



North Dakota Farmers' Market & Growers Association

Growing North Dakota From Within

Spring 2005

Join the North Dakota Farmers' Market & Growers Association today! Contact 1-800-242-7535 for more information.

Promotional Ideas for Your Farmers' Market:

- Farmers' markets offer high quality produce at competitive prices.
- Homemade products and farm freshness are appealing to customers.
- People in the community trust their farmers.
- Farmers' markets are a social meeting place where neighbors can get to know each other.
- People like to support local farmers.

Message from the chairman

I would like to thank everyone who attended the spring conference held in Bismarck in February. We had a good conference with many different ideas that can be used to make your operation more effective.

The new board will be working on coordinating another conference next year. If you have any ideas or topics for the conference, please contact either Donna Thronson or me.

The 2005 planting season is upon us and it seems as though we are off to another year of uncertainty with recent cold temperatures. I wanted to have some things planted before the first of May, but it has been too cold and windy to get anything done. However, as producers we will get our gardens planted and growing before long and hope for a successful year.

We have sent information about grant programs to help promote North Dakota farmers' markets. I hope most markets will take advantage of these programs. The information is summarized on page two.

If you have questions, please contact me at 701-842-6308 or Donna Thronson at North Dakota Department of Agriculture at 701-328-4763.

Paul Deutsch
Chairman
North Dakota Farmers' Market & Growers Association

Board elected for NDFMGA

Twelve board members were elected to the North Dakota Farmers' Market and Growers Association (NDFMGA) on February 22 at the Farmers' Market Conference and Annual Meeting.

Re-elected are Chairman Paul Deutsch, Watford City, and Vice Chairman Joe Detmer, Pingree. Lisa Bakke, Walhalla, was elected as Secretary/Treasurer.

Elected to regional board positions were: Roberta Thorson, Arena, and Steve Reimer, Scranton, Southwest Region; Jodi Albert, Erie, and Joe Detmer, Pingree, Southeast Region; Marvin Baker, Carpio, and Paul Deutsch, Watford City, Northwest Region; and Bob Nowatski, Langdon, and Lisa Bakke, Walhalla, Northeast Region.

Tips on Signage:

- Product
Description: Let people know that your product is crunchy, tangy, tart or sweet. Use colorful language to describe your crop: "Slender and Tender Green Beans," "Crisp cabbage straight from the field," etc.
- Provide useful information: "Good for soups" or "2 lbs. of these apples make an 8-inch pie," etc.
- Guarantee product: "100% Happiness Guaranteed! Tell us next week what you think.
- Highlight what you are offering that day. Give USDA nutritional information with vitamin and mineral content
- Give a brief story of the product, i.e., where it originated, how it came to this country, what traditional dishes use it.

* Source: The New Farmers' Market by Vance Corum, Marcie Rosenzweig & Eric Gibson

Pattie Patrie, Bowdon, will serve as director at large. The board is also represented by three advisory positions, which are held by Rudy Radke, NDSU Extension Service, Fargo; Orrin Hughes, Bismarck; and Donna Thronson, North Dakota Department of Agriculture, Bismarck.

The board will lead the direction of the NDFMGA and see that all members can benefit. Congratulations to all!

Farmers' market grants now available

The North Dakota Farmers' Market and Growers Association is offering a total of \$10,500 in grant funds for the 2005 season. Three farmers' market grant programs, designed to fit the promotional needs for existing and new farmers' markets, are now available for your farmers' market enhancements.

Grants for existing farmers' markets include an *Event Marketing Grant* for \$100 and a *Signage Grant* for \$200. The grants can be used for promoting your market and investing in permanent signage for it.

The grant for new farmers' markets is a New Market Development Grant for \$300. The grant funds can be applied toward expenses incurred with opening a new market such as signage, advertising, purchasing permits, postage and other promotional expenses.

Applications are being accepted on a first come, first serve basis through May 31. If you would like a grant application, contact Donna Thronson at the ND Department of Agriculture at 1-800-242-7535.

We encourage you to use the grants to benefit and enhance your farmers' market for this upcoming season!

