 2020 and how did you overcome?**

**2) What is the top priority for you to accomplish in 2021?**

We started 2020 with the goal of improving efficiency and reducing costs to become a sustainable business for The Arc. We offer employment and vocational training opportunities for people with developmental disabilities. The year started with us well on our way to meeting this goal, however the COVID pandemic and subsequent shutdown brought this momentum to a screeching halt. We used this period to rethink our workflows and analyze our processes. Through some changes in how we manage a food production and the addition of some grant funded equipment, when people returned to work, we were implemented these new procedures. The people we support are now able to independently run large portions of certain productions. These small successes will become the focus of 2021 as we continue to expand our customer base and create work opportunities in food production for people with disabilities.

**Andy Dufresne**, Communications Committee, Board Member, NYSSFPA  
 Concord Grape Belt Association



**1) What was your greatest challenge in 2020 and how did you overcome?**

**2) What is the top priority for you to accomplish in 2021?**

The Grape Discovery Center had a challenging year like most all of you. Our Center is tourist visitor oriented with income generated primarily by the gift shop and tasting room. Rather than the mid-March opening we did not re-open until July 10 and then only on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. We only do a small number of sales via the internet.

We followed the protocols for sanitation, social distancing, mask wearing, etc. We do have an outdoor patio which was nice in the warm weather for visitors to enjoy a glass of wine, a slushy and some of our available foods seated feet away from a grape vineyard and watch the seasonal changes of grapes from little green berries to plump ripe purple Concord grapes.

All of our normal events were cancelled, and no buses arrived. We are located near I90 and receive a lot of visitors from Pittsburgh, Cleveland and Buffalo directions visiting or passing through the region. Business was good considering the virus but much reduced from the past years. We did not have many complaints or issues.

We did receive a PPP loan to offset staff's pay which was very helpful in keeping the Center open. Grants that we had been working on for years to aid in the Center's operations and expansion are pretty much on hold due to state financial issues, etc. Membership support was good and a big factor in being able to stay open.

The Board of Directors and staff still have a positive attitude for 2021 and 2022 and will explore possible events to get back to "normal". We know that we face big challenges.

**Deb Krajcik**, Secretary, Board Member, NYSSFPA  
Women of Food



- 1) What was your greatest challenge in 2020 and how did you overcome it?**  
**2) What is the top priority for you to accomplish in 2021?**

Our biggest challenge of 2020 was the word "NO". No you can't do, go, remember to wear your mask, do not look at anyone you might get . . . and more. Doors were slammed in our faces and locked. Businesses closed left and right. Grocery shopping, standing in line for toilet paper! Seriously!

We overcame our challenges by acting on the proverb "when life gives you lemons, make lemonade." We turned to alternative ways of meeting utilizing Zoom and face time and ordered online. We wrote letters, invented games, made puzzles, became artists and inventors.

The top priority of Secretary is to not only take meeting minutes, it is to know, encourage and support our fellow board and membership. The troubles of 2020 will not simply go away however working together we may make the best lemonade on the planet in 2021. Looking forward to helping make 2021 the best it can be.

**Kevin Byrne**, Communications Committee, Board member, NYSSFPA  
FSQA Solutions, LLC



- 1) What was your greatest challenge in 2020 and how did you overcome it?**

The greatest challenge I dealt with this year came from an inability to physically visit facilities; due to COVID-19, a number of processors closed their doors to visitors in order to protect their employees. I was able to overcome this by using online tools such as Microsoft Teams to perform consults and other actions remotely.

- 2) What is the top priority for you to accomplish in 2021?**

The pandemic has made me of all things busy this past year due to the increase in remote activities I was able to perform, to the point that I did not spend as much time maintaining my business' online presence as I should have. So my top priority for 2021 is to schedule time each week towards improving my website, as well as develop a social media presence.

**Ashley Rossi**, Communications Chair, Board Member, NYSSFPA  
Red Kill Mountain Homestead Farms

- 1) What was your greatest challenge in 2020 and how did you overcome it?**

The greatest challenge I had to overcome in 2020 was deciding how to interact with the public. Part of the mission of our company is education and we had planned tours/agri-tourism for 2020 with leading pomologists and a local tour company in the Catskills. Instead of constantly rescheduling or toggling around itineraries, we decided to pursue NO tourism or education for 2020. This absolutely hurt the bottom line but it also opened up different ideas and different revenues streams for the company.

