



## Michigan Good Food Charter

Food System Economic Partnership Board Members and Staff participated in work groups that helped develop the Michigan Good Food Charter. This initiative by the C.S. Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems at MSU is a roadmap to how we can utilize Michigan's agricultural resources to improve the economy. It outlines 25 priority agendas over the next ten years. Both the Michigan Agriculture Commission and the Michigan Food Policy Council adopted resolutions in support of the Charter. The first three of five work group reports have been issued including Institutional Food Purchasing, Food System Infrastructure, and Good Food Access. To learn more about the Michigan Good Food Charter visit:

<http://www.michiganfood.org>

## Grant and Loan Opportunities

**Hoophouse Loans Available** - The State of Michigan is offering low-interest loans between \$5,000-\$15,000 for family farms or non-profits to install passive solar systems, also known as hoophouses. A recent on-farm research project by 12 private farms and Michigan State University has shown that passive solar systems can generate gross and net sales at a rate which would make a loan repayable in one to four years. The loans can only be used to cover materials, supplies and equipment costs. Applicants can apply now through February 15, 2011. Applications and loan specifications are available at: [www.michiganadvantage.org/PSS](http://www.michiganadvantage.org/PSS) For questions about application requirements, contact: David Binkley at (517) 373-7673 or email: [binkleyd@michigan.gov](mailto:binkleyd@michigan.gov). Questions about projects and technical issues should be directed to Adam Montri at (517)-355-5191 Ext. 1407 or email: [admontri@msu.edu](mailto:admontri@msu.edu)

**Specialty Crop Block Grants available** - The Michigan Department of Agriculture recently announced grant opportunities to enhance the competitiveness of the state's specialty crops. Eligible applicants for the grants which range from \$10,000 to \$75,000 include non-profit organizations, local, state, and federal government entities, for-profit organizations, and universities. For more information, visit [www.michigan.gov/mda](http://www.michigan.gov/mda) or contact Mike DiBernardo at [dibernardom@michigan.gov](mailto:dibernardom@michigan.gov) or 517-373-9144. Proposals are due by **April 1, 2011**.

**Financial Aid is now available for program fees and cost of living for the Organic Farmer Training Program at Michigan State University** - AmeriCorps Education Awards may now be

used to pay for program fees. Only a couple of open spaces remain in the 2011 Cohort. The Organic Farmer Training Program offers nine months of intensive instruction in year-round organic farming. The program focuses on diversified production of vegetables, flowers, fruits and herbs for local markets. Students manage all aspects of a 10-acre certified organic farm, including passive solar greenhouses used for year-round production in cold climates. Program participants include new and beginning farmers, urban and community farmers and gardeners, educators, and those interested in local or organic agriculture. For more information, visit [www.msuorganicfarm.org](http://www.msuorganicfarm.org), email [msufarm@msu.edu](mailto:msufarm@msu.edu) or call 517-449-3290.

## Upcoming Events

### **2nd Annual Growing Our Food Systems Conference - February 17, 2011 from 9 a.m.- 4 p.m. - Lansing**

The Greater Lansing Food Bank, and various area partners have come together to provide a one day conference for people who grow, produce, process, market, distribute, prepare or eat food. Whether you are just beginning or have been involved with food your whole life, come join the conversation. For more information or to register, visit [www.greaterlansingfoodbank.org](http://www.greaterlansingfoodbank.org) or call 517-853-7800. **Post conference BUYER AND SELLER MEET & GREET from 4-6:00 p.m.** South Washington Office Complex, 2500 S Washington, Lansing. This event is free for those who just attend the Meet & Greet. Registration for the day-long conference is \$10.

**Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Good Handling Practices (GHP) workshops - February 17, 2011- 9 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.** Lapeer County MSU Extension Office, 287 W. Nepessing St, Suite 1, Lapeer, MI 48446-2104 MIFFS hosts this workshop to reach out to growers trying to tackle the supply chain, focusing on steps and strategies to safely get fresh local product to regional grocery stores and the wholesale distributors that service them. There is no cost to attend, but an RSVP is required by contacting the MIFFS office at 517-432-0712 or [miffs@msu.edu](mailto:miffs@msu.edu) by Monday, February 14.

