



# The Dane County Farmers' Market: A Personal History

*Mary Carpenter, Quentin Carpenter*

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It's a sunny summer Saturday in Madison, Wisconsin, and the eight-block square around the state capitol building is lined with booths bursting with handmade cheeses, fresh-picked berries and veggies, potted herbs and bedding plants, smoked trout and venison sausage, mushrooms, hickory nuts and honey, sprays of cut flowers, luscious baked goods and candies, and even newly spun yarn from the wool of local sheep.

The Dane County Farmers' Market has become one of Madison's primary tourist attractions, rated as a top market by both Food and Wine and Good Housekeeping. It's the place to be on Saturday morning from April to early November for locals and visitors alike. Among the early-morning foragers at the market are local chefs, including Odessa Piper of the nationally renowned, award-winning restaurant L'Etoile. Out-of-towners have been startled and delighted to encounter at the market a Holstein cow on Cows on the Concourse day, or galloping runners with canoes on their heads during the annual Paddle and Portage race, or Bucky Badger dancing atop a fire engine on an autumn football Saturday.

Mary Carpenter, past market manager and a long-time vendor, and her husband Quentin offer in this book a lively history of the market's first thirty years, its impact, and its future. It includes:

- o Photos of the market, from its early years until the present
- o Oral histories from the market vendors
- o Anecdotes and insiders' tips
- o Recipes from vendors, growers, and chefs featuring foods from the market

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