



MICHIGAN FARMERS' MARKET ASSOCIATION

MIFMA Visioning Session

On September 11, 2006, Michigan Food and Farming Systems (MIFFS) held a day-long visioning session at the St. Francis Retreat Center in DeWitt, MI, to launch the new statewide Michigan Farmers' Market Association (MIFMA). Sixty people attended representing farmers, farmers' markets, neighborhood centers, municipalities, downtown development authorities, foundations, nonprofit organizations and state entities.

Participants identified key strategies and activities as well as elements for MIFMA's mission and vision. "There is a great need for this," said Pat Roush, Market Master at the Kalamazoo Farmers' Market. Development of a statewide association to address needs of Michigan farmers' markets is very timely. More than 150 farmers' markets are active across the state and the number is growing.

The gathering allowed stakeholders to interact with one another and to identify the scope of issues faced at farmers' markets. Melissa Palma, Market Master for the Ypsilanti Downtown Farmers' Market, said, "Bringing us together is a great start!" Monday was the beginning of many conversations between farmers' market stakeholders.

Since the visioning session, the Project Leadership Team has met to draft the elements of the mission and vision into statements and five task forces have been



Farmers' market stakeholders discuss MIFMA's mission and vision.

organized addressing organization identity and governance, professional development, community outreach, information and education resources, and member benefits.

How can you get involved? Consider joining our listserv to stay up-to-date on all MI Farmers' Market happenings. To join the listserv, send an email to listserv@list.msu.edu with this command in the body of the email: SUBSCRIBE farmmktmi your name. Or, if you're interested in joining a task force, contact Dru Montri at dnmontri@msu.edu or 517-432-3381.

What's Happening?

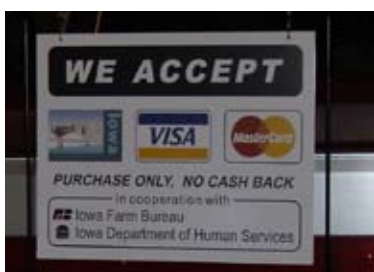
- **November 1-13, 2006:** MSU Product Center's "Road to Independence" workshops on developing business ideas in agriculture and natural resources. www.productcenter.msu.edu
- **November 10-12, 2006:** "Raising Vegetables and Civic Values: CSA in the 21st Century" Conference for Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), Kettunen Center in Tustin, MI. www.csafarms.org
- **November 13, 2006:** "Designing Healthy Livable Communities: A Study in Best Practices," Kellogg Center, East Lansing, MI.
- **November 16, 2006:** Farmers' Market Vendor Workshop in Frankenmuth, MI.
- **November 17, 2006:** Farmers' Market Vendor Workshop in Kalamazoo, MI.
- **November 20, 2006:** Farmers' Market Vendor Workshop in Royal Oak, MI.

- **November 21, 2006:** Farmers' Market Vendor Workshop in Traverse City, MI. Visit www.productcenter.msu.edu to learn more about these farmers' market workshops.

- **December 5-7, 2006:** Great Lake Fruit, Vegetable and Farm Market Expo, Amway Grand Plaza Hotel, Grand Rapids, MI. www.glexpo.com

For more information regarding any of these listings, call the MIFFS office at 517-432-0712.

Technology is Changing Farmers' Markets



Iowa farmers accept EBT, Visa and Mastercard

On September 28-30, 2006, the Iowa Department of Human Services hosted a national farmers' market conference, "Sowing the Seeds of Change: How Technology

is Changing Farmers' Markets," in Des Moines. The purpose of the conference was to illustrate how wireless technology, especially for EBT cards, can be used at farmers' markets.

EBT, or electronic benefit transfer, is the card system that replaced the food stamp coupon program. With the move to the card system (EBT customers use a plastic card similar to a bank debit card), many farmers' markets were unable to accept those funds. Currently, only 12 of the 150 Michigan farmers' markets are able to accept EBT, but the

interest is growing.

Four individuals involved with MIFMA attended the conference. Each participant received a comprehensive packet of information regarding EBT use at farmers' markets across the nation. If you are interested in receiving a copy of this information or learning more about accepting EBT at your market, contact Dru Montri (dnmontri@msu.edu or 517-432-3381).

Over the winter months, MIFMA hopes to explore ways to increase the number of markets accepting EBT.

The Michigan Farmers' Market Association champions farmers' markets to create a thriving marketplace for local food and farm products.

Visit www.farmersmarkets.msu.edu to learn more about MIFMA.

Michigan Food & Farming Systems received a grant from the Project for Public Spaces to start MIFMA.

Learn more at www.miffs.org.