



**Michigan Food &
Farming Systems-MIFFS**
Bringing Farmers & Communities Together

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 15, 2006

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Michigan Farmers' Market Stakeholders Envision Michigan Farmers' Market Association

East Lansing, Mich. – On Monday, 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 a 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. MIFMA will contribute to the expansion and improvement of these farmers' markets.

The September 11th gathering allowed stakeholders to interact with one another and to define the needs of the stakeholders that MIFMA will serve by identifying 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.

"Overall, I believe the session was very effective in helping the association answer key questions about who MIFMA should serve, the needs MIFMA should address, and the necessity for a statewide association," said Dru Montri, project manager for MIFMA. "We left the session with clear elements of our mission and vision as well as an action register for accomplishing those tasks." At the close of the session, most participants indicated their intent to participate in MIFMA.

Elaine Brown, Executive Director of MIFFS, sent the group on their way with a closing statement charging each one to reach one. This is a chance for those involved with farmers' markets to come together and have their collaborative voice heard.

See the attached spreadsheet for a list of participants. For additional information about MIFMA and Michigan farmers' markets, visit the MIFMA website at www.farmersmarkets.msu.edu.

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MIFMA project leaders include Michigan Food and Farming Systems, the Michigan State University CS Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems, the Michigan State University 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.