

Opportunity For Growers To Expand Markets

PHILADELPHIA — Pennsylvania Preferred, an initiative stemming from the annual ten-day The Book and The Cook Fair and Festival in Philadelphia, is hosting special events to increase awareness and business for growers of Pennsylvania products.

The first Pennsylvania Preferred event took place on March 2 and 3 and featured the products of eight specialty growers in Pennsylvania. Many of Philadelphia's acclaimed chefs had a chance to sample these quality products prepared by Chef Michael Bruno at the Sheraton Rittenhouse Square. The chefs also met with the growers of each product.

During the event, students from the Saint Joseph's

Academy of Food Marketing were on hand to present an interim review of the marketing study. The study commissioned by The Book and The Cook with the support of a Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture matching grant for each of the participating

growers.

As Pennsylvania Preferred "grows" into phase two of the project this fall, students from Saint Joseph's University will work with Pennsylvania growers to expand their markets within the Philadelphia restaurant community

and high-end retail stores. A key element in this phase be a campaign for growers interested in branding their products and educating consumers.

Quality specialty produce growers in Pennsylvania are

invited to participate in Pennsylvania Preferred. If you have a product that fits this description and if you have an interest in learning more about upcoming Pennsylvania Preferred events, contact The Book and The Cook at (215) 545-5353.

Farmers' Market Federation To Offer Transition Training

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — New York State's more than 230 farmers' markets provide an important marketing alternative for existing farmers seeking alternatives to existing farm enterprises, or for new farmers seeking to enter agriculture.

Farmers Markets offer low-cost access to consumers

seeking to purchase locally grown products and yield farmers immediate cash through retail sales. They also provide an ideal low-risk "farmer-friendly" setting for testing out new farm enterprises and products, such as specialty crops and value-added farm products, that can strengthen and sustain a

farm enterprise.

However, many farmers in need of marketing alternatives, have not taken advantage of the important economic opportunities offered by farmers' markets. This can be due to a number of factors, including farmers' unfamiliarity with the markets' potential for sales, their uncertainty about what prod-

ucts can be sold successfully, or their lack of knowledge of the direct marketing and merchandising practices needed to succeed at the markets. As a result, existing farms faced with economic uncertainty may be lost to agriculture when they could be revitalized and sustained through participation at farmers' markets.

The Farmers' Market Federation of New York is undertaking a new project aiming to eliminate the uncertainty that prevents farmers from taking advantage of the direct marketing opportunities of farmers' markets. Farmers wanting to transition their farming operation to include a direct marketing approach and those interested in starting out in farming will be encouraged to participate in this project.

As a first step, farm tours will be organized across the state, throughout the growing season. The tours will look at innovative production techniques, different niches such as herbs, pastured poultry, bedding plants, livestock raised for retail sales, and fresh cut flowers to name a few. Program participants will learn about each farming operation and have the opportunity to ask questions and network with others with similar interests. The program will culminate in a workshop with classroom style training in marketing skills, production techniques and discussions of the many direct marketing channels.

If you are interested in participating in this program, call the Farmers' Market Federation of New York office at (315) 475-1101.

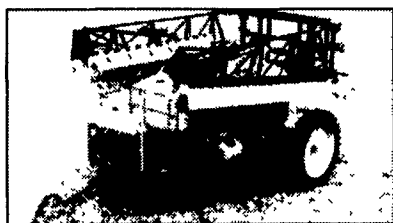


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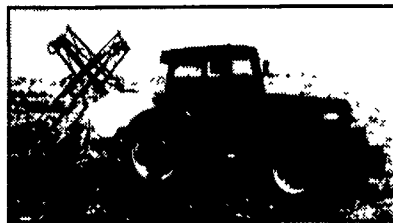
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