



Goals of the WVFMA: to share resources; to coordinate issues related to farmers markets throughout the state, and to promote activities that help establish, operate, and expand farmers markets throughout West Virginia.

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West Virginia Farmers Market Association Is Born

With demand for local farm products growing faster than supply, this group of farmers has **formed the WV Farmers Market Association (WVFMA)** to address the problems and opportunities faced by the estimated 40 farmers markets as well as those of on-farm markets. These markets allow families to share their farm fresh products with the public in a setting close to home, reducing wear and tear on the environment, on the produce and on the farmer. Furthermore, a recent WVU study revealed that **these venues contributed \$3.2 million to the state's economy!**

The WVFMA held our first membership meeting this February at the WV Small Farm Conference (WVSF) in Morgantown where directors were selected, a grant was conceptualized, and groundwork was laid for the year ahead. This work includes addressing market issues such as risk in the form of **personal and product liability**. The WVFMA also hopes **to improve communications within the state farm marketers network** and its support agencies and organizations. By working closely with the WV Department of Agriculture, the Davis College of Agriculture, Forestry and Consumer Sciences, and the WVU Extension Service, the group has developed **a contact list of nearly 500 farmers** and the personnel who support them. (Please let us know if we have gotten anything wrong with your address, but better yet, send us your e-mail so we can communicate that way.) This will allow for a targeted mobilization of producers to seize the great opportunities that lie before the West Virginia local food movement.

Goals of the WVFMA are to share resources; to coordinate issues related to farmers markets throughout the state, and to promote activities that help establish, operate, and expand farmers markets throughout West Virginia.

Join Us!

We'd love for you to join the organization and if you have web access, **a membership form can be downloaded from the website www.wvfarmers.org** If you need a paper copy, please contact WVFMA Secretary Kellie Boles, Jefferson County Development Authority, 150 Burr Blvd., East, Kearneysville, WV 25430; 304/728-3051 ext. 239. **Market Membership** is open to farmers market groups and/or grower groups representing two or more growers and/or on-farm markets representing one or more family. Each Market Entity is counted as one member and is entitled to one vote. Two categories of **Non-voting Members (Associates and Friends)** are open to individuals and agriculture groups who do not qualify for market membership. Complete details about membership categories are at the website and on the membership form.

Strike-Force E-Response on Local Foods by Tom McConnell

To serve our state's market garden community, helping find markets for what is produced could be considered the WVFMA's highest calling. However, many opportunities must be responded to quickly and I don't mean necessarily to deliver the product, but to see if it actually can be met. **"Rapid market opportunity response"** would take the organization's service to a higher level. For instance, if a group wanted our market garden community to supply their event with local food, we often can't take the time to send a card of inquiry and wait on your response. We must have a quicker turnaround time as to whether you and others have the product and are able to participate. But if you are using e-mail, we could send you this same market opportunity request and you could respond in seconds. This gives us the ability to be of more service to you. Furthermore, you could give your "non-e-mail" neighbor a call to get in on the bandwagon too.

Electronic communication will allow the WVFMA to be of service very inexpensively versus the *slow, expensive* way of paper mail. This newsletter you are holding in your hand, for example, cost \$1.50 in materials not including labor that has been donated. What we must do, as individuals, is respond electronically. Please write to stsauter@frontiernet.net and when Susan Sauter receives this e-mail from you, **we will take that as your request to communicate with you electronically** instead of through the U.S. mail for future WVFMA communication. To further entice you, I will send a special thank you gift. I hope either the logic or the gift will cause you to e-mail us because this community of farmers will accomplish nothing unless we communicate quickly!

Check Out Your WVFMA Website: www.wvfarmers.org launched!!

"About Us," "Members," "Harvest Calendar," "Recipes," "Useful Links," and **"Resources"** are some of the categories you'll find at your website. Furthermore, did you know that if you don't have your own web page for us to link to, we've created one? For example, the Wheeling Farmers Market now has their own page. So does **Community Garden Market of Phillippi, West Farm in Lewisburg, Shady Dale Farms, LLC, of Gandeeville, and Gritt's Farm in Buffalo** among others. So be sure to look over the "Members" pages and let us know additions/corrections to your very own page. We will be adding much more to the site. Spread the word—especially to farmers markets and on-farm markets we haven't connected with yet.

