



# MICHIGAN FARMERS MARKET ASSOCIATION

## Farm Aid and MIFMA Grow Good Food in Michigan

The Michigan Farmers Market Association (MIFMA) was recently awarded \$5,000 to continue its work on farmers market viability in Michigan by Farm Aid's "Growing the Good Food Movement" program.

"Farmers markets let consumers interact with those growing their food and help farmers generate significant income and expand the demand for local farm products" said Dru Montri, MIFMA Association Manager. "This grant allows us to help them grow, thrive and meet those consumer demands for fresh, local food."

According to a 2007 report by Packaged Facts, nationally, the demand for locally grown food has gone from \$4 billion in 2002 to \$5 billion in 2007 and could reach \$7 billion by 2011. But in order to meet that escalating demand, both farmers markets and their growers need assistance.

Through this grant, MIFMA will build upon the work and programs accomplished since MIFMA's inception in 2006 and will focus on outreach and technical assistance for the 3,000 farmers selling at farmers markets.

Marketing, networking, risk management and education are key components to helping Michigan's nearly 200 farmers markets succeed in meeting the growing demand for local food.

Specific goals of this project include promoting the MIFMA-secured group rates for liability insurance for farmers markets and for farmer/vendors at those markets and putting on educational workshops for market managers on marketing and management skills. The project also aims to enhance MIFMA's online presence and the Michigan Farmers Market Listserv and to increase networking opportunities for market managers, farmer/vendors and local food enthusiasts.

"We are grateful for your efforts in serving farmers and farming communities," wrote Willie Nelson in the grant acceptance letter Michigan Food & Farming Systems (MIFFS), the host organization for MIFMA operations, received. "It is very inspiring and energizing to see how much good work is going on to support family farmers and good food across the country."

Farm Aid, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to keep family farmers on their land, has been serving and supporting farm families and rural communities in the United States for 23 years. Farm Aid has raised more than \$33 million to promote a strong and resilient family farm system of agriculture through concerts by artists like Nelson, Neil Young and John Mellencamp devoted to raising awareness and funds for family farms.

For more information about Michigan farmers markets or MIFMA projects and successes, visit [www.farmersmarkets.msu.edu](http://www.farmersmarkets.msu.edu) or contact Dru Montri at (517) 432-3381 or [dnmontri@msu.edu](mailto:dnmontri@msu.edu).

Learn more about Farm Aid and what its doing to help family farmers all across America online at [www.farmaid.org](http://www.farmaid.org).



### What's Happening?

- **February 9, 2009**  
MIFMA Board Meeting
  - **February 19, 2009**  
MIFMA Professional Development Committee Conference Call
  - **February 26, 2009**  
Accepting SNAP Benefits at Michigan Farmers Markets Training Session in Detroit
  - **March 3, 2009**  
Ag for Tomorrow Conference in Escanaba
  - **March 4, 2009**  
Accepting SNAP Benefits at Michigan Farmers Markets Training Session in Gaylord
  - **March 9, 2009**  
Using the Internet to Increase Awareness and Interest in Your Farm or Farmers Market Workshop in East Lansing, 1-4p
  - **March 9, 2009**  
MIFMA Annual Meeting and Celebration Dinner, 6-9 p, MSU Kellogg Center, Riverside Room
  - **March 10, 2009**  
Farmers Market Manager "Boot Camp" II, 9a-4p, MSU Kellogg Center
  - **March 19, 2009**  
MIFMA Professional Development Committee Conference Call
  - **March 4, 2009**  
Accepting SNAP Benefits at Michigan Farmers Markets Training Session in Grand Rapids
- For more information regarding these listings, call 517-432-3381.



The Michigan Farmers Market Association advances farmers markets to create a thriving marketplace for local food and farm products. Our vision is to place farmers markets at the forefront of the local food movement and to ensure all residents have access to healthy, locally grown food and that Michigan farmers markets receive policy support.

# MIFMA Member of the Month:

## Flint Farmers' Market

An Interview with Market Manager, Dick Ramsdell



**A part of the Flint Farmers' Market mission is to help rebuild your community. In what ways are you working on this mission?**

Flint has been hit by the economic downturn as hard as any city in Michigan. But even when times were better economically, Flint has always been a culturally fractured town. A market is one place where barriers can be broken down and spirits improved. With our outreach programs, our partnerships and our efforts to welcome every person who comes through our doors, we are working to build a sense of community by making the market a model worthy of everyone's pride and support.

**You are a year-round market. What's the market like during these chilly months?**

Much slower than summer! However, our inside market is exactly the same during the winter as during the summer – same excellent selection of businesses and same friendly and knowledgeable vendors. Aside from the absence of fresh summer produce, a visitor to our market will find the inside just the same... but during the winter, with the building closed and the heat on, the smells are wonderful!

**A number of vendors at your market accept SNAP benefits (food stamps/EBT). Why do you think is important for farmers markets to participate in governmental food assistance programs like SNAP?**

We have sixteen EBT vendors, with more coming during the summer of 2009. The incidences of obesity, diabetes, teen pregnancy and infant mortality are numbing in a community like Flint. If part of our society's goal is to prevent these diseases by encouraging healthier eating, then markets must be a focal point, and assistance programs are critical.

**The Flint Farmers' Market is a member of MIFMA. Why is it important to you and your market to be involved in MIFMA?**

Even though our name says we are, Flint is obviously not a true farmers' market. But many of our goals, issues and concerns are shared by every other market in Michigan. MIFMA brings us all together for dialogue, support and education. When individuals and groups with common interests work together, the outcome cannot help but improve us all.

**What is one thing every MIFMA member should know about the Flint Farmers' Market?**

**Tell us why we should come visit for a day and what else we can do while we're in town.** People should know that the market has become a wonderful morale booster for Flint and Genesee County. People are proud of "their" market. They have watched it change and grow over the past seven years, and they love it. "I love this place. I'm from the South, and this is the only place I can go around here that makes me feel as if I'm back home."

As for what to do: Exit 8A on I 475 puts one right in the neighborhood of the market, Flint's superb art museum, two Sloan museums for automobile history lovers, a nationally recognized music institute and childrens' theatre, a planetarium, and a vibrant public auditorium, The Whiting. Despite our national image, there are some wonderful small city opportunities. Visitors can spend a weekend in Flint and not see or do all that is possible. And there is an excellent motel right in the middle of it all. Visit the market's website: [www.flintfarmersmarket.com](http://www.flintfarmersmarket.com) for more information.

## Welcome New Members!

MIFMA would like to welcome its new members for January 2009.

### Farmers Market members

- New Baltimore Farmers Market
- Three Oaks Farmers Market

### Farmer/Vendor members

- Wasem Fruit Farm of Milan, MI
- Mikki's Ginger Tea, of Detroit, MI

To join MIFMA, visit [www.farmersmarkets.msu.edu](http://www.farmersmarkets.msu.edu)!

## Thank You Sponsors!

Thank you to our newest sponsors!

### MIFMA Sponsors

- Lynn Ochberg, Ochberg Sugar Bush in Okemos, MI

To become a MIFMA Sponsor, contact Dru Montri at (517) 432-3381 or [dnmontri@msu.edu](mailto:dnmontri@msu.edu).



# MICHIGAN FARMERS MARKET ASSOCIATION

## MIFMA and Learn Great Foods to Host Summer 2009 Farmers Market Tours

Farmers market shoppers all aboard! This summer the Michigan Farmers Market Association (MIFMA) will host a market road show - visiting six farmers markets for a guided shopping tour, cooking demo and gourmet lunch made with fresh products purchased at the market that morning. One stop is scheduled for each month, June through November. Participating farmers markets are members of MIFMA and include the Meridian Township Farmers Market, a Leelanau area farmers market, the Downtown Saginaw Farmers Market, the Texas Township Farmers Market, the Farmington Farmers and Artisans Market and the Frankenmuth Farmers Market.

These tours are organized by the Michigan Farmers Market Association and Learn Great Foods. Stay tuned to [www.learngreatfoods.com](http://www.learngreatfoods.com) to read about the tours and sign up, or call Pam at (231) 758-3407.

MIFMA is a member-based, statewide

association promoting local food consumption in Michigan by connecting more farmers to consumers through farmers markets. The association promote farmers markets across the state to increase visibility to both farmers and consumers and aids farmers market sponsors, managers and farmers in assuring long-term viability of Michigan farmers markets. Its overall mission is to advance farmers markets to create a thriving marketplace for local food and farm products. Learn more about MIFMA and becoming a member at [www.farmersmarkets.msu.edu](http://www.farmersmarkets.msu.edu).

Learn Great Foods is a national touring company that teaches about the natural link that exists between sustainable farming, great cooking and the environment. LGF hosts agri-culinary tours and dinners, retreat weekends, travel vacations and more and is the recipient of the Michigan State University Product Center for Agriculture and Natural Resource's Best Innovative Business Idea of 2008.

### What's Happening?

- **March 3, 2009**  
Ag for Tomorrow Conference in Escanaba
  - **March 4, 2009**  
Accepting SNAP Benefits at Farmers Markets Training Session, Gaylord, MI
  - **March 5, 2009**  
Michigan Farmers Markets Food Assistance Partnership Conference Call
  - **March 9, 2009**  
Using the Internet to Increase Awareness and Interest in Your Farm or FarmersMarket, Workshop, East Lansing, MI
  - **March 9, 2009**  
MIFMA Annual Meeting and Celebration Dinner, East Lansing, MI
  - **March 10, 2009**  
Farmers Market Manager "Boot Camp" II, East Lansing, MI
  - **March 19, 2009**  
MIFMA Professional Development Committee Conference Call
  - **March 19, 2009**  
Accepting SNAP Benefits at Farmers Markets Training Session, Grand Rapids, MI
  - **March 23, 2009**  
MIFMA Marketing Committee Conference Call
  - **April 2, 2009**  
Michigan Farmers Markets Food Assistance Partnership Retreat
- For more information regarding these listings, call 517-432-3381.

