



Menominee Historic Downtown Farmers Market

Menominee, Michigan

2016 Impacts

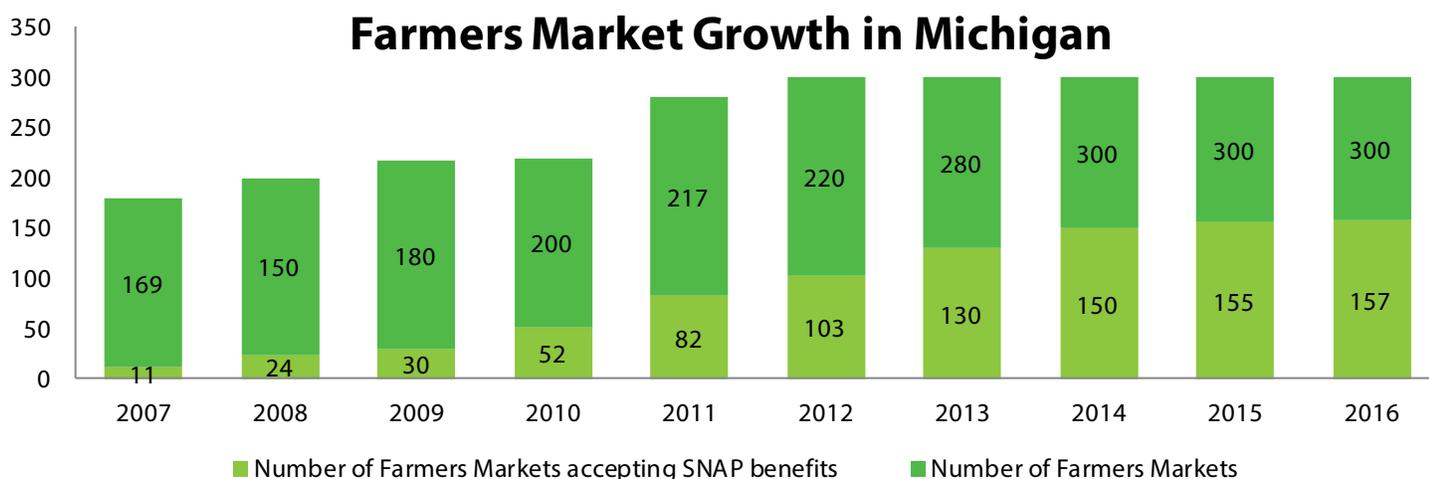


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INTRODUCTION

In 2006, the Michigan Farmers Market Association (MIFMA) was formed to provide a central resource for farmers markets and the farmers and vendors that sell at farmers markets, working toward a mission of advancing farmers markets to create a thriving marketplace for local food and farm products. MIFMA defines a farmers market as a public and recurring assembly of farmers or their representatives selling direct-to-consumer food and products which they have produced themselves.¹ In addition, the market may include a variety of vendors as determined by market management. A farmers market is organized for the purpose of facilitating personal connections that create mutual benefits for local farmers, vendors, shoppers and communities.

Over the last 10 years, the number of farmers markets in Michigan has doubled, from 150 in 2006 to more than 300 in 2016. This growth can be attributed to the wide range of benefits farmers markets provide their communities including, but not limited to, acting as the center of a thriving regional food system, supporting food and farm based businesses, serving as a community gathering place, increasing healthy food access, and protecting farmland and the environment.



Michigan markets are central to strong regional food systems because they promote farm vitality and provide communities of all sizes direct access to farmers and their products. Michigan farmers markets operate as incubators for unique and varying food and farm businesses. By fostering a mutually beneficial relationship between customers and farmers, farmers markets give small businesses a unique outlet to develop a customer base and increase profits. Low-income areas can also be reinvigorated through exposure to diverse products found within these markets, especially to a wide variety of fruits and vegetables which are often difficult to access in underserved areas. Benefiting from one of the most diverse selections of local agriculture in the nation, Michigan farmers markets expose communities to an ever-changing selection of products throughout the year.

Farmers markets generate economic benefit not only for the farmers and small businesses that participate, but also for neighborhood and nearby businesses, as well as the surrounding region. Farmers markets attract shoppers to a downtown or commercial area where they will often linger and make additional purchases during their shopping trip, thus spreading economic impact throughout the community. Farmers markets also distribute impact through a community by supporting small businesses, which are more likely to purchase goods and services from local or regional suppliers for the inputs they need.

