



Wine Sales at FARMERS MARKETS

In 2013, Public Act 100 was approved by the legislature and signed into law, allowing farmers markets across the State of Michigan to have the ability to accept any “qualified small wine maker” for the purpose of sampling and selling their products at the market. The current definition of a “qualified small wine maker” is an entity that produces 5,000 gallons or less in one calendar year. Under the law, these wineries can serve up to three two-ounce samples of wine and sell their product on-site in a specific designated area within the market.

According to the Michigan Grape & Wine Industry Council, Michigan consistently ranks in the top ten in the nation for wine grape production, with more than 410 wineries bottling more than 2.4 million gallons of wine annually. Of those wineries, 130 are considered commercial wineries which produce more than 50,000 gallons of wine annually, and 280 are categorized as small winemakers which produce 50,000 gallons or less in 1 calendar year.

The role of farmers markets across the state of Michigan is to give citizens direct access to fresh produce and locally produced foods, and to support local businesses. As Michigan farmers markets continue to thrive, qualified wineries have begun utilizing this opportunity to connect with local customers. This has helped “qualified small wine makers” (which include the sale of grape wine, hard cider and mead) to increase overall sales, build relationships with other local vendors, and spread the word about their vineyards and tasting rooms. It also has allowed the consumer to discover new businesses, support local food systems, and help stimulate a growing Michigan economy.

Concerns

- Only 34 qualified small winemakers have received a permit to sell at farmers markets since 2013.
- The current gallon threshold:
 - Limits the number of small businesses in the State of Michigan that can benefit from building relationships with the local consumer at farmers markets;
 - Prevents farmers markets from being able to recruit an eligible winemaker due to the small number of businesses who qualify;
 - Prevents consumers from supporting more locally owned businesses.

Solution

In recognition of the growing wine industry within the State of Michigan and the desire to see small businesses thrive, the limit set by law to sell at farmers markets should increase to the current definition of a small wine maker set by the Michigan Liquor Control Commission – 50,000 gallons. This allows farmers markets statewide more ability to recruit small winemakers as vendors, allows more opportunity from wine makers to promote a growing industry within the state, and allows the consumer exposure to more local businesses.



#FarmersMarketsMI

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