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Winter Farmers' Market Bringing West Virginia's Best Food to Capital City

Charleston, W.Va. – Dark days of winter getting you down?

Hungry for summer?

The Winter Blues Farmers' Market is the cure for what's ailing you.

Dozens of the state's top food producers will take over the Charleston Civic Center Sunday, Feb. 12 from 1-5 p.m.

"It is vital that we back our homegrown farmers while keeping monies within our communities and this is a perfect opportunity to do just that," said Commissioner of Agriculture Kent Leonhardt. "The Winter Blues Market is a great chance for consumers to get high-quality and locally-produced products while supporting the agricultural community, especially during the cold winter months. This is one of the premier local food events in the state and we hope to see everyone in the Kanawha Valley there."

Featured products will include fresh produce, gourmet meats, value-added products including jams, jellies and salsas, hand-spun wool, bath and body care items, honey and maple syrup. The event will also include a "Dine-Around" where visitors can purchase dishes from Charleston-area restaurants. Grab a meal, shop West Virginia products and listen to great music courtesy of The Half Bad Bluegrass Band.

A new feature to the Winter Blues Market, as well as the Small Farm Conference, is a video scrapbook project. Anyone with an agriculture-related story is invited to stop by the booth and share. Visitors are also asked to fill out a brief survey on their Winter Blues experience when they leave the market.

Admission is free and the event will include door prizes and hourly activities for children, such as story times, a pretend "milk cow," coloring and activity sheets. Other attractions will include West Virginia Grown popcorn and maple cotton candy.

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The Winter Blues Farmers' Market is sponsored by the WVDA and the WVU Extension Small Farm Center and is held in conjunction with the West Virginia Small Farm Conference.

Now in its 13th year, the Small Farm Conference offers numerous educational sessions on an extensive variety of agricultural topics aimed at helping food producers operate knowledgeably, efficiently and profitably by providing reliable, tested knowledge about current trends, needed skills and the latest production and operation information.

The 2016 Small Farm Conference averaged 700 in daily attendance and featured 140 different sessions. The Winter Blues Farmers' Market attracted an estimated 3,000 shoppers and raised \$25,000 for vendors.

For more information on the Small Farm Conference, visit

<http://smallfarmcenter.ext.wvu.edu/events/conference>.

For more information on the Winter Blues Farmers' Market, visit www.agriculture.wv.gov or [facebook.com/West.Virginia.Department.of.Agriculture](https://www.facebook.com/West.Virginia.Department.of.Agriculture).

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Winter Blues Farmers' Market 2017 children's activities schedule:

1 p.m. - Maple Syrup

"Curious George Makes Maple Syrup," adaptation by C.A. Krones, based on the TV series teleplay written by Chuck Tately.

"At Grandpa's Sugar Bush," by Margaret Carney and Janet Wilson.

"Sugarbush Spring," by Marsha Wilson Chall.

2 p.m. - Dairy

"Milk: From Cow to Carton," by Alikei.

"Clarabelle: Making Milk and So Much More," by Cris Peterson.

"The Milk Makers," by Gail Gibbons.

3 p.m. - Bugs

"Ladybugs," by Gail Gibbons.

"The Bug Book," by Sue Fliess.

"On Beyond Bugs!" a Cat in the Hat's Learning Library selection by Tish Rabe.

4 p.m. - Kid's Cooking

"Cooking with the Cat," a Cat in the Hat Step into Reading selection illustrated by Christopher Moroney.

"The Little Red Hen Makes a Pizza," retold by Philemon Sturges and illustrated by Amy Walrod.

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