

# FARMERS' MARKETS – SPEAKER'S NOTES

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## SLIDE 1: FARMERS' MARKETS

### Introduction

This presentation is based on the *Farmers' Market Best Practices Toolkit: A Guide for Community Organizations in Newfoundland and Labrador*. It is one in a series of best practices toolkits, which also cover community gardens, community kitchens, and bulk buying clubs, available through the Food Security Network of Newfoundland and Labrador.



Your audience should come away from this presentation with a basic understanding of what a farmers' market is and how it works. Those who plan on actually starting a farmers' market should consult the toolkit for more in depth information and resources.

This presentation should take between 30 and 40 minutes, depending on how much interaction there is between the audience and the presenter.

### Materials Needed

- Projector & screen
- Flipchart or whiteboard & marker
- FSN E-News sign-up forms (available at [www.foodsecuritynews.com](http://www.foodsecuritynews.com))
- A copy of *Farmers' Market Best Practices Toolkit: A Guide for Community Organizations* (optional)

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## SLIDE 2: AGENDA

Introduce the topic and list the information that is going to be covered during the presentation. This slide can be on the screen while welcoming the group and doing introductions and icebreakers.

Let the audience know how long you expect the presentation to take, and whether they should ask questions as they arise or wait until the presentation is over.

**Farmers' Markets**

**Agenda**

1. What is a Farmers' Market?
2. Why Start a Farmers' Market?
3. Forming a Working Group
4. Planning for Success
5. Organizational Structure
6. Location
7. Funding
8. Market Manager
9. Policies & Procedures
10. Vendor Recruitment
11. Market Promotion
12. Running a Market



## Ice-Breakers

Consider introducing your audience to each other and the concept of food security by holding an ice-breaker. Ice-breakers are short games that get people talking, introducing themselves, and sharing information. Icebreakers can range from simply asking the group to introduce themselves and share their favourite vegetable, to more interactive activities or games.

FoodShare Toronto has a great list of food security related icebreakers at [http://www.foodshare.net/toolbox\\_roots-rooftops-Support.htm](http://www.foodshare.net/toolbox_roots-rooftops-Support.htm)

## SLIDE 3: WHAT IS A FARMERS' MARKET?

- A farmers' market is a place where farmers come together on a regular basis to **sell fresh fruits, vegetables, dairy, fish, meats and other farm products** (such as preserves, baked goods, flowers and plants), directly to consumers.
- **Hand-made items such as artwork and crafts** are often

**What is a Farmers' Market?**



- Fresh fruits and vegetables
- Dairy, meat, fish, and eggs
- Preserves, baked goods and other prepared foods
- Flowers and plants
- Artwork and crafts

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sold at farmers' markets as well, though many markets place limits on the percentage of non-farmer vendors allowed. This is to ensure that markets which promote themselves as *belonging to farmers* are providing the service that is expected by the public when they arrive on a market day.

- Generally, farmers' markets also follow a "**Make it, Bake it, and Grow it**" motto, where all products available at the market have to be produced by the vendor selling it.
- In Newfoundland and Labrador some markets can't attract many farmers or simply don't want to be focused on farmers and instead call themselves '**community markets**' or '**public markets**'. This can be a good way to start off while working on attracting farmers.

### SLIDE 4: WHY START A FARMERS' MARKET?

According to a 2008 national study commissioned by Farmers' Markets Canada:

- Farmers' markets are an important source of Canadian farm income, providing 1/3 of participating vendors' revenue on average.
- They produce \$1.03 billion in annual sales nationally.
- Studies show that every dollar spent locally circulates in the community three times around in a phenomenon called "the Multiplier Effect".

#### Why Start a Farmers' Market?

- Economic benefits and 'multiplier effect'
- Availability and variety of local food products
- Food education and awareness
- Supports small and medium sized farms
- Community space and social interaction
- Encourages entrepreneurial businesses



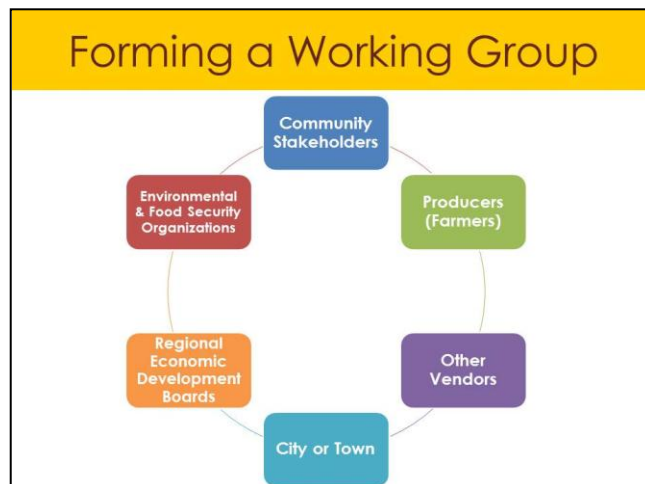
The desire for face-to-face interaction between producer and consumer is a major reason for the rapid growth of farmers' markets.

