



North Coast Growers' Association

Humboldt County Farmers' Markets

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RE: Weekday Farmers' Markets Now Open in Eureka, Fortuna, McKinleyville and Willow Creek, Celebrating 40 years of Farmers' Markets in Humboldt County

"For 40 years, the North Coast Growers' Association has connected Humboldt County farmers and communities."

ARCATA, CA - The North Coast Growers' Association is proud to kick off the summer season with the opening of six weekday farmers' markets, celebrating 40 years of farmers' markets in Humboldt County. With farmers' markets now open in Eureka, Fortuna, McKinleyville and Willow Creek, community residents and visitors alike are invited to celebrate the bounty of fresh, Humboldt-grown food and plants at their local neighborhood markets.

The Fortuna Farmers' Market has merged with the North Coast Growers' Association this season, joining the weekday market lineup on Tuesday afternoons, offering even more vendors and variety than before. Be on the lookout for "Fresh and Festive" events during the height of the season. The Willow Creek farmers' market will be happening once again, providing a much-needed community gathering space on Thursday evenings, and even hosting a few special events like zucchini races and a blackberry dessert contest. The McKinleyville farmers' market is teaming up with the McKinleyville Community Services district on Thursday late afternoons during the summer for their "lawn games in the park," and will offer even more vendors and products than before. Eureka mid-day markets in Old Town and Henderson Center are continuing on this year, and are conveniently located and for the perfect lunchtime stop to freshen up the week. NCGA's newest market is the Friday Night Market in Old Town, hosted in partnership with Eureka Visitors' Center, Humboldt Made, and Eureka Main Street, and offering a wide variety of products and activities for locals on Friday evenings.

With something for everyone, local farmers are ready to share the fruits of their labor including a wide variety of delicious and affordable fruits and vegetables, humanely raised meat and eggs, goat cheese, honey, wine and flowers, along with nursery starts for the garden, native and ornamental plants and more. Hot prepared foods are also available at the markets, with offerings ranging from hand-made brick oven pizza to Barbecue to vegan baked goods, sandwiches and soups, and everything in between. As always, farmers' market festivities include free, local live music and a fun, family-friendly community gathering place open to everyone.

Shelley Ruhlen Ponce of Sweet Pea Gardens shares her thoughts about why she participates in farmers' markets. "There's so much to love! The diversity of farmers and people, it brings out young people and old people. I think it's really important to have something in the community that's really wholesome and focuses on fresh food. It's important for a community to have a weekly daytime activity for families, and markets are a direct way to sell your product rather than a grocery store."

Emily Catherine from Brunner Family Farm echoes the importance of community and direct marketing through local farmers' markets. "I love the community, it's really great. It's fun to see customers, and it's really great to be able to be the avenue between your product and the consumer."

Featured items at the farmers' markets for June include strawberries, cherries, snap peas and summer squash, along with spring onions, broccoli, salad greens, meat, eggs, honey and flowers. Neighborhood weekday farmers' markets are also great places to find nursery starts, seeds and ornamental plants for home gardens -

whether they be in pots, straw bales or in the ground. For those who may be new to gardening, the farmers at the market are always happy to share helpful growing tips.

Marsha Maxwell from Jameson Creek Nursery reflects on customer interactions at the market and why she's moved away from wholesaling her products. "It's a good mix of people. It's not only business, it's socializing so it's a good mix of things. It's more rewarding to interact with people who are going to plant your items."

NCGA farmers' markets are also exclusively Humboldt-grown and GMO-free. Market attendees can enjoy the benefits of eating locally and seasonally--taste free samples, try out new foods and meet the local family farmers who work so hard to produce the highest quality food for Humboldt County. What else makes the products at farmers' markets unique? The ultra-high quality of the products available. Chris Moore of Woody Ryno Farms explains, "we raise our pigs on pasture and they get to have fresh grass every day, so that's a big difference from most pork. They also eat Six Rivers Brewery grain, and the Tofu Shop's okara."

In a similar vein, Karin Eide of Spring Hill Farmstead Goat Cheese shares what makes her products special. "I sell and make farmstead goat cheese and am the only farmstead cheese producer in Humboldt County. Farmstead means that we raise the goats on the farm, we milk them on the farm and we make the cheese on the farm." She continues, "I just want to make cheese for my community, and I want to sell it directly. I don't sell it in any of the stores."

NCGA's weekday farmers' markets are open in six locations now through October, and take place rain or shine. Customers with CalFresh EBT cards are welcome at all of these North Coast Growers' Association Farmers' Markets, and Market Match is also available at every market to help make fresh fruits and vegetables more affordable. Visit the Market Info Booth to learn more about CalFresh and Market Match, and to sign up. The Market Info Booth also offers free nutrition information including recipes featuring local seasonal items from the market, food preservation guides, and growing guides for a variety of vegetables including both inland and coastal climates.

MARKET SCHEDULE:

EUREKA Old Town - TUESDAYS 10am-1pm, Jun-Oct - F & 2nd Streets

EUREKA Henderson Center- THURSDAYS 10am-1pm, Jun-Oct - F & Henderson Streets

EUREKA Friday Night Market - FRIDAYS 5-8pm, Jun-Oct - E St. & Opera Alley

FORTUNA Farmers Market - TUESDAYS 3-6pm, Jun-Oct - 10th St. & Main St.

MCKINLEYVILLE Eureka Natural Foods - THURSDAYS 3:30-6:30pm, Jun-Oct - Central Ave. & Pickett Rd.

WILLOW CREEK Community Commons- THURSDAYS 5-8pm, Jun-Oct - Hwy 299 & Hwy 96

ARCATA PLAZA - SATURDAYS 9am-2pm April-November; 10am-2pm December-March

Join the North Coast Growers' Association in supporting local farmers, the local economy and healthy families! (And don't forget to bring those reusable shopping bags!) For more information like market dates and times, live music schedules, and information about Market Match, visit www.northcoastgrowersassociation.org or call (707) 441-9999. Photos available upon request.

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The North Coast Growers' Association's farmers' markets were established in 1978 by a handful of farmers who began selling from the back of their trucks in the vacant lot at the food of F and 1st Streets in Eureka. Today, NCGA is a membership-run, 501(c)3 non-profit organization with over 100 members, contributing significantly to the health and well-being of the community. 2018 is NCGA's 40th season operating farmers' markets. Working collaboratively, NCGA members and staff represent agricultural interests in Humboldt County through community partnerships that promote local and healthy foods, programs that increase access to local food, participation in local and statewide policy-making, and the coordination of our seven Certified Farmers' Markets.

"To be interested in food but not in food production is clearly absurd." -Wendell Berry