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MarketMaker Welcomes Alabama!

National Food MarketMaker is excited to welcome Alabama to their growing online network of states. The state went live on Thursday, October 13. MarketMaker now includes 17 states plus the District of Columbia.



Bringing MarketMaker to Alabama is a cooperative effort between the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission; Auburn University Marine Extension & Research Center; Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium; Alabama Department of Agriculture & Industries; AL Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources, Marine Resources Division; National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration, US Dept. of Commerce.

“The idea of web-based marketing may be somewhat new to the fishing industry, but it has been around for years,” said Ralph Hode, fisheries disaster recovery coordinator for the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission. “It stands to reason that the Marine Directors of the five Gulf states had great foresight in requesting that a portion of the post-oil disaster funds provided to us by Congress be used to advertise via the Internet.”



The Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission awarded a grant that funds an Alabama MarketMaker outreach coordinator position, giving seafood business owners and managers an opportunity for training one-on-one. Producers, processors, chefs, restaurants, and other food-related businesses are also encouraged to register at no cost on the Alabama MarketMaker site. Providing detailed information about products and services will help connect these businesses with each other and with consumers.

We welcome you visit Alabama’s new site by clicking on the logo above or go to: www.al.foodmarketmaker.com. View all the MarketMaker states on the national website at: www.foodmarketmaker.com



GAPs, Otherwise Known As Good Agricultural Practices

By Kari Houle

Kari is currently a Horticulture and Sustainable Landscape Instructor at Illinois Central College and previously a Horticulture Educator with University of Illinois Extension



The concepts of Good Agricultural Practices should not be new to most producers, the implementation of safe production and handling methods of produce on the farm to reduce the risk of microbial contamination. GAPs is becoming even more imperative for producers as the concern over food borne illnesses reach the media spotlight.

One of the main goals of GAPs is to develop a safety plan that is implemented on farm that addresses all the various components of GAPs, which are many and varied. Those components include worker health and hygiene, water use, postharvest water use, soil amendments, cleaning and sanitation, traceback and recall, and crisis management. Though it may seem over whelming at first, many of these fall into the realm of common sense when it comes to farm safety and management.

As an example, if you are working on a farm and use the bathroom, before you go back to the field to continue harvesting produce, you should make sure that you wash your hands with soap and water. You wouldn't go back to the dinner table to finish your food without doing the same thing. Another example is the use of manure on production fields. Careful management of manure is imperative for safe application to reduce the risk of microbial contamination of produce. Application of raw manure to a field that in the same year would be used to grow root crops or low growing crops such as carrots or lettuce immediately increases the chance of contamination. In that situation, your best option is to apply full composted manure that has been tested for microbes.

GAPs is the idea of reducing, as much as possible, the chance of contamination of produce you sell to the consumer. Attending a training session on GAPs and then developing and implementing your farm safety plan gives the chance to increase your potential market through showing your consumer that you are aware and willing to address these various safety issues. There are certification programs available for producers who are willing to take the next step or if you wish to sell to a wholesale outlet such as a grocery store that requires certification. One such certifier is the USDA.



There are many resources available to producers to help them work through the process of addressing on-farm safety and developing a safety plan. The National GAPs Program is run by Cornell University's Department of Food Science and the website is full of a variety of useful information to set you on your way to developing your plan. Visit the National GAPs Program website at www.gaps.cornell.edu and start thinking about developing your on-farm safety plan.

MarketMaker Communicates with Cantaloupe Growers

Serving as an educational and communication resource



National MarketMaker responded to this fall's listeria outbreak by sending a fact sheet entitled, "*Melon Food Safety Resources for Producers and Consumers*", to cantaloupe growers in the database. This resource was provided by Marisa Bunning, Asst. Professor and Extension Specialist, Food Safety, Colorado State University with YouTube links supplied by Dr. Mosbah Kushad, Food Crops Extension Specialist, University of Illinois.

MarketMaker is pleased to be of service, not only as a connection for buyers and sellers, but also as an educational and communication resource for food industry-related businesses and consumers.

MarketMaker Business in the Spotlight...

WesMar Farms Moreauville, Louisiana

Are you kidding? Goats might not be your idea of a birthday gift, but that's exactly what West Constantine received from his wife, Marguerite in 2002. All she wanted in return for her birthday 2 weeks later, was for West to accept her gift. This was the beginning of WesMar Farms which, today, is the only licensed Grade A dairy in central and north Louisiana.



The Constantine's make every effort to manage WesMar Farms in a manner that works with the environment. They raise their Nubian Dairy Goats with a natural approach to animal husbandry. Their herds are raised in a non-confined environment and allowed to graze in the pastures.



Along with their sweet, farm fresh goats milk, the Constantine's have developed an excellent fresh Chèvre and a creamy, mildly aged Fête cheese. These, along with goat cheese truffles, a variety of goat milk soaps made with pure essential oils (handcrafted by Marguerite herself), and other delicacies, are available in the gift shop on the farm. Customers comment that Marguerite's soap is a great skin care product that doesn't leave their skin feeling dry and itchy like commercial soap. WesMar products have been certified as Genuine Louisiana Products by the Louisiana Department of Agriculture.

If feeding and milking, making cheese and soaps, and running a farm and gift shop isn't enough to keep the Constantine's busy, they also offer tours of their working dairy farm, host a weekly Dairy Market, manage their wholesale business along with their retail operation, and still find time to correspond weekly with their customers via email.

Even with this busy schedule, you'll find Marguerite with her laptop helping others register their businesses in the **MarketMaker** database. "MarketMaker allows producers to market their products **free of charge**. How can you beat free advertising?" says Marguerite. "MarketMaker allows agritourism operators to market their value-added products such as cheeses, wines, salsas, jelly, jams, and honeys and promote their on-farm tourism," she said.

Click to view WesMar Farms' [MarketMaker profile](#) or find them on the Web at: www.wesmarfarms.com.

MarketPlace Buy & Sell Forum

Post your ad for products and/or services you have to sell or want to buy. The Buy & Sell Forum is available to you at no cost. See detailed ads on our website by clicking on MarketPlace Buy & Sell Forum on the National site: www.foodmarketmaker.com.

BUY 3 listings	SELL 72 listings	SERVICES/EQUIPMENT 6 listings	TRANSPORTATION 0 listing	OTHER 0 listing
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WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Do you have an idea that might benefit another farm, fishery, or business? Did you find markets for your products by doing a market search? Have customers found you because of your listing? Did you connect with a business by using the Buy & Sell Forum?

Tell us how you have used MarketMaker-we'd like to know! Please submit ideas or articles to: marketmaker@extension.uiuc.edu

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