

North Dakota Farmers Markets and Growers Association, Inc.
105 Simrall Blvd, Molberg Center #22
Bottineau, ND 58318

Temporary Return Service Requested



NORTH DAKOTA FARMERS MARKET & GROWERS ASSOCIATION, INC

GROWING NORTH DAKOTA FROM WITHIN

Spring
2010

www.ndfarmersmarkets.com

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*NDFMGA, INC.
105 SIMRALL
BLVD, MOLBERG
CENTER #22
BOTTINEAU, ND
58318-1159*

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A Hunger Free North Dakota

Imagine a community with Hunger Free North Dakota Garden signs in every yard.

The North Dakota Department of Agriculture, NDSU Extension Service, Dakota College at Bottineau Entrepreneurial Center for Horticulture, Northern Plains Sustainable Agriculture Society, The North Dakota Farmers Market and Growers Association, Pride of Dakota and Healthy North Dakota have teamed up to Create A Hunger Free North Dakota by doing what they do best – grow.



On March 3, the department of agriculture held a press conference to officially kick off the Hunger Free North Dakota Garden Project in conjunction with a Creating a Hunger Free North Dakota Coalition meeting.

In an effort to address the need for fresh food in food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters across the state, these organizations have joined together to ask gardeners to plant some extra rows this season and donate the produce to a local food pantry or church organization.

Hunger has been a priority of the NDDA's local foods initiative and this project will hopefully fulfill the following goals:

- To grow and distribute a minimum of 500,000 pounds of fresh food to North Dakota's 244 food pantries.
- To build a distribution system to continue supplying food pantry clients with fresh and healthy produce.
- To recognize the growers and quantities of fruits and vegetables grown in the state.
- Improve diets through cooking, canning, and education.

The produce will be weighed and distributed in each community and a running total will be kept by the department of agriculture with a final goal of 500,000 pounds or more of produce by the end of the growing season.

Communities or individuals are invited to be a part of the project. Information is available from the NDDA. There are brochures, pledge cards, information on

how to distribute produce, sample press releases, community garden information, logos and more available for the asking.

If you are interested in a sign for your garden, you must register by May 25.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
 North Dakota Department of Agriculture
 600 East Blvd Ave, #602
 Bismarck, ND 58505-0020
 Phone: 701-328-4763
 Email: suebalcom@nd.gov

Local Foods Conference a Success

The *Dakota Grown*: A Local Foods Conference held in Jamestown this February was a great success. It was a great time to share ideas, network and make plans for the future. The North Dakota Department of Agriculture announced their new Hunger Free ND Garden Project at the event. For more information please read the related article.

A big thank you to all those involved with making this conference happen. Stephanie Sinner, Sue Balcom, and Joanna from the North Dakota Department of Agriculture were instrumental in making the event a success. Thanks to the Gladstone Inn and their staff for all of their work, the NDFMGA Board of Directors, and the Entrepreneurial Center for Horticulture.

The newly elected NDFMGA Board of Directors includes:

- President (SE): Karen Gehrig
- Vice President (SW): Hero Barth
- Treasurer: Ilene Baker
- NW Rep.: Dan Folske
- NW Rep.: Marvin Baker
- NE Rep.: Bob Nowatzki
- NE Rep.: Randy Mehlhoff
- SW Rep.: Roberta Thorson
- SE Rep.: Pam Anderson
- At Large Rep: Tracie Thompson



Finally, a huge thank you to Patti Patrie for her service as President and her continued support and involvement with Local Foods and the NDFMGA. She will continue to be a valued advisor and advocate for farmers' markets and local foods.



The Bowdon Farmers' Market: A Community Event

The Bowdon Farmers' Market may only be in its second year, but it is already a popular community gathering. This vibrant new market happens twice a week, Wednesday evenings from 4:30 – 7:30 and Sunday afternoons 2-5. The Wednesday market is particularly lively with door prizes, music, demonstrations, and even a "Taste of Bowdon" supper. This supper is served by local groups and individuals.

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Questions?
 Comments?
 Have a great story idea or know of an event or business we should feature in our newsletter?

Contact us!
 We are always looking for ways to improve our newsletter and services to you.

Just contact:

Stacy Baldus

stacy.baldus@dakotacollege.edu

228-5649

NDFMGA
 105 Simrall Blvd.
 Bottineau, ND 58318

Market Tip: Worried about your vendors receiving a fair price? Instead of trying to regulate how much is charged for products, simply eliminate 'dumping'. Dumping is an unloading of surplus or lower quality product at deep discounts. Instead of having vendors deeply discount product just to get rid of it, develop a relationship with food banks, food pantries, soup kitchens and senior centers. Donate excess product. Not only are you doing a good thing for the community, but also ensuring prices at your market remain healthy.

driver's license, passport, military ID, or official state-issued photo ID for owners and partners. A current business license might include a permit to operate provided by the local public health unit.

