



**Henderson County Local Government**  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Local Farmer's Markets Provide Access to Fresh, Healthful Food**

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**Hendersonville, NC – August 6, 2020**

Henderson County Cooperative Extension Agents Steve Pettis and Karen Blaedow would like you to know that with the interruptions in our national food system due to Covid-19, farmers markets have proven themselves to be essential to our local food system. According to Karen Blaedow, NC State Small Fruit and Vegetable Agent, "Farmers markets provide community members access to fresh nutritious fruits, vegetables, meats, honey and dairy products. Fortunately for the community, several Henderson County markets are providing a safe space for local farmers to sell directly to consumers. Local farmers markets are one of the best places to purchase the freshest possible products straight from the farmers that grow and produce them."

**Mills River Farmer Market:** Open Saturdays from 8 a.m. – noon May through October. Currently, MRFM is located in the parking area of G and B Energy at 5046 Boylston Hwy. in Mills River, NC. The market accepts SNAP/EBT, Debit and Credit and through a partnership with Healthy Carolinas the SNAP/EBT dollars are doubled. The MRFM had to suspend the demo kitchen and kid's activities because of Covid-19 restrictions. Instead they have begun a YouTube channel showing the demo kitchen chef doing her cooking demonstrations online. For the kids, they have a different activity pack each week for them to take home and do there. They are also reading and recording stories for them on our YouTube channel. The Mills River Farmers Market is a 501c(3) nonprofit agency run by volunteers. MRFM is a producer only market, meaning you are buying it from the grower/producer or their employee. All products come from within 50 miles or less.

**Hendersonville Farmers Market:** Open Saturdays from 8 a.m.–1 p.m. June through October. Located at the Historic Train Depot, 650 Maple St. Hendersonville. Hendersonville Farmers Market is lucky enough to have partnered with regional nonprofit Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project for funding that doubles SNAP/EBT dollars, promoting affordable healthy food opportunities to those in the low income bracket. So far, the market has been a success in connecting people of multiple demographics with local, healthy food. They have 51 vendors signed up in this the first year, with 23 of those being regular



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full season vendors. The market is keeping it safe yet lively with free masks, social distancing measures, and weekly live music.

**Flat Rock Farmers Market:** Open Thursdays from 3–6 p.m. May through October. Located at the Pinecrest ARP Church parking lot, 1790 Greenville Hwy.

**Henderson County Tailgate Market:** Open Saturdays from 8 a.m.–noon April through October. Located at 100 N. King St. in downtown Hendersonville. All produce and products are Henderson County grown/made. The market will also be celebrating its 41st year this season.

These Henderson County farmers markets will be providing the same quality products, as always, but the layout will look a little different. The markets have been working tirelessly to implement new protocols to keep customers and the community safe during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Local farmers markets safety protocols:

- Maintaining 6 feet of social distancing at all times and increased distance between vendor booths.
- One customer at a time at each vendor table. Maintain 6 feet between each waiting customer.
- Vendors will be wearing face masks, which were provided courtesy of the N.C. State Extension, Henderson County Center.
- Product sampling is not allowed at the markets.
- Customers should not handle any items at a vendors table, but instead, point to the item they wish to purchase and ask the vendor for assistance.
- Customers should bring plenty of different denominations to the market to avoid the need to make change.
- Hand sanitizer will be available for both vendors and customers.

So get out to one of our local markets. Stock up on fresh, local food in a safe shopping environment. Social distancing, masks, and other precautions are encouraged for all vendors and customers. Shop safe, support local farmers and be healthy!

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