

Land O' Lakes Making a Difference

When we ask ourselves what we can do to make the world a better place, one answer may be right in our own backyards. Our local non-profits help us feed our neighbors, provide valuable human services and can help us educate agriculture's next generation. And through the Land O'Lakes Foundation, we are helping our members multiply efforts to feed our future.

The Land O'Lakes Foundation's mission is to serve the many communities where our members and employees live and work," says Lydia Botham, Land O'Lakes Foundation Executive Director and Vice President of Community Relations. "Through programs like our member matches, we partner with our members to fight hunger, support education and strengthen communities."

"We have two types of member match programs," says Lydia. "The Direct Member Match works with individual farmers and the Member Co-op Match works with our member co-ops. Both of these are important investments in our communities."

These programs match members' dollar-for-dollar cash donations to local non-profit organizations. While the Member Co-op Match Program has been in existence for more than 15 years, the Direct Member Match Program just launched in 2016.

Member co-ops qualify for matching funds for hunger initiatives and community efforts. Direct Members are eligible for matches up to \$500 for community efforts such as food shelves, Backpack programs, homeless shelters, FFA programs and educational institutions.

For more than 15 years, Land O'Lakes has offered the Member Co-op Match program. Co-ops such as Fosston Tri-Coop have been enthusiastic program participants.

"We appreciate the programs and take full advantage," says Jen Howard, Office Manager at Fosston Tri-Coop. "Land O'Lakes increases our ability to invest in our local community. They match our donations dollar for dollar to organizations such as the Backpack Program and new equipment at the school or in the community."

Causes supported by Land O Lakes are divided into two categories: by hunger and non-hunger initiatives. On the non-hunger side, Fosston Tri-Coop focuses donations on rural youth. That means regular financial support and a presence at local 4-H fairs, as well as support of the Magelssen Elementary playground equipment, city park equipment and this year the amplified sound system at the elementary."

On the hunger side, Fosston Tri-Coop actively supports the Backpack program at Magelssen Elementary, where students receive food for the weekend. Fosston Tri-Coop has also partnered with local food pantries in the past.

7 reasons to shop farmers markets

A farmers market is likely coming to a field or open parking lot near you — if there isn't already one operating nearby. The United States Department of Agriculture says that, between the years of 2008 and 2013, the number of farmers markets doubled across the country.

Farmers markets will continue to thrive and expand as people increasingly realize the benefits of supporting local food providers.

Buyers who are not yet familiar with farmers markets can examine the following seven reasons to break the ice.

1. Enjoy fresh, seasonal foods

Foods at farmers markets tend to be limited to in-season offerings. Some nutritionists suggest eating seasonally available foods is better for your body, because humans ate seasonal produce for thousands of years before shipping and refrigeration changed how people received the majority of their foods. In addition, many people feel that fresh, seasonal foods taste better than the alternatives.

2. Discover new foods

There's always something

new at a farmers market, and this can entice shoppers to expand their flavor palates. Explore interesting, locally grown items. Even children may fall in love with colorful fruits or vegetables and their refreshing tastes.

3. Embrace organic and non-GMO offerings

Many farmers markets offer foods that are organically grown and are produced without GMOs. Farmers market retailers also tend to give firsthand accounts of where their foods come from and how they are grown or raised.

4. Indulge in nutritious foods

The vivid colors and smells emanating from farmers markets indicate just how fresh and nutritious the offerings tend to be. Farmers who peddle their wares at farmers markets adhere to careful farming methods to ensure their foods are as nutritious as possible.

5. Learn secrets and recipes

In addition to fresh produce, farmers markets may offer baked and other prepared goods. Shopkeepers often mingle with their customers, offering trade secrets

and recipe ideas. Additionally, local farm families supported by farmers markets generally offer supreme customer service to keep shoppers coming back week after week.

6. Turn the trip into a social excursion

A farmers market can be an exciting and flavorful social gathering place for families and groups of friends, as well as a great place to meet other members of the community. Sometimes farmers also mingle with local artisans, so the market can be a one-stop-shopping locale for locally produced food and art.

7. Save money

Farmers markets may sell organic produce at a cost comparable or even lower than other retailers. That's because local farmers don't have to transport their items as far as retailers whose foods were shipped from far away places.

Any time of the year is perfect for grabbing a tote bag and browsing the wares at a nearby farmers market, where shoppers are bound to find something fresh, unique and delicious.

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