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## Farmers market coming to Cow Palace

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Fresh fruit and vegetables may not seem like a luxury to many, but they sometimes feel that way to residents of Brisbane and Daly City's Bayshore neighborhood.

Neither area has access to a nearby supermarket with a wide selection of fresh foods, and many locals don't have a car to make the trip.

Starting on Saturday, fresh food will come to them. The Fremont-based Urban Village Farmers Market Association is opening a farmers market in the lower parking lot of the Cow Palace, and founder Ron Pardini hopes residents will help make the market a success.

"I truly believe it is not a privilege but a right to have fresh produce available to you," Pardini said. "And we thought that, because it was such an underserved community, we could bring some local farmers to the area."

The market will be from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday through Oct. 16, although Pardini has indicated that he would be open to making it a year-round venture if it is popular enough. Parking will be free.

Pardini spends every day signing up farmers and

other food vendors, who will sell products including fruit and berries, vegetables, bread, cheese, fresh fish and meat. Taco trucks and other mobile food vans will be on hand to serve a hot lunch or cool ice cream to the crowds. Musicians will perform for the shoppers and face-painters will entertain their kids.

It's the first foray into San Mateo County by the Urban Village Farmers Market Association, a

nonprofit corporation that runs markets throughout Santa Clara and Alameda counties. Most of the markets are in more upscale neighborhoods than the one surrounding the Cow Palace; Pardini said the diversity of residents there was one of the biggest selling points for him. Serramonte Mall already hosts a farmers market twice a week, but he thinks this one will be very different.

"We hope to have a lot of Asian vendors — a lot of the Hmong farmers are excellent," he said.

Market vendors will accept Golden State Advantage EBT card and WIC checks.

The push to bring a farmers market to the Cow Palace originated with the office of Assemblywoman Fiona Ma, D-San Francisco, more than a year ago. San Mateo County Supervisors Carole Groom and Adrienne Tissier joined the campaign a few months ago, spurred by what they perceived as an urgent local need and by statistics showing that a lack of access to healthy foods creates an overreliance on fast-food restaurants and liquor stores, which can contribute to chronic health problems.

Eventually, Bill Chiang, a legislative aide in Tissier's office, started cold-calling farmers market producers to pitch them on coming out to Daly City.

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Chiang said Pardini was the only producer who responded with enthusiasm. The pieces came together very quickly after Pardini toured the Cow Palace parking lot June 1. The county issued a permit earlier this month. Cow Palace CEO Joe Barkett wants the farmers market to succeed, so he offered the space for free.

"They make a concerted effort to acknowledge that these markets also need to serve the middle-income families, and that the higher-end farmers markets, such as the one at the Ferry Building in San Francisco, don't fit every neighborhood," Chiang said. "That kind of made me send the e-mail (to Pardini) in the first place."

It's unclear how "local" the produce will be. The new market may open without any San Mateo County farmers represented — Pardini said he hasn't received any interest from them yet in selling their produce in Daly City. He will be reaching out to Coastside flower and vegetable growers in the coming weeks.

For more information, visit [www.urbanvillageonline.com](http://www.urbanvillageonline.com).

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