



2017 Advocacy Priorities

MIFMA's Advocacy Accomplishments



2009- MIFMA works with MDARD to secure a licensing exemption for egg producers selling direct to consumers



2009- MIFMA works with MDARD to publish Safe Food Sampling Guidelines



2010- MIFMA advocates for the passage of the Cottage Food Law



2013- MIFMA supports the passage of Public Act 100 to create a license for wine sales at farmers markets



2015- MIFMA works with MDARD to license farmers markets to do cooking demonstrations throughout the market season

The Michigan Farmers Market Association (MIFMA) is a statewide, member-based association with a mission to advance farmers markets to create a thriving marketplace for local food and farm products. To accomplish this mission, our work includes advocacy. MIFMA supports and advocates for policies at the federal, state and local levels that expand opportunities for direct market farmers and businesses, support the farmers market industry, contribute to vibrant communities, and sustain the environment.

MIFMA represents more than 575 members, including more than 225 farmers and food and ag-based businesses that sell at farmers markets, as well as more than 150 farmers markets that contribute to the economic viability of more than 3,000 farmers and food and ag-based businesses.

This document outlines MIFMA's priorities for 2017. These advocacy goals support our mission, and the objectives are integral to our strategic plan.

Goal:

Support policy initiatives within the state of Michigan that advance and improve farmers markets.

Objectives:

- ✿ To increase the awareness and consumption of value-added products that highlight Michigan's diverse agricultural industry.
- ✿ To support policies that enable food entrepreneurs to use Michigan grown and produced products.
- ✿ To create new opportunities for promoting farmers markets, food and ag-based businesses, and Michigan grown and produced products.

Action:

- ✿ Support legislators in the re-introduction and passage of a bill to expand licensing that allows beer sales at Michigan farmers markets.
- ✿ Share information about the success of wine sales at farmers markets in an effort to educate potential bill sponsors to increase the size of wineries that are eligible for the farmers markets license.

Goal:

Support initiatives, including food assistance programs, that ensure access to fresh, nutritious, local foods available at Michigan farmers markets.

Objectives:

- ✿ To advocate for maintaining and/or expanding funding for food assistance programs that can be, or could be in the future, redeemed at farmers markets. For example, supporting the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) referred to as WIC Project FRESH in Michigan; the Senior FMNP referred to as Senior Project FRESH/Market FRESH in Michigan; WIC Cash Value Benefits; Prescription for Health style programs; and Hoophouses for Health.
- ✿ To support programs and collaborate with organizations that work to increase consumers' access to nutritious, locally produced foods through farmers markets. For example, supporting Fair Food Network's Double Up Food Bucks program partially funded through the Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) program and Michigan Nutrition Network's SNAP-Ed nutrition education program.
- ✿ To support federal and state initiatives that increase the capacity of or reduce the barriers for farmers and farmers markets implementing food assistance programs.

Action:

- ✿ Advocate for the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services to incorporate into the State Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) SNAP processing contract an amendment that equips farmers markets and direct-marketing farmers with free, wireless equipment that does not incur transaction fees.

Goal:

Establish relationships with legislators and other food and farming organizations in alignment with our mission to advance farmers markets to create a thriving marketplace for local food and farm products.

Objective:

- ✿ To identify and align with initiatives and organizations with clearly stated advocacy priorities including, but not limited to, the Michigan Good Food Charter, Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan, Michigan Alliance to Stop Hunger, Farmers Market Coalition (FMC), and the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC).
- ✿ To advocate for maintaining and/or expanding the funding essential to the farmers market community including, but not limited to, the Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Programs, Specialty Crop Block Grant program, the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, and the Value Added Producer Grant.

Action:

- ✿ A MIFMA representative will serve on the Michigan Good Food Charter steering committee. MIFMA staff will participate in the Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan Community Policy Action Team for Healthy Food Access and the Michigan Alliance to Stop Hunger. MIFMA's Executive Director will serve on the Farmers Market Coalition's Board of Directors, and MIFMA staff will participate in multiple committees within NSAC.
- ✿ On any bill that MIFMA supports, the Advocacy Committee will (1) identify the bill sponsor(s); (2) have a committee member contact the legislator(s) to share our Advocacy Priorities and express our support of the legislation; (3) ask the bill sponsor(s) which committee the bill will be referred to and how MIFMA can support bill advocacy. For example, MIFMA may testify at committee hearings, contact committee members to express support and/or host or participate in media events to bring awareness to the legislation.
- ✿ Educate our members on which legislators are in key positions to support our advocacy priorities and guide our members in how they can strengthen their relationships with those decision-makers. Support our members in their advocacy efforts by providing tools and resources.