



Making It In Michigan: One-Day Event Hosts Educational Sessions For Food and Agricultural Entrepreneurs and Trade Show Featuring Over 200 Michigan-made Products

The MSU Product Center will hold the ninth annual Making It In Michigan Conference and Premier Specialty Food Marketplace Trade Show on Wednesday, November 16th from 7:30AM – 4:30PM at the Lansing Center.

“In supporting this year’s theme of ‘Taste the Future’ we will be presenting a comprehensive series of educational sessions with forward thinking strategies for long-term success,” states Brenda Reau, Senior Associate Director, MSU Product Center. “We are also pleased to expand the trade show this year to over 200 vendors that will be sampling Michigan-made products including beer and wine for the first time,” says Reau.

This year’s keynote speakers are Mike and Denise Busley, owners of Grand Traverse Pie Company. They will discuss the company’s 20-year history and how their family has influenced decisions and played a role in its success and future plans.

The one-day event features educational sessions that will concentrate on different business stages and cover strategies for the following:

- Starting Your Business
 - Regulatory and licensing for the beginning food entrepreneur
 - Farmers markets – what do they offer to my business
 - Preparing for sound record keeping
 - Keys to FSMA compliance in putting together a food safety plan
 - Branding your product and marketing your image

- Growing Your Business
 - Making sense of social media and other communication innovations jargon
 - Becoming retailer savvy to meet customer needs
 - Financing beyond the bank loan – alternative choices

- The Mature Business

- Determining if imports and exports will be a good fit for your food business
- Navigating legal issues in hiring employees

The \$85 per person conference registration fee includes breakfast, lunch, and educational sessions, digital copies of all presentations and reference materials and admission to the Marketplace trade show.

Conference participants will also have time to network with the winners of this year's MSU Product Center awards and learn from their success stories. Awards will be presented for Entrepreneur of the Year, Start-up to Watch, Best Barrier Buster, Value-Added Agriculture and the Director's Award. MSU Product Center innovation counselors and staff members, Product Center clients, business consultants, regulatory officials and food and farming groups will also be available to provide in-depth information and counseling.

A major highlight for vendors exhibiting this year is that Meijer will solely be using the trade show to establish their 2017 selection of Michigan-made products for more than 100 stores across the state. This year marks a change in the previous process since 2012 where Meijer has invited MSU Product Center clients to submit products for consideration.

"If you want to be seen in Meijer in 2017, you need to be at this year's show," states Matthew Birbeck, Senior Project Director, Food Processing and Innovation Center (FPIC) at the MSU Product Center.

"The Marketplace trade show presents a great opportunity for us to bring buyers from all departments to not only sample new and unique products but also meet the entrepreneurs and business owners and learn the stories behind those products," states Peter Heinz, merchandise manager for Meijer. "In continuing our initiative to bring our customers locally-sourced products, we want to provide them with the opportunity to buy local across new categories, including fresh products," says Heinz.

The Marketplace trade show in the afternoon will feature over 200 new and existing businesses that will be showcasing and sampling their Michigan-made food and agricultural products to the general public and other Michigan-based food and specialty product buyers. The trade show is free to the general public.

For more information and registration details, visit productcenter.msu.edu/miim.