

NEBRASKA

RURAL

FARMERS MARKET

HANDBOOK



Advice & Inspiration For Nebraska's

FARMERS MARKETS



The Nebraska Farmers Market Manager Handbook brings together ideas, inspiration, and insight from farmers markets across Nebraska. It is the culmination of research, hands-on experience, and interviews with market managers, vendors, and professionals.

There are a variety of market manager manuals and handbooks published at a state and local level across the nation. They are valuable resources no matter what state a manager resides in. With the ease of online searching, these manuals can benefit managers at all skill levels. For this Nebraska handbook, the project team combined broad best practices with ideas and encouragement from real Nebraska farmers market managers. We modelled this handbook after the Iowa Valley RC&D Iowa Farmers Market Toolkit.

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Disclaimer: The information provided in this Toolkit is for educational purposes to assist farmers market management in improving their market operations. This material is not intended, and should not be used, as a substitute or replacement for individual legal, financial, or actuarial advice. Each market organization should consult a relevant professional advisor when making business decisions as appropriate.

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FARMERS MARKET?



The USDA defines a farmers market as, "a multi-stall market at which farmer-producers sell agricultural products directly to the general public at a central or fixed location, particularly fresh fruits and vegetables (but also meat products, dairy products, and/or grains)."

Today, farmers markets often include prepared food, arts and crafts, cut flowers, baked goods, and handcrafted items. In addition, **they act as an important gathering place for the community.**

A RENAISSANCE

THE HISTORY OF FARMERS MARKETS

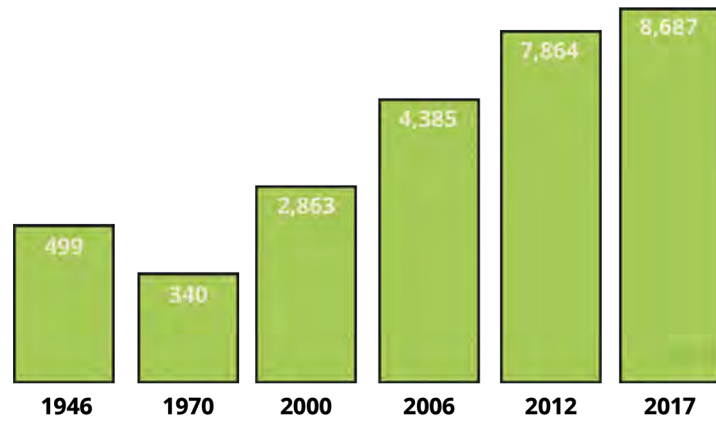
Humans have been selling and purchasing farm-fresh food (and more) at markets for thousands of years. In North America, Indigenous peoples established vast trading networks, exchanging food and other goods with European traders and neighboring tribes, setting the stage for permanent markets.

The first recorded farmers market in the United States opened in 1634 in Boston, Massachusetts. Others soon followed in the surrounding colonies. The Easton Farmers Market in Easton, Pennsylvania has been in operation since 1752—claiming the title of “America’s longest continuous running open-air market.” In 20th century America, farmers markets saw dramatic growth during the Great Depression, but started to decline after World War II as grocery stores became more commonplace and convenient. In the 1980s, interest in farmers markets picked up again.

The rise and fall of farmers markets reflects, in part, changes in economic conditions, consumer preferences,

and national policy. Today, there’s growing interest in “local”—preserving local farmland, protecting the livelihood of local growers, and diversifying local economies—as well as farm workers’ rights, food safety, and training the next generation of farmers. Farmers markets can play a prominent role in this new food landscape.

National Count Of Farmers Market Directory Listings



Farmers Markets Throughout American History

1600s

1600s: “**Street markets**” are so commonplace that markets aren’t given specific names—nobody pays much attention to one being established.

1634: The **first farmers market** establishment formally recorded in the English colonies is in Boston by order of Governor John Winthrop.

Late 1800s: Pattern of **declining importance** of city produce markets as transportation improves, cities grow, and agriculture becomes specialized.

1900s

Early 1900s: Most cities with **30,000+ residents** sponsor municipal markets.

1913: **USDA Office of Public Markets** is established.

1914: **USDA Cooperative Extension Service** is established.

1916: The **first self-service grocery store** opens in Memphis, Tennessee. This is the first time customers select items directly off the shelf instead of asking the store clerk for items behind the counter.

Mid 1900s: **Rise in markets across the country** as families seek extra income and self-sufficiency.

1940s

1946: Four economists with the USDA identify **499 farmers markets** in the United States.

1948: Farmers markets of all classes account for sales of **less than 10% of the total fruit and vegetable production** in the United States. Markets are formally defined as “Places where farmers congregate to sell their own products.”

1950s

1950s: Better roads, western irrigation infrastructure, and refrigeration usher in **supermarkets and wholesalers**, leaving many small farms and markets out of the food system.

1970: Estimates at the national level log only about **340 farmers markets** across the country, many populated by resellers—not farmers—and many on the verge of collapse.

1970s

1975: U.S. House Resolution 2458: Defines a Farmers Market as “Any marketplace where at least ten **farmers congregate for the purpose of selling their agricultural commodities directly to consumers** in a manner designed to lower the cost of food for the consumers while providing an increased income to the farmers.”

1990s

1996: USDA defines a farmers market as “a common facility or area where several **farmers/growers gather** on a regular, recurring basis to sell a variety of fresh fruit and vegetables and other farm products directly to consumers.”

2000+

2000: More than **\$888 Million in sales** recorded at 2,863 U.S. farmers markets.

2006: **USDA’s Farmers Market Promotion Program grant began receiving funding.** This competitive grant program awards about 11 million dollars per year to eligible projects that assist in the development, improvement, and expansion of domestic direct to consumer outlets like farmers’ markets.

