

## Certified SC Indoor Winter Farmers Market

*Something's always in season at the SC State Farmers Market!*



**Corbett Building, SC State Farmers Market  
3483 Charleston Highway, W. Columbia, SC  
9 a.m. to 1 p.m. through March 31, 2012**

While farmers markets are typically known to be open during the summer months, this year the South Carolina Department of Agriculture is partnering with the SC Specialty Foods Association to host an indoor winter Certified SC Farmers Market at the State Farmers Market in West Columbia. The indoor market is open each Saturday in the Corbett Building at the market from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. through March 31.

This weekly market inside of a market features South Carolina vendors selling a wide variety of fresh, local products. No matter what the weather, visitors can enjoy shopping for locally grown or processed products. In addition to collards, cabbage, sweet potatoes, and other seasonal produce, the market vendors a variety of local meats including cured bacon and grass fed beef. Other items unique to South Carolina offered include: goat milk soap, Shea butter, and body scrubs; soy candles, SC-made painted crafts and jewelry; gourmet salt, rubs, baking and dessert mixes; honey, syrup, sauces, dips, jams, and jellies; cookies, cakes, breads and other baked

goods; peanut brittle; frozen blueberries and pears; wine and juice; and other specialty products.

Jackie Moore, a marketing specialist with the SC Department of Agriculture, is managing the indoor market. She said she encourages everyone to come and shop at the market and meet the vendors.

“You can find everything here that you need for a meal,” Moore said.

The number of winter farmers markets is increasing, according to the US Department of Agriculture’s updated National Farmers Market Directory. Venues that are open at least once between November and March are considered winter farmers markets. According to the USDA, since 2010 the number of winter markets has increased 38 percent, from 886 to 1,225. These winter markets also account for nearly 17 percent of the nation’s 7,222 operating farmers markets.

Here in South Carolina we are blessed with a long growing season and a diverse mix of crops farmers can rotate between winter and summer months. This is a contributing factor to the growth of the winter farmers market. The market is giving farmers and specialty food producers an additional outlet to sell their products, and a way for consumers to stay connected to their local growers.

Before or after shopping at the indoor farmers market, walk down the hall to Judy’s Restaurant for comfort food at its finest. Judy’s is a proud member of the Department’s Fresh on the Menu program for restaurants that serve at least 25 percent of their menu items from local farmers. Judy’s offers everything from hand-battered fried okra to red velvet cake. Everything at Judy’s is proudly made from scratch from local ingredients. Lunch hours are 11 a.m. to 3p.m., so visitors can have lunch and shop at the Certified SC Winter Farmers Market all underneath one roof.

Moore said customers can sign up to win a gift basket of specialty products to be awarded on the last day of the Winter Market. The more Saturdays you sign up, the more chances there are to win.

The indoor market is open each Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. inside the Corbett Building located at the State Farmers Market, 3483 Charleston Highway in West Columbia.