

Sold-Out Benefit Festival Highlights "Role for Everyone" in Strengthening Family Farm Agriculture to Benefit Health, Economy and Environment

SARATOGA SPRINGS, N.Y., Sept. 21, 2013 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Standing with family farmers and more than a dozen artists, Farm Aid uses the platform of its annual benefit festival to urge all Americans to play a role in strengthening the country's food system.

Farm Aid board members Willie Nelson, Neil Young, John Mellencamp and Dave Matthews emphasized the critical responsibility of businesses, policymakers — and everyone who eats — to help grow the Good Food Movement. More than 25,000 fans attended the sold-out event, hosted at Saratoga Performing Arts Center (SPAC) in Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

"Every time we eat, we determine the direction of our food system," said Nelson, president and founder of Farm Aid. "Farmers are doing their part. When we all stand with them and do our part, we can bring about change that's good for all of us."

Curt Ellis, filmmaker and founder of the nonprofit organization FoodCorps, moderated a discussion about the challenges family farmers face and strategies for a strong Good Food Movement. Chuck Curtiss of Willow Marsh Farm in Ballston Spa, N.Y.; Ben and

Lindsey Shute

of Hearty Roots Community Farm in Clermont, N.Y.

; and

Jayson Rosado

of GrowNYC's Youthmarket joined Nelson, Mellencamp, Young and Matthews, along with Jack Johnson

and Farm Aid Executive Director

Carolyn Mugar

Farm Aid 2013 Calls on All Eaters to Contribute to a Healthier Food System

Written by Australian Business

, for the conversation.

Citing a recent report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) showing that industrial livestock agriculture is contributing to increased human antibiotic resistance, Mugar said there is new urgency for all Americans to fight for a safe, healthy, family farm food system.

"Farm Aid artists have all sparked a movement that many have now joined," said Mugar. "Farmers, community leaders, food businesses, schools, parents, chefs and eaters young and old are seizing opportunities to make changes that support family farm agriculture. The possibilities for good food grow exponentially when we all step up in whatever way we can."

Farm Aid 2013 featured performances by Willie Nelson, John Mellencamp, Neil Young, and Dave Matthews

with

Tim Reynolds

, in addition to

Jack Johnson

,

Amos Lee

,

Jamey Johnson

,

Kacey Musgraves

, Toad the Wet Sprocket,

Pegi Young

& The Survivors,

Carlene Carter

,

Lukas Nelson

& Promise of the Real,

Bahamas

,

Sasha Dobson

,

Jesse Lenat

, Insects vs. Robots and The Blackwood Quartet.

HOMEgrown Concessions® brought family farm-sourced foods to concertgoers including

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organic burgers and corndogs, grilled cheese with family farm bacon and local tomatoes, and antibiotic-free pork chop sandwiches, poutine with organic fries and homemade gravy, and Chipotle Mexican Grill's beef barbacoa chili. Seasonal menu items included grilled local non-GMO corn, a garden green vegetable wrap and local fresh fruit sold at GrowNYC's HOMEGROWN Youthmarket. Dessert offerings included fair trade coffees and local cider donuts, ice cream and maple cotton candy.

Farm Aid's HOMEGROWN Village featured hands-on educational activities; concert attendees learned agrarian skills such as curing bacon, growing mushrooms and making cheese. Farm Aid partnered with the Regional Food Bank of Northeastern New York to help meet the needs of the hungry across the region by collecting nonperishable food items from concertgoers at the main entrances to SPAC.

"Farm Aid 2013 Live Presented by Amy's Kitchen" aired from 5 to 11 p.m. EDT at farmaid.org, and Willie Nelson's

SiriusXM channel 56, Willie's Roadhouse, also aired the show live. Farm Aid's first-ever official festival app allowed users to view the entire Farm Aid 2013 schedule and add artists, workshops and artist briefings to make their own personal schedule for the day.

Farm Aid 2013 is sponsored by Chipotle Mexican Grill, Amy's Kitchen, Farm Family Insurance, Horizon Organic, American Harvest, Rudi's Organic Bakery, Organic Valley Coop, Applegate, Greener Fields Together, EcoScraps, PLOTSAYER, Taste NY and Dean's Beans.

Farm Aid's mission is to build a vibrant, family farm-centered system of agriculture in America. Farm Aid artists and board members Willie Nelson, Neil Young, John Mellencamp and Dave Matthews

host an annual concert to raise funds to support Farm Aid's work with family farmers and to inspire people to choose family farm food. Since 1985, Farm Aid, with the support of the artists who contribute their performances each year, has raised more than \$43 million

to support programs that help farmers thrive, expand the reach of the Good Food Movement, take action to change the dominant system of industrial agriculture and promote food from family farms.

SOURCE Farm Aid