

Southern Maryland Regional Farmer's Market Opens

CHELTENHAM, Md. — The Southern Maryland Regional Farmer's Market has opened its wholesale auction market for the 1993 season. The first sale was held Friday, June 4.

Produce auctions are scheduled for every Friday in June at 11 a.m. As the supply of fresh, local produce increases, additional sales will be added on Mondays and Wednesdays at 11 a.m. and Thursdays at 7 p.m. Thursday night sales were something new tried by the market last season and proved to be a big success with both buyers and growers.

One of the improvements in the market this season is a rebate being offered to sellers. Sellers who sell more than \$5,000 worth of produce during the season will receive a 1 percent rebate on the

amount sold over \$5,000. A 2-percent rebate will be given on the amount sold over \$7,500. Rebates will be mailed to sellers after the auction market closes for the season and by December 1, 1993.

According to market manager Regina Prunty, the rebate is being offered as an incentive for growers to sell more of their produce through the auction.

"If the market is to continue to grow, we must sell more volume of quality produce," said Prunty.

Commission rates for selling in the auction are 12 percent for out-of-state growers and 10 percent for Maryland growers.

A "no sale" fee is still in effect for this year. Sellers will be charged \$2 per lot of produce for rejecting a final bid. "The 'no sale' fee is charged because of the

time required to auction the produce," said Prunty.

The market will strictly enforce more than ever its policy against topping or "nesting" as referred to by tobacco growers. Topping is not going to be tolerated according to Prunty. "Growers who top only end up hurting themselves and the market in the long run by driving buyers away," she said.

Another improvement this season is expansion of the calling area for the market's 1-800-533-FARM phone line. Previously the line could only be called from within Maryland. It can now be called from states outside of Maryland. The change was made as a service to out-of-state participants.

One of the many advantages the market offers sellers is weekly

payments. Sellers can pick up their checks on Wednesday of the following week.

Buyers are required to pay a \$10 season buyer registration fee. The market offers buyers a quick and efficient checkout procedure. Buyers must have prior approval by the market manager to write checks for their purchases.

In 1992 the wholesale market had about 200 buyers and 200 sellers with \$335,000 in gross sales. Goals for this year are to have at least 250 buyers and 250 sellers with \$500,000 in gross sales. "We are hoping for our best season

ever," said Prunty.

The retail market of the Southern Maryland Regional Farmer's Market is set to open on June 26. Seasonal rates are \$250 for Maryland growers and \$300 for out-of-state growers. Daily rental rates are \$15 for Maryland growers and \$20 for out-of-state growers. Retail hours for this year are 1 p.m.-6 p.m. on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons and 9 a.m.-3 p.m. on Saturdays. Stalls are still available for the market.

For more information about the wholesale auction or retail market, call (800) 533-FARM or (301) 372-1066.



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19	6.84	13.68	17.10
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1	2	3	4	5
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11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25
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36	37	38	39	40

(Phone Numbers Count As One Word)

