

The Farm Stop Model & Consignment Approach

After Harvest, September 2025

Katie Barr

Author, How to Start a Farm Stop

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Today's Speakers



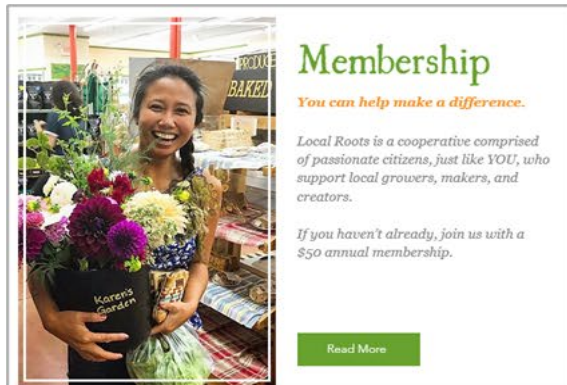
Casey Miller – External Training
Manager at Argus Farm Stop



Katie Barr – Author of *How to
Start a Farm Stop*

What is a Farm Stop?

1. Brick and Mortar store
2. Direct-to-Consumer sales from farms and producers via consignment
3. Mission-directed to Grow Local Food Economies
4. Flexible Business Model



Cooperative



Non-Profit



L3C

Comparison

	GROCERY STORE	FARMERS' MARKET	FARM STOP
Hours of operation	Year-Round, 8-24 hr x 7 days Indoor	Seasonal, 1-2 days, few hours Outdoor (usually)	Year-Round, min 8 hr x 6-7 days Indoor
Licensing Required	Health Department/RFE	None/Farmers' Market Registration, or Farm Carries License	Health Department/RFE
Products available	Typical, non-local	Farm Direct Only: produce, bakery, honey, syrup, flowers, crafts *sometimes meats/eggs/cheese	Mix of Farm & other products - refrigeration and freezer capability
Payment Methods	Cash, Credit, EBT, etc	Often cash only or Tokens	Cash, Credit, EBT, etc
Inventory	Store buys and re-sells	Farmers sell own product direct	Farmers sell on Consignment + Inventory
Staffing	Store Staff	Farmers On-Site/ Market Manager	Store Staff / Volunteers?

Argus Farm Stop

journey from one store to a multi-faceted organization over
11+ years in Ann Arbor, MI

2014



325 W Liberty Opens

2017



1200 Packard Opens

2020



Subscriptions

2022



1226 Packard Opens

2020



Delivery

Argus Impact

- We opened in August 2014 with 40 producers and have grown to over 300 today.
- 2024 another year of growth
 - \$6.9 million in sales
 - Top 75 farms received over \$44,000 on average
- Argus has paid out over \$26 million to local farms and food producers since 2014.
- Washtenaw County is #1 with most farms selling DTC in MI, top 10 nationally

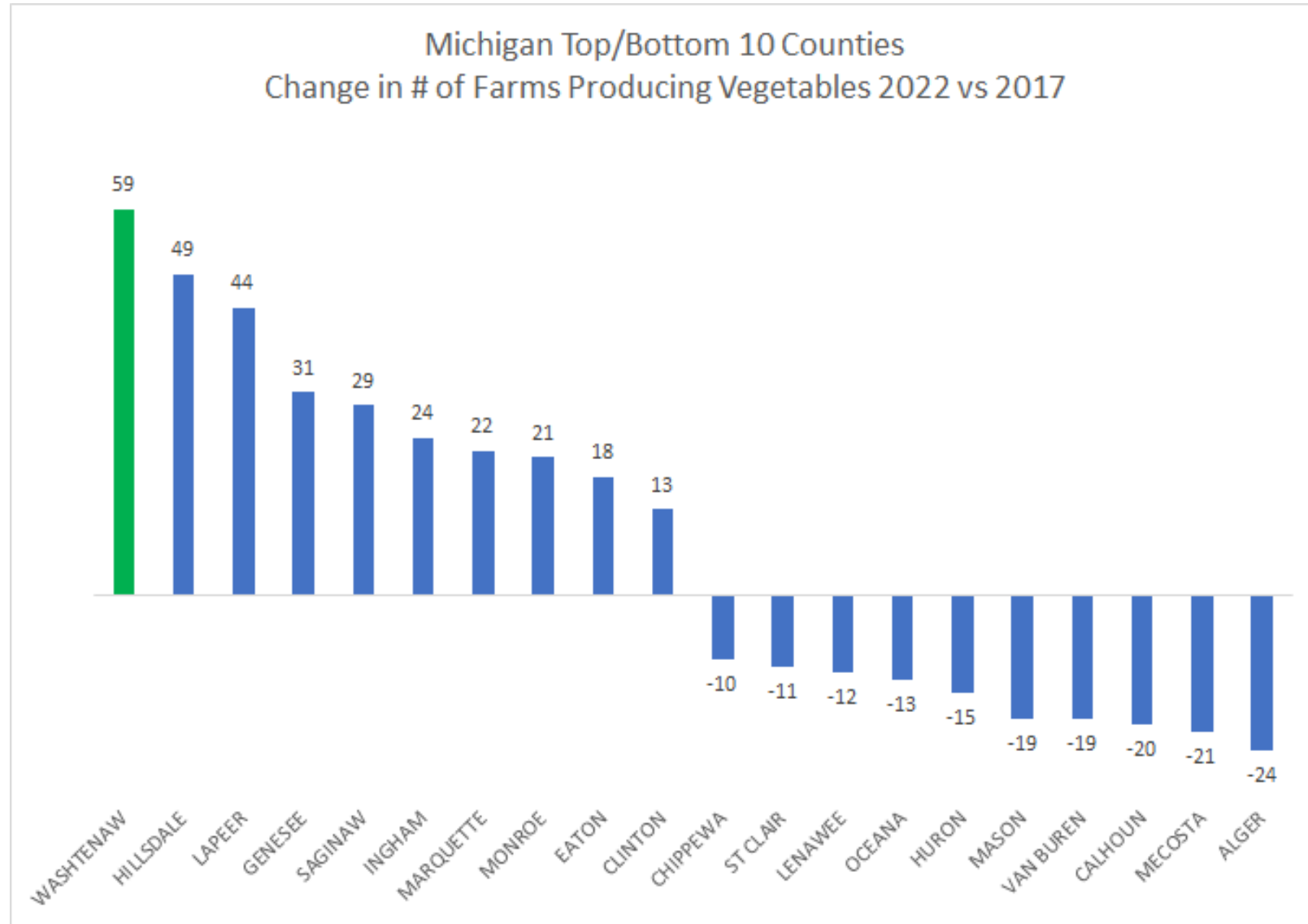




**Argus creates a
community
tapestry.**



Washtenaw County is #1 in Michigan for Growth in Number of Farms Producing Vegetables



Source: USDA Ag Census 2022 and 2017

Farm Stops provide year-round income for farms and extend seasonality

Yellow  = “extended season”

Purple  = “storage”

- Farm Stops have reliable & comfortable year-round shopping
- Expanded use of cold weather growing and storage techniques
- 36% of Argus annual produce sales take place from January - May.
- Expanded retail outlets encourage new products

MICHIGAN PRODUCE AVAILABILITY

CROP	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Arugula												
Asian Greens (Mizuna, Pac Choi, Tatsoi, etc.)												
Asparagus												
Beans, Fresh (Green or Wax)												
Edamame (Green Soybeans)												
Beets												
Broccoli												
Brussel Sprouts												
Cabbage												
Carrots												
Cauliflower (Inc. Romanesco)												
Celery												
Chard and Beet Greens												
Corn												
Cucumbers												
Eggplant												
Garlic												
Greens (Beet, Collard, Mustard, Turnip)												
Kale												
Kohlrabi												
Lettuce (Leaf, Iceberg, Romaine, Bibb, etc.)												

Source: MSU Center for Regional Food Systems

“Typical” MI farmer’s market season

Argus Expands Food Access

- Argus has solved the biggest hurdle facing most local food communities: *the logistics of getting products from local farms to customers.*
- Well positioned to grow food access in conjunction with funding partners
 - Double Up Food Buck (Fair Food Network)
 - Michigan Fitness Foundation
 - Customer donations (round up at the register)
 - Local farms now economically stabilized – and in a position to help.

“Are there ever customers that come in the store looking for food, but unable to pay? Part of why we are in food is to feed the hungry, so please load them up with Pine Ridge Organics food and send them on their way with my blessing.”

