



# the wisconsin foodshed

## Helping bring the farm to the city

*Study highlights needs of Milwaukee farmers markets*

Few things are more basic in human society than the provisioning of food. Farmers have hauled harvests to villages and cities to be sold at stands and established marketplaces for centuries. While most food today arrives pre-processed and pre-packaged on trucks and trains to be sold in supermarkets, the traditional farmers market is experiencing a renaissance.

Throughout the nation, new markets are being formed and established markets are looking for innovative ways to market, educate, and expand. The Hunger Task Force of Milwaukee (HTFM) has recently completed a study to identify the strengths and challenges of local farmers markets, to determine how the organization can help the markets attract new vendors and additional customers, and to help them better serve low-income persons.

HTFM is a non-profit organization promoting food security in Milwaukee through direct service, advocacy, and community development.

*The state of Milwaukee's farmers markets*, prepared by Sharon Lezberg of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Department of Rural Sociology, summarizes a series of interviews conducted at all markets of the Milwaukee Farmers Market Association in 1999. HTFM created the Association in 1998 to increase food security while providing direct marketing opportunities for regional farmers. The Association has performed collective marketing, created a centralized vendor database, and helped find market sponsors.

The report profiles 13 markets, describing their history, management and operations. Most are relatively new with the number of markets serving Milwaukee residents increasing from only three in the early 1990s to 13 in 1999.

Lezberg learned that Milwaukee's markets serve a

wide geographic area and a diverse customer base. Despite this diversity, she also observed that there could be more differentiation of Milwaukee's markets, including unique attempts to attract customers to particular markets.

The report notes that despite their short histories, most of Milwaukee's markets have proven to be quite popular with their neighborhoods. Vendors have also benefitted from new opportunities to market directly to Wisconsin's largest urban population. Most of Milwaukee's newest markets are planning for expansion and continued improvement.

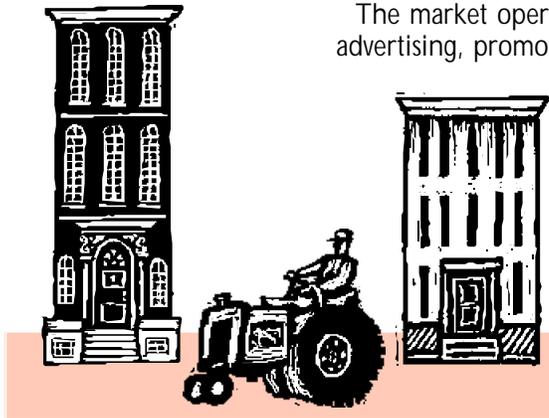
The market operators' primary concerns included advertising, promotion, and continuing to attract vendors to meet customer demand.

Market operators suggested several ways to address these concerns, including involving local businesses, churches, and community organizations in markets, including music or other activities, providing cooking demonstrations and nutrition education at markets,

and timing market hours to coincide with other neighborhood events.

Additional suggestions include expanding the variety of products and vendors to include more organic produce. The Hunger Task Force plans to work with the markets to increase the number of vendors who participate in the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Farmers Market Nutrition

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Why not share your community's recipe for success for creating a local food system? This newsletter depends on you for content! Send articles or story ideas to John Hendrickson at CIAS, 1450 Linden Drive, Madison, WI 53706 or e-mail them to [jhendric@facstaff.wisc.edu](mailto:jhendric@facstaff.wisc.edu) Thank you!

# Whats for Lunch?

news about the food system

Web site weaves marketing, research, and education to support local food systems

The Dane County Farmers Market is one of the biggest and best markets in the country. It is also one of the few in the country to have its own Web site (<http://www.madfarmmkt.org/>).

Of course, the site does the expected: it gives the location and hours of the market, describes the market, features seasonal produce, and has some great photos.

What may come as a surprise is that the site also goes into the how and why of buying within the local foodshed and supporting sustainable agriculture. The site is the result of a unique collaboration between the Market and the Department of Life Sciences Communication (formerly Agricultural Journalism) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The section titled Seasonal Eating explains why it's important to eat seasonally and links the user to seasonal recipes, recipes for unusual vegetables, tips for seasonal eating, and information about food processing and preservation. In addition, the global, industrialized food system is contrasted with shopping at the farmers market through brief facts throughout the site. All information is referenced.

