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Food production became one of the ways in which farmers evolved to shifting demands.

“ASAP’s work is really to kind of help farms transition after tobacco was no longer a subsidized industry,” Lenner said. “We’re in a region where commodity crops really aren’t possible. We have mountain farms that grow on hillsides and the ability to do large tracks of corn or soy are really limited by our geography. So this idea of small farms growing food was looked at as a potentially viable option.”

Zeke Filiss, owner of Long Valley Farm in Marshall, has seen the tobacco

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— *Zeke Filiss*

co-food transition first-hand.

“I’ve been farming all my life. My parents grew tobacco when I was young and I’ve always had a big garden,” Filiss said.

Filiss, a Madison County native, said CSAs provide a way for his farm to connect to people in the surrounding areas.

“There’s not as much opportunity

there. It’s a small town. A lot of people have their own garden. CSAs give us a venue for our product and something to start with,” Filiss said. “When we have more CSA customers, we’re not worried about overproducing. It’s kind of a drag when you put a lot of work into coming up with a nice product and you have no one to sell it to.”

Carla Padvoiskis, a second year apprentice at Flying Cloud Farm in Fairview, said the benefits of a CSA may fit the needs of busy students.

“I work the UNCA market on Saturday and one thing that comes to mind right away is that it’s very convenient. It’s right there,” Padvoiskis said.

Padvoiskis said she understands the

desire many college students have for transparency from food suppliers and buying local is one way to make their voices heard.

“I think understanding your power as a consumer and the notion that every time you spend money, you’re essentially voting on what you’re choosing to spend money on,” Padvoiskis said. “If you do something that you decide you value and if the local small economy in the area you live in is something you value and the carbon footprint of the food you’re eating is something you value, then shopping locally at your farmer’s market and directly supporting farmers is a great way to do that.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF USDA

Farmers markets like this one in Michigan are prominent across the country and provide a variety of fresh produce from local farmers.