



**ESSEX COUNTY IN THE PARK
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

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Farm succeeds growing fish, herbs

KEESEVILLE – At the Wednesday, Feb. 18, Champlain Valley Foodshed Coalition meeting, Don and Eve McCormick of Laughing Duck Farm in Wadhams will share their experience growing tilapia fish and basil year round in a greenhouse and developing local markets for their products.

This is an example of folks trying to produce healthy food and market it locally, doing it in an environmentally sound manner, and stimulating the local economy. The meeting will be held at the AuSable Valley Grange in Keeseville beginning at 7 p.m.

Having developed the aquaponics system in a pilot greenhouse, the McCormicks are now expanding into commercial production. Their unique natural and fully self contained growing system will be capable of producing 650 pounds of fish and more than 1,500 pounds of vegetables each month in one greenhouse. Fresh herbs and live tilapia fish will be delivered weekly to local restaurants.

This advanced growing facility features a complete recirculating fish-culture system (aquaculture) integrated with a hydroponic-vegetable growing system. The synergistic integration of these two systems, called aquaponics, is an emerging production technique that reduces operating costs and input requirements by linking two highly compatible systems.

Heat and other energy costs are applied shared by both systems, thereby cutting energy costs in half when compared to stand-alone production. Furthermore, a single source of nutrient input serves both systems. Fish feed only is introduced. After the fish feed is digested by the fish and processed through the primary filter system, the water becomes nutrient rich with an optimal balance to support highly productive hydroponic vegetable growth without the addition of expensive artificial hydroponic nutrient solutions. Solid waste is composted and used for crop production outside. The aquaponics system has the added benefit of being, capable of being certified organic. Products will be marketed with a natural, chemical-free branding. Laughing Duck Farm has already test marketed its products and proven successful for a product that is superior in quality and locally and naturally grown.

For more information, call 643-7822.

