



MICHIGAN FARMERS MARKET ASSOCIATION

National Farmers Market Summit sets national policy priorities for farmers markets

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From November 7 to 9, 2007, the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (USDA/AMS) hosted the historic, first National Farmers Market Summit in Baltimore, Maryland to identify and set national policy priorities for farmers markets around the US.

As a member of the Board of the new non-profit Farmers Market Coalition, I had the privilege as the only Michigan representative to join 75 other farmers markets enthusiasts and advocates from 31 states in high energy discussions designed to identify farmers market needs and policy priorities to support and strengthen farmers markets across the country.

All of the issues we face in Michigan and specifically those identified in response to my request for agenda items were shared by all the groups represented at the Summit.

Some of these key priority areas include: developing a national promotional campaign and a national voice for farmers markets; getting more farmers, and a more diverse group of farmers in markets; investing in capacity-building opportunities and networks for market managers, sponsors, farmer-vendors; helping communities make farmers markets community places; clarifying and revising health, safety, and zoning regulations at federal, state

and local levels; improving low-income consumer access to markets and making markets integral to health and nutrition initiatives; securing more financial and technical support for markets; and putting farmers markets in the center of efforts to promote the availability and accessibility of food grown locally/regionally.

There was a very clear call for a national group such as the Farmers Market Coalition to begin carrying the banner for farmers markets.

The Summit far exceeded USDA's expectations and now it will be critical to assure the translation of the Summit's ideas into supportive priorities, policies and programs.

What does this Summit mean for MIFMA? A first step might involve beginning an exchange with other state associations about policy issues as well as administrative and funding concerns. As a new member of the Farmers Market Coalition, MIFMA might encourage farmers markets around the state and others (individuals, groups, etc.)

to join in creating a national policy voice for farmers markets. The Summit proceedings are expected by early 2008, and MIFMA could consider hosting a statewide discussion to take action on the highest priority items for Michigan.

Please contact me (517-353-1905) if you would like more information about the Summit or a copy of my more complete report on the Summit.

Learn more about the national Farmers Market Coalition. Visit www.farmersmarketcoalition.org.



**FARMERS
MARKET
COALITION**

What's Happening?

- **December 4-6, 2007:** Great Lakes Fruit, Vegetable and Farm Market Expo in Grand Rapids. See www.glexpo.com
- **December 6, 2007:** MIFMA Founding Meeting from 11 am - 12 pm at the Great Lakes Expo, Grand Rapids.
- **December 7-8, 2007 and January 11-12, 2008:** Farm it Forward Workshop for farmers looking to transition the family farm to the next generation. Dennis Stein: 989-672-3570.
- **December 14, 2007:** Hoophouse Workshop, MSUE, Genesee County Office, Flint, MI from 9-3. www.miffs.org/events.asp
- **January 19, 2008:** 5th Annual Michigan Family Farms Conference, Lakeview High School, Battle Creek, MI. www.miffs.org/mffc.asp
- **January 26, 2008** Northern Michigan Small Farm Conference, Grayling High School, Grayling, MI.
- **March 4, 2008** Farmers Market Manager Training during ANR Week.

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!

Frankenmuth Farmers Market

An Interview with Dietrich Bronner, Frankenmuth Farmers Market President



Q: The Frankenmuth Farmers Market is a growers-only market. Why is this important to you?

A. It is important to keep pushing boundaries and exploring new territory--this is the only way to achieve true progress. We created our Market to be much more than just a farmers market. Our events, environment, and activities enrich, entertain, and educate both consumers and producers while strengthening our culture, food system, economy, and agriculture, and creating "community"--or togetherness. In shooting for the stars, we have annually increased the purity of our Market, now funneling as much support as we can to our producers. It's not a merchant market with reselling, but a true farmers market. It's critical that visitors speak with and purchase products directly from the people who produce them, and our customers confirm they appreciate this.

Q. This month you held the 3rd Annual Christkindlmarkt. Can you tell us a little bit about the concept? How does this market relate to your weekly, seasonal market?

A. We wanted to extend our Market's season while preserving traditions and benefiting artisans and producers. Styled after the olde world European Christmas markets which unite the community in spite of cold weather, the Christkindlmarkt is an absolute natural fit for our Market and for Frankenmuth's tourism and Christmas atmosphere. The Christmas Market features about half of our regular vendors, who switch over production to outstanding, unique items rarely found anywhere else.

Q. As a fairly new market, just 3 years old, how do you garner community support, get the word out, and attract new customers?

A. In almost every way we can think of. The Frankenmuth News generously allows us to publish a weekly news column about market matters. Strong, meaningful press releases about special events pique the media's interest. Our weekly events introduce many people to the Market as contributors. Other ways include our website, other website listings, postcard mailings, t-shirts, participation in local events, hosting benefits for local organizations, and our popular 28-page "Market Magazine" we write and distribute in 5,000 copies of The Frankenmuth News. Nonetheless, we will forever be trying to attract every single community member to their Market.

Q. What's the next best thing to do in Frankenmuth besides visiting the farmers market?

A. Frankenmuth is a great food town all around, so exercise that morning and come hungry!. Check out Zehnder's Bakery, the Cheese Haus, and St. Julian Winery (all with free samples of great Michigan products), and then pick up some great traditional German products at Bernthal's Packing Co. or Willi's Sausages. Squeeze in some exercise by touring through Bronner's CHRISTmas Wonderland. Then, check out the beautiful river walk or a great festival in Heritage Park before a great dinner and the best local craft brew at Black Forest Brew Haus.

Welcome New Members!

MIFMA would like to welcome its new charter members for the month of November 2007.

Farmers Market members

- Downtown Bay City Farmers Market
- Birch Run Farmers Market
- Birmingham Farmers Market
- Hemlock Farmers Market
- Ionia Farmers' Market
- Pentwater Farmers' Market
- Southfield Farmers Market
- Vantage Point Farmers Market
- Southfield Farms Market
- Northwest Detroit Farmers' Market
- Rockford Farm Market

Farmers and Vendors

- Bob Koenders, The Backyard Bouquet Farm, Inc.
- Shelia Crooks, Ocha Tea Etc.
- Douglas and Susan DeLeo
- Michael Fusilier, Fusilier Farms
- John Decker, Hickory Corners Greenhouse and Nursery
- Dale Janke, Janke Farm and Vineyard
- Karen Earley, Karen's Garden Produce
- Kathy Lyvere
- Lynn Ochberg, Ochberg Sugar Bush
- Walter Reinhardt, Reinhardt Blooms
- Sharon Ostrowski, Sharkar Farm
- Harold Kemler, Son-in-Law Products
- Ron Willis, Sweet Heat Salsa
- Stephen Slag, The Four Acres

Friends of MIFMA

Individuals:

- Scott Corrin
- Darice Duckworth
- Jane Knapp

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