FARMERS MARKET COALITION ANNOUNCES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHARISSE MCGILL TO LEAD NATIONAL ORGANIZATION SERVING 8,000+ MARKETS ACROSS AMERICA

Albany, California and Philadelphia, PA - Farmers Market Coalition (FMC) today announced that Charisse McGill will serve as the organization’s new Executive Director. McGill was hired by the Board of Directors after a nationwide search. McGill will lead the national non-profit that is dedicated to strengthening and supporting 8,000+ farmers markets across the United States, while providing real income opportunities for farmers and expanding access in local communities. This exciting news comes just in time for the launch of National Farmers Market Week (NFMW), which runs from August 6 to 12, 2023. Now in its 24th year, NFMW is an annual celebration that highlights the vital role farmers markets play in the nation’s food system, showcasing their value to customers, communities, local leaders and legislators. Leading up to and throughout NFMW, McGill will connect with farmers market operators through online town halls and in-person visits, including an in-person visit to the USDA Farmers Market in Washington DC. For more about Farmers Market Coalition and National Farmers Market Week, visit www.farmersmarketcoalition.org, or follow the organization on Facebook and Instagram @fmcorg.

“We are thrilled that Charisse McGill has agreed to step into the role of FMC’s Executive Director,” said FMC Board President Allen Moy. “We are confident that her passion for this work and entrepreneurial spirit – developed during her time as both a farmers market manager and a farmers market vendor – will allow FMC to further increase its support for farmers market operators nationwide and to have an even greater impact upon our collective efforts to create a more sustainable and equitable food system.”

Based in Philadelphia, PA, McGill’s experience spans farmers market management, community building, entrepreneurship and business development. Before making FMC history as the first Black woman to serve as Executive Director, McGill was also the first Black woman to own and operate a food establishment in Penn’s Landing. As such, she brings a fresh energy and drive to both the organization and marketplace.
Having served as a market manager for seven years and developing her knowledge of open-air economics, McGill brought her efforts full circle by founding a business which got its start at a farmers market. Lokal Artisan Foods and French Toast Bites expanded from Lansdale’s Farmers Market to Christmas Village in Philadelphia and then went on to make history at Cherry Street Pier and Spruce Street Harbor Park. McGill would later partner with Yard’s Brewery and become the only Black female in the state of Pennsylvania with her own beer.

Featured on the Today Show, in Forbes and in numerous other national and regional publications, she bookends her journey by stepping into a role wherein she can amplify the voices of market operators and lend support in fostering equity, access and recognition within their communities.

McGill reinforces that intention, stating that, “I am honored to lead an organization dedicated to serving and supporting local farmers markets across the country. Together we'll blaze new paths, sow seeds of change, and harvest a brighter future for farmers, consumers, and communities.”

Recognizing her roots in a network that gave rise to her own business ventures, McGill hopes to lead this organization forward, inspiring participation by- and opening doors for BIPOC, female and LGBTQIA+ market operators, producers, community leaders and allies.

McGill aims to work with FMC staff and Board to expand membership, explore new programs, generate new resources, increase funding and amplify the group’s reach.

FMC’s previous Executive Director, Ben Feldman, will be channeling his own experience and expertise into his newly created consulting firm and will continue to support the organization’s Farm Bill advocacy as Policy Director. When Feldman announced this transition, states Moy, “the FMC Board of Directors knew it was essential to find someone who would build upon the organization’s strong record of accomplishments.”

The team at FMC enters into this new chapter inspired and optimistic, and looks forward to continued relationship building and fruitful collaboration among its members, partners and community.

**NATIONAL FARMERS MARKET WEEK**

FMC brings on McGill just as National Farmers Market Week (NFMW) gears up. Entering its 24th year, NFMW will take place at participating markets across America between August 6 to 12, 2023. The eventful week helps to boost market visibility, and provides a timely platform for introducing FMC’s new Executive Director as she steps into her role, connecting with farmers market leaders, vendors and the communities they serve.
Amidst global change, it is more important than ever to showcase the impact of farmers markets on their communities. As hubs for connection and community resilience, farmers markets have particularly risen to the occasion this year by providing a necessary sense of unity and stability during a time of great uncertainty. Farmers markets don’t just happen, and the hard work of farmers market operators should be recognized within our network, as well as shared far and wide.

Each year during NFMW, FMC provides market operators and organizations with free tools, guides, and marketing materials for implementing their own messaging campaign. The resources in the National Farmers Market Week Toolkit are designed to help organizers: 1) Generate national and local excitement for NFMW, 2) Promote their local markets and vendors as well as the benefits of farmers markets nationally, and 3) Advocate for farmers markets at the local, state, and federal.

This year, with FMC’s 2023 theme of “Farmers markets are changing the way....,” NFMW messaging will focus not only on the essential role farmers markets play in local food systems, but how market organizations are working to make change in communities.

Visit USDA’s Farmers Market Directory to find local farmers markets and vendors to support. For information about specific NFMW events and campaigns across the country, follow #FarmersMarketWeek and #LoveMyMarket. Make sure to also follow and engage with local markets, farmers and other vendors on social media.

**ABOUT FARMERS MARKET COALITION:**

Farmers Market Coalition (FMC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to strengthening farmers markets for the benefit of farmers, consumers, and communities.

The organization is driven by three complementary goals - FMC’s triple bottom line:

- Farmers earn fair prices for the fruits of their labor by selling directly to consumers.
- Consumers gain access to fresh, nutritious, and local produce.
- Communities regain a figurative “town square,” experiencing the many positive outcomes of foot traffic and community connection.

FMC connects with markets of all sizes to work towards this triple bottom line and engage with their unique communities.

For more information about the national Farmers Market Coalition, visit: www.farmersmarketcoalition.org or follow @fmcorg on Facebook and Instagram.

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