2020: Farmers markets **adjust to COVID-19 pandemic, providing critical access to fresh foods.**

NEBRASKA TODAY

ROOM TO GROW

MARKET TRENDS AT A GLANCE

NEBRASKA HAS ROUGHLY

1 MARKET PER 19,191 PEOPLE.

NE Dept of Ag, 2020

BETWEEN 2000-2020, A

154% INCREASE

IN THE NUMBER OF FARMERS MARKETS IN NE

NE Dept of Ag, 2020

85%* OF NE'S FARMERS MARKETS ARE IN

RURAL AREAS

60%* OF NE'S RURAL FARMERS MARKETS HAVE

NO FORMAL STATUS/STRUCTURE (LLC, NON-PROFIT, ETC.)

35%* OF NE'S RURAL FARMERS MARKETS ARE

501(c)3 NON-PROFITS

66%* OF NE'S RURAL FARMERS MARKETS HAVE

LESS THAN 10 VENDORS ON A TYPICAL DAY

42%* OF NE'S RURAL FARMERS MARKETS PROCESS

CREDIT CARDS

*Of those surveyed, from a Spring 2020 rural farmers market manager survey, done by FMPP project partners.

With Nebraska's rich agricultural resources, entrepreneurial spirit, and community connections, farmers markets have grown and multiplied across the state—in towns of all sizes—in recent decades.

LINCOLN'S HAYMARKET

Lincoln's Haymarket was home to a farmers market predecessor in Nebraska beginning in 1867. The "Market Square" was deeded to the City of Lincoln in that year as a place for the public to buy hay and produce. Soon after, the Market Square came into competition with indoor grocery stores, which could remain open year-round and which sold staples such as canned goods.

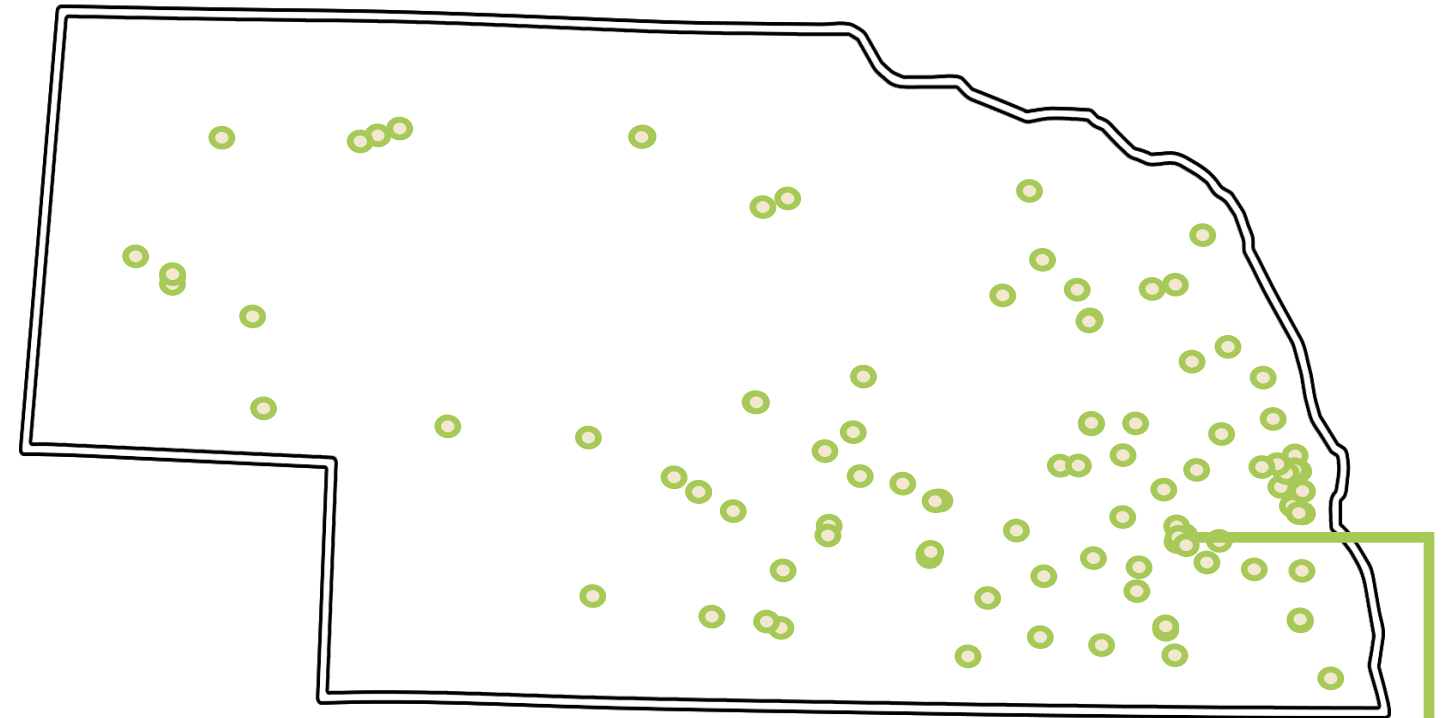
In the 1890s, truck farms arrived on the scene, selling produce in open air markets as well as delivering to grocery stores. These enjoyed peak popularity until the 1920s, when the ubiquity of the automobile put a premium on parking space and drove the truck vendors from the square, as well as minimized the need for hay for horses. The Haymarket square was replaced with a filling station.

Some murmurings were heard in the 1960s in favor of bringing back the open air markets, most likely due to the nation's growing interest in all-natural "health food." But farmers markets achieved their most lasting and indelible impression on the landscape beginning in the 1990s, and they have continued to this day, providing generations of Nebraskans with quality fresh, local ingredients for their tables.

For more information about operating as a registered market, check out **Chapter 3: Planning Your Farmers Market.**

SNAPSHOT OF NEBRASKA'S FARMERS MARKETS

As of 2022, there are 93 operating farmers markets across the state of Nebraska. The Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA) maintains a public database of farmers markets. To add your farmers market to the database, contact the Ag Promotion and Development program at NDA at 402-471-4876 or ne.gov/go/neproduce



MARKET MANAGER?



The market manager **sets the tone and represents the market** both internally to vendors and externally to shoppers and market stakeholders.

The Role of the

MARKET MANAGER

THE FACE OF THE MARKET & SO MUCH MORE!