¹ MIFMA definition of a farmers market: <http://mifma.org/aboutus/>

By creating a thriving marketplace on a weekly basis, farmers markets also foster community development. Farmers markets create an active public space that offers community members a unique experience to gather, interact, and build relationships. As a community gathering place, markets can shape growth, foster development, and strengthen communities.

Michigan farmers markets also expand access to local, nutritious foods which affects the health of the entire community. MIFMA strives to ensure all residents have access to locally grown, fresh, nutritious food. In 2006, only three of Michigan's farmers markets accepted the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). In 2016, 157 farmers markets in Michigan, just over half of all markets in the state, accepted SNAP. In addition to SNAP, customers have the opportunity to utilize many different food assistance benefits at Michigan farmers markets, such as Double Up Food Bucks, WIC Project FRESH, Market FRESH for Seniors, and Hoophouses for Health. Accepting a variety of food assistance benefits allows markets to serve a wide and diverse customer base and provides an inclusive environment for community members. When food assistance benefits, such as SNAP, flow through farmers markets, federal and philanthropic dollars circulate through local communities and benefit local businesses.

Farmers markets also help to protect Michigan agriculture, farmland, and greenspace. Farmland is protected and well cared for when farming is profitable. Supporting farm vitality helps keep and restore farmland to production, as well as enabling farmers to utilize management practices that protect the environment and incorporate and care for greenspace.

While the benefits of farmers markets are diverse and expansive, the economic impact of Michigan farmers markets has not been measured or documented. For this reason, MIFMA identified the need for standardized, accurate data collection at a local and state level in order to recognize and document the contributions farmers markets make to Michigan's food and agricultural industry.



Successful farmers markets reflect on the benefits they provide, measure their impact, and share the outcomes. Having strong data leads to strong markets. Strong markets measure various impacts to share with vendors, customers, community partners, and other local stakeholders. The impact farmers markets have on their communities is significant. When a market is focused on attracting visitors, facilitating a thriving local marketplace, and administering various food assistance benefits, measuring and communicating about their impact is often an overlooked and undervalued investment of time, energy, and resources. Strong farmers markets understand the importance of identifying important metrics, utilizing sound measurement instruments and practices, being accurate and timely with measurement, and tracking metrics over time. Initiating this kind of thoughtful and comprehensive approach to data collection at farmers markets will help markets evaluate and share their impact.

For these reasons, MIFMA conducted a pilot project in 2016 with funding from a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG). Through this pilot, MIFMA sought to assess the economic contribution farmers markets make to Michigan's rural communities. The pilot project supported seven farmers markets in six rural communities in collecting data and assessing economic contribution. Each of these participating communities is considered rural according to the following USDA Economic Research Service definition: a nonmetropolitan area, based at the county level, which includes a combination of open countryside, rural towns (places with fewer than 2,500 people), and urban areas with populations ranging from 2,500 to 49,999 that are not part of larger labor market areas (metropolitan areas).²

Participating communities benefited from this project by gaining access to data they could use to inform future decisions. Area small businesses also benefited by learning how the farmers market contributes to their independent stores' consumer attendance and sales. Participating markets benefited by collecting data that can demonstrate the market's impacts on the community and can be used to inform future decisions about expansion, the addition or enhancement of facilities, and/or to identify and evaluate new opportunities.



² United States Department of Agriculture. Economic Research Service. *USDA ERS - Rural Classifications*. N.p., 17 Nov. 2016. Web. 30 Mar. 2017.

Data was collected over the course of the 2016 farmers market season in a variety of ways including: customer surveys, a pre- and post-season vendor survey to summarize season sales and trends, a daily vendor sales log, and data collection by market managers to document daily trends such as customer counts and vendor attendance.

Market managers who participated in this study faced many barriers including hesitation from farmers and vendors to report sales, taxing weather conditions, cumbersome reporting requirements, and limited staff time available for this project. To make strides in assessing the impacts of their markets, most managers had to overcome a lack in budget resources and staff time to collect useable information. The participating farmers market managers understood the value of the data being collected and took the time to make it a part of their daily operational duties.

