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Down to Earth Markets Vendor Meeting to Address Financial Needs and Goals of Local Food

February 2016 (Ossining, NY) – One of the most important gatherings of farmers and food makers in the Hudson Valley region is soon to take place: On Monday, March 7th, Down to Earth Markets hosts the company's 12th Annual Vendor Meeting. Every year, the meeting brings together dozens of market vendors for a discussion on the state of farming and food businesses in the region. The 2016 meeting theme is, "Growing Your Farm or Food Business - Financing and Succession Strategies."

"The local food scene has entered a unique cycle when the old timers are thinking of retirement and a new generation of entrepreneurs is coming up in farming and food businesses," said Down to Earth Markets President, Jon Zeltsman. Presenters at the meeting will include Slow Money NYC Board President, Claude Arpels, along with other investors, consultants, and vendors. Each speaker will build upon the theme of securing financial success, from crowd funding campaigns to accredited investment.

Claude Arpels plans to explore an investor's perspective of what it takes to grow local food companies. **Gordon Bennett** of Barry's Tempeh will discuss his company's experience with the Kiva Zip crowd-sourcing loan process.

The meeting will then examine case studies in financing farm transitions with a talk by **Jacob Israelow**, the founder of Dirt Capital Partners, an investment fund that partners with growers to purchase farmland. **Tamar Gisis**, an expert on succession in family-held businesses, will address potential issues and rewards based on her experience.

"We opened our first farmers market twenty-five years ago, and in that time, the local food landscape has radically changed. As market managers, our goal is to support our vendors in a comprehensive way. We've built a network of people who want local agriculture to thrive as much as we do. Now we're connecting them with our vendors," Zeltsman said.

Down to Earth Markets is a social enterprise in the truest sense of the description: a business with the goals of 1) addressing social and environmental issues and 2) achieving financial sustainability as a business. The company works to create economic opportunities for local farmers and food makers.

Down to Earth Markets began with the Ossining Farmers Market in 1991. Today we manage approximately fifteen farmers markets in Westchester County, Rockland County, and in New York City. Our company envisions a strong regional food system, built by independent farms and food businesses, that provides everyone with an alternative to industrial food.