

Growing food on small farms is labor intensive, especially when the farmer uses natural or organic growing practices. When people object to, say, the cost of green beans, our farmers explain just what kind of time and labor it takes to hand-pick each bean that goes into that pound bag.

Food is sold at its freshest and at the peak of ripeness when flavor and nutrition are highest. It is harvested within hours of your purchase. Supermarket produce, often is picked green to prevent damage during long-distance transit and can take weeks to get to your plate. There is no comparison. The flavor of the food speaks for itself. You may think \$6 or \$7 dollars is an outrageous price for a dozen free-range eggs, but you once you taste them, you'll never want to buy supermarket eggs again.

Many of the produce varieties that our farmers grow are selected for flavor, not ease of growing or yield. They are more expensive to grow, but worth it. That's why you'll find dozens of varieties of vegetables – all picked for their taste. You'll quickly find your favorites in every season and may discover foods you never knew existed.

MCFM enables farmers to charge retail prices so they can make a decent income from their produce. As it is, many of our farmers work another job so they will have enough income to support themselves and their families. Farmers charge what they believe is a fair price, reflecting the cost in time and labor to plant, to nurture and to harvest, as well as flavor, quality, sustainability and nutrition. Money spent on good locally grown food benefits the farm, the local economy, the consumer and, last but not least, the environment, because it encourages good stewardship of the land. Without this support, we run the risk of losing our region's farmers and farmland, as well as our local food security.