



# 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



## 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).

### 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.