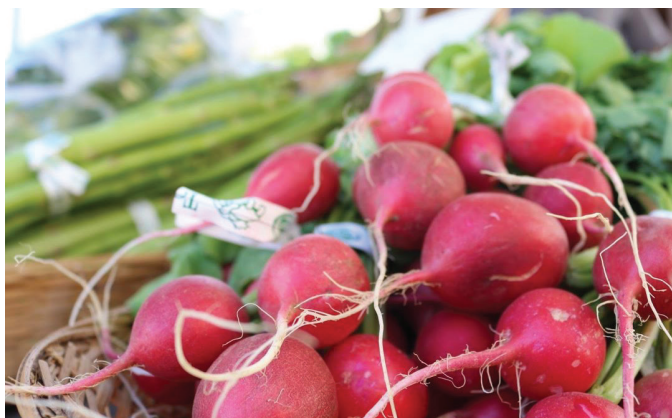


STARTING A FARMERS' MARKET IN MONTANA

2ND EDITION: 2018 UPDATE



NATIONAL CENTER FOR
APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY

Starting a Farmers' Market in Montana

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AERO is a grassroots nonprofit whose mission is to empower communities to nurture and promote a more sustainable Montana. We envision a future where all Montanans have access to clean energy, healthy food, sustainable agriculture, and a network that provides leadership, resources, and advocacy.



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INTRODUCTION

Fresh peas, sweet corn, new potatoes, honey, farm fresh eggs, cut flowers, ranch-raised meats...these are but a few of the treasures that await you when you shop at one of Montana's 70+ different farmers' markets around the state. The popularity of farmers' markets has grown tremendously in recent years, with the number of markets in the United States increasing 92% from 2007 to 2017, according to the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service. This growth trend is mirrored in Montana with 78% growth during that same time period. Farmers' markets play a valuable role in promoting healthy local economies and communities across Montana. Shoppers enjoy the freshness of locally grown foods. Vendors benefit from direct sales to their customers. Money is circulated through the local economy and nearby businesses often benefit from additional traffic on market days. In addition, farmers' markets serve as community centers where community members meet to enjoy shopping in a festive atmosphere.

This manual was developed by AERO, in partnership with the Montana Department of Agriculture, the Community Food and Agriculture Coalition, Nourish the Flathead and the National Center for Appropriate

Technology. It builds upon a manual originally developed in 2007. Acknowledging the diversity of community needs, the manual is not intended as a blueprint of starting a new market, but rather highlights some common strategies that can be employed to build a successful farmers' market. The manual draws on the experience of market organizers around Montana, and features resources that link to sample vendor rules, by-laws, outreach and publicity activities, and many more items that market organizers have generously shared with us. It is our hope that this manual will be a resource to help additional Montana farms, ranches and communities reap the benefits of local farmers' markets.

A special thanks to the following markets for sharing sample materials and photos with us: Butte Farmers' Market, Yellowstone Valley Farmers' Market, Havre Farmer's Market, Red Lodge Farmers' Market, Capitol Square Market, and the Whitefish Farmers' Market.



CHAPTER I:

MARKET PREPARATIONS

Starting a farmers' market in your community is an exciting opportunity. Whether it's a grower looking for an outlet to sell goods, a community member hoping to buy local products, or a community organization hoping to revitalize a downtown, people start markets for many different reasons, and that is what makes farmers' markets so wonderfully diverse. While each market is as different as the community that supports it, there are some common strategies to use to begin organizing a new market.

THIS CHAPTER WILL COVER HOW TO:

- Form a steering committee and define the purpose of your market
- Assess community support
- Hold organizational meetings to attract market supporters
- Identify possible vendors for your market
- Find a location for your market
- Develop a market budget

I. CREATING A STEERING COMMITTEE

Building a core group of market supporters provides strength, stability, and longevity to your efforts. This group of people will help brainstorm ideas, divide tasks, and provide the support necessary to make the market happen. Ideally a committee is composed of people who represent all aspects of the market and provide a mix of perspectives and needs during the planning process. Since this committee will do much of the initial planning for the market, aim for a group of 4-8 individuals. As a committee, one of your first jobs is to determine the purpose or mission of your farmers' market. It may be as simple as providing fresh produce to the community, providing an outlet for local producers to sell, or creating a vibrant downtown environment. Consider the focus of your market and whether you'd like to include the sale of craft items and/or invite organizations to table with information, etc. Whatever your mission, be sure that you clearly and succinctly state why your market exists. For example, the Hamilton Farmers' Market Cooperative states: "The Bitterroot Valley Community Farmers' Market is a cooperative association organized to:



- A. provide for its members – the Valley's Farmers, Growers, Craftspeople and others – an economical place – a Farmers market – for them to sell their products and/or services;
- B. provide a venue where the community and visitors come together and socialize;
- C. stimulate the local economy;
- D. promote awareness about food, nutrition, health, and cooperative values;
- E. educate the public on the benefits of supporting local businesses;
- F. and engage on a cooperative basis in any other lawful trade business or industry authorized by Montana law."

Create a fact sheet about the market that outlines the goals and intentions of the market, potential benefits, and contact information for key people on your committee. The fact sheet can be shared with community members as you build support for the market.

II. ASSESSING COMMUNITY INTEREST AND PRODUCER SUPPORT

A successful farmers' market must have the support and interest of the community. Researching the feasibility of your market will help you understand factors that are working for and against the market in your community. There are three key groups of people to contact when planning a market: the vendors that will sell at your market, the people who will shop at your market, and local businesses, local government and other community stakeholders that will support the market.

Vendors

Talk to farmers, gardeners, and other potential vendors in your community. Questions you might want to ask include:

- 1) Would you be interested in selling at a farmers' market in our town?
- 2) How far would you drive to participate in a farmers' market?
- 3) What would you like to sell?
- 4) When are your products available?
- 5) What are your preferred days of the week? Times of day?
- 6) Do you sell at other markets?
- 7) How involved do you want to be in the organizing/marketing of this market?
- 8) When are other markets happening near you?



If there is a nearby market look closely to see if there is enough producer support for your market. This may be as simple as talking to the manager of the nearby market. They may know of producers that would be interested in selling at a new market. For example, the Missoula Farmers' Market has a waiting list for producers who want to sell at their market. Visit neighboring markets to talk to vendors, but make sure you check with the manager of that market first. It is important to let market managers know that

you are not trying to compete with their market. An excellent resource for cultivating and maintaining positive relationships with vendors can be found at <http://bit.ly/2j4UoVo>.

Community Members

Conversations with community members and assessments of area markets can help to determine preferred locations, hours of operation, and what products people are most interested in buying. Consider putting together a survey to gauge interest in the market. Surveys such as this one <http://bit.ly/2AoEwEP> can be posted on a market website and/or social media account to make it easily accessible. The Dawson County Extension Service collected helpful information about the Glendive Farmers' Market by encouraging attendees at a community event to fill out a survey on preferred market times and what kinds of items people were interested in purchasing. A door prize drawing was offered as an incentive to complete the survey. "We found out that the Friday morning market was difficult for many people to attend, so we added a monthly Saturday morning Farmers' Market and Flea Market," shared Bruce Smith, Dawson County Extension Agent. See the appendix for a copy of the Glendive Questionnaire. This is also a great time to see what kinds of consumers you have in your community. Visit with local grocery stores about their local food options and what customers request regularly. If allowing crafts or nursery items, check with brick and mortar establishments to learn more about buying trends for those products. Check with the local Chamber of Commerce or Small Business Development Center to see what kind of demographic data they have about your community. Census data can prove useful as well, you can access this information at <http://bit.ly/2eN2kf9>.

This type of data can help you build the best market for your community. You might find, for example, that your community has a large percentage of people enrolled in food assistance programs, so participating in a Farmers' Market Nutrition Program or becoming authorized to accept SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) could be beneficial to the market and your community. See Chapter 3 for more on incorporating food assistance programs. At the end of each market season, it's a good idea to collect feedback from vendors and community members to

incorporate for future planning. Here is an example of an end of season customer survey:

<http://bit.ly/2BIO3Mn>.

Business and local government support

Contact local businesses to see if they would support a farmers' market. Do they have any concerns about the market? If so, what are some ways to address them? Often businesses that are located near a farmers' market are concerned that they will have to compete with the market for customers—especially if their business is food related. It is important to address these concerns. Most farmers' markets find that the number of customers visiting surrounding businesses actually increases on market days. One recent study looking at economic impact of local food producers discovered that “for every dollar of sales, direct marketers are generating twice as much economic activity within the region, as compared to producers who are not involved in direct marketing.” The University of California Davis study can be found at <http://sfp.ucdavis.edu/files/238053.pdf>.

“Our local merchants are really pleased to have the market there on Saturday mornings. It brings more people uptown,” says Elizabeth Wogamon, former Butte Farmers' Market Manager. Chambers of Commerce and Downtown Business Associations are often enthusiastic supporters of farmers' markets. “We made an effort to go to all community points of information and scheduled presentations with the city council, county commission, and Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber was very supportive and interested in the farmers' market, and invited us to give progress reports periodically,” related Ann Haggett, a former Dillon Farmers' Market organizer. A local business may be able to offer a central location, or other in-kind support. Local government representatives such as planners, city managers, the mayor, and the parks department can be good contacts for location ideas, and possible funding or in-kind support. The Cut Bank Farmers' Market exemplifies local government investment, the mayor serves as the market manager. Another example is in the City of Lewistown. Their local government sponsors the Lewistown Farmers' Market which is held in a city park, and advertises the market on the radio as a part of their summer parks programs. Local government support of the market will be helpful in obtaining

required permits, particularly if the market's location impacts a city property such as a park or street.

