

## **Support Your Local Farmers**

### **Experience the Bibb County Farmers Market**

It is my pleasure this week to step aside and give my column pen to tireless Bibb County Farmers Market volunteer Helen Dunnavent, so that she can update everyone on what's going on at the Market. But first, I'd like to extend a heartfelt 'thank you' to Helen and everyone else who has visited, shopped or supported the Market.

The list of partners is so long that I literally don't have the space to mention all of the great organizations, individuals, growers, customers and volunteers who have made the Market successful. And the season's far from over! Now, let's hear from Helen...

There's a party going on from 3pm-6pm every Friday afternoon! People are gathering to meet friends and neighbors at the Bibb County Farmers Market. Not only are they able to find the freshest fruits and vegetables around, but they also have fun!

For the typical farmer, crops are peaking right now. Cucumbers, yellow squash, and peaches are declining, but peas are rolling in, second plantings of beans are ripening, corn has hit its height, and watermelons and cantaloupes are at their succulent best. Don't forget the tomatoes! You will also find potatoes, onions, collards and some of the most unusual acorn squash, Star of David okra, and eggplant in all shapes and sizes. A trip to the Farmers Market can be a real education.

Many people expect the prices at the Market to be much less than in the regular grocery stores. This is not always the case. These farmers are your neighbors who purchase seed, irrigate, and work long hours for months to bring you the freshest and best produce that can be had in Bibb County.

The produce you find in the stores was picked before it was fully ripened and hauled many miles to reach you. Our farmers are within 30 miles of the Market. Their produce is picked Friday morning and literally rushed to the Market in time for you to make your purchases beginning at 3:00p.m.

The Farmers Market has more than fresh fruits and vegetables. It also has vendors who supply an assortment of breads (including sourdough and banana), cakes (caramel, pound, and apple, etc.), relishes (corn, squash, zucchini, etc.), Sno-Ice, and Bar-B-Que by the plate or pound.

Some of our farmers have planted their crops to provide a continuing source of vegetables. With your support, the Bibb County Farmers Market can continue bringing you their fresh produce well into September, or as long as the crops continue producing.

Sweet potatoes will be ready soon and the peas, beans, tomatoes, okra, peppers, and eggplant will continue for a while longer. Come check out the fun at the Farmers Market "party" on Friday afternoons. To plug into our Market Information System, send an email to [hdunnaventbcfm@yahoo.com](mailto:hdunnaventbcfm@yahoo.com). You will receive not only the Market Menu every Thursday but also information about market dates and plans for next year.

If you have not yet visited the Bibb County Farmers Market, come on out and experience it! It is true that you might pay a little more for some items than you pay in the grocery store. However, you can be assured that what you are buying is fresh, and that you are supporting local farmers and the local economy by shopping at home.

The future of the Bibb County Farmers Market depends on you! Possible expansion of the market to two days, or to northern Bibb County, in 2010 will be determined by how well we can "keep a good thing going." So come on out and join the "party!"