

News Release

Community collaboration produces 'greener' bag option for Oakland County Farmers Market vendors, customers

April 22, 2020, OAKLAND COUNTY, MI. – While Earth Day celebrates its 50th anniversary this year, the second year of a special Oakland County Farmers Market initiative has also hit a major milestone.

Elizabeth Romano, a Bloomfield Township resident, spearheaded an effort two years ago to replace the conventional bags that Oakland County Farmers Market vendors use with a biodegradable option. This year, with the help of the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Department and sponsorships from Genisys Credit Union, Prielipp Farm, Penzien's Produce, Julie's Floral Design, Clarkston Farm, Forever Summer Natural Soaps and Red Wood Grills, Romano was able to more than double last year's donation of 36,000 bags to 78,000 bags for the 2020 season.

"On this Earth Day, in the midst of the coronavirus emergency, my hope is that at the end of that long tunnel, we are not too exhausted to remember other ongoing problems," Romano said. "Single-use plastic bags are still choking our planet. Let the shared responsibility we have learned in dealing with coronavirus together continue with our ongoing plastic dilemma."

Raised on a family farm in Oregon, Romano has been visiting the market since 1985 and said she tries to eat locally as much as she can.

"It is exciting when local residents step up to fill a need or lead a new initiative on behalf of our community," Board Vice Chairwoman **Marcia Gershenson** (D-Bloomfield Township) said. "The Oakland County Farmers Market is a wonderful place to get fresh produce, flowers and other goods, and supplying our vendors with eco-friendly, biodegradable bags is a great way to help preserve the environment while we enjoy this amazing county resource."

For this most recent purchase of bags, Jeremy Brown, market manager, worked with the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Department to find a better bag option. The new bag is made in the U.S. and is imprinted with the logos of the market and sponsors. In addition, the market now has a collection area to recycle the bags.

"As the market manager, I am always impressed when a guest goes above and beyond to support the market," Brown said. "Ms. Romano saw a need to be a little 'greener' at the market, and she was willing to help make that happen. Her enthusiasm and donation was the spark that helped jump start this wonderful collaboration between the county parks, market vendors and Genisys Credit Union."

The Oakland County Farmers Market (2350 Pontiac Lake Rd, Waterford Township) is currently open on Saturdays from 7 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., with options for curbside pickup. For more information about the Oakland County Farmers Market, including additional summer hours, visit www.oakgov.com/parks/parksandtrails/farmers-market.

For more information about the Board of Commissioners, please visit www.oakgov.com/boc or call 248-858-0100.

#