

## Farmers' Market Managers, Farmer/Vendor Training Schools Set

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — The Farmers' Market Federation of New York has teamed with the NYS Farmers' Direct Marketing Association to bring a full day of training seminars to farmers' market managers, sponsors, farmers, and vendors.

The training school will be Jan. 31, 2000 in Rochester, N.Y. This is in conjunction with the NYS Farmers' Direct Marketing Conference sponsored each year by the NYS Farmers' Direct Marketing Association.

Participants will be able to attend a variety of instructional sessions sponsored by the Farmers' Market Federation, visit a trade show with vendors specializing in direct farm marketing, and enjoy the company of others with the same interests and businesses as you.

A concern of many market managers and sponsors is farm inspections. These inspections are often necessary as disputes arise over possible market rules infractions and FMNP misuse. The first session of the day will be farm inspection training.

The Greenmarket inspector, Carolyn Lasar, and Tony Manna, executive director of the Greenmarkets will share skills, techniques and knowledge to help others perform effective and relatively pain-free inspections. They'll help us to understand how to verify a crop plan and determine eligibility for the FMNP and for selling at a market based on a grower only or percentage of homegrown rule.

Most every market is looking to add to their customer base. One "demographic" that markets often lack is the restaurant trade. Restaurant owners and chefs can mean a great deal of repeat business to a market. But what exactly are they looking for and how do

we convince them that the farmers' markets have what they want? An executive chef in Rochester, Richard Reynolds of Woodcliff Restaurant will explain just what it takes for a market and a farmer to attract restaurants and chefs to a market and keep them coming back week after week.

The Ithaca Farmers' Market has come up with a very effective plan for attracting new farmers and vendors to their market. The program, called the "Easy Entry Program" offers newcomers an incentive to try the market out for a season before they must make a financial commitment for market membership. Andre Goncorovs, a member of the Ithaca Board of Directors will share the details of the program with you. You may be able to take home the kernels of an idea that will grow into your own plan to increase your farmer and vendor base.

Market farmers and vendors will have their own training sessions held concurrently with the managers training sessions. These classes include such things as how to deal with problem customers. This session will be presented by a group of marketers from the Rochester farmers' market. Their presentation will be a fun learning experience using skits and role-playing.

Next, Monika Roth, from Cornell Cooperative Extension in Tompkins County, will give a talk on what makes a market stand "stand out" from the others. Her presentation will include a slide presentation of examples of attractive and effective displays — they draw the customer's attention and invite them to purchase the products they see.

Monika will also be presenting a panel of marketers of niche products. The marketers will talk about how and why they got in-

involved in their particular product line. They'll stress the importance of finding your own place in the mix of products at your farmers' market and then making that niche work to your best advantage.

After lunch, market managers, sponsors, farmers, and vendors will come together for joint sessions. The Warwick Valley Farmers Market and the Downtown Syracuse Farmers Market will give presentations on their guerilla marketing techniques. These two markets are excellent examples of how markets can promote their

markets effectively on a shoestring budget. Their style of marketing makes use of free publicity, special events and entertainment, promotional sales material and friends of the market campaigns.

For the last session, Anu Rangarajan, an assistant professor with Fresh Market Vegetable Production at Cornell University, will give a presentation on the "Fresh Now Series." This is a series of informational brochures and press materials promoting New York State grown products that she developed with Jennifer Wil-

kins, professor of Nutrition, Cornell University. Anu would like to not only tell you about the program, but she would also like your feedback. This will be an opportunity for you to get involved in a project that Cornell is working on for your benefit.

For more information on the training schools, the Direct Marketing Conference, Trade Show and registration information, contact Diane Eggert at the Farmers' Market Federation, (315) 656-9977.

## USDA Implements Additional Digital Imaging Sites

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The USDA is expanding the availability of new digital imaging services at 12 major city terminal food markets throughout the country.

The Fresh Products Branch of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service has equipped inspectors in the designated market offices with digital cameras and enhanced computer technology for taking and transmitting images of produce or containers.

AMS is offering the images to applicants over the Internet as an additional resource in its fresh fruits and vegetable inspection service. Inspectors also use the imaging to confer with produce quality experts working in USDA's headquarters in Washington, D.C.

The imaging provides a quick, visual confirmation of product

appearance and defects, damage from shifted loads, brands and container markings, and container conditions.

"Digital imaging technology backs up our inspection standards and can help the produce industry quickly resolve disputes over the quality or condition of shipments," said Michael V. Dunn, Undersecretary for USDA's Marketing and Regulatory Programs. "This service is important when considering the perishable nature of fruits and vegetables."

Digital images may be requested by any financially interested party by contacting Fresh Products Branch market inspection offices. Charges are based on a hourly rate of \$43, with a one-hour minimum. The digital images may be viewed on the applicant's

computer screen and are password-protected to ensure privacy.

For additional information, contact the AMS Fresh Products Branch headquarters at (202) 720-5870. Market offices may also be contacted directly: Boston, Mass., (617) 389-2480; Bronx, N.Y., (718) 991-7665; Chicago, Ill., (630) 794-0754; Dallas, Texas, (214) 767-5337; Baltimore-Washington, D.C., (301) 317-4387; Los Angeles, Calif., (323) 725-0442; Miami, Fla., (305) 870-9542; Newark, N.J., (973) 645-2636; Philadelphia, Pa., (215) 336-0845; Pittsburgh, Pa., (412) 261-6435; San Francisco, Calif., (650) 876-9313; Seattle, Wash., (253) 859-9801; and the AMS oversight office in North Highlands, Calif., (916) 332-4758.

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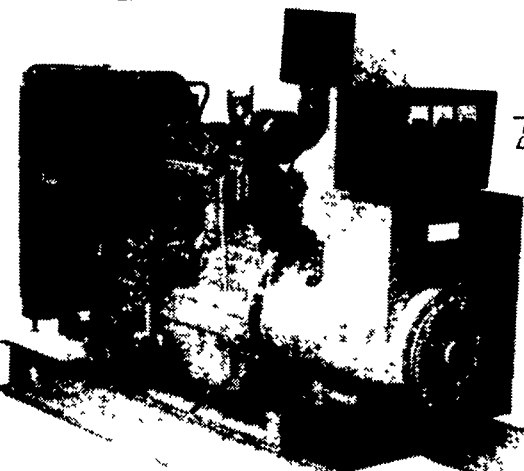

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