

New Website Developed to Connect Farm Markets, Growers and Consumers for a Healthier Population

Want to find fresh produce in your area? Find out what's growing! New website offers fresh farm markets and growers a platform for connecting with each other and with fresh produce consumers.

Newark, DE (PRWEB) February 8, 2006 -- Word of mouth and trial and error used to be the only methods of locating farm stands for fresh produce in season, but a new website (www.agri-culturehealth.com) was recently launched in the Mid-Atlantic area that makes it much easier for consumers to find fresh-picked fruits and vegetables at local farm markets -- and it also connects farm markets with growers.

When it comes to consuming fresh fruits and vegetables, nothing could be healthier than selecting ripe specimens picked fresh from a local garden; and for busy people, local produce stands are a great source. However, finding farm markets isn't always easy, and knowing when different types of produce are in season is often a guessing game.

The Mid-Atlantic Consortium, a group of educational institutions, businesses, and community and government organizations in the Mid-Atlantic region, developed www.agri-culturehealth.com as one of 14 nationwide initiatives to address these and other food systems issues for consumers, farm markets and growers. It was designed to promote the consumption of healthy foods by providing consumers with a means of finding locally grown produce easily, and to provide business information to fresh markets and growers as well.

"We wanted to create a user-driven website with a database of farm markets that can be accessed by market name, county or crop," says project director Carl German, Extension Crops Marketing Specialist at the University of Delaware's Department of Food & Resource Economics.

"But it's more than just a list for consumers," he notes. "It's also a powerful tool for markets and growers. We designed it to include in-depth information on planning farm markets, links to food safety and health resources, daily and weekly market and crop reports and wholesale auction information."

To populate the database, farm markets and growers log into the website and create a free user account. From there they have access to a wealth of wholesale information, and can update their contact information and available crops as they come into season, making it easier for consumers to find what they need, and for growers to find outlets for their produce.

Once the database is populated, consumers will have broader access to the fresh markets as well as helpful information on selecting fresh produce, USDA information on food safety and nutritional information, and health links.

The Mid-Atlantic Consortium hopes growers and farm markets will take advantage of the opportunities provided by the new website, which will in turn drive consumer use. By using the power of the web to connect the fresh produce industry to its market, the Consortium hopes to promote a healthier population with more choices.

Word is getting out to local markets; Fifer Orchards in Wyoming, Delaware, recently logged in and created an



account, which includes a listing of every produce category they carry, as well as a link to their website and information about their market.

“This should be a tremendous tool for people to use to find fresh produce in season,” said Mary Fifer Fennemore. “We hope it will increase our pick-your-own trade and traffic into our country store as well.”

Web designer Pat Chambers of Innovative Exchange, Inc. (IXI) the Forrest Hill, Maryland company that designed and hosts the site, is excited about the benefits that www.agri-culturehealth.com provides both producers and consumers.

“The goal is to provide a multi-use tool set for getting fresh produce from the ground to the table,” said Chambers. “It’s colorful, dynamic, and easy to navigate...essential items for any website, but it’s also designed to grow with use. We’re glad to have had a hand in creating it.”

Contact:

Carl German

University of Delaware

Dept. of Food & Resource Economics

302-831-1317

###

Contact Information

Carl German

<http://www.agri-culturehealth.com>

302-831-1317