



**Independent, locally owned and operated!**

[www.lamorindaweekly.com](http://www.lamorindaweekly.com) 925-377-0977

Published April 14th, 2010

## Lafayette's Weekly Farmers' Market Opens Soon

By Cathy Tyson



After enjoying a trial run of the Lafayette Farmers' Market late last summer, 72% of those polled said "yes" to the Market's return Photo Andy Scheck

Look for a variety of vendors including honey from Steve's Bees of Orinda, beef and chicken from Holding Ranch, Alhambra Valley pears in the fall, and a variety of produce from Freewheelin' Farm in Santa Cruz. One of Freewheelin's founders is former Acalanes High School Class of 2000 graduate Darryl Wong. In addition, there will be strawberries from Watsonville, fresh local asparagus and Contra Costa wineries represented.

"I couldn't pass up the opportunity to sell produce in my hometown," said Darryl Wong, speaking on a cell phone from the farm overlooking the Pacific in north Santa Cruz. He and two other owner-farmers cultivate eight organic, sustainable acres that supply homes through CSA boxes (community supported agriculture) and a number of restaurants. Their dedication to limiting petroleum consumption is manifested in their method of delivery - bicycles with trailers. "It saves on a gym membership," notes Wong.

Sustainable Lafayette and Friends of the Market are working on signs for every booth - noting the distance from each individual farm to the market, organic information and cooking tips. "We want to start a conversation," said Klein, "to educate consumers about what they eat."

"The Market is a key part of the community that helps build community. It's a centerpiece of a broader effort to encourage residents to shop, dine and run errands on Thursday evenings," said Klein. She explained that organizers want to encourage residents to not only shop at the market, but pick up dry cleaning, get a haircut, have dinner with the family, pick up dog food at the pet store - while visiting with neighbors, supporting local merchants and making healthy food choices.

At this point there are some projects still in the works; vegetable valet - a kind of "coat check" for purchases, so that residents can grab a bite of dinner or frozen yogurt without schlepping their squash all over town, cooking demonstrations, sign boards noting what's in season, and periodic special events.

Although one-third of market shoppers surveyed last year reported that they came by bicycle or walked, parking is still a concern at this central Lafayette location - the corner of Mount Diablo Boulevard and Moraga Road. Organizers are talking with nearby banks and business owners to see about using their parking after hours. The Lafayette United Methodist church has graciously donated the use of its parking lot for vendor parking.

Volunteers who are interested in lending a hand should contact Rebecca Calahan Klein, [Rebecca@](mailto:Rebecca@sustainablelafayette.net)

[sustainablelafayette.net](http://sustainablelafayette.net). For more information on Freewheelin' Farm go to [www.freewheelinfarm.com](http://www.freewheelinfarm.com). For more information on Contra Costa Certified Farmers' Markets, go to

[www.cccfm.org](http://www.cccfm.org).

Organizers are working hard behind the scenes toward the grand opening, on May 6th, of the first official full season of the Lafayette Farmers' Market. For twenty-two weeks, every Thursday evening from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. through September 30, residents will have an opportunity to support small family farms, bring vitality to the downtown, and purchase delicious fresh produce. After a successful three-day pilot program last year, the market received approval for a weekly seasonal market at Plaza Park. "It was a collaborative effort," said Rebecca Calahan Klein referring to the Contra Costa Certified Farmers' Markets, the Chamber of Commerce, Sustainable Lafayette, Urban Farmers and a host of volunteers whose enthusiasm and support helped bring the market to fruition.

There will be thirty spots for vendors featuring fresh fruits, vegetables and flowers, and up to five spaces for non-profit organizations. "The conscientious farmers from the pilot program were the first to be invited back because they were so well received," said Jessie Neu, Executive Director of Contra Costa Certified Farmers' Markets (CCCFM).

"The City will not incur any cost to run the market," said Neu. She should know, because CCCFM has years of experience running markets in Walnut Creek, Orinda, Martinez and now Lafayette.

Reach the reporter at: [cathy@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:cathy@lamorindaweekly.com)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA