

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**East Lansing, Mich. - Michigan Food & Farming Systems hires project manager and seeks farmers' markets and stakeholders input**

On June 15, Michigan Food and Farming Systems - MIFFS hired Dru Montri as project manager for the Michigan Farmers' Market Association (MIFMA) and began developing the statewide association to enhance farmers' markets and subsequently advance local food production and consumption. With support from the international non-profit Project for Public Spaces (PPS), MIFMA will develop innovative programs to increase the impact of farmers' markets in their communities and expand opportunities for farmers.

Montri grew up in Frankenmuth, MI. She has both work and volunteer experience in community food system project development, coordination, and promotion. While collaborating with the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture as the Centre County "Buy Fresh Buy Local" coordinator, she worked to increase consumer awareness of local foods through the promotion of area producers and farmers' markets. She simultaneously completed a year's appointment to The Food Project's Building Local Agricultural Systems Today (BLAST) Leadership Cadre – a national training program for emerging food system leaders that incorporates national and local endeavors to strengthen food systems. She is a 2003 graduate of Michigan State University with a B.S. degree in horticulture. She also attended Penn State University where her graduate research focused on production and marketing techniques to aid small acreage growers. Dru is excited to have returned to Michigan, a place she has always considered home, and looks forward to building partnerships with farmers' markets and stakeholders across the state.

In the upcoming weeks, MIFFS will work with project partners and individuals representing farmers' market managers and stakeholders to begin the MIFMA visioning process. A planning session will be held in August to identify key questions and background information to implement the vision, fine-tune plans for a visioning session(s) to be held this fall, and recognize responsibilities among participants. All interested individuals will be invited to attend the visioning session(s) in September. The session's objective will be to engage those invested in farmers' markets across the state in the process of developing MIFMA and to develop consensus among stakeholders about the vision and role that farmers' markets play in the food system.

For additional information about MIFMA and Michigan farmers' markets, please visit the MIFMA website at [www.farmersmarkets.msu.edu](http://www.farmersmarkets.msu.edu).

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*Dru Montri*

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Founded in 1998, Michigan Food and Farming Systems is a statewide membership organization (510c3) whose purpose is to promote diverse efforts that foster and sustain food and farming systems that improve economic, ecological, and social well-being. MIFFS has been effective at establishing successful partnerships among producers, markets and institutions that have created more profitable, environmentally friendly food systems in Michigan. To learn more, visit [www.miffs.org](http://www.miffs.org), call (517) 432-0712, or send an e-mail to [miffs@msu.edu](mailto:miffs@msu.edu).

Project partners are the Michigan State University CS Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems, the Saginaw Farmers' Market, and the MSU Department of Community, Agriculture, Recreation and Resource Studies.

Project for Public Spaces (PPS) is a non-profit organization founded in 1975 dedicated to creating and sustaining places that build community. PPS provides technical assistance, education, and research through programs in [parks, plazas and central squares](#); [buildings and civic architecture](#); [transportation](#); and [public markets](#). PPS has worked with communities in 48 states and in 20 countries around the world. Please visit [www.pps.org](http://www.pps.org) for more information.

The [W.K. Kellogg Foundation](#) was established in 1930 “to help people help themselves through the practical application of knowledge and resources to improve their quality of life and that of future generations.” Its programming activities center around the common vision of a world in which each person has a sense of worth; accepts responsibility for self, family, community, and societal well-being; and has the capacity to be productive, and to help create nurturing families, responsive institutions, and healthy communities.