Farmers’ Markets: Great Source for Local Produce

One of the fastest growing segments of fresh fruit and vegetable sales in Mississippi, as in the rest of the country, is direct marketing.

As opposed to selling wholesale, direct marketing is when a producer sells his or her produce directly to the consumer. This can be via on-farm retail sales, roadside stands, community supported agriculture (CSAs), buying clubs, pick-your-own farms, or farmers’ markets.

At the end of the 2013 season, Mississippi had 81 farmers’ markets. This number represents a sharp increase from just 10 years earlier when there were barely a dozen markets statewide. Nearly every county in the state has a market, and there are even a few with two or more.

The prevalence of so many farmers’ markets in Mississippi is great for consumers because they don’t have to travel very far to find high-quality, locally grown produce. It’s good for growers, too, because it gives them more opportunities to sell their produce. In addition to selling at the closest farmers’ market to the farm, many growers stagger their selling days by using two or more markets every week.
Farmers’ Markets Are a Win-Win-Win

Farmers’ markets, as well as other forms of direct marketing, are a winning proposition for the grower, the consumer, and the community in which they operate.

The advantage of direct marketing for the grower is that the retail sales price received is much higher than the wholesale price at which they would otherwise sell their products. By selling directly to the ultimate consumer, producers avoid the cost of handlers and resellers.

Farmers’ markets, along with other direct marketing techniques, are also a great benefit to the consumer. Produce has spent less time in transportation from the farm to the consumer, so it is much fresher and likely to be richer in vitamins. Most vendors harvest their produce the day before or the morning of the market. Also, prices are often lower at farmers’ markets than in grocery stores, so consumers can sometimes save money while buying higher-quality produce.

In addition, shopping locally supports your local farmers and has a local economic impact by keeping the dollars circulating within your own community rather than losing them to corporations in other states or countries. According to a 2009 study at Mississippi State University that collected data on 26 farmers’ markets, total sales by vendors totaled $1.4 million that year. Extrapolating to the 81 markets currently in business, that total sales volume is estimated to be more than $4 million.

In addition to the farmer, consumer, and community benefits, buying local decreases “food miles,” or the distance food is transported across the country or from other countries. Reducing food miles is good for the environment because it reduces energy consumption and pollution from fossil fuels used in transportation.

Another less tangible benefit of farmers’ markets is that consumers can build relationships with the people who grow their food. This helps consumers to get a better picture of how their food is grown, what inputs are used, and whether good agricultural practices (GAPs) are followed.

What Is Local?

“Locally grown” has been a common catch phrase since the early 2000s. People who demonstrate a preference for locally grown food have been referred to as “locavores” since about 2005. But what exactly does local mean in this context?

Local produce might be interpreted to be those fruits and vegetables grown within your own town or county. However, local often means produce from within a specified radius, such as 50 or 100 miles from your point of reference.

Some people use local to refer to anything grown within their state, which may be more than 100 miles away. On the other hand, the specified distance definition above may include farms that are located in neighboring states, yet still within the mileage being used.

At the far extreme are definitions used by major grocery store chains. Some of them consider 500 or even 1,000 miles from the store to be local, and some even call any produce grown in the United States local. This definition may be too broad for most applications.

Congress passed H.R. 2419, the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, which includes this definition of local: (I) the locality or region in which the final product is marketed, so that the total distance that the product is transported is less than 400 miles from the origin of the product; or (II) the state in which the product is produced. (See http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c110:h2419:)

For practical purposes, most farmers’ markets require produce to be locally grown and consider that to be within the same county or neighboring counties. Including surrounding counties is often important since there may not be enough local growers within the county to support a farmers’ market on their own.

The Cost of Eating Right

An Economic Research Service (ERS) study in 2004 concluded that a consumer could meet the recommendation of three servings of fruits and four servings of vegetables per day for 64 cents, which is about 12 percent of the average amount spent on food per person. The study is available at http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/aib-agricultural-information-bulletin/aib792-4.aspx#.UuwOR_aH9m9.

According to nutrition studies, Americans do not even come close to the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables in their diets. One of the barriers may be the perceived higher cost of fresh produce compared to convenience, packaged foods.