### **Small Holder Farm Career Day and Job Fair - Washtenaw Community College on February 22, 2011.**

Farmers, is it your 2011 goal to grow your business, sell to local chefs and hire new employees? Chefs, is it your goal to grow your business, source from local farms and hire new employees? Job Seekers, is it your goal to begin a career in food and farming? Reserve your spot now for the Small Holder Farm Career Day & Job Fair. RSVP to [vbennett@wccnet.edu](mailto:vbennett@wccnet.edu).

9:00 – noon Chef / Farmer Speed Planning – meet with up to 5 chefs to decide what you will grow for local restaurants this season

12:30 – 2:00 pm Chef / Farmer Roundtable & Brown Bag Lunch – bring the challenges your business is facing and get help from your local community to help you face those challenges

2:30 – 4:30 pm Career Fair – Food and Farming businesses will be accepting applications. Tantre Farm, Zingerman's Family of Businesses, Capella Farm, People's Food Co-op and many more will all be in one place looking for energetic new employees. Help them meet the growing demand for quality local food. Employers are seeking a diverse set of skills and experience.

**Ann Arbor Township's Small Farm Initiative Landowner/Grower Gathering - Saturday February 26 at 10:00 a.m.** Ann Arbor Township is hosting a gathering of landowners with small acreage properties and growers seeking to lease such land. Three landowners have committed to being present or providing information on their land and facilities, and more are expected. This will be an informal gathering, with landowners making short presentations on their properties followed by opportunity for growers to meet them and discuss potential lease arrangements. The township can provide sample leases but negotiations will be between landowner and grower. There will be a short presentation on beginning farmer training programs starting this year on township-owned land along with information about the township's farmland preservation program, which late last year passed 1,000 acres of protected land, halfway to its goal. Apple cider, coffee and treats will be available. Contact Barry Lonik for more information at [BLonik13@aol.com](mailto:BLonik13@aol.com) or (734) 223-2321.

**Good Food Film Festival - February 28 - Washtenaw Community College - Morris Lawrence Building - 6:15 p.m.**

Washtenaw Community College, Slow Food Huron Valley, FSEP and Whole Foods Market have teamed up to host the first Michigan Good Food Film Festival. Film entries were reviewed by a panel of industry professionals and cash prizes will be awarded to winners. This screening is FREE and open to all and will take place from 6:15-9:00 p.m. Bring your friends, family, and neighbors to vote for the "Viewers Choice" award, which will be announced on March 1, 2011 at the Local Food Summit.

**HomeGrown Local Food Summit - March 1 - Washtenaw Community College - Morris Lawrence Building - 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m** Cost is \$18 (registration), and \$12 (optional local food lunch). Registration is required. This year's Summit will continue the theme of building connections & relationships, and will focus on local food as a critical piece of Michigan's economic future. Keynote speakers include food system researcher Ken Meter of the Crossroads Resource Center and Dan Carmody, President of Eastern Market. Visit <http://localfoodsummit.org/> to register and learn more

**2011 Michigan Organic Conference "Keeping the Local in Organic", presented by the Michigan Organic Food and Farming Alliance (MOFFA)- March 4 - 5, 2011**, Kellogg Convention Center, East Lansing. New for this year MOFFA will host a special event and mixer "Taste of Michigan" featuring live music on Friday. This event will take place at the East Lansing Hannah Community Center. On Saturday, The Michigan Organic Conference will include: a keynote speaker, education sessions, and organic luncheon. This year's keynote speaker is Mark Kastel of the Cornucopia Institute (<http://www.cornucopia.org/>). Register online,

[http://www.moffa.org/2011\\_moc.html](http://www.moffa.org/2011_moc.html).

**2011 Choices Conference: Healthy Kitchens, Healthy Lives - March 9-10, Kellogg  
Conference Center, East Lansing**

The conference that celebrates food, health, and collaboration. Visit

<http://www.regonline.com/builder/site/default.aspx?EventID=929422> to view the agenda, register,  
and receive more information.

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