



NEWS RELEASE

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MILWAUKEE COUNTY SITE OF WINTER FARMERS' MARKET

MILWAUKEE, WI OCTOBER 19TH 2009: When you visualize a farmers' market it's usually on a warm summer day in a bucolic setting of sunshine, bright colors, and tables laden with fresh produce, flowers, and bakery. The assumption is that in the winter that all goes away. Yet there's actually a wonderful variety of fresh produce, dairy, bakery and meats available during the winter months. Beginning Saturday November 7 you will be able to purchase farm fresh products in our area from the Milwaukee County Winter Farmers' Market (MCWFM).

Held at the Tommy Thompson Youth Center at State Fair Park (Ag Village, Gate 5 – 640 South 84th Street, Milwaukee), this new indoor market will operate from 8 am to noon (snow or shine) through April 24th, 2010. Fresh fruit, vegetables, dairy, bakery, poultry and meats will be available throughout the winter market season.

The Wisconsin Apple Growers Association (WAGA) sponsors the winter market. Anna Maenner WAGA Executive Director, explains, "Running farmers' markets isn't normal operating procedure for the Wisconsin Apple Growers Association. Helping our growers find markets for their products is. That's how WAGA came to be the catalyst for starting the Milwaukee County Winter Farmers' Market. Growers needed places to sell produce after the summer market season had ended and there just wasn't a suitable place in Milwaukee County."

Maenner shares the requirement for market vendors: "The market is open to any farmer producing products locally. Wisconsin grown and Wisconsin ingredients, all types of Wisconsin products are welcomed – fresh, processed, and baked." Farmers interested in participating in the MCWFM will find more information and the vendor agreement at www.waga.org/MCWFM.htm. Residents of Milwaukee and surrounding counties can learn more about the market by visiting www.mcwfm.org.

The MCWFM recently received a special grant from the Agricultural Marketing Service of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). "Farmers' markets have an important role in local and regional food systems by helping consumers have access to healthy, nutritious foods," explains USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack. "These grants will help continue the recent expansion of farmers' markets across the country to increase access to locally grown food for consumers, and increase incomes for farmers."

www.MCWFM.org



The specific focus of the Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP) grant is to offset the cost of implementing Quest cards as a payment option at the market. Martha Davis Kipcak of Slow Food Wisconsin Southeast further explains, "The Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) system that allows FoodShares (food stamp) recipients to purchase at the market is an important piece of our winter market. We want good, local food to be available to everyone in a way that works well for the consumer and for the producer." The MCWFM will be the only market in our area to accept the Quest Card in the winter months.

According to the Wisconsin Food Security Consortium's goals for ending hunger in Wisconsin, the MCWFM will help families in areas of the city that may not have ready access to healthy locally grown produce/products in the winter months. Selection of State Fair Park was partially based on its proximity to Milwaukee County bus line #67. Within the State of Wisconsin, 35% of all eligible FoodShare recipients live in Milwaukee County. Participation in the EBT program is on the rise.

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