III. HOLDING AN ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

Taking the time to collect feedback from your community should give you a good sense of how to proceed. Assuming the response has been favorable, build on the interest that's been generated by holding an organizational meeting. Invite contacts made during your initial assessment to attend. Opening the process up to the whole community helps ensure a large base of support. Consider posting flyers around town, sending the meeting announcement to local papers, radio stations, church bulletins, social media, and organizational newsletters. The purpose of the first organizational meeting is to explain the market concept, generate support and enthusiasm for the project by highlighting community benefits, and begin forming the market. It also provides an opportunity to troubleshoot potential challenges as a group. A sample agenda for this meeting can be found in the appendix of this manual. A good way to start working on the market is to establish subcommittees to break the work into manageable units. Each committee can research a different aspect of the market and then provide follow-up reports at subsequent meetings. Potential committees might include:

- Grower/vendor recruitment
- Market location
- Publicity
- Fundraising/budget
- Market rules and regulations
- Organizational structure

This first meeting is also a good time to discuss the range of products that could be available at the market, and the level of supply of these products. You may have collected feedback from your community assessment to share with the group indicating what is available and what people are most interested in purchasing. At the close of the meeting be sure to set a date for the next meeting and make sure that each committee has its “homework.”

Annual Market Meetings

Many markets, once established, host an annual spring vendor meeting to plan and evaluate the market. An-

nual meetings provide a chance for vendors to socialize with each other and the organizing committee, and address business of the coming season, such as setting vendor fees, and reviewing market rules. An annual meeting can also be an opportunity to educate vendors on related community programs such as WIC, Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, SNAP, or coordinating donations for the local food bank. See Chapter 3 for more information on food assistance programs. Also, an annual meeting is a great time to plan special events, collect vendor feedback on aspects that would make the market better for them, and collectively brainstorm marketing ideas.



IV. FINDING VENDORS FOR YOUR MARKET

To begin finding vendors, the recruiting committee will want to spend some time considering the kinds of vendors that will be included in the market. Will your market include more than produce? Meats? Baked goods? Crafts? Will the market allow groups such as 4-H clubs and church groups to sell at the market? In Montana, over 90% of the farmers' markets feature crafts, meat, baked goods and food products in addition to produce. There are markets that require

all products to be grown or made within a certain distance of the market and markets that establish ratios of produce vendors to others. The exact mix of vendors can be determined by your market mission statement and by the rules and regulations you establish. As you recruit vendors for your market, keep in mind that vendors will travel farther than your average customer to the market. Invite farmers and other vendors from your extended area. Try not to invite too many vendors from existing markets, unless your market is scheduled at a time when it won't be competing with an existing market. Consider drafting a letter that outlines key market information, such as location, days and hours of operation, general market rules, and product guidelines, to leave with prospective vendors. Highlight any perks or vendor driven considerations such as convenient parking, etc. For sample vendor information you can read through the 'Significant Paperwork' tab of the Hamilton Farmers Market at www.hamiltonfarmersmarket.org. While the best vendor recruitment often happens person to person, some other strategies for identifying vendors include:

- Spread the word on social media accounts
- Use the Abundant Montana Directory (www.abundantmontana.org), the Farm Link website (www.farmlinkmontana.org) and your local extension agents (<https://www.msuetension.org/directory/>)
- Place an ad in local papers or agricultural bulletins
- Send a press release about the market to local media
- Ask a reporter to write a story about the developing market
- Place a Public Service Announcement (PSA) on your local radio station
- Place signs around town and in farm supply stores

Locating and retaining growers to participate can be one of the most difficult parts of establishing a farmers' market. An additional resource for vendor recruitment can be found here <http://bit.ly/2BoVq-CL>. Sources for developing a contact list of potential growers include:

- Alternative Energy Resources Organization (AERO). AERO publishes a statewide directory, Abundant Montana, which contains listings for farms and ranches offering products

directly to the consumer. (www.aeromt.org)

- County Extension Agent Garden Clubs (<https://www.msuxextension.org/directory/>)
- 4-H clubs
- Local nurseries and garden centers
- Food Banks
- Other farmers and gardeners you know
- Directory of Hutterite Colonies in Montana (<http://www.hutterites.org/directory/>)
- The Montana Department of Agriculture's Organic Certification Program, The Made in Montana/Grown in Montana program, (see "Additional Resources" for contact information)

V. LOCATION AND TIMING

Finding a good location for your farmers' market is a critical part of a successful market. The location will, among other things, determine the look and feel of your market, how many customers and vendors attend, and possibly what kind of special events you hold. Farmers' markets around the state have found suitable locations in a wide variety of locations, from downtown streets, to business parking lots, to city parks or plazas. For a complete list of Montana

Farmers' Markets including location, days and times, and months of operation, see the Abundant Montana Directory (www.abundantmontana.org), the Department of Agriculture's site (<http://agr.mt.gov/Farmers-Markets>), or the Department of Commerce site (<http://bit.ly/2hWPHw7>). Identifying a good, central location helps build community synergy around the market. First, find a location that will be the same each week and ideally for years to come. You will want to make sure that the location is available to the market all season long, that way the market will not be displaced on certain days. It is confusing to customers if the market changes from place to place. Second, make sure the location will provide enough room of your current list of vendors, as well as for future vendors that will join. There should be adequate space for vendors to park their trucks by their stalls, or space allocated elsewhere for vendor vehicles. A center aisle between rows of sellers should be a minimum of 10 to 12 feet wide to give plenty of room for customers to shop at the stands on either side of the aisle. Third, consider the ownership of the place when choosing your location. Regardless of where you choose to locate, your market will need to operate according to the rules of the property owner. You



will want to carefully consider whether these rules will work for your market. For example, needing to move your market every week within a city park to protect grass may prove challenging. Additionally, the owner of the property may or may not have liability insurance for accidents occurring on the property. It is critical to determine who will cover the insurance. Your location can be a great way to develop a partnership with a community group or business. The following are desirable in a market location:

- Visible, well traveled
- Easily accessible
- Central location
- Easy pedestrian access
- Easy to describe location (for ads etc.)
- Close to customers (not necessarily the producers)
- Convenient parking
- Streets that can accommodate trucks for set up and takedown
- Cover
- Shade
- Seating for customers
- Level, hard surface
- Good drainage

- Access to water and electricity
- Restrooms
- Lighting for early morning and late evening

Market Timing

Be conservative with your start and end dates. Adding days to the season can show how your market is growing, whereas subtracting days can indicate that the market is not successful. Pick your start and end dates based on when you will have plenty of goods to sell. At least for the first season, it's better to wait until you will have an abundance, rather than trying to get off the ground when only a few products are ready. Try to make your market look as full as possible. Bare market tables at the beginning and end of the season can discourage some customers from returning. Choose days of the week and hours of operation based on when the customer flow will be the largest. As stated earlier, an assessment of potential customers can help identify preferred shopping times. One market, for example, shifted their hours later into the evening on Fridays from 4pm-7pm to draw people in when they would typically be doing their shopping in preparation for the weekend. Weekends can be great times for a market because families and



business people alike are free to attend the market. Some markets have shifted to a weeknight schedule in anticipation of weekend travel by residents. Currently about 40 percent of Montana markets choose to operate only on Saturdays, while the other 60 percent operate on weekdays. Some markets have chosen a time that coincides with another regular community event so that people have several reasons to head to the market. Most markets do not need to have lengthy hours. Vendors like to stay busy, customers like shopping with others, and it is these limited hours that make the market different than the grocery store. Again, keep in mind that it is better to offer fewer hours in the beginning and then add more hours if necessary. Also be aware of other markets and events in the area when you schedule your market. It's a great idea to collaborate with a weekly community event if possible, but only if the event organizers view the partnership as mutually beneficial.

VI. DEVELOPING A MARKET BUDGET

Getting a new market off the ground requires some initial start-up money. Start-up costs can include printing for vendor recruitment and publicizing the market, advertising, signage to guide customers to the market such as banners or sandwich boards, and liability insurance if not provided by the site owner. Depending on the site and property owner specifications,

portable toilets may be required. Below is a budget template from www.smartsheet.com.

There are also budget resources at www.nonprofitaccountingbasics.org, www.farmersmarketcoalition.org, and www.wafarmersmarkettoolkit.org/.

Potential sources for community funding include:

- A sponsoring organization or agency
 - Local government offices, such as the parks or community development department
- Chamber of Commerce (<http://www.montana-chamber.com/>)
- Business sponsorships
- Local foundations
- Private donations
 - Civic Organizations such as Exchange, Lions, and Rotary Clubs
- Farmer Market Promotion Program (<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/fmpp>)

Be sure to visit potential sponsors in person to explain the market, and community benefits the sponsor might receive such as recognition in advertising.

CURRENT BUDGET – GOODS				
Chart Area		\$5,450.00	\$7,020.00	
SUMMARY				
Total Income	\$	7,270.00	\$	7,020.00
Total Expenses	\$	5,023.00	\$	5,450.00
				(427.00)
INCOME				
	BUDGET	ACTUAL	UNDER/OVER	
OPERATING INCOME				
Category 1	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ -	
Category 2	\$ 200.00	\$ 150.00	\$ (50.00)	
Category 3	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ -	
Category 4	\$ 55.00	\$ 20.00	\$ (35.00)	
Category 5	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ -	
Category 6	\$ 300.00	\$ 200.00	\$ (100.00)	
Category 7	\$ 115.00	\$ 50.00	\$ (65.00)	
TOTAL	\$ 7,270.00	\$ 7,020.00		
EXPENSES				
	BUDGET	ACTUAL	UNDER/OVER	
OPERATING EXPENSE				
Accounting & Legal	\$ 2,250.00	\$ 2,250.00	\$ -	
Advertising	\$ 25.00		\$ (25.00)	
Depreciation	\$ 40.00		\$ (40.00)	
Dues & Subscriptions	\$ 44.00		\$ (44.00)	
Insurance	\$ 20.00		\$ (20.00)	
Interest Expense	\$ 15.00		\$ (15.00)	
Maintenance/Improvements			\$ -	
Taxes & Licenses	\$ 29.00		\$ (29.00)	
Telephone			\$ -	
Travel			\$ -	
Utilities			\$ -	
Web Hosting & Domains			\$ -	
	\$ 2,423.00	\$ 2,250.00		
PAYROLL				
Payroll Expenses	\$ 2,600.00	\$ 3,200.00	\$ 600.00	
Salaries & Wages			\$ -	
Contractor Wages			\$ -	
	\$ 2,600.00	\$ 3,200.00		
OFFICE				
Office Supplies			\$ -	
Space Rental			\$ -	
Décor			\$ -	
Machine Rental			\$ -	
Equipment			\$ -	
Postage			\$ -	
Other			\$ -	
	\$ -	\$ -		
ENTERTAINMENT				
Video/DVD/Movies			\$ -	
Concerts/Plays			\$ -	
Sports			\$ -	
Outdoor Recreation			\$ -	
	\$ -	\$ -		
HEALTH				
Health Insurance			\$ -	
Gym Membership			\$ -	
Doctors/Dentist Visits			\$ -	
Medicine/Prescriptions			\$ -	
Veterinarian			\$ -	
Life Insurance			\$ -	
	\$ -	\$ -		
VACATION/HOLIDAY				
Airfare			\$ -	
Accommodations			\$ -	
Food			\$ -	
Souvenirs			\$ -	
Pet Boarding			\$ -	
Rental Car			\$ -	
	\$ -	\$ -		
TOTAL	\$ 5,023.00	\$ 5,450.00		

CHAPTER 2:

MARKET ORGANIZATION

Now that you have many of your market preparations underway, it is time to start looking at the organization of your market.

THIS CHAPTER WILL COVER SEVERAL WAYS TO ORGANIZE YOUR MARKET, INCLUDING:

- Determining your market structure
- Keeping market records
- Establishing market rules
- Stalls and fees
- Duties of a market manager

I. DETERMINING YOUR MARKET STRUCTURE

At some point in your market's development, you will want to decide what sort of management structure to adopt. The structure will dictate many aspects of the market including how decisions are made and who is authorized to make them. It is particularly important to have vendor involvement in this decision because they will be directly affected by the structure. Vendors who have an equal voice in how the market operates tend to be more invested in making the market work and more dedicated to the market's mission.

Voluntary Structure

Most markets, especially during their startup, operate informally with a few key volunteers or a steering committee. There are few if any rules that govern the group and decisions are made by consensus. As the market evolves it can be beneficial to establish a voluntary board to oversee the market. Establishing a board of directors, and developing a set of rules or bylaws provides a roadmap for how the market will operate, clarifies how decisions are made, and helps establish continuity for the market. This structure can also provide something to fall back on if a question or dispute arises in relation to the market. "We decided to organize before some unexpected event happened at the market and we did not have any guidelines to follow," relates Marie Hoyer, former Lewistown Farmers' Market Manager, on the development of their market by-laws. Some Montana Markets operate with a steering committee or volunteer boards. The Dillon

Farmers' Market operates as a nonprofit corporation with a Market Master, a Board of Directors, and an engaged Membership. You can read more about their structure on their website at <http://dillonfarmersmarket.blogspot.com/>. The Red Lodge market is governed by a steering committee that is comprised of a Market Manager, three elected vendor members, one member of the Red Lodge Area Food Partnership Council, and two community members-at-large. More information about their market by laws can be found at <http://bit.ly/2zyAijr>.



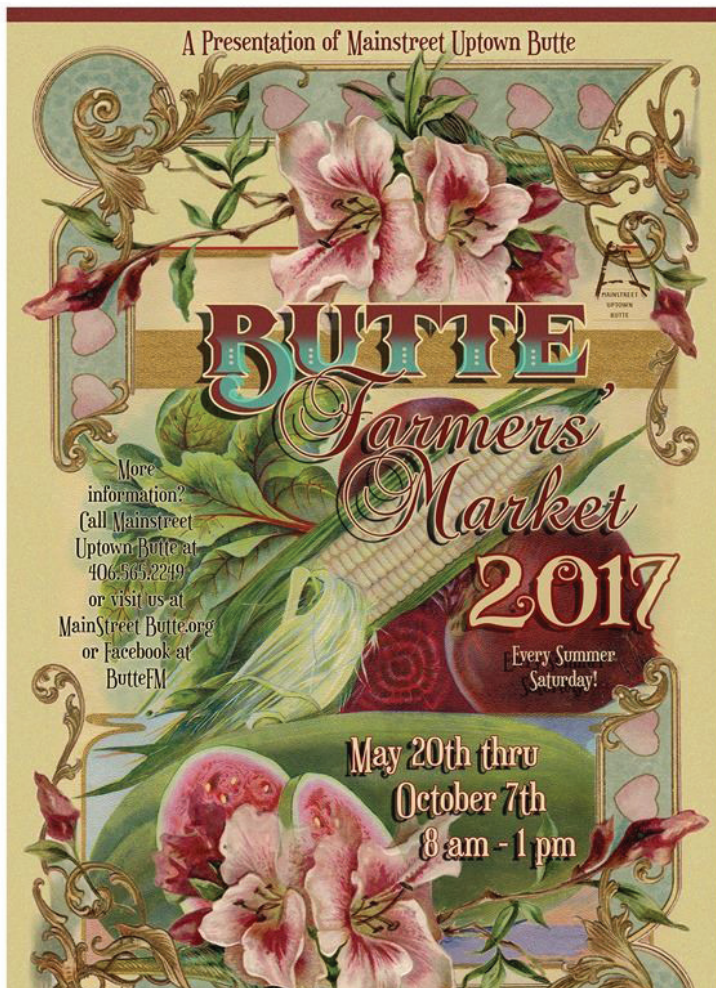
Sponsoring Agency Structure

Some Montana markets operate under the management of another community organization or agency. This can be a successful strategy because the market benefits from the management capabilities and financial assistance of the sponsoring organization. The sponsoring organization may provide funding for a market manager, or the market may be part of the duties of someone in the sponsoring organization. Examples of Montana markets which operate under a sponsoring organization include:

- The Havre Chamber of Commerce oversees the Saturday Market, coordinates publicity efforts, and provides a volunteer market organizer to collect vendor fees, and help with setup.
- The Gallatin Valley Farmers' Market is managed by the Career Transition Community non-profit literacy program, and the market in turn raises money for Career Transition's literacy program.

Non-Profit Structure

Because of the formality of establishing a non-profit and associated filing fees, most markets do not seek to become a non-profit in their startup years, but may find it advantageous as the market evolves. To incorporate your farmers' market as a non-profit organization you must apply to the IRS for nonprofit status (often called 501(c)3 status because of its IRS tax code) and then file Articles of Incorporation with the Montana Secretary of State's Office. Non-profits are governed by a board of directors and follow a set of by-laws developed by the board about how the organization must operate.



Markets in Montana that are incorporated as non-profits include the Helena and Billings markets. Advantages of applying for non-profit status include exemption from federal and state income taxes, and eligibility for charitable tax deductions by contributions as well as for foundation and corporate grants. This organizational structure also limits liability of individuals and instead transfers the liability to the organization.

For more information on applying for non-profit status, visit the Montana Nonprofit Association Website (<http://www.mtnonprofit.org/C3Startup/>).

II. KEEPING MARKET RECORDS

Regardless of how you choose to organize your market, you will want to pay special attention to your market records. These records show how your market has developed, how it is managed, and can serve as a useful evaluation tool as your market grows and matures. Records are especially important for transferring the market's operation over to new volunteers, managers, staff, or board. Important records to keep include: a copy of permission to use site for the market; copy of certificate of insurance; all minutes from farmers' market committee meetings; vendor registration forms which track payment, attendance, and types of product sold. The Farmers Market Coalition website has an abundance of resources available including market insurance information at <http://bit.ly/2k9np62> and vendor registration examples at <http://bit.ly/2ihM-7jX>. The Dillon Farmers' Market posts committee meeting notes on their website regularly.

III. ESTABLISHING MARKET RULES

Market rules are the backbone for your farmers' market. They outline who can sell, what can be sold, when they can sell, and under what terms the selling can take place. Rules create an agreement between the vendor and the market, and they establish rights and responsibilities. When developing market rules be sure to involve the vendors who will be affected by the rules. People are much more willing to follow rules when they have been involved in their creation. Market rules should include the following:

- Your mission statement
- Hours and days of operation, including first and last day of season
- Set up and take down schedule
- Who can sell at the market
- What can be sold
- Vendor responsibilities and guidelines (i.e. appearance of the vendor and booth, safety issues, quality standards, signage requirements)
- Stall fees and assignment procedure

- Guidelines for organic sales- what can and cannot be labeled as organic (see more in chapter 3, section II)
- Disciplinary actions
- Grievance procedure
- General market guidelines (i.e. are pets, skate boards or bicycles allowed, cottage food laws that apply to vendors)

An example of market rules from the Kalispell markets can be found at <http://bit.ly/2kbm7al>. Keep in mind that effective rules should be easy to understand, enforceable, and outline operations in enough detail for the market to function. Market rules will vary in complexity based on the needs of the market. Make sure all vendors receive a copy of the rules before each market season begins to ensure everyone starts the season with the same shared understanding. We suggest requiring your vendors to sign a document acknowledging their understanding of the market rules. As your market grows and evolves, rules can be revised from year to year if necessary.



Who Can Sell

Most Montana farmers' markets feature a range of products including baked goods and crafts in addition to fresh produce, with the emphasis on homegrown, and handmade. The rules you develop for your market should reflect the variety of vendors you hope to attract to your market. Many markets in Montana limit their products to those grown or made within Montana, their respective county, or within a certain radius of the market.

For example, the Yellowstone Valley Farmers' Market requires that produce and food items sold be grown or prepared within a hundred mile radius of Billings. The Ronan market requires that all fruits, vegetables, and foods sold at the market are raised and produced by local growers, and no items imported from outside Western Montana will be offered for resale at the Market. This keeps the market's focus on supporting community vendors, which is part of their mission.

Your committee may want to consider non-local fruit or produce if the product is not available from a local vendor. Typically, non-local vendors are charged a higher rate to reserve stall space than local vendors. Be sure to clearly state any selling requirements in your market rules.

