



FOX POINT *files*

by Douglas H. Frazer

Fox Point Farmers' Market **URNS** 15

In 2017, the Fox Point Farmers' Market will celebrate 15 years of operation. Located at the west parking lot of Stormouth School, it is a producer-only market that features local food and food-related products. It is open the third Saturday in June through the third Saturday of October from 8am to noon — with music at 10am.

The inauguration of the Fox Point Farmers' Market in 2003 was in-step with a larger and growing farmers' market movement. It is an old concept. The first farmers' markets originated in Egypt over 5,000 years ago when farmers along the Nile brought their fresh produce to be sold at market. Today there are farmers' markets worldwide. The largest one in the world is in Tokyo, which has over 1,700 stalls.

Farmers' markets are where producers gather on a regular basis to sell fresh fruits, vegetables, meats, flowers, bakery and prepared foods. The goods are produced locally and the vendors sell their own products.

Farmers' markets are distinguished from public markets that are generally housed in permanent structures, open year round, and feature a variety of non-farmer or producer vendors offering package foods and non-food products.

Consumers often favor farmers' markets because of the ease of purchase, fresher and seasonal foods, healthier food choices, a better variety of items, a place to meet neighbors and socialize, a place to enjoy an outdoor walk while getting needed groceries. In sum, consumers are drawn to farmers' markets for food quality and a great social atmosphere.

Foods sold at farmers' markets are often fresher because they spend less time in transit. Moreover, the costs associated with longer distance transportation are eliminated. For farmers, farmers' markets can offer increased profits because the middlemen are out of the picture. By selling directly to consumers, the produce needs less transport, handling, refrigeration or time in storage.

Where consumers have strong preferences for local variety, and want to know and be able to ask directly what is in their food, farmers' markets are an excellent alternative to, and competitive with, other forms of food retail.



Farmers' markets also contribute to strengthening civic engagement.

In the United States, there are currently over 8,000 farmers' markets. [www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Farmers'_market (last visited 11-17-16)]. A number of municipalities in Milwaukee county sponsor farmers' markets. Fox Point's Farmers' Market stands proud among them.

The Fox Point Farmers' Market features over 20 vendors who sell produce, range-free chickens and eggs, coffee, pastured, grass-feed beef, lamb, and organic pork. Fresh trout and smoked salmon are a recent addition. Add in pies, jam, bakery items, mushrooms, flowers, cheese, honey, artisanal soup, maple syrup, herbs, traditional Mexican bakery, tamales and breakfast burritos, Greek pastry, feta, olives and olive oil, eggrolls, spring rolls, and soap. Starting in mid-August, consumers will see apples and tree-ripened peaches. There is even a knife sharpening stall and a bird house vendor.

In addition, community service organizations are permitted to put up information booths or displays. These have included master gardeners, the Boy Scouts, Respect our Waters, and the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District, the Fox Point police department, and North Shore Fire and Rescue.

Long time village resident Mary LaCharite founded the market in 2003 after receiving approvals from the Fox Point village board and the Fox Point-Bayside school board. The market is organized as Fox Point Farmers' Market, Ltd., a statutory closed C corporation that pays taxes, has a board of directors, officers, and a team of 20 volunteers — including Mary and her husband Jim. There is no paid staff.

The market receives income from renting vendor stalls at \$200 for an 18-week season. The market also gets financial support from the Fox Point Foundation and local businesses.

The market is governed by the Farmers' Market ordinance found at Chapter 362 of the village code. (The ordinance is worth a look. It's very detailed. Check it out at www.ecode360.com/14574336.) The market carries its own liability insurance. Vendors are responsible for holding and displaying required local and state licenses. The North Shore Health Department or the State of Wisconsin conducts health and food safety inspections.

A few things set the Fox Point Farmers' Market apart. The market is easy to access and just the right size. It offers food and food related items only. Vendors are loyal and come back season-after-season. There is entertainment and community engagement. And dogs are welcome.

The Fox Point Farmers' Market is uniquely ours — and it is here to stay. It's one of the special assets that make our village great.

Douglas H. Frazer is a Fox Point resident and neighborhood contributor. The views expressed are his own and not necessarily those of Best Version Media, LLC.



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