Valuable records are attained by making data collection part of ongoing market operations. Utilizing the information gained from data collection helps to enforce market operations by showing what outside factors may be effecting market dynamics. Data collection also informs management strategy by identifying where energy should be focused. This helps market managers be strategic about the limited time they have to offer.

METHODOLOGY

Throughout the 2016 market season, market managers were asked to collect data through a farmers market profile, two connected Excel workbooks (one for master data entry and one to track vendor sales), a vendor profile survey, vendor sales slips, visitor/customer survey, and a visitor count log.

Vendors were asked to take a pre-season vendor profile survey that asked for information about acreage owned and/or leased, distance traveled to the market, products offered, and in which farmers markets they participate. Vendor sales were tracked each market day by collecting vendor sales slips. Sales slips accounted for cash, credit/debit, and food assistance program sales. Although these were required pieces of data, reporting was inconsistent due to lack of participation from all vendors. Market managers also tracked vendor attendance, volunteer hours, and visitor counts. Visitor surveys were also distributed throughout the market season to capture feedback from unique customers. The number of customer surveys to be collected was determined by using estimated annual visitor attendance and a survey sample calculator with a confidence level of 95% and a confidence interval of 10. Farmers market visitors were asked about what transportation method they used to reach the market, their zip code, the amount of money spent at the farmers market and at surrounding businesses, products they were purchasing, and frequency of visits to the market.

MARKET PROFILE

Menominee Historic Downtown Farmers Market

Sponsoring Organization: Menominee Downtown Business Association

When: 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. Wednesdays June - October, Saturdays Year-Round

Where: Summer - 1st Street & 8th Ave Menominee 49858
Winter - Menominee Senior Center (905 10th St. Menominee 49858)

Style: Summer - Pop-Up in a Park, Winter - Shared Building

County: Menominee

County Population: 23,548

Website: <http://www.menomineefarmersmarket.com>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MenomineeFarmersMarket/>

Market Management: Volunteer

Market Manager Status: Certified Market Manager

Number of Market Days Throughout Season: 60

Average Number of Weekly Vendors: 4

Total Number of Vendors Throughout Season: 10

Average Number of Visitors Each Market Day: 65

Types of Currency Accepted: Cash, Check, Debit & Credit, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)³, Double Up Food Bucks⁴, WIC Project FRESH (WIC FMNP)⁵, Market FRESH (Senior FMNP)⁶



**Senior Project FRESH/
Market FRESH**

³ SNAP EBT: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, a nutrition assistance program administered by the United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service to help low-income people and families to buy the food they need for good health. Benefits are distributed on debit-like Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards and transfer to retailers through an electronic system. www.fns.usda.gov/snap/

⁴ Double Up Food Bucks: A SNAP incentive program developed by Fair Food Network that doubles the value of SNAP benefits spent at participating markets and grocery stores. www.fairfoodnetwork.org/projects/double-up-food-bucks/

⁵ WIC Project FRESH: Federally recognized as Women, Infants, and Children Farmers Market Nutrition Program (WIC FMNP). A program providing participating WIC clients with coupons to purchase eligible, locally grown, fresh, unprepared fruits and vegetables at authorized farmers markets. www.michigan.gov/mdhhs

⁶ Market FRESH: Federally recognized as Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (Senior FMNP). An educational program providing senior participants with coupons to purchase locally grown, fresh fruits and vegetables at participating farmers markets. www.michigan.gov/marketfresh

MARKET DESCRIPTION

The mission of the Menominee Historic Downtown Farmers Market:

“To provide a venue for mutually beneficial partnership between producers and consumers in our community.”

The Menominee Historic Downtown Farmers Market is a year-round market sponsored by the Menominee Downtown Business Association and operated by the Menominee Historic Downtown Farmers Market Association. By operating year-round, the market builds relationships between farmers, producers, and consumers to improve the financial and physical health of the community. Each week, volunteers organize and run the market.

The Menominee Historic Downtown Farmers Market started in 2006 as part of the Menominee Downtown Development Authority (MDDA). In 2010, the Menominee Historic Downtown Farmers Market was born as a State Non-Profit market. During this time the farmers market formed a board of directors, rules and regulations, and vendor applications. Solely run by volunteers, the Downtown Menominee Farmers Market was the first in the Upper Peninsula to have a Certified Market Manager. With the help of the Delta Menominee Health Department the farmers market became the first in Menominee County to accept the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Double Up Food Bucks (DUFEB), debit and credit cards, and one of the first in Menominee County to be part of the Hoophouse for Health program. The Certified Market Manager represents the market by belonging to the Menominee Downtown Development Authority, (MDDA) the Menominee Downtown Business Association (MDBA), the Menominee County Healthy Communities Coalition (HCC), and MIFMA.