MARKET MANAGER RESPONSIBILITIES

Market managers are responsible for all aspects of market operations during the season and the main contact for customers, vendors, volunteers, health inspectors, police, city transportation, sponsors, media and more. Responsibilities often include managing vendor relationships, coordinating setup and tear-down, promoting the market, operating the SNAP program (if applicable), answering customer or vendor questions, and assisting with the market's special events.

Market managers may be paid employees or they may be volunteers. Their job descriptions may be very specific or very informal. Regardless of their official position and job description, their actual responsibilities are likely to be similar.



Market Manager Job Description

The market manager must be reliable, self-motivated, and have good communication and customer service skills. The ideal candidate will be an enthusiastic advocate of the local food movement. Specific responsibilities will be determined by the needs of the customers, market partners, and market vendors. Generally, the market manager is responsible for the following activities:

MARKET OPERATIONS

- Arrive at market 2 hours before opening to coordinate setup
- Stay at market until all vendors have left (usually no more than 1 hour after)
- Set up welcome booth tent, table, and display
- Place directional signs promoting the market around the community at key locations prior to opening on each market day; remove at the close of market
- Coordinate vendor parking/setup to ensure vendors are in the correct space
- Staff the welcome booth, provide information to customers and help run the EBT/credit card machine

GENERAL MARKET SUPPORT

- Develop and maintain good relationships with staff, interns, vendors, customers, and the community
- Assist vendors, community representatives, and customers by providing market-related information, conflict resolution, and general aid as appropriate
- Enforce market rules
- Vendor recruitment
- Occasionally assist vendors by providing limited setup help and brief personal breaks and by assisting vendors with sales during especially busy times

OUTREACH & MARKETING

- Work with partners to promote the market through social media, e-newsletters, and community outreach
- Assist with development and coordination of special events

REQUIREMENTS

- Available during all market hours during the season
- Willing and able to work outside in all weather conditions
- Safely able to lift and carry at least 50 pounds



Whose Market

IS IT, ANYWAYS?

EXPLORE TYPES OF MARKET MANAGER POSITIONS

Farmers market manager positions vary. Larger, urban markets might employ a full-time, year-round director, while many smaller markets rely on an unpaid, part-time, seasonal volunteer or paid seasonal employee or contractor. And there are many possibilities in between.

For some managers, the market is the main focus of their job. For others, it's one of several responsibilities. Market managers may be employed by the market

itself or contracted through a university program, chamber of commerce, city government or economic development agency.

While there's no one-size-fits-all approach for market managers, there's likely someone else in the state who can relate to your situation. Connecting with fellow managers in similar -- and different! -- situations may be beneficial for you.



Let's Meet Some Market Managers!

This handbook includes stories, insight, and advice from all types of manager positions. Here are some of the managers you'll hear from:

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR ROLE AS MARKET MANAGER?



CHERYL AVERILL

Morrill Farmers Market

"Doing it all. Main roles are **communicating with vendors and organizing them, logistics, working out any issues--pulling it off!**"



LARRY KRAMER

Bennett Farmers Market

"**Marketing the market!** We have an electric sign we use for promotion and portable marquee signs that we rent. We set out yard signs the day before along the highway."



CHRIS GRESS

Nebraska City Farmers Market

"Getting the market started in Nebraska City. **Making sure people are aware of the rules and that they are followed.** Having good knowledge about the market, and its rules."



ANNIE GLINES

Alma Farmers Market

"My role is to get people fresh fruit and veggies, and not have them shipped in--to show people that **this is what food should look and taste like.**"

It's More than

JUST A MARKET

HOW TO BUILD COMMUNITY AROUND YOUR MARKET

At its heart, the farmers market is a place to buy and sell fresh, healthy, local foods. But in many communities, it's much more than that. Markets provide opportunities for collaboration between residents, vendors, volunteers, and local businesses and organizations. Markets began as a way to do business, but have evolved into a way to connect people with their communities, food producers, and the land that surrounds them. We've gathered some ways that Nebraska markets are collaborating and connecting within their communities.





PARTNERING WITH LOCAL BUSINESSES TO DRAW CUSTOMERS

**Nebraska City Farmers Market
Nebraska City, NE**

Each week, Market Manager Chris Gress calls into the radio station to give local residents a taste of what to expect that week at the market. Drawing in more shoppers (and hopefully more sales) is just one motivation for this weekly radio segment. As the manager for the Nebraska City Farmers Market, Chris knows that keeping shoppers interested week after week can be a challenge. That's where having strong relationships with local businesses comes into play.

Chris organizes a weekly giveaway at the market, each sponsored by a different local business. From water bottles and koozies, to cookies and ice cream sandwiches, getting businesses to support your

farmers market gets the community involved and creates new partnership opportunities.

HOW IT WORKS:

Chris contacts local businesses ahead of time, asking them to sponsor a particular week. Each business works with Chris to figure out a giveaway item that will be attractive to market-goers and any other details. In return, the business will be promoted through social media and on Chris' weekly call into the radio station.

TAKEAWAY IDEAS:

Give the participating businesses something in return. Promoting a local business through the market's media channels is a great way to support that business and broaden the audience of shoppers for the market.

ENDING THE YEAR STRONG WITH THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

**Beaver City Farmers Market
Beaver City, NE**

Sometimes, the best way to build community around your market has to do with scheduling. In Beaver City, the annual Eager Beaver Days in September is a guaranteed high-traffic event. Market manager Meredith Williams capitalized on this by aligning the market's final week to coincide with Eager Beaver Days.

In a rural farming community like Beaver City, the hot summer days don't draw as big of crowds, when most of the community is busy on the farm. Farmers market

vendors know that there will be some slow weeks in the summer, but it all will pay off come September when the community really comes out.

TAKEAWAY IDEAS

Recognizing the unique needs of your community is key to ensuring a successful market season. Rather than competing with other community events, aligning with them helps increase visitors to the market and builds stronger connections with the community. Reaching out to organizers for other groups and events during the winter is a great way to maximize your market's attendance.