Spring conference was a hit



Bob Nowatski checks out the resource table.

The second annual Farmers' Market Conference, held February 22 & 23 in Bismarck, proved to be beneficial for over ninety participants. The conference was designed to provide education and networking opportunities for farmers' markets, fruit and vegetable producers and producers of value-added processed products.

Sixteen speakers presented on topics that focused on farmers' market management, vegetable production and specialty crop management. A leading authority on hydroponics, Jim Brown, horticulturist for CropKing Greenhouse Systems of Ohio, presented the latest technology for greenhouse agriculture.

Other topics focused on fruit and vegetable marketing and production that included "Trends in

Vegetable Marketing: What's Hot and What's Not" by NDSU extension horticulturalist Ron Smith and Lisa Duppong, NDSU extension Crops Research Specialist; "Berry Production and Marketing" by Patty Patrie of Patrie's Raspberries on the Prairie, Bowdon, and "Apple Production and Marketing" by Dan Cashman of Cashman's Nursery, Bismarck and "Marketing to Chefs & Grocery Stores" by Rick Mittleider, Bob Nowatski, Paul Deutsch and Dwight Duke and "Sweet Corn Insect Management" by Dr. Phil Glogoza, NDSU Entomologist.



Conference participants pack the sessions.

The demand for selling cut flowers at farmers' markets spurred interest in "Flower Power: Producing and Marketing Flowers" by Dave Graper, South Dakota State University extension horticulturalist. Graper displayed colorful slides of flower varieties that can be successfully grown and marketed in North Dakota climates.

Because of North Dakota's growth in farmers' markets this past year, a session was dedicated to market management. "Managing Your Farmers' Market" was presented by Lisa Bakke, Walhalla Farmers' Market and Caroline Boutine, Festival Market Downtown (Fargo). The session featured economical ideas, for both large and small communities, on how to successfully market and manage your farmers' market.

"Pumpkin Production & Marketing" by David Pearce, Papa's Pumpkin Patch, proved to be entertaining and educational. Pearce shared a broad range of marketing techniques that lead to the success of Papa's Pumpkin Patch. "Don't be afraid to experiment with new ideas," said Pearce. "To be a successful marketer, you need to differentiate yourself from the competition."

Agriculture Commissioner Roger Johnson says that farmers' markets are an increasingly important part of North Dakota's rural economy. "North Dakota has experienced a tremendous growth in the number and size of farmers' markets during the past year," said Commissioner Johnson. "This conference was designed to provide information for established growers and dealers, as well as those who are interested in starting up or taking part in farmers' markets."

If you wish to locate a farmers' market or grower in your area, go to the North Dakota Department of Agriculture website, <http://agdepartment.com/Programs/Farmers%20Markets.html>

For more information on farmers' markets or the North Dakota Farmers' Markets and Growers Association, contact Donna Thronson, North Dakota Department of Agriculture at 701-328-4763.

Join the NDFMGA ~ Become a member today!

Are you interested in advancing your direct marketing skills and increasing your farmers' market networking opportunities? If so, this is the association you want to join! Membership is available at three levels: Direct Membership is available to producers for an annual fee of \$10; Farmers' Market Membership is available to all farmers' market organizations for \$25 and Golden Growers Membership is available to all organizations actively engaged in educational research and the promotion of the grower industry for \$100.

Membership provides you access to educational seminars at reduced fees and networking opportunities. If you haven't already signed up for the 2005 season, join today by contacting Paul Deutsch at (701) 842-6043 or Donna Thronson at North Dakota Department of Ag 1-800-242-7535.

NDFMGA receives grant

Farmers' markets in North Dakota are benefiting from a \$25,000 grant that was awarded to the North Dakota Farmers' Market and Growers Association. The grant, received from the Agriculture Products Utilization Commission, is being used to advance the farmers' market industry in North Dakota. A portion of the funds is being used to fund this year's farmers' market grant programs.

The funds are being used to develop a "locally grown" logo, website and National Farmers' Market campaign. These activities are designed to create awareness of locally grown produce and farmers' markets.