IV. STALL FEES AND ASSIGNMENT

Most farmers' markets establish stall fees that vendors pay to sell at the market. Stall fees are a good way to offset the costs of running the market and are used for advertising, insurance, rent, electricity, restrooms, and other market expenses.

There are several different ways markets assess stall fees:

Annual fees: Vendors pay one fee for the whole season and reserve stall space at the market. The fee can be determined by estimating market expenses for the year. Annual fees that are collected at the beginning of the season can provide start-up dollars for the market to use for early season costs.

Daily fee: Vendors pay a per/day fee to sell, and are assigned space on a first-come first-served basis.

Percentage fee: Vendors pay a small percentage of their sales on the honor system. A percentage fee can be an equitable way to assess stall fees on both large and small vendors. The Whitefish and Columbia Falls Markets ask for 5% of sales and \$1 each week.

Different fees for different types of vendors: For example, the Gallatin Valley Farmers' Market has separate fee structure for produce and non-produce. The Livingston Market has different rates for different booth sizes in addition to nonprofit, out of state, Montana Grown, and WSE-Certified Producers. You can read

more about their rate structure at <http://bit.ly/2i-04h5Z>.

Many markets offer vendors the opportunity to reserve stall space for the season, but accommodate vendors who don't want to participate every week with a daily fee. Other markets establish lower prices early on in the season and then raise prices during peak times. Other considerations include: Will all stalls be the same size? Can vendors rent more than one stall? Can vendors sell out of trucks or should tables be used? Do vendors get the same stall each week or does it change each week? Do some stalls cost more than others?

V. DUTIES OF MARKET MANAGER

A market manager is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the farmers' market. The manager is generally on-site at the market during the entire season and may work during the off season. The market manager's job description depends upon the needs of the market, and if a paid position, the available budget. A recommendation from the Farmers Market Coalition is to compensate a manager based on the market value for the skills they bring to the market and the time they spend making sure the market is a success. A study conducted by Oregon State Extension provides useful data on market labor resources. You can read about it at <http://bit.ly/2BIYAqH> on page eight and nine.

In general, market managers attend to the following on-site duties:

- Present from set-up to close, managing daily market functions
- Resolve conflicts
- Manage booth allocation and payment
- Provide pricing and merchandising help to vendors
- Manage voucher exchange programs for vendors such as SNAP, etc.
- Enforce health and agriculture guidelines and market rules
- Organize the collection and donation of extra food to food banks
- Evaluate the market day/season. Get feedback from customers, volunteers, vendors etc.

Other duties:

- Maintain market records
- Coordinate special events
- Act as liaison between sponsors, board and vendors
- Advertise and promote market
- Recruit new vendors
- Acquire permits and licensing
- Build community relationships

At the end of this manual you will find an example of a market manager job description courtesy of the Farmers Market Federation of New York.





CHAPTER 3: MARKET REGULATIONS

When establishing a farmers' market, it is important to understand local and state laws that pertain to markets. The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) updated their Food and Consumer Safety Farmers' Market Guidelines in April 2017. It covers labeling, non-potentially hazardous foods, specific market requirements, and more. You can find the full publication at <http://bit.ly/2AHxr58>. There are also federally funded nutrition programs your market may want to participate in.

THIS CHAPTER FOCUSES ON THE LEGAL AND LOGISTICAL DETAILS INVOLVING:

- Local Permits
- Licensing
- The Cottage Food Law
- Liability insurance
- Food assistance programs

I. OBTAINING LOCAL PERMITS

County and city laws will outline how a farmers' market may operate in your community. For example, local governments may require that your market hold a "special event" permit to operate. Other permits that may be necessary include a street closure permit if a city street is blocked off for the market, street peddler permits, signage permits, and parking permits. Contact your city or county offices, and fire and police departments to find out what permits are necessary to operate the market.

II. LICENSING

The market manager of municipal and county markets is required to keep registration records of all persons and organizations that serve or sell food at the market, except those that have a DPHHS food license or Cottage Food Registration. The records must include the name, address, and telephone number of the seller or server as well as types of products sold or served and date on which the products were sold or served. The records must be available for the sanitarian to review.

Health and Safety Codes

To learn more about health and safety regulations that apply to farmers markets, contact your county sanitarian. A directory can be found here: <http://bit.ly/2ir-Oq40>. They should be able to help you with these requirements, any county or city specific guidelines, and would be an excellent first contact when starting a market. The following guidelines outline state requirements for food sales at the farmers' markets in Montana. Sections of the Montana Code Annotated applicable to farmers' market health and safety regulations are found here: <http://bit.ly/2BoTDxo>.

Produce: Produce vendors at farmers markets in Montana are required to carry a produce dealer license from the State Department of Agriculture if their gross sales exceed \$25,000 per year, if they are wholesaling produce, or if they are out of state vendors. Contact the Department of Agriculture Produce program manager for any questions about costs or applying at 406-444-5419 or LKrum@mt.gov. Any products that include processing of the vegetables such as canning, cooking, preserving, peeling, dicing, cutting, or other value-adding procedures must be approved through the county sanitarian and licensed by the state health department before being sold to the public.

Baked Goods: Baked goods that are *not* potentially hazardous foods subject to spoilage such as breads, pastries, and cookies may be sold at a farmers' market without a license. Baked goods that require refrigeration (e.g. cream pies, cream filled pastries, cheesecakes and custard pies) are considered potentially hazardous and may not be sold at farmers' markets.



Fruit Preserves: Freezer jams or jellies are not allowed because they require refrigeration storage. Preserved jams, jellies, and some fruit butters that have at least 67% sugar by weight can be sold as cottage foods because of their high sugar content and lower water activity. See non-potentially hazardous foods below.

You can read more about Montana's Cottage Food Law here (<http://bit.ly/2nkpz1Z>).

Meat and Poultry: Meat sellers who have processed their meat in a state inspected facility must then apply to the county sanitarian for a retail meat market license. This is a state license through the Department of Public Health and Human Services, administered through the county sanitarian. Sellers become registered as a "mobile food service facility." Additional licensing may be required by the Department of Livestock, Meat and Poultry Inspection Bureau (<http://liv.mt.gov/>), depending on the situation.

Eggs: Eggs are required to be kept under refrigeration at 45 degrees or cooler, and can not be sold in reused cartons. For more information contact your county sanitarian, or the Montana Department of Livestock, Egg and Dairy Inspection Bureau.

Honey: All beekeepers are required to be registered with the Montana Department of Agriculture. Vendors selling honey directly to customers at a farmers' market or roadside stand are exempt from state licensing requirements.

If sales involve processing, packaging, and distribution to other channels, licensing is required through the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, Food and Consumer Safety Section. See the appendix for contact information.

Non-potentially hazardous foods include:

- Loaf breads, rolls, biscuits, quick breads, and muffins that do not contain meat or cheese
- Cakes—all frostings or glazes must have a cook step or be made with ingredients (such as a large amount of sugar) that when combined are stable at room temperature
- Pastries or scones
- Cookies or pastry bars
- Crackers

- Cereals, trail mixes or granola
 - Nuts and nut mixes
 - Snack mixes
 - Fruit Pies (no custard style pies, unbaked pies with fresh fruit, or pies that require refrigeration after baking, such as pumpkin pie)
 - Dried fruits
- The following fruits can be dried, packaged and sold as well as other fruits that have a pH of 4.6 or lower: Apples, apricots, grapefruit, lemons, limes, mangos, nectarines, oranges, peaches, plums, pomegranates, tangerines, blackberries, blueberries, cherries, cranberries, currants, gooseberries, grapes, raspberries, strawberries and huckleberries.
- Must have a minimum internal food temperature of 160°F within 60 minutes of cutting fruit.
- Must have a minimum internal temperature of 135°F during the entire drying process.
- Cannot be packaged in vacuum, reduced oxygen or modified oxygen packaging
- Jams, jellies and fruit butters made from the following fruits, and contain at least 67% sugar by weight. They cannot contain large chunks of fruit.
 - Fruit butters made with apple, apricot, grape, pear, plum, prune, quince, and combinations of these fruits.
 - Fruit jellies made with apple, apricot, blackberry, black raspberry, boysenberry, cherry, crabapple, cranberry, dewberry, fig, gooseberry, grape, grapefruit, guava, loganberry, orange, peach, pineapple, plum, pomegranate, prickly pear, quince, raspberry, currant, strawberry and youngberry and combinations of these fruits.
 - Fruit preserves and jams made with the same fruits as fruit jellies, as well as blueberry, elderberry, huckleberry, rhubarb, tangerine, nectarine, cranberry and tomato and combinations of these fruits.
 - Recombining and packaging of dry herbs, seasonings, or mixtures (dry soup, teas, coffees, spice seasonings)
 - Popped popcorn, popcorn balls, or cotton candy
 - Fudge, candies or confections that require a cook step and do not require refrigeration after cooking
 - Molded chocolate using commercial chocolate melts



Selling nursery stock: Vendors that sell nursery stock at farmers' markets are required to have a license. These licenses are issued every year and help insure that nurseries comply with state and federal pest quarantines. Licenses are priced based on your gross annual sales.

Operations that sell less than \$1000 annually may apply for fee exemption. Licenses are issued by the Montana Department of Revenue. Inspections are carried out by the Montana Department of Agriculture. Nursery inspectors look for common pests and diseases, for the correct labeling of plants and proof of licensing. See the appendix for contact information.

Selling Organic Products: Many producers choose to grow organically because of the ecological benefits of the production practices and because of the increased sales organic production often brings. Organic certification involves an independent third party that evaluates whether organic production standards have been met. Only USDA-accredited certifying agents may certify producers and handlers.

The Montana Department of Agriculture is one of the approved USDA-accredited certifiers in the state of Montana. Once the department certifies a producer, they may use the USDA Organic seal and/or the Montana Organic seal. Producers whose gross organic agricultural income is \$5000 or less are exempt from organic certification, though they must follow all certification guidelines. If producers choose to sell their product using the term organic they are responsible for knowing and documenting that they are using the USDA Organic Program standards and should be aware that they can be fined if they are marketing their product in violation of national standards.

