



UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI
UM Extension

**COMMUNITY FOOD SYSTEMS &
SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PROGRAM**

**Eat Well, Do Good
In Missouri!**

Issue 8

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Researching Local Food Systems

By Sarah Hultine, MU Extension Community Development Specialist, Dent County

As the popularity of and demand for locally grown food increases, farmers' markets represent the most commonly recognized form of local food distribution and marketing. What communities need to consider, however, is the set of conditions that make farmers' markets successful. In a recent study of farmers' markets in Illinois, published in the journal *Southern Rural Sociology*, my co-authors and I found that while farmers' markets may be more popular and viable in urban areas, rural communities still have opportunities to create successful local food systems.

Consumers in many different locations value locally grown food, but they seek it out through different channels. That means there is no one-size-fits-all approach to marketing local foods. Instead, creativity is required in developing local markets that build on current shopping behaviors of consumers in various locations, rural or urban.

We studied four rural and two urban markets in Central Illinois. Only one of the four rural communities had what we considered a vibrant farmers' market. The research showed that urban markets often attract customers who shop at the market not only for produce, but also for the social and entertainment opportunities that urban markets can provide. The challenge for rural farmers' markets is that locally grown produce is often available from several venues – farm stands, CSAs, farmers' markets and other direct-from-farmer sales – and rural customers take advantage of all these outlets, spreading their purchases among of them.

This means that rural communities will need to be creative in their approaches for building successful local food systems – whether through farmers' markets or other alternative venues. The one successful rural farmers' market studied was Metamora, which focused on connecting with other downtown businesses, including local restaurants and a museum.

When a farmers' market in Fairbury, IL lacked support from customers, area farmers worked with a local grocery store to create an in-store venue for their produce, resulting in several thousand dollars in sales in each of the past four years. Fairbury customers preferred the option to purchase locally grown food while they shopped in the store, rather than driving to a separate farmers' market.

The experience in Fairbury serves as a successful example of the alternative markets rural communities can create beyond a traditional farmers market. According to our study, local food systems are

more successful when they address the needs of the whole community and take into account existing shopping behaviors and consumption decisions within the community.

Anyone interested in starting a farmers market can consult the recently released MU Extension publication, "Starting and Operating a Farmers Market," at

<http://extension.missouri.edu/explore/agguides/hort/g06223.htm>.

The article from *Southern Rural Sociology*, "Produce Sections, Town Squares, and Farm Stands: Comparing Local Food Systems in Community Context," is available online at <http://www.ag.auburn.edu/auxiliary/srsa/pages/Articles/SRS%202008%2023%201%2047-71.pdf>

Inside This Issue

We're back! After taking a one-year hiatus with the newsletter, we hope to publish the newsletter three times per year. We sadly said good-bye to Jose Garcia, but welcome Bill McKelvey to our program.

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Inclusion Leads to Success:

Gardening with the Umaña family, a Cross Cultural Workshop



By Nadia Navarrete-Tindall

Join us for a trip to Latin America in the heart of rural Missouri. On Saturday, September 20th from 9:30 am to 3 pm educators and the general public are invited to a training workshop to learn about Hispanic culture and agriculture-related activities. This workshop will take place at the home of an American-Salvadoran family in Marshall, MO.

One of the goals of this event is to increase communication between the Hispanic community and other locals, educators and service providers, such as extension specialists, outreach workers from federal, state, and NGO agencies, and high school vocational agriculture teachers.

In the morning, several local Hispanic residents, including an educator, a farmer, and an extension specialist from Lincoln University will discuss some of the experiences and challenges that Hispanics face in rural Missouri.

After a light ethnic lunch from noon to 1pm., displays and demonstrations will be offered until 3pm. Information discussed will include community gardens, building cold frames for gardens, fall gardening, native plants and pollinators, composting, and loans, grants, and cost-share programs available for farmers. In addition, there will be fun educational activities for children.

Participating institutions include Lincoln University Extension, University of Missouri Extension, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency, Missouri Department of Conservation, and others.

