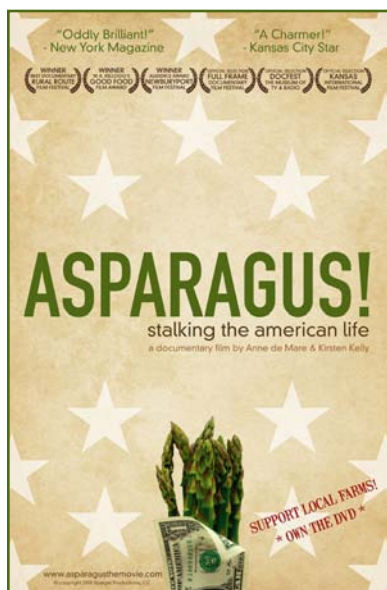


MICHIGAN FARMERS MARKET ASSOCIATION

ASPARAGUS! (Stalking the American Life) Available on DVD



Asparagus! Stalking the American Life - the multiple award-winning documentary film about the “Asparagus Capital of the Nation” in Western Michigan - was released on DVD May 1, 2008. The DVD includes the 53-minute broadcast cut of the film as well as a number of Special Features including “Extra Scenes,” “Asparagus Tips,” and a “Recipe File.” The DVD is available at www.asparagusthemovie.com and at special screening events beginning May 1, 2008. It retails for \$24.99, with a portion of sales going directly to support Michigan family farms and asparagus growers.

The film tells the story of Oceana County, Michigan, whose spear-struck residents built their identity and economic survival on asparagus, but now find themselves taking on the U.S. War on Drugs, Free Trade, and the Fast Food Nation, all to save their beloved “roots”. *Asparagus! Stalking the American Life* journeys to the heart of Asparagus Country to discover why one little vegetable matters so much.

Asparagus! Stalking the American Life had its World Premiere in 2006 at the acclaimed Full Frame Documentary Film Festival - the largest documentary film festival in the U.S. - and toured the festival circuit throughout 2006-2007. It garnered Best Documentary awards at the Rural Route Film Festival in New York and East Lansing Film Festival, as well as Audience Awards at the Newburyport Documentary Film Festival and Waterfront Film Festival. The film also won the W. K. Kellogg Foundation Good Food Film Award at the Media That Matters Film Festival and a special finishing funds grant from P.O.V./American Documentary through New York’s Museum of Television and Radio.

The DVD is being launched in tandem with a “GrassRoots Film

Screening Series” in communities and schools across the country. Beginning with a special screening sponsored by The Food Literacy Project at Harvard University on April 29, this series includes local Michigan screenings at the Empire Asparagus Festival in Northern Michigan and at this year’s National Asparagus Festival in Oceana County at the Hart Area Public Library’s Film Series on Friday, June 13 at 7 pm (Hart Middle School Auditorium).

The documentary is a 4-year independent film project of Michigan native, director Kirsten Kelly, and her film partner Anne de Mare from New York, who worked extensively with Michigan arts, humanities and agricultural organizations from the film’s inception to its completion. Kirsten was raised on an asparagus farm in Oceana County and was a proud member of the pre-teen asparagus dance troupe “The Oceana Stalkers.”

More information on the film, including a synopsis, is available online at www.asparagusthemovie.com. For more information, contact Kirsten Kelly of Spargel Productions, LLC at (646) 526-4407 or spargel@verizon.net.

What’s Happening?

- **June 12, 2008**
Cover Cropping in Vegetable Systems – An Essential Tool for Sustainable and Organic Farmers, Kellogg Biological Station from 9 am – 5 pm. Call Vicki Morrone at 517-282-3557
- **June 18, 2008**
Senior Project FRESH Webinar from 9 – 10 am.
- **June 25, 2008**
MIFMA Marketing Committee conference call from 9 – 10 am.
- **June 26, 2008**
Farmers Market Rapid Market Assessment Workshop at the Flint Farmers Market from 9am – 4pm.
- **July 10, 2008**
MIFMA Board Meeting from 12 – 4 pm.
- **July 24, 2008**
Buy Local Farmers Market, sponsored by MDA, East Capitol Lawn, Lansing, MI.
- **August 12-13, 2008**
Choices: The Conference That Celebrates Food and Health! 517-663-5147
- **September 18, 2008**
4th Annual “Buy Fresh Buy Local – Select Michigan Day”
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!

Yolanda Blissett

An Interview with Farmer/Vendor and MIFMA Board Treasurer, Yolanda Blissett



MIFMA Board of Directors: Yolanda Blissett pictured third from left

Q: Please tell us about Homestead Acres. Where are you located? What do you grow/produce/raise? What is something special about your farm?

A: My farm is located in the Ionia area. This is as centennial farm. I am the 4th generation here and my daughter the 5th. I have a fiber farm with alpaca and llama fleece. I also raise Dexter cattle for the meat.

Q: Which farmers markets do you sell at and why? How were you drawn to selling at farmers markets?

A: I will be participating in the Lowell Farmers Market and am looking into the DeWitt market.

Farmers markets are a logical place to sell my fleece and related products. It is also a great place for exposure to the public of our farming heritage.

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

A: Involvement in MIFMA brings the exchange of new ideas among members, notification of learning seminars and connections with people of similar interests. MIFMA is trying to make farmers markets and their vendors a logical and needed alternative to grocery store offerings of non-local produce.

Q: What do you love about farmers markets?

A: I truly love the interesting mix of vendors and customers at farmers markets. I enjoy talking to the other vendors about their farms and production methods and to customers about their reactions to the offerings and other people at the market.

Q: What's your greatest challenge associated with farmers markets?

A: The greatest challenges associated with farmers markets include customer awareness of and access to the markets. As markets, we need to be "on the list" of things to do. Sometimes that is hard to achieve in the busy lives of our customers.

Welcome New Members!

MIFMA would like to welcome its new members for the month of May 2008.

Farmers Market members

- Dexter Farmers Market

Farmer/Vendor members

- Dominic Palazzolo in Macomb
- Wayne and Jane Gee, 100 Acre Wood Honey Farm in Hudsonville

Friends of MIFMA

- Steve Anderson of Advanced Insurance Markets in Holt
- Pierre La Voie of the Small Business Association of Michigan in Lansing

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

Rapid Market Assessment Workshop: June 26th in Flint

MIFMA, the Michigan State University C.S. Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems, and MSU Department of CARRS are pleased to announce a June 26th Rapid Market Assessment (RMA) Workshop. This is an opportunity for market managers, farmers/vendors, MSU Extension, market volunteers, and market enthusiasts to learn how a RMA can offer an intense one-time market-day snapshot of a farmers market. Participants will learn about conducting customer counts and dot surveys, completing market observations, and analyzing RMA data. In the afternoon, attendees will participate in a hands-on assessment learning how to apply the skills they learned in the morning.

Check out the flyer, learn more about 2008 Rapid Market Assessments, or get registration information for this workshop at www.farmersmarkets.msu.edu.