



IN THE KITCHEN: Farmers' markets are thriving!

By Pat Tanner Special Writer

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Isn't it remarkable how in the last few years we have witnessed the explosion of seasonal farmers' markets that bring together in one place — usually on weekly basis and almost always outdoors — the glorious bounty of our state's farms? Many of us anticipate their reappearance each spring the way children await the Easter Bunny. For us, these markets have become a well-established and cherished form of shopping.

For many years it was only the venerable Trenton Farmers Market, which has been around since 1948 and which operates year-round, that fulfilled that mission in our area. Now, each spring we have a veritable bumper crop of alternatives, with new markets popping up like mushrooms after a heavy rain.

One particularly encouraging new development is the flourishing of markets on university campuses, established and run by students. Last fall saw the triumphant inauguration of the Greening Princeton market on the plaza by Princeton University's Firestone Library, managed by student volunteers and organized by Katherine Andersen, '08, and Ruthie Schwab, '09. The market had been in full bloom again earlier this spring, just about the same time as the beautiful magnolias that dot the campus. It will, unlike the magnolia blossoms, return for a fall run in September.

Paul Valetutti, a food science/ culinology major at Rutgers University, is the dynamic force behind the just-debuted Rutgers Gardens Farmers' Market. This Cook College junior has an impeccable food pedigree: Not only is he the president of that university's Slow Food chapter, he is a member of the family that is behind the highly regarded New York sausage and charcuterie company, Salumeria Biellese. Participating vendors at the Rutgers market include familiar names that can be found at many of the markets listed below — Griggstown Quail Farm, Village Bakery, Valley Shepherd Creamery — and at least one vendor that is unique, as far as I can tell: Readington River Buffalo Company, which raises bison in Hunterdon County.

This growing season the only day of the week that won't see a farmers' market operating in our neck of the woods, as far as I can tell, is Monday. But keep in mind that many of the farms that participate in the weekly markets, such as Terhune Orchards and Griggstown Quail Farm, also have their own markets at their farms.

It's safe to say that all the returning farmers' markets, including those listed below, will feature at minimum the same number of farms, vendors and activities that we have come to expect and appreciate from previous years. But changes abound. The Montgomery market is changing its day of operation from Thursday to Saturday. West Windsor is welcoming many additional vendors, among them Stults Farm of Cranbury, Crescent Moon organic coffee roasters from Mickelton (Mullica Hill), Condiment Man of Skillman's line of bottled hot sauces, and Olsson's Fine Foods — a longtime and continuing anchor of the Trenton Farmers' Market known for their wide selection of cheeses — which is offering handmade ice cream and fresh lemonade from a cart. On my first visit of the season to this market I picked up a bottle of Condiment Man Evil Lime Zinger — one of several hot sauce/marinades that combine fruit and fire. I used it with great success in a recipe for cornbread that is on their Web site (www.condimentman.com), although because I am a hot sauce wimp, I used far less of the fiery stuff than the recipe calls for.

New to the line up at Lawrence's Sunday market will be a specialty mushroom grower from Kennett Square, Pa. This market is also ramping up its programs for children and its special events, including a repeat of last year's big hit, the kale cook-off. Again I ask: Who could have predicted such a thing even a few short years ago?

Farmers' markets 2008

GREENING PRINCETON FARMERS' MARKET:
Firestone Library/Chapel Plaza at Princeton University.

Season: Fall session runs Sept. 16 through Oct. 21, plus special Thanksgiving market on Nov. 25.

Hours: (in the fall) Tuesdays, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Phone: (609) 258.5144. On the Web. www.princeton.edu/greening/market.

LAWRENCEVILLE FARMERS' MARKET:

16 Gordon Avenue (just off Route 206).
Season: June 8 to Oct. 26.

Hours: Sundays, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Phone: (609) 206-0344. On the Web: www.lawrencevillemainstreet.com
RUTGERS GARDENS FARMERS' MARKET (Piscataway):

Rutgers Gardens, 112 Ryders Lane (Just off Route 1).

Season: May 23 to Oct. 31.

Hours: Fridays, 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.

No phone given. On the Web: www.rutgersgardens.rutgers.edu (click 'events')

WEST WINDSOR COMMUNITY FARMERS' MARKET:

Princeton Junction Train Station, Southbound, Vaughn Drive Parking Lot off Alexander Road.

Season: May 10 to Oct. 25

Hours: Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Phone: (609) 577-5113. On the Web: www.westwindsorfarmersmarket.org

HOPEWELL COMMUNITY FARMERS' MARKET:

The Train Station, off Greenwood Avenue.

Season: May 28 to Oct. 29

Hours: Wednesdays, 2 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Phone: (609) 466-8330 (Northslope Farm).

MONTGOMERY FARMERS' MARKET:

Routes 206 & 518 (behind the Red Oak Diner, in the Princeton North Shopping Center).

Season: June 28 to Oct. 18

Hours: Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Phone: (908) 359-9665.

On the Web: www.montgomeryfriends.org

TRENTON FARMERS' MARKET:

960 Spruce Street (next to Halo Farms).

Season: Open year-round.

Hours (May through October): Tuesday through Sunday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Phone: (609) 695-2998. On the Web: www.thetrentonfarmersmarket.com.

CAPITAL CITY FARMERS' MARKET (Trenton):

E. State Street, The Commons, Warren & Broad Street.

Season: July 10 to Sept. 25

Hours: Thursdays, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Phone: (609) 393-8998. On the Web: www.trenton-downtown.com

WHOLE FOODS FARMERS' MARKET (West Windsor):

3495 U.S. Route 1 South

Season: Alternate Thursdays beginning June 12 and ending Sept. 18 (i.e., 6/12, 6/26, 7/10, 7/24, 8/7, 8/21, 9/4, 9/18)

Hours: Alternate Thursdays as above, 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Phone: (609) 799-2919

Farmers' markets

by day of the week

MONDAY: None.

TUESDAY: Trenton; Princeton (Greening Princeton) in the early spring and fall only. Currently on hiatus.

WEDNESDAY: Trenton; Hopewell

THURSDAY: Trenton; Capital City Market (Trenton); West Windsor (Whole Foods Farmers Market on alternating Thursdays only)

FRIDAY: Trenton; Piscataway (Rutgers Gardens)

SATURDAY: Trenton; Montgomery; West Windsor

SUNDAY: Trenton; Lawrenceville.

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