



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 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.



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.



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'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.



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.

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.

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!

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.