



**MEDIA RELEASE: 2/24/2015**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Postharvest Handling Workshops**

Renewing the Countryside and the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture are offering four half-day postharvest handling workshops in March for fruit and vegetable farmers. Produce growers who sell at wholesale (restaurants, grocery stores, distributors, institutions); or through farmers' markets or CSAs; will learn how three farms of varying size and experience handle produce from harvest and through the whole process of washing, storage, packing, and transportation to maintain the highest quality product. Additional topics covered will include produce respiration rates, harvest tips, packing areas, food safety, grading, pack sizes, packaging, on-farm efficiency, optimal shelf-life, point-of-sale/retail display, and more. Each workshop will be led by one of three Minnesota vegetable farmers: Laura Frerichs of Loon Organics, Inc.; Lisa Baker of Bakers' Acres LLC; or Joan Olson of Prairie Drifter Farm.

Workshops are from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm and will be held in St. Charles, MN on March 3<sup>rd</sup>; Fairmont, MN on March 5<sup>th</sup>; Little Falls, MN on March 20<sup>th</sup>; and Cannon Falls, MN on March 25<sup>th</sup>. The cost to attend is \$20 for the first person and \$10 for the second if coming from the same farm (fee includes lunch), but there are scholarships available at some locations thanks to generous support from local sponsors.

Workshop co-sponsors:

Land Stewardship Project

SE Regional Sustainable Development Partnership

Winona County Extension

Rural Advantage

Central Lakes College

Central Regional Sustainable Development Partnership

Region 5 Development Commission

SPROUT MN, LLC Food Hub

Register online here:

<http://www.renewingthecountryside.org/calendar>

Find out more about postharvest handling here:

<http://www.misa.umn.edu/Publications/PostharvestHandling/index.htm>

Workshop attendees will receive a FREE copy of the Food Safety Decision Tree (\$10 value):

<http://www.gaps.cornell.edu/tree.html>

Workshop attendees will also get a discounted rate on purchase of the Wholesale Success book:

<http://www.misa.umn.edu/Publications/WholesaleSuccess/index.htm>

Questions? Please contact Devon Ballinger, [devon@rtc.org](mailto:devon@rtc.org), 612-716-1706; or Jane Jewett, [jewet006@umn.edu](mailto:jewet006@umn.edu), 218-845-2832.