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**Farm To Market Days**

**By Rondi Hillstrom Davis and Janell Sewall Oakes**

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Summer may begin in June but, for many parts of the country, gardens don't reach their peak until August. Modern grocery stores manage to keep us satisfied with produce year round, but there is nothing like the flavor of farm fresh tomatoes, peaches, or sweet corn. And there is nothing like the experience of buying from local growers who are proud of their wares.

The first farmers' markets started over a century before the Declaration of Independence. Since then, it has become an American tradition to buy fresh produce, flowers, eggs and cheese from markets and roadside stands. In the beginning, farmers would brave muddy roads in their horse-drawn wagons. As time went on, farmers made the weekly trek to town in pick-ups, where they'd pile bushels of fruit and vegetables high on the tailgate of their trucks. Today, many lucky city dwellers visit markets that are open every day.

My favorite though, is our county farmers' market held on the courthouse grounds. It's open only on Saturday mornings, and only June – October. It may sound inconvenient but, for my family, it's a summer ritual. We wake early and arrive disheveled, rarely taking the time to comb through our hair. For breakfast, we buy scones from our favorite bread stand and snatch up the best looking fruit we see. My son is an expert at choosing "chin dripping" peaches, always looking for the most fragrant and the heaviest peach that can sit in the palm of his small hand. My husband lounges on the grass and watches the people go by as I scribble a list of what is available, anticipating the culinary treats that only summer brings. There is nothing like fresh corn on the cob, cold gazpacho with homegrown tomatoes, or homemade fruit sorbet. We always have a batch of sorbet on hand, each week a different flavor. Sometimes we experiment by combining fruit with fresh herbs, but most of the time we simple puree 2 cups of fruit with a little citrus juice and a bit of honey, and then freeze it in an ice cream maker. My boys and their friends think it's a decadent treat.

Summer vacation is about to end, and our weekly ritual will soon give way to soccer games and birthday parties. Lucky for me, the farmers will be back next year with their trucks piled high, just as

they've done for generations.

## MARKET FRESH FRUIT DIP

This makes a terrific afternoon snack on a warm summer's day. When entertaining, serve in a honeydew melon half and decorate the rim with fresh blueberries and mint sprigs.

Ingredients 1 Pint Strawberries 2 Teaspoons Lemon Juice 3 Tablespoons Honey 4 oz Cream Cheese, Room Temperature 1 Cup Plain Yogurt

Assorted Fruit Slices

### Directions

1. Wash the strawberries and remove the green tops.
2. Place strawberries in a blender or food processor with lemon juice, honey, cream cheese, and yogurt. Puree until smooth.
3. To make a honeydew melon bowl, cut the melon in half and scoop out the seeds. Slice a 3 inch diameter circle off the rounded bottom of the rind so your bowl will sit flat.
4. Serve with slices of your favorite summer fruit. Peaches, plums, apples, and melons all work well and make a colorful presentation.

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Rondi Hillstrom Davis and Janell Sewall Oakes are the co-authors of the award-winning book Together: Creating Family Traditions. To check out their website that's jam packed with family ideas, visit

## **A Few Tips For Buying A Horse Farm**

**By Gabriel Adams**

A horse farm is probably one of the most beautiful real estate properties there is. As you drive up the drive, you're met with a picturesque view: A red roofed white two story house with a large red barn next to it, surrounded by immaculate board fences and green pastures. Of course, there are several horses

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staring over the fence at you, their coats gleaming in the sunshine.

But aside from its looks, what makes a good horse farm? If you're planning on buying or building a horse farm, here are a few things to keep in mind.

### The house

It might seem like an obvious thing, but be certain that if a house is on the farm, that it will fulfill your needs for a house. It wouldn't make sense to buy a farm and have to build a new house.

### The barn

Once again, make sure that the barn fits your needs. Two main things you should consider are size and convenience. Does it have enough space? Is it convenient to the house, the road or driveway, and the pastures?

### Water supply

Another item to consider is water supply. If you have a drought, an ample water supply could be the difference between your farm going under or surviving. Ideally, you should have at least two sources of water - a well and a creek, for example. Be sure that you have pipes carrying the water to key locations, such as the water trough and the barn.

### The pastures

How much pasture does the farm have? Is it steep? Is it good quality? Would any of it be suitable for hay fields? All of these are questions you should ask yourself.

Of course, these factors are only the very basics. Before buying a horse farm, you should take many factors into consideration to ensure that not only are you getting what you need, but you're also making a sound financial decision.

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