

Subscription Orders Now Available for Fresh Local Produce

A multi-county, two state partnership of local agricultural producers and Cooperative Extension agents has finally launched and is now taking orders for fresh local produce for delivery starting the first of May. Farm Fresh Ventures Cooperative brings farmers in Anson, Chesterfield, Montgomery, Richmond, Stanly and Union Counties together to sell their products through a weekly produce box subscription. The Anson Farmers Market is the aggregate site for this service.

The farmer owned cooperative will sell a limited number of subscriptions to consumers in the six counties to supply a box of locally grown, fresh produce once a week beginning early May and running for 18 weeks. In addition, specialty items may be available for advance purchase during specified weeks, including protein foods such as eggs and local meats, as well as orders for produce in bulk.

Each week there will be five to seven different produce items from among what's in season in our area. Examples of produce to expect include locally grown strawberries, tomatoes, squash, peppers, corn, eggplant, peaches - and the list goes on. If it can be grown in the region, a variety of it will pretty much show up in a weekly box. Produce boxes will be assembled on Tuesday mornings by Cooperative members and volunteers at the Anson County Farmer's Market in Wadesboro and then delivered to designated distribution locations in each county for personal pick-up that afternoon.

The 2013 Season subscription cost is \$396 (18 weeks x \$22 per box), and can be paid in full by April 1. Or you can pay a deposit of \$198 by April 1 and the balance of \$198 by May 1. For more information contact your local Cooperative Extension Horticulture Agent or the Farm Fresh Ventures office at 704-694-2415.

The goal of Farm Fresh Ventures is to provide consumers with fresh, local produce at peak season while creating new marketing outlets for our area farmers. So, not only will you be buying fresh produce that's good for your health, but you will also be supporting the local economy. An educational newsletter with information on how to prepare fresh produce and assemble tasty recipes will be included in weekly produce boxes. Food safety and stor-

age information will also be included throughout the season in addition to information about Cooperative farmers.

Farms providing a variety of local produce for this regional project include: Gary Sikes (Anson) Bountiful Harvest Farms; Calvin Phillips (Anson) Phillips Farms; Dale Nelson (Anson) Nelson All-Natural; Chesley Greene (Anson) Pee Dee Orchards; Clayton & Sherry Sellers (Chesterfield) Sellers Farms; Kent Lowder (Stanly) Muddy Boots Farms; Jackie Sherrill (Richmond) David's Produce; Keith Andrews (Richmond) Andrews Farm Produce; Joe and Jim Lambeth (Richmond) Triple L Farm Inc.; Allan Baucom (Union) A. L. Baucom, Inc.; and Amy Stanley (Union) Veggie Patch Farm.

For information about this project or subscriptions please contact Farm Fresh Ventures at 704-694-2415 or farm-freshventures@gmail.com or visit the extension office at 501 McLaurin Street in Wadesboro.

About the N.C. Cooperative Extension Service - The North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service is the largest outreach program at North Carolina State University. Based in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Cooperative Extension reaches millions of North Carolina citizens each year through local centers in the state's 100 counties and with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. The N.C. Cooperative Extension Service's mission is to partner with communities to deliver education and technology that enrich the lives, land and economy of North Carolinians. Learn more at www.ces.ncsu.edu.

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Catfish Stew Cook-off

The third annual Anson County Catfish Stew Cook-off is scheduled for Saturday, March 16, from noon until 4 p.m. at Hatcher Park in Lilesville. The Town of Lilesville is sponsoring this event. Judging will take place between 2 and 3 p.m. and participation is free! The winner will receive a \$250 prize.

All cooks are challenged to bring your best catfish stew and find out who has the winning recipe according to a select panel of judges.

Not a cook? Join the fun anyway and come out and cheer for your favorite catfish stew team! Want to be a judge? Pay \$5, pick up a bowl and spoon and taste each entry yourself. Complete rules and entry forms are available at Scotty's Bait and Tackle, the Lilesville Town Hall, all three Whit's Convenience locations, Wayne Knott's Service Station and The Old Store.

Bring the kids and enjoy a special day of song, giant slides and lots of fun for all ages. Also new this year are vendor booths. If you are interested in a booth (no food booths, though), contact the Lilesville Town Hall. Cost is only \$10.

Don't miss the crowning of Miss Catfish, open to girls age five through sixth grade who colored the best picture of a catfish. And Master Catfish, open to boys age five through sixth grade who wrote the best essay on how to catch a catfish. A panel of judges will select both and prizes will be awarded.

By Melanie Lyon

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