GIVING BACK AND THANKS FOR THE COMMUNITY

Morrill Farmers Market Morrill, NE

Each year, the Morrill Farmers Market manager and vendors come together to provide a Thanksgiving meal for area residents in need. Sourcing the turkey and fixings from market vendors, the Thanksgiving meal provides a win-win for vendors and community members who otherwise wouldn't have a meal that day or would be eating alone.

As it turns out, the community members who took part in the Thanksgiving meal were so grateful that they chipped in what they could to show their support for the market and the value it brings to the community.



Build Community Around Your Farmers Market

ONCE A MONTH EVENING MARKET DRAWS A CROWD

Broken Bow Farmers Market Broken Bow, NE

Each month, the Broken Bow Farmers Market stays open into the evening to give people getting off work, and families, a chance to experience everything the market has to offer. Located in downtown Broken Bow, many customers come over the dinner hour to visit the market. These monthly evening markets expand access to the market for those customers who couldn't otherwise be there during the day. With live music and other fun activities, and no-cost booth fees for vendors, a strong community spirit forms around these special evening markets.



COMMUNITY-DRIVEN PARTNER CONTRIBUTES TO MARKET

Statewide Farmers Markets, NE

Invite a local nonprofit or community-minded organization that can contribute to your market and your shoppers. Buy Fresh Buy Local Nebraska, a local food education program, conducted taste tests at farmers' markets using locally grown specialty crops. Other ideas include inviting a local animal shelter, library, or service provider to have a booth.



CULTIVATING THE ARTS AT THE MARKET

Thursday Evening Market Downtown Hastings, NE

There's something about live music at a farmers market that draws in community. The Thursday Evening Downtown Market in Hastings has seen this up close. Each year, manager Amy Hoagland works with the Hastings Arts Council to recruit and pay for local musicians to play for customers at the market. Compared to the larger Saturday market in Hastings, the Thursday market has more of a family feel. And the live music creates a focal point for families to get their market goods, spread out a blanket in the grass and enjoy local food and local music.





DOWNTOWN LOCATION ATTRACTS BROADER COMMUNITY

Aurora Market on the Square Aurora, NE

When the Aurora Market on the Square sets up booths on Saturday mornings in downtown Aurora, local businesses open their doors early to welcome in the community. What could be better than stopping by the farmers market for fresh produce and then hitting shops and boutiques for other needs? How about a free petting zoo or a live musician? Local businesses and market vendors work together to draw in customers, to the benefit of all.

WORKING TOGETHER TO PROMOTE HEALTH

Schuyler Farmers Market Schuyler, NE

Hospitals can be great partners for farmers markets. They exist to promote healthy behaviors for local community members, and eating healthy is a big part of that effort. In Schuyler, when the farmers market needed a new location, CHI Health was more than happy to offer free space in their parking lot. With the market right outside their door, CHI Health takes an

active role in the market, sampling out fresh produce items and talking about nutrition with customers. They also provide funding for market signage and other programming; a great partnership between critical community resource providers.

NATIONAL FARMERS MARKET WEEK BRINGS FUN EVENTS, AND PLENTY OF VENDORS

Sutton Farmers Market Sutton, NE

National Farmers Market Week is a celebration of the many benefits of farmers markets for communities across the country, and it served as the perfect backdrop for the Sutton Farmers Market annual big event. In the weeks leading up to the big event, market manager Rebecca Plettner started collecting customer names to enter into a raffle for a big basket of market goodies. She also worked with the local newspaper to promote the event, and partnered with the library to have a kids story time and face painting. The event was a smash hit, bringing more customers and vendors than any other week throughout the season. And, importantly, it created an event that the whole community could participate in.

MORE IDEAS FOR COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

DEVELOP AN AMBASSADOR GROUP

Develop an ambassador group made up of your most supportive community members. They can help build connections, give feedback, organize events and fundraisers, and promote the market.

INCLUDE LOCAL ARTISTS

Invite a community theater to perform a teaser of their summer play, a local author to do a short reading, or museum to facilitate an activity related to a new exhibit.

WORK WITH MUNICIPALITIES

Collaborate with county conservation on a campfire skillet-cooking demo using locally grown produce.



STAY ACTIVE IN THE OFF-SEASON

Hold a pre- and post-season meeting with vendors, then organize an off-season potluck or training. If you have ambassadors or a committee, check in with them face-to-face, too. The connections you nurture in the off-season will help build your market community for the busy season.

A New Manager at

A NEW MARKET

HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY LAUNCH A NEW MARKET

As a new manager starting a new market, it can be hard to know where to begin. Determining if there is enough supply and demand to create a new market is one of the most important considerations. Don't skimp on conversations with other area market managers, potential vendors, and community members when weighing the decision to start a new market. Sometimes, finding creative ways to support existing markets, or working to expand their reach and access is the best way forward. The sample timeline (right) lays out a suggested order for the many tasks required to launch a market. Certain to-dos need to be completed before others can happen. For example: you'll want to set your market schedule before you lock in vendors—to ensure the vendors will be available during your days and times. Keep in mind that this timeline is based on a 9-12 month period. If you have less time to plan and prepare, the tasks will need to be condensed into a tighter time frame.



CHERYL AVERILL
Morrill Farmers Market

"Listen to the people, listen to the vendors, make sure **everyone has a say in what's going on**. If you're a part of the decision-making, you will be happier."

ADVERTISE, ADVERTISE

"Lots and lots and lots of advertising will be needed if starting new. Use Buy-Sell-Trade groups on Facebook...and embrace technology. Take vendor photos every single week and post all the pictures. This makes a big difference."

-Helen Gartner, Plattsmouth Farmers Market



Countdown to Opening Day!

12-9
mo.

12-9 MONTHS OUT

- Continue to research nearby markets (online and in-person)
- Talk to vendors and other market managers in the area
- Identify local community partners
- Talk with future customers about what they want
- Research the history of farmers markets in your area and reach out to those who have been involved
- Contact NDA, local health dept., and municipality to learn about requirements for markets and vendors

9-6
mo.

9-6 MONTHS OUT

- Select and reserve the location
- Set the schedule (season/months, days, times)
- Decide on your market business structure
- Secure local partnerships
- Recruit vendors
- Form a market committee

6-3
mo.