It could take up to 45 days to process an application. FNS reviews the applications for accuracy, conducts a background check for past SNAP history, and evaluates the market and/or producer for eligibility, including a potential site visit. Timing is key at the beginning of the market year, as the USDA cannot process applications more than 30 days prior to the starting day of the market. Once the application has been approved, however, it is continual, and a vendor need not apply each year. So if your market opens in mid-July, you should start the application process no later than June 1.

EBT-Only

An electrical supply and phone landline are necessary to operate an EBT-only POS machine. When power is not available, vendors may use an "off-line" voucher process. When there is not access to electricity and/or phone service at the time of purchase, a vendor can fill out a paper voucher and dial a toll-free number using a cell phone to a USDA representative for approval of the voucher sale. The vendor then has 15 days to send in the voucher for reimbursement. If the whole market is authorized, a market representative may use one POS machine and complete the process for all the vendors who complete vouchers.

EBT/Credit/Debit

There are machines that would be able to process credit/debit cards in addition to SNAP EBT cards. The cost to purchase a wireless POS machine is approximately \$1200 with a monthly service charge of approximately \$45.00/month plus additional transaction fees. Other states in our area including Kansas, Montana and South Dakota all operate wireless EBT systems. In Iowa, farmers' incomes increased 13% in the first year they started accepting SNAP benefits with these machines. If you have ever lost a sale from a purchaser with no cash or checks, then you may be interested in this option.

Producers and markets should consider whether it may be possible to jointly purchase one POS machine for the market and divide the cost.

Looking for leaders

The North Dakota Departments of Agriculture and Human Services both wish to get this program going in our state. There is a possibility of funding the purchase price of an EBT machine for one or more "pilot" markets or vendors who would like to participate in this program and share how it worked with other vendors. Technical assistance for vendors and markets starting now throughout the market season is available and is supported by the ND Department of Agriculture. If you would like to lead the state, increase your potential market, and help people get access to your healthy food, contact Karen Ehrens, phone 701-223-2616 or e-mail karen@ehrensconsulting.com Please feel free to call me for more information or if you have questions on any aspect of this program!



The North Dakota Farmers Market and Growers Association, Inc.

Bringing Vegetables & Fruits to More North Dakotans – It's a SNAP

By Karen K. Ehrens, LRD, Consultant to the North Dakota Department of Agriculture

What is it?

SNAP is one of three federal food programs that can operate at farmers markets and/or with individual producers. SNAP provides assistance for purchasing food to families in households with lower incomes. People apply for SNAP benefits at county social service offices. If a household's income falls under a specified amount, the household qualifies for a monthly allotment. Benefits are deposited monthly into an account which is accessed through electronic benefits transfer (EBT) cards, which act like debit cards. Paper food stamps are no longer used.

SNAP benefits can be used to buy foods including fruits and vegetables and also to purchase seeds and plants which produce food for the household to eat. On average, over 53,000 North Dakotans participate in SNAP each month; nearly half of these people are children. A person participating in SNAP in North Dakota receives an average of \$125 per month to spend on food.

In the U.S. over 750 farmers markets are authorized to accept SNAP benefits, and \$2.7 million was directed to small farmers through the SNAP program in 2008. In North Dakota in 2009, nearly \$80 million in SNAP benefits was spent on food purchased in the state. How about getting some of that \$80 million directed to farmers markets?!

How does it work?

People with SNAP EBT cards come to a farmers market that has been authorized (approved) by the USDA. They pick out their produce and present the card for payment. The farmer (or market representative) runs the card through a point of sale (POS) machine, just like when you use a credit/debit card for shopping at a store. The amount of purchase is deducted from the purchaser's account, the farmer gets a message that the sale was approved, and the purchaser takes the delicious fresh food home and eats it! The farmer keeps track of the sale, and the USDA credits the farmer's (or market's) bank account for the sale. An alternative way to this process is to write up the sale on a paper voucher, call a toll-free number at the time of purchase, and send the voucher in to request payment within 15 days of the sale.

How can I take part?

ND markets and/or producers can participate in the program now. Here are the steps.

Before you start, you will need an individual bank account if you are going to apply as an individual vendor or a joint market account if you will apply as a market. You must also become recognized as an authorized vendor by the USDA.

Each vendor who wants to participate can apply as an individual OR a market organization can apply on behalf of all participating vendors in an "umbrella" arrangement. Apply online through the USDA web portal at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailers/application-process.htm> or request a paper application by calling USDA toll-free at 1-877-823-4369.

