

## CULTURAL MOMENT FOR MAY 21, 2024

### CELEBRATING FARM TO TABLE SALES AND THE FARMERS' MARKET

Consider the usual journey undertaken by your fruits and vegetables to the grocery store. Days can pass before they arrive from their place of origin. As time passes, the nutrients and taste of food decline. There are a variety of ways to take advantage of direct farm marketing. Most people know about farmers' markets, but there are other methods of getting fresh produce. A popular option in Wellington North is some form of on-farm process.

Often called farm gate or roadside, these stands teem with fresh food and flowers through summer and fall. You may find something as simple as a farm wagon or a buggy parked on the roadside. Some farmers will build rustic little stands or huts that can somewhat protect the buyer from the weather. Many of these operations are provided on an honour system for payment because everyone on the farm is busy with production. Sadly, there is the occasional instance of people taking advantage of that trust, but most understand the idea of paying for their purchases.

"Pick Your Own" operations are another way to enjoy fresh-to-the-table food. It is a great outdoor family activity with the reward of eating food you have picked with your own hands. Children learn in a meaningful way, where our food comes from. These businesses require more supervision to ensure that pickers are in the right area of the field, and that damage is kept to a minimum.

A Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) subscription provides an assortment of fresh produce to the consumer in a regularly available assortment of whatever is ripe on the farm. Although the boxing up of various food shares requires time and labour, the timing is flexible to allow the farmer to get important work done. Some farms will offer a half-share of a CSA for those who are not cooking for a family.

If you prefer a more traditional approach to buying farm products, the Wellington North Farmers' Market is the place for you. With several vendors offering fresh produce, meat, and other agricultural products, the Wellington North Farmers' Market is a great place to shop locally while buying fresh product directly from the source.

The Wellington North Farmers' Market opens for the season on Saturday, June 15 at 8:30 a.m. at the Victory Community Centre, 320 King Street in Mount Forest. The Market will run every Saturday until September 28. Check out the Market on Facebook for more information.

Submitted by Doris Cassan, Wellington North Cultural Roundtable

