

Charlotte's Market Economy

Shopping Local made easy at the Charlotte Regional Farmers Market



The official beginnings of the Charlotte Regional Farmers Market at the groundbreaking and ribbon cutting ceremonies in 1984 with former Department of Agriculture Commissioner Jim Graham (center), former Charlotte Mayors Harvey Gantt and Eddie Knox with other Charlotte dignitaries.

The Charlotte Regional Farmers Market officially opened at groundbreaking and ribbon cutting ceremonies in the mid 1980s and has been going strong ever since. Under the leadership of, then Department of Agriculture Commissioner Jim Graham, the state built four regional markets all about the same time, all fashioned after the State Farmers Market in Raleigh which was originally built in the 1955.

Today there are four thriving regional farmers markets in North Carolina that are owned by the state of North Carolina and operated by the NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. The largest of these year-round markets is still the State Farmers Market in Raleigh which operates with several restaurants and a

large wholesale division on the same site.

In addition to the Charlotte Regional Farmers Market, there are regional markets in Asheville – the Western North Carolina Farmers Market; and in Greensboro – Robert G. Shaw Piedmont Triad Farmers Market.

The concept of regional markets came to be as a way to serve North Carolina farmers and consumers, providing an outlet to buy and sell all that is grown, raised, caught or made in the state of North Carolina. Back in the day, Commissioner Graham coined the phrase “Goodness Grows in North Carolina” and more recently, the “Got To Be NC” mantra has helped to echo the same sentiment.

Each state regional market is open year-round with availability for any farmer to apply for a place to sell. While North Carolina farmers and products do get priority, in Charlotte with the state line so close to the city limits, when there is room, you’ll often find South Carolina farmers selling at the regional market here, as well.

Products available at the regional market range from local produce, dairy, chicken, seafood and meat to all other things grown, raised, caught or made in North Carolina. As farming isn’t just a spring and summer endeavor, the market encourages customers to “Shop Local” each week offering open-year-round hours. In



The Charlotte Regional Farmers Market Winter 2018

Charlotte, the market is open during the week as well as on weekends, but the busiest time is when many Charlotte area foodies take their lead from local chefs and shop the market on Saturday mornings – the time when most local farmers are there.

Any consumer or chef looking to “shop local” can easily consider the Charlotte Regional Market a one-stop shopping spot for just about everything from grains to greens, flowers and soaps to coffee, tea, honey and sauces of all sorts; in addition to a plethora of local protein.

This food writer is pleased to be at the center of an all new #MeatMeAtTheMarket blog campaign designed to encourage local food lovers to shop the Charlotte Regional Market for all varieties of meat throughout the winter months, as well as seasonal veggies, and then to continue



Goodness Grows in North Carolina



the habit when the market kicks off their big April and May festivities. Visit HeidiBillottoFood.com for monthly recipe ideas from local chefs as well as where-to-find-the-farmer tips for Got To Be NC rabbit, pork, beef, lamb and more!

In the spring the Greenery Shed opens in the fourth building on the market site – with seedlings to plant, herbs to grow, and shrubs and trees to locally landscape.

The Charlotte Regional Farmers Market is located at 1801 Yorkmont Road and is easily accessible from South Tryon Street, Tyvola Road, I-77, and I-85. For more information call 704.357.1269. ■

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