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Farmers Market Produce Looks Yummy Despite Drought

Farm vendors at the Grayslake Farmers Market have taken painstaking measures like constant irrigation to ensure their crops are up to snuff for sale to market-goers.

Posted by [Angela Sykora](#) (Editor) · July 26, 2012 at 05:20 PM

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The Grayslake Farmers Market has fewer vendors compared with previous years, but the fruits and veggies from farmers who are selling their goods look fantastic despite the drought that has plagued the Midwest.

The veggies are doing just fine, assured Kevin Krug, of Berrien Center, Michigan's [Klug Orchards](#).

"Tomatoes like it hot!"

The broccoli? Not so much.

"Instead of a nice, tight head, it grows freaky," said Klug of broccoli growing under too-hot conditions.

In response to the Midwest drought, Klug said his farm has been irrigating a lot more than usual. He figures they've spent \$800 to \$1,000 per week irrigating the produce crops to ensure a quality product for market-goers.

The extra costs associated with that irrigation are passed on to customers with an increase of about 25-cents per container. Given the quality, though, that is a minimal price to pay.

Market-goer Anne Sopiartz, of Grayslake, has a plot in the community garden and visits the farmers market weekly. From what she has seen, she has no concerns about the quality of the produce.

"I haven't noticed a difference, and I go every week. I'm able to get whatever I want," she said.

Farmers have acknowledged some corn crops have taken a hit, though.

The drought "ruined our popcorn crop," said Dave Everhart, who works for [Red Barn Farm Market](#), based in Woodstock. Blue and Indian corn have also suffered.

"A lot of sweet corn isn't pushing through," said Corban Koster, a member of the farming family who owns and operates [Geneva Lakes Produce](#) in Burlington, Wis

Broccoli, cabbage and cauliflower are not at their best either, he said. But other produce like berries, cherries, melons and peaches are on point.

Like Krug Orchards, Geneva Lakes Produce is relying on a lot of irrigation, "which take a whole lot of time and money," said Koster.

They've also had to scale back their wholesale market operation this season.

It could be worse, said Klug, who still remembers the drought of 1988, which began early and had a record number of 100-degree days.

"That was rough," he said.

The Grayslake Farmers Market is held from 3 to 7 p.m. Wednesdays on downtown Center Street. For more information, go to www.grayslakefarmersmarket.com.

For more on the drought, click here.

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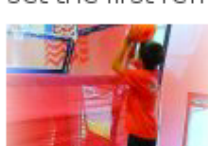
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