Wanted! To Purchase Local Produce

Becky Jones-Pierce, General Manager of **Mountain People's Market Co-op in Morgantown**, came to the WV Small Farm Conference in February and invited area and state farmers to contact the co-op produce manager if interested and able in supplying the legendary food co-op with fruit, mushrooms, vegetables or cheese. If you are one of these farmers, please contact their produce buyer Rebecca Fedorko, mpcproduce@mountaincoop.com or at 291-6131 with details about what you can provide, when, the quantities, and your asking price.

Highlights: First WVFMA Membership Meeting

At least 100 people attended the long-anticipated meeting (**minutes at our website**) with Cheryl Brown serving as facilitator. Fifteen of 18 voting market members were present and just as many

“Friends of” members. A number of each joined on the spot at the convening of the meeting. A brief history of the organization since the 2007 Specialty Crops Grant was provided. The history included a description of the August core group meeting in Fairmont when 11 people ‘slogged through’ Susan’s draft of the by-laws (developed after researching similar organizations) which were later approved with changes. The whole group was then asked to review these by-laws and purpose statement, as well as the types of memberships with clarification made about what is meant by “On-farm Market.” It was stressed that WVFMA is not a direct marketing association with questions ranging from: “If someone comes to my farm to buy lamb, am I an on-farm market?” The group clarified that an ‘on-farm market’ is one with predictable hours and a physical structure, and explained how the decision was made to include on-farm markets as well as farmers markets.

The seven officers were then elected (see list below. Note: Steve Martin of Church View Farm, Romney, was among those elected who has since stepped down with Kellie Boles, Jefferson County Farm Market, replacing him). Next was the riveting subject of the proposed by-laws ☺. After one change with an amendment that passed to increase the 20% quorum requirement to a 45% quorum, the by-laws were adopted. **(by-laws at the website)**

Work of the upcoming year was then reviewed.

- Jessica Greenblatt-Seeley, an invited speaker from FoodRoutes, gave an overview of the **Buy Fresh Buy Local (BFBL) promotional campaign** that thirty-some states participate in. A discussion ensued about how to cover the initial chapter cost with Jessica noting that most chapters do rely on grants to start up their BFBL programs. She also emphasized that the promotional logo is not necessarily the best thing about BFBL, but the instant access to other local foods campaigns around the country and not having to reinvent the wheel.
- A lot of excitement was generated by Susan’s proposal to hold an annual winter farmers market (**Winter Blues Farmers Market**) to coincide with next year’s conference (see article below).
- Tom McConnell reported on **liability Insurance, announcing a committee** had formed to look into providing this to farmers markets through the Association. Eric Jack, Tom McConnell, Steve Martin, and Susan Sauter volunteered to join the committee, which will meet by conference call.
- The **web site mock-up** was shown, but not yet ‘live’ at that time.
- A vision for the **2008 WVDA Specialty Crops Grant** was discussed, beginning with an idea for a grant proposal that would pay for 20 banners that 20 farmers markets could apply to receive plus a camera ready-copy ad for the markets to tailor for newspaper. Another option proposed was to apply money to join the Buy Fresh Buy Local campaign. Steve Martin volunteered to write the first draft of this grant working collaboratively on-line for submission by the March 4th deadline.

Next year’s meeting should be just as exciting and we hope to see you there.

Highlights: 2008 West Virginia Small Farm Conference

It was an exciting time—three days of workshops and networking with many new attendees each day. Despite bad weather, some people came just for the last day that focused more on farmers markets (see above article). Some came earlier for the great horticulture workshops. And many energy “wonks” enjoyed the thought-provoking talks on that subject. The schedule and agenda are still posted at www.wvu.edu/~agexten/sustanag/events/SF2008_Home.html if you want to take a look at what to expect for next year. Ideas are overflowing already—farmer health; risk reducing management; energy alternatives specific to the farm; season extension and succession planting and way more.

Want more info on ag entrepreneurship loans?

If you attended Marten Jenkins workshop (from Natural Capital Investment Fund on the first afternoon of the conference (Evergreen Room downstairs), and wanted more information from him, please contact him at 870-2205 or mjenkins@conservationfund.org Marten was impressed by the attendance and great questions at this workshop and offered to provide more to the signers of a list passed around which was misplaced. If you happened to be one of those signers, Marten would be happy to hear from you.

Electronic bank transfer info offered

Jack Dunbar offered to share his experiences and research on this payment method which he tried to develop for his farmers market. Jack provided his contact information for anyone interested in learning more about EBT. His home phone is 772-5175; e-mail: jadun@earthlink.net; cell phone: 304-646-7399.

Food safety for farmers markets: WVBH Food Program Manager Linda Whaley's speech

One workshop that particularly interested marketers was WV Bureau for Public Health Linda Whaley's about food safety at farmers markets. The conference schedule had to be changed too late to notify conference-goers and some people who very much wanted to hear her talk, missed it. She has graciously provided the content of her speech which incorporates answers to questions from the audience on specific food categories. Linda has firsthand experience raising tomatoes for market for several years on a neighbor's small produce farm. She has held her current position with the Bureau for two years, and has worked as a Sanitarian for almost 25 years.

Food codes

Currently food establishments are inspected under the 1999 FDA Model Food Code that WV adopted in 2000. We are trying to get the 2005 Code adopted. (*This did pass and implementation is July 1, 2008.*) We have a Food Safety and Security Task Force made up of 25 individuals including state and local regulators in addition to members from the Dept. of Agriculture, Dept. of Education, Dept. of Corrections, plus consumers, chain and independent restaurant operators, and members of West Virginia travel and hospitality industry. The WV Food Establishment Rule contains information on any changes that were made to the Model Food Code. That rule can be found on the Secretary of State's webpage under Code of State Rules. WV also uses the Code of Federal Rule 121, section 110 for processing facilities.

F45 becomes F7

The Bureau has a two-page policy guide regarding the products that may be sold at fairs, festivals, and farmers markets that was known as the F45. It is now the F7. This policy guide may be found at <http://www.wvdhhr.org/phs/manual/Food/index.asp>

Definition of "temporary"

Because it is used in the F7, we get questions on a regular basis about the term "temporary." The Attorney General's office has defined "temporary" to be 14 consecutive days (of sales) or less. The temporary basis does not apply to markets that are sponsored by the WVDA (flea markets are not generally sponsored by them) or markets that accept Senior Nutrition coupons for produce.

Specific food examples

Vinegars are allowed to be sold at farmers markets. However garlic in oil is not allowed due to the oil creating a sealant over the garlic where botulism may grow in this anaerobic condition. **Pumpkin rolls** would not be allowed since the filling is usually made from a cream cheese that would have to be kept at 41 degrees. **Granola** would be allowed. No **pickled products or salsa** unless it is produced under the guidance of and inspected by the State Health Dept. An approved kitchen is required and labels would have to be

approved by the WVDA. Theresa Halloran or Cindy Martel of the WVDA would be able to assist with this process. I do have a list of approved processors in WV.

The WVDA has an **Egg Rule**. Copies of that rule may be obtained by contacting the Regulatory Affairs division of the WVDA. **Sprouted Seeds** will not be allowed for sale at farmers markets because they are considered to be a "Potentially Hazardous Food" that must be held at proper refrigeration temperatures. The FDA has exempted **unpasteurized apple juice and cider** as long as the producer is selling directly to the customer from his or her own stand. A label must be attached to the container that notifies the customer that there is a potential risk associated with drinking an unpasteurized product. Regarding **raw milk**, Mr. Phil Jones is the Milk Program Manager and he would have to address any questions regarding milk. WVDA is the regulatory agency on **fish**. Even when offered in shops, the sale of **coffee** technically falls into the definition of a Food Service Establishment. So, the Food Rule would exclude the sale or offer of coffee without a food service permit.

Giving samples

Samples of "Non-Potentially Hazardous Foods" may be given out. However, if fruits and vegetables are cut, then that produce stand is in effect becoming a Food Establishment and must meet guidelines described in the Food Code. Please check with your county Health Dept. on particular issues that they may have with sampling. (Audience member Cheryl DeBerry of **DeBerry Farms** stated that Maryland is stricter than WV on what can be sold at farmers markets.) Sliced tomatoes are now considered to be a potentially hazardous food by the FDA due to the number of recent foodborne illness outbreaks that have been associated with cut tomatoes. Therefore, sampling of cut tomatoes at a farmers market will not be allowed.