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People Making Daily Contributions to Community Food Systems and Sustainable Agriculture



Margot McMillen

Margot McMillen has been working on issues of sustainable farming much of her adult life. Watching the landscape change around her family farm in Illinois, she first saw the diversity of crops disappear into monocultures of corn and soybeans, and then saw the fences and barns disappear and, finally, saw the land itself disappear under pavement and housing developments. Moving with husband Howard Marshall to a 45-acre farm in Callaway County in 1994, she was determined to restore the piece to diversity and now keeps Salers beef cattle, Katahdin sheep and a family garden and chicken flock. In 2005, she purchased Terra Bella Farm, a diverse farm that specializes in raising vegetables. She is a co-host of "Farm and Fiddle," the radio program that celebrates and explores rural life on KOPN community radio 89.5 FM, Columbia, and she writes a twice-monthly column for Progressive Populist, which is archived at populist.com. She has authored five books and many articles on Missouri history and culture and teaches English part-time at Westminster College.

Margot has been involved in sustainable agriculture and with our program for many years. She has always been an advocate, and provided good advice and ideas to us. Thank you very much, Margot, for being such a great supporter of the CFSSA Program.

Patrick Byers



Patrick Byers, Horticulture Specialist in Greene County for the University of Missouri Extension, was born in Nebraska and raised in the Midwest. He can trace his interest in fruit and vegetable production to market garden-

ing while he was in his teens. His educational background includes an associate degree in commercial horticulture from the University of Nebraska, a bachelor's degree in horticulture from the University of Missouri, and a Master's degree, also in horticulture, from the University of Arkansas. His job experience includes 3 years at the University of Arkansas Fruit Substation, where he served as research associate in the peach and apple breeding programs, and 16 years as the Fruit Grower Advisor at Missouri State University's State Fruit Experiment Station in Mountain Grove. Patrick's responsibilities include outreach education to Missouri's commercial fruit industry, as well as research interests in elderberry, pawpaw, persimmon, primocane raspberry, blackberry, and other fruit crops. Patrick and his family manage a small commercial orchard near Fordland, Missouri, where they produce and market peaches, sweet corn and other vegetables, and honey. Patrick has an interest in international agricultural issues, and has made trips in 2003 and 2004 to Uzbekistan and in 2005 to China to consult with fruit producers and scientists. His interests in agricultural sustainability stem from his work with Missouri's fruit growers, many of whom are small scale, diversified farmers involved in direct marketing.





Starting and Operating a Farmers' Market

By Bill McKelvey

Summer has officially arrived in Missouri and with it comes a great variety of fresh and flavorful fruits, vegetables, meats and dairy products that can only be found at local farmers' markets.

Like other states across the country, Missouri has experienced an increase in the number of farmers' markets in the past few years. According to the Missouri Department of Agriculture, there are approximately 140 farmers' markets in operation this year — up from 97 in 2004. This represents a 44% increase in just the last 4 years.

For growers and communities looking for information about starting a new market or improving an existing market, the Community Food Systems and Sustainable Agriculture program has published a new MU Extension Guide titled "Starting and Operating a Farmers' Market," available at:

<http://extension.missouri.edu/explore/agguides/hort/g06223.htm>.

Get Your Guide Now!!!



The guide follows a *frequently asked questions* format, provides brief answers to each question and then directs readers to free, online publications that answer the questions in more detail. Market organizers will find information on the qualities of successful markets, drafting rules and regulations, hiring a market manager, grant opportunities, and evaluating the performance of farmers' markets, among other things.

The guide also includes information about legal and regulatory issues for farmers' markets in Missouri. Issues pertaining to taxes and licenses, insurance, weights and measures, and food safety are covered, with links to additional information and contacts at state and local government agencies.

Salesmanship — Why Bother?

By Mary Hendrickson

In the early days of our courtship, my husband attended a local foods event with me. He loved the food and the people, but one thing puzzled him. "These people have such a good product! Why are they so reluctant to sell it?" he asked.

He was referring to a farmer telling us about his pork, a superior product that customers raved about — but the farmer seemed slightly bemused by the praise and confided that he had trouble asking for a premium price, even though customers were willing to pay it. This frustrated my husband, who said the first rule of good salesmanship is to believe in your product and know its attributes. The second —and crucial — rule is to be willing to **ask** for the sale.

Marketing and selling are often the most challenging parts of the job for farmers in the local foods arena. After all, a farmer has to know how to produce good food, know what makes her money, and then has to have good marketing and sales skills. It's almost too much!

That's why we wrote the MU Extension Guide, "Selling Strategies for Local Food Producers," available at <http://extension.missouri.edu/explore/agguides/hort/g06222.htm>.

This is a short guide to selling techniques that are customer-friendly and ethical —and easy to implement. The guide is organized around the counselor approach to selling which is a step-by-step process that includes: 1) building relationships with customers, 2) discovering customers' needs and preferences, 3) advocating for one's products, and 4) providing quality service. This guide is focused on farmers' markets, but the process works in about any direct sales.

