Kansas Farmers’ Market Month

Anna Schremmer
Phillips-Rooks District Extension Agent
Family and Consumer Science

As I was driving home from work the other day, I saw sweet corn and peaches being sold at the courthouse square. I love this time of year, all the fresh fruit, vegetables, and other produce available for our purchase and ready to consume or preserve for this winter. There is nothing better than going to a Farmer’s Market this time of year to stock up, fill the freezer or preserve the “bounty” of the harvest. August is Kansas Farmers’ Market Month, and we urge everyone to visit one or more of the state’s farmers’ markets.

Our community farmers’ markets are the best place to find freshly picked fruits and vegetables grown right here in Kansas. Farmer’s Markets serve as an integral link between urban, suburban, and rural communities, and they give farmers and consumers an opportunity to interact. Farmers markets are a win-win situation for the community and farmer. By selling directly to the consumer, farmers can realize a higher return for their products than if they were working through a wholesale market. Plus, local farmers spend their money with local merchants, so that money stays where it benefits everyone by building a stronger local economy.

The fruits and vegetables available at Kansas farmers’ markets typically are harvested within 24 hours of market day, and you just can’t beat that for freshness and flavor.

Right now, is a great time to purchase vegetables and fruit, to preserve for later use. Tomatoes, a very popular vegetable, are very versatile for preserving, such as tomato sauce, ketchup, or the ever-popular Salsa. Colorado Peaches are now available and can be either canned or frozen for use this winter. Pickling is a great way to preserve cucumbers, beets, peppers, okra, watermelon, etc. Berries have been abundant, and the wild grapes are getting ripe so there can be lots of jams, jellies, & juice that can be preserved for later use.

A few things to remember when preserving is: Make sure you are processing correctly what you preserve. Low acid foods like vegetables and meats must be preserved by the pressure canner. High acid foods like fruits, jams, jellies, pickles, etc. should be processed in a boiling water bath. When preserving salsa make sure you use a research-based recipe if you are planning on canning it. If you make up your own recipe, freeze the salsa. The proportion of acid to vegetables must be correct or the salsa may spoil. For an excellent salsa recipe contact me at the Phillips-Rooks District Extension Office. Have your pressure canner checked to make sure the pressure gauge is accurate. Bring in your canner lid with the pressure gauge and gasket to be tested. It takes about 5 minutes to do the testing. If your canner only uses a weighted gauge, there is no need to test the weight, but you should have the gasket and other parts checked at least every 5 years. When testing we find most problems with old gaskets is they become brittle and don’t hold pressure which does not allow the canner to become hot enough to kill the bacteria.

August is Kansas Farmers’ Market Month. Enjoy this year’s harvest now and later.

“Knowledge for Life” provided by Phillips-Rooks Extension District #5 and K-State Research and Extension. K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer.