



# HOME GROWN

Website connects consumers to local farmers' products

The corn is as high as an elephant's eye in Northeast Pennsylvania this time of year. That means that it's late summer and the fall harvest is right around the corner.

Of course some local crops have already been brought to market, such as tomatoes, strawberries and blueberries. And I've seen roadside corn stands recently. Our area has different locally grown produce available most of the year. In fact, dairy and meat products are available all year.

Buying locally produced food is often promoted as a way to reduce your carbon footprint, eat healthier and support the local economy. But how do you know where to get local produce and what's in season? You can start by visiting the website **FarmFreshPA.com**. It's a directory of farms and farmers markets in Northeast Pennsylvania.

#### Land of plenty

The site covers farms as far north as Franklin Forks in Susquehanna County, south to Tremont in Schuylkill County, west to Muncy in Lycoming County and east to Honesdale in Wayne County.

The farms offer a wide variety of products. There's the everyday fruits, vegetables, eggs, dairy, beef, poultry and pork; seasonal fare, such as syrup, cider, pumpkins and Christ-

mas trees; and specialty items like olive oil, wine, honey, baked goods, flowers, jellies, jams and sauces.

The homepage features four main sections with links to more information on each one. The Farmers and Growers section is a list of all the farms on the site along with their specialties, location and links to websites for many of them.

Markets and Stands has five farmers markets: Co-op in Scranton, South Side in Scranton, Wilkes-Barre, Pittston City and Tunkhannock. Under each market is a list of the participating vendors, their specialties and locations. There are clickable icons for different specialties, such as fruits, vegetables, pork, etc., that let you filter the vendors by the products they offer. What's missing is a list of roadside farm stands. They may be too sporadic in location and scheduling to accurately track.

The Pick Your Own section is a list of berry, apple and Christmas tree farms where you can harvest the crops yourself. Finally, the Seasonal Activities section is a list of pumpkin patches that offer hayrides, corn mazes and the like.

Links to the four main sections are repeated in a navigation bar across the top of the page. There's also links to a News & Recipes section and a Contact section there.

Near the bottom of the page under the heading #Farm-FreshPA is a photo gallery of prepared dishes. Clicking on an image brings up a bigger version of it, but there's no caption information indicating what

the dish is or where it's from.

Next to that is a What's Cookin' section featuring a recipe for grilled corn salad and a month-old press release about the Scranton Co-op Farmers Market. At the very bottom of all the pages is a sign-up form if you want to receive emails.

#### Organic look... almost

The design of the website tries to capture a down-on-the-farm, homemade, organic look. It comes close to accomplishing this, but a few minor design missteps prevent it from pulling it off successfully. Although I guess you could argue that a down-on-the-farm, homemade, organic site should have some design missteps, as opposed to a professionally designed site that would be seamlessly unified.

The pages are decorated with beautiful white-line drawings of produce on a black background. Some of the drawings use colored or gray lines. If the typography was chosen more carefully to compliment the drawings, or better still, if the display type had been hand drawn, the overall feel of the site would be more successful.

Instead the type feels a little clunky, with too many different styles and some poor spacing and alignment choices.

Aesthetics aside, this a useful site for anyone interested in buying locally grown products. It's organized well with intuitive navigation and good information.

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