



Local Food Consumption: Establish a Farmers Market

Goal(s)

- The initial goal is to promote existing farmers markets, either in the municipality or its vicinity, to increase attendance and sales at the markets thereby providing benefit to both farmer and consumers. If a farmers market does not already exist in a municipality, a determination should be made as to whether enough interest exists to start a farmers market in the municipality. If it is determined that the municipality can support a farmers market, one should be established and promoted.

Why Important

- Farmers markets provide farmers and local value-added producers an opportunity to increase profitability by selling products to consumers at retail prices. They allow growers to have better control over production and marketing decisions and enable the sale of specialty products.
- For consumers and communities, the markets offer a variety of economic, health and social benefits. Farmers markets can provide economic stimulus to municipalities. They provide an alternative shopping experience that draw people out of their homes and increase interaction with neighbors. Most importantly, farmers markets: increases a consumer's access to fresher, healthier foods; fosters a relationship between the farmer and consumer; and raises the consumer's awareness of the food system.
- Encouraging farmers to accept WIC vouchers, Fruits & Vegetable Vouchers (FVC) and the Farmers Market Nutrition Program enables lower income at risk families to have access to healthier foods.
- This action qualifies as an Action Item for the *Let's Move* program, an SMC Action Item under Health & Wellness.

Who to Involve

- It is important that a municipal representative is committed to promoting and/or establishing a local farmers market. Leadership and support can come from the Green Team, Public Works Department, Parks and Recreation representatives, community non-profit organizations, local Chamber of Commerce or local volunteers. Inclusion of a representative of the county's health department will ensure that the health regulations are understood and being met. The representative can also serve as the liaison with the state's health department.

Timeframe

- Promoting an existing farmers market can take very little time. Surveying a community and organizing a new farmers market can take 6 months – 1 year.

Project Costs and Resource Needs

- Resources to promote an existing farmers market:
 - Staff or volunteer to identify farmers markets in the area and acquire information about operating hours and vendors. The local Chamber of Commerce may be able to provide this information. Consult the Maryland Department of Agriculture's [Farmers Market List](#).
 - Staff or volunteer to keep an updated list of vendors and publicize the market.
- Resources needed to organize and support a new farmers market
 - Staff, volunteer or business partner to serve as the market manager
 - Advertising costs
 - Market event program funding
 - Insurance
 - Market operating costs (site clean-up)
 - Fundraising to secure funding and offset market promotional and operational costs.
- Average costs for starting a farmers market can range from \$4,000 to \$15,000 per season for a mid-size 6-8 vendor market, for items such as insurance, publicity, etc.
- Costs are typically offset by donations and event income, booth rental income and grants secured by the market manager.

What to Do

- Establish a new farmers market
 - Determine the community's needs and interest in a farmers market.
 - Establish a market manager (staff, volunteer or business partner) who will:
 - Find interested farming operations and other value-added vendors to participate (e.g., cheese, honey, soap).
 - Select a market site that is centrally located, easily accessible, well-traveled and highly visible with adequate parking.
 - Publicize the farmers market all season long.
 - Establish procedures for the market:
 - Number of months the market will be open
 - Determine weekly sale day(s) and hours of operation.
 - Establish market by-laws that specify fees, health and insurance requirements; outline product limitations and establish a "not permitted for sale" list; define a method for resolving market disputes.
 - Establish a fee schedule for the rental of space (e.g., stall fee, per day fee, per month fee, seasonal fee) and method to assign space.
 - Ensure all produce is high quality and priced competitively.
 - Seek sponsors and market day underwriters to support special events, entertainment, and cooking demonstrations as well as the general operations.

- Encourage your market to become a part of the [Farmers Market Nutrition Program](#). The Maryland Department of Agriculture administers a federally-funded program which provides low-income women, infants & children and seniors with checks that can be exchanged for eligible foods at farmers' markets and roadside stands.
- Farmers Market Extended Season
 - In an effort to encourage farmers to extend their growing season and to encourage eating locally year round, farmers markets that stay open 3 months longer than the normal season (**June-October**) will be awarded 5 extra points.

Resources

- [Starting a New Farmers Market in Maryland](#), Maryland Department of Agriculture. Guidelines
- [Maryland Business License Information System](#) Maryland Department of Economic and Business Development (information on permits and licenses)
- Maryland Annual Farmers Market Conference. Consult [Maryland's Best Website](#). Held in February 2010 & 2011.
- [Future Harvest- CASA](#) Chesapeake Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture (Future Harvest-CASA) is a network of farmers, agricultural professionals, landowners and consumers living and working in the Chesapeake region. Future Harvest-CASA promotes profitable, environmentally sound and socially acceptable food and farming systems that work to sustain communities.
- [MD Farmers' Market Directory](#) Maryland Department of Agriculture Farmers' Market Directory by county.
- *Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) Resources from Maryland Department of Agriculture.*

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- [FMNP Information](#)
- [2011 Authorized FMNP Farmers Market Criteria](#)
- [FMNP 2011 Application/Agreement](#)
- [FMNP 2011 Rules](#)
- [FMNP and FVC Comparison Chart](#)
- [MD WIC Program Farmer Handbook](#)
- [PowerPoint for FMNP](#)

Spotlight on Maryland

- [The Baltimore County Farmers' Market](#)

- [Takoma Park Farmers Market](#)
- ["Shore Fresh" Farmers Market- Ocean City, MD and Berlin, MD](#)
- [Town of Kensington Farmers Market](#)
- [The Downtown Westminster Farmers Market](#)
- [Chestertown Farmers Market](#)
- [Cheverly Community Market](#)

Submission Requirements

In order to earn points, your submission must meet the following standards:

1. For your municipal government to get points for a farmers market that is run by a nongovernmental organization, your municipal government must clearly demonstrate how it is actively supporting the farmers market. Municipalities can actively support markets by: promoting the market, allowing the market to operate on municipal land, or providing liability insurance, traffic control, garbage control, restrooms, or cash or other in kind donations of municipal staff resources to support the market. Similarly, if your town collaborates with another community to support a farmers market and you are not the host town, you should actively support the market by promoting (website, outreach, advertisements) and/or providing financial support for operating costs or in-kind contributions mentioned above.
2. The Farmers Market must have operated during the most recent June through October growing season. Additional points (5) will be awarded if the farmers market operated at least 3 months longer than the June – October growing season.

Submit the following documentation to verify the action was completed to the above standards.

1. In the text box, please provide a short narrative (300 word max) that describes your farmers' market. Provide information on the market manager, the number and type of vendors, market dates and hours of operation, as well as a summary of the market's operational costs and income. Also describe in detail the support the municipal government provided to the farmers market as outlined in the above standard.
2. Upload File 1: Submit a single pdf document that has examples of market promotional materials, newspaper articles and municipal newsletters that highlight the market, municipal website screen shots, as well as outreach materials for special events and programming hosted at the farmers' market.

IMPORTANT NOTES: Please excerpt relevant information from large documents. Please remember that your submissions will be viewable by the public as part of your certified report.