

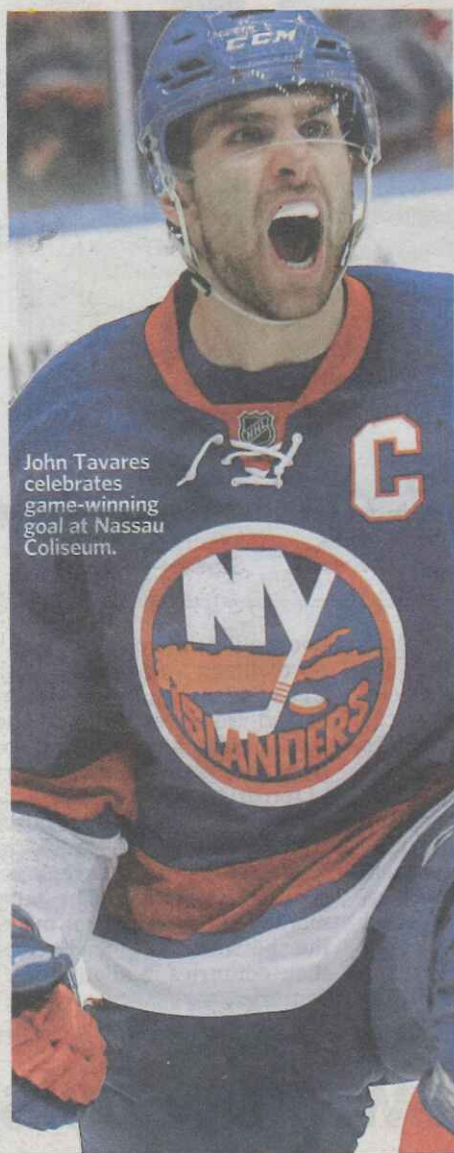


HI 57° LO 49°  
RAIN, PATCHY FOG

## ISLANDERS

Take 2-1 playoff lead  
on Tavares goal in OT

SPORTS



John Tavares  
celebrates  
game-winning  
goal at Nassau  
Coliseum.

AP / SETH WENIG

VIDEO AT NEWSDAY.COM

# \$425M POWER REPRIEVE

PSEG ratepayers on LI won't have  
to help finance upstate project  
under ruling

A3

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ROUND 1 GAME 3  
**RANGERS**  
VS PENGUINS

TONIGHT  
6P



CABLEVISION CH 71 OR CH 87 IN NYC/HUDSON/NEWARK COMCAST NJ CH 846 DIRECTV CH 634 FIOS CH 578 RCN CH 687 TWC CH 318

#NYR

Welcome to RANGERS TOWN

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## BILL WOULD HALT SALE OF PLUM I.

U.S. Rep. Lee Zeldin has reintroduced a bill that would reverse the federal government's planned sale of Plum Island.

In 2008, Congress ordered the government to sell the 840-acre island to the highest bidder, as officials prepared to move the livestock disease laboratory there to a new facility in Kansas.

Zeldin (R-Shirley) said Friday that he reintroduced legislation previously sponsored by his predecessor Tim Bishop (D-Southampton) to reverse the government's mandate to sell the island, which conservationists prize.

Zeldin said the sale would do little to offset the cost of building the new \$1.2 billion Bio and Agro-Defense Facility in Kansas, due to the anticipated cost of environmental cleanup on Plum Island and 2013 zoning passed by Southold Town that severely restricts development there.

"Plum Island offers Long Island a unique research and environmental resource that should be preserved for generations to come," Zeldin said in a news release. "I have always supported keeping Plum Island open on Long Island and am fighting hard in Congress to do just that."

— WILL JAMES

# Food fest heats up

■ **Cooks get creative** for annual horseradish event

■ **Niche crops** a needed boost for local farmers

BY DAVID M. SCHWARTZ  
david.schwartz@newsday.com

Chocolate horseradish peanut butter cups, horseradish empanadas, and tea and beer infused with the root.

The second annual North Fork Horseradish Festival in Riverhead was a sinus-clearing, eye-watering experience for the more than 1,000 people who came yesterday to sample foods made from the hot plant.

For Matthew Schmitt, a fourth-generation farmer whose family's Riverhead farm supplied most of the horseradish, it's a possible future for Long Island agriculture.

"I want to keep farming; I want my kid to be able to farm if he wants," said Schmitt, 30, who founded Holy Schmitt's Homemade Horseradish in 2010. "You can't compete with the wholesalers. It's about finding a niche."

The East End isn't all potatoes and ducks anymore, nor is it all about wine. Specialty produce is gaining a hold, often buoyed by festivals or events.

"The days of cauliflower and potatoes and cabbage are long gone," said Rob Carpenter, administrative director of the Long Island Farm Bureau. "There's not enough money to economically sustain that type of business, unless you have a specialty way of marketing or packaging those products."

The market value of all the farm goods produced in Suffolk fell 1 percent, to \$240 million, between 2007 and 2012, according to federal statistics.

In 2010, Matthew Schmitt began selling jars of horseradish at the family's farm stand in Riverhead.

The plant once covered a half-acre of the family's 200-acre farm. That increased to 3 acres two years ago and 6 acres last year.

Schmitt plans to plant about 10 acres of the root later this spring.



Joe Arnau from Jamesport, left, Linda Nabrezny from Wading River and Ed "Cookie" Sujeski from Flanders prepare horseradish at the festival yesterday. ■ Video: [newsday.com/suffolk](http://newsday.com/suffolk)



Ed "Cookie" Sujeski holds a horseradish root before peeling.

Farmers on Eastern Long Island say they increasingly have to find ways to innovate, either by finding niche products, incorporating a level of entertainment or both.

At the Garden of Eve Organic Farm and Market in River-

head, next week is the third "Chickapalooza," where people can learn about raising backyard chickens, bees and other animals.

Eve Kaplan-Walbrecht, co-owner of the farm, said, "You need to draw people's atten-

tion to how what they're getting is different from a mass marketer."

The farm also hosts an annual Garlic Festival in September.

While the Phil A. Schmitt & Son Farm provided all the horseradish roots, the festival was run by Starfish Junction Productions of Bay Shore, whose owner, Andy Calimano, got the idea from local traditions of East End "horseradish parties."

One of the most popular ones, hosted by Riverhead attorney Peter Danowski, was held every Wednesday before Easter, when everyone would gather to peel, grind and mix up a supply of horseradish.

The line yesterday for Schmitt's, which sold seven varieties including cranberry, beet and barbecue, snaked around the grounds. There were free samples.

David Gershman of North Bellmore gave a yelp as he tried some of the original. "It caught me by surprise," he said. His wife, Jill Gershman, said, "I felt it in my eyeballs."