The site's Making the Connection Quiz is designed to be a fun and informative way to learn how supporting local vendors and the Farmers Market can make a difference to personal health, to the local economy, and to the environment. For example, a series of questions reveals the number of middlemen that stand between the farmer and the consumer and how the farmers' share of the consumer food dollar has dropped from 37 cents in 1980 to only 21 cents in 1994. Consumers can help reverse this trend by buying directly from the farmers at farmers markets.

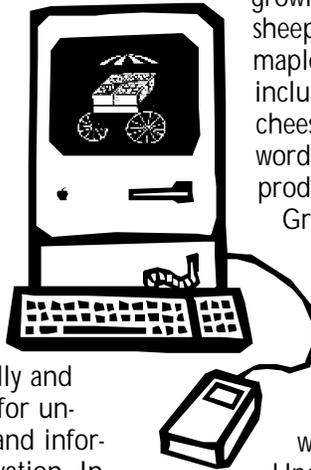
The Vendor Directory encourages the important connection between those who grow or make food and those who buy and eat food—not just by describing the products found at the market, but by highlighting producers' stories. For example, the entry for Butler Farms, an organic sheep milk dairy, says they "gave up jobs in New York to pursue the simple life and a good environment in which to

raise their son. They moved to Wisconsin in 1993 and, in February 1995, completed the set-up of the first Grade A sheep dairy in the United States. That spring they began selling sheep milk products. The Madison farmers market was their first stop. During their years at the market, they have developed a growing and very loyal clientele. They sell sheep milk products such as yogurt (plain, maple & berry) as well as sheep milk cheese including feta, ricotta and a chevre-like cheese called *brebis*. *Brebis* is the French word for ewe. They are certified organic. All production is done right on the farm."

Graduate students Victoria Jagar and Don Stanley developed the site under the direction of Professor Suzanne Pingree. A journalism student goes to the market every Saturday to interview farmers for the Featured Vendors spot on the site and to report on what's new at the market that week.

Updates are posted every Wednesday during the market season. Special events are added. Sellers are added. It's a dynamic site, accurately reflecting the healthy farmers market it supports.

—contributed by Suzanne Pingree



## Internet resources on farmers markets

- g Statewide listing of farmers markets:  
<http://datcp.state.wi.us/static/mktg/publications/farmers.htm>
- g Eau Claire, WI farmers market:  
<http://www.appledorewoods.com/farmersmarket/index.html>
- g National directory of farmers markets:  
<http://www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/map.htm>

According to the USDA site, "the number of farmers markets in the United States has grown dramatically, increasing 56 percent in the last four years. According to the 1998 National Farmers Market Directory, there are 2,746 farmers markets operating in the United States. The number of markets is up from 2,410 in 1996 and 1,755 in 1994, when USDA began collecting the data."



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Vol. 4, Issue 1 June 2000

the wisconsin foodshed is a food systems newsletter produced by the Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems. CIAS is a sustainable agricultural research center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. Please contact us to submit articles or for more information on CIAS' food systems research programs.

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# From Field to Table

*food system research and action*

## Nurturing the CRAFT of farming

Who will be the next generation of farmers and how will they acquire skills and experience? How will they learn what it takes to farm sustainably and run a sound business? A unique project in southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois is forging a path for tomorrow's farmers to broaden and deepen their training experience.

The Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training (CRAFT) is a farmer-organized program designed to strengthen a farm intern's awareness of the nature and the requirements of organic farming. The program consists of an intern orientation program, farm visits, workshops, and intern work exchanges throughout the growing season.

As CRAFT farmer Rob Baratz says, "CRAFT enables me to offer my interns greater experience by taking their training from the microcosm of my farm and connecting it to a diverse community of farms." CRAFT seeks to broaden intern training by exposing them to the diversity of farms within the region and to the power of being part of a supportive community of peers. The Upper-Midwest CRAFT program, started in 1997, was modeled after a CRAFT in New England. It now includes 20 farms and five supporting organizations in the Chicago, Madison, and Milwaukee areas.