6-3 MONTHS OUT

- Finalize all your permits, insurance, and legal documents
- Start promoting your farmers market
- Create your branding and marketing materials
- Contact/register with NDA and local health dept.
- Develop your market rules and guidelines
- Create an emergency plan and weather policy
- Start fundraising and secure sponsors
- Plan special events for your market

3-0
mo.

3 MONTHS OUT-OPENING DAY

- Create the market layout
- Enlist volunteers and identify tasks
- Ramp up marketing efforts
- Schedule and carry out vendor meetings
- Design market signage and maps
- Create a master contact list
- Get on every local events calendar

DAY
OF!

OPENING DAY AND BEYOND!

- Communicate with vendors, volunteers, and partners
- Confirm attendance of vendors and volunteers
- Make sure you're available for all questions
- Start collecting vendor payments/dues
- Continue implementing your marketing plan
- Be ready for troubleshooting
- Keep track of market metrics
- Communicate with vendors, volunteers, and partners
- Ensure market safety and market rules are enforced
- Attend every market (be the first there, and last to leave)

A New Manager at

AN OLD MARKET

HOW TO TAKE THE LEAD AT AN EXISTING MARKET



When stepping into a manager role at an existing market, it can be challenging to know where to start. What is your role? What will the vendors and customers expect from you? Who is your support system? Should you make any changes?

All of these questions are important and should be answered in time. Steve Anderson from the Hebron Farmers Market encourages managers who are taking the reins at an existing market to be patient. He explains, **“Sometimes it takes some trial and error.** Otherwise, do your best to adhere to the rules and make sure to **be patient with vendors during the transition.**” With your priorities in order, you will find answers to your questions and be a guiding force for vendors and customers alike.



SUE DUBOIS

Wahoo Farmers Market

“Don’t be afraid to make changes to improve the market, but don’t make changes just to make changes.”

Sorting Out Your Priorities

HIGH PRIORITY

TALKING & LISTENING

- Meet with the previous farmers market manager
- Get a full description of your job duties
- Understand your role at the market
- Visit other nearby farmers markets
- Get to know other market managers in the area
- Hold a meeting with previous/existing vendors
- Reach out individually to customers

ANALYZING YOUR RESOURCES

- Locate marketing materials
- Learn to use the payment system (if applicable)
- Get social media and email login information
- Check on permits, insurance, and licenses
- Find the market map or existing vendor layout
- Read through and update your rules/regulations
- Repair and replace market supplies, if needed
- Make sure information on website is up-to-date

MEDIUM PRIORITY

ARRANGING FOR EXTRA HELP

- Arranging for extra help
- Find volunteers to help with day-of tasks
- Form a support team (vendors, partners, friends)
- Send a year-end survey to vendors to collect feedback and improvements for next season

LOW PRIORITY

BRANDING & LOGOS

For the first year, your time and energy should be focused on having conversations, building relationships, and figuring out how to run the market. Even if you don’t love the existing logo or branding, you can still work with it. Save these types of changes for the off-season or next year when you have a better grasp on your role and the market as a whole.

MAKING BIG CHANGES

Take the first year to figure out how the market works. Avoid knee jerk reactions and changes based on feeling pressured. Be strategic about the changes you do make. In many cases, it will be wise to wait until you have a year of experience under your belt before making adjustments to the market.



WISH YOU KNEW

WE ASKED, VENDORS ANSWERED

...ABOUT CONSISTENCY

"You need consistent vendors showing up every time, so customers can get used to it. **Consistency is the best.**"

"Humans are creatures of habit. Consistency is important. **Changing anything--time, date, location, vendor arrangement, parking, or even the information booth--will impact your vendors and your customers.**"

...ABOUT PRODUCTS

"**You've got to have a core group of vegetable vendors.** Period. Arts and crafts and baked goods add to the ambiance, but you need vegetables."

...ABOUT MARKETING THE MARKET

"While the market itself may last only a few hours, farmers have spent days harvesting, cleaning, and packing. On market day, more time is spent loading, driving, and setting up. When all of that is taken into consideration, it's hard to turn a profit if the market isn't well-attended. **It's so important to have a market manager that pulls out all the stops to make sure the market is a well-advertised, fun atmosphere that people don't want to miss! The more customers that show up, the more vendors that will be able to commit to attending consistently.**"

...ABOUT CUSTOMER SERVICE

"**I only have control over the customer's experience with me. I don't have control over their experience with the market as a whole.** Can they find the bathroom? Are there garbage cans? Do they know where to park? Is there a friendly community vibe? It takes everyone at the market to make customer service work."



"**It goes a long way when the market manager has positive energy and is proactive in helping vendors and customers--not just sitting at the information booth and waiting for problems to come to them.**"

...ABOUT COMMUNICATION

"The best managers make sure to listen to vendor and customer feedback. Being able to make someone feel like they're heard is important. It is equally important to keep your response to feedback in line with market goals. **Keep it professional!**"

...ABOUT COMMUNITY

"**Make sure it is kid friendly, and friendly for the elderly.** Choose a safe area. Try to meet the needs of the community."

"Every town is going to be different, so you really have to **know your local people - build connections, relationships, and trust.**"



...ABOUT CHANGES OVER TIME

"There are two things I would want a new manager to know. **First, when you have that many independent entrepreneurs grouped together, it is rare to get 100% consensus. Secondly, you're not alone.** The board or committee is there for a reason. You don't have to shoulder the full burden of conflict and problem-solving."

FARMERS MARKET



Whether you're launching a new market or stepping into manage an existing one, there are certain plans to be made to **keep your market running smoothly.**

Selecting

MARKET HOURS

CHOOSING DATES & TIMES FOR YOUR MARKET

4 TIPS FOR SELECTING HOURS

1. CHECK NEARBY

MARKET HOURS

Look into other area farmers markets' days and times. If you want to attract the same vendors, you may not want to hold your market at the same time.

2. OVERLAPPING IS OKAY

If there's another event in the community, overlapping with it is okay—even encouraged. When scheduling your market, don't think of it as an isolated event. If there's another event happening nearby before, after, or during the market, both can benefit from shared traffic and cross-promotion.

