

To market, to market: Farms' bounty, new take-out options make for one-stop shopping

By Cindy Sutter

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It's finally time. Saturdays can now be punctuated by a relaxed browse through the Boulder County Farmers' Market and a taste of something local.

A carefully chosen bunch of spinach, some green garlic perhaps, mushrooms, locally produced cheeses, bread and wine. How satisfying to whip up a lovely fresh salad or a satisfying stir-fry for dinner.

But what about when the weekend is over and it's Tuesday? The work week bears down, your children's school projects loom and the lure of takeout is strong. The farmers' market feels your pain. This year, along with some additions to the food court, several new vendors will offer frozen and fresh food for takeout.

The move is a natural one for a market that grew 27 percent last year. Executive Director Mark Menagh says more folks are looking at the market for regular shopping.

"People are making it more and more a part of their weekly purchasing," he says. "Last year, we saw a lot of people coming Saturday and Wednesday."

The new vendors will give people a chance to buy high quality prepared foods, some of them organic, Menagh says.

One such is Pasta Bozza. The artisanal pasta sometimes makes an appearance at local restaurants such as Trattoria on Pearl and Antica Roma, says owner Michael Bozza, a third-generation pasta maker. He offers such goodies as roasted red pepper fettuccini, garlic and black pepper spaghetti and saffron angel hair. Then there are the filled goodies like artichoke-provolone tortelloni and smoked mozzarella and portobello mushroom ravioli.

Bozza plans to add special pastas that incorporate seasonal produce as the season progresses. The pasta, made with organic flour and eggs, will be sold frozen, although some fresh pasta may also be made available.

"(Later) we hope to introduce some sauces to complement the pasta," Bozza says.

Another new vendor, The Organic Dish, will offer a rotating menu of frozen take-out items from its business, an organic version of the make-and-take supper kitchens where busy people spend an evening prepping meals for the freezer and future use.

"Any of the meals we have pre-made will be at the farmers' market," says Toby Hemmerling, who owns the business with his wife, Beckie.

Items in the regular rotation include beer and beef stew, soy-glazed salmon with soba noodles, Thai coconut curry with tofu, buffalo meatball spaghetti or tofu spaghetti.

And for those who want to start young, another new vendor, Little Spoon, will offer frozen baby food.

Owner Susan Gerber (no relation) says her product's superior taste sets it apart.

"By freezing instead of canning, I preserve a lot of the natural flavor, color and texture," she says.

But what of the star attraction at the market — the good stuff that springs up from the earth of Boulder County?

Menagh says the combination of warm weather and the efforts of local farmers are likely to mean that the produce will arrive a little earlier this year.

"More hoop houses are going," he says. "I expect this year to start off sooner having veggies and greens."

Wyatt Barnes of Red Wagon Organic Farm says he hopes more of his produce will be ready for the early markets.

His spinach, which was planted in September, didn't die back, because it was protected by the snow.

But he says: "I'm not sure what's going to happen by the market. It may have bolted by then."

However, he has scallions, sorrel and green garlic likely to be ready.

"There's a chance we'll have Jerusalem artichokes or sunchokes," he says.

This year, he's growing more herbs, as well as edible flowers.

"We try something new every year," he says.

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