- 2) What is the top priority for you to accomplish in 2021?**

My top priority for 2021 is build a digital presence and following online so that any in-person experiences, that might be pushed off again, can still be had in a virtual setting.



**Beth Linskey**, Communications Committee, Board Member, NYSSFPA  
Former Owner of Beth's Farm Kitchen, Consultant

- 1) What was your greatest challenge in 2020 and how did you overcome it?
- 2) What is the top priority for you to accomplish in 2021?



All of our worlds changed in some way. I will be forever grateful that I sold my business in 2016 so I did not have to decide if I was an essential business or not. The decision would have been yes. Many of you made those decisions and then had to figure out all the guidelines you would follow and how to keep you and your staff safe. What a huge responsibility! I give you all much credit for swimming through the processes and the ever changing processes. Phew! It was exhausting. For the last 4 years I have been actively involved with the Fulton Stall Market in the Seaport in NYC. It is a 501c3, non profit 6 days-a-week indoor Farmers Market. We sell mostly New York made and grown products. It is a grocery store with all local products and a CSA that runs all year. It is an "essential business". We had to scramble to be sure our employees could continue working and our vendors would be able to supply us so we could stay open and continue with our CSA. As well as figure out what would happen with our booming take out lunch business (it was gone). That was a pivot! (Big new word for 2020). We weren't and still aren't ready for a big tire to 'online' delivery so we are depending on word of mouth, Instagram and Facebook to lure people into the shop.

We made payroll consistently and paid the vendors and farmers consistently. Our CSA grew to about 90 families. Right now, Jan 2020, we are at 48 families but it is winter. Our CSA has poultry, meat, dairy and fish, so it has been invaluable to the families who live in the FiDi area who have rather limited shopping venues.

In my personal life I completed my attachment to Beth's Farm Kitchen. The new owners of my old company were able to move from my old kitchen to their NEW kitchen at the end of March. Hooray! This meant transforming a long time commercial kitchen into a lovely comfortable country. Many dumpsters and dump runs later the house went on the market and was sold in Sept with no bargaining. The new owners seem happy and had Christmas lights outside and a tree in the window. Other than that I have been "staying-at-home" and zooming with the best of them. Fulton Stall Market got a USDA grant with Escape maker that covers 2021 to 2023, so we are working on projects again. With that in mind we are interested in speaking to new entrepreneurs. We love to know what is in the marketplace and what would fit in our store. We are a consignment only shop. You get 80% and we take 20%. Email Bob Lewis, [tanagerbob@gmail.com](mailto:tanagerbob@gmail.com) with info on new products. We do not carry baked goods because of their shelf life. I wish us all the best of luck in this new year. I'll be getting my vaccine this month, so it is starting right for me. Hooray!

**Miriam Haas**, Corporate Member, NYSSFPA  
Down to Earth Markets

- 1) What was your greatest challenge in 2020 and how did you overcome it?

Down to Earth Markets a developer of urban and suburban farmers markets, hardly lost a beat. As with most farmers markets we closed for about two weeks to retool the layout and methods of selling. We had to develop protocols, train our staff and indicate to vendors the new set ups and rules. It was challenging to make sure vendors did not sample or allow shoppers to touch the merchandise.



With up-to-date information from the NY Farmers Market Federation and from the Department of Agriculture, we reorganized the layout of the markets and then had to explain the new rules and regulations.

We had only a few glitches. Some vendors wore their masks sloppily or not at all and this had to be addressed. After a few weeks we felt that the markets began to get their stride. Our greatest challenge was finding more space as we added new vendors. Maps were made and remade.

In some of our city markets we have small footprints for set up, so the city agencies we work with allowed us to spread out beyond our usual space. This enabled us to set up the vendors 6 ft. apart. Our site managers were given boxes and boxes of chalk and each market day they marked x's and lines to show how far apart each shopper had to stand. Sometimes lines had to cross as the spaces were tight. But after a while shoppers began to understand.

- 2) What is the top priority for you to accomplish in 2021?

As the world moves closer to normal, we are continuing our momentum. We found that so many new shoppers have discovered the farmers markets. I imagine that in 2021 we will also continue to see a lot of food makers who were economically displaced (either from traditional restaurant and brick and mortar models or from entirely other careers) who are hoping to build businesses via the farmers markets. So Down to Earth will continue to work on bringing new vendors, especially small start-ups, into the farmers markets in ways that help ensure their, and our, success.