3. THE MORE YOU ADVERTISE,

THE BETTER

State the hours of your market clearly & frequently on marketing materials (signage, social media, etc.).

4. BE CONSISTENT

YEAR TO YEAR

When you decide on your market hours, it's strongly recommended to keep the day and time consistent in future years to avoid confusion for customers.

WHEN ARE MARKETS IN NEBRASKA?

There are several factors to consider when setting hours. Think about the hours of other markets, nearby businesses, community events, and even the sunset times of changing seasons.

Days for Farmers Markets in Nebraska*



Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

*out of 104 markets
**some markets have multiple days

MOST POPULAR:

SATURDAYS**

LEAST POPULAR:

MONDAYS

WINNING WEEKDAYS:

WEDNESDAYS & THURSDAYS

FINE STRUCTURE

HOW A SMART FEE STRUCTURE PAYS OFF

Vendor fees are the primary source of income for covering the operational costs of a farmers market—from paying market staff to helping with marketing costs to hiring entertainment. Part of your responsibility as market manager is to collect the membership fees and enforce any other policies/fees/fines that were established as part of the market rules.

FEES & FINES ARE NOT ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL

Just as rules and structure vary from market to market, so do fees and fines. One manager might need to offer large and small stalls to make the layout possible in their location—charging fees accordingly. Another may only be able to work with stalls all of the same size, not needing to charge less or more based on space. A large market may charge higher fees to cover additional costs, such as marketing or staff. A very small, volunteer-run market may charge a few

dollars or nothing at all. Before opting out of fees, consider what even a few dollars per vendor could help you afford.

VENDORS VARY

If the goal/mission of the market is to have more produce and less prepared food, the market manager has the right to charge food producers lower rates and charge higher rates to vendors of crafts and prepared foods.

DON'T RAISE RATES MID-YEAR

Changing rates in the middle of a market season is likely to cause vendor confusion and complaints. If fees need to be raised or implemented, do so in the off-season and communicate it to vendors clearly, frequently, and well ahead of time.



Market Fee Examples



STALL FEE

All stalls are the same size and vendors pay the same amount.



EARLY ENTRY FEE

Vendors who pay this are allowed to start setting up earlier at the market.



LARGE/SMALL STALL FEE

Some markets are laid out with smaller or larger sized stalls to fit spaces. Vendors pay more or less depending on size.



MAILING FEE

Paid by vendors who do not wish to receive email or do not have email. This covers the cost of mailed communication.



RESERVED STALL FEE

Vendors who pay the reserved stall fee may be in the same location at the market all year.



NO SHOW FINE

Enforced if a vendor fails to show up to a market without informing the market manager.



DAILY LEASE

Vendors who arrive the day of the market looking to sell will be charged a one-day fee to vend. Often this one-day charge will be higher on a per-day basis than vendors who pay for a stall for the full season.



TRASH DISPOSAL FINE

Enforced if a vendor does not remove trash or does not clean up their stall after the market.



SHARED STALL FEE

Two or more vendors pay for a shared stall to sell their seasonal products together rather than each pay for their own stall.



LATE ARRIVAL FINE

Enforced if a market vendor arrives late to set up their stall.



VARIABLE STALL FEE

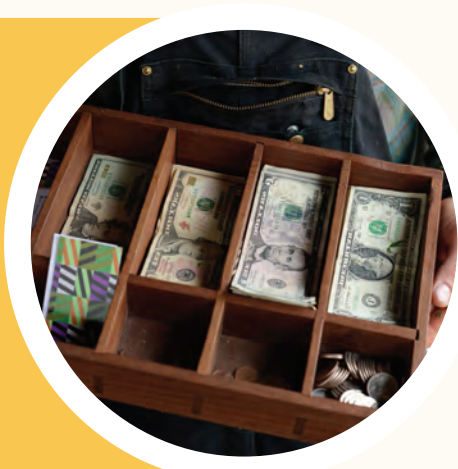
Different categories of vendors are charged different amounts based on consumer demand and pre-established market goals for product diversity.



RECKLESS DRIVING FINE

Enforced if a vendor leaves before the market is closed and customers are still at the market.

Which Fee Structure Is Right For You?



FEE DETERMINED BY VENDOR-TYPE, PAID IN FULL PRIOR TO SEASON'S START

"We have three tiers of vendor fees—Farm Processor (grow and sell the product), Non-Farm Processor (make the food product, but don't grow it) and Crafter (people who make non-food items). The fees cover the entire season, and are usually paid in advance. We have had some vendors that don't know whether they are going to come to every market, so they just pay weekly and pay a bigger fee."

- Kelsie Jensen, Thursday Market at Fallbrook



FEES DETERMINED BY BOOTH SIZE, PAID IN FULL OR WEEK-TO-WEEK

"Our market fees are based on size of stall, and whether the vendor is signed on for the full season, or week-by-week. Our full season fees are cheaper per week than our weekly vendor fees - so it pays to commit to the whole season. We typically start collecting fees for full-season vendors in April or May, usually after our preseason meeting."

- Michael Sothan, Beatrice Farmers' Market



FLAT-RATE FEE PAID WEEK-TO-WEEK

"At our market we ask that vendors pay when they attend the market, so every vendor is able to choose what weeks work for them to come to market. We keep it simple by asking for vendor fees in cash. The market fees cover advertising - usually in the local paper, or flyers and signage around town."

- Sue DuBois, Wahoo Farmers' Market

WHAT, WHEN, & HOW

WHAT WILL YOU CHARGE?

Decide on your market's vendor fees as well as potential add-ons and fines. Depending on the structure of your market, this may be up to you or it may be a decision made by the board or operating entity.

WHEN WILL YOU COLLECT?

If you're managing a large market, it will save you time and effort to collect dues for the entire season before the first market is held. If you're managing a small market, there's value in collecting fees in-person bi-weekly or weekly.

HOW WILL YOU TAKE PAYMENT?

Cash? Check? Can vendors pay with their debit/credit card in-person or online? Can vendors mail their payment or bring it to a physical office location? Will you go around and collect it yourself?



