



2023 Seasonal Review of the USDA's Farmers Market





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Letter from the Market Manager

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for your support that helped strengthen the community of local farmers, small businesses, and our local anti-hunger non-profit, DC Central Kitchen.

If you were able to visit us on Fridays, you experienced our new location across from the Washington Monument. Our vendors made the move such a smooth transition and I'm forever grateful for their dedication to USDA's market. Stay tuned for all news and upcoming announcements for the 2024 season by subscribing to our newsletter.

Toi Thompson,
USDA Farmers Market Manager
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Scan and subscribe to our newsletter!



Message from our Under Secretary

From the opening bell to the last of the season, the USDA Farmers Market offers a place for people to come together and enjoy local produce, freshly prepared food including regional specialties. Each visit is a sensory adventure, offering a chance to discover new foods, connect with local farmers, and support their sustainable production practices. It is also where we invite the community to celebrate and learn about Pollinators Week, National Farmers Market Week, 4-H, and so much more. We love seeing returning customers and new faces as they sample a new recipe in the VegU tent, pick up fresh fruits and vegetables, or simply enjoying the lively atmosphere. The USDA Farmers Market is truly a place to celebrate community, and we look forward to welcoming you year after year.

Jenny Lester Moffitt,
USDA Under Secretary for Marketing
and Regulatory Programs



2023 Vendors

- Amazonica Coffee
- BDot Breakfast
- Beauty Blooms
- Blended Desserts
- Bun'd Up
- C&T Produce
- CJR UNIKE Gardens
- Claudia's
- Diaz Berries & Veggies
- DMV Empanadas
- El Piquin
- Elda Gardens
- Grace's Pastries
- Just AJ's
- Lucie's
- Metro Microgreens
- Miguel's Donuts
- My Pawssion
- Nappe Catering
- The Neighborgoods
- The Snack Lady
- Timber Pizza Company



Vendor Spotlight

Diaz Berries and Veggies

Alma Diaz and her husband founded Diaz Berries & Veggies after 34 years of working on farms. Located in Westmoreland County, Virginia, Diaz Berries and Veggies has been operating for over 15 years. Alma is not only a businesswoman but also a mother of three boys and one girl and a grandmother of 18.

Alma, a beacon of dedication, places the happiness of her customers at the heart of her work. As a steadfast vendor at the USDA Farmers Market for over 6 years, Alma cherishes the friendly faces she encounters weekly and brings a smile to all her customers.

The USDA Farmers Market would like to thank Diaz Berries and Veggies for their contributions and service over the years.



Grace's Pastries

Grace Banahene is a dedicated mother of four boys and the proud owner of Grace's Pastries, based in Herndon, Virginia. Grace's Pastries started as a passion project and turned into a family business that has operated for almost 30 years and has been a USDA Farmers Market vendor for 25 years.

Grace recalls a positive experience from her many years of vending at the market. She happily states that "the market has contributed to the growth of her business, and watching it grow over the years has been a joy for her."

The USDA Farmers Market is grateful to have vendors like Grace's Pastries and would like to thank Grace and her team for their many years of service.



“A highlight of my Friday. Always love the fresh produce!”

“I think it’s a great idea to show how to prepare produce in new ways to encourage purchase and consumption!”



VegU Program

Nutrition Education at the Market

VegU is a produce education program launched in 2016 at the USDA Farmers Market. Market visitors can learn how to grow, pick, prepare, and store different produce by attending free 10-minute classes at the market. At VegU, you can expect gardening tips from your local growing experts, live cooking demos, take-home recipe cards, food tastings, and prizes, and learn all about the nutritional benefits of fresh fruits and vegetables. Last year, VegU featured 14 special guests, including local non-profits, chefs, and research and promotion boards. We demonstrated over 15 recipes to make healthy eating easy. If you can’t attend our live events, scan the QR code to check out our new video series, Cooking with VegU! You can find recipes from previous years on our website at www.usda.gov/farmersmarket.

How did VegU do?