### 2009 Summer Farmers Market Tours

**June:** Meridian Township Farmers Market

**July:** Leelanau Area Farmers Market

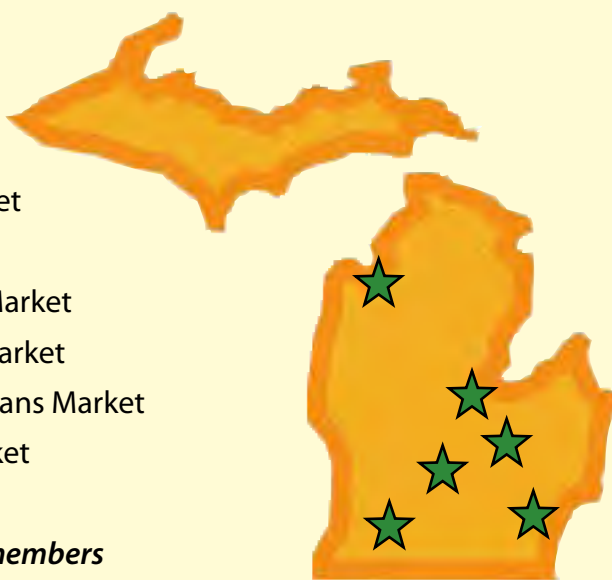
**August:** Downtown Saginaw Farmers Market

**September:** Texas Township Farmers Market

**October:** Farmington Farmers and Artisans Market

**November:** Frankenmuth Farmers Market

*Tickets are \$50 each or \$40 for MIFMA members*



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# MIFMA Member of the Month: *Douglas DeLeo, Big Blue Plantation*

An Interview with Farmer, Douglas DeLeo



Douglas selling his produce at Kalamazoo's Bank Street Farmers Market



Susan standing in their fields last summer.

## **Please tell us about Big Blue Plantation**

We are located in Van Buren County, Bangor area. We raise blueberries, apples, cherries, peaches, plums, gooseberries, currants, potatoes, herbs, flowers, beans, eggplants and tomatoes. We specialize in produce that appeal to the local restaurants in the surrounding areas of Kalamazoo, Berrien and Van Buren counties.

## **How did you get involved in selling at farmers markets?**

My wife, Susan, and her family were farmers who sold produce at the Kalamazoo Farmers' Market for more than 50 years. Susan and I married 38 years ago and bought a small farm and started selling produce at the market before taking over the family business.



The DeLeos plant and harvest about an acre of basil to sell fresh cut at the market.

## **Which farmers markets do you sell at and why?**

We have always sold at the Kalamazoo Farmers' Market downtown on Bank Street, and we do wholesale produce at the Benton Harbor Farmers' Market. They're both great markets, not far from where we live.

## **You are a farmer member of MIFMA. Why is it important to you to be involved in MIFMA?**

Being a member of MIFMA allows us to network with other markets sellers from around the state. This gives us educational information on farming and selling techniques from other in the same kind of business.



They also sell fresh cut flowers, like these sunflowers, throughout the summer.

## **Welcome New Members!**

MIFMA would like to welcome its new members for February 2009.

### **Farmers Market members**

- Texas Township Farmers Market, Kalamazoo

### **Farmer/Vendor members**

- Turk Farms in Fenton, MI

### **Friend of MIFMA members**

- Battle Creek Downtown Partnership

To join MIFMA, visit [www.farmersmarkets.msu.edu](http://www.farmersmarkets.msu.edu)!

## **Thank You Sponsors!**

Thank you to our sponsors!

### **MIFMA Sponsors**

- Lynn Ochberg, Ochberg Sugar Bush in Okemos, MI

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# MICHIGAN FARMERS MARKET ASSOCIATION

## MIFMA's March Madness

### Accepting SNAP Benefits at Michigan Farmers Markets

As of Oct. 1, 2008, SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) is the new name for the federal Food Stamp Program. Between February 26th and March 19th, MIFMA organized four training sessions in Detroit, Gaylord, Lansing and Grand Rapids to address how farmers markets and farmers can accept SNAP benefits. Approximately 115 people attended the sessions to learn about completing the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) application to become an authorized retailer, preparing a proposal for the Michigan Department of Human Services (MDHS), alternative redemption system options, record keeping, promotions and outreach. All attendees received a free resource binder with step by step instructions and examples for accepting SNAP benefits. These resource materials are expected to be available online at [www.farmersmarkets.msu.edu](http://www.farmersmarkets.msu.edu) in mid-April.



Jennifer Renegar, USDA FNS, explains to the Gaylord audience how farmers and farmers market managers can complete the online FNS application to become an authorized SNAP retailer.

In just a couple of short weeks since the training sessions, five farmers markets have already become authorized, and 11 applications are pending approval. We anticipate that at least 30 markets will be accepting benefits in 2009, a significant increase again this year.

### Using the Internet to Increase Awareness and Interest in Your Farm or Farmers Market

On March 9th, a sold-out crowd joined us in one of MSU's computer labs for an afternoon of hands-on, online training for promoting farms and farmers markets. Four speakers talked attendees through enhancing their presence on food and farming websites and online calendars, what works and doesn't for websites and using weekly e-mail announcements. More than 90% of those that attended indicated that they had a better idea of how to use the internet to promote their farm or farmers market and felt prepared to apply what they learned. We heard "please keep doing sessions like this," and are working on future professional development events for you.

Resources from this event can be found under the Events tab at [www.farmersmarkets.msu.edu](http://www.farmersmarkets.msu.edu).



Bonnie Bucqueroux, of Sustainable Farmer, gives a virtual tour of what works and what doesn't for farm and market websites.

### What's Happening?

- **April 2, 2009**  
Michigan Farmers Markets Food Assistance Partnership Retreat
- **April 13, 2009**  
MIFMA Marketing Committee Conference Call
- **April 13, 2009**  
MIFMA Board Meeting
- **April 16, 2009**  
MIFMA Professional Development Committee Conference Call
- **April 20-26, 2009**  
MIFMA Membership Drive - contact your regional Board representative to learn more.
- **May 1-3, 2009:**  
Green Street Fair, Exhibitor - Plymouth, MI
- **May 4, 2009:**  
MIFMA Marketing Committee Conference Call
- **May 7, 2009:**  
Michigan Farmers Markets Food Assistance Partnership Conference Call
- **May 21, 2009:**  
MIFMA Professional Development Committee Conference Call

For more information regarding these listings, call 517-432-3381.



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# MIFMA's March Madness (continued)

## Annual Meeting and Celebration Dinner

Forty MIFMA members came together on the evening of March 9th to talk business, celebrate MIFMA accomplishments, dine and network. MIFMA by-laws were amended, and our second Board of Directors was elected. MIFMA Board members include six farmers market regional representatives and four at-large farmers: Region 2 – Jen Welty, Black Star Farms; Region 3 – Sue Nowak, Downtown Gaylord Farmers Market; Region 4 – Brian Cool, LeRoy Farmers Market; Region 5 – Dietrich Bronner, Frankenmuth Farmers Market; Region 6 – Jan Lawson, Battle Creek Farmers Market; Region 7 – Vince Paris, Fenton Farmers Market; Dan Keane of Keane's Wee Bee Farm; Yolanda Blissett of Homestead Acres; Richard "Cousin Don" Hobson of Hickory Hill Farm; and Rebecca Titus of Titus Farms.



Susan Nowak, Jan Lawson, Cousin Don Hobson, Jen Welty, Dan Keane, Dietrich Bronner and Yolanda Blissett smile for the camera at the annual meeting and celebration dinner.

## Farmers Market Manager "Boot Camp" II

More than 80 market managers attended MIFMA's second annual "boot camp" for intensive market management training. Leslie Schaller, Director of Programs at the Appalachian Center for Economic Networks, started the day with an information packed presentation that set a positive context for the roundtable discussions focused on three key market management questions: (1) How Do You Address the Issue of Transparency at your Farmers Market? (2) How Do You Handle Liability Exposure at your Farmers Market? and (3) What is the One New Thing you Plan to Implement at your Farmers Market this Year and Why? Afternoon breakout sessions addressed: (1) Successful Community Outreach, (2) Increasing Access to Low-income Households and (3) Business Management Strategies.



Rachel Chadderdon from the Downtown Ypsilanti Farmers Market presents on EBT Success at the second annual Boot Camp to the more than 80 market managers who attended.

## Thank You to our Silent Auction Donors!

Silent auctions, featuring local product "goodie bags", at the Annual Meeting and Celebration Dinner and the Boot Camp raised \$595 for MIFMA. Thanks to those who donated their items for this auction:

- Detroit Eastern Market
- Green Barn Llama Farm
- Kapow Soap
- Keane's Wee Bee Farm
- Hickory Hill Farm
- Homestead Acres
- Victoria Farms Honey

## Welcome New Members!

MIFMA would like to welcome its new members for March 2009.

### Farmers Market members

- Athens Area Farmers' Market
- South Lansing Community Farmers Market
- Uncle Sam's Market
- Blueberry Hills in Mio, MI
- City of Wixom Farmers Market
- St. Clair Farmers Market

### Farmer/Vendor members

- Nic and Jen Welty, 9 Bean Rows in Northport, MI
- Charlie Ham of Ham Family Farm in Allendale, MI
- Robert Schultz of Brookside Farm in Ypsilanti, MI

### Friend of MIFMA members

- Martha Dindoffer of Milan, MI
- Our Family Farm in Manchester, MI
- Lazandra White and Lena Moore of Milford, MI
- City of Muskegon Heights
- City of Wayne

To join MIFMA, visit [www.farmersmarkets.msu.edu](http://www.farmersmarkets.msu.edu)!

## Thank you, Sponsors!

### MIFMA Sponsors

- Lynn Ochberg, Ochberg Sugar Bush in Okemos, MI

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# MICHIGAN FARMERS MARKET ASSOCIATION

## Michigan Farmers Markets Food Assistance Partnership Retreat Takes on Food Access

On April 2, more than 30 members of the Michigan Farmers Markets Food Assistance Partnership gathered at the Bengel Wildlife Center in Bath to network, brainstorm and address the critical issue of farmers market access for low-income and diverse communities.

Participants included a range of individuals involved in local food access, including farmers market managers, health clinic employees, agricultural organizations, Michigan State Departments and folks from the United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service.

The group discussed goals of the Partnership, barriers to local food access in both rural and urban communities, ways to bring project ideas to life in many different capacities, plans for the coming year and how to stay connected to keep this work moving forward.

Specific goals of the retreat included sharing accomplishments and opportunities related to increasing farmers market access to low-income households; laying the foundation for strong working relationships through face-to-face networking and planning; identifying resources and connections available to the Partnership; reviewing 2009 project tasks and timeline to ensure successful completion and opportunity for partner engagement; and beginning long-term planning by



Retreat participants brainstorm about the purpose and future goals of the Partnership.

defining a process for developing a mission and vision for the Partnership.

Out of the structured and spontaneous networking emerged strong connections and a universal passion for this work by all attendees. Everyone showed interest in continuing the work of the Partnership and expressed feelings of renewed energy and focus for this work.

For more information about the Partnership or to find out how you can be involved, contact Dru Montri, MIFMA Association Manager, at (517) 432-3381 or [dnmontri@msu.edu](mailto:dnmontri@msu.edu).

**MIFMA is offering a special group rate for liability insurance to its farmer/vendor and farmers market members, provided by Advanced Insurance Markets. Premiums provide coverage from April 1, 2009 – March 31, 2010.**

See the Join MIFMA tab at [www.farmersmarkets.msu.edu](http://www.farmersmarkets.msu.edu) to learn more.

### What's Happening?

- **May 1-3, 2009:**  
Green Street Fair, Exhibitor  
– Plymouth, MI
  - **May 7, 2009:**  
Michigan Farmers Markets  
Food Assistance Partnership  
Conference Call
  - **May 11, 2009:**  
MIFMA Marketing Committee  
Conference Call
  - **May 14, 2009:**  
Senior Project FRESH  
Conference Call
  - **May 21, 2009:**  
MIFMA Professional  
Development Committee  
Conference Call
  - **May 21, 2009:**  
Michigan Food Policy Council  
Taskforce B Meeting
  - **June 1, 2009:**  
MIFMA Board Meeting
  - **June 4, 2009:**  
Michigan Farmers Markets  
Food Assistance Partnership  
Conference Call
  - **June 18, 2009:**  
FSEP Conference,  
[www.fsepmichigan.org](http://www.fsepmichigan.org)
  - **June 20, 2009:**  
Meridian Twp "Fantastically  
Fresh" Farmers Market Tour.  
Register now at  
[www.learngreatfoods.com](http://www.learngreatfoods.com)
  - **July 23, 2009:**  
Select Michigan Farmers  
Market at the Capitol
- For more information regarding these listings, call 517-432-3381.



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# MIFMA Member of the Month: *Learn Great Foods*

An Interview with Ann Dougherty, LGF Founder

## What is Learn Great Foods and how does your work relate to Michigan farmers markets?

LGF is a food knowledge company. (My mom would now ask, "What does that mean?") We started five years ago, giving culinary farm tours in Northern Michigan and Northwest Illinois. We believe that the more each of knows about our food sources, the better able we will be to navigate the roads ahead, when we have less energy and less clean water. Intimate tours with farmers and chefs are a fun way for guests to enjoy an area's beauty, engage every sense, and learn deeply.

Our mission is to connect our guests with great cooking, family farms, and the CSA idea of food purchase - knowing your farmer personally and being a consistent and satisfied customer. Farmers Markets do the same thing - connecting farmers with customers - in a cooperative venture. Everyone talks about passion, but our feeling about this goes beyond words - we need cooperative food systems - we need farmers markets.

## Tell us about your FoodBooks!

The Foodbooks are an appetizer of food knowledge - with a nugget of heirloom information, a tidbit of how to preserve a special vegetable after the season, a few great recipes, snappy interviews with our tour farmers, and a smattering of health ideas. We are 10 chefs, 60 farms, 5 gourmet shops, and 6 tour guides. Last year, we started taking the knowledge gained from giving the tours and putting it all into booklets. We have Asparagus, Eggplant, Herbs, Lettuce, Potatoes, Squash, and Tomatoes plus Beef, Bison, and Fish. The books are written by three of our chefs, two tour guides and one intern. The asparagus booklet was written by Alex, a philosophy major who has worked with us for three summers.

FoodBooks are another way for the farmers and chefs with whom we work to sell more products and educate their customers. Guests can buy them off our website, and they are also available wholesale as a fundraiser for resale at farmers markets, farm markets, natural food stores, garden clubs, or whomever.

## Learn Great Foods is a Friend of MIFMA. Why is it important to you to be a member of MIFMA?

We support wholeheartedly the training, planning, and advocating that MIFMA accomplishes for members. It is a needed function - and it is being very well executed by the board and staff. MIFMA helps us succeed with our mission, and helps our friends succeed.

## What is one thing that every MIFMA member should know about Learn Great Foods?

We believe in Michigan food and farmers and local food systems, and will do whatever we can to strengthen, support, and create farmers markets, so that all of us can find and learn about great foods. This year, we are co-sponsoring the farmers market culinary tours - next year, we will find a way to help again.

### MIFMA and Learn Great Foods

#### *Farmers Market Tours*

**Meridian Twp "Fantastically Fresh" Farmers Market Tour, Okemos**  
*Sat. June 20, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.*

**Leland "Wharf and Wine" Farmers Market Tour, Leelanau Peninsula**  
*Thurs. July 16, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.*

**Downtown Saginaw "Delicious Adventure" Farmers Market Tour**  
*Fri. Aug. 14, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.*

**Texas Twp "Fresh on Q!" Farmers Market Tour, Kalamazoo**  
*Sat. Sept. 12, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.*

**Farmington's "Culturally Delicious" Farmers and Artisans Market Tour**  
*Sat. Oct. 17, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.*

**Frankenmuth "Festive Seasonings" Farmers Market Tour**  
*Sat. Nov. 28, 3 - 8 p.m.*

To learn more or register, visit  
[www.learngreatfoods.com/mi\\_MIFMA.php](http://www.learngreatfoods.com/mi_MIFMA.php)

## Welcome New Members!

MIFMA would like to welcome its new members for April 2009.

### Farmers Market members

- Wayne State Wednesday Farmers Market in Detroit
- People's Food Co-op 100-mile Market in Kalamazoo
- Market at the Marquee in Redford

### Friend of MIFMA members

- Gerald Jennings, East Lansing

To join MIFMA, visit [www.farmersmarkets.msu.edu](http://www.farmersmarkets.msu.edu)!

## Thank you, Sponsors!

### MIFMA Sponsors

- Lynn Ochberg, Ochberg Sugar Bush in Okemos, MI

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# MICHIGAN FARMERS MARKET ASSOCIATION

## Food Samples at Farmers Markets

Over the last couple years, MIFMA and MIFFS have been working with the MDA to develop guidelines for safe food sampling at Michigan farmers markets. A new MDA document, Guidelines for Providing Safe Food Samples at Farmers' Markets, does just that.

This five-page document, available online at [http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mda/MDA\\_FdSmplngFarmMkts5-09\\_279110\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mda/MDA_FdSmplngFarmMkts5-09_279110_7.pdf), covers guidelines for processed food, fruit, vegetable and meat sampling at farmers markets. Hygiene, temperature control, food protection, warewashing and facility and equipment are other important topics. Here's a quick summary of guidelines for different products. Please read the full document before sampling at your market.

### Processed Food Sampling

*Processed foods include bakery items, jams, jellies, canned items, etc.*

- The best practice is to prepare samples at an approved, licensed facility prior to arriving at the market.
- The next best practice is to use clean, sanitized knives and cutting boards to cut product, taking care to store in-use items so they are protected from contamination.
- Use toothpicks, wax paper, paper sampling cups, or disposable utensils to distribute samples.
- Maintain temperature control on items needing refrigeration after opening.
- Home-canned and home-prepared foods are not allowed.

### Fresh Fruit And Vegetable Sampling

*Preparation of most fruit and vegetable samples requiring cutting or slicing must be done on-site, immediately prior to consumption. Samples prepared ahead of time must be prepared in a licensed kitchen.*

- The best practice is to prepare samples at an approved, licensed facility prior to arriving at the market.
- Rinse all fruits and vegetables thoroughly in clean, potable water on site, or if not available, in advance, storing in disposable food bags.
- Protect samples from contamination at all times and protect the sample from any bare hand contact.

### Meat Sampling

*All meats must come from inspected approved sources. Vendors must be able to show proof of the approved source.*

- Serve meat items directly from a covered grill using sanitary methods, such as toothpicks or tissues
- If foods are cooked and held, hold meat at 135°F or above.
- Protect foods from environmental contamination and insects at all times.
- The best practice is to provide meats in pre-formed patties, or pre-cut portions not requiring on-site preparation.
- Set up and operate as shown in warewashing station if necessary.
- Serving full meal size portions requires a temporary food establishment license from the local health department.
- Home-canned and home-prepared foods are not allowed.

