

Temps cool just in time for the Fall Farmers Market

By Royce Armstrong

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A timely chill was in the air last Saturday morning for the start of the Fall Farmers Market. The cool weather made hot coffee served by the Methodist men one of the morning's highlights.

About a dozen farmers were on hand with an excellent presentation of fall produce, according to Ken Flanagan, George County Communications Director. There was a nice wide selection of locally grown pumpkins, acorn, butternut and other fall squash varieties. There were gourds, truckloads of locally grown sweet potatoes, vine ripened fall tomatoes and greens such as kale, according to Flanagan. Of course, there were homemade jellies, jams, preserves, pickles, relishes, honey, preserving the fruits of the recent summer sunshine. Local producers also bring fresh eggs along with stone-ground grits and corn meal. There was also freshly cut sugar cane and cane syrup on hand.

The seasonal weather helped set the tone and business was brisk, Flanagan said.

The Fall Farmers Market is just four weeks long each year, beginning in mid-October and ending just before Thanksgiving. This year the Saturday morning market will end on November 17. It is an excellent time to stock up on produce to be used during the upcoming holiday season.

Next week more greens such as turnips and kale are expected, according to Flanagan. There will still be plenty of squash, pumpkins, gourds and tomatoes, he said.

The Lucedale Farmers Market is easy to find in front of the County's historic Courthouse on Cox Street. The market usually opens at sun-up to customers with most local farmers and vendors setting up around sunrise. Customer and visitor parking are available around the entire Courthouse square.

The Fall Farmers Market will run every Saturday morning through November 17. The market is a project sponsored by the George County Board of Supervisors, Chamber of Commerce, and the City of Lucedale. This is the sixth year for the "Fall Season" of the Farmers Market.

"The support of local farmers and local customers is really what makes this event possible. We are so blessed to live in an area where there is so much local produce. Our motto says it best, Buy Local, Buy George," Flanagan said.

There is still time to become a vendor at the Lucedale Farmers Market. Call Monica Turner at the Chamber of Commerce. Her number is 601-947-2755. Registration is free. The market is an excellent opportunity for local growers to put a little cash in their pocket for the holidays. It is also a chance for church youth groups and civic organizations to raise funds and present themselves to the public.