



MICHIGAN FARMERS MARKET ASSOCIATION

Michigan's Senior Project FRESH

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Since 2000, the State of Michigan has received money from the USDA to participate in the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program. Both the USDA and the Michigan Office of Services to the Aging (OSA) share the goals of the program. Those goals are: 1) to help local farmers markets and roadside stands and 2) to help those individuals 60 and over to have access to locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables. In Michigan, we term the project "Senior Project FRESH". It has a counterpart program for WIC moms, titled "Project FRESH". "FRESH" is the acronym for "Farm Resources for Expanding and Supporting Health".

According to the Michigan Behavioral Risk Factor Survey (BRFS) Michigan seniors (and "boomers") do not get enough fruit and vegetable servings per day. In the 2005 survey, 70% of those aged 65 and over reported not getting at least 5 servings of fruits



A Farmers Market in Wayne County Accepts Senior Project FRESH.

and veggies per day. The number increases to 77% for those aged 45-64. This is significant when you consider the fact that a diet high in fruits and veggies has been shown to lower the risk of developing chronic disease, as well as being a tool to help manage existing chronic disease.

Working with the MSU Extension Offices, Area Agencies on Aging, and Commissions/Councils on Aging, Senior Project FRESH provides seniors with coupons that can be used like cash at Michigan farmers markets and roadside stands that have been approved by the Michigan Department of Community Health, WIC Division. Seniors receive coupons in their county of residence, but can spend the coupons at any approved farmers market. This allows

seniors greater flexibility in deciding what markets to use.

To qualify, seniors must be 60 years of age or older, have a total household income of 185% or less, and live in a participating county. The season runs from June 1 - October 31st. Qualifying seniors all receive at least one coupon book with ten, \$2.00 coupons. Counties that wish to contribute local dollars may provide their seniors with additional books. The program has grown from 3 counties in 2000-2004 to 46 counties in 2007. In 2007, 8,274 seniors received coupon books. The redemption rate for coupons was 85%. Participating counties contributed over \$150,000 in support of the 2007 season. It has been estimated that the 2005 season brought over \$500,000 additional

dollars to Michigan farmers through both the WIC Project FRESH program and the Senior Project FRESH program.

Nutrition education is a major part of the program. Several counties, including Wayne, Otsego, Ingham, and Ottawa, provided nutrition education and cooking demonstrations at the markets before giving out the coupons. This gave seniors an opportunity to learn about fruits and veggies that they may not be familiar with. It also reduced the need for an additional trip to pick up coupons.

There is no charge for farmers to be a participating market or roadside stand. For more information on becoming an approved market, please contact the WIC program at: 517-335-8996. For a list of 2007 participating counties, please visit: <http://www.michigan.gov/miseniors>, and check out the Eating Well section after clicking on Aging Well, Living Well. For general information about Senior Project FRESH, please contact Sherri King, 517-373-4064, or kings1@michigan.gov.

What's Happening?

• **February 23, 2008:** CSA Training in Kalamazoo, MI. See www.csafarms.org.

• **February 29 – March 1, 2008** Michigan Organic Conference. See www.moffa.org/page/4069041.htm.

• **February 29 – March 8, 2008** Agriculture and Natural Resources Week. See www.canr.msu.edu/anrweek/.

• **March 4, 2008** Farmers Market Manager Training during ANR Week.

• **March 5, 2008** Plain Language Health Literacy Seminar. See <http://mnn.fcs.msu.edu/resources.html>.

• **March 8, 2008** CSA Training in Ann Arbor, MI. See <http://www.csafarms.org>

• **May 30, 2008** Successful, Sustainable Farmers Markets: What Does it Take? Designing Healthy Livable Communities Conference.

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!

Dan Keane

An Interview with Dan Keane, Keane's Wee Bee Farms



Q: Can you tell us a little bit about Keane's Wee Bee Farms?

A: We've just completed Thirty Years keeping bees and producing honey. My introduction to bees was part of my job with the Michigan Department of Agriculture doing Apiary Inspections, checking colonies for honey bee diseases. With help from my trainer and mentor, Krank Krupka, I wanted to know more about bees and everything related to them. Our name is mostly for fun and celebrates my Scottish heritage. (Little bee farms everywhere!)

Q: Why or how were you drawn to selling at farmers markets?

A: With the very first honey produced, I realized it was special because it was local and likewise with a unique flavor. Having more honey than we could consume we started selling at festivals, fairs and markets. From that beginning I realized how much I enjoy talking to people about my honey and what made it a high quality product. As I started working with the Hemlock Farmers' Market it was natural that I start selling honey. That's the cycle... Make more honey so you can have more bees...buy more bees so you can make more honey.

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

A: I view farmers' markets as a living, breathing entity, and as such, they need care and tending. Collectively throughout Michigan they create an incredibly dynamic industry with exciting

potential. It's not an accident that we have our 160 (or so) markets, nor that they support so many farms. Likewise it is not an accident that people who are market customers enjoy the experience so much and seek local products directly from the producer. MIFMA members get it, and I'm glad to have the opportunity to support the association with my membership. Developing and fostering this Industry is Good Work!

Q: In addition to selling your honey at the Hemlock Farmers' Market, you've also been active with the Downtown Saginaw Farmers' Market. What is your role with the DSFM?

A: Along with a lot of other folks, I've been active with the Downtown Saginaw Farmers' Market for over 15 years. We've grown from two farmers two days a week to about fifty farmers and vendors, four days a week. The season currently runs from the end of May through October. I had many roles with the market but currently serve as chair of our Board.

Q: What do you love about farmers markets?

A: In addition to buying something that is fresh, locally grown and in season, I don't think anything compares better in flavor or texture. What I really get excited about is how people come together at market. If you go to a farmers' market you've likely seen it to.

Q: You were recently elected Vice-Chair of the MIFMA Board of Directors. To you, what is the most exciting aspect of this very important role?

A: Seeing the association all come together as it has is very exciting. Several of us attended a meeting over ten years ago to talk about the benefits and possibility of starting a Michigan Farmers' Market Association. Now here we are! I'm just delighted to be in a position to serve on this board. There is so much good work that we can do together. I want to help ensure that we grow and support this very important Farmers' Market Industry.

Welcome New Members!

MIFMA would like to welcome its new charter member for the month of January 2008.

Farmers Market members

- Farmers Market of Dearborn

To join MIFMA, visit www.farmersmarkets.msu.edu!

MIFMA would also like to welcome its first Board of Director Officers:

Dietrich Bronner
Chairperson

Dan Keane
Vice-Chair

Lynn Ochberg
Secretary

Yolanda Blissett
Treasurer

