

Growing ND

FROM WITHIN

SUMMER 2026



Welcome our newest market

New Farmers Market Grant The Market At West Acres

The Market at West Acres is a partnership between the Northern Plains Botanic Garden Society and West Acres, and since 2014, it has grown from a small but mighty market into its biggest season yet. In 2026, more than 28 vendors are bringing fresh, locally made products to the community throughout the season. From June through mid-October, shoppers can visit the market every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. to browse locally grown produce, fresh-baked goods, handmade products, flowers, honey, and a variety of unique offerings from talented farmers, growers, makers, bakers, and artisans across the region.

More than just a place to shop, the Northern Plains Farmers Market at West Acres has become a community gathering

space that celebrates local businesses and the people behind them. Whether you're picking up fresh ingredients, discovering handcrafted goods, or meeting the vendors who make it all possible, every visit helps support small businesses throughout our region.

The continued growth of the market wouldn't be possible without our incredible vendors and the community members who choose to shop local week after week. Their support has helped make this season our largest and most successful yet.

We're also especially grateful for our partnership with the North Dakota Farmers Market & Growers Association. Grant funding from NDFMGA expanded our marketing efforts, enhanced the market experience through social media campaigns, paid advertising, market flags and signage, food court table tents, and

more.

Thank you to the North Dakota Farmers Market & Growers Association for investing in local markets and helping us continue to grow. And thank you to our vendors and shoppers for making the 2026 Northern Plains Farmers Market at West Acres our biggest season yet.

Contact Emma Ritterman for more info.
emmaritterman@westacres.com



**James Johnston, 12 years old,
owner of Easy Peasy.**

NDFMGA grants help grow Ag's next generation of farmers

Youth Vendor Grant - James Johnston

I started my business after the farmers market convention back in October of '25, where I learned about marketing from Vance Corum and how something as simple as a logo could affect a business. After that, I was inspired by Vance to start my business, Easy - Peasy (my pea business where I grow peas).

I applied for a youth vendor grant. I am very happy I got it! I used the money to get myself a cart and a booth tent, along with several other things, including my sign, a T-shirt with my logo, and logo stickers for bags of peas. I put the ND Farmers Market and Growers logo inside the pea pod on my logo so it looks like one of the peas :) I'm happy with where I am and excited to see where the future leads.

Help us better serve your needs

Hello NDFMGA Members and Friends,

It's hard to believe we're already at the peak of summer! I hope each of you has found time to enjoy the warm—sometimes very warm—weather this season. Here in my neck of the woods, we had a cooler-than-usual June, which stunted my peppers and tomatoes. Fortunately, July more than made up for it!



Quinn Renfandt
NDFMGA President

I want to take a moment to share a brief mid-year update on what the NDFMGA Board of Directors and team have been working on.

Since taking on the role of President last fall, I have encouraged our Board to invest time and energy into strengthening our Association. As many of you have read, our longtime Executive Director, Keith Knudson, will be stepping down later this year. His leadership has had a lasting impact on NDFMGA, and his departure marks the beginning of an important transition for our organization.

Change always brings both opportunities and challenges. It gives us a chance to reflect on where we are and where we want to go. In response to Keith's upcoming departure, I asked our Board to participate in facilitated strategic planning sessions. While navigating this transition, our focus remains on building an Association that can serve our members for years to come. Together, we have been evaluating what is working well, identifying areas that no longer align with our mission, and developing a thoughtful plan for the future.

As we look ahead, one priority has become especially clear: we need to better understand what our members want and need from their Association while ensuring everyone is aware of the valuable resources and opportunities already available to them. NDFMGA has long provided value through conferences, grant opportunities, technical assistance, and many other programs. Our focus now is on strengthening those services while ensuring they continue to meet the evolving needs of our members.

Advocacy is another important way we can better serve our members. As an association, we are uniquely positioned to advocate on behalf of farmers markets and the communities they serve. Whether

working alongside partner organizations or engaging with legislators, NDFMGA can help ensure that the voices of our members are heard in the decisions and policies that affect farmers markets across our region. Our goal is to be a trusted, collaborative voice that advances the interests of our members and strengthens farmers markets across North Dakota.

In the coming months, the Board will undertake the important work of identifying and hiring NDFMGA's next Executive Director. This is a critical leadership role that supports entrepreneurs, farmers markets, and local food systems across North Dakota. We will also continue strengthening our relationships with partner organizations that provide valuable programs, services, and resources to our members.

Finally, I want to extend my sincere thanks to the NDFMGA Board of Directors for their dedication and leadership, to our Executive Director for his years of service, and to each of our members for your continued support and commitment to our Association.

I hope you enjoy the rest of the market season.

Quinn Renfandt
President | NDFMGA

Rust grows her business with youth vendor grants

My name is Kaylee Rust, and I'm 14 years old from Mercer.

This is my third year receiving the NDFMGA grant, and I am so thankful for the opportunity. This year, I used the grant to purchase the supplies I needed to make my homemade strawberry rhubarb and blueberry rhubarb jam, along with peach and blueberry kuchen.

Receiving this grant has allowed me to continue growing my small business while keeping my prices affordable so more people can enjoy my products. It has also allowed me

to learn valuable skills in budgeting, planning, customer service, and entrepreneurship. I enjoy meeting people at the farmers market and sharing homemade treats with my community.

The NDFMGA has made a real difference for my business, and I'm grateful for the support it provides to young entrepreneurs like me. I encourage others to visit their local farmers markets—not only to enjoy fresh, locally made products, but also to support the hardworking vendors who make them. Thank you for this opportunity.