## What's Happening?

- **June 1, 2009:**  
MIFMA Board Meeting
- **June 4, 2009:**  
Michigan Farmers Markets Food Assistance Partnership Conference Call
- **June 8, 2009:**  
MIFMA Marketing Committee Conference Call
- **June 15, 2009:**  
MIFMA Board Conference Call
- **June 18, 2009:**  
FSEP Conference, [www.fsepmichigan.org](http://www.fsepmichigan.org)
- **June 20, 2009:**  
Meridian Twp "Fantastically Fresh" Farmers Market Tour. Register now at [www.learngreatfoods.com](http://www.learngreatfoods.com)
- **June 24, 2009:**  
Senior Project FRESH Conference Call
- **July 2, 2009:**  
Michigan Farmers Markets Food Assistance Partnership Conference Call
- **July 13, 2009:**  
MIFMA Board Conference Call
- **July 16, 2009:**  
MIFMA Professional Development Committee Conference Call
- **July 16, 2009:**  
Leland "Wharf & Wine" Farmers Market Tour. Register now at [www.learngreatfoods.com](http://www.learngreatfoods.com)

For more information regarding these listings, call 517-432-3381.

**Egg Law Update!** A representative of the Office of Attorney General is expected to issue an opinion on whether or not the MDA has the authority to regulate shell eggs sold by the producer to final consumer or first receiver by June 10. Learn more and get updates at: [http://www.michigan.gov/mda/0,1607,7-125-1568\\_2387\\_46671-212367--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/mda/0,1607,7-125-1568_2387_46671-212367--,00.html)



The Michigan Farmers Market Association advances farmers markets to create a thriving marketplace for local food and farm products. Our vision is to place farmers markets at the forefront of the local food movement and to ensure all residents have access to healthy, locally grown food and that Michigan farmers markets receive policy support.

# MIFMA Member of the Month: *Meridian Township Farmers Market (Okemos)*

An Interview with Christine Miller, Market Manager



**MIFMA and Learn Great Foods are kicking off their market tour series at the Meridian Township Farmers Market on June 20th. Tell us why we should register today for the market tour.**

Besides supporting local agriculture, guests can learn the ins and outs of a “seasoned” farmers market. Participants will be able to talk with vendors candidly and ask questions about their farming practices. Once the ingredients are picked up from the market vendors, Chef Ian Diem, Culinary Program Coordinator from Lansing Community College, will take the group to the adjacent Meridian Historical Village to prepare and serve the meal. Guests will be able to ask the chef questions on how to prepare food items and cook with fresh ingredients!

After the meal commences, guests have some options. The market will be open until 2 p.m. so shopping may take place after the meal, the Meridian Historical Village does free tours until 2 p.m., the MSU Student Organic Farm will provide a free tour at 2:30 p.m. only minutes away from the market (maps will be available), there is a festival in Downtown Okemos (corner of Okemos Rd and Hamilton Rd) and of course there is always Michigan State University campus to cruise. Please come see what the Meridian Township “Fantastically Fresh” Market Tour has to offer!

**Can you share something about the farmers and vendors that sell at your market?**

The Meridian Township Farmers’ Market is very much a community gathering place! Family, friends, and neighbors come, meet, and shop at the market and visit with the wide range of vendors. The Market has fresh fruits and veggies, plants for your gardens, flowers for the house, grass fed beef, lamb, pork, poultry, fish, fresh mushrooms, egg

rolls and spring rolls, baked goods from around the world, and kettle corn. Our farmers are more than happy to answer any questions customers might have and help them have a great experience at the farmers’ market!

**Tell us more about how you’re encouraging your farmers and vendors to use a labeling system to help consumers know where products are coming from, how that system works and what those labels are?**

Each farmer has to label their products either “Home Grown,” “Farmer Direct,” “Wholesale,” or “Home Made.” “Home Grown” is defined as grown or self- produced by vendor. “Farmer Direct” means purchased from the farmer who grew it. “Wholesale” is purchased through a produce wholesaler or produce auction. “Home Made” is produced by the vendor from raw materials. The reasoning for having the labels is to educate the customer about where their food is coming from and where it has been. If a vendor produces 100% of their products they only need to state “Home Grown” on their farm sign versus every product on their table if they have a mix of “Home Grown”, “Farmer Direct”, “Wholesale”, and “Home Made.”

**The Meridian Township Farmers Market is a member of MIFMA. Why is it important to you and your market to be involved in MIFMA?**

Besides all the great support of other MIFMA members, it is important to have that network for sharing information and staying informed about current events in the agriculture industry and how it will affect farmers and/or farmers markets. I truly enjoy the comradery and sense of togetherness that being a MIFMA member brings. I have been a member of many organizations, but none welcomed you like MIFMA does - almost making you feel like a member of a family. Thanks Dru!

**What’s one thing every MIFMA member should know about the Meridian Township Farmers Market?**

The Meridian Township Farmers’ Market is a great place to find fabulous friends, fantastic flowers and the freshest food! Come visit the market every Saturday, May through October and Wednesdays, July through October from 8 am to 2 pm. I hope to see you at the market!

## Welcome New Members!

MIFMA would like to welcome its new members for May 2009.

### Farmers Markets

- Richland Area Community Center Farmers Market
- Dansville Farmers Market

### Farmer/Vendors

- Roeske Farms, LLC in Hartland
- F.U.R.R. Produce in Pinconning
- Rock River Farm in Chatham

### Friends, Individual/ Household

- Carolyn Hancock, Bath
- Dave and Pam Montri, Troy

### Friends, Organization

- Cherry Capitol Foods, LLC in Traverse City
- Inn Season Café in Royal Oak
- St. Clair County MSUE in Port Huron
- Traverse Bay Medical in Traverse City

To join MIFMA, visit [www.farmersmarkets.msu.edu](http://www.farmersmarkets.msu.edu)

## Thank you, Sponsors!

### MIFMA Sponsors

- Lynn Ochberg, Ochberg Sugar Bush in Okemos

To become a MIFMA Sponsor, contact Dru Montri, 517- 432-3381 or [dnmontri@msu.edu](mailto:dnmontri@msu.edu).



# MICHIGAN FARMERS MARKET ASSOCIATION

## Select Michigan Farmers Markets!

July 23, Capitol lawn • Aug 20, Detroit Eastern Market Shed 2 • Sept 17, Capitol lawn

This year's Select Michigan Farmers Market dates have been set, so get ready to grow, sell, buy and eat local!

In celebration of Michigan agriculture and our state's great farmers, Michigan Food & Farming Systems (MIFFS), the Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) - Select Michigan Program and the Michigan Farmers Market Association (MIFMA) are partnering again this summer to host three special farmers markets on July 23 and September 17 on the Capitol lawn in Lansing, and on August 20 at Eastern Market in Detroit.

Each market is expected to feature around 40 vendors, all from across the state of Michigan, all selling their local products, grown and/or processed in Michigan, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on each day, rain or shine! Vendors will be selling fresh flowers, fruits and vegetables, honey and maple syrup, pies and baked goods, meat and fish, spices and seasonings, nuts, jams, jellies, salsas and much more!

"These markets have been a great tool to get local food out in the public eye, and in the eyes of the legislators and media who need to know how important agriculture is to our state and our economy," said Elaine Brown, MIFFS Executive Director.

They're great for the vendors, too, according to Christine Lietzau, MDA Select Michigan Program Manager, who shared that last year's vendors collected more than \$100,000 all together at the three markets held at the Capitol and at the Henry Ford in Dearborn.

If you are interested in participating in any of the markets, please contact Erin Groeb, MDA, at 517-373-2469 or groebe@michigan.gov or visit [www.selectmichigan.org](http://www.selectmichigan.org).

Applications for each individual market will be available approximately two months prior to that market. MIFFS and MIFMA members will receive several days advance notice by e-mail for applications. Vendors are chosen largely on a first-come, first-serve basis, so take advantage of the lead time!

Other partners and funders for these markets include Detroit Eastern Market, Slow Food Detroit and the Food Bank Council of Michigan.

Don't miss out on this great opportunity to celebrate local food and Michigan agriculture!



## What's Happening?

- **July 2, 2009:**  
Michigan Farmers Markets Food Assistance Partnership Conference Call
  - **July 13, 2009:**  
MIFMA Marketing Committee Conference Call
  - **July 13, 2009:**  
MIFMA Fundraising Committee Conference Call
  - **July 13, 2009:**  
MIFMA Board Conference Call
  - **July 14, 2009:**  
Farmers Market Coalition Sowing Value, Reaping Rewards: Recruitment, Services, and Administrative Systems for Successful Membership Organizations Webinar
  - **July 16, 2009:**  
MIFMA Professional Development Committee Conference Call
  - **July 16, 2009:**  
Leland "Wharf & Wine" Farmers Market Tour. Register now at [www.learngreatfoods.com](http://www.learngreatfoods.com)
  - **July 21, 2009:**  
Rapid Market Assessment Workshop, Lansing City Market
  - **July 22, 2009:**  
Senior Project FRESH Conference Call
  - **July 23, 2009:**  
Select Michigan Farmers Market at the Capitol
- For more information regarding these listings, call 517-432-3381.



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# MIFMA Member of the Month: Leland Farmers Market (Leelanau Peninsula)

An Interview with Megan Gregory, Market Manager



**The Leland "Wharf and Wine" Farmers Market Tour is scheduled for Thursday, July 16th. Why should we register now?**

Registering now will ensure a spot for this unique and exciting opportunity. We have a great lineup of local talent, beginning at the market and ending with Larry Mawby and Chef Perry Harmon. For dedicated foodies, it really doesn't get much better.

