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Raleigh, NC: Tickets are now on sale for the 2012 Farm to Fork Picnic, held annually at the Breeze Farm in Orange County's Hurdle Mills. The event – sponsored by the Center for Environmental Farming Systems (CEFS), Orange County/Breeze Farm Incubator, Slow Food Triangle, and the N.C. Agricultural Foundation – pairs some of the Triangle's best chefs with local farmers and food producers to celebrate local food and local farms.

Dubbed the "Best All You Can Eat Feast in the Country" by *Bon Appetit* magazine, this year's Farm to Fork picnic will feature the combined talents of 28 farms, 28 chefs, and 11 food artisans whose creations range from farmstead cheese to local mint julep jelly.

Proceeds from the event will support new and beginning farmer programs at CEFS and the Breeze Farm Incubator, including apprenticeships, education, and mentoring for aspiring farmers. With the average age of North Carolina farmers at 59, recruiting new farmers is necessary to meet the state's future food needs.

According to CEFS Director Nancy Creamer, "Providing new farmers with training and opportunities to have access to land is critical in maintaining our local capacity to raise food." Creamer added, "Everyone loves fresh farm products, but unless we address this crisis, we won't be able to meet the growing demand."

"The Breeze Farm has done so much with the funds raised from the Farm to Fork Picnic and other sources; from a new well to a new tractor, two new hoop houses, and new waterlines and fencing for livestock grazing, these funds are equipping the farm to train new farmers to become stewards of our land and producers of our food," said Noah Ranells, Agricultural Economic Development Coordinator for Orange County.

Tickets for the event are \$100 per person, which includes drinks, and may be purchased through the [Farm to Fork Picnic website](#). Since the inaugural picnic in 2007, the event has

sold out each year to ever-growing crowds. Carlo Petrini, the founder of Slow Food International, was a distinguished guest at the first Farm to Fork picnic.

One of the event's participating chefs (and farmers) is Isaiah Allen, Chef de Cuisine at Il Palio restaurant and a new farmer who, along with his wife, established Rocky Run Farm in Hillsborough. Says Allen, "With a culinary background, growing good honest food just makes sense. Farming has fallen into place for us and has been heavily influenced during my time spent at Il Palio...Our plan for Rocky Run is to grow produce as sustainably as the land and resources will allow."

The Center for Environmental Farming Systems is a partnership of N.C. State University, N.C. A&T State University and the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. CEFS develops and promotes food and farming systems that protect the environment, strengthen local communities and provide economic opportunities in North Carolina and beyond. For more information, visit www.cefs.ncsu.edu.

Slow Food Triangle is a local, volunteer-run chapter of Slow Food USA with the simple mission to work toward a world in which all food is good, clean, fair, and accessible to all. Through advocacy, education, and special events, the organization also seeks to celebrate food as a social and cultural connector of people to each other, their food traditions, and the land. Learn more at <http://www.slowfoodtriangle.org/>.

The Breeze Farm was donated to NC State University by Colonel Bill Breeze and his family to support sustainable farming system programming. It conducts an 8-week new farmer training workshop series in January and February and leases land to aspiring farmers and livestock producers. For more information see <http://www.orangecountyfarms.org/PLANTatBreeze.asp>.

To read the story by *Bon Appetit*, visit: <http://www.bonappetit.com/blogsandforums/blogs/bafoodist/2009/06/two-food-events-worth-planning.html>.

More information on the Farm to Fork Picnic is available at www.farmtoforknc.com.

Thank you to our sponsors Whole Foods and North Carolina Farm Bureau. For a list of all Farm to Fork sponsors please visit <http://www.farmtoforknc.com/sponsors.html>