Friend of the market introduction

Strengthen ND is a rural capacity-building organization that works alongside communities across North Dakota to turn local ideas into action. Our work spans community development, nonprofit and small-business support, AmeriCorps, local food systems, and grantmaking. While the projects may look different from one community to another, they all share a common goal: helping rural people build the resources, relationships, and capacity needed to create a strong future close to home.

One example of that work is our Strong Farm program, which supports beginning and small-scale farmers as they grow their businesses. Through the Strong Farm Incubator, producers receive access to land, equipment, education, technical assistance, and connections to

new markets. We currently support five on-site growers near Baldwin, along with additional producers who participate from their own farms across the state.

As we worked with these producers, one challenge surfaced: growing food is only one part of building a successful farm business. Producers also need dependable ways to reach customers.

That challenge led to the Strong Farm Veggie Van.

The Veggie Van is a mobile market that brings fresh, locally grown produce and other seasonal products directly into North Dakota communities. It creates another sales opportunity for local farmers while making fresh food more accessible to people who may not regularly visit a farmers market or live

near a full-service grocery store.

The idea was tested through a small pilot in 2025. Six pop-up markets were held, and every one sold out. That response showed us there was real demand from both customers and producers. In 2026, Strengthen ND purchased a refrigerated van and began working with a group of local growers to prepare for a full summer season.

The Veggie Van officially launched in July and is stopping weekly at the AgeWell Center in Bismarck on Wednesday mornings through August. We are also exploring a Thursday afternoon stop at the Wilton Farmers Market. Produce is sourced from Pride of Dakota growers located primarily along the Highway 83 corridor or within approximately 40
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Keith Knudson, Executive Director

Understanding North Dakota Cottage Food Laws

It is the time of year when I get a lot of inquiries about what can be sold directly to consumers. Of course, produce from the garden can be sold at our farmers markets! However, there are restrictions on other items, such as baked goods, canned goods, and processed foods. North Dakota's cottage food laws do allow home producers to sell processed food directly to consumers without needing a commercial kitchen license or state inspection.



Keith Knudson
Executive Director

a home kitchen that is not inspected by the state or local health department."

Refrigerated Goods: Items needing refrigeration (like cream pies or cheesecake) must include safe handling instructions and a disclosure showing they were kept frozen or properly chilled.

PROHIBITED OR RESTRICTED ITEMS:

Uninspected Meats: Beef, pork, wild game, or fish cannot be sold. (Small-scale home-raised poultry has specific exemptions.)

Fresh Shell Eggs: Flock owners selling eggs directly to consumers are exempt from egg dealer licensing and commercial washing/grading. However, eggs must be clean, uncracked, kept refrigerated at 45°F or below during storage and transport, and sold directly to the end user (not for commercial resale or use by other cottage food vendors).

Excluded Pickled Goods: While acidified

plant products like pickled cucumbers or salsa are allowed, pickled eggs, pickled meats, and pickled seafood are explicitly excluded.

Low-Acid Canned Goods: Canned items with a non-acidic pH (higher than 4.6, like unacidified vegetables or soups) are restricted.

Wholesale: Products cannot be resold in restaurants, grocery stores, or retail shops.



Check out our resources page on our website for more information!

Here is the link: <https://www.ndfarmersmarkets.org/resources#FarmersMarketResources>

Disclaimer: The North Dakota Farmers Market and Growers Association does not provide legal advice. This summary is for informational purposes only. Please review state statutes or consult a legal professional for guidance on your specific business operations.

Still have questions? Email us at NDFMGA@outlook.com.

HERE IS WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

Direct Sales Only: You can sell directly to end consumers at farmers markets, farm stands, CSAs, home kitchens, or via delivery.

No Inspections Required: State and local health departments do not require permits, official licensing, or routine kitchen inspections.

Required Consumer Advisory: You must inform buyers your products are uninspected. Display a table sign or label products with: "This product is made in



CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

**NORTH DAKOTA FARMER MARKET
AND GROWERS ASSOCIATION**

10191 Lake Road
Bottineau, North Dakota 58318

A Message from Our Executive Director

Looking Ahead

Dear NDFMGA Members,

It is with deep gratitude that I share with you that I will be stepping down as Executive Director, effective Nov. 1, 2026.

Serving this organization has been an absolute honor. Working alongside our dedicated producers and makers, market managers, and board members to strengthen North Dakota's local food systems has been immensely rewarding. What we've built together is strong, and I have confidence in the bright future and continued growth of the NDFMGA.

Help Us Find Our Next Leader

As the Board of Directors begins searching for the next Executive Director, they welcome your help! If you know someone passionate about local agriculture and community leadership, please encourage them to send your candidate referrals to the Board at NDFMGA@outlook.com

Over the coming months, I'll be working closely with our Board to ensure a smooth transition. Thank you all for your partnership, hard work, and dedication over the years—it has been a privilege to serve you.

Sincerely,
Keith A. Knudson
Executive Director, NDFMGA



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minutes east or west of the Bismarck-Mandan area.

For us, the Veggie Van is about more than selling vegetables. It is about creating practical infrastructure that helps farmers reach new customers, keeps more food dollars circulating within North Dakota, and gives communities greater access to food grown closer to home.

We are grateful for organizations like the North Dakota Farmers Market and Growers Association that continue to advocate for growers, strengthen farmers markets, and connect producers across the state. Partnerships like these are essential as we work together to build a stronger and more resilient local food system for North Dakota.

MEGAN LANGLEY
Executive Director