**The market is promoted as a great place to get local produce and meet the farmers who grow it. Tell us more about these farmers and the local produce available at your market.**

Well, one of the more exciting things going on at the markets lately is that strawberries are finally available! Things have been a bit behind schedule this year, and a mission for many market visitors has been to not leave empty handed. It's nice to have the berries there now.

In all seriousness though, the Leland market is a great representation of local artisans proudly displaying their craft. Many of these farmers/vendors have a following, and devoted customers will seek them out each week. Right now it is for honey, soaps/salves and beauty products, salad greens, natural beef, floral bouquets, hearth breads, and croissants, to name a few. And, more often than not, these folks stick around and chat for a while. It really makes for a fun and friendly atmosphere. Everyone walks away feeling good.

**The Leelanau Farmers Markets are a member of MIFMA. Why do you feel it is important for your markets to be involved in MIFMA?**

MIFMA is an excellent way to keep everyone connected and informed. Continued education is a must for successfully running any business. MIFMA offers an abundance of great programs and resources geared towards the enrichment of farmers and markets. In this scenario everyone wins.

**What is one thing every MIFMA member should know about the Leelanau Farmers Markets?**

We have five different market locations to better serve our customers. So on nearly any given day in Leelanau County, a market is likely under way.

For details on market locations, weekly features and more, we invite everyone to visit our website at [www.leelanau.cc/farmersmarkets.asp](http://www.leelanau.cc/farmersmarkets.asp)

*Leland "Wharf & Wine"*

*Farmers Market Tour*

*Thursday, July 16 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.*

Join us by the dock for a market tour with market manager, Megan Gregory and pick up fresh entrées at Carlson's Fisheries in historic Fishtown and chat with fisherman/artist Clay Carlson. Cook with Chef Perry Harmon at Sweeter Song Farm, then enjoy a wine pouring with celebrated wine-maker Larry Mawby of L. Mawby Winery. Cost of \$50 per person (\$40 for MIFMA members) includes journal, list of vendors, recipes, tour of market, demonstration cooking class, and luncheon.

Register now at  
[www.learngreatfoods.com/mi\\_MIFMA.php](http://www.learngreatfoods.com/mi_MIFMA.php)

## Welcome New Members!

MIFMA would like to welcome its new members for June 2009.

### Farmers Markets

- Downtown Lake Orion Farmers Market
- Ada Village Farmers Market

### Farmer/Vendors

- Crane Dance Farm in Middleville
- Robert Beaudette, Kettle Corn of MI Inc. in Wyandotte
- Jacqueline Cole, Best Breads in Rockford

To join MIFMA, visit [www.farmersmarkets.msu.edu](http://www.farmersmarkets.msu.edu)

## Thank you, Sponsors!

### MIFMA Sponsors

- Lynn Ochberg, Ochberg Sugar Bush in Okemos

To become a MIFMA Sponsor, contact Dru Montri, 517-432-3381 or [dmontri@msu.edu](mailto:dmontri@msu.edu).





# MICHIGAN FARMERS MARKET ASSOCIATION

## Egg Law Update

MIFMA, MIFFS, MDA and other partners have been working together over the last two years to clarify the operating policy and regulatory issues for egg sales at farmers markets, and more broadly direct from producer to consumer. In March, the workgroup met with a representative from the Office of Attorney General (AG) to present this issue of MDA regulation of shell eggs sold by producer to consumer or first receiver. On July 17<sup>th</sup>, MDA received an AG opinion stating that the 1963 Eggs Law “prevails over the Food Law when in conflict.” The opinion concluded, “As the Eggs Law does not require retailer-producers who sell directly to consumers to comply with its food safety provisions, this shows that the Legislature did not

intend to subject egg producers to such regulation, including under the more general Food Law.”

Based on this opinion, **MDA will not license or regulate eggs being sold directly by a producer to a consumer.** During an August 18 meeting, we learned that all MDA supervisors and inspectors have received notice that until further notice, MDA shall not regulate, license or cite violations when an egg producer sells to a consumer or first receiver. You can view MDA’s policy at [http://www.michigan.gov/mda/0,1607,7-125-1568\\_2387\\_46671-212367--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/mda/0,1607,7-125-1568_2387_46671-212367--,00.html). We will also continue to share updates as available.

Please share this message with fellow farmers and market managers as appropriate.

## What’s Happening?

- **September 3, 2009:**  
RMA at Downtown Bay City Farmers Market
  - **September 5, 2009:**  
RMA at South Lansing Community Farmers Market
  - **September 9, 2009:**  
Senior Project FRESH Conference Call, Using Data to Tell Your Story
  - **September 10, 2009:**  
Michigan Farmers Markets Food Assistance Partnership Conference Call
  - **September 12, 2009:**  
RMA at Kalamazoo Farmers Market
  - **September 14, 2009:**  
MIFMA Board Meeting
  - **September 16, 2009:**  
Farmers Market Coalition EBT Webinar
  - **September 17, 2009:**  
Select Michigan Farmers Market at the Capitol
  - **September 17, 2009:**  
MIFMA Professional Development Committee Conference Call
  - **September 18, 2009:**  
RMA at Downtown Saginaw Farmers Market
  - **September 24, 2009:**  
RMA at Northwest Detroit Farmers Market
  - **September 28, 2009:**  
MIFMA Marketing Committee Conference Call
- For more information regarding these listings, call 517-432-3381.

## Rapid Market Assessment Schedule

Check out this year’s Rapid Market Assessment (RMA) schedule! An RMA provides a one-time, market-day snapshot of a market using three tools: customer counts, dot surveys, and market observations and recommendations. Being an RMA team member not only teaches you how to count customers and survey customers, it also provides you with an opportunity to critically examine a market’s physical characteristics, market atmosphere, vendors and products and food assistance programs. You’ll go home with a mind full of ideas to implement at your farmers market or in your work.

If you’re interested in volunteering for any of the starred markets below, please contact Dru Montri at [dnmontri@msu.edu](mailto:dnmontri@msu.edu) or 517-432-3381.

- Lapeer Farmers Market: Wednesday, August 26th from 9 am - 3 pm
- Flint Farmers Market: Thursday, August 27th from 9 am - 5 pm
- \*Downtown Bay City Farmers Market: Thursday, September 3rd from 10 am - 3 pm
- \*South Lansing Community Farmers Market: Saturday, September 5th from 10 am - 2 pm
- \*Kalamazoo Farmers Market: Saturday, September 12th from 7 am - 2 pm
- \*Downtown Saginaw Farmers Market: Friday, September 18th from 10 am - 3 pm
- Northwest Detroit Farmers Market: Thursday, September 24th from 4 - 8 pm
- \*Ann Arbor Farmers Market: Wednesday, October 7th from 7 am - 3 pm
- \*Lansing City Market: Thursday, October 8th from 9 am - 6 pm
- Downtown Ypsilanti Farmers Market: Tuesday, October 13th from 2 - 6 pm



Flint Farmers Market RMA, August 27

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# MIFMA Member of the Month:

## Jan Lawson

An Interview with Jan Lawson, Battle Creek Farmers Market Manager



### Please tell us about your farm.

My farm is located between Battle Creek and Marshall, MI. I am primarily a beekeeper and honey is my main crop, but I also have a 2 acre market garden in which I grow everything you can grow in Michigan. I specialize in heirloom tomatoes. I am also a member of Seed Savers Exchange and enjoy saving seeds of heirloom peppers, tomatoes and beans.

### What do you love about farmers markets?

I started selling my honey about ten years ago when I had a good year with lots of surplus honey. I quickly learned that in our market, selling just honey wasn't enough, so I expanded an already large garden and started to pay attention to what people wanted. I enjoy taking a quality product to market and I really enjoy getting compliments about my produce and honey, but my favorite part of the market is interacting with people. You can't survive unless you are a people person.

### In addition to selling at the farmers market, you also manage the Battle Creek Farmers Market. How do you balance being a market manager and a vendor?

About five years ago, our market went through a change in leadership and as the organizational meeting ended, I somehow became the market manager. Since our market is relatively small, my duties as manager are not overwhelming, especially since we have a good leadership team. I'd be in real trouble if were just up to me to manage the market. It is really a team effort.

### You serve on the MIFMA Board of Directors as the Region 6 representative. What have you learned about Michigan farmers markets in this leadership position?

Our secretary encouraged me to run for Region 6 representative primarily to keep our market informed and to garner ideas to promote our market. Farmer's markets are the truest and probably the oldest form of capitalism. The grower, in most cases, is selling to the consumer. There aren't many things more important than the food you eat, and MIFMA is exceedingly aware of those important facts. MIFMA is supporting the leadership teams in all of the markets by providing education and professional development, as well as being aware of laws that affect markets.

Since I have been on the MIFMA board, I have had the privilege of visiting several markets across the state, and one thing I now realize is that there are no two markets that are exactly alike. Sure we all live in the same climate and grow some of the same things, but every vendor is a unique individual, and every market has a unique flavor. Visiting other farmers markets could become addictive if I wasn't working at our own market. I will continue as a farmer vendor as long as I am physically able. You can find me selling my produce and honey every Saturday at the Battle Creek Farmer's Market. If I'm not there, look for me at one of the other great markets around the state.

### MIFMA is on Facebook!

The Michigan Farmers Market Association is now on Facebook! Check us out at <http://tinyurl.com/lwe8ma> and become a fan today to show your support for MIFMA, farmers markets and local food. You need to be a Facebook member to become a fan, so start your profile today at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com). This is another great way to receive regular updates, share information, and view photos from our recent events.

