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NEWS RELEASE | August 19, 2020

Photos available—Download links and sample captions at end of release

Annual FEAST! Marketplace prepares for a modified COVID-era event

Rochester, MN – Food and beverage businesses from Iowa, Wisconsin and Minnesota are called to register for the Seventh Annual FEAST! Local Foods Marketplace festival, to be held on Sunday, Dec. 6, 2020. To accommodate social distancing needs, a hybrid event is planned, offering online ordering with curbside pickup plus a modified in-person marketplace to take place at the Graham Park County Fairgrounds. Food businesses that use local ingredients can learn more and register online at local-feast.org/registration2020.

Just like grocery stores were called out as essential, farmers markets have continued their service of bringing local farm produce to consumers. This was quickly apparent in Rochester when an online sales platform designed for bulk sales was shifted to allow for smaller pack sales to individual consumers for a drive-thru farmers market on March 21.

Jan Joannides, Executive Director of Renewing the Countryside and co-founder of the FEAST! Local Foods Network, was part of the Farmers Market Food Hub team that made that online pivot, and will be guiding efforts to get FEAST! vendor information online for ordering. "FEAST! is all about expanding markets for farms and food businesses in our region, so we're all in for meeting the challenge of achieving that amidst the need for safe distancing."

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is excited to see FEAST transition to a new, COVID-friendly, event format. MDA's Marketing Section Supervisor, Emily Jerve said, "The FEAST! team is adapting their approach to continue to support the food community in their region, just as we recently pivoted a popular cost sharing program to help Minnesota farmers and food makers who are innovating in the new COVID-influenced food marketing channels, including E-commerce."

FEAST! hosts more than 100 regional food businesses each year, including national award-winners. Many exhibitors utilize locally-grown ingredients in foods like cheese, jam, and wine, and include features like gluten-free, grass-fed and organic, as well as environmentally- and socially-responsible practices. See the 2019 exhibitors [here](#), and an array of photos from the 2019 event [here](#).

FEAST! Local Foods Marketplace is co-hosted by non-profit organizations, [Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation](#) and [Renewing the Countryside](#), and sponsored by the [Minnesota Department of Agriculture](#). For more, visit www.local-feast.org. Follow @localfeastnetwork on [Facebook](#), @Local_Feast on [Twitter](#), localfeast on [Instagram](#), and use #localFEAST to join the conversation.

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Photos and suggested captions:

FEAST! 2019 People's Choice winner

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1aTmXhhJSPszGnAl8jENS0U9ayw35VzmX/view?usp=sharing>

Sample caption:

Jackie Ohmann, DeeAnn Lufkin and Kathy Hupf (L to R), co-owners of CannonBelles Cheese, pose with the FEAST! 2019 People's Choice engraved cheeseboard at the event in Rochester, Minn. last December.

Photo: Ashley Aukes, Beruck Studios

FEAST! 2019 Vegetable Alfombra

https://drive.google.com/file/d/11w_1ehbulEIH2OFgH-rXqf7-IHJybh69/view?usp=sharing

Sample caption:

FEAST! 2019 attendees were invited to participate in the construction of a vegetable alfombra (carpet) made of local veggies, that were then donated to Channel One Regional Food Bank the next day.

Photo: Ashley Aukes, Beruck Studios

FEAST! Local Foods Marketplace Logo

<https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/renewingthecountryside/pages/383/attachments/original/1476298740/Feast!.png?1476298740>

Sample caption:

The largest celebration of local foods in the upper Midwest, FEAST! Local Foods Marketplace brings together over 100 regional food and beverage businesses for sampling, sales and fun.