

## Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency

July 9, 2015

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### Farmers Markets and Roadside Stands

**Coldwater, MI.** Stroll down the aisle and enjoy the colors of Michigan-grown fruits and vegetables. Smell the sweet scent of freshly-picked oregano or cilantro. Take a bite and taste the flavor of a juicy, sweet, red strawberry. These are just a few of the tastes and aromas you can enjoy when you attend a local Farmers Market. The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency offers the following seven reasons why you should consider checking out a Farmers Market or Roadside Stand this summer:

1. **Freshly picked, in season produce is at its peak in flavor.** Corn, cucumbers, melons and berries of all kinds are some of the seasonal fruits and vegetables that are harvested during the summer months, when they are fully ripened and at their best. Apples, potatoes, pumpkins and carrots come into season in the fall. Eating fresh fruits and vegetables in season is a definite delight!
2. **Support your local farmers and economy.** According to a recent study, a dollar spent locally at a market or stand generates twice as much income for the local economy.
3. **Fresh fruit and vegetables are full of antioxidants and phytonutrients.** Studies prove that fresh produce loses nutrients quickly. Produce purchased locally has probably been picked within the last day or two and still retains much of its original vitamins and minerals

4. **It's a great way to get your kids involved.** Farmers Markets and Roadside Stands offer children the opportunity to sample foods and ask questions of the farmers, which can turn produce shopping into an adventure.
5. **Farmers often have recommendations for preparing their products.** Who better than the person who grew the produce can advise you on how to select the produce or how to prepare it? Farmers who sell at the markets or stands are often available to answer these and other questions.
6. **Project Fresh and Senior Project Fresh coupons are accepted by many local Farmers Markets or Roadside Stands.** Project FRESH, is a component of the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program. If you or your family members are on WIC, you may be eligible for Project Fresh. If so, just stop by your county health department to pick up your coupon book, which is redeemable at participating Farmers Markets and Roadside Stands.

Senior Project FRESH/Market FRESH coupon books can be obtained by calling the county's senior centers and are for people who meet the following criteria:

- Be at least 60 years old
- Live in Branch, Hillsdale or St. Joseph County
- Have an annual income up to \$21,775 for a person or \$29,471 for a couple (185% of poverty).

Each coupon book contains **10** \$2 coupons which can be used at any participating Farmers Market or Roadside Stand between now and October 31st. According to Dave Fowler, WIC Coordinator for the tri-county health department, "By picking up your coupon book today and using it this season, you can help assure that coupons will be available next year for those who need it."

7. **Farmers markets that accept Project Fresh and Senior Project Fresh coupons are easy to find.**

Branch County:

- Hoff Vegetable Farm – 546 N. Marshall Road, Coldwater, MI
- Gleis Inc. – 464 N. Willowbrook Rd., Coldwater, MI

Hillsdale County:

- Creek Valley Farm - 6600 E. Camden Road, Waldron, MI

- Glei's Inc. – 3500 Milnes, Hillsdale, MI
- K's Acres – 4680 Fitzpatrick Rod, Hillsdale, MI or at the Hillsdale County Market, 29 N. Howell Street, Hillsdale, MI

St. Joseph County:

- Corey Lake Orchards – 12147 Corey Lake Road, Three Rivers, MI
- Three Rivers Farmer's Market – 138 West Michigan Ave., Three Rivers, MI
- Byler's Farm Market, 21738 West US – 12, Sturgis, MI

In addition, coupons can be redeemed at any Michigan Farmers Market or Roadside Stand that displays the laminated, yellow poster stating: "**Project FRESH Coupons Accepted Here.**"

Oh – there is one more reason to go to a Farmers Market. It's just plain, old-fashioned fun! So take some time to enjoy summer and all its goodness by visiting a Farmers Market or stopping at a Roadside Stand! You will be glad you did.

To learn more about Project Fresh or Senior Project Fresh, call your county health department office or visit our website at [www.bhsj.org](http://www.bhsj.org). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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**Hillsdale County**  
20 Care Drive  
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**Three Rivers**  
1110 Hill St.  
Three Rivers, MI 49093  
(269) 273-2161  
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