Sustainable Agriculture, Local Foods and Farmer’s Markets – the Sustainability connection

Local farmers’ markets, like the one held for 11 years now, each Saturday in downtown Kankakee, are important aspects of the movement towards Sustainability. The farmers’ markets offer a chance to get out of the house, socialize with friends, meet new people, enjoy live entertainment, and then of course there’s the food! Farmer’s markets are perfect opportunities to purchase and sample the bounty of the good earth – fruits, vegetables, herbs and flowers.

Whether freshly picked or baked into delicious creations, the “good stuff”. Supporting these events allows us to eat local. Even after harvesting, fresh fruits and vegetables begin to lose their nutrients. So the closer your kitchen sits to the farmer that grew your dinner salad, the healthier you eat.

Almost 95% of the foods purchased at local grocery stores are transported over 1,500 miles and are dead by the time they are added!

Local Growers, Farmers Market

Deer Creek Organics
Jeff Franklin grows vegetables on 20 acres just south of Aroma Park and just west of St. Anne. As the owner of Deer Creek Organics (deercreekorganics.com) he practices sustainable farming methods, using no synthetic chemicals on his produce. He plans to start “certified organic” farming in 2010. After receiving an agricultural degree from Purdue University, Jeff worked in horticulture and agriculture for twenty-eight years. Jeff researched sustainable vegetable farming, and in 2007, started Deer Creek Organics and began to sell fresh produce to local markets. Jeff works to bring healthy vegetables to families, keep the soil clean and build a vibrant local community.

Contact information: deercreekorganics.com or 815.427.6856.

Madeline’s Heavenly Harvest
Madeline’s Heavenly Harvest is a “sweet” little business that has been operating out of Bourbonnais for two years. Madeline’s website is madelinesheavenlyharvest.com. She and her husband John walk their honey bee hives located in local fields, meadows and pastures in Kankakee County. Madeline and John work together. The Franklins work to bring healthy vegetables to families, keep the soil clean and build a vibrant local community.

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• The Sustainability connection

Eat well. Words of wisdom from the “sustainable food movement.” Sustainable agriculture tends to be a way of life or philosophy rather than a set of strict rules. Eating sustainably means more health benefits for us and for the planet.

Family farms are saved. Local foods are available. This is a “sweet” little business that has been operating out of Bourbonnais for two years. Madeline’s Heavenly Harvest is a “sweet” little business that has been operating out of Bourbonnais for two years. Madeline’s website is madelinesheavenlyharvest.com. She and her husband John walk their honey bee hives located in local fields, meadows and pastures in Kankakee County. Madeline and John work together. The Franklins work to bring healthy vegetables to families, keep the soil clean and build a vibrant local community.

Local foods, local farmers, local markets – sustainability is a way of life for many and a philosophy for others. Local foods and local farmers contribute to a vibrant local community.

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FEATURED Business

Midwest Duffy Electric Boats

They’re quiet, they’re clean, they’re GREEN! Although relatively new to the Kankakee area, electric boats have been around for over 100 years. Larry Breeck of Kankakee, owner of Midwest Duffy Electric Boats (midwestduffyelectricboats.com, 815.935.5001), is the local distributor for Duffy Electric Boats manufactured in California. Duffy Electric Boats manufactures the world’s largest fleet of electric boats which range from 14 feet up to 24 feet with several different configurations to suit the intended use. These boats are extremely easy to own and operate since they eliminate the need for fuel, oil, and engine maintenance. Instead, the owner needs to do is plug in the on-board “Smart Charging” system into a standard 10/2 household power source for about 12 hours. This will allow for about 10 hours of silent cruising at 5 to 7.5 mph. The boats include a standard digital energy gauge to keep “real time” track of energy use and remaining power to eliminate concerns about running out of power.

These boats are environmentally friendly, since they use no fuel, leak no oil and create no air or water pollution. They are also very quiet, since the powerful electric motor replaces the conventional outboard motor. More and more marine and fresh water recreational areas are restricting or prohibiting the use of internal combustion engines to reduce their environmental impacts on air and water quality. This minimal impact on the environment is why electric boats are the “boat of choice”.

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KCC Sustainability Center

Working to create a “Greener Future” for the Kankakee River Valley

The KCC Sustainability Center is our community resource for information about conserving energy, recycling, building “green” and much more.

Learn more: www.kcc.edu/sustainability or call (815) 802-6243

KCC Sustainability Center located in the Learning Resource Center – part of the local community of George R. Collins, an educational icon, donor and friend to KCC.

A joint project of KCC and the Sustainability Center; funded in part by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources – Urban Agriculture Program.
The saying “good things come in small packages” would apply to Larry Munson’s vegetable farming operation located in Donovan, Illinois. Like most of the growers at the local market, these folks feel truly local. Using ten acres of a 40 acre farmstead, Munson and family grow lettuce, peas, and radishes in the spring. Later, they switch to beets, green beans, tomatoes, and corn to offer. In the fall, it will be various types of squash and more lettuce. The Munson’s have been producing the bounty from their small operation for about 10 years and bring it to the Kankakee Farmer’s Market.

Larry grew up in Donovan, earned an Engineering Degree from the University of Illinois and entered the US Air Force. He spent 20 years in service as a navigator in F-111’s and was stationed in several bases in Europe where he enjoyed learning about other cultures. After all of that, he content to be back in Donovan growing vegetables and substances that he believes to be absolutely necessary for anyone who wants to get well and stay well. He is well aware of the value of what goes into the food we eat. Their main mission is to raise the most nutritious, healthiest, chemical free vegetables available. Whether it’s a whole chicken or one of their other products such as fresh chicken or pasture, the buyer can be assured that the chicken was produced in a healthy environment. They were raised in the fresh air, made to fresh grass daily, and their diet does not include any antibiotics. Dickman insists that Dickman’s mix their own feed so they know what is in the meat they sell. They process their poultry at a small federally inspected facility owned by an Amish family so they also know who has handled their products. Other products available are brown eggs, turkey, duck, chicken, fresh zucchini, squash, apples and white and yellow pop corn. They even offer grass fed, all natural beef and elk. The Dickman’s are members of the American Pasteur and participate in Free Soil USA and are advocates for local agriculture and local foods. To contact them call 815-242-5154 or visit www.dickmanmeats.net.

Green Byte: What’s Organic?

Organic” means produce is free of synthetic chemicals and substances; contains no antibiotics and hormones; has not been fertilized with sewage sludge or chemicals; was raised without the use of most conventional pesticides; and contains no genetically modified organisms; as well as all and other. Certified “organic” farms follow a strict set of guidelines when growing vegetables. The soil needs to be free of all synthetic pesticides and fertilizers for three years. Certified products are labeled “certified organic” and are tested periodically to ensure that the farmer is only using approved inputs. An input is whatever is put in the ground or on the vegetable to keep away the weeds, insects and diseases. Only natural inputs are used on certified organic fruits and vegetables. “Organic” means produce is generally free of synthetic, “Organic” means that the farm is using approved inputs. It is important to know what goes into the food you eat. Many farmers grow organically without seeking official certification.

Career Corner

Johari Cole-Kweli

It’s easy to drive right past Iyabo and some of the other farms in the Pembroke Farming Family, hidden among masses of farmland in Kankakee County. This is Pembroke Farm, an area which has been called one of the most impoverished areas in the country. Johari Cole-Kweli, owner of Iyabo Farms along with her husband of 20 years, Sharadi, has a different opinion. “That’s sort of a misconception," she says. "I think the improvement of our land and the improvement of the health of individuals through the food you eat has been the new passion for all things sustainable and “green,” we’ve begun to realize their importance. "Organic” means produce is generally free of synthetic, “Organic” means that the farm is using approved inputs. It is important to know what goes into the food you eat. Many farmers grow organically without seeking official certification.

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