## Welcome New Members!

MIFMA would like to welcome its new members for July and August 2009.

### Farmers/Vendors

- Bill Vang of Lansing
- Green Beans of Bath
- Janet's LLC of Dexter
- M. Salomon Jost of East Lansing
- Mark Sienkiewicz of Berkley
- Ma's Produce of Grand Rapids
- Michigan Mushrooms LLC of Alpena

### Friends of MIFMA

- Jenifer Buckley of Lansing

To join MIFMA, visit [www.farmersmarkets.msu.edu](http://www.farmersmarkets.msu.edu)

## Thank you, Sponsors!

### MIFMA Sponsors

- Lynn Ochberg, Ochberg Sugar Bush in Okemos

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# MICHIGAN FARMERS MARKET ASSOCIATION

## Michigan Farmers Markets Top "Most Loved" Charts

### "Top 100 Farmers Markets" Winners in Michigan

1. **Flint Farmers Market**  
(MIFMA Member)
24. **Port Austin Farmers Market**
25. **Mount Clemens Farmers Market**
59. **Royal Oak Farmers Market**
72. **Allen Street Farmers Market in Lansing**  
(MIFMA Member)
81. **Grand Blanc Farmers Market**
91. **Sweetwater Local Foods Market in Muskegon**
94. **Downtown Ypsilanti Farmers Market**  
(MIFMA Member)

It's official – Michigan loves its farmers markets! More than most states, in fact, according to the "Most Loved Farmers' Market in America" contest recently held by national health, environmental, and agricultural support web organizations, Care2.com and LocalHarvest.org. The contest, which started on June 19<sup>th</sup> and ended September 17<sup>th</sup>, encouraged people all across the United States to cast a vote online for their favorite market. Of the more than 5,000 markets across the country, hundreds entered the contest, but Michigan's beloved Flint Farmers' Markets won the "Most Loved Farmers' Market in America" with 6,174 votes.

Seven other farmers markets from Michigan also made the "Top 100 Most Loved Farmers' Markets in America" list, which is online at [http://www.care2.com/farmersmarket/top\\_markets](http://www.care2.com/farmersmarket/top_markets).

The Flint Farmers' Market is more than 100 years old, beginning in 1905 as the earliest recorded open air market. Today, it is a year round public market which heavily supports locally grown produce during the Michigan growing season.

"We are certainly not the largest and we don't claim to be the best, but we will proudly accept the designation of 'Most Loved Market in America,'" said Market Manager Dick Ramsdell. "We call ourselves the Flint Farmers' Market, but we are clear to point out that we are a year round public market. This win is a tribute to the steadfast loyalty of our customers and supporters, near and far."

"This was a huge team effort by staff, vendors, customers and our local media partners. We came TOGETHER as a community to win this for Flint. This win says a lot about the people of Flint and Genesee County," said Karianne Martus, Market Public Relations Director. "As a market family we are humbled and proud to be the recipient of this prestigious title."

In addition to the title, the Flint Farmers Market received a first place prize of \$5,000, which will be used in the Flint area to further market efforts to educate the community on the importance of eating locally grown food.

### What's Happening?

- **October 7, 2009:**  
Rapid Market Assessment at Ann Arbor Farmers Market
  - **October 8, 2009:**  
Michigan Farmers Markets Food Assistance Partnership Conference Call
  - **October 12, 2009:**  
MSU Student Organic Farm Tour, contact [admontri@msu.edu](mailto:admontri@msu.edu) to register
  - **October 13, 2009:**  
Rapid Market Assessment at Ypsilanti Farmers Market
  - **October 15, 2009:**  
MIFMA Professional Development Conference Call
  - **October 17, 2009:**  
Farmington's Culturally Delicious Farmers and Artisans Market Tour, [www.learngreatfoods.com/mi\\_MIFMA.php](http://www.learngreatfoods.com/mi_MIFMA.php)
  - **October 25, 2009:**  
Just Outside Your Window, Inaugural Michigan Sustainable Stoup Competition, [www.brownpapertickets.com/event/71894](http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/71894)
  - **October 29, 2009:**  
MIFFS Annual Harvest Celebration, [www.miffs.org/harvestcelebration.asp](http://www.miffs.org/harvestcelebration.asp)
- For more information regarding these listings, call 517-432-3381.



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# MIFMA Member of the Month: *Farmington Farmers & Artisans Market*

An Interview with Scott Stevenson, Farmington Farmers & Artisans Market Manager



## **Farmington's "Culturally Delicious" Farmers & Artisans Market Tour is scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 17th. What do you have in store for tour participants and why should folks register now?**

We are excited and honored to host the "Culturally Delicious" market tour this season at the Farmington Farmers & Artisans Market. Attendees will be treated to guided tours of our market, with the opportunity to get to know the fine, hard-working farmers and growers that bring ultra-fresh produce from the fields to their tables. Each farmer will have the chance to tell folks about their farms, when they were established, what they grow, and their philosophy about why they feel it important to offer quality, locally-grown food to the people of Southeastern Michigan. The tour participants will also be able to hear select local artisans and crafters talk about themselves and methods of creating some of the unique products they offer.

The chef's cooking demonstration and 3-course lunch with market ingredients will top off the experience and illustrate how good fresh really is!

## **Winners of the 5th Annual Scarecrow Contest will be announced at the market on the day of the tour. Tell us more about the market's scarecrow competition.**

Farmington's 5th Annual Scarecrow Building Contest is an event that has drawn increased excitement from an ever-widening swath of our community. Each year, the challenge has been offered to create fantastic, whimsical themed scarecrows to celebrate the fall harvest season and contribute to the sense of shared participation in our town-wide Harvest Moon Celebration. Each year, we've seen a response surprisingly diverse in scope and quality.

Community groups, businesses and individuals each have their own category, and there are cash prizes for those judged outstanding. Once judged, the entries

are displayed throughout our downtown, which makes for a great fall visual, and encourages folks to walk around, looking for either their contribution or those of their friends and neighbors. It's a lot of fun, and just another way to connect the community at large with their city and with those who do business here.

## **There is a great diversity of products at your market, including farm fresh produce and crafts. Tell us more about this special mix of farmers and artisans that come together in Farmington each Saturday.**

Since its inception, the Farmington Farmers & Artisans Market has strived to fulfill the desire of customers from within our community and beyond to have fresh, healthy alternatives to offer to their families. In keeping with the local aspect, we determined that showcasing the talents of some of the area artisans and crafters would provide a nice addition to the market, and perhaps encourage customers to linger. We rotate many of these participants each week, creating another reason for customers to return on a regular basis to see what's new. Paintings, jewelry, garden art, pottery, hand-woven baskets, photography and hand-made soaps are a few examples of what's offered on any given Saturday.

## **The Downtown Farmington Farmers & Artisans Market is a member of MIFMA. Why do you feel it is important for your market to be involved in MIFMA?**

Being a charter member of MIFMA has been a point of pride for us in Farmington. The association has been a wealth of information and assistance to us, not only for establishing a new footprint and philosophy when the market's venue, size and look were changed a few years ago, but also with the ongoing challenges of weekly operations. The boot camps, abundant resources and dedicated staff are what make our membership very worthwhile.

## **What is one thing you want every MIFMA member to know about your farmers market?**

That we are proud to be part of an ever-growing group of good folk dedicated to advancing the concept of local - food, arts & crafts, etc. and underlining the benefits of community gathering and interaction. It has been personally gratifying to see more and more people obviously enjoying themselves at our market, and the hope is that perhaps we're helping to create new habits and understanding to pass to next generations.

**Join MIFMA today to receive special member pricing for the 2009 Learn Great Foods and MIFMA Farmers Market Tours.**

Upcoming Farmers Market Tours:


- Farmington's "Culturally Delicious" Farmers and Artisans Market Tour  
*Sat. Oct. 17, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.*
- Frankenmuth's "Festive Seasonings" Farmers Market Tour  
*Sat. Nov. 28, 3-8 p.m.*

Join us at each tour for:

- A Guided shopping tour
- A Cooking demonstration
- A Gourmet meal made with fresh ingredients

To learn more or register, visit [www.learngreatfoods.com/mi\\_MIFMA.php](http://www.learngreatfoods.com/mi_MIFMA.php)





# MICHIGAN FARMERS MARKET ASSOCIATION

## Great Lakes Fruit, Vegetable and Farm Market EXPO *Farmers Market Focus*

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2009 - FARMERS MARKETS I

### Food Safety on the Farm

Thursday, December 10<sup>th</sup> 9:00 – 10:30 AM

Food buyers increasingly demand assurance that their food is safe through various certification programs for good handling practices or GAP. Panelists include a GAP auditor, a GAP educator, a blueberry farmer who has been USDA GAP certified and a farmer who direct markets produce through farmers markets and CSA and is working to bring her family's farm into GAP compliance. They will discuss the easy parts, the challenging parts and what both farmers and farmers market managers need to know.

Panelists:

- **Robin Danto**, *Extension Educator – Oakland County, Michigan State University Extension (moderator)*
- **Colleen M. Bess**, *Michigan Department of Agriculture, Pesticide and Plant Pest Management Division*
- **Phillip Tocco**, *Extension Educator – Jackson County, Michigan State University Extension*
- **Margarita Caldera**, *Caldera Blueberries, West Olive, MI*
- **Rebecca Titus**, *Titus Farms, Leslie, MI*

### Safe Food Sampling at Farmers Markets

Thursday, December 10<sup>th</sup> 10:30 AM-noon

In May 2009 the Michigan Department of Agriculture released a new document, *Guidelines for Providing Safe Food Samples at Farmers Markets*. Hygiene, temperature control, food protection, warewashing and facility equipment are all important topics. This panel of speakers will discuss sampling fresh fruits and vegetables, meats and processed foods at farmers markets.

