




# MFMA NEWS

Spring 2010

## › 2010 GREETINGS FROM THE MINNESOTA FARMERS' MARKET ASSOCIATION



The board of the Minnesota Farmers' Market Association wishes each of you success in the coming year whether you are a vender, market manager or supporter of our many farmers' markets in Minnesota. Since this is our first newsletter, we would like to acquaint you with the MFMA.

The mission of MFMA is "To offer services and programs that support and promote Minnesota farmers' markets".

Our strength is in your participation. We are better together. The success or failure of this organization depends on the support of farmers' markets, large and small.

Membership qualifications are:

1. Be an established market with written rules or by-laws and a dues structure,
2. Be a community farmers' market and or growers group representing three or more growers,
3. Sell majority of Minnesota grown agricultural products.

Many of you have participated in the educational opportunities MFMA has provided each fall in Staples and Owatonna and again in the spring in conjunction with our annual meeting held in a more central location. Each conference is designed to provide information to make markets and vendors more successful.



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### Current Benefits for each market...

Reduced fees at all conferences for every member.

One vote at the annual meeting

A unified voice

Statewide communication via the Farmers' Market list-serv.

Members also receive **A Free listing on the MFMA.org website.**

This can be a very useful marketing tool for your market. You make the changes; add events etc. as needed at no cost.

Future benefits – The MFMA five-year strategic plan (developed in 2008) includes these objectives:

- Strengthen farmers' markets statewide
- Expand vendors and increase profitability
- Expand awareness of and participation in consumers' use of farmers' markets
- Build a robust, well-served membership
- Network with other organizations
- Achieve a visible and effective influence on policy
- Strengthen MFMA's infrastructure

More and more communities are establishing farmers' markets as they become aware of the environmental benefits, the health benefits, economic benefits to local merchants as well as the vendors positive impact on their local economy. The Minnesota Farmers' Market Association is preparing to meet the growing need for services for the expanding number of farmers' markets, managers and vendors needed to supply the local, fresh and safe food our Minnesota consumers demand.



MFMA will become a 501 (c) (6) non profit in 2010. The top priority will be to secure funds to employ a part-time staff person for the MFMA. Currently there are nine board members representing markets all across Minnesota. Directors are elected at the annual meeting held in conjunction with the spring conference scheduled for Friday, March 26, 2010. Exhibitor space will be available for businesses and organizations to meet managers and vendors. Check the web site MFMA.org for additional information.

### › **FARMERS' MARKETS IN THE NEWS**

Michelle Obama recently spoke to the Conference of Mayors, and touted the Minneapolis' mini farmers markets as a leading example of communities combating obesity and promoting healthier, sustainable food initiatives. To view the entire article by Mary Aileen visit [LiveGreenTwinCities.com](http://LiveGreenTwinCities.com) .

## » YOU NEED TO BE A MEMBER

If you believe . . . .

1. That farmers' markets are the place to buy safe healthy food.
2. That educational opportunities will improve your business.
3. That networking with other growers and venders is important.
4. That it is important to have a voice in governmental affairs to establish policies to protect venders and customers.
5. That there is strength in numbers.
6. That farmers' markets are good for the local economy.
7. That marketing your market is important.
8. That fresh food is the cornerstone to healthy diets.

Membership fees are \$30 for markets with 15 or fewer venders and only \$60 for the larger markets. The membership year is January 1 to December 31. Associate membership is \$15. You can

## » SPRING CONFERENCE DETAILS!

The MFMA 2010 Spring Conference will be held on March 26th at the Shoreview Community Center. The annual meeting will take place in the morning, followed by our Spring Conference Sessions. This year we will have a number of market topics including:

- A Panel on Market Activities, including children's activities and chef's demos.
- Reaching the Unreachable,
- The Art of Visual Marketing: Using Visual Clues as a Silent Salesperson,
- The ever popular "Speed Mentoring", and
- Going from Good to Great.

The MFMA Spring & Fall Conferences are a great opportunity to network with other market managers and growers, and learn tools to help make you more successful. The afternoon session will emphasize information for venders and is offered at a reduced "afternoon only" rate. Online registration is available at [www.MFMA.org](http://www.MFMA.org).

## » FARMERS' MARKET MANUALS

Do you know someone who is interested in starting a farmers' market? MFMA has Farmers' Market Manuals available for purchase. Visit our booth at the Spring Conference or email [info@MFMA.org](mailto:info@MFMA.org) to request a manual. The cost is \$55.





## › MDA Education Scholarships

### ***MDA Offers Farm Business Management Education Scholarships to Specialty Crop Growers in MN***

*What's my cost of production? Am I making any money? How are my margins? How should I budget for next year?*

Do these questions sound familiar? This scholarship program defrays growers' cost to enroll in farm business management education programs, offered statewide by the Minnesota State College and University (MnSCU) system. Growers in the program work one-on-one with management instructors, learning to keep and use quality records to make sound business management decisions. They receive comprehensive year-end analyses that can be used for tax preparation, discussions with lenders, and enterprise planning, and will be able to compare their farm's performance against similar groups of growers. Strict confidentiality measures protect the identity of both participants and their information. Current growers of the following fresh market crops qualify in 2010: Apples, Berries, Grapes, Pumpkins, Sweet Corn, and Vegetables (mixed).

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is currently able to offer these scholarships with funds from the USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant Program and participation by MnSCU and the University of Minnesota Center for Farm Financial Management. Funds are limited.

For more information about the program and how to contact an instructor, call Meg Moynihan at the Minnesota Department of Agriculture 651-201-6616.



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