Information that will need to be submitted includes copy of current business license, Social Security number, confirmation of a bank account, photo Identification such as copy of

What if there was something you could do as a fruit/vegetable producer to increase your sales and help more people have access to the delicious produce you grow and sell? There is something that you can do as an individual vendor or as a market – participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

CSA Tip:

Keeping a detailed Crop Journal during your season can help you plan and budget for next year. Keep track of time and money spent on each crop – this may help you figure out what really is and isn't profitable for you to grow. For more information on crop journals and making your business work, check out "The Organic Farmer's Business Handbook" by Richard Wiswall.

The Wednesday market takes place in the school gymnasium in Bowdon. The market has a lot of things attendees can participate in. There is a "Swap Shop" board where people can post free ads to buy, sell, or give away items. The vendors at the market contribute to the nightly door prizes. There is always something new going on, like last fall's "guess the weight of the pumpkin". The two closest guesses for the weight of the huge pumpkin resting in a wheelbarrow received a prize.

The Sunday market this year will be taking place in the farmyard of Larry and Fay Fandrich, 1572 Highway 52, Fessenden. The market is hoping the new location closer to Fessenden will draw more visitors from that region. Each vendor at both markets receive 5 \$1.00 off coupons to hand out to customers and that can be used anywhere in the market.

Last year, the Bowdon Farmers' Market had 12 vendors and attendance ranged from 30-50 people. Vendors sell a huge range of produce and products, from raspberries, herbs, and the regular garden produce to breads, jams, pickles, kuchen, soap, crafts, jewelry, granola, honey, pies, and much more! The market has also trucked in things like blueberries, cherries, peaches, nectarines, pears, and organic medjool dates to give customers even more variety and choices.

The market utilizes a variety of methods to advertise. They put an ad in local papers and radio stations. One vendor handles online advertisement, with information on Facebook and other sites. Vendors help to make the sign placed around town and along the roads to advertise the market.

The Bowdon Market is run by volunteers who are enthusiastic and helpful. Responsibilities are spread out among members and Linda Widicker has been appointed to be the market manager. This coming year they hope to invite more members and continue to grow the market. The market season will start July 14th and run through September 29th.

The ultimate goal? As Linda put it: "We hope that the Bowdon Farmers' Market will have a positive impact on the community and will help not only area consumers get great local foods and hand crafted products, but will the vendors and producers have a unique and fun venue to market the 'fruits of their labors'."

For more information about the Bowdon Farmers' Market contact Linda Widicker at 701-962-3736 or lindawidicker@daktel.com.

From the Newly Elected President, Karen Gehrig

Wow! What an exciting conference we just had in Jamestown, ND on February 19 & 20, 2010. Thank you everyone for your enthusiasm and interest in the local foods movement and our farmers' markets around North Dakota. I am looking forward to serving as the new NDFMGA's president and continuing as my role as a representative for the SE Region. This is going to be an exciting year. We have some high tunnels that will hopefully be installed around the state of North Dakota and maybe even some winter greenhouses. We are also on a mission to create a hunger free North Dakota!

I would like to tell you a little bit about how I became involved in the North Dakota Farmers Market and Grower's Association.

In 2003, my husband's job relocated from Redmond, WA to Fargo, ND. My husband, Chris, moved to Fargo in October of 2003, leaving me behind to sell our 1908 farmhouse in Fall City, WA, 20 miles east of Seattle, and pregnant with our 4th child who was due to enter this world in November. Our house sold in 5 days, the baby came early and Chris barely made it home for our little Mary's birth! Two weeks later, we all flew together to the cold white winter land of Fargo, ND.

In 2005 Chris and I were contemplating what I would do once all of our four wonderful children were in school full time. Chris is very creative and has a lot of great ideas for inventions. We thought about following that trail for a while but money was an issue for patents and trademark costs. Then we thought about what I really enjoyed doing. What could I do that would still allow me to volunteer for the children's school and at church? What could help contribute to the household finances? I absolutely love projects, cooking, baking and gardening. We were up all hours of the night sometimes for months! Then Chris came home one day and told me he may have a solution.

We came from Oregon and Washington where there are many U-pick berry farms and event places out in the country. It is a big business on the East and West Coasts. He said he had searched the Web for some u-pick berry farms locally. He found Patrie's Raspberries on the Prairie. We called her that night and asked several questions. She was so gracious to answer them all even though we were perfect strangers. After that conversation we thought this sounded like it was right up our alley.

Then at 3:00am one morning, I sat up in bed and exclaimed, "I know, what if we sell all of our properties and some of our other possessions, find the perfect piece of property with rolling hills for character, not too far for people to visit, find a 2 story Red Barn in really good condition, move it to our farm, renovate it, and rent it out for weddings and other events?" So.....we did!

In 2006 we purchased 40 acres in the sand hills of Kindred, ND. In 2007, we found a 2-story Red Barn in good condition located in Sheldon, ND and moved it to our new farm property. In the spring of 2008 we purchased and planted 4,500 certified virus free raspberry plants from Nourse Farms in Maine: 2,500 Autumn Britten, 1,000 Jaclyn and 1,000 Boyne. In the spring of 2009 we planted Honey Crisp and Snowsweet apple trees and finished building our 2-story white farmhouse. By the end of the summer had a well dug for irrigation purposes.

In May of 2009, we applied for and were awarded a grant from APUC for marketing purposes. We are very grateful for that award. We have created a logo and are working on the signs for the barn and farm yard, a website, and some marketing materials.

This spring we will be adding two more raspberry varieties to our farm: Caroline and Encore. We will be installing a drip irrigation system and a deer fence to insure that we get our first big crop of raspberries this summer!

Our future plans include installing a high tunnel. If you haven't heard about them, give me a call! We are looking to raise funds to start the renovation on the barn and to build a small "Berry Shack" country store to sell jams, jellies, syrups and fresh produce directly from our farm. The plans for the barn events are extensive...stay tuned!

I would like to say thank you to Patti Patrie. She is the one who encouraged me to get involved in the North Dakota Farmers Market and Growers Association (NDFMGA) and the annual Market Place put on by the USDA and Kent Conrad's office. Patti has been there as a mentor through this whole process since we had that first telephone conversation. This is my 2nd term on the Board of Director's for the NDFMGA and I enjoy it very much.

This has been and still is a very exciting journey and adventure! We have met some great and very helpful people a long the way and are meeting more everyday. Thank you North Dakota! Talk to the people you know who love to garden and eat fresh produce. Encourage them to start a garden of their own and join a local farmers market. It's all good! Hunger Free ND....here we come!!!

Vendor Tip:

Handing out recipes at your booth is a good way to attract customers. Choose a different one each week. Pick tasty but easy recipes that feature the produce you sell.

Ruso Ranch

Myron and Georgean Lick own Ruso Ranch and have been selling at a farmers' market for nearly 12 years. They currently attend the North Prairie Farmers' Market in Minot. The Licks sell vegetables through a CSA as well as selling eggs, bread, cookies, grass fed beef, chicken, and pork.

The quality of their goods and the nutrition they provide is of the utmost concern for Georgean and Myron. Their meat products are free of antibiotics and hormones and their produce is organic. Myron is also interested in producing nutrient dense foods. He spends a lot of time researching and working towards this goal. Their soil is tested by a lab that specializes in nutrient dense production.

"I like meeting the people we sell to and explaining our way of growing products," Georgean says. "Our clientele are very informed people and know why they want organic, hormone free, antibiotic free, and pesticide free products."

Their best sellers include their chicken, beef, and eggs. They butcher their own chickens and invite customers to come to their farm to pick up their orders, take them home and package it for themselves. This personal relationship with their customers is an important part of the business for Ruso Ranch.



Market pictures from our website! Want your market featured online or in the newsletter? Send you pictures and a breif description to the NDFMGA!



2010 Market Exploration Grant Program

To help advance farmers markets in North Dakota, the North Dakota Department of Agriculture & North Dakota Farmers Market and Growers Association are offering a Market Exploration Grant Program.

Applications must be received by May 10, 2010. **The grant is in the amount of \$500 per market.** Only a market may apply, vendors do not qualify. A copy of market by-laws and a list of officers will be required. Applicants must be members of the NDGMGA. Applications will be reviewed and approved on a first-come-first-serve basis to qualifying applicants. Markets receiving grants will be notified by June 1, 2010 and grant payments will come at the end of the market season once all information necessary to complete the agreement has been received and approved by the NDFMGA. Markets awarded grant money are required to enter into an agreement with the NDFMGA and submit all data necessary for completion of this agreement. If the terms of the agreement are not met, funds will not be issued to the market. Eligible activities for this grant include, but are not limited to, information that is relevant to improving and growing farmers markets and NDFMGA activities. More information and applications will be arriving in the mail soon.

For more information or if you do not receive an application please contact:
Stacy Baldus, Dakota College at Bottineau – NDFMGA,
105 Simrall Blvd., Bottineau, ND 58318-1159 tel: 701-228-5649
stacy.baldus@dakotacollege.edu