- 85%** of VegU visitors inspired to purchase featured produce!
- 78%** of VegU visitors rated the quality of the presentation as “excellent.”
- 75%** shared that they are likely to attend another class.





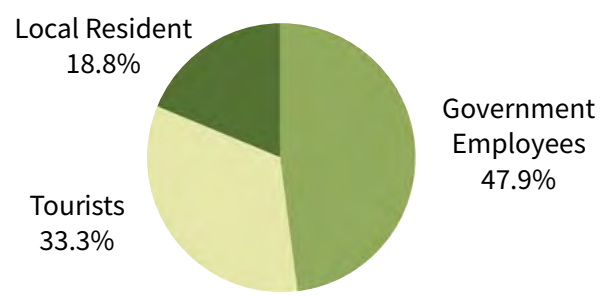
“Loved the presenters!
Very engaging.”

“Didn’t know you could
eat carrot tops! Will
try at home!”

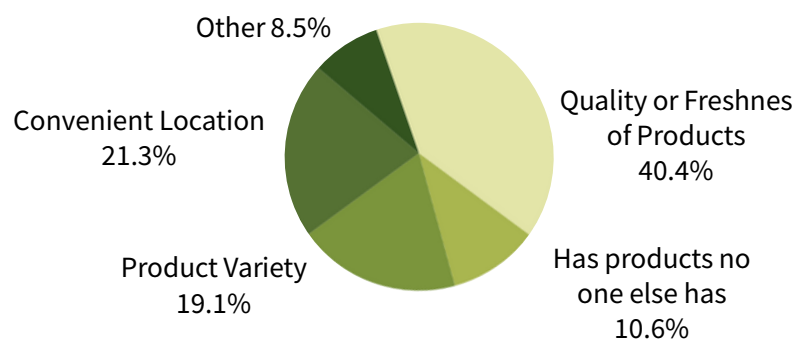


Visitor Demographics

Who visits the market?



Why USDA Farmers Market?



Market by the Numbers

45% of visitors were looking for lunch at the farmers market.

32% of visitors were looking for nothing in particular.

53% of visitors learned about the USDA Farmers Market through word of mouth.

33% of visitors discovered it by accident.



Produce Pals

Produce Pals continued its success in its second year by engaging new partners, organizing a “Kid’s Takeover,” innovating educational resources, and developing new materials. Produce Pals provides various activities, coloring sheets, crafts, and games focused around the featured “Produce of the Week.” Be sure to subscribe to our newsletter to see what kids’ activities are happening in Produce Pals each week during the market season!

Kid’s Takeover the Market

In 2023, the USDA Farmers Market hosted its first “Kid’s Takeover” event organized by the Produce Pals team. Youth and child-focused organizations visited the market to see special guests and participate in various kid-inspired activities all over the market. The event attendance was our second largest of the 2023 market season and our largest total attendance at Produce Pals.

Thank you to the schools, daycares, and other child-focused organizations who visited the Produce Pals tent this year to learn about eating local foods!

Want Produce Pals to come to you? Send us a message at USDAFarmersMarket@usda.gov

Industry Experts

VegU partners with various industry experts every year to provide market visitors with an educational and immersive nutrition experience. Presentations feature farmers, researchers, marketing experts, and others who support producing, purchasing, and consuming various commodities. Thank you to the research and promotion boards, marketing orders, and other industry experts who came to VegU this year!

- **The National Corn Growers Association** - Presented corn facts and samples of corn on the cob and corn bread.
- **US Sweet Potato Council** - Presented fun facts and sampled a sweet potato smoothie.
- **National Peach Council** - Taught visitors how to pick the sweetest peach and grilling peaches
- **The National Mango Board** - Brought a variety of mangos and showed visitors how to easily cut them.
- **Cranberry Marketing Committee** - Handed out cranberry swag and sampled cranberry salsa.
- **MarDel Watermelon Association** - Featured the 2023 Watermelon Queen and hosted an educational event.
- **USA Pears** - Taught visitors about picking pears and how to turn them into a delicious summer salsa.
- **USApple** - Hosted an apple tasting with Gala, Honey crisp, and Crimson Crisp apples in addition to fun facts about apples.





