



National Ag Day, March 20, 2018



A budding food network takes root in West Tennessee

The Northwest Tennessee Local Food Network (#NWTNLFN) is composed of private citizens, agricultural producers, representatives from area Farmers Markets, the Health Department, UT Extension, area schools, UTM, local businesses, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and anybody who feels the need to make locally-grown food a priority for this region. When people talk about food, the discussion involves access to food, distribution of food, quality and quantity of food, food education, food justice, food waste, and the future of local food economies.

The #NWTNLFN is working towards building an equitable and sustainable food system, one that is improving access to locally-grown, fresh, healthy food, and promoting increased usage of local places for the health and economic welfare of communities in Northwest Tennessee.

In 2015, the newly formed LFN Steering Committee in Weakley County requested assistance through the national Local Foods, Local Places program to develop an action plan for advancing the local food system through a community forum series called "Using Food to Build Community."

The next community forum, which is the fifth to be

held in the region, and locally-sourced breakfast, is set for Wednesday, April 25 from 8-10 a.m. at the Trinity Presbyterian Church on 145 Hannings Lane in Martin.

The #NWTNLFN is inviting area residents, farmers, clergymen, clergywomen, and non-profit organizations to engage in dialogue about issues facing this community regarding hunger access to healthy food.

The goal is to form collaborative partnerships with the purpose of creating a local food system that is thriving and equitable for all, and its potential for supporting healthier people and neighborhoods, strengthening the local economy, and revitalizing the downtown and rural areas.

An RSVP is required to attend this free event. RSVP deadline is Friday, April 20. Visit the #NWTNLFN facebook page event "Ticket URL" or RSVP on the webpage at nteconnect.com/get-involved/local-food-network.

In 2016, the LFN produced the first Weakley County Local Food Guide. In 2017 the guide was expanded to include agribusinesses from Weakley, Carroll, Henry and Obion Counties. The goal is to turn the food guide into a yearly magazine by 2020 distributing free, public copies

throughout the Northwest Tennessee region through paid advertising. The LFN continually seeks area farmers markets, farmers, value-added producers, beekeepers, locally owned greenhouses, and organizations who would like to be listed in this widely distributed guide to register online at nteconnect.com/get-involved/local-food-network.

The #NWTNLFN is continuously working on developing a shared understanding of the purpose and value of the LFN throughout the area while forum participants have been providing design input to ensure that the network adds tangible benefits to both individual and collective efforts.

Moving forward, the members of the network hope to create LFN branches in each county throughout Northwest Tennessee, creating a regional steering committee that will help strengthen the local and regional food system, organize and promote educational programs around how to cook and grow local food, and continue to grow the NWTN Local Food Guide listings.

Currently, the Northwest Tennessee Entrepreneur Center (NTEC) supports the network financially and also logistically through a grant with the Delta Regional Authority.



NEW ADDITION —Tori Damron greets Callie the cow's newest offspring.Tori is the wife of Clint Damron. Together they raise beef cattle.



SECOND GENERATION FULL-TIME FARMING — Jay and Alice Ann Yeargin of Greenfield have received more achievements as agriculturists than many have received in their lifetime. The family helps manage about 5,000 acres between Dresden and Greenfield. From Tennessee YF&R Environmental Stewardship Award to the county's Chamber Business of the Year Award, the Yeargins work full-time throughout the year with their row crops and cattle operation.

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