

Iowa Fruit and Vegetable Week

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SPEAKERS

Speaker 3, Olivia Hanlon, Kendra Meyer

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- S** Speaker 3 00:15
Hello, and welcome to the Small Farms Podcast, a production of the Small Farms Program at Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. Our podcast covers the opportunities and challenges associated with rural life.
 - O** Olivia Hanlon 00:29
In this episode I interview Kendra Meyer Iowa State University Program Specialist and Executive Secretary for the Iowa Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association, and talk about the upcoming Iowa Fruit and Vegetable Week. I'm Olivia Hamlon, Farm, Food and Enterprise Development Extension and Education Specialist, and welcome to the show. Kendra, welcome to the show. Thanks for being on today.
 - K** Kendra Meyer 00:49
Thank you for having me.
 - O** Olivia Hanlon 00:51
Could you tell our listeners what exactly Iowa Fruit and Vegetable week is and when it will be?



Kendra Meyer 00:56

So Iowa Fruit and Vegetable week will take place June 22nd through the 26th. And this is a week that's designated to highlight the fruit and vegetable industry here in Iowa by showcasing what is produced in our state and the importance of fruits and vegetables play in our individual health and on our economy. But it's also a week to help celebrate our local fruit and vegetable growers by giving them support and recognition for what they do.



Olivia Hanlon 01:18

Perfect. So how can our listeners participate in this week?



Kendra Meyer 01:22

Like I said this week is really about highlighting the Iowa fruit and vegetable industry. So if you are a grower, this is an opportunity to connect with consumers and share with them what you grow in your farm. And that could be through social media signage, newsletters or any promotion like that. And IFEGA, we did create a social media toolkit and that gives ideas for themes and posts to share each day during the week. So for our fruit vegetable consumers we have a list of ways you can connect with growers. And then just in general, we have additional resources and contacts for the industry. So I think this week is really just a great way for all of us to remember that we have such a vast variety of agriculture in our state, and that we're so fortunate to be able to source so many foods from right down the road from us.



Olivia Hanlon 02:01

Yeah, so kind of going off of that. Why is this week so important here in Iowa?



Kendra Meyer 02:05

So I think when people think of Iowa agriculture, the first thing that comes to their mind is not our specialty crops, but we really have a wide variety of fruit and vegetables in our state. Our commercial horticulture industry contributes \$48 million to the state's economy each year and provides fresh fruits and vegetables to our Iowa consumers. And that's made up of more than 1000 farms growing vegetables and another 1000 farms growing fruits statewide.

O Olivia Hanlon 02:28
Kendra, there's a big push for sourcing local right now. Why is that so important to our growers during this time?

K Kendra Meyer 02:34
I think this is important because it's an opportunity for our growers. It's an opportunity for them to connect with consumers and supply them with local, healthy, and safe produce. And it's also an opportunity to build relationships and share the story with people on where their food is coming from.

O Olivia Hanlon 02:49
So when consumers are out there looking for their local growers, what's the best way for them to find produce local to them?

K Kendra Meyer 02:57
There are numerous ways to find fruits and vegetables here in Iowa, specifically for the Iowa Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association, we have a website and we have all of our growers listed on that website. There are many other sites that list growers and a few of those include the IDALS Farmers Market Directory, the IDALS Farmstand Directory, the Iowa CSA Directory, the Iowa Food Hub Directory, Iowa Market Maker, Practical Farmers of Iowa Local Food Directory, and there's also a Visit Iowa Farms Directory. So all those will show you where you can connect with farms and find fresh fruits and vegetables here in Iowa.

O Olivia Hanlon 03:28
Awesome. If people are looking for more information on Iowa Fruit and Vegetable Week or on the Iowa Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association, where can they find that?

K Kendra Meyer 03:38
So our website is www.ifvga.org.

O Olivia Hanlon 03:46
Perfect. Is there anything that we didn't cover today about Iowa Fruit and Vegetable

Week that you would like to add today Kendra?

- K** Kendra Meyer 03:54
No. I just like to say that we're just grateful to Governor Reynolds for designating this week for the fruit and vegetable industry and we just hope everyone joins us in celebrating.
- O** Olivia Hanlon 04:03
Well Kendra, thanks again for being on and we hope that everyone out there is excited for Iowa Fruit and Vegetable Week.
- K** Kendra Meyer 04:09
Yes, I hope so. Thank you.
- S** Speaker 3 04:10
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