- Direct marketing provides farmers with immediate feedback from their customers and enables producers to respond more effectively to consumer needs.
- In turn, growing consumer awareness of the health, environmental, social and economic benefits of supporting local, sustainable agriculture has resulted in a desire for direct contact with food producers.

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### SLIDE 5: FORMING A WORKING GROUP

A successful farmers' market is the result of a significant amount of planning and commitment on the part of a dedicated organizing team. A farmers' market organizing team should be a diverse group with different interests in the market, and with adequate representation from both producers and other community stakeholders.



Contact agricultural associations, government departments, and gardening and horticultural societies to help with initial farmer outreach. One or two farmers on your organizing team will help to guarantee farmers' needs are addressed from the beginning. However, farmers are busy people and may not initially want to be very involved.

**Ask the group to list any key people or organizations they know of that should be involved in forming a farmers' market in their community. You can write these suggestions on a whiteboard or flipchart.**

### SLIDE 6: PLANNING FOR SUCCESS

Planning is an essential early activity for any successful farmers' market. It prepares a roadmap for the group and sets achievable objectives by which to measure success. A clear strategic plan is also an asset when applying for funds or seeking support from government agencies, and may also serve as the basis for a future business plan.

- Prior to developing your plan, your group should consider conducting a simple **market feasibility study** to determine if a farmers' market is a viable option for your community.

The slide, titled "Planning for Success", is divided into two main sections. The first section, "Market Feasibility:", lists seven questions: "Need and support for a market?", "Is there a suitable site available?", "What is the potential customer base?", "Revenues, costs, and sources of funding?", "What is the potential for vendor profitability?", "What is the optimal vendor make-up?", and "What are some possible organizational structures?". To the right of these questions is a small photograph of a vegetable field. The second section, "Strategies to Develop:", lists six items: "Farmer outreach", "Vendor relations", "Volunteer recruitment", "Health and safety", "Media and marketing", and "Consumer education".

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- If there are few farmers in your region, a 'public market' or 'community market' which includes a couple of farmers and gardeners may be more appropriate than a farmers' market.
- Early in the planning process, the working group will want to develop both **vision and mission statements**, and identify specific goals and objectives for the farmers' market. That will lead to strategies being formed to achieve those goals and objectives.

### SLIDE 7: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Your vision, goals, objectives, and plan will directly inform the organizational structure your farmers' market will take. Selecting an organizational structure will assist the market in establishing committee responsibilities and developing rules, decision-making procedures, and policy enforcement protocols.



The slide titled "Organizational Structure" features a yellow header. Below the header is a photograph of a market stall with various produce and cardboard boxes. To the right of the photo is a bulleted list of organizational structures:

- Sponsorship
- Incorporation
  - Non-profit
  - Co-operative
- Charitable organization
- 'Friends of the Market'

- **Small farmers' markets** sometimes operate as unincorporated committees, with no formal organizational structure.
- **Sponsored markets** are run as sub-committees of town councils, farmer associations, service clubs, or other groups. Sponsors can assist with necessary tasks such as setting up a bank account and sourcing initial funding. Sponsors may also provide market and office spaces and administrative resources.
- Many farmers' markets **incorporate** as either **non-profit organizations** or **co-operatives**. In each case, membership can be limited to farmers only, or can include other vendors, community groups and even consumers. Members of the organization vote for the governing board and on major policy matters.
- **Charities** are exempt from paying income tax and can issue official tax receipts for donations. They are required to limit activities to "charitable purposes" including relief of poverty, education or religious activities.

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- While charitable incorporation may not be suitable for a farmers' market, it could be one option for a separate **'Friends of the Market'** organization which conducts educational activities around sustainable food issues or fundraisers, for example.

### SLIDE 8: LOCATION

Finding a good location for your farmers' market is an important step in getting established.

- A market can take place in an open space, such as a public park or square; it can be indoors in either its own building or a public building; or it can be a combination of both.

### Location

- Visibility from the road
- Accessibility, public transit, bike racks, and parking
- Shelter (indoor/outdoor)
- Public washrooms
- Garbage and recycling
- Food preparation and eating areas
- Water and electricity
- Green space



- There are many factors that you will want to consider when searching for the perfect location. The market needs to be visible, it needs to be safe and easily accessible for both vendors and customers, and it needs to be large enough to allow for growth.
- Locations should also be family friendly. If possible, locate your market in an area with a nearby playground, green space, sports field, recreation centre, or library.

