



A Hoophouse Success Story

Jane Bush, FSEP Business Development Specialist, has been working with Southeast Michigan farmers to extend Michigan's growing season through hoophouse farming. In pursuit of this goal, Jane helped to create the Four Seasons Produce Co-op, a federation of farmers who work to provide fresh, locally grown greens to local customers. On Tuesday, March 8, the Co-op made its first sale of hoophouse grown spinach to Allegiance Health in Jackson--see picture (above left) of farmers, Jane Knapp and Lisa Brown who are Co-op members. The Allegiance Health cafeteria traditionally serves one pan of spinach at lunchtime. On March 8, with the introduction of Four Seasons Produce hoophouse spinach, the cafeteria served five pans! Thanks to Allegiance Health for their commitment to serving fresh, healthy, local food and to the MSU Product Center for guidance and support throughout the process. To learn more about the Co-op, visit <http://4seasonsproducecoop.org/>.

Upcoming Events

Growing Hope, in partnership with the Michigan Small Business and Technology Development Center (SBTDC), is offering a series of Farmer's Market Vendor Education Workshops. Workshops are open to a wide selection of the community, including current and potential vendors at the Downtown Ypsilanti Farmer's Market, vendors from any of the other area farmer's markets, and anyone interested in starting a food based business. Each workshop costs only \$5. Registration is required and can be completed on Growing Hope's website, www.growinghope.net/get_involved/events/rsvp, or by calling Arika at 734-786-8401. Workshop topics, dates, and times are listed below:

Business, Finances and Accounting - March 22, 5:30pm - 7:30pm at SPARK East

Writing a Business Plan (Pt 2) - March 29, 11:30am - 1:00pm at SBTDC

Business Legalities - March 29, 5:30 - 7:30pm at SPARK East

Financing Your Business, Business Planning, Cottage Food Law & Food Safety, and Web

Marketing & Social Media -April 9, 9:00am - 4:00pm at SBTDC (exact times for these workshops

can be found on Growing Hope's website)

Michigan Food and Farming Systems (MIFFS) will be hosting a series of webinars and forums focused on food safety. Dates, times, and forum locations are listed below. Register for webinars at www.miffs.org/gapghp. For more information, please contact the MIFFS office at 517-432-0712.

Webinar: GAP certification w/ buyer Denis Jennisch, Sysco, and farmer Patrick Hartmann -
March 24, 2:00pm - 4:00pm

Food Safety Regulation Discussion Forum - March 25 in Big Rapids (please call 517-432-0712 for more details)

In addition to these events, MIFFS has created an online survey to gather input from small food processors and producers. Complete the survey at <http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/WEB22BXED2HY97/>.

Michigan State's CS Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems will be holding a Farm to School Meet and Greet on Monday, March 21, from 2:30pm - 4:30pm. This event is an opportunity for school food service directors and farmers to meet and discuss opportunities of linking through local food. This event will be held at:

Genesee ISD Health, Safety and Nutrition Services
2284 S Ballenger Highway
Flint, MI 48503

RSVP to Colleen Matts at matts@msu.edu or call 517-432-0310.

The Washtenaw County Farm Bureau is hosting Farmer's Day on Wednesday, March 23 from 9:30am - 3:00pm. Speakers and topics will include:

Vicki Morrone, MSUE - Discussion of organic operations
Florian Chirra, OSUE, Conservation possibilities with cover crops
Ned Birkley MSUE, Integrated Pest Management and Sprayer Calibration
Steve Olds, NRCS, Outline and discussion of 2008 Farm Bill conservation programs
Dana Wright, Legacy Land Conservancy, to discuss open land preservation
Amy Gilhouse, MGSP, Introduction to groundwater protection actions
Matt Hinderer, WCFB Young Farmer Chair, Discussion of the Michigan Agriculture Environment Assurance Program (MAEAP)

Those interested in attending should register at the Washtenaw County MSUE office (734-997-1678) or the Washtenaw County Farm Bureau office (734-997-1469) by March 18.

The Lenawee Economic Development Corporation (LEDC) is hosting a free informational Agriculture Seminar on March 29 from 8:00am-11:30am, sponsored by South Central Michigan Works! The seminar will include issues such as: estate and succession planning, accounting rules and regulations, commodity outlook and the new Food Safety Act. Presenters all have a personal and professional connection to agriculture. The LEDC recognizes agriculture as a vital part of Lenawee's economy. In cooperation with the Lenawee Farm Bureau, the LEDC wants to help local farmers stay up-to-date on current and future agricultural issues that could affect them. Please join us for breakfast and this informational seminar **designed especially for local farmers**. There is no cost to attend this seminar, but registration is required. To register, contact the LEDC at (517) 265-5141 or email Catrina Ossmann at catrina@onelenawee.org.

The Detroit Food Policy Council will be hosting its first conference-- "Powering up the Local Food System" summit from May 19-20. For more information, email detroitfoodpolicycouncil@gmail.com.

Announcements

SEED Wayne receives honorable mention as 2011 Michigan Green Leader!

Congratulations to SEED Wayne and Kami Pothukuchi, who will be recognized for the SEED Wayne program which is creating sustainable food systems on the Wayne State Campus and throughout the Detroit community. The winners and honorees will be recognized on Thursday, April 21, 8 a.m. at DTE headquarters downtown. Governor Rick Snyder will keynote the event. Tickets to the awards breakfast can be purchased for \$40 each at www.michigangreenleaders.com.

The **Eastern Market Corporation is hiring a Wholesale Market Coordinator**. The Wholesale Marketing Coordinator will lead efforts to increase the number of growers and buyers utilizing the wholesale market at Eastern Market. Applicants should have two or more years of fruit and vegetable farm to market experience. If interested, please send cover letter and resume to:

Doshia Barton
Eastern Market Corporation
2934 Russell Street
Detroit, MI 48207
or via email to dbarton@detroit.easternmarket.com

Growing Hope is hiring a Downtown Ypsilanti Farmer's Market Manager to manage and coordinate all aspects of the Downtown Ypsilanti Farmers' Market. This position will average 15 hours per week April - December. Preference will be given to candidates looking to return for multiple seasons. To apply, send resume and 2 page cover letter with references to Arika Lycan, Outreach and Volunteerism Manager, at apply@growinghope.net. This position will remain open until March 20.

Back Forty Acres, now entering its fifth year, will continue to offer pasture-raised poultry and grass-fed meat in Southeastern Michigan. To read about new happenings at the farm and to place your order, please visit www.backfortyacres.com.

The Michigan State University Horticulture is conducting an online survey to learn more about hoophouse farming in Michigan. If you own a high tunnel, or have taken part in hoophouse training, please complete this survey which can be found at http://msucarrs.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_1XiJ6idCDwSLdc0.

Happy Spring!

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