Situated on the Green Bay shoreline, visitors to the market are steps away from the Marina and Menominee Band Shell. The farmers market gives the community a central gathering place throughout the year while exposing residents and tourists to nutritious and locally grown foods. Vendors offer fresh whitefish, other meats, eggs, produce, and crafts. Providing an all-inclusive environment, the farmers market accepts multiple forms of currency, including several different food assistance benefits.

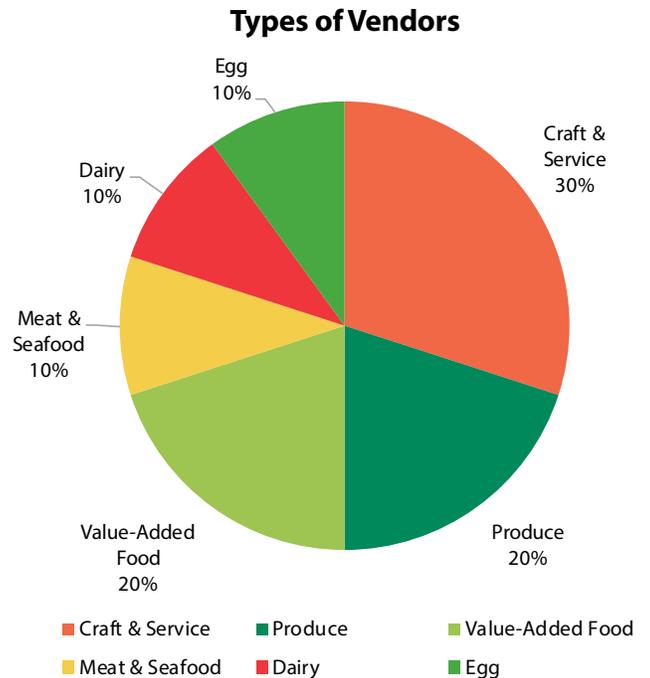


VENDORS

The Vantage Point Farmers Market brings together a variety of farmers and small businesses from along the eastern border of Michigan. The Vantage Point Farmers Market is open to producer-only vendors.

- Through the course of 2016, 10 vendors attended the Menominee Historic Downtown Farmers Market with an average of 4 vendors per market day. These small businesses sold a wide range of product types, including an average of 20 different food items eligible to be purchased with SNAP

- Crafts and Services: 3 Vendors (30%)
- Produce: 2 Vendors (20%)
- Value-Added: 2 Vendors (20%)
- Meat and Fish: 1 Vendor (10%)
- Eggs: 1 Vendor (10%)
- Dairy: 1 Vendor (10%)



- Total Number of Individuals Employed Through Vendor Businesses: 24
 - Year-Round Employees: 23
 - Seasonal Employees: 1
- Total Acres Owned or Leased by Farmer Vendors (reported by farmer vendors) ⁷: 770
 - Owned: 750 acres
 - Leased: 20 acres
- Average Number of Miles Vendors Traveled to the Market: 20 miles
- 2 of the Farmer Vendors have Less than 10 Years of Experience
- 20% of Farm Vendors are Certified Organic

⁷ This number represents acres of land owned or leased by farm vendors who reported owning or leasing land in the vendor pre-season survey.



24 employees
are supported by our vendors' businesses.

Small businesses create new, meaningful employment opportunities.



20 miles
average distance food travels from farm to our market.

That's fresh!



770 acres
of farmland in production by our vendors.
America loses an acre of farmland every hour to development.

VISITORS

Weekly, an average of 65 people visited the Menominee Historic Downtown Farmers Market, resulting in approximately 3,755⁸ total visits throughout the season. 30% of visitors surveyed come from Menominee (zip code 49858). The market sees visitors from 15 zipcodes outside of the Upper Peninsula including the Eastern Lower Peninsula, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, and Minnesota.

- Estimated Average Visitor Count Per Day: 65
- Estimated Annual Visitor Count: 3,754

Customers who reported their amount spent in the visitor survey spent an average of \$15.

- 54% of visitors came to the area specifically for the market
- More than half (55%) of visitors who came to the area specifically for the market also ending up shopping in the surrounding area

Average visitor who also shopped in the surrounding area spent \$50 downtown.

- 65% of visitors shopped or planned to shop in the surrounding area

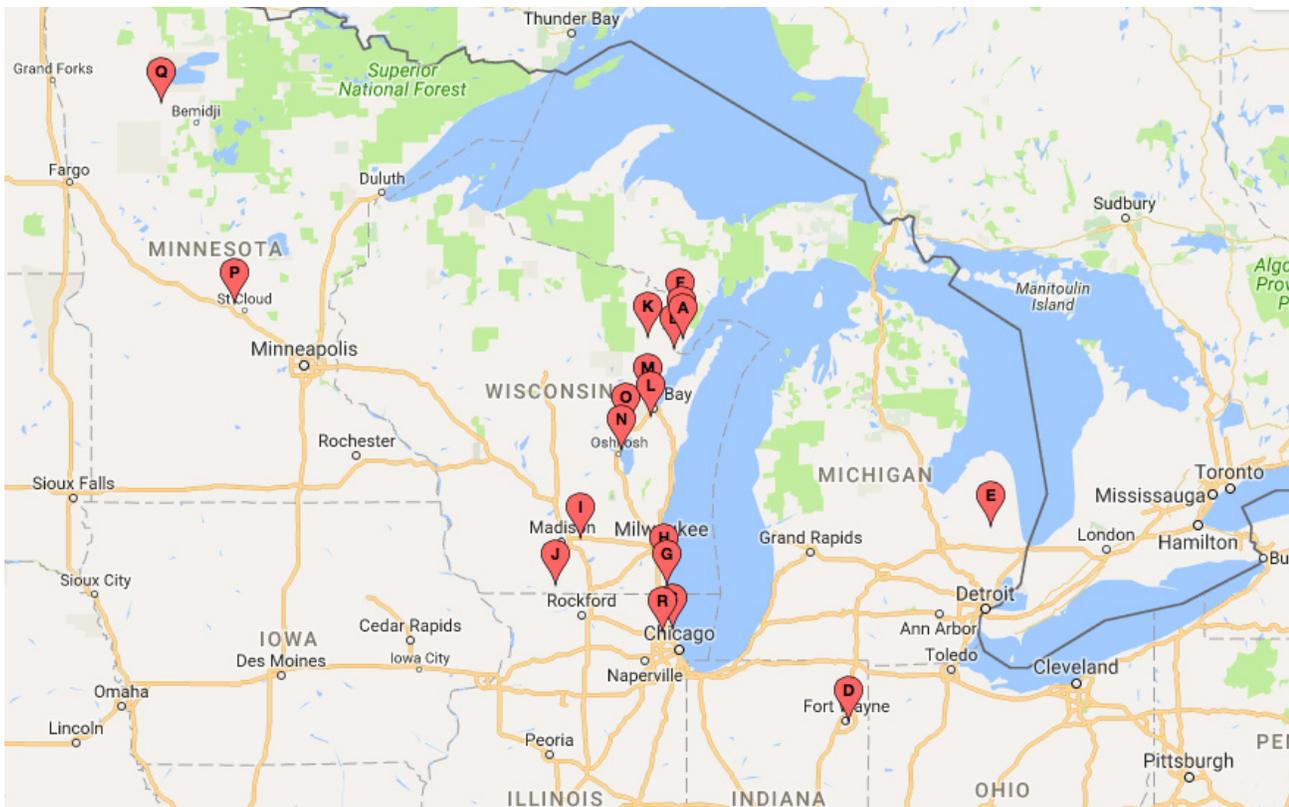


65%
of visitors

plan to spend money at neighboring businesses on market days.

Local businesses benefit from customers drawn to the area on market days.

⁸ This number does not represent unique visitors. The average number of visitors was calculated by taking monthly visitor counts periodically throughout the market day according to the Rapid Market Assessment protocol developed by Oregon State University. www.smallfarms.oregonstate.edu/



SALES

Market sales were reported over 35 weeks of the farmers market season, between January 9, 2016 and July 30, 2016. Total reported sales were \$5,184.93⁹, an average of \$150 per market day. These numbers are based solely on the data reported at will by vendors. The number of vendors reporting each week is unknown.

