

U.P. Agriculture Assessment 2011

Dear U.P. Farmer,

You should have received a postcard a week or so ago giving you the heads up that you would be receiving this survey. Thank you in advance for participating in this worthwhile project.

As interest in local food increases so does the pressure on our local farmers to keep pace with this demand. As a significant purchaser of local food, the Marquette Food Co-op has an active interest in assessing the needs of local farmers in order to ensure a steady supply of high quality food for our owners and customers. Beyond that, we strongly believe that a vibrant local food economy is integral to the health of our small rural communities, and we are entirely invested in helping develop food security here in the U.P. Our Co-op currently assists local farmers in a variety of ways from marketing to purchasing. We, as well as other organizations and groups in the U.P. want to do more, but we need to hear from the farmers themselves as to what their needs are. This is where you come in.

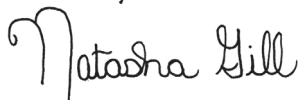
We have teamed up with MSU Extension, The Eastern Upper Peninsula Food Hub Project, and Northern Michigan University's Center for Community and Economic Development to conduct a comprehensive survey of U.P. Farms that sell directly to consumers. We are interested in hearing from all U.P. producers of hay, vegetables, meat, poultry, eggs, fruits, mushrooms, fiber, maple syrup, honey, flowers, and plant starts regardless of growing practices. Our survey is inclusive of conventional, natural, and organic farms of all sizes.

We truly need your help to get an accurate picture of the needs of U.P. farmers. **No individual farm information will be published under any circumstances.** All of your responses will remain completely confidential. No names or addresses will ever be connected with the information provided. Please note that the questions about income are asked strictly to help us get a better understanding of the total financial contribution local farmers are making overall to local economies and will in no way be linked to your farm in the **compiled survey results**. Upon completion, only the compiled information will be shared with survey participants, the agencies working on the project, state officials, and those interested in U.P. agriculture.

The survey is enclosed. Please return it in the envelope provided or take the survey online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/upfood> by Wednesday, August 10. Try to be as thorough as possible in providing answers to the questions in the survey. If there is a question that doesn't apply to you or you don't wish to answer, simply leave it blank. We would also ask that you pass the word about the survey to as many U.P. farmers as you can. The more producers that fill out the survey, the more accurate our picture of U.P. farming will be.

Thank you for helping us with this project. A member of our project team will be following up with you via phone to answer any questions or listen to any comments that you may have. In the meantime, if you have questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,



Natasha Gill, EDUCATION & OUTREACH DIRECTOR
The Marquette Food Co-op
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***We will be doing onsite farm interviews with farmers interested in sharing their stories.**



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