

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Financing is a battle for local food

**Local farm and local food financing issues bring experts,
Senator King staff member and local farmers to Topsham**

The Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust and nearby Kennebec Estuary Land Trust continue their joint Local Farms-Local Food partnership to build one of the Midcoast region's top local agriculture programs.

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Media kit with images available for use at: www.btl.org/news

Topsham, Maine - January 29, 2014 - Nearly forty leaders in local agriculture gathered today in Topsham to consider critical ongoing conversations to build a more resilient food system in Midcoast Maine.

Today's meetings drew Senator Angus King staff member Gail Kezer, local financing experts, experts from Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust and Kennebec Estuary Land Trust, and leading farmers in the region as discussions focused on financing hurdles for our local agriculture. They joined representatives from the Maine Organic Farmers and Growers Association (MOFGA) and a number of local credit and banking organizations including the Norway Savings Bank and Farm Credit East.

The Roundtable series is generously supported by the Elmina B. Sewall Foundation.

Tom Settlemyre, professor emeritus of the biology and chemistry departments at Bowdoin College, and long-time board member at Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust, notes the significance of the discussions:

"Based on the amount of food that Maine imports each year, a 20 percent increase in locally-produced food could pump millions of dollars into the state's economy. That would fix a lot of roadways and failing bridges, as well as reduce the health problems that continue to plague the health care system in the state of Maine."

Joe Grady, of Two Coves Farm, and Steve Sinisi, of Old Crow Ranch, discussed financing and capital opportunities. Key to those discussions was how the Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust, Kennebec Estuary Land Trust, and similar organizations are working to promote long-term farm viability.

Representatives from the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry joined David Asmussen, of Blue Bell Farm, to provide business planning assistance to local

growers in an ongoing effort to increase the foundation of business knowledge and acumen that supports the farming community.

Coastal Enterprises, Inc, Bowdoinham Community Development Initiative, Slow Money Maine, and others were present for those in attendance.

Local Farms-Local Food is partnership between Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust and Kennebec Estuary Land Trust to conserve farmland, increase local food production, and promote a more resilient food system in our region.

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Image Captions

1. Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust, A land trust serving the towns of Bowdoin, Brunswick, and Topsham, Maine
2. Angela Twitchell, Executive Director of Brunswick Topsham-Land Trust
3. Angela Twitchell, Executive Director of Brunswick Topsham Land Trust, Gail Kezer, staff member at Senator Angus King's office and former member of the Brunswick School Board, and Carrie Kinne, Executive Director of Kennebec Estuary Land Trust discuss financing obstacles between sessions
4. Joe Grady of Two Coves Farm in Harpswell talks as Esther Palmer, board member of Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust, and Maina Handmaker, the manger of the new year round indoor farmers' market in Brunswick look on
5. Angela Twitchell, Executive Director of the Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust talks to the local leaders about resources in the community
6. Steve Sinisi, of Old Crow Ranch, discusses financing and capital opportunities he found available to his business
7. David Asmussen, of Blue Bell Farm, co-leads a session with Abby Sadauckas of the Maine Organic Growers and Farmers Association
8. Abby Sadauckas of the Maine Organic Growers and Farmers Association leads a financing discussion aimed at local agriculture
9. David Asmussen, of Blue Bell Farm, discusses financial hurdles that face local agriculture