Actually, although fruits and vegetables may be a dollar to several dollars per pound, each pound provides several servings. Therefore, the ERS analysis demonstrated that servings of fruit ranged from 11 cents (watermelons and apples) to 66 cents (blackberries); vegetables cost from 6 cents (Irish potatoes) to 53 cents (asparagus) per serving. For example, although a pound of peaches may cost a dollar, it provides 4½ servings, which comes to 22 cents per serving.

More than half of all fruits and vegetables were estimated to cost less than 25 cents per serving; 86 percent of all vegetables and 78 percent of all fruits cost less than 50 cents per serving.
Where Are Mississippi’s Farmers’ Markets?

Following is a list of all the farmers’ markets that operated in Mississippi in 2013, sorted by county. The indication of “certified” in this list means that the farmers’ market has been certified by the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce as a market with Mississippi farmers selling Mississippi-grown produce.

**Adams County**

Natchez Farmers’ Market
CERTIFIED
199 St Catherine Street
Natchez, MS 39120
Contact: Helen Brooks
(601) 442-4648

**Bolivar County**

Cleveland Farmers’ Market
The Alley Downtown Cleveland
Cleveland, MS 38732
Contact: Michelle Johansen
(662) 719-9595
[www.clevelandfarmersmarket.com](http://www.clevelandfarmersmarket.com)

**Choctaw County**

Choctaw County Farmers’ Market
Corner of Main and Commerce Streets
Acker, MS 39735
Contact: Juli Hughes
(662) 285-6337

**Alcorn County**

Green Market
Corinth Depot
Corinth, MS 38834
Contact: Karen Beth Martin
(662) 287-8300

**Calhoun County**

Bruce Farmers’ Market
CERTIFIED
Public Square
Bruce, MS 38915
Contact: Becky Wright
(662) 983-2222

**Clay County**

West Point Farmers’ Market
CERTIFIED
1251 Highway 45 South Alternate
West Point, MS 39773
Contact: Cynthia Wilson
(662) 494-5121

**Corinth Farmers’ Market**

Shiloh Road
Corinth, MS 38834
Contact: Patrick Poindexter
(662) 286-7755

**Calhoun City Farmers’ Market**

East Side of Square
P.O. Box 64
Calhoun City, MS 38916
Contact: Connie Caviness
(662) 628-6990

**Copiah County**

Crystal Springs Farmers’ Market
West Railroad Avenue
Crystal Springs, MS 39059
Contact: Dr. Rick Snyder
(601) 892-3731

**Carroll County**

Crossroads Farmers’ Market
CERTIFIED
15426 MS Hwy 17
Coila, MS 38923
Contact: Alonzo Lewis II
(662) 237-6062

**The Downtown Market**

204 East Georgetown Street
Crystal Springs, MS 39059
Contact: Mary Dell McCoy
(601) 927-1533 or (601) 497-1044

**Amite County**

Amite County Farmers’ Market
Cotton Gin in Liberty
Liberty, MS 39645
Contact: Juanita Bates
(225) 235-8279

**Covington County**

Krickets Market
CERTIFIED
201 Downing Street
Hazlehurst, MS 39083
Contact: David Yowell
(769) 232-2657

**Atalla County**

Atalla County Farmers’ Market
CERTIFIED
450 Hwy 12 E
(intersection of 12 & 35)
Kosciusko, MS 39090
Contact: Kenneth Georgia
(662) 312-2891

**Chickasaw County**

Okolona Farmers’ Market
Mini Park on Main Street
Okolona, MS 38860
Contact: Gary Moore
(662) 255-1736

**Copiah County Farmers’ Market**

201 Downing Street
Hazlehurst, MS 39083
Contact: David Yowell
(769) 232-2657

**Choctaw City Farmers’ Market**

Vaiden, MS 39176
Contact: Jan Maddox
(662) 289-4125

**McComb County**

**Vaiden Farmers’ Market**

CERTIFIED
Vaiden High School
Vo-Tech Building
Vaiden, MS 39176
Contact: Jan Maddox
(662) 289-4125