Panelists:

- **Kevin Halfmann**, *Food Program Policy Specialist, Michigan Department of Agriculture Food and Dairy Division*
- **Hollie Hamel**, *Allen Street Farmers Market of Lansing*
- **Becky DeYoung**, *DeYoung's Fore Seasons of Hartland*
- **Mary Safie**, *Safe Specialty Foods of Mount Clemens*

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2009 - FARMERS MARKETS II

### Tricks of the Trade for Farmers Markets: Sharing What Works

Thursday, December 10<sup>th</sup> 1:00-2:30 PM

Top off your Expo experience by participating in this moderated sharing session. Come to listen and to share good ideas that have worked for you. Hear ideas about staging a used cookbook sale to raise money, storing wooden market tokens, getting great board members, recruiting youth marketers, using video to promote your market, highlighting local foods and more.

- **Dru Montri**, *Michigan Farmers Market Association (moderator)*



MICHIGAN STATE  
UNIVERSITY



Michigan Food &  
Farming Systems-MIFFS  
Bringing Farmers & Communities Together

Pre-registration is open, and the early discount continues until November 10. Expo will continue receiving registrations online until December 3, and then onsite beginning Monday afternoon, December 7, at 4:00 pm. To register on-line, visit [www.glexpo.com/register.php](http://www.glexpo.com/register.php).

### What's Happening?

- **November 2, 2009:**  
MIFMA Marketing Committee Conference Call
- **November 5, 2009:**  
Michigan Farmers Markets Food Assistance Partnership Conference Call
- **November 9, 2009:**  
MIFMA Fundraising Committee Conference Call
- **November 9, 2009:**  
MIFMA Board Meeting
- **November 16, 2009:**  
MSU Student Organic Farm Tour, contact [admontri@msu.edu](mailto:admontri@msu.edu) to register
- **November 19, 2009:**  
MIFMA Professional Development Committee Conference Call
- **November 28, 2009:**  
Frankenmuth "Festive Seasonings" Farmers Market Tour, register at [www.learngreatfoods.com](http://www.learngreatfoods.com)
- **December 3, 2009:**  
Michigan Farmers Markets Food Assistance Partnership Conference Call
- **December 8-10, 2009:**  
Great Lakes Fruit, Vegetable and Farm Market Expo, [www.glexpo.com](http://www.glexpo.com)

For more information regarding these listings, call 517-432-3381.



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# MIFMA Member of the Month: Neal Gracey

An Interview with Neal Gracey, Friend of MIFMA since April 2008



Neal Gracey, standing center and holding bedding flat



Neal Gracey, far right

Born on a farm in Bay City, Michigan years ago, Neal has grown up an avid supporter of farmers markets. Residing now just six miles from the Frankenmuth Farmers Market, he has found a market home and dedicates much of his time to planning market activities and manning the information booth. Neal started volunteering four years ago and soon became a mainstay at the market. He started at the information booth by answering general questions and serving coffee, tea and muffins to regular shoppers and tourists strolling through the market located in heart of downtown. To this day he still is at the market bright and early every Saturday morning to help set-up, man the information booth, and count customers each hour, but he also started taking on more and more responsibility. Neal is also an active Board member. He was secretary during the first couple years of his term, but has given up that piece of responsibility to take on something he enjoys much, much more – music.

Neal is in charge of organizing the Frankenmuth Farmers Market's weekly entertainment. With sponsorship dollars provided by the Frankenmuth Credit Union, Neal has been able to work with other Board members to find a nucleus of core musicians to frequent the market and aid in creating

a friendly shopping atmosphere. They bring in musicians from town, from the Greater Saginaw area, and have even brought in radio stations for remote broadcasts. Entertainers seem to enjoy the experience as much as market goes and Neal hasn't had a problem securing nearly all of the entertainment slots for 2010 already. He has built a lot of great relationships in his experience with the market and speaks fondly of the close knit group of market organizers, the overall community support, and their special events.

One of those upcoming events is the Christkindlmarkt, held annually on Thanksgiving weekend. In conjunction with the market this year, Frankenmuth will also be hosting the "Festive Seasonings" Farmers Market Tour. Santa Claus will be in town, a guided shopping tour will be offered, and a fantastic gourmet meal will be prepared. According to Neal, it is an event no one should miss.

At the close of our conversation, I asked Neal why it was so important to him to be a member of MIFMA. He responded, "It feels good to pay dues to a wonderful organization that benefits farmers markets. I want to support the statewide effort."

## Welcome New Members

MIFMA would like to welcome its new members for October 2009.

### Farmers Markets

- Kalamazoo Indoor Flea & Farmers Market

### Friends of MIFMA

- Elizabeth Bertolini

### Organizational Friend of MIFMA

- Greening of Detroit

To join MIFMA, visit [www.farmersmarkets.msu.edu](http://www.farmersmarkets.msu.edu)

## Thank you, Sponsors!

### MIFMA Sponsors

- Lynn Ochberg, Ochberg Sugar Bush in Okemos

To become a MIFMA Sponsor, contact Dru Montri, 517- 432-3381 or [dnmontri@msu.edu](mailto:dnmontri@msu.edu).

## Frankenmuth "Festive Seasonings" Farmers Market Tour

Saturday, November 28, 2009, 3 to 8 p.m.

Frankenmuth Farmers Market

Cost of \$50 per person (\$40 for MIFMA members)

Includes journal, list of vendors, recipes, tour of market, demonstration cooking class, and dinner made of foods fresh from the market!

Register now online at [www.learngreatfoods.com/mi\\_MIFMA.php](http://www.learngreatfoods.com/mi_MIFMA.php)





# MICHIGAN FARMERS MARKET ASSOCIATION

## MIFMA Begins Working on a Long-Term Strategic Plan

With support from the United States Department of Agriculture Farmers Market Promotion Program, MIFMA is excited to begin developing a long-term strategic plan. Since MIFMA's inception in 2006, we have experienced rapid growth of our statewide association and witnessed the number of farmers markets grow year after year. In addition to building our membership benefits and educational opportunities, we know that MIFMA simultaneously needs to focus on steps to assure the viability of our association. To do so, we are excited to work with our Board, staff and members to revisit who we are, why we exist, how we reach our goals, and what it will look like when we are wildly successful.



To coach us through this process, MIFMA recently hired Michelle Napier-Dunnings of Pearl Partners, LLC in Lansing. Michelle founded Pearl Partners in 2003 with the mission "of helping others find the energy to move towards

success by creatively tapping the wisdom within each individual." As part of this mission, she has helped numerous organizations and groups with strategic planning, strategic coaching, capacity building and skill development.

During the November 9<sup>th</sup> MIFMA Board Meeting, Michelle introduced her process for strategic planning and led a discussion about why strategic planning is important and what our board thinks success looks like. Over the next two years, we will work to identify our collective direction

and develop a targeted approach to reach the results we, as an association, desire.

While MIFMA's strategic planning process will be guided by our Board of Directors, we will also actively include our members. Starting with this e-newsletter article, we will create a record of our journey. We will share it in a variety of ways and formats and are always open to suggestions from you, our members. At any time, you are welcome to contact Dru Montri, our association manager at 517-432-3381 or [dnmontri@msu.edu](mailto:dnmontri@msu.edu) or Dietrich Bronner, our Board chair at [dbronner@chartermi.net](mailto:dbronner@chartermi.net). You will also receive regular e-mails from your Regional Representatives giving you updates and seeking your input. Help them understand what you want to see from MIFMA – now and in the future.

Together we can build an association that will truly advance farmers markets to creating a thriving marketplace for local food and farm products. Join us in this process!

### Regional Representatives

**Region 1** – Frank Blissett, *Bliss Hill Farm in Sault Ste. Marie*

**Region 2** – Jen Welty, *9 Bean Rows in Northport*

**Region 3** – Vacant

**Region 4** – Brian Cool, *LeRoy Farmers Market*

**Region 5** – Dietrich Bronner, *Frankenmuth Farmers Market*

**Region 6** – Jan Lawson, *Battle Creek Farmers Market*

**Region 7** – Vince Paris, *Fenton Farmers Market*

### What's Happening?

- **December 3, 2009:**  
Michigan Farmers Markets Food Assistance Partnership Conference Call
  - **December 8-10, 2009:**  
Great Lakes Fruit, Vegetable and Farm Market Expo, [www.glexpo.com](http://www.glexpo.com). Farmers Market Focus on Thursday, Dec 10.
  - **December 9, 2009:**  
Michigan Farmers Markets Food Assistance Partnership Year-end Conference in Grand Rapids
  - **December 14, 2009:**  
MIFMA Board Meeting Conference Call
  - **December 17, 2009:**  
MIFMA Professional Development Committee Conference Call
  - **December 21, 2009:**  
MIFMA Fundraising Committee Conference Call
  - **January 16, 2010:**  
Michigan Family Farms Conference in Battle Creek
  - **January 26, 2010:**  
Training Session on Accepting Bridge Cards at Farmers Markets in Traverse City
  - **January 30, 2010:**  
Northern Michigan Small Farms Conference in Grayling
  - **March 9, 2010:**  
MIFMA's 3rd Annual Market Manager "Boot Camp"
- For more information regarding these listings, call 517-432-3381.



