

Farm Market Report for July 14, 20015
Keith Helmuth

Value Added at the Farm Market

Value added products have always been a feature of Farm Markets.

Local fresh fruits turned into jellies and jams, cucumbers, beets, and other vegetables turned into pickles and relishes, wool yarn turned in mittens and socks, and baked goods of all kinds are value added products.

The added value for the producers is in the extra income and the value added for customers is in getting the benefit of the producer's labour.

But there is another kind of value added business that goes on in Farm Markets – the added value of information that is exchanged in the conversations that take place. Savvy producers look for ways of adding useful information to their interaction with customers. A very good example of this came up when I ordered my lunch at the Market Café this past Friday.

I gave Sarah and Len Sherman my order for their salad plate and went off to discuss some business with Market manager, Ramona Paul. When I came back to the table where my salad plate was ready, I found not only generous servings of three kinds of salad, but a 2 cup bag of organic oat groats marked "sample" from Speerville Flour Mill.

Beside the bag was a four-page brochure providing a generous helping of detailed information about organic hullless oats, including a recipe for Cavena Mediterranean Salad made from oat groats. And, to top it off, this very tasty salad prepared by the Sherman's was on my lunch plate.

This was a real value added lunch. Not only did I get three really good salads (bean salad and pasta salad, plus the oat groats salad), I got a whack of information including a detailed listing of hullless oats' nutritional values. It turns out hullless oats are nutritionally superior in many respects to both white rice and quinoa.

The Speerville Mill people are right up front about their mission. Their organic hullless oats are a healthy, locally grown alternative to imported rice and quinoa, to which many folks on gluten free diets have now turned.

Sarah told me that the sample bags of oat groats that Speerville Mill provide to hand out are now all gone (I guess I got the last one), but she will be offering the lunch plate with the Cavena Mediterranean Salad for weeks to come.

And of course Speerville Mill products are for sale in the Market at the Knowlesbee Orchards stall. (Formerly Hutlo Acres) I'll make sure the brochure on organic hullless oats is available as well.

The Woodstock Farm and Craft Market is open six days a week for fresh locally grown, and value added products and information.