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fresh & green

Farm-to-table movement
 takes root in Acadiana

**TODAY'S
 MARKET FINDS**

Duck eggs, zucchini,
 cucumbers, pea spouts,
 Swiss chard

I love the outdoors. I love food. So it could not have been a more perfect Saturday.

I spent the morning at local farmer's markets with Jolie's executive chef Manny Augello. A bit of a disclaimer — this talented, passionate chef is my brother-in-law, so I knew he would love the trip. Spouses and kids in tow, we made it to Acadi-

ana Farmer's Market on Dulles and Foreman for 7:45 a.m. Note: 7:45 is late for this market. Farmers from the surrounding areas travel to Lafayette to set up the market at 5 a.m. each Saturday morning with expanded hours in the summer, Tuesday and Thursday mornings. So if you want the best selection, you'll need to get there early.

This market opened 41 »

Dawn Gotreaux, above, bags bunches of Swiss chard at the Gotreaux Family Farms booth at Hub City Farmers Market.

years ago as part of the Greater Lafayette Chamber of Commerce's agriculture program. David Richter, a participating farmer selling an array of seasonal vegetables explains that he's been farming for the last several decades and is the last generation in his family to farm. "It's the computers taking them away," he says when I asked why his children decided not to continue farming. He says the younger generation wants a corporate ladder to climb. Manny and I pick out a dozen duck eggs (he swears these will taste better than chicken), Swiss chard and zucchini then headed to the Oil Center.

You'll find the Hub City Farmers' Market each Saturday

morning on the corner of Heymann Boulevard and South College (you don't have to wake up as early, as it's open from 8 a.m. to noon). This market breaks from tradition with vendors selling small-batch, organic coffee, a range of homemade breads, locally grown flowers, handmade furniture and a wide variety of seasonal, local produce. There was even a student selling painted yard flamingoes!

Brian Gautreaux (of Gautreaux Farms in Scott) started the market as a place where farmers and artisans could sell their goods together in a convenient location. You'll notice the energy immediately as enthusiastic and informative vendors are eager to share their »



Freshly picked carrots, top, are sold by Gotreaux Family Farms. Bottom, thyme and other plants are available for sale at the Louisiana Earth Organics booth.

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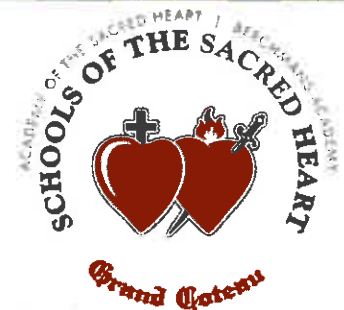


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Manny Augello packs up carrots while shopping at the farmers market with wife Abi and daughter Amelie.

knowledge of crafts, growing and more. Occasionally you'll enjoy musicians playing tunes to the crowd. Manny chose to pick up pea sprouts and cucumbers then headed home, but not after we grabbed some homemade tamales (best in town, honest).

I am always in awe watching Manny run a kitchen and this time it was mine. We turned our local finds into an incredible breakfast that's simple, yet sophisticated (see recipe below). You'll need very little seasoning as fresh produce carries incredibly intense flavor. Nothing dried. Nothing jarred. Almost every ingredient was picked just a day before on a local farm. You can't beat this breakfast experience.

The "farm to table" phenomena is sweeping the country and creeping into Acadiana, with Jolie's Bistro embracing the concept wholeheartedly. The restaurant goes so far as to describe which farms your food comes from, how it was raised and more on the back of its menu. I overheard Manny ask one farmer for 35 pounds of beets! And to think we sometimes wonder how we keep local farmers in business? It's a commitment to quality, local ingredients.

You'll be delighted to know that intensely flavorful, organically grown produce is no longer relegated to the east and west coast regions. Quite a few farmers at these local markets work hard to provide organically produced fruit and vegetables and it's easy to see their passion for what they do.

In the past, few people in Acadiana were able to purchase farm shares (also know as Consumer Supported Agriculture, or CSA) but now they're available at our local markets. CSA participants own a share of the farmer's garden, providing the financial resources to produce the vegetables, fruits and flowers. Each week, the owner receives a box of recently harvested produce. After this breakfast, we couldn't resist. We bought our share and we look forward to the weekly surprises, planning our meals around the seasonal produce we receive.

I hope you enjoy the breakfast as much as I enjoyed discovering our local, organic treasures. 🍴

ZUCCHINI FRITTATA PEA SPROUT SALAD

1 zucchini, thinly sliced
4 duck eggs (or chicken eggs)
Handful of pea sprouts
1 Swiss chard leaf
1 cucumber
Olive oil, salt and pepper

Beat eggs in a bowl with salt and pepper. Heat up skillet on medium heat, add a couple tablespoons of olive oil, slightly cook zucchini then add beaten duck eggs. Allow to cook on low heat until cooked throughout. Place pea sprouts in a bowl, add chopped swiss chard and sliced cucumber. Toss with salt pepper, olive oil and a few drops of balsamic vinegar.

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