

NEWS RELEASE | September 8, 2021

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FEAST! Festival returns Saturday, December 11

Rochester, MN – Food and beverage businesses from Iowa, Wisconsin and Minnesota are invited to register for the eighth annual FEAST! Local Foods Marketplace, to be held on Saturday, Dec. 11, 2021. Fans of the event should save the date to join us for the in-person festival at the Mayo Civic Center in Rochester, and participate in the Online Marketplace, where customers can preview products and order online for curbside pick-up. Regional food makers can learn more and register online at local-feast.org/registration2021.

With both the in-person event and the online shopping experience you can savor the taste of the Midwest and learn why local is best. Buying regional food helps to build and support our local food system, from the families growing and creating the food all the way to your kitchen table. While a hybrid event is currently planned, hosts are actively monitoring the COVID-19 situation and will switch to an online-only event if necessary.

"There are so many unique regional products at FEAST! that you really can't get just anywhere, and I love being able to discover the passion these food businesses have for local, sustainably-grown ingredients," said Beth Dooley, James Beard Award-winning cookbook author and tireless advocate of ecological eating. Dooley has offered cooking demos at past festivals, and is looking forward to repeating that this year.

FEAST! hosts more than 100 regional food businesses each year, including national award-winners. Most utilize locally-grown ingredients to make foods such as cheese, jam, specialty and ethnic sauces, as well as cider and wine. Many also carry certifications, including gluten-free, grass-fed and organic, and show leadership through business practices such as commitments to environmental sustainability, fair wages, community food access, and supporting social movements.

"I believe business can—and should—be a force for good," said John Peterson, Founder and CEO of Ferndale Market, which has been both a sponsor and a vendor at FEAST! from the beginning. "When done properly, businesses can extend opportunity, and enrich their communities. It's why we consciously source local, so we can drive demand and create change in our food system."

Vendors are encouraged to register by September 22 to take advantage of early bird pricing.

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 info, including COVID-related updates, visit www.local-feast.org and follow us on social media: @localfeastnetwork on [Facebook](#), @Local_Feast on [Twitter](#), localfeast on [Instagram](#), and #localFEAST.

CONTACT

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Image and suggested caption:

FEAST! Save the Date

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/18Yh-WngD4uUdd8SfIM94XRAYwb2K0de0/view?usp=sharing>

Sample caption:

The eighth annual FEAST! Local Foods Marketplace is planned as a hybrid Online Marketplace and in-person festival Dec.11 in Rochester, Minn.

Quotes...

Customers

Thank you for having the drive thru market! I really appreciate it. What a great asset to our community:)



Happy Holidays!

Emily

Hello-

I just wanted to send a thank you out there to all of the volunteers! You were so hard to make this work during a pandemic. We are so grateful! We loved all of our items and really hope they do online again next year ahead of time. We go every year and know the places that we want to order from anyways :) They make great christmas gifts too.

Thank you again for support local people and putting so much work into this. We were sad we missed it in person but loved the products we got online. It also gave us time to look ahead at the times and think about christmas gifts for others.

Blessings-

Emily and Luke Doskey

Per Sara George: Three different customers in the drive thru Dec. 6 asked when we were doing it again—one begging for the next weekend!

Vendors

You're uber-organized. For that, I am uber-grateful. Thank you for all that you and the FEAST! Team have done and will be doing in the days ahead,

Angie

As a vendor, I felt like the whole thing was quite a success this year! I'm very appreciative of all the work that was done on my behalf - all the organizing and advertising and such. Thank you!

Kate Bonow

Capra Nera Creamery

From vendor survey:

I really appreciate all you do to help local small businesses grow & thrive !!!!!

Thank you so much for all you do! I know it's really hard to figure this out, but what you do is invaluable for all of us! It has helped us more than we ever expected over the years.

From customer survey:

How easy was it to

...find products you wanted?

Somewhat easy 27/54

Very easy 17/54

Combined 44/54 = 81%

...purchase the products?

Somewhat easy 13/54

Very easy 38/54

Combined 51/54 = 94%

...pick up the order?

Somewhat easy 5/54

Very easy 48/54

Combined 53/54 = 98%

"Nice job! I enjoyed getting my local my sources items despite the pandemic. Offer it again."

"Thank you for the opportunity to purchase online during these difficult times"