



South Carolina DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Hugh E. Weathers, Commissioner

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – March 18, 2022

Certified SC Showcase a Success for South Carolina

COLUMBIA — At the first Certified SC Showcase, South Carolina farmers and food producers connected with local and regional buyers from grocery stores, wholesalers, and restaurants – an opportunity for South Carolina agriculture to show off its abundant produce, specialty food products and strong industry support.

The event grew out of the South Carolina Department of Agriculture’s successful Grower-Buyer Mash-Up, which for the past four years has brought together [Certified South Carolina](#) food producers and buyers to network and learn. This year, SCDA moved the event to the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center and expanded its scope.

Gov. Henry McMaster addressed the 230 attendees at the March 14-15 event, praising it as an opportunity to “communicate, collaborate and cooperate.”

Commissioner of Agriculture Hugh Weathers explained the importance of showcasing South Carolina farmer and products in such a setting. “We’re putting South Carolina farming on the map,” Weathers said. “During COVID, we learned that people want to know more about where their food’s coming from, who’s growing it, and if I can trust them – and sourcing more Certified South Carolina products is one way to answer those questions.”

Eric McClam, who runs Columbia farm City Roots, called the Showcase “incredibly beneficial.” McClam said, “It was an intimate event that allowed us to reconnect and foster existing relationships and to gain new sales with regional and national grocery retailers and food service distribution companies.”

The educational section of the event included a panel discussion featuring buyers from various outlets, from wholesale to grocery to restaurants. They explained how they work with growers to ensure freshness and maximum profit.



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“Being able to market your own brand and share your story is key, because then we can share that with customers,” Lauren Horning, Local Product Specialist with Freshpoint, told farmers.

The event also incorporated The Taste of South Carolina, a networking reception featuring Certified South Carolina hors d’oeuvres, sponsored by Arbor One and AgSouth Farm Credit. The Taste of South Carolina was formerly held each year during the SC AgriBiz and Farm Expo in Florence.

Event lead Katie Pfeiffer, SCDA’s market development coordinator, said the inaugural Certified SC Showcase was a huge success – and South Carolina farmers can expect an expanded event next year.

“We loved the opportunity to show off South Carolina’s diverse, year-round bounty of food and farm products and the people who make it possible,” Pfeiffer said. “South Carolina has so much to offer.”

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