

Day connects farmers, consumers

THE Michigan Legislature has established Sept. 13 as the third annual "Buy Fresh, Buy Local — Select Michigan Day," and events are popping up all over the state this summer and fall to celebrate.

Michigan Food & Farming Systems is partnering again with the Michigan Department of Agriculture in the Select Michigan campaign. This year, the Michigan Farmers' Market Association and the Food Bank Council of Michigan also have joined in the effort to spread the word about the many benefits of local food and connecting farmers and consumers.

With Michigan produce ripening all over the state, the Select Michigan program is in full swing, promoting local food and Michigan products throughout the state, from farmers markets and farm stands to grocery store shelves.

Michigan grows more than 200 agricultural commodities, making it the second-most diverse state in the nation and contributing more than \$60 billion in economic activity to the state. By buying local food, consumers get a fresher, tastier product that is grown in their own state, which keeps money circulating within their communities.

With rising awareness and increasing demand for local food, more communities are getting involved to start celebrating "Select Michigan" in their own ways, from highlighting farmers markets to hosting activities in hospitals and schools with Michigan-grown foods.

Attractions are many

The list of events is constantly growing, but the main attractions this year include several farmers markets in Lansing and Detroit:

■ Sept. 13 is the third annual "Buy Fresh, Buy Local — Select Michigan Day" with another farmers market on the Capitol lawn. Farmers and vendors

Key Points

- Sept. 13 is "Buy Fresh, Buy Local — Select Michigan Day."
- Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit will also have a farmers market on Aug. 22.
- Michigan Harvest Gathering plans its annual kickoff to coincide with Sept. 13.

from the state will be selling Michigan-grown and processed products, from apples to honey to fresh flowers.

■ The Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit will also have a farmers market on Aug. 22, featuring local food and jazz music. About 3,000 people are expected to join the celebration.

■ The Michigan State Fair Blue Ribbon Farmers' Market in Detroit is from Aug. 22 to Sept. 3 and features all Michigan-grown foods and products.

■ The Michigan Harvest Gathering is planning its annual kickoff to coincide with Sept. 13, and the FBCM will have a

mobile pantry at the Capitol to highlight the work the group does in statewide leadership to food banks to alleviate the hunger of Michigan families. MDA is also working to have the week of Sept. 9 – 15 as "Select Michigan Week."

For more information about the Select Michigan program, visit www.michigan.gov/mda. To check out a list of events and participating communities this year or read about previous years' events, visit www.miffs.org.



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Petoskey farm, MSU get grants

NEARLY \$20 million in USDA Conservation Innovation Grants were recently awarded to 36 states to fund 51 projects designed to develop and refine cutting-edge technologies and approaches that can help producers maintain viable agricultural operations.

Two conservation Innovation Grants were awarded in Michigan. Michigan State University was awarded a \$443,410 grant to develop a National Air Quality Self Assessment Tool. The tool will be used to help poultry and livestock producers determine the best methods to mitigate air emissions specific to their operations.

Coveyou Farms of Petoskey will receive an \$87,300 grant to develop, install and demonstrate a portable high tunnel growing system.

Additional information about CIG, including summaries of approved projects, is online at www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cig. A chart for a listing of FY 2007 CIG projects can be found at www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cig/2007awards.html.

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