Local authority

Local sanitarians work for local health departments which are autonomous agencies. The state office does not have the authority to directly oversee their programs.

The **Food Safety Task Force** will be addressing the issues of farmers markets at our next meeting. My goal is that we can come to a general consensus on several questions and concerns that have been brought up at this conference. I may be reached at 304-558-6727 or at lindawhaley@wvdhhr.org Thank you very much.

Donations

Del Yoder of **Owl Creek Farm** brought the wonderful cookbook, **Simply in Season**, to sell at the conference and for each one sold, he offered to donate \$1 to our new organization, the WVFMA. Thank you to Del for this kind offer and for his subsequent check of \$20. In exchange, we have made him an official "Friend" for a year. In the same vein, Kirk and Sharon Ward of **Ward's Farm Market**, donated a cookbook they sell at their market to be one of the conference door prizes. Offered up for next year by Patty Hillyard of **Patty's Daylilies** is a special, less-hybridized daylily. **Thank you, Del, Kirk & Sharon, and Patty!**

Evaluation/comments

Tom McConnell would love to hear back from you about the conference, in particular, three things you learned, three things you would change, and comments about the conference length. He is also taking suggestions for topics for next year's workshops, and asking for speaker names with contact info for those persons as well. Send your comments to trmccconnell@mail.wvu.edu or call 293-6131 x4237.

Hold the dates for next year: WVSF/WVFMA February 24, 25, 26, 2009 Morgantown

Yes, we are gathering again in Morgantown this coming winter and have been laying the groundwork for workshops (anyone want to see Tom McConnell do yoga demonstrations during

“Yoga for Farmers”? Come to see if we are really kidding.), for the Winter Blues Farmers Market (kicked off by a regional wine and cheese tasting), for feeding ourselves at least one of the conference meals, and for exhibitors. Read on!

Plan now for February conference food

We are putting a lot of effort into assessing what local foods will be available and figuring out who will have what to serve the 125-200 WVSF conference attendees. You don't have to have enough apples, for example, to serve the whole group IF there are other apple growers with which we can pool together enough for a quantity needed. Nor are very large quantities required of every item, for example, a little garlic goes a long way. These **items will be purchased** by the hosting conference business as we want this event to serve as a role model for other events of the future meeting around the issue of supporting family farms in our state. Understand that **these foods can be fresh but also frozen, canned or dried**. You also could decide to grow an item just for the conference and plant it soon. Because of the ease of purchasing them from Farmers Markets over the summer, jams, jellies and similar items will not be included. Here are some ideas to get the ball rolling:

winter-stored apples/asian pears; goat, sheep or cow's milk cheeses; eggs; artisan bread products made with local eggs, honey, nuts, herbs, meat, veggies such as scones/biscotti/veggie ciabbati/pizza/pepperoni rolls; jerky; tofu products; legumes/shell beans/dry beans; WV smoked trout; salsa; butternut squash/pumpkin; tomatillos; garlic and onions; wintered over or stored brussel sprouts/cabbage; wintered over or stored root crops: turnips, carrots, onions, potatoes, beets, sweet potatoes, parsnips; cider; maple syrup/sorghum/molasses; artisan chocolate; high-tunnel or hydroponic lettuces; kale; chard; spinach; cornmeal; local lamb, pork, beef, chicken, goat; local shiitakes or other mushrooms....

Your unique food products/suggestions/additions are appreciated. Note: If we are hard-pressed for some items within West Virginia's boundaries, we are open to items from our neighboring states, if necessary. **We need to hear back from all who think they will have food to supply the conference no later than June 30. Please contact Laura Ketchum at laurak@suddenlink.net or 574-6027.** She will send you a consignee agreement and information sheet.

