

Starting a Farmers' Market

Community Relationships Build Strong Markets

Definition of a Farmers' Market



- A common facility or area where several farmers or growers gather on a regular, recurring basis to sell a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables and other locally-grown farm products directly to consumers.

www.ams.usda.gov

It's a Great Sense of Community

Benefits of a Farmers' Market

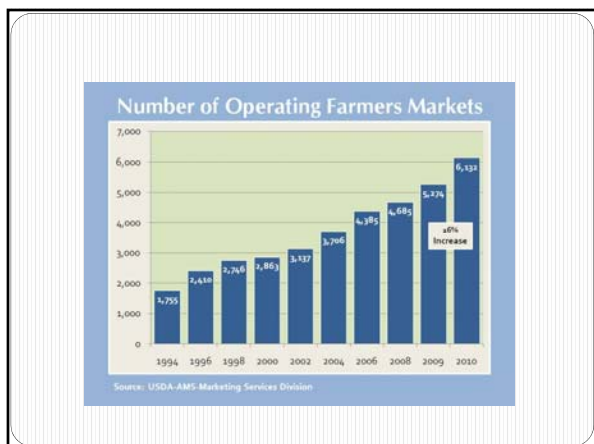
- Sustainability of small/mid scale family farms
- Offers easy entry into farming and farm-direct marketing
- Serves communities:
 - Integral part in local food system
 - Provides access to fresh local foods, for all citizens, EBT and farmers market nutrition program
 - Personal interaction between customers and farmers
- Means for community revitalization
- Place to meet and socialize



Our Nation's Mushrooming Appetite for Locally-Grown



The USDA has recently released new data that showed farmers markets have grown 16% in the last 12 months!
This means there are currently 6,132 such markets across the country.



Despite all the growth of farmers' markets and the many benefits for farmers and the local community:

Over 50% of new markets fail in the first 5 years of opening and up to 20% of markets that make it past 5 years fail.

Why?

Poor Planning, Organization and Need of Community Involvement

Advance Planning

- Farmers' markets start as an idea.
 - A group of local growers, the chamber of commerce, a neighborhood association or a single individual wanting to start a farmers' market in their community.

Develop a market planning committee a year before you want to open

Answer the following questions:

- Is starting a new farmers' market feasible?
- What is the purpose of the market?
- Who will sponsor the market and how will it be funded?

Advanced Planning

- Market planning committee
 - Four areas
 - Market analysis and planning (Survey)
 - Finding a market manager
 - Organization and logistics
 - Financing



Market Analysis – (Survey)

- **Community Support**
 - “Buy-in” from surrounding businesses as well as the local government:
 - Will ensure that the market is seen as contributing to the vitality of the community
 - Local business and city and county government may be willing and able to help with:
 - Finding a location
 - Sponsoring
 - Advertising for the market
 - Events
 - Or other resources.



Market Analysis – (Survey)

- **Customers**
 - Income (families, students, elderly)
 - Population (nationalities/ethnicities)
 - Successful market nearby
 - How many farmers are selling there?
 - Is it popular? How many people shop there?
 - What kinds of things are available for sale?
 - Is it profitable for the farmers?
 - Are there already to many markets in your community?



Market Analysis – (Survey)

- Customers want a mix of high quality, fresh produce, value added food vendors, dairy and meat products



Market Analysis – (Survey)

• Growers

- Will you have a critical mass of producers who can grow what your customers want?
- Are local farmers already selling at a local market?
- Are they looking for more direct marketing outlets?
- What crops do they grow?
- How much money do they want to make each market day?
- How far would they be willing to travel?
- When will their produce be available?



Market Analysis (Survey)

• Location

- Reliable location?
- Visibility - easy to find – convenience – view from arterial streets?
- Attractive - clean location –safe –accessible to handicapped people?
- Parking – Plenty for farmers/vendors and customers?
- Farmer accessibility - easy access for farmer's vehicles – space for trucks to get in and out – turn around and park and space for the farmers to set up their displays - can the surface support the trucks?
- Customer accessibility – easy for customers to get in and out of?
- Safe - level pedestrian surface with good drainage – no standing water?
- Shade – shelter protection from the weather?
- Grey water disposal?
- Solid waste disposal?
- Public facilities - restrooms for farmers and the public – potable water?
- Zoning laws?
- Cost – is there a fee (rent) for the market to use the space?

Hire a Market Manager

- The type of market manager you hire will depend on the kind of farmers' market the planning committee wants to create.
- The market manager may come from the organizing group, a vendor or a volunteer, but successful markets grow with a hired market manager that has a:

PASSION for LOCAL FOOD, FAMILY FARMERS and the COMMUNITY!

Market Manager Responsibilities

- Acts as the main contact person for the market
- Overseeing day-to-day market operation
- Collecting of vendor fees
- Obtains proper permits and insurance for market
- Enforces rules and regulations
- Recruiting of vendors
- Controlling vendor and product mix
- Handling complaints and disputes
- Work with market's board
- Establishes strong community contacts



Organization & Logistics

• Market manager and market organizers define:

- Market policies
- Financing
- Publicity
- Organizing special events
- Coordinating committees



Market Policy

• Key Documents

- Mission statement
 - Articles of Incorporation
 - Bylaws – purpose and objectives
 - Describe and define responsibilities of directors and officers
 - Define the purpose, location, and hours of operation
 - Define membership, dues, and fees
 - Define amendment process and election procedures
 - Permits (site, street closure, signage)
 - City, state and federal laws and regulations
 - Market rules for vendors
 - Who can sell • What can be sold • When they can sell • Permits required • restrictions • penalties
 - Budget
 - Market and board liability insurance
- Comprehensive book *The Legal Guide to Direct Farm Marketing* by Neil Hamilton

Financing

- **Set a budget**

- Insurance
- Permits
- Advertising/promotion
- Salary
- Site improvements
- Rent for site

Market may receive a sponsorship or seed money from an interested individual, business or through a state agriculture organization.

Most likely vendor fees are the primary source that support the farmers' market.

• Fees determine the market manager's salary, advertising budget, insurance and site location and improvements to the market site

Be Realistic !

Promotion and Advertising

- **Best Advertising is FREE**

- A feature story in your local newspaper
- Television coverage (you need a news story)
- Radio Show (cooking or growing food)
- Community calendar
- Posters, fliers
- Banner
- Booth at events
- Social media
- Word-of-mouth



Promotion and Advertising

- **Paid Advertising**

- 5 – 10 percent of budget

- Banners
- Sandwich boards
- Burma-shave signs
- Newspaper ads
- Local Food Guide
- Farmers' Market coupons/money
- Internet
- Bumper stickers
- Booth at events
- Business cards



Final Word

- **Be Patient!**

- It takes time for a market to become known in a community
 - Did your homework
 - Developed strong community relations
 - Have good market standards
 - Quality Management
 - Realistic budget
 - Advertise well
 - Farmers bring a reliable and steady supply of quality fresh products

Have Fun and Good Luck!

Resources

- **Related Links**

- <http://food.unl.edu/localfoods>
- <http://www.farmersmarketcoalition.org>
- <http://www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets>
- <http://oodweb.sc.egov.usda.gov/technotes/tn12.pdf>

- **Books:**

- The Farmers' Market Book: Growing Food, Cultivating Community (Quarry Books) (Paperback) By Jennifer Meta Robinson and J.A. Hartenfeld
- The New Farmers' Market: Farm-Fresh Ideas for Producers, Managers & Communities (Paperback) By Vance Corum, Marcie Rozenzweig and Eric Gibson

- **Publications:**

- ATTRA: Farmers' Market Marketing and Business Guide
<http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/PDF/farmmarket.pdf>
- Recruiting Vendors to a Farmers' Market
http://www.wallacecenter.org/our-work/Resource-Library/wallace-publications/handbooks/RECRUITERS_Sc.pdf

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