The Farm Stop model is gaining momentum

The New York Times

What if a Grocery Store Was More Like a Farmers' Market?

A farm stop in Ann Arbor, Mich., has found success with its local-first approach. But is the model replicable?



Farm Stops Create New Markets for Small Farms

These brick-and-mortar consignment businesses support farmers and bring fresh, locally grown food to their communities.

BY PAIGE HODDER • AUGUST 12, 2024

FOOD & WINE

NEWS > LIFESTYLE

Searching for Community and Fresh Local Produce? You Should Know What a Farm Stop Is

This brick-and-mortar spin on a farmers market is a new model for shopping local.



Modern Farmer

CONSUMPTION - EXPLAINER

Is the Farm Stop Revolution Upon Us?

A hybrid between a farmer's market and a co-op store, farm stops are popping up across the country, helping customers access local food year round.

#Access #Business #Food & Drink

by Steven Corso · May 14, 2024

The Farm Stop model is gaining momentum



Scan here to learn more about
the 2026 Conference!





FARM STOPS AROUND THE COUNTRY

Des Moines, IA

Chelsea, MI

Empire, MI

Marquette, MI

Ann Arbor, MI

Peninsula, OH

Wooster, OH



Clatskanie, OR



Lander, WY



Ash Grove, MO



Springfield, MO



Bloomington, IN



Madison, IN



Lancaster, OH



Huntington, WV



Jonesborough, TN



Wheeling, OH



State College, PA



Philmont, NY



Craryville, NY



Millerton, NY

Farm Stop Research, Resources and Network



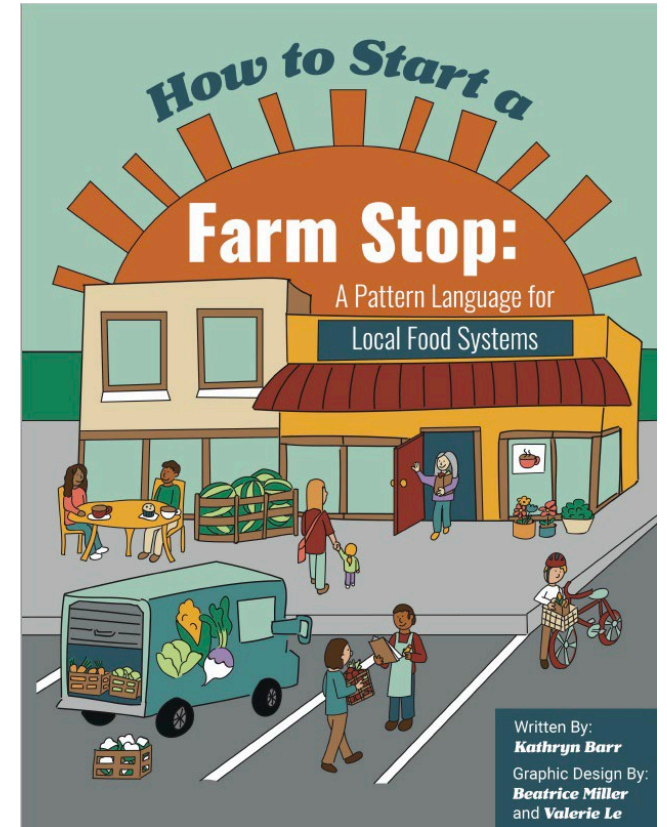
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Community-Based Circular Food Systems Papers

Farm stops: Understanding a new model for local food distribution

Argus Farm Stop offers technical training:

- Free monthly webinar
- 3 day How to Start a Farm Stop course
- 1:1 consulting

training@argusfarmstop.com
argusfarmstop.com/learn



Farm Stop Research, Resources and Network

NETWORKING to provide a strong support system for existing and aspiring Farm Stop owners.

RESOURCES in the form of case studies, replicable templates, funding directories, and more.

RESEARCH to understand the ever evolving Farm Stop landscape as a means of strengthening the efficacy and credibility of the model.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT via connections to existing educational opportunities and experts, communities of practice, webinars, support for the initial planning phases, and connections with existing Farm Stops

Join a growing community of existing and aspiring Farm Stop owners to share best practices via Slack!



Thank You! Questions?
