



MEDIA RELEASE

TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
MARKET DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

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SUMMER SUCCOTASH PROVES PRODUCE SEASON FAR FROM OVER

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – School buses are running, stores are filled with Halloween and Thanksgiving décor, and all the catalogs are filled with pictures of boots and winter coats. So summer is over, right?

Wrong. Here in Tennessee, summer – or at least produce season – lasts until Jack Frost comes down hard, and that could be as late as November in some spots. Until then, farms and farmers markets will still have baskets full of summer produce, including summer squashes, cucumbers, eggplant and herbs. In fact, it's around this time that autumn and cool weather crops like sweet potatoes, peas, turnips and turnip greens start showing up, making markets more abundant than ever.

“Don't judge the seasons by what you see in store windows at the mall,” said Pamela Bartholomew, marketing specialist for the Tennessee Department of Agriculture. “Walk around outside. If you're still in short sleeves and it's at least 70 degrees outside, the growing season here in Tennessee is still going strong.”

“Serious produce growers replant cool weather crops like broccoli and cabbage when the temperatures start that downward trend, so that we can enjoy fresh vegetables right up until a killing frost shuts them down. Apple orchards are at their peak in September and October, and of course the freshest autumn produce you can get will be right there where you found your summer produce – at a local farm or farmers market.”

Bartholomew says it's easier than ever to find out what your favorite farmers are bringing to the market, now that social media has connected growers straight to their customers.

“I still prefer to go to the market just to enjoy all the garden colors and people and to see for myself what's available,” said Bartholomew, “but if you want, chances are good that you could follow your farmers on Facebook and Twitter, and they'll send you a 'shout out' about what's coming to the market that day.”

“Visit the Pick Tennessee Products site, and look for farmers markets in your area,” said Bartholomew. “You can find farms and products listed by region and then by county. Lots of those farms will have their own sites you can go to, where you can add them to your social media accounts.”

Pick Tennessee Products is the statewide campaign developed by the Tennessee Department of Agriculture to help consumers find Tennessee farms, farm products and foods processed or manufactured in Tennessee. More than 1,600 farmers and more than 6,000 products are currently listed at www.picktnproducts.org. The campaign is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year with recipes and helpful tips for shopping at farmers markets and fun farms, available at the website.

Summer succotash is the latest Pick Tennessee Products recipe from Tammy Algood, pick Tennessee Products spokesperson and author of "The Complete Southern Cookbook." Algood creates seasonal recipes featuring products grown and processed in Tennessee. More recipes are available at www.picktnproducts.org.

"This recipe is so good," said Bartholomew, "and guess where you can get these fresh ingredients? That's right, at your local farm or farmers market, right now. Come get all this fresh produce, as long as summer lasts!"

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Summer Succotash

Yield: 6 servings

4 thick slices applewood bacon
1 cup chopped sweet onions
1 garlic clove, minced
2 cups fresh lima beans
4 cups fresh corn cut from the cob (6 to 7 ears)
3 tablespoons unsalted butter
1/4 cup heavy cream or half-and-half
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon black pepper

In a large skillet over medium heat, cook bacon until crisp. Drain on paper towels and crumble when cool enough to handle. Set aside. Add onion and garlic to the drippings. Cook, stirring constantly, for 4 to 5 minutes or until crisp tender. Drain and set aside. Meanwhile, in a large saucepan, bring 4 cups of water to a boil over medium-high heat. Add the lima beans and cook 15 minutes or until almost tender. Drain, return to the saucepan and reduce heat to low. Stir in the reserved onions, garlic, corn, butter, cream, salt, and pepper. Cook, stirring frequently, for 8 to 10 minutes. Serve warm with the reserved sprinkled over the top or cool to room temperature.