Winter Blues Farmers Market

Along with the above produce to supply the conference, start your planning for what you'll bring to sell as a vendor direct to the Morgantown public at what we hope will become an annual winter farmers market to coincide with the kick-off of next year's conference at the Ramada Inn. Morgantown has a huge farmers market "following" who can easily be contacted about this event. We will advertise the event as featuring farmers across the state who have brought their own seasonal products to sell, e.g., wintered over root crops, maple syrup, sorghum, meat, eggs, high-tunnel lettuces, greens and herbs; jams, baked goods, windowsill herb plants, farm-raised wool sweaters, fleeces and more. Kellie Boles volunteered to help coordinate this effort, and provided her contact information: 304-728-3051 x 239; kboles@jctc.org

WVFMA joins national Farmers Market Coalition (FMC)

Our state group is growing with the national one which has West Virginia roots with Stacy M. Miller currently the Executive Secretary. Stacy received her Masters in Agricultural Education from WVU and was also Market Manager for the Morgantown Farmers Market for 2 years. In the second FMC newsletter, *Peas 'n News*, an interview, **Communication is Key for New State Farmers Market Association** was conducted with Susan Sauter, founding interim board member and current treasurer of the WVFMA, about organizational startup challenges. You can read the interview in its entirety at www.farmersmarketcoalition.org. The FMC has released two newsletters and has **inaugurated the Farmers Market Coalition listserv** as a free service to members of the farmers market community. To subscribe, visit <http://lists.easilyamusedinc.com/mailman/listinfo/fmc> or, via email, send a message with the subject line or in the message body the word 'help' to

fmc-request@lists.farmersmarketcoalition.org We encourage you to use it as a tool to network, learn, and share with your colleagues 'in the field'. The FMC is also now piloting an on-line resource submission form where market managers and other members of farmers market community can submit a variety of resources for their information clearinghouse. Currently, they are looking for examples of innovative farmer recruitment and retention strategies, and examples of policies designed to ensure that products sold at markets are produced by the people who say they are producing them. If you can help spread the word about the Coalition among members of the farmers market community in your neck of the woods, contact Stacy at 304-685-2669 or stacy@farmersmarketcoalition.org to request copies of their new brochure.

Events

Send your events with a brief explanation and contact info!

- **June 7-8 Mountain State Dairy Goat Assn & Appalachian Goat Association**, ADGA Show, WV State Fairgrounds, Fairlea; contact D. Loudermilk at 647-3031, thornfieldfarm1980@hotmail.com or Elva Lamont at 354-9656, eilamo3@aol.com
- **June 28 La Paix Farm Lavendar Fair**, contact Myra Bonhage-Hale at 269-7681 or find details at www.lapaixherbfarm.com
- **July 10-12 Heartland Apicultural Society Annual Conference**, Marshall University, Huntington, over 125 presentations and a live working "bee yard." For info, call between 8-5 pm 888-932-3268 or go to www.wvbeekeepers.org
- **July 24 WVU Plant and Soil Science Organic Research Farm Field Day**, Morgantown; contact Jim Kotcon at jkotcon@wvu.edu or 293-8822. Take a look at their web information: <http://www.caf.wvu.edu:80/plsc/organic/> Their mission is to conduct scientifically sound research designed to provide best-practice recommendations for organic farmers and home gardeners, the Field Day being a part of education and grower outreach efforts.
- **August 3-9 National Farmers Market Week** The U.S. Secretary of Agriculture has permanently designated the first week of every August (Sunday through Saturday) as National Farmers Market Week. Velma Lakins, Agricultural Marketing Service, says that the designation "allows our constituents to start the planning process before we officially announce the Secretary's Proclamation each year."
- **August 5 Value-Added Fair** at Pierpont Community & Technical College at Fairmont State University, Fairmont; contact Brian Floyd at bfloyd@fairmontstate.edu or 367-4409
- **August 8-16 State Fair of West Virginia**, Fairlea, www.statefairwv.com

Send your articles, events, and feedback for future newsletters to Susan Sauter, WVFMA, Rt. 4 Box 43, Bruceton Mills, WV 26525 or stsauter@frontiernet.net

The WVFMA was formed with guidance from the WVU Extension Service and the Davis College of Agriculture, Forestry and Consumer Sciences and through a WV Department of Agriculture Specialty Crops Grant

- Jack Dunbar, President, jadun@earthlink.net, Breezy Heights Farm, Sinks Grove, 772-5175
- Bill Reebel, Vice President, pepperking@peoplepc.com, Mason County Farm Markets, 675-2067
- Susan Sauter, Treasurer, stsauter@frontiernet.net, Morgantown Farmers Market, 379-7800
- Kellie S. Boles, Secretary, kboles@jtc.org, Jefferson Farmers Market, 728-3051 ex 239
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