



A Wisconsin, Farmer-owned Co-op!

The Southern Wisconsin Food Hub Cooperative is currently recruiting local, fresh-produce growers and interested buyers for the 2013 season. The interim grower-led board has formed and an interim general manager has been hired.

The vision of the Southern Wisconsin Food Hub Cooperative (SWFH) is to:

- enable local growers to aggregate their produce to meet the larger volume requirements of intermediate buyers such as grocery stores, schools and hospitals, as well as distributors
- provide mechanisms to reduce up-front risks of growing fresh produce
- engage community investment and participation in the cooperative and local food system
- allow growers to control their markets and receive good prices for their products
- develop strong brand recognition for *Wisconsin Farmed* produce in the local and regional marketplace
- build new avenues for growers and buyers of locally grown fresh produce to come together

There is strong demand for local produce, as evidenced by the Dane County feasibility study that served as a beginning step in this project.

http://pdf.countyofdane.com/Purchasing/RFI_111101_Packing_House_Study.pdf

To get started in 2013 we are strategically targeting certain crops, including: peas, string beans, cabbage, cucumbers, peppers, squash, carrots, beets, sweet corn, and leafy greens.

Experienced growers and interested buyers are currently being recruited. We are also willing to entertain additional crops for 2013 if growers have experience in growing larger quantities for the market.

Growers will be members of the cooperative and required to hold equity stock to access the services and benefits. The Wisconsin Farmers Union will be the founding organizational member of the cooperative. Community and organizational members will also be invited to hold equity in the cooperative. Growers will constitute a majority of the board.

Prices will be based on Chicago Terminal Prices. The cooperative will provide sales, marketing, warehousing, business administration and some packing services to member growers in year one with plans to move towards additional packing and processing services in subsequent years as SWFH Cooperative members see fit.

For more information or to join us in these efforts please contact:

Mark Olson, Renaissance Farmers and SWFH Interim Board member, Tel: (608) 588 2230, Email: pesto@renfarm.com or Sarah Lloyd, Special Projects Coordinator, Wisconsin Farmers Union, Mobile: (608) 844 3758, Email: slloyd@wisconsinfarmersunion.com

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