

Sales at Delaware farmers' markets second highest in 2017

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DOVER, Del. – Delaware celebrated the second highest farmers' market season with more than \$3 million dollars in sales in 2017. Both residents and visitors of the state continue to buy locally because of the fresh, high quality products that Delaware's farm families grow.

"These numbers are a reflection of the positive relationship that Delaware residents and those visiting our state have with our family farmers," said Secretary Michael T. Scuse. "Consumers know food purchased at our farmers' market are grown locally, picked fresh, and delivered that day by the farm. Not only do they have the opportunity to learn how their food is grown directly from Delaware farmers, but they are able to make a positive impact on the economy by keeping it local."

There were 21 community-run farmers' markets in Delaware in 2017. These markets are economic drivers for the state's agricultural industry generating direct sales of \$3,004,174 in 2017. Fresh produce made up 53 percent of total sales, with the remainder coming from products such as meats, cheeses, jellies, breads, salsa, eggs, or honey.

"Farmers' markets play an important role in providing Delaware grown fruits, vegetables, and value-added products to both rural and urban communities across our state," said Delaware Department of Agriculture spokeswoman Stacey Hofmann. "We are starting to see an important change in the attendance at farmers' markets – and that is more and more children are attending with adults. This is exciting because research shows

if children are able to select their fruits and vegetables, then they are more likely to eat them. Learning to making healthy choices now, with the help of role models, will encourage a lifetime of healthy eating.”

In 2017, there were 13 markets that participated in the Women, Infants, and Children Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program. There were 12 markets that participated in the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP). These programs help expand access for low-income residents to be able to purchase fresh local produce at Delaware farmers’ markets.

Delaware farmers’ markets are all run at the local level, by municipalities, business groups, farmers or market associations, with the Department of Agriculture providing support and marketing assistance.

The 2018 market season will begin in April; most markets start their operations in May, June and July. A list of the 2017 markets is online at Delaware’s Buy Local Guide, de.gov/buylocal, and will be updated in late March for 2018.

Farmers and others interested in becoming a vendor, or community groups interested in starting a local market, can contact Department of Agriculture at (302) 698-4542 or by email at dda.marketing@delaware.gov.

Delaware Farmers’ Market Sales:

2017: \$3,004,174
2016: \$2,901,081
2015: \$3,029,831
2014: \$2,636,727
2013: \$2,107,265
2012: \$1,960,357
2011: \$1,794,265
2010: \$1,330,617
2009: \$1,121,024
2008: \$800,679

2007: \$289,706

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