Producers who are not certified or not following the USDA Organic Program standards cannot label or imply that they are organic, and may not use the national or state organic seals. Visit their website here (<http://bit.ly/2jt4cs2>) for contact information for the Montana Department of Agriculture Organic Certification Program. National Organic Program standards may be found here (<http://bit.ly/1XeLoJa>).

Selling Products by Weight: If vendors are selling products by weight, the scales used must be licensed and inspected annually by the Bureau of Weights

& Measures (<http://bit.ly/2ibNoJo>). The Bureau of Weights & Measures has developed two pamphlets to address questions and concerns regarding the use of scales and proper method of sale of products at farmers' markets: "The Montana Farmers' Market Guide - Method of Sale for Commodities;" (<http://bit.ly/2B-gvd9m>) and "The Montana Farmers' Market Guide: Use of Weighing Devices" (<http://bit.ly/2iVtdfw>).



III. LIABILITY INSURANCE

Farmers' markets, like any other business in our society, should be aware of liability concerns. There are several different ways to address liability at the market.

First, your market rules and regulations should outline what can be sold at the market, and clarify that vendors are responsible for any inspections or licenses required by the county sanitarian or the State of Montana. Second, vendors are encouraged to carry their own liability insurance. This link (<http://bit.ly/2AaeZBi>) takes you to a site that highlights an insurance program that offers liability insurance to food vendors because it can be hard to find an insurance provider that knows farms and farmers markets. Another resource on Farmers' Markets Rules, Regulations and Opportunities can be accessed here: <http://bit.ly/2nb6zEC>. Third, general liability insurance is strongly advised for the whole market to cover accidents that may happen at the market. If your market is located on private or city property it may be covered under the owner's insurance, but be sure to check.

If your market is not covered by the property owner's liability insurance it will be necessary to secure



insurance for the market independently. Other farmers' market masters are good contacts for identifying insurance carriers that will cover farmers' markets.

Many insurance companies are familiar with the idea of what a farmers' market is. The more information you can supply to the insurance agent, the better the chance of being insured at the lowest possible cost. Inquire about policies which allow for an inactive status during the winter months and then are reactivated when the market is in operation during the summer. A written statement with the following information will be helpful to your agent (Idaho Farmers Market Manual: <http://bit.ly/2ACZ2nY>):

- Exact location of market
- Parking conditions
- Cleanup and maintenance plan
- Are stalls permanent or temporary?
- How is the site used when the market is not in operation?
- Is the site covered by another policy?
- What is the condition of all products offered at the market?

- What is the estimated revenue for all sales?
- What is the stall fee per vendor?

The Farmers Market Coalition website has excellent resources for insurance, which you can explore here: <http://bit.ly/2ADAR97>.

IV. INCORPORATING FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Food assistance programs are federally and state funded programs that help low-income people purchase nutritious foods. Several major programs that farmers' markets can participate in include the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, SNAP, and the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP). Participating in a Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs (FMNP) can broaden your market's customer base, increase vendor sales, and improve local food access in your community. In addition to the food assistance program descriptions below, you can find tips and additional resources here: <http://bit.ly/2AsVYKF>.

WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

The Montana WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) is a federal program established to provide fresh, unprepared, locally grown fruits and vegetables to those enrolled in the Women's Infant and Children Program (WIC); and to expand the awareness, use of it, and sales at farmers' markets.

The WIC FMNP is administered through county WIC offices, which oversee promotion of the program, distribution of the FMNP coupons to WIC participants, and the training and monitoring of participating vendors. Farmers/vendors are individually trained. The market master does not help to coordinate the program other than potentially organizing/ hosting a training at the market meeting.



It is important that all coupons are redeemed. If a new market participates and they don't have enough produce for the demand, or if there is low participation in the program, the vouchers may go unused and this will impact state funding as a whole.

Communities that accept WIC FMNP coupons include Flathead WIC, Missoula WIC, Ravalli WIC, Cascade WIC, Lewis & Clark County WIC, Gallatin CO WIC, Riverstone WIC, and Dawson WIC.

Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

The Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) is a federal program to help provide fresh, nutritious, unprepared locally grown fruits, vegetables, and herbs from farmers' markets, roadside stands and community supported agriculture programs to low-income seniors; and to aid in the development of new and additional farmers' markets, roadside stands, and

community support agriculture programs.

The SFMNP is administered locally by a community agency or organization which varies from market to market. Various methods are used to distribute coupons to participating seniors. For example, Lake County SFMNP is hosted and distributed through the Lake County Council on Aging. Participating market vendors must be trained by the state and display a sign identifying that they are authorized vendors, and turn vouchers in to the authorized SFMNP representative at the market, who directly reimburses the vendors.

To improve redemption rates, the SFMNP allows for bulk buying at the end of the season. All unused vouchers after October can be used to buy bulk produce from participating vendors, which is then distributed to seniors who participated during the season. The SFMNP uses the same vendor and market participation guidelines as the WIC FMNP.

Successful Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs

A successful Farmers' Market Nutrition Program takes thought and planning to develop effective outreach to participants. Strong partnerships between the market and the local WIC agency, or organization administering the Senior program are essential.

Currently, there is no additional funding available to expand either the WIC or SFMNP FMNPs to new market communities, however, this could change in the future, so be sure to check in periodically with the organizations that administer these programs.

In response to the lack of funding for new communities to leverage FMNP programs, some organizations, such as Farm Hands- Nourish the Flathead, who assists with nutrition programs at the Whitefish and Columbia Falls markets, have worked to create and independently fund a Senior Coupon program that is unique and fitting to their elderly low-income population. Independent from the state program, the group has fundraised, developed eligibility and redemption requirements, and physical coupons for their program. This unique approach allows for more flexibility in how the program is run and allows the program to be tailored to community needs. To read more about how Farm Hands- Nourish the Flathead organization

has implemented this program, check out page two of the following document <http://bit.ly/2AsVYKF>.

The Bozeman Senior Center, which administers the Senior FMNP for Gallatin County, in partnership with the Gallatin Valley Farmers' Market, has developed a highly successful Senior coupon program. Participating vendors received \$8,200 in the 2017 season from Senior coupons with a 95% redemption rate. Kristi Wetsch, Gallatin Valley Farmers' Market organizer, attributes the success of the program to the Bozeman Senior Center's targeted outreach efforts to make it easy for Seniors to participate. The Senior Center advertises throughout the county that free Senior pro-



duce vouchers are available. Participants can enroll in the program at the Bozeman Senior Center, and Senior Center staff also visit Senior housing complexes to sign people up. In addition to improving access to fresh food, and boosting vendor sales, the program offers a valuable social component. "The Seniors really enjoy the social aspect of the market. They stay and have coffee and visit with friends they haven't seen since last summer," relates Kristi Wetsch.

Components that might help create a welcoming environment for Senior shoppers include:

- Offering free coffee and cookies
- Special parking places close to the market
- Benches in the market to sit down and rest
- Wagons to pull produce (a youth group, student, or scout volunteer project)

- Music to enjoy and chairs to sit in

Working with Local Food Banks

Many possibilities exist for partnering with your local food bank. One option is to coordinate pickup of surplus food at the end of the market to be donated to the food bank.

The Miles City Farmers' Market, for example, hosts monthly food bank collections at the market, where shoppers are encouraged to bring a donation for the local food bank (20).

Accepting SNAP

SNAP is short for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Authorization takes place with the USDA Food and Nutrition Service. While the WIC and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Programs train and authorize individual vendors, SNAP authorization is usually done by the market board or market manager. Accepting SNAP is a great way to provide more revenue for your vendors and provide low income local food access for your community. For more information on farmers market SNAP, see the manual here <http://bit.ly/2AFvzd6>. Technical assistance is available through the National Center for Appropriate Technology to help navigate nutrition programs as needed.



Steps to becoming a market that accepts SNAP:

1. Apply to become a vendor site through <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailer-apply>
2. Purchase a Vendor machine through a merchant service
3. Create a coin or voucher to give SNAP recipients at the market

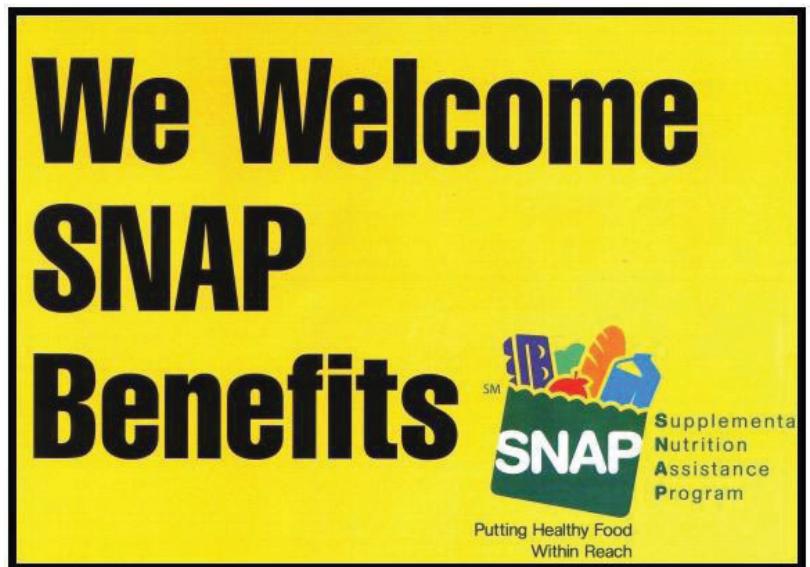
4. Advertise that you accept SNAP
5. Welcome low income families and individuals to your market to purchase local food!

SNAP Incentive Programs

Another successful way to encourage low-income community members to farmers markets is through SNAP incentive programs. There have been many successful efforts across Montana and nationally to incentivize the use of federal nutrition dollars to aid in the purchase of fresh food from local producers. A market may choose to offer a “match” of SNAP benefits. For example, a market may choose to match \$5 or more, of every SNAP dollar that is spent at the market to increase purchasing power of customers.

In western Montana, seven markets in three counties are working together under one SNAP incentive program called Double SNAP Dollars, which is coordinated by the Community Food and Agriculture Coalition in Missoula. In market season 2016, markets in the region saw a 29% increase in local food sales and 600 new SNAP customers, all while infusing over \$100,000 into the local agricultural economy. Other markets have also been successful in implementing their own

independent SNAP incentive programs across the state such as Double Up Bucks. Read more about participating Double Up locations here <http://www.doubledollarsmt.com/locations>.



CHAPTER 4:

ATTRACTING CUSTOMERS

The need to attract customers is something that all farmers' markets share in common.

THIS CHAPTER WILL INTRODUCE IDEAS FOR PROMOTING YOUR MARKET TO ATTRACT THE MOST CUSTOMERS INCLUDING:

- Promoting your market
- Special events



I. PROMOTING YOUR MARKET

Research from across the U.S. has consistently found that marketing and outreach are one of the most important parts of maintaining a successful farmers' market. This section highlights tools that can help you promote your market effectively and efficiently. One of the first steps in bringing customers to your market is making your market an attractive place to shop. Appealing to consumer tastes includes taking into consideration the overall look and feel of the market, as well as the kind of community your market creates. Access to garbage, recycling, and compost bins should be considered when looking at market features. Also, you might want to add decorations to your entrance such as attractive signage, flowers, balloons, vegetable displays, scarecrows, etc.

People come to farmers' markets for the quality of the product, the interaction with the vendors, and the social aspect of shopping at a farmers' market. It is important that everyone presents the highest quality goods. This will bring people back again and again.

- Sell only clean, ripe and fresh produce
- Encourage your vendors to remove bruised produce and keep their product looking fresh all day long, or have an "ugly food" special price to reduce food waste
- Establish guidelines for vendors that will ensure quality products
- Encourage vendors to be friendly and helpful throughout the market

You can help your customers get to know vendors better by profiling vendors in your market newsletter, on a market bulletin board, in local press outlets, or on your social media accounts. For example, the Dillon Tribune ran free weekly profiles of vendors selling at the newly established Dillon Farmers' Market. The profiles included a photo, background information about the vendor and their products, and general market information such as time and location. The Whitefish Farmers Market has attractive sandwich boards that are placed all over town the morning of the market. This alerts tourists and reminds the community each week of the market's time and place.

Attractive stands and color draw people in so put signage, flowers, balloons and other bright, festive decorations at the entrance to your market. Encourage vendors to dress up their stalls with colorful tents or shelters, tablecloths, and signs. Music also helps attract people. You can hire musicians or simply give them permission to play in the market and many will play for free if they can leave a case open for donations. Inviting school bands or choruses to perform is a good way to draw in crowds of parents or other supporters who may be new to the market.

Finally, you should provide excellent customer service at your market. Encourage vendors to share recipe cards and preparation tips for their products. Consider offering help with packages, wagon rentals, or refreshment tents for shoppers. Make your market a community center. Opening your community space to others will help promote good will and encourage new people to come to the market. Establish an in-

formation booth about the market where people can come with questions or find out how to get involved. Invite local organizations to set up tables at the market or hold their fundraiser at the market. Troy Farmer's Market has a cider press that the community can use each week.

One of the most important elements to consider when navigating marketing and outreach for your market is setting realistic goals. For example, if you are a volunteer manager with minimal financial resources for printing and distribution, you might want to focus more of your outreach efforts on web based platforms.

Signs

One of the most effective, low-cost opportunities to bring people to your market is the use of signs. Sandwich board directional signs posted around town on market days are very helpful in publicizing the market. Many towns will hang banners across main street or throughout the town during market season. Posters in local businesses and tourist attractions can advertise special events. Another advertisement opportunity is reader boards for schools, banks and other visible locations. Consider creating market event bookmarks to be distributed at the local library or inserts in shopping bags at partner retailers or restaurant countertops. Most signs and flyers can be created at a low cost and then distributed with volunteer labor.

Creating a market logo for these signs helps build recognition and consumer awareness. You can hold a community contest to design your logo or ask a professional artist to create one. Use your logo on everything the market distributes. From letterhead to t-shirts, aprons and ads, your logo is an effective way to build awareness of your market. As an example, check out the Whitefish Farmers Market website (www.whitefishfarmersmarket.org). This page includes some examples of logos that Montana markets have developed.

Websites

Websites can also be a low cost option for promoting your market. If you find a volunteer with website management skills that is willing to update the website, your only cost can be your web hosting service.



Most farmers' markets have embraced the internet as a means of promoting their market and their vendors, be it through a market related website and/or a social media account. If you do decide to have a market web page, keep the following in mind:

- Post all your critical market information: when, where, time, and rain or shine!
- Update weekly with special events and produce availability, or include recipes, farmer and customer profiles, and gardening tips
- Set up a vendor page with a list of vendors at the market and their contact information
- Get your website listed on search engines, such as the Abundant Montana Directory (www.abundantmontana.org), the Montana Department of Agriculture site (<http://agr.mt.gov/Farmers-Markets>), the Farm Hands map (<http://nourishtheflathead.org/map/>) and the Visit Montana site (<http://bit.ly/2hWPHw7>). This is how people will find you!

Abundant Montana is the most comprehensive online local foods directory in the state. AERO began the Directory in 1999 as a print booklet, and now works online in an interactive, GIS mapping system. The Directory contains nearly 300 listings of farms, ranches, organizations, all our Farmers' Markets, and more that are working to strengthen our local food systems. The directory can be explored with its full listings, or is

searchable by product, region, and activity type. The directory provides free advertising and promotion for all those who submit their listings, and consolidates local food opportunities and agritourism into a single, easy to use source for consumers looking for Montana grown food and experiences.

Social Media

Social media is a great option for marketing and outreach. It is free, easy to use, and has the capacity to reach a wide audience. Farmers' markets across the world are using social media channels to get the word out about not only what's at the market, but related issues such as news and information about the local food movement. Time sensitive updates about your market can be effectively communicated via social media platforms. Time and location posts on Facebook or Twitter can let customers know (or remind them) when and where they can find the market. Instagram can be a great way to share mouth-watering photos of your market products. Social media can also be a great way to give customers ideas about how to use market products by sharing recipes and gift ideas. Some Montana farmers markets already have great social media pages. If you are looking for examples to model your social media after, check out: www.facebook.com/MissoulaFarmersMarket, <https://www.facebook.com/CapitolSquareFarmersMarket/> and www.instagram.com/WhitefishFarmersMarket. The Farmers Market Coalition site has a page of social media posting tips that can be found here <http://bit.ly/2Ag7Jlm>.

Press Releases and Public Service Announcements can also serve as effective advertising strategies. Press releases are essentially a bulletin sent to media outlets that lets them know you have something newsworthy going on at your market. They are a great way to have articles written about your market or to bring the local TV station out to film your special event. A sample press release can be found on page 37 of this manual.

Public Service Announcements (PSA) are free radio and television ads for community activities. They are 10-30 second messages that may announce a special event or simply advertise that the market is open. You'll want your PSA to be short enough to be read out loud and written to the radio station's specifica-



tions. Don't forget to send the announcements to public radio stations as well as commercial stations. Most television stations in Montana use their Community Calendars as their public service announcement venue. It is helpful to create a media list each season, complete with all the reporters that might cover your market. Your press release will be more likely to be accepted if it is directed to an individual. Include on your media list: food, garden, and agricultural newspaper editors; local TV and radio reporters; and state and local agricultural organizations. Other free advertising ideas include:

- Word of mouth. Create a buzz: establish a superior market and word of mouth will help the good word spread fast. Encourage customers to bring a friend or family member next time they visit – you can create promotional campaigns around this theme
- Community events sections: Place a notice in the community sections of newspapers. Many papers have sections dedicated to what is happening in the community each week. Be sure to list your market each week and include any special events or produce that has just come into season. Many community calendars, both in print and online, are usually free to post to, so be sure to list your market on them
- Service Clubs: Visit local community groups to talk about your market. Service clubs (Rotary, Lions, and Elks etc) and senior centers

are always looking for interesting presentations. Create a market slide show and a list of special events and visit these groups

- Letters to the Editor: Write an editorial or letter to the editor for your local newspaper
- Website Listings: Contact AERO, the Montana Department of Agriculture, Travel Montana, and local tourism agencies, and make sure your market is listed on their website and in their publications (you can find contact information for these groups in the "Additional Resources" section of this manual)
- Local Churches/Civic Bulletins: Ask local churches and civic organizations to include a notice about the market in their weekly bulletin or newsletter

Paid Advertising

In general, you can purchase classified or advertising space on social media sites, in newspapers, seasonal publications, and local magazines or you can purchase ads for radio, billboard, and movie screens. To find out about specifications and costs, contact the business with which you wish to advertise. When placing an ad, be sure to ask for discounts. Many businesses will offer a non-profit rate. There are search engine optimization tools on the internet to get your market to show up when people search online for "local food" or "buy local," etc. Many farmers' markets around Montana have developed partnerships with their local paper or radio stations to promote their markets. For example, each week the Havre Chamber of Commerce distributes a newspaper form to vendors, to indicate what they will have at market the following week. Vendors complete the form and submit it to the paper by Wednesday.

