

City folks meet farmers at market

Bringing back the farmers' market in Dundas is just one of Chris Krucker's plans as he continues to 'dream big'

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City folks will get to know the producer behind ManoRun Farm when they shop at the Dundas Farmers' Market this summer.



Chris Krucker is a new farmer by most accounts, just 10 years into this full-time lifestyle. His commitment to building and strengthening healthy food communities, though, has been an integral part of several initiatives designed to move Hamilton toward a food-secure future.

Education is a big part of what Krucker does. On his farm in Copetown, he trains a new generation of farmers, as interns contract for the summer to learn about integrating organic farming into local communities. He enlightens supporters of his community supported agriculture (CSA) program on the how and why of local organic food and eating seasonally, and offers events at the farm to celebrate together around the table.

Krucker and his wife, Denise Trigatti, also own two houses in the heart of the city, where urban food projects -- lessons on urban food production, seasonal cooking and preserving locally grown food -- are slowly taking hold. "We're still in the 'dream big' stage," Krucker says of the plans for a community food centre on Murray Street East.

Helping to restore Dundas Farmers' Market is his latest effort to make the urban-rural connection. "We brought back the market. That was the easy part," he says of the group determined to put more local, sustainably grown food on the tables in this region.

"It won't be the same market that it was historically," he points out. "It will have new farmers, and the pricing will be different. We won't try to compete with the grocery stores."

What this Dundas BIA initiative will do, though, is provide a place for city folks to meet their local small-scale producers and processors. Fruit, vegetables, meat and

cheese at the 20-stall market will be local -- within a 160-kilometre radius of Dundas -- and processed products such as baked goods will have at least half of their ingredients produced locally.

Since decisions about the market are made jointly with the BIA and vendors, the market is designed to enhance rather than compete with the unique food businesses along King Street. Even the decision to open on Thursdays, from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m., was based on drawing visitors to both the market and the shops.

In the past year or two, there has been a lot of demand for farmers to attend markets across the region, and Krucker gets calls from as far away as Woodbridge. He would rather stay close to home, though, and work to educate his own neighbourhood, build partnerships and help the Hamilton area develop a strong and vibrant food culture.

The Dundas Farmers' Market will open June 11 at the corner of Hatt Street and Memorial Square in the TD Canada Trust parking lot.

The market is looking for vendors. For information, visit downtowndundas.ca or call Chris Krucker at 905-304-8048 or Melanie Golba at 905-659-2572.

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