The following tips can be found in more detail in the guide.

Building relationships: Smiling, saying hi, and paying attention to personal appearance are all parts of engaging and building long-term relationships with your customers. Being reliable, sharing your knowledge, and going the extra mile for customers are important too.

Discovering customers' needs and preferences: Once you have engaged customers, you need to know what they want or like, and the best way to do that is to simply ask questions to discover what they are looking for. Doing your homework on the internet or in the library helps you be prepared and know what questions to ask.

Being an advocate for your products: Advocating for your products may be one of the hardest things you do, but if you don't believe in your products, why should anyone else? You should know why your product is better, tastier, longer-lasting, healthier and just downright superior to anybody else's! You also have to ask for the sale — don't say "Would you like to buy some tomatoes?" Instead, you should ask "Would you like 2 or 5 pounds of tomatoes today?" This entices the customer into a "yes" answer and doesn't give them the opportunity to say no.

Providing quality service: Finally, salesmanship will get you nowhere without good quality service. Make sure you put the customer first during market hours — save the chatting with other vendors or friends for when you don't have a line at your booth. Have an idea of how you'll answer complaints about your product (promptly and politely for sure!). Deliver when you say you will, provide samples when you can.

The next time you see my husband at a local food event — sell him some good food!



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Continued from page 2 This event will be hosted by Dona Eusebia Umaña and her family. The workshop will be sponsored by Lincoln University Extension and the University of Missouri Extension. English-Spanish interpreters will be available during the whole event. Don't miss the opportunity to visit with your neighbors, learn from each other's culture, and at the same time improve your gardening skills. For directions please check the CFSSA website by August 15th or contact Casi Lock at CML136@mizzou.edu or Vonna Kesel at keselv@lincolnu.edu (573-681-5312). Please make your reservation by September 15th

City Seeds in St. Louis



On June 26, we celebrated the first-of-the-season produce distribution of the City Seeds project, a joint collaboration between Gateway Greening and MU Extension's Food Circles Networking Project. Every week during growing season, 40 limited resource families in St. Louis neighborhoods receive a box of fresh vegetables produced by eight area farmers. Thanks to a USDA-Community Food Projects grant, families pay \$7/box for high-quality produce that would retail for \$15-\$20. At the celebration, families who receive boxes met Rusty Lee, Carl Saunders and Trisha Wagner, three of the farmers who supply their food. Operation

Food Search prepared a tasty assortment of food to share from what was available that week in the box. The restaurant "Five" shared their favorite cucumber soup, and everyone had a chance to check out the neighborhood community garden. We thank Mid-Town Catholic Charities for hosting us for such a fun time!

Mark Your Calendar

FAPRI Conference

September 3, 2008, University of Missouri

Conference presented by the Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute (FAPRI). For information, contact: Brent Carpenter, 573-882-6121, carpenterb@missouri.edu

Tomato Festival

September 4, 2008,

**University of Missouri, Columbia, MO
Bradford Research & Extension Center
4 pm—7 pm**

Free and Open to the public. Features, tours, educational information, demonstrations and even taste testing!

<http://aes.missouri.edu/bradford/events/tomato-festival.php>

Gardening—Cross Cultural Workshop

September 20, 2008,

Marshall, MO

9:30am—3:00 pm

See article on page 3 of this newsletter for more information.

South Farm Showcase

University of Missouri South Farm

September 27, 10 am—4 pm

Featuring numerous activities, refreshments and tours which also include a look at the neighboring Jefferson Farm & Gardens.

<http://cafnr.missouri.edu/aes/southfarm/>

Community Food Security Coalition 12th Annual Conference

*Restoring Our Urban Rural
Communities with Healthy Food*

**October 4-8, outside Philadelphia
www.healthyfoodconference.com**

6th Annual Missouri

Chestnut Roast

**October 18, New Franklin, MO
10 am—4 pm**

Open to the public. Free parking and admission. Most activities held inside tents, for comfort rain or shine.

Horticulture & Agroforestry Research
www.centerforagroforestry.org

Obesity Summit

October 31, 2008

Hilton Garden Inn, Columbia, MO

7:30 am—3:30 pm

www.healthpolicy.missouri.edu

16th National Small Farm

Trade Show & Conference

November 6-8, 2008

Boone County Fairgrounds, Columbia, MO

Call 1-800-633-2535 or visit

www.smallfarmtoday.com