Focusing on Marketing and Outreach for SNAP Authorized Markets

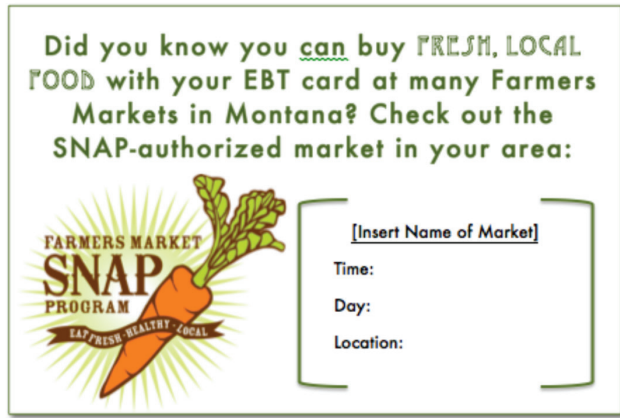
Special attention should be paid to marketing and outreach if your market is one of the growing numbers of markets that are authorized to accept benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). While becoming SNAP authorized is a great first step, it is also essential to do outreach and promotion to make your SNAP program successful. Many SNAP recipients are unaware that they can use their benefits at farmers' markets. A study conduct-

ed in 2016 at the Gallatin Valley Farmers' Market in Bozeman, MT, found that lack of awareness of being able to use SNAP at the farmers market was by far the greatest barrier to SNAP recipient participation at that market. It is likely that lack of awareness is an issue at many other markets in Montana. This study also highlighted a few effective forms of marketing and outreach specific to SNAP recipients:



- Get the word out. Distribute flyers and hand outs to areas that SNAP recipients are more likely to frequent, such as the Office of Public Assistance (OPA), food banks, community resource centers and the public library.
- Advertise specifically for the SNAP program- make sure all outreach materials for your market includes phrases like "We accept SNAP!" and visual recognition pieces like the state SNAP card or the SNAP logo.
- Consider also enrolling your market in an incentive program, which have shown to be successful tools in attracting SNAP customers to farmers markets. The goal of incentive programs is to improve the purchasing power of low-income customers by providing matching "bonus dollars" in the form of additional tokens. Most incentive programs will match up to \$10 worth of tokens, although that amount varies by market at program. Incentive programs are very important in reducing the barrier of cost to SNAP customers. For more information on starting an incentive program at your market, contact Tammy Howard, NCAT Agricultural Specialist (tammyh@ncat.org).
- Take advantage of free resources. There are

a variety flyers and handouts created specifically for SNAP-authorized markets that you can use for free. Simply download the file and your markets information into the designated spaces. There are also a variety of graphics and logos in this guide that can be incorporated into pre-existing marketing materials that you may already have, such as the Farmers Market SNAP Program Logo:



As you can see there is quite a menu of advertising options available for the promotion of your market. Following a well thought out marketing and outreach plan will help make good use of your time while achieving your market goals.

II. EVENTS

Holding events at your farmers' market is a sure way to attract customers. Events serve to entertain your regular patrons and to draw in visitors who may be new customers. Whether they are regularly scheduled or special events, they can be a mechanism for market growth. Some tips to keep in mind when organizing events:

- Hold different types of events to attract different groups in the community. For example, target children at one event and seniors at another
- Hire an event coordinator or designate a volunteer who likes to coordinate special events. Although events are fun they can involve a lot of work and can reflect poorly on the market if they fail
- Keep trying new events! If you've held an event that did not do well, try a different one. It may take some practice to find the kind of event that works best for your community

Since there are almost as many kinds of market events as there are farmers' markets, your options are really endless. A few of the most common event types are outlined on the next page.





Chef in the Market

Invite a local chef to the market to provide a cooking demonstration. Often the chef will shop for ingredients at the market, use these for the cooking demo, and then give shoppers the recipe to the meal that was cooked. Or you could combine the demonstration with a cookbook signing. Having a chef in your market provides great exposure for the chef and their restaurant while teaching market attendees how to use certain produce. Invite different kinds of chefs to attract different customers, and ask your chef to choose a recipe that will be easy for the market's customers to duplicate. With vendor approval, consider sending "in season" flyers to local restaurants so they know what produce is in season. Invite local chefs to a special "Meet the Farmer" time where they can establish buying relationships with vendors. Some markets encourage chefs to attend the market before regular hours to buy produce for the day. This helps promote local foods at a restaurant level.

Contests

Consider holding a contest to draw people to the market. Perennial favorites include baking, gardening, cook-offs, or vegetable art contests. The Miles City market hosts a zucchini car race and pumpkin carving contest each year. Contests can be a great way to involve kids or local celebrities while providing excellent story opportunities for TV and newspaper coverage. Other event examples include:

- Raffles or a weekly drawing for a basket of goods donated by market vendors
- Harvest Festivals with hayrides
- Events centered around holidays (Mother's and Father's Day, Fourth of July, etc.)
- Customer appreciation days
- Opening and closing celebrations
- Children's day

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

I. MONTANA-SPECIFIC RESOURCES

Alternative Energy Resources Organization (AERO)

Mail: PO Box 1558, Helena MT 59624
Office: 302 N Last Chance Gulch, Helena, MT 59601
Phone: (406) 443-7272
Email: aero@aeromt.org
Web: <http://www.aeromt.org>

The mission of AERO is to empower communities to nurture and promote a more sustainable Montana. We envision a future where all Montanans have access to clean energy, healthy food, sustainable agriculture, and a network that provides leadership, resources, and advocacy. Resources include:

- Abundant Montana, AERO's Directory to Sustainably Grown Montana Food
- Farmers' Markets, Enriching Communities Across Montana, a survey study of twenty farmers' markets across the state
- Montana's first Agritourism Manual at www.aeromt.org/agritourism

National Center for Appropriate Technology

3040 Continental Dr, Butte, MT 59701
Phone: 406-494-8683
Email: Tammyh@ncat.org

NCAT provides technical assistance on starting a SNAP program and general assistance with farmers markets. They have formed a farmers market network in the state and robust training materials and resources for Montana.

Community Food and Agriculture Coalition

Mail: P.O. Box 7025, Missoula, MT 59807
Office: 328 E Main, Missoula - feel free to stop by!
Phone: 406-926-1004
Email: cfacinfo@missoulacfac.org
Web: <http://www.missoulacfac.org/>

CFAC envisions a future where houses, farms, and ranches thrive; people are well-fed and food secure; family farms are sustainable, successful, and support-

ed within a community food system; and farmers and ranchers can access the land they need.

The Montana Food and Agriculture Development Centers (FADCs)

There are four regional centers available to assist you, please contact your nearest center.

Bear Paw Development Corporation
Taylor Lyon, FADC Director
48 2nd Avenue, PO BOX 170 Havre, MT 59501
Phone: 406 265-9226 Email: tlyon@bearpaw.org

Beartooth RC&D
Joel Bertolino, FADC Director
128 South Main Street, PO BOX 180 Joliet, MT 59041
Phone: 406 962-3914
Email: jbortolino@beartooth.org

Great Falls Montana Development Authority
Eric Bergman, FADC Director
300 Central Ave. Suite 406
PO Box 949, Great Falls, MT 59403
Phone: 406-750-3285
Email: ebergman@GFdevelopment.org

Lake County Community Development Corporation
Jan Tusick, FADC Director
405 Main Street SW
Ronan, MT 59864
Phone: 406 676-5901
Email: jan.tusick@lakecountycdc.org

Montana Cooperative Development Center, Inc.
Janice Brown, Director
P.O. Box 3027
Great Falls, MT 59403
Phone: 406-727-1517

Services of the FADCs and the MCDC include:

- Project planning and facilitation
- Legal document assistance
- Prefeasibility study and market analysis
- Capitalization strategies
- Professional referrals
- Grant writing assistance



Montana Department of Agriculture

Agriculture Development Division
Agriculture Marketing And Business Development
Bureau
P.O. Box 200201
Helena, MT 59620
(406) 444-5425
agr@mt.gov
<http://agr.mt.gov/>

Resources include:

- A list of farmers' markets around the state, including additional farmers' market resources on the department website
- "Grown in Montana" marketing resources to help identify Montana products
- Montana Growth Through Agriculture Program administers a quarterly grant program to assist in the development of new agricultural products and processes.

Organic Certification Program Field Services Bureau/Agriculture Sciences Division

P.O. Box 200201
Helena, MT 59601-0201
(406) 444-3730
<http://agr.mt.gov/Organic-Program>

Montana State University Extension

Extension Personnel
220 Culbertson Hall, MS
P.O. Box 172230
Bozeman, MT 58717-2230
(406) 994-1750
<http://www.msuextension.org/>

Visit the MSU Extension Website for contact information for county extension agents, publications, and programs. Farmers' market related resources include: Starting a Specialty Food business: Knowing what questions to ask and where to find the answers. Running a specialty food business may be a profitable venture for Montana's farmers and entrepreneurs, but getting started can be a challenge.

Montana Office of Tourism & Business Development Industry Services & Outreach Bureau

301 South Park
P.O. Box 200533
Helena, MT 59620-0133
406-841-2870
Marketmontana.com, MadeinMontanaUSA.com

Their efforts focus on helping the state's communities and businesses utilize tourism as a tool to improve the local, regional and state economy while protecting

or improving the quality of life for Montana's residents through education and grants. This program supports Farmer's Markets and agritourism opportunities through the Made in Montana program, which also includes the Grown in Montana logo, and by promotion of events through destination visitor websites and social media.

II. NATIONAL RESOURCES

Farmers Market Coalition

P.O. Box 499
Kimberton, PA 19442
888-FMC-8177
<https://farmersmarketcoalition.org/>

The Farmers Market Coalition is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to strengthening farmers markets across the United States so that they can serve as community assets while providing real income opportunities for farmers.

United States Department of Agriculture Agricultural Marketing Service , Local Food Research and Development

1400 Independence Ave., SW. Room 2646 - S, Stop
0269 Washington, DC 20250-0269
(202) 690-8326
<http://www.ams.usda.gov/services/local-regional>

The USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) offers many resources for farmers' markets including facts and figures, a national list of markets, and marketing information.