In addition to marketing, funds will be invested in developing programs for youth. Today, more than ever, it is important to educate children about agriculture and reconnect them to the land.

The NDFMGA looks forward to a challenging and rewarding year dedicated to growing the farmers' market industry.

Resource library now available

If you missed the farmers' market conference, here is your chance to experience distance learning! Each conference session was recorded and is available for check-out through the Resource Library. Members are invited to borrow the recordings, free of charge, for a two-week period through the library program. To request resource materials, contact Donna Thronson at 701-328-4763 or email at dthronson@state.nd.us.

The available sessions include:

| VHS TAPES: CONFERENCE COVERAGE |
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| Trends in Vegetable Marketing |
| Hydroponics and Greenhouse Production |
| Managing Your Farmers' Market |
| Pumpkin Production & Marketing |
| Preparing Your Community for an Agricultural Experience |
| Five Plus Five Program |
| Marketing to Chefs & Grocery Stores |
| Apple Production & Marketing |
| Berry Production & Marketing |
| Sweet Corn Insect Management |
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| Audio/CD recordings |
| Second and Tertiary Benefits of Farmers' Markets |
| Rapid Market Assessments for Real Market Improvements |
| Display and Merchandising to Increase Your Sales |
| Pricing for Profit |
| |
| MATERIALS MUST BE RETURNED WITHIN TWO WEEKS |
| THREE RESOURCES IS THE MAXIMUM FOR CHECKOUT AT ONE TIME |

Farmers' market vendor feature



Lisa and David Bakke along with their two children, Brianna, age 4 and Brook, age 2.

This issue features Lisa Bakke of Walhalla: Lisa has been very instrumental in developing the Rendezvous Farmers' Market Association and the Walhalla Farmers' Market.

Lisa and her husband, David, have been growing produce on their farm for nine years. When Motor Coach Industries down-sized their North Dakota operation, the Bakkes took their production to higher level and that is when Lisa became active in farmers' markets. "After losing our manufacturing jobs that provided a good income with benefits, we created jobs for ourselves through farmers' markets," says Lisa.

The Rendezvous Farmers' Market Association fits the needs of producers like the Bakkes. Through this network, producers are able to participate in four markets: Langdon, Walhalla, Cavalier and Pembina.

"Having the four markets in our area dramatically increased our sales," said Bakke. "I used to make \$200 a week selling from our farm location and through direct sales. But 2004 brought a new player to the game when we organized the Rendezvous Region Farmers' Market Association. At the end of the first week of attending the markets, I was shocked that I had sold over \$500 of produce."

The markets have their traditional selling function, but they also serve as an outlet for entertainment and community fellowship. The markets feature festivals such as the *First Annual Giant Pumpkin Contest* where prizes are awarded for the largest pumpkin and other large vegetables. The events also feature pie-eating contests and pumpkin carving events that draw customers into the market.

"You need to keep the market exciting and make it come alive if you want the customers to return," says Bakke.

In addition to serving on the NDFMGA board, Lisa is an advocate for farmers' markets and growers and is willing to share information about how to get a

If you have information you would like to share in upcoming issues of *Growing North Dakota From Within*, please submit information to or contact:

Donna Thronson
North Dakota
Department of
Agriculture

Toll Free:
1-800-242-7535

Fax:
701-328-4567

email:
dthronson@state.nd.us

**North Dakota
Farmers' Market &
Growers
Association**

P.O. Box 1054
Watford City, ND 58854
Phone: 701-842-6308

strong market rolling. "We have another growing season upon us and we are already building on ideas to improve the markets," says Bakke. If you have questions or would like to share market ideas, please contact Lisa at 701-549-2667.



It's Pumpkin Weigh-in Time at the Festival!

**JOIN THE
NORTH DAKOTA
FARMERS'
MARKET &
GROWERS
ASSOCIATION
TODAY!**



Which pumpkin will be the winner?

Community events

For the summer months, this publication will be printed more frequently. Please submit your calendar of events to have it published in this column. If you have pictures or would like to share ideas, that information can be shared right here! Contact Donna Thronson at 701-328-4763 or email at dthronson@state.nd.us .