RECRUITMENT

GET THE RIGHT MIX FOR YOUR MARKET

VENDOR RECRUITMENT

Vendor recruitment is an important responsibility for market managers because the variety of vendors can make or break a market. Some markets will develop a rough equation for how many different types of vendors they want to have. For example, to encourage customers to do most of their grocery shopping at the market, a market manager may aim to have over half of the vendors be produce vendors. Here are a few examples of vendor breakdown by type of product:

- Produce
- Meat
- Dairy
- Prepared food
- Crafts/Jewelry
- Other food products

Once you have your desired vendors identified, you can then be specific with your efforts to recruit those vendors.

FIGURES FOR PROSPECTIVE VENDORS

To be prepared when trying to convince a prospective vendor to sell at your market, create a simple handout with statistics that hold sway, including:

- Average number of customers per market
- Location of the market (if possible, the distance from the market to their farm or place of business)
- Average number of total vendors and in each category (produce, meat, baked goods, etc.)
- How the market has grown (revenue, vendors, customers, etc.)



- Market achievements (Held a successful event?)
- Articles and press about the market or partnerships with community

TIMING CONTACT WITH VENDORS

Most farmers are planning their season in January and February, so that's generally the best time to contact them about vending at your market.

ADVERTISING VENDOR GAPS

Make sure you're promoting in different ways to reach different vendors. Create a flyer that can be posted around town and on social media. Reach out to your local Extension offices, public library, coffee shops, or other high-traffic areas in the community. Have conversations with local partners, current vendors, customers, and other market managers in the area to gain insights on potential new vendors or types of vendors that could fit into your market mix.

ADVICE FROM MARKET MANAGERS

MAKE USE OF NEW AND OLD WAYS TO RECRUIT

"We created a Facebook page for events happening in the community, including the farmers market. We use that page and other Facebook group to spread the word that we are looking for vendors and accepting applications. Our Chamber of Commerce has been helpful in the process. For example, we have paper copies of our vendor application at their office, so people can stop by and fill out an application on site."

- Sadie Wright, York Farmers Market

"We talk to current vendors and get recommendations from them; do they know anyone who grows or makes 'xyz' who might be interested? I make lots of calls to vendors at other regional markets, asking if they'd be interested in adding another market to their lineup."

- Doyle Morse, Holdrege Farmers Market

"We run ads in the local newspapers, usually one per month to recruit and do outreach. Besides that, I have a whole list of people to call, mostly names that came from vendors or people I know in the community."

- Judy Wohl, Crete Farmers Market



MAKE IT EASY

"We try to make it easy - we have our market information and registration on the website, and also hand out paper registration forms. Vendors also help us distribute market information and registration - to people they know and to other markets they attend."

- Justise Rhoades, Aurora Farmers Market

Let's Get Down to

BUSINESS (STRUCTURE)

FINDING THE RIGHT FIT

Most farmers markets will fit into one of the following business structures: sole proprietorship, partnership, limited liability company (LLC), non-profit, for-profit corporation, or cooperative. If you're starting a farmers market from scratch, there's a lot to consider when choosing a business structure. First, decide whether your farmers market should or needs to be its own independent entity. It's possible the market may fit within an existing organization. Next, contact the Nebraska Business Development Center (NBDC), your nearest Small Business Development Center (SBDC) or the Rural Enterprise Assistance Project (REAP) for expert advice. In the meantime, use our chart to get an idea of what business structure may fit your market.

Two Things to Consider When Choosing a Business Structure



1. DO YOU HAVE AN UMBRELLA?

Some farmers markets in Nebraska are a part of an already established business, government entity, or non-profit organization. If there's an existing local entity that would oversee your farmers market, this could be a great option. Being housed under such an "umbrella" gives you access to more resources—such as assistance with financials, marketing and fundraising, but you'll also be relinquishing some control to varying degrees.



2. DO YOU HAVE ACCESS TO A SBDC?

Scott Swenson, a SBDC Regional Director, says "The SBDC is a free and confidential service that can help market managers understand and navigate the business formation process and the steps to getting set up properly. This includes the various business structures they may considering and the resources for helping with business planning, marketing strategy, financial projections, and identifying any resources that apply to helping get the market launched successfully."

What's the Best Business Fit for My Market?

To learn more about these types of business structures and how they may suit your farmers market, the Center for Agriculture & Food Systems Farmers Market Legal Toolkit is a great resource: farmersmarketlegaltoolkit.org

WHICH STRUCTURE IS RIGHT FOR ME?	SOLE PROPRIETORSHIP	PARTNERSHIP	LLC	NON PROFIT	S & C CORPS
Are you okay being personally liable for business debts?	X	X	X	X	
Do you want to protect members and shareholders from personal liability?					X
Do you plan to split profit among owners?			X		X
Do you plan to report profit or loss on your personal tax return?		X	X		
Do you want to have an unlimited number of owners?		X	X		X
Do you want to have partners?			X		X
Do you want to own the company yourself?	X				X
Do you want to create the company simply and inexpensively with minimum requirements?	X	X	X		
Do you want to create an entity at a state level that protects the company name?			X		X
Do you want the business duration to be perpetual?			X		X
Are you willing to write articles of incorporation and bylaws, file various documents for state and federal regulations, get an EIN with the IRS and set up a bank account?		X		X	X
Do you want few reporting responsibilities?	X	X	X		
Do not want to hold annual meetings?	X	X	X		



YOUR MARKET

WITH VENDORS AND CUSTOMERS IN MIND

Creating an effective layout of the market is very important for proper space allocation for vendors, as well as ease and comfort of customers shopping the market.