**Covington County**

Krickets Market
CERTIFIED
2849 Hwy 49
Collins, MS 39428
Contact: Linda Counts
(601) 765-8064
Desoto County
Hernando Farmers’ Market
CERTIFIED
2535 Highway 51 South
Hernando, MS 38632
Contact: Shelly Johnstone
(662) 429-9092
www.cityofhernando.org/farmersmarket

Olive Branch Farmers’ Market
CERTIFIED
6900 Highland Street
Olive Branch, MS 38654
Contact: Dee Dee Erfurdt
(662) 893-0888
www.olivebrancholdtowne.org

Southaven Farmers’ Market
Corner of Hwy 51 and Stateline Rd
Southaven, MS 38671
Contact: Joann Force
(662) 342-6114

Forrest County
East Jerusalem Farmers’ Market
1009 Rebecca Street (East Park)
Hattiesburg, MS 39401
Contact: Sylvia Forster
(601) 582-0909 or (601) 606-8785
http://paffpetal.com/farmersmarket

Downtown Hattiesburg
Farmers’ Market
Town Square Park
Downtown Hattiesburg
Hattiesburg, MS 39401
Contact: Anna Cagle
(601) 527-6141
www.hattiesburgfarmersmarket.com

Forrest County Farmers’ Market
Corinne Street
Hattiesburg, MS 39401
Contact: Tawnya Crockett
(601) 583-9954 or (601) 545-6083

USM Hattiesburg
Outside USM
Baptist Student Union
Hattiesburg, MS 39401
Contact: Susan Bone
(601) 266-5655

Greene County
Greene Co. Farmers’ Market
CERTIFIED
Hwy 63 North
Leakesville, MS 39451
Contact: Dewayne Smith
(601) 394-8763

Grenada County
Grenada Farmers’ Market
CERTIFIED
Sunset Drive
Grenada Shopping Center
Grenada, MS 38901
Contact: Leslie Moss
(662) 226-7608

Hancock County
Our New Farmers’ Market
628 Hwy 90 (under water tower)
Waveland, MS 39576
Contact: Janice Shaw
(228) 860-8620

Harrison County
Charles R. Hedgewood Biloxi Farmers’ Market
Underneath I-110 overpass and Howard Avenue
P.O. Box 775
Biloxi, MS 39530
Contact: Tina Cowart
(228) 435-6281
http://www.biloxi.ms.us/pr/Programs/Farmers_Market.asp

D’Iberville Farmers’ Market
10383 Automall Parkway
D’Iberville, MS 39540
Contact: Patty Ewing
(228) 392-9734

Gulfport Harbor Market
CERTIFIED
1070 23rd Avenue
Gulfport, MS 39501
(228) 257-2496

City of Gulfport Farmers’ Market
1300 21st Avenue
Gulfport, MS 39501
Contact: Brittany Dyess
(228) 860-4444

Long Beach Farmers’ Market
CERTIFIED
126 Jeff Davis Avenue (Bankhouse Coffee, downtown Long Beach)
Long Beach, MS 39560
Contact: Dita McCarthy
(228) 234-8732
https://www.facebook.com/longbeachfarmersmarket

The Pass Market
CERTIFIED
103 Fleits Street
War Memorial Park
Pass Christian, MS 39503
Contact: Joe Buckley
(228) 297-3040

Hinds County
Fresh at Five
CERTIFIED
Downtown on Jefferson Street
Clinton, MS 39060
Contact: Tara Lytal
(601) 924-5472
www.mainstreetclintonms.com

Jump Start Jackson Fall Farmers’ Market
Battlefield Park (intersection of Hwy 80 and Terry Road)
Jackson, MS 39204
Contact: Jammie Collins
(601) 898-0000

Mississippi Farmers’ Market
CERTIFIED
929 High Street
Jackson, MS 39202
Contact: Frank Malta
(601) 354-6573
www.msfarmersmarket.com

Holmes County
Lexington Farmers’ Market
112 Spring Street
Lexington, MS 39095
Contact: Marcus Stone
(662) 834-1261

Itawamba County
Itawamba Farmers’ Market
Cypress Pavilion (ICC campus)
Fulton, MS 38843
Contact: Homer Wilson
(662) 862-3201
Jackson County
Ocean Springs Fresh Market
CERTIFIED
L&N Depot
1000 Washington Avenue
Ocean Springs, MS 39564
Contact: Diane Clauthon
(228) 257-2496
www.oceanspringsfreshmarket.com