Appropriate Technology Transfer to Rural Areas (ATTRA) National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT)

3040 Continental Dr.
P.O. Box 3838
Butte, Montana 59702
1-800-346-9140
<http://attra.ncat.org>

ATTRA National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service, funded by the USDA, is managed by the Montana-based National Center for Appropriate



Technology. With offices in Butte, as well as Fayetteville AR, Jackson MS, Keene NH, San Antonio TX and Davis CA, NCAT provides information and other technical assistance to farmers, ranchers, Extension Agents, educators, and others involved in sustainable agriculture in the United States. The National Sustainable Agriculture Information Services website features many resources for farmers' markets and small farms. **FoodRoutes Network (FRN)**

P.O. Box 443
Millheim, PA 16854
(814) 571-8319
info@foodroutes.org
<http://www.foodroutes.org>

The FoodRoutes Network (FRN) is a national nonprofit organization that provides communication tools, technical support, networking and information resources to organizations nationwide that are working to rebuild local, community based food systems. FRN is dedication to reintroducing Americans to their food--the seeds it grows from, the farmers who produce it, and the routes that carry it from the fields to their tables.

National Association of Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs (NAFMNP)
P.O. Box 9080
Alexandria, VA 22304
(703) 837-0451
pdarby@comcast.net
<http://www.nafmnp.org>

NAFMNP works to cultivate opportunities for consumers to buy fresh produce from local growers. It publishes yearly evaluations of the FMNP and advocates for adequate funding of FMNP.

Northeast-Midwest Institute: Resources for Farmers' Markets

50 F Street, N.W. Suite 950
Washington, DC 20001
202-464-4014
<https://www.nhc.fns.usda.gov/nhc/86266ahance@nemw.org>

The Northeast-Midwest Institute is an online resource guide to programs and foundations that support U.S. farmers' markets. This guide is an excellent source for farmers' market development and expansion. The Federal Funding section is particularly rich with options.

Michigan Farmers' Market Association

480 Wilson Rd, Room 172
East Lansing, MI 48824
517-432-3381
<http://mifma.org/>
The Michigan Farmers Market Association works with and for farmers market organizers, managers, farmers, vendors and friends to create a thriving marketplace for local food and farm products.

USDA, Rural Information Center

National Agricultural Library 10301 Baltimore Ave.,
Room 304 Beltsville, MD 20705-2351
(800) 633-7701
email: ric@nal.usda.gov
<http://www.nal.usda.gov/ric/>

The Rural Information Center provides information and publications on funding resources for small farms and businesses.

***USDA Farmer Direct Marketing
Alternative Farming Systems Information Center
National Agricultural Library***

U.S. Department of Agriculture
10301 Baltimore Avenue, Room 123
Beltsville, MD 20705
(301) 504-6559
Marketing Services Branch - USDA 1400 Independence Ave., S.W. Room 2646 - S, Stop 0269 Washington, DC 20250-0269
(202) 720-8317
Errol.Bragg@usda.gov
<http://www.ams.usda.gov/directmarketing/index.htm>
<https://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/direct-marketing>

The USDA Farmer Direct Marketing services include many publications helpful for marketing your farm or market as well as links to other direct marketing resources on the Internet.

III. PUBLICATIONS

The New Farmers' Market: Farm-Fresh Ideas for Producers, Managers, and Communities. By Vance Corum, Marcie Rosenzweig, and Eric Gibson. New World Publishing. This book offers advice on the best products to grow and sell; display ideas; setting prices and doing business; best merchandising tips; best selling ideas; managing and promoting the market; setting up an Internet web site; key market issues and challenges; planning and starting a market; legal advice and dealing with rules and regulations; getting community support for your market; farmers' market resources, and more.

Dynamic Farmers' Marketing: A Guide to Successfully Selling Your Farmers' Market Products by Jeff Ishee. Bittersweet Farmstead. This book, written by a market gardener/ writer/ radio farm show host, will help producers, vendors, market masters and market planners to learn the secrets of having a successful and dynamic farmers' market experience. Highlights include group dynamics/farmers' market organization, face to face with Mr. & Mrs. Customer, visual displays that draw a crowd, products that customers want, and increasing demand for local farm products.

Grassroots Marketing: Getting Noticed in a Noisy World by Shel Horwitz. New World Publishing. This book covers creating an image, how to write ad copy and press releases, tricks of the printing trade to save money on brochures, ads, direct mail, selling on the Internet, working with the media, and more.

APPENDICES

Sample Farmers Market Questionnaire

1. I would prefer to shop at the Farmers Market on:

- ☐ Monday
- ☐ Tuesday
- ☐ Wednesday
- ☐ Thursday
- ☐ Friday
- ☐ Saturday
- ☐ Sunday

2. My preferred shopping hours would be:

- ☐ Before noon
- ☐ Noon - 5pm
- ☐ After 5pm

3. Products I would like to see at a Farmers Market include:

- ☐ Breads
- ☐ Cakes and Pies
- ☐ Fresh Ground Flour
- ☐ Pasta
- ☐ Cut flowers
- ☐ Bedding plants
- ☐ Trees and shrubs
- ☐ Pickles/sauerkraut
- ☐ Jams and Jellies
- ☐ Coffee/Tea/Hot Chocolate
- ☐ Medicinal Herbs
- ☐ Culinary Herbs
- ☐ Craft items
- ☐ Firewood
- ☐ Other: _____

4. I am

Male _____ Female _____

5. I am between the ages of:

- ☐ 15-25
- ☐ 26-35
- ☐ 36-45
- ☐ 46-55
- ☐ 56-65
- ☐ 66 on up

Sample Meeting Agenda

- I. Introduction of Speakers/Guest
 - A. Organizers
 - B. Speakers
 - C. Guests
- II. General Explanation of the Market
 - A. Purpose
 - B. Advantages to vendors
 - C. Advantages to shoppers
 - D. Advantages to local businesses, and the community
- III. Next Steps
 - A. Establishes committees such as:
 - 1. Grower/vendor recruitment
 - 2. Market location
 - 3. Publicity
 - 4. Fundraising
 - 5. Market rules and regulations
 - B. Discuss range of products that might be available and level of supply
 - C. Discuss organizational form
- IV. Next Meeting
 - A. Make a date for next meeting in 1-2 weeks
 - B. Expect preliminary reports from committees

Sample Sponsorship Letter

Dear _____ -

I would like to introduce the Yellowstone Valley Farmers' Market. The YVFM is an outdoor market that was started in 1986 with the purpose of bringing fresh, local produce and unique prepared foods to the community and its visitors. The market has grown from its humble beginnings to become the social event of the summer. We are located in the heart of downtown at the intersection of N. Broadway and 2nd Ave N. under the Skypoint. The market is continuing to grow and expand; this year we are adding a fifth block of vendors on N. 29th Street. The market will be in operation on Saturdays from 8:30am-noon starting July 19th and ending October 4th.

The Yellowstone Valley Farmers' Market has opening for weekly exclusive, weekly co-sponsors, and weekly quarter sponsors this year; I am inviting _____ to fill one of these positions this season. What a great way for you to grab the attention of thousands of potential customers and support an important community event at the same time.

Enclosed are a sponsorship level sheet and a contract. Thank you for considering supporting the Yellowstone Valley Farmers' Market.

Sincerely,

Sample Press Release

For Immediate Release

Contact: (Insert contact name, number, email here)

Press Release Template: Farmers' Market Opening Day

It's summertime, and what is more exciting than the prospect of fresh local produce provided by your nearby farmers' market? This season, don't forget to buy your produce and goods at (name of market).

Starting on (opening date of market), you can find (name of market) at (location of market) every (dates and times of market) through (end date of market).

The (name of the market) is not only a great place to purchase local produce and goods, but it is a place to enjoy the day with family and friends. This year, to celebrate our Opening Day, we will be (list and special activities going on at opening day).

This season, all sorts of wonderful things will be offered at the market! Things like (list one special food and one special non-food item) will be sold and who better to buy them from than your own community members?

There's no better way to strengthen your local community than to shop and eat locally! By visiting the (name of market), you support our local farmers as well as businesses and community members. Also, you support yourself by providing healthy and fresh food for you and your family.

(Optional paragraph if your market accepts EBT/Debit cards) We also accept EBT and Debit cards! If you have any questions about how to use your EBT or Debit card at the market, please contact (market contact person with email and number).

Include a couple photos of your market

Sample Market Manager Job Description

The Market Manager is a part time position with primary responsibility being the day-to-day operation of the farmers market. This will include an on-site presence at the market during all market hours, as well as off-site work during non-market hours. The manager will report to a market committee, who will set all market policy. In addition, the manager will represent the market to the market's vendors, the consumers, and to the community.

Duties—in season • Enroll farmers/vendors in the market—either through seasonal vendor agreements or as daily vendors • Collect all stall fees owed, make accurate accounting, and deposit in market account • Arrive prior to market vendors arriving and remain throughout the market day to: • Properly place vendors in stalls, including assigning market stalls to daily vendors • Place market signs, parking signs • Ensure all rules and regulations are adhered to • Ensure all state and county regulations are adhered to • Answer questions for vendors and consumers • Resolve disputes that arise • Maintain market grounds in a safe manner • Operate market manager's booth • Have nutritional education materials to distribute • Have recipes for seasonal, local foods that are available in the market • Operate market's EBT program • Enroll market and market farmers in the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) • Act as liaison to the market's governing body, providing accounting and performance reports • Communicate market policies, activities, and rules to farmers, keeping them informed throughout the season • Bring suggestions from farmers back to the market board/committee • Solicit entertainment for market days, as well as sponsors for the entertainment • Conduct periodic customer counts each market day to assess the level of growth in market usage • Assure the market site is clean once the market is closed and the vendors have left for the day • Maintain database of farmers, vendors, their contact information, and any licenses or permits each vendor possesses based on the products they are selling • Conduct farm inspections

Duties—off season • Vendor recruitment • Professional development for market managers • Community relationship development • Fundraising • Advertising/ promotional program development, including special events planning • Work with market board/committee to plan for market growth and development • Preparations of site for next season, including securing location, site permits, market insurance, ensure that any maintenance or repairs needed to site are made, secure bathrooms, set market schedule, organize volunteers

Qualifications • Ability to think creatively • People person with skills in diplomacy • Dispute resolution skills • Good communication skills • Organizational skills • Marketing skills helpful • Some financial knowledge helpful: i.e., budgeting • Self-motivated • Passionate about the community and local agriculture

