

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The USDA declares August 6-12, 2006, National Farmers Market Week

East Lansing, Mich. – In an effort to further awareness of farmers markets and the contributions farmers make to daily life in America, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has declared August 6-12, 2006, National Farmers Market Week.

“National Farmers Market Week is an indication of how important farmers’ markets are becoming as we continue to increase our understanding of and interest in local food systems,” said Dan Keane, the Saginaw Farmers’ Market Coordinator and vendor at the Hemlock Farmers’ Market. “This is a wonderful opportunity for people to come out to their farmers’ market and thank their favorite farmers for their hard work and wonderful products.”

The beginning of National Farmers Market Week falls just days after the first Michigan Farmers’ Market Association’s (MIFMA) meeting in which participants worked to plan a statewide visioning session that will be held in mid-September. MIFMA is a statewide association that will promote farmers’ markets and assist market managers, vendors and supporters in creating a thriving marketplace for local food and farm products. Its organizational structure is currently being developed by Michigan Food and Farming Systems (MIFFS).

Farmers’ markets provide farmers with increased marketing opportunities, offer shoppers fresh and healthy products, serve as a social catalyst for communities, support anti-hunger initiatives, encourage environmental stewardship and strengthen local economies.

“The USDA’s Proclamation points out the many benefits farmers’ markets provide that deserve to be celebrated. We hope this next week brings recognition to the 150 farmers’ markets we have here in Michigan,” said Dru Montri, MIFMA Program Manager. For additional information about Michigan farmers’ markets, visit the MIFMA website at www.farmersmarkets.msu.edu.

Elaine Brown, Executive Director of MIFFS, is pleased with the development of MIFMA and its goal to work within the context of MIFFS vision.

“Farmers’ markets put a face on local agriculture,” said Brown. “Successful partnerships between farmers and communities are nurtured at farmers’ markets resulting in more profitable, environmentally friendly food systems.”

On behalf of Michigan farmers’ markets, the Michigan Farmers’ Market Association encourages farmers, market managers and consumers to support National Farmers Market Week by promoting local farmers’ markets and spreading the exciting news and events that take place.

The full text of the National Farmers Market Week Proclamation can be found at http://www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/FM_Proclamation_2006.pdf.

The Michigan Farmers' Market Association is supported by a grant from Project for Public Spaces, Inc., with funding provided by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

MIFMA project leaders include Michigan Food and Farming Systems – MIFFS; the Michigan State University CS Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems, the MSU Department of Community, Agriculture, Recreation and Resource Studies; and the Saginaw Farmers' Market.

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, call (517) 432-0712, or send an e-mail to miffs@msu.edu.

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 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.