Community Partners

DC Central Kitchen

DC Central Kitchen (DCK) is a nonprofit organization based in Washington, D.C. that addresses issues related to hunger, poverty, and homelessness. It was established in 1989 and is now a nationally known leader in community-based responses to hunger. DC Central Kitchen also offers a Culinary Job Training Program where individuals facing barriers to employment, such as prior incarceration or homelessness, receive training in culinary arts. Participants in this program gain valuable skills, enabling them to secure jobs within the food service industry. In place of a vendor fee at the USDA Farmers Market, we ask that vendors donate some of their produce or provide a monetary donation to DC Central Kitchen. This year, the market donated a total of 4,643 pounds of fresh produce, averaging about 220lbs of donations of fresh produce and other ingredients from our vendors per market.

In 2023, DC Central Kitchen brought two of its finest chefs from the Culinary Job Training Program. The chefs taught market visitors how to prepare tomato salsa, a summer-time staple when tomatoes are in season.



The USDA Farmers Market Team volunteered at DC Central Kitchen to see what happens to the produce that is donated to DCCK. We chopped, peeled, and packed to transform produce into delicious meals for the community.

4,643 lbs. of fresh produce donated to DCCK!

Compost Cab

In collaboration with Compost Cab, the USDA Farmers Market tackled waste reduction by collecting organic materials such as fruit and vegetable scraps, certified compostable takeout boxes, napkins, and more that otherwise would end up in a landfill.

Compost Cab is a company that collects organic waste at various farmers markets in Washington, D.C. and Alexandria, Virginia. To encourage and inform about composting, market visitors could pick up at the info booth brochures on the science basics of compost, fact sheets showing the local journey this compost makes from collection to conversion into soil amendment, and flyers displaying which items to compost or leave out.



Through the combined efforts of staff, vendors, and market visitors, we were able to divert 1,197 lbs. of waste (averaging 75 lbs. each week) from the landfill by the end of our four-month farmers market season!



Fitness Fridays

The USDA Farmers Market offers free, short fitness sessions open to the public every first Friday of the season. The fitness instructors, all working and living in D.C., bring their energy and expertise to the market. Stop by this season for a joyful outdoor experience!

2023 Instructors:

1. **Wanda Bamberg Tia (Zumba) - Workitstudio.com**
2. **Angela & Joe VanCleve (Strength training) - dedicatedstrengthdc.com**
3. **Havala Schumacher (Yoga) - USDA Volunteer**
4. **Granetta Coleman (Hula hoop) - roodetdish.com**





Musical Guests - Buskers

Live music at the market creates an inviting environment and provides entertainment for our visitors! Thank you to all of the musical guests who made this market season so memorable. Be sure to support your local musicians!

- | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Randolph Strings | 4. US Army Band Country Roads | 7. Alice Park |
| 2. Flo Anito | 5. Tony Ade | 8. The Craigs |
| 3. Jaz Trotters | 6. Marsha & the Positrons | 9. Marvillous Beats |







The People's Garden

Garden Education

The USDA Farmers Market has partnered with The People's Garden, a USDA initiative that was first established in 2009 to encourage local communities to grow their own food, support local agriculture, and conserve natural resources. The People's Garden promotes community gardens, sustainability, agriculture, and environmental stewardship. The program encourages individuals and organizations to create gardens and green spaces to promote healthy living, environmental awareness, and community engagement.

This year, garden educators from the People's Garden stopped by the market on different occasions to show visitors how the featured produce of the week at VegU is grown in the garden. They went into detail on how to grow the specific produce properly with the right type of soil, the proper amount of water, and the perfect environment for the produce to thrive. Market visitors could also visit the garden located on 12th and Independence Ave. SW to learn how local produce grows.

For more information on The People's Garden visit www.usda.gov/peoples-garden



Thank you for supporting the USDA Farmers Market!



**Scan and subscribe
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