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# MIFMA Member of the Month:

## Jen Welty, 9 Bean Rows Farm

An Interview with Jen Welty of 9 Bean Rows Farm in Northport



Jen and Nic Welty



**What farmers markets do you sell at? What do you love most about this part of your business?**

We sell at Leelanau County Farmers Markets (both Suttons Bay and Leland) as well as the Sara Hardy Downtown Farmers Market (Traverse City) and the farmers market at the Village of Grand Traverse Commons. We are also selling at the newly established Winter Market at the Village. Selling directly is what I love most about our business. Seeing people come back week after week for something they just “had to have” makes me smile. My husband, on the other hand, prefers talking shop with other farmers, getting inspiration and new ideas from this, week after week.

**You are a farmer/vendor member of MIFMA. Why is it important to you to be involved in MIFMA?**

There are countless reasons to be a member of the statewide organization whose goal is to promote and help advance farmer markets in Michigan. First, farmers market sales represent approximately half our annual revenue. Stronger markets mean more income and economic security

for our business. This coincides with the fact that thriving markets lead to healthier communities and stronger local economies. Next, MIFMA is a stellar resource for anyone with a vested interest in farmers markets (hey, that’s everyone!). They offer professional development opportunities for farmers and market masters, they push to bring us the latest policy information, and they help to get fresh foods into the hands of low income households. If MIFMA stays strong, everyone benefits.

**In March 2009, you were elected to serve on the MIFMA Board of Directors. As we begin our strategic planning process, what is the most exciting aspect of your role?**

I have the opportunity to make MIFMA a stronger organization by helping to set the best possible course for success. Not knowing exactly what the future will bring is tremendously exciting. Today’s dreams of what MIFMA will become will be tomorrow’s tangibles.

**What is one thing you want every MIFMA member to know about 9 Bean Rows?**

We like to think of ourselves as food artisans, experimenters, and scientists – both in the field and in the kitchen. Our approach to farming and cooking is the same. We constantly try new methods, and we never think anything is impossible!

## Welcome New Members

MIFMA would like to welcome its new members for November 2009.

### Farmers Markets

- Howard City Farmers Market

### Friends of MIFMA

- Leon & Suzanne Begue, Scottville

To join MIFMA, visit [www.farmersmarkets.msu.edu](http://www.farmersmarkets.msu.edu)

## Thank you, Sponsors!

### MIFMA Sponsors

- Lynn Ochberg, Ochberg Sugar Bush in Okemos

To become a MIFMA Sponsor, contact Dru Montri, 517-432-3381 or [dnmontri@msu.edu](mailto:dnmontri@msu.edu).



Save the Date for ANR Week Activities!

**Monday, March 8, 2010:** Farmers Market Vendor Panel and Roundtable from 1-5 p.m.

**Tuesday, March 9, 2010:** Michigan Farmers Market Association 3rd Annual Market Manager “Boot Camp” from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

# MICHIGAN FARMERS MARKET ASSOCIATION

## 2009 Rapid Market Assessment Wrap-up

Over the past market season, eleven Rapid Market Assessments were conducted at the Grand Rapids Fulton Street, Muskegon, Lapeer, Flint, Downtown Bay City, South Lansing, Kalamazoo, Downtown Saginaw, Northwest Detroit, Ann Arbor, and Downtown Ypsilanti farmers markets. The Rapid Market Assessments were facilitated by the Michigan Farmers Market Association (MIFMA), Michigan State University (MSU) and the Michigan Farmers Markets Food Assistance Partnership. The RMAs gathered information to assist the markets in future planning.

A team composed of representatives from other farmers markets, MIFMA and MSU spent the day at each market performing the assessments. Team members counted customers, helped shoppers with dot surveys, and collected constructive comments and observations. Organizers then took these results and assembled a report for each market that was shared with the market manager and staff for review. Final reports can be found online at [www.farmersmarkets.msu.edu](http://www.farmersmarkets.msu.edu) under the For Market Managers tab.

A Rapid Market Assessment



gives farmers markets an outside perspective that can help answer management questions and point to the future direction. They also teach an effective way to collect customer input and can generate interest for the market. The Rapid Market Assessment team composed of hardworking volunteers provided each market with a one-time, market day snapshot.

One of the key issues that was explored during these assessments was the markets' acceptance of food assistance benefits. All the markets accept Bridge Cards and Project FRESH coupons in an effort to make the fresh, local foods available at the market accessible to everyone. RMA team members



critically observed food assistance signage at the market, as well as, if the market had an alternative redemption systems. Thank you to everyone that helped plan and facilitate the Rapid Market Assessments this year!

### What's Happening?

- **January 5, 2010:**  
MIFMA Board Meeting
- **January 7, 2010:**  
Michigan Farmers Markets Food Assistance Partnership Conference Call
- **January 11, 2010:**  
MIFMA Marketing Committee Conference Call
- **January 16, 2010:**  
Michigan Family Farms Conference in Battle Creek
- **January 19-20, 2010:**  
MIFMA Strategic Planning
- **January 26, 2010:**  
Training Session on Accepting Bridge Cards at Farmers Markets in Traverse City, 1-4p
- **January 30, 2010:**  
Northern Michigan Small Farms Conference in Grayling
- **February 11, 2010:**  
Training Session on Accepting Bridge Cards at Farmers Markets in Kalamazoo, 1-4p
- **February 22, 2010:**  
Training Session on Accepting Bridge Cards at Farmers Markets in Waterford, 1-4p
- **March 8, 2010:**  
Farmers Market Vendor Panel and Roundtable from 1-5p
- **March 9, 2010:**  
MIFMA's 3rd Annual Market Manager "Boot Camp"
- **March 10, 2010:**  
Choices Conference in East Lansing

For more information regarding these listings, call 517-432-3381.

### Save the Date for ANR Week Activities!

**Monday, March 8, 2010:** Farmers Market Vendor Panel and Roundtable from 1-5 p.m.

**Tuesday, March 9, 2010:** MIFMA's 3rd Annual Market Manager "Boot Camp" from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

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# MIFMA Member of the Month: *Alcona Farmers Market*

An Interview with Pam Burt, Alcona Local Foods Association



**Most of your vendors accept Senior Project FRESH. In what ways does participating in Senior Project FRESH help both the seniors and your vendors?**

All of our market vendors are required to sign an agreement that they will accept Senior Project FRESH coupons, which we distribute to qualifying community members. The redemption rate of the coupons in our first year was some 94%. After coupon distribution, there was an immediate surge in market attendance by the seniors, who could be seen leaving the market with bags of fresh produce and a happy looks on their faces. Market vendors went above and beyond in answering the seniors' questions and giving them food-preparation tips, as well as giving them free samples of fresh herbs and produce to try. All vendors reported great personal satisfaction with being able to serve the seniors like this.

**Your market is a member of MIFMA. Why is it important to you to be involved in MIFMA?**

Our market has been a member of MIFMA from the start, and will continue to be. MIFMA membership has many advantages for us, including keeping up with the latest farmers' market news and trends around the state, learning about marketing and promotion techniques and opportunities, and providing the opportunity to conveniently obtain affordable market insurance. Due to our remote location in Harrisville (on the Sunrise Side in NE Mich, right on Lake Huron), without MIFMA we would feel disconnected from our fellow Michigan farmers' markets.

**What is one thing that you want every MIFMA member to know about your farmers market?**

For us, it has "taken a village" to establish and grow our market. Our volunteers and supporters come from all age groups and walks of life, and all have played an important part in helping us establish a successful farmers' market in our poor, rural community.

**There seems to be a great cooperative spirit in Alcona County with individuals, farmers, MSUE, and others working together to promote and support your farmers market. How do you all work together to fulfill your mission?**

Alcona Local Foods Association (ALFA), a 502(c)3 non-profit formed in 2007, is the sponsor of Alcona Farmers' Market. ALFA's mission is to promote the availability of fresh local foods in our county. ALFA's board includes local farmers and business owners, local Master Gardeners, Alcona County MSU Extension Director Bonnie Wichtner-Zoia, a local attorney, members of the Sunrise Gardening Club, the former President of Alcona Community Schools, and our county's former Public Health Dept. Nurse.

The diversity and credentials of the ALFA board has been a huge help in developing the market, including by drawing support from all sectors of our community. Our market had its grand opening in June 2008, with our MSU Extension Director Bonnie serving as the Market Master the first year. Each week, our local Master Gardeners have manned a table which provides gardening information to customers. Students from Alcona Community Schools, including FFA and 4H members, have volunteered their time for everything from parking attendants to face painting on kids' day.

Local businesses have also been supportive, donating everything from printing services to chef services in preparing local food samples at market. The market vendors themselves have been a vital force in developing the market, and are always happy to answer customer questions and offer nutritional and food growing tips.

A key feature of our market is that only foods and products grown and produced in Alcona County are permitted, except by occasional special invitation to outside vendors with produce unavailable in the county.

**The Alcona Local Foods Association recently received a \$77,943 USDA FMPP grant to promote farmers/vendors, support the income of local growers, increase awareness of nutrition and health issues and build hoophouses for season extension. Can you tell us more about this project and the impacts it will have in Alcona County and beyond?**

The \$77,943 FMPP grant will provide ALFA with needed resources to expand Farmers' Market operations. A key disadvantage of our northern location (200 miles N of Detroit) is our painfully short growing season. Most of the grant funds (\$50,000) is devoted to construction of hoop houses for extending the growing season. Current plans are for 8 or 9 hoophouses, all but two of which will be constructed on farms of the market vendors. The remaining two will be community hoop houses to be constructed on Harrisville and Mikado Township properties, for use by potential new market vendors and for educating area farmers and gardeners about season extension. Next spring, ALFA will sponsor a conference at one of the community hoop houses for interested people throughout our NE Michigan region, where hoop house technology is relatively unknown. Remaining grant funds will be used to build a website for the market, provide signs and other needed equipment at the market, and to advertise and promote the market.