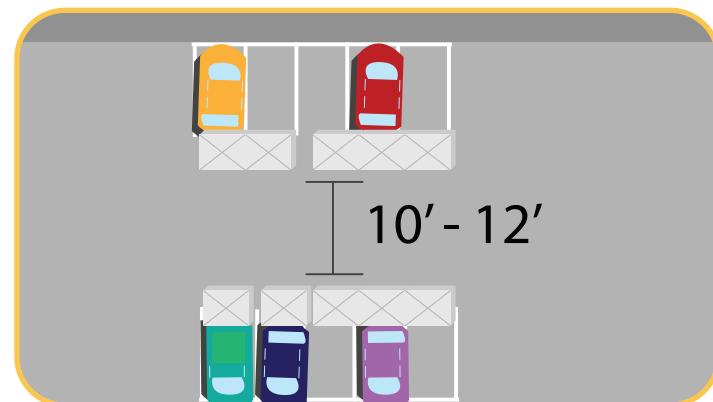
AVOID "DEAD ENDS"

"Dead end" aisles can be seen as inconvenient. To overcome this, many markets use a circular traffic pattern instead.



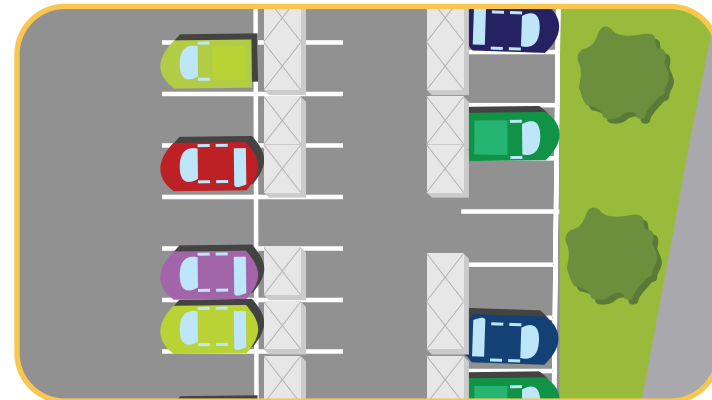
GIVE CUSTOMERS SPACE

The center aisle between rows of vendors should be at least 10' to 12' wide to give customers plenty of room to shop at stands on either side of the aisle and allow for 4' down the center for others to walk comfortably through.



VENDOR PARKING

Will you allow vendors to park their vehicles in stalls or will it be a drop-off market? Either way, vendors will need to get their products to their stall.



PUT STALLS SIDE-BY-SIDE

Shoppers may take advantage of gaps between stalls and use those spaces as entry and exit points at the market. To avoid this, consider contiguous stalls.



Parking Lot Example

Population: 5,000

Market location: Church-owned parking lot off of a main street

Description: The market has been in operation for twenty years—four of those taking place in a church-owned parking lot. The church lot is located on the main drag going into downtown, and offers convenient, free parking for customers.



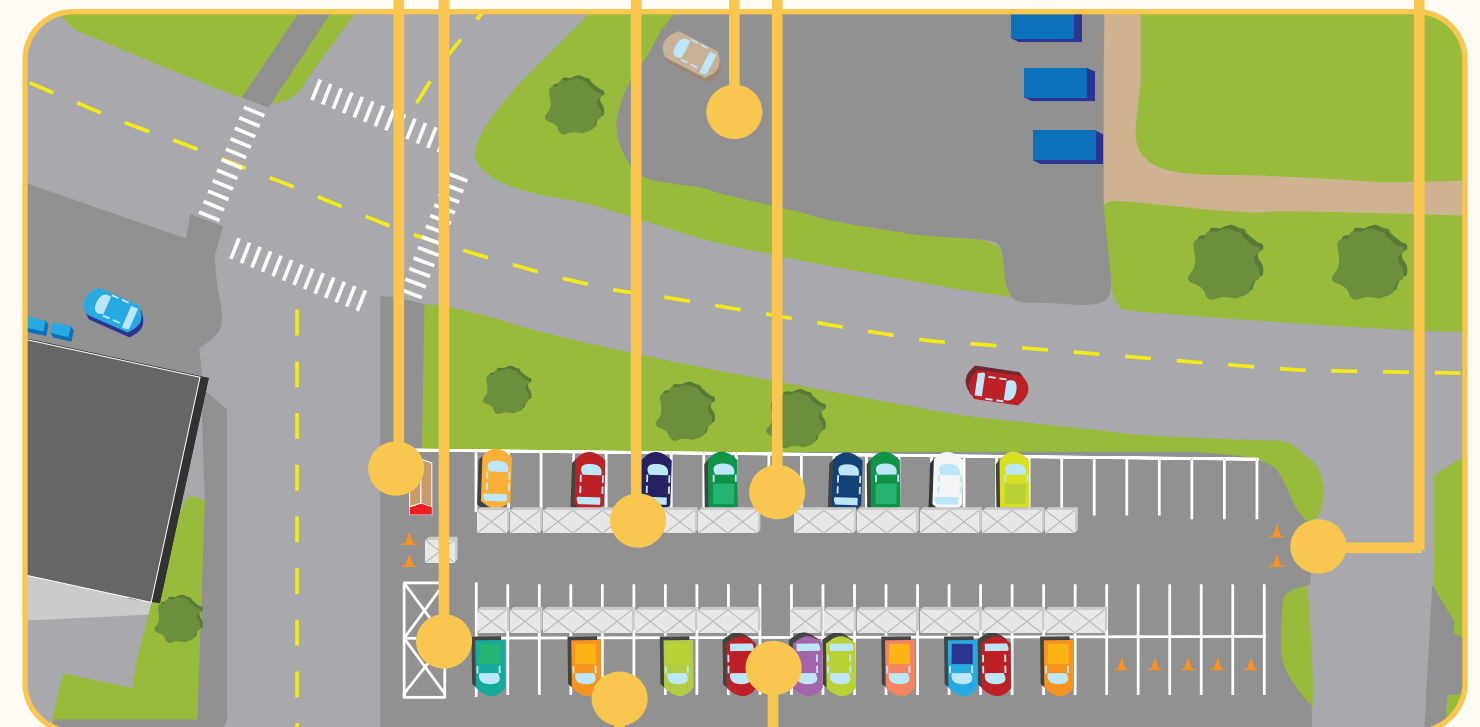
Customer parking is available in several lots across the street from the market location.

Vendor stalls are placed close together. Each stall has been given an ID # to allow for easy identification for vendors when setting up.

A safely accessible temporary parking area is defined for customers utilizing curbside pickup. The info booth is an easy-to-find canopy tent.

An entