Celebrate National Farmers Market Week August 2-8

Posted by TBN[Staff]  On 07/31/2020

HUGHESVILLE, Md. - National Farmers Week is an annual celebration that highlights the essential role farmers markets play in the nation’s food system. The 21st annual National Farmers Market Week runs August 2nd to 8th, 2020, and is a unique opportunity to showcase the positive impact of markets on their communities.

This year amidst a global pandemic and national unrest, farmers markets have played a vital role as food access points offering shoppers wholesome foods that are sold in safe, open-air settings. Early on in the Covid-19 pandemic, Maryland Governor Larry Hogan was one of the first governors in the nation to declare farmers markets an ‘essential business’. In turn, Maryland farmers market managers quickly modified their sales platforms and daily operations to conform with local and state guidelines to serve their communities safely.

While a few Maryland farmers markets are not able to operate this year, most farmers markets continue to be important food access points for Marylanders in both urban and rural communities. Although firm sales data for the 2020 market season is not yet available, many direct-market farmers are reporting significantly increased demand for their products, suggesting that Maryland foodways are strong and are playing a vital role in neighborhoods around the state.

Maryland Market Money (MMM), the newly acquired food access program being run collaboratively by the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC), and the Maryland Agricultural & Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation (MARBIDCO), aims to further fortify Maryland’s local food system by removing economic barriers for food-insecure shoppers. MMM provides a dollar-for-dollar match for purchases made using federal nutrition benefits—SNAP/EBT/P-EBT, eWIC, and Senior and WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) benefits—at farmers markets. The program helps shoppers, farmers, and markets equally. It helps shoppers, by lowering economic barriers to healthy foods; farmers, by improving their financial viability; and markets, by increasing their customer base. SMADC hopes to have the program rolled out at 28 markets in ten counties by the end of August.

"The first week of August, when sweet corn, tender green beans, and juicy peaches are in season and abundant, is a wonderful time to shop at Maryland Farmers Markets," commented Shelby Watson-Hampton, SMADC Director. "Arm yourself with our August farmers market shopping list and your face mask, head to your favorite farmers market, and fill your basket with Maryland’s Best!"

SMADC’s Buy Local Challenge website - buylocalchallenge.com - offers fun and inspirational resources that make it easy to celebrate Farmers Market Week. Check out SMADC’s recently launched Buy Local Challenge Recipe Book showcasing 15 recipes using ingredients that can be purchased at Maryland farmers markets, and watch a virtual step-by-step cooking class to learn how to prepare one of the featured recipes - Summer Succotash, a quick and simple summer favorite. Find extensive guides to markets around the state, "In a Cook’s Kitchen” cookery classes, recipes and ways to enjoy Maryland’s farms and food at buylocalchallenge.com, SMADC.com and Facebook.

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