**Ask the group to list the potential market locations in their community. Write these down on a whiteboard or flipchart.**

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## SLIDE 9: FUNDING

A farmers' market will have start-up costs and ongoing operating costs.

- **Start-up costs** can include consulting or facilitation during early meetings, feasibility studies, site expenses, insurance, advertising/promotion, permits, and incorporation fees.
- **Operational costs** can include staff, space rental, legal assistance, educational programming, vendor outreach, technical support, promotion/publicity, logo and website design, signage, office expenses, and supplies.



Funding or income can come from a number of sources:

- **Partner organizations** may provide in-kind donations such as use of a location, or volunteer support.
- **Vendor fees** make up a significant portion of operating costs for most farmers' markets. This can be a once a year fee charged at the beginning of the season, or a fee charged at each market. Some markets charge a percentage of the vendors' sales, or a combination of different fees.
- **Membership fees** may be charged to provide members with privileges such as the right to stand or vote for the board of directors, discounts at the market, or guaranteed tables for vendors.
- **Grants** from governments, foundations, and corporations may provide funding to the market. Fundraising activities such as sale of coffee and tea at the market, flea markets, t-shirt sales, and selling advertising space on promotional materials can all contribute to the market's revenue as well.

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## SLIDE 10: MARKET MANAGER

The market manager is the most important person in the market organization. They will act as the face of the market and will manage the daily market activities.

- They are appointed by, and accountable to, the board of directors, working group, or sponsoring organization.
- If possible the manager should be a paid employee that is not a current vendor of the market, although this position may begin as a volunteer role.
- The market manager should be passionate about farmers' markets, have strong leadership, communication, conflict resolution, and organizational skills and ideally have experience working with a volunteer board, food service management and/or market management.

### Market Manager

Duties include:

- Enforcing market rules
- Mediating disputes between vendors, customers, and the market
- Ensuring the market and vendors adhere to all applicable local, provincial, and federal regulations
- Maintaining market records
- Recruiting and organizing vendors
- Promoting the market publicly
- Coordinating set-up and break down of the market
- Supervising/coordinating volunteers



## SLIDE 11: POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Clearly established vendor rules and regulations help create a positive market experience for everyone by ensuring that vendors understand the purpose of the market, their rights and obligations, food safety requirements, and how disputes are resolved.

**Food safety** is a significant issue for farmers' markets.

### Policies and Procedures



- Vendor Rules and Regulations
  - Fees
  - Table allocation
- Food Safety
- Food Handling
  - Clean, cook, chill, separate
- Insurance
  - Market
  - vendors

- It is important to be aware of provincial and federal food safety regulations, which are generally overseen by the provincial Department of Government Services, Government Service Centres Division. Find Food Safety information at



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[http://www.health.gov.ni.ca/health/publichealth/envhealth/foodsafetyinfo\\_fsrp.html](http://www.health.gov.ni.ca/health/publichealth/envhealth/foodsafetyinfo_fsrp.html)

- Most venues that allow or host the sale or processing of food products require a Food Premises License from the Department of Government Services. This is particularly important for high risk foods, such as those containing meats, cheeses, dairy, eggs, and prepared or processed foods.
- Food that is prepared in a licensed kitchen and served at the market must be kept sufficiently cold (i.e., refrigerated) or sufficiently hot to prevent the growth of harmful bacteria.

Speak to an insurance agent about necessary insurance policies before opening your farmers' market.

### SLIDE 12: VENDOR RECRUITMENT

You will want to ensure adequate representation from two key groups: **farmers** and **other vendors**.

- If possible, start recruiting farmers at least six to eight months before your market opening date, during the winter months, as farmers will have more time to participate in planning during this time. This also gives them time to order seeds and supplies, and plan for the amount and types of crops they will require for the market.
- Forming a Farmer Outreach Committee specifically for this purpose may be helpful in spreading the word about the new market as widely as possible.
- Invite farmers to attend the market for free for their first visit, which will give them a taste of the experience.
- Reach out to large-scale gardeners as well as small-scale farmers.

### Vendor Recruitment

- Determine vendor interest before opening market
- Farmers are difficult to attract – start recruiting 6 to 8 months in advance
- Encourage variety
- Non-farmer vendors include:
  - Arts & Crafts
  - Pottery
  - Jewelry
  - Preserves
  - Baking
  - Prepared food
  - Clothing
  - Beverages



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- Ask for support in promotion from:
  - Department of Natural Resources, Forestry and Agrifoods Agency
  - NL Federation of Agriculture
  - ACORN (Atlantic Canadian Organic Regional Network)
  - NL Horticultural Council
  - Food Security Network of Newfoundland and Labrador

For handicrafts and artwork, it is a good idea to have a craft jury, made up of qualified representatives of the local craft council or other arts organizations to select what to allow at the market, based on uniqueness and quality. These requirements will greatly enhance public perception of your market, and will benefit the artisans themselves as well by inspiring them towards excellence.

### SLIDE 13: MARKET PROMOTION

Since new markets often operate on a limited budget, be sure to consider low-cost and/or free publicity and promotion opportunities available to you before spending money on advertising. These include:

- Sending **public service announcements** out for free to local radio and print publications.
- **Arranging interviews** on cable TV shows or community interest spots.
- Making announcements on **radio call-in shows**.
- **Listing the market** in tourism directories and summer entertainment guides.
- **Distributing flyers** at tourism displays, hotels, B&Bs, and local businesses.
- Asking like-minded organizations to **promote your market** through their email lists, websites, mail-outs, etc.
- Using **social networking** sites such as Facebook and Twitter to build a popularity base.

### Market Promotion



- Public Service Announcements (PSA)
- Cable TV shows
- Radio call-in shows
- Tourism directories and summer entertainment guides
- Flyers
- Facebook and Twitter
- Seasonal events
- Children's events
- Community events

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Another way to promote the market is to host regular special events that will attract media and new customers, and engage the local community. These can include **seasonal events**, **children's events**, and other **community events**.

- **Seasonal events** are an easy way to create a festival atmosphere based on the growing season. Many farmers' markets plan regular events to coincide with the peak season for particular crops. A Strawberry Festival can include strawberry shortcake giveaways and the Corn Festival can host a community corn roast, for example. Pumpkin Festivals can include Halloween costumes and pumpkin carvings. These events have the added benefit of educating the public on the seasonality of local foods at the same time as stimulating media coverage and community interest.
- **Children's events** are a great way to encourage families to attend the market. Families are always looking for places to go on weekends, so making your market a child-friendly space will make it a destination for family outings. Be sure to include activities for children such as face painting and crafts.
- **Community events** can help build partnerships with local organizations and make the market a vibrant community gathering space. There are many opportunities for creating a "buzz" by partnering with other groups. These can include gardening workshops hosted by the local horticultural society, the launch of a healthy eating campaign by a dietitians' association, or cultural events such as dance demonstrations or choral performances.

### SLIDE 14: RUNNING A MARKET

Starting out, it is advisable to start small and build gradually on your success. As mentioned earlier, some markets start out as one-time events, or operate during the harvest period only, and then expand the market during the following year.

- Once established, plan the market season in time with the growing season. Consider

### Running a Market

Market day activities

- Set-up tables, booths, tents, chairs, garbage and recycling
- Signage and posters
- Washrooms clean and well-stocked
- Visitor count
- Collect vendor fees
- Ensure compliance with market regulations
- Market clean-up



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scheduling your opening when your growers have a good variety of produce, especially during your first year, in order to make a positive initial impact.

- It also helps to end on a high note, when produce is still abundant, instead of allowing the market to dwindle as produce availability diminishes.
- If and when your vendors are capable of extending the market season with spring crops and bedding plants in the early season and root crops and preserves in the late fall, you can consider extending the market.

On the slide is a general list of activities that will have to be completed at most markets. These tasks can be done by a market manager and/or volunteers. Volunteers will be essential to the success of your market. Volunteers can be recruited from:

- local service clubs;
- youth groups;
- educational institutions; and
- the general public.

### SLIDE 15: THANK YOU

Thank the audience for participating and take this opportunity to encourage discussions and questions about starting a farmers' market in your community.

You can use FSN's Food Security Initiative Inventory to help you find farmers' markets in your area (see [www.foodsecuritynews.com/resources](http://www.foodsecuritynews.com/resources)).



Thank you!



Food Security Network  
of Newfoundland & Labrador  
Healthy food for all!

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If members of the audience are interested in starting a farmers' market, direct them to FSN's Best Practices Toolkits ([www.foodsecuritynews.com/resources](http://www.foodsecuritynews.com/resources)).

Try to continue the momentum from the presentation by starting an email list or a working group to work on improving your community's food security.

## **FARMERS' MARKETS – SPEAKER'S NOTES**

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Collect any FSN E-News sign-up sheets and return them to FSN, along with any feedback about the presentation.

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i National Farmers' Market Impact Study 2009 Overview, Farmers' Markets Canada, 2008.

<http://www.farmersmarketscanada.ca/Upload/file/FMC%20FINAL%20Brochure%202009-ENG.pdf>