Jackson County Farmers’ Market
Jackson County Fairgrounds
Pascagoula, MS 39568
Contact: Jim Hart
(228) 762-6043

Pascagoula Farmers’ Market
Victory Lot on Pascagoula Street
(north of Pascagoula Public Library)
Pascagoula, MS 39567
Contact: Jen Dearman
(228) 938-6639

Lee County
Tupelo Farmers’ Market
CERTIFIED
South Springs Street at Railroad
Tupelo, MS 38804
Contact: Carl Brandenburg
(662) 841-6598 or (662) 891-6139
www.tupelomainstreet.com

Leflore County
Downtown Greenwood Farmers’ Market
CERTIFIED
Corner of Howard and Johnson Streets
Greenwood, MS 38935
Contact: Glen Stevens
(662) 897-0017
https://www.facebook.com/greenwoodfarmersmarket

Lincoln County
Brookhaven Farmers’ Market
CERTIFIED
Downtown Brookhaven in Railroad Park
301 South First Street, Room 201
Brookhaven, MS 36901
Contact: Rebecca Bates
(601) 835-3460

Lowndes County
Hitching Lot Farmers’ Market
Corner of Second Avenue and Second Street North
Columbus, MS 39701
Contact: Katherine Munson
(662) 328-6305
www.hitchinglotfarmersmarket.com

Madison County
Canton Farmers’ Market
CERTIFIED
100 Depot Drive (The Depot)
Canton, MS 39046
Contact: Jordan Hillman
(601) 859-5816
http://canton-mississippi.com/farmersmarket
Livingston Farmers’ Market
Corner of Hwy 463 and Hwy 22
Madison, MS 39110
Contact: Walt Bowie
(601) 707-7789

Marion County
Pearl River Market
229 Second Street Downtown
Columbia, MS 39429
Contact: Lori Watts
(601) 736-1170

Marshall County
Holly Springs Farmers’ Market
Memphis Street
(Historical Town Square)
Holly Springs, MS 38635
Contact: Lemon Phelps
(662) 252-3541

Neshoba County
Choctaw Farmers’ Market
Blackjack Road
(Horticulture Training Facility)
Choctaw, MS 39350
Contact: Gilbert Thompson
(601) 656-2070

Neshoba County Farmers’ Market
CERTIFIED
Highway 16 East (behind Farm Bureau office)
Philadelphia, MS 39350
Contact: Harvin Hudson
(601) 656-4602

Noxubee County
Noxubee County Farmers’ Market
CERTIFIED
16295 Highway 45
Macon, MS 39341
Contact: John Williams
(662) 726-9929 or (662) 549-1721
Oktibbeha County
Maben Farmers’ Market
In the lot by the post office
Maben, MS 39750
Contact: Jane Collins
(662) 263-8458

Starkville Community Market
CERTIFIED
Corner of Jackson and Lampkin Streets
Starkville, MS 39759
Contact: Jennifer Prather
(662) 323-3322
visit.starkville.org/market

Panola County
Square Market
Downtown Square
Batesville, MS 38606
Contact: Coleen Clark or Mary Troxler
(662) 578-1148 or (662) 563-3126
www.panolacounty.com

Pike County
Magnolia Farmers’ Market
Downtown along the railroad
Magnolia, MS 38652
Contact: James Harris
(601) 341-5340

McComb Farmers’ Market
CERTIFIED
212 Railroad Blvd (across Front Street from Cabose Restaurant)
McComb, MS 39648
Contact: Sonya Lowery
(601) 684-8599

Prentiss County
Prentiss County Farmers’ Market
2301 North Second Street
Booneville, MS 38829
Contact: Buddy Smith
(662) 728-3946

Quitman County
Quitman County Farmers’ Market
Roadside Park
Marks, MS 38646
Contact: Michael Anthony
(662) 822-3374

Scott County
Farmers’ Market
403 Hill Street
Forest, MS 39074

Stone County
Stone County Farmers’ Market
Hudson’s Farm Supply parking lot
735 Hall Street
Wiggins, MS 39577
Contact: Brad Jones
(601) 928-5286

Sunflower County
Indianola Open Air Market
CERTIFIED
112 Martin Luther King
Indianola, MS 38751
Contact: Maggie Barnes
(662) 299-0018

Tate County
Tate County Farmers’ Market
CERTIFIED
451 Norfleet Drive
Senatobia, MS 38668
Contact: Shelli Benton
(662) 562-4274 or (662) 209-0477

Tippah County
Main Street Farmers’ Market
102 N Main Street
Ripley, MS 38663
Contact: Libbi Bryant-Bennett
(662) 512-0226

Tishomingo County
Bear Creek Farmers’ Market
P.O. Box 816
CC Shook Park
Belmont, MS 38827
Contact: Mike Neighbors
(662) 660-4274

Iuka Farmers’ Market
CERTIFIED
Between the old jail and Walmart
Iuka, MS 38852
Contact: Danny Owen
(662) 413-7016

Union County
Biscuits and Jam
112 Fairgrounds Circle
New Albany, MS 38652
Contact: Stanley Wise
(662) 534-1916

Walthall County
Tylerstown Farmers’ Market
CERTIFIED
116 South Railroad Avenue
Tylerstown, MS 39667
Contact: Sonya Lowery
(601) 684-8599

Warren County
Vicksburg Farmers’ Market
CERTIFIED
Corner of Jackson and Washington Streets (downtown Vicksburg)
Vicksburg, MS 39180
Contact: Herschel Hale
(601) 801-3513
www.vicksburgfarmersmarket.org

Washington County
Greenville Farmers’ Market
783 Washington Avenue (corner of Washington Ave & North Street)
Greenville, MS 38701
Contact: Betty Lynn Cameron
(662) 378-3121
Fax (662) 378-3966
http://www.mainstreetgreenville.com/greenville-farmers-market.html

Leland Farmers’ Market
Hwy 82 West
Leland, MS 38756
Contact: Robert Neill
(662) 686-2687

Wilkinson County
Woodville Farmers’ Market
Courthouse Square
Woodville, MS 39669
Contact: Monique Wagner
(601) 888-7690
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<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Market Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
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<td>Winston County</td>
<td>Winston County Farmers’ Market</td>
<td>Louisville Coliseum</td>
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<td>Jean Hopper</td>
<td>(662) 773-8264</td>
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<td>(662) 773-8264</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yalobusha County</td>
<td>Water Valley Main Street</td>
<td>Railroad Park (Main Street)</td>
<td>Water Valley</td>
<td>Mickey Howley</td>
<td>(662) 473-6767</td>
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<td>Farmers’ Market</td>
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<td>Contact: Mickey Howley</td>
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<td>(662) 473-6767</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yazoo County</td>
<td>Yazoo Farmers’ Market</td>
<td>417 North Main</td>
<td>Yazoo City</td>
<td>Phyllis Haynes</td>
<td>(662) 590-5415</td>
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Note: This list is current as of January 1, 2014. See [http://www.mdac.state.ms.us/departments/ms_farmers_market/farmers-markets-in-mississippi.asp](http://www.mdac.state.ms.us/departments/ms_farmers_market/farmers-markets-in-mississippi.asp) for updates.
For More Information
MSU Extension has several additional publications related to farmers’ markets. They are available from your local Extension office or as free, downloadable files from MSUcares.com.

M1434 Organizing a Farmers’ Market
http://msucares.com/pubs/misc/m1434.pdf

P2444 Greens Production for Farmers’ Markets

P2582 Economic Impact of Farmers’ Markets in Mississippi

Construction Plan 6380 Farm Market Walk-In Refrigerator

IS1794 Specialty Cut Flower Production: Meet the Markets
http://msucares.com/pubs/infosheets/is1794.pdf

MAFES Bulletin 1140 Market Potential for “Mississippi Grown” Cut Flowers

IS1893 Electronic Marketplaces: How to “Net” Your Customers
http://msucares.com/pubs/infosheets/is1893.pdf

More farmers’ market information on MSUcares.com:
http://msucares.com/crops/market/index.html

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By Dr. Richard G. Snyder, Professor of Horticulture and Extension Vegetable Specialist, Central Mississippi R&E Center.

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