Visitors Reported Spending an Average of \$15¹⁰

- \$15 Per Customer
- \$975 Per Market Day
- \$56,300 Per Farmers Market Season (annually)

⁹ The percentage of vendors reporting sales per market day was not recorded in this data set. This information is calculated based on the total sales reported by the market manager each market day.

¹⁰ This number represents the percentage of people who reported buying food in a specific category through the customer survey, who claimed buying produce, value-added products, meat and seafood.



\$56,300
in estimated sales

*directly to the vendors' local
farms and businesses.*

*Returning 3x more of their sales to
the local economy than chain retailers.*



SUMMARY

The 2016 pilot project conducted by MIFMA sought to assess the economic contribution farmers markets make to Michigan's rural communities. At the end of the pilot project, it was evident that farmers markets impact their community in many ways, including but not limited to, acting as the center of a thriving regional food system, supporting food and farm based businesses, and serving as community gathering places. The pilot project allowed for impacts to be measured over a market season and for the results to be used to aid market managers in future decision making.

Measuring impacts at the market level strengthens the entire Michigan farmers market community. By conducting the 2016 program, MIFMA has begun to form standardized data collection processes that can be utilized by any/all Michigan farmers markets. Utilizing standardized data collection processes also allows for data to be equitably compared between markets and for data to be aggregated from several markets in order to show impacts at a county, regional, and/or statewide level. This kind of data can be a powerful advocacy tool for market managers in their local community, as well as for a statewide farmers market association, like MIFMA, that advocates at a state and federal level for programs and policies which support farmers markets and the farmers and vendors that sell at farmers markets.

In addition to identifying a variety of benefits from this data collection process, the 2016 pilot project also identified several challenges with this type of record keeping and impact measurement. Confusion regarding reporting requirements, the availability and investment of staff time to gather data, and cooperation from vendors were all challenges experienced by participating markets. Feedback from market managers encouraged MIFMA to find efficient, streamlined data collection tools for farmers markets. This need led to the adoption of use of the Farmers Market Metrics Portal¹¹.

In partnership with the national Farmers Market Coalition, MIFMA launched the Farmers Market Metrics Portal in 2017. The Farmers Market Metrics Portal is a web-based tool used by market managers to track and communicate farmers market data. This tool allows market managers to easily input daily data, track market vendors, and communicate impacts to their community.

The use of the Farmers Market Metrics Portal allows Michigan farmers markets to collect standardized data and measure impacts in a user-friendly environment. Standardizing these processes will allow MIFMA to understand the scope of impacts that farmers markets in Michigan have on jobs, tourism, agriculture, food access, and the economy.

Looking forward, MIFMA's goal is to help Michigan farmers markets understand the importance of data collection and to demonstrate how collecting and sharing data can benefit their markets. Utilizing the Farmers Market Metrics Portal will allow markets to collect data independently while creating a common place to keep all Michigan farmers market data and an efficient way of measuring impacts of farmers markets across the state. The portal will allow farmers market managers to identify yearly trends due to consistent data collection each season.

Farmers markets have significant and meaningful impacts on their communities that reach far beyond vendor shopper sales and interactions, but the quantifiable data to support those impacts has always been lacking. Thanks to this project, the data gathered and the tools and resources developed, MIFMA hopes to build an even stronger case for farmers markets in Michigan and the tremendous impact they have on their local economies and the social wellbeing of their communities.

¹¹ The Farmers Market Metrics Portal was developed by the Farmers Market Coalition (FMC). In partnership with FMC, MIFMA and participating Michigan farmers markets have access to this portal. <https://farmersmarketcoalition.org/programs/farmers-market-metrics/>



About the Michigan Farmers Market Association

The Michigan Farmers Market Association (MIFMA) was started in 2006 as a statewide association to promote local food consumption in Michigan by connecting more farmers to consumers through farmers markets. Today, MIFMA works with its membership to maintain its mission and attain its vision.

Mission: MIFMA advances farmers markets to create a thriving marketplace for local food and farm products.

Vision: MIFMA places farmers markets at the forefront of the local food movement and works to ensure all residents have access to healthy, locally grown food and that Michigan farmers markets receive policy support.

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