



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.

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 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
 - **June 20, 2009:**
Meridian Twp "Fantastically Fresh" Farmers Market Tour. Register now at www.learngreatfoods.com
 - **July 23, 2009:**
Select Michigan Farmers Market at the Capitol
- 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: 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

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!

Thank you, 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.

