



Harvestation: Green gets bulky with a Virtual Farmers Market

By Katie Quinn-Jacobs

Online farmers market to debut in Tompkins County

A new web-based tool will connect local farmers and buyers online

A greener way to connect local farmers and home food preservers is here. *Harvestation.com*, an online farmers market targeting quantity buyers, is being launched this June. IthaCan, a local home food preservers network, will pilot *Harvestation* on its website (<http://ithacan.ning.com>) thanks in part to funding from a Northeast SARE Sustainable Community Grant awarded to local software developer, Authentrics, Inc. of Ithaca, NY.

Harvestation creates a win-win situation for farmers and buyers, adding another valuable component to the local foodshed. Folks looking to can or freeze or fill their root cellars with locally produced meats and vegetables will find high quality farm products available in volume. Farmers can sell on their own terms without leaving the farm. Both home food processors and farmers save time, money – and energy.

Through *Harvestation*, buyers are able to:

- shop from the comfort of their homes
- enjoy bulk discounts
- post their own wish-lists
- place orders in advance of harvest
- get to know their farmers.

Farmers are able to:

- sell from the farm
- set their own prices, minimum quantities, and pickup times
- accept payment via PayPal
- advertise their products online
- plan according to buyers' desires
- get to know their customers.

Harvestation creates an opportunity for farmers to link up with the growing home food processors market using web tools designed specifically for this task. Home

food processors require bulk quantities of farm products in order to can, freeze, ferment, dehydrate, and root-cellar food.

Harvestation can also be used as an internet widget that can be embedded on any website. Used independently or as a conduit to the main Harvestation site, the widget matches produce growers and meat producers with food preservers and vice versa.

The advantages for farmers who subscribe to *Harvestation* include reducing off-field time on marketing activities, such as going to farmers' markets, negotiating with retailers for supermarket access, and managing CSAs. *Harvestation* member farms will have a dedicated webpage to showcase their farms and the system will provide sales tracking reports that can be downloaded from the Internet to a home computer. It will also be Paypal compatible.

Katie Quinn-Jacobs is a local farmer, writer, small business owner and grassroots organizer. She is an owner of Authentrics, Inc. and the founder of IthaCan.

Visit the web for more information about:

Harvestation <http://harvestation.com/>

Authentrics <http://authentrics.com/>

IthaCan <http://ithacan.ning.com/>

NE SARE <http://nesare.org/>

To join IthaCan, the local home food preservers network, click on the "Sign Up" box at <http://IthaCan.ning.com>.