This season, CRAFT is adding to its program in order to help bridge the gap between being an intern and being a farmer. A transition workshop series is being organized to provide closure to the intern experience and to address questions of how to continue in farming or a related field. They



are also looking for ways to offer "second year internships," (see following article).

For more information about CRAFT, contact the CSA Learning Center at Angelic Organics at (815) 389-8455, [Learn@AngelicOrganics.com](mailto:Learn@AngelicOrganics.com), or <http://www.AngelicOrganics.com/intern/craft.html>.

—contributed by Meagan Cocke

## Cooperative Enterprise Program begins growing new farmers

A budding entrepreneur's business is blooming. Amy Kremen is grower and creator of a new up-start, Morning Star Garden. Aspiring to blend business profits with stewardship for the Earth's ecological diversity and soil health, Kremen is growing a cut flower business on less than an acre.

Morning Star Garden sprouted from the new Cooperative Enterprise Program developed by Inn Serendipity Bed and Breakfast and the Michael Fields Agricultural Institute (MFAI).

Merging resources and skills from both organizations, this pilot program provides young people who are enthusiastic about running a sustainable farming business the opportunity to transform their ideas into real operations. An internship is offered to an aspiring farmer who has successfully completed

MFAI's seven-month organic and Biodynamic farming internship or who has participated as an

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## Milwaukee Farmers Markets *from page 1*

Program, and who accept food stamps in order to better meet the needs of low-income customers.

The report emphasized the need for the following initiatives:

- 1) convening meetings of market organizers and managers to discuss various market issues,
- 2) coordinating publicity and advertising,
- 3) helping independent markets design and distribute neighborhood fliers,
- 4) soliciting public service announcements and radio advertisements,
- 5) continuing to identify vendors of various products and expanding the database of vendors,
- 6) using local food security research to determine

- 7) working with the University to conduct standardized surveys to identify vendor issues,
- 8) continuing to expand the WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program,
- 9) helping to find market sponsors, and
- 10) researching and providing information on liability insurance for markets and vendors.

The Hunger Task Force of Milwaukee continues to help support local farmers markets by coordinating these activities through the Milwaukee Farmers Market Association.

To learn more, request a copy of the report, or for market schedules and information about the 2000 season please call Tim Locke or Melisa Santimo at (414) 777-0483.

—contributed by Tim Locke

## Growing New Farmers from page 3

intern at a CRAFT farm (see previous article for a description of CRAFT).

The Cooperative Enterprise Program opportunity enables a second-year intern to hone their skills by creating and managing a farming operation without the financial burden of land ownership. The intern receives some seed money for capital expenses and room and board, as well as a stipend. They are also

### Table Settings

g What do people buy when they're not shopping at a farmers market? According to the *Complete Idiot's Guide to Living Longer and Healthier*, the top ten items purchased at grocery stores in the U.S. are (in descending order):

Marlboro cigarettes  
Coca-Cola Classic  
Pepsi-Cola  
Kraft processed cheese  
Diet Coke  
Campbell's soup  
Budweiser beer  
Tide detergent  
Folger's coffee  
Winston cigarettes



offered the incentive to profit share from their business. Janet Gamble, Michael Field's intern program coordinator, mentors the intern with gardening expertise. The Inn Serendipity husband-and-wife team of John Ivanko and Lisa Kivirist help guide the intern with their own entrepreneurial backgrounds in marketing and communications.

Kremen is responsible for acquiring and managing all equipment, managing the business effectively, marketing, and working to maintain and improve soils while growing a mixture of vegetables and flowers. She will train and transfer the position to another second-year intern in 2001.

Kremen says, "Morning Star Garden is out to prove that stewardship of the land does not mean giving up profits." By securing subscription sales for 14 weeks of bouquets in advance of the growing season and pursuing retail sales at both stores and at farmers markets, Morning Star Garden appears to be on its way to a successful season.

Inn Serendipity is located in Browntown, Wisconsin on a former century farm and serves as a showplace for energy conservation and sustainable living. The Inn features a solar hot water heating system, super energy-efficient refrigerator and wood stove, and the floor tiles used in their bathrooms are made from recycled auto windshield glass.

For more information, contact Inn Serendipity and Morning Star Garden at (608) 329-7056 or visit their Web site: <http://www.innserendipity.com>

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Non-profit organization  
U.S. Postage Paid  
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