

Tri-County Cooperative
Auction Market -- Established 1934
619 Route 33 East, Hightstown, NJ 08520
(609) 448-0193
www.tricountycoop.net

Memorial Day, 2019

Message from Cooperative President and Farmer George Asprocolas:

Tri-County is open for orders via phone, fax and the website only until further notice. We are not set up on the dock yet with produce. We anticipate -- depending on Mother Nature -- that substantial quantities of produce will be arriving the second and third weeks of June.

Typically the market is open Wednesday evenings from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. only in late May and early June. As more produce is harvested off area farms in late June, we add Friday evenings and Monday evenings from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. as well. In 2018, for the first time ever, Tri-County Cooperative Wholesale Produce Market opened its loading docks to the general public.

Produce types available right now based on seasonality include strawberries, beets, greenhouse tomatoes, bok choy, escarole, kale, Swiss chard, collard greens endives and all types of lettuces, radishes, turnips, potted herbs, eggs, various types of honey and honey-based products. Check our website to see the full line of produce.

We recognize the Garden State's ethnic diversity and cater to our ethnic community. By late July, a wide range of specialty crops will be available, including various types of okra, field peas, beans, peppers and eggplant.

For the 2019 growing season we expect our membership status will be about the same as it was last year; we are gaining some younger farmers and we're losing older farmers who are retiring, but each year we have between 50 and 60 organic and conventional farmers involved as members of Tri-County Cooperative.

Something new this year: we have added a tailgate auction starting Monday June 3. The auction is open to anyone – the general public and farmers – who may bring in produce, tools, office and kitchen equipment, furniture, plants, cars, auto parts, tractor parts, or anything else they'd like to sell. We are bringing in John Oleinik of Sunrise Antiques, a professional auctioneer based in Chesterfield, to conduct auctions. We hope the tailgate auction will be an added draw for farmers, handy men and women, fans of fresh produce and restaurant owner members who have recently discovered the cooperative is open to the public.

"Tri-County used to host many auctions in the past," explained President George Asprocolas.

"We're simply calling it a tailgate auction. We'll play it by ear, it will be a test run for a couple of months. It should be a good thing, a way for farmers to move out some of their abundant produce and for people in surrounding communities who have things to sell but no time to organize a garage sale at their home," he explained. Asprocolas estimated it's been at least eight years since Tri-County had a

professional auctioneer at the market. Interested parties may reach out to Mr. Oleinik of Sunrise Antiques, Chesterfield, at (888) 639-4443. Marjorie Forbes is acting market manager during Lisa Lawlor's absence. Patrons may reach out to her at the office, (609) 448-0193, cellular (609) 284-2375, or call George Asprocolas, cell phone, (609) 516-5296.

"Tri-County Cooperative specializes in locally grown, Jersey Fresh produce," Asprocolas stressed, "however, we do bring in produce from farmers who are members of the co-op from New York State, Pennsylvania and farmers as far away as Maryland and Delaware who want to market watermelons or other produce we don't have yet. We encourage them to come in to sell as well."

"Traditionally, it has been our local farmer members selling their own homegrown, nutrient-dense produce. Later this season, we may bring in the citrus fruits as well, but that will depend on demand," he added.

Whether you are a farmer with a retail stand, a restaurant owner or chef who needs fresh vegetables and fruits in bulk, or just a person who appreciates nutrient-dense, farm fresh produce, Tri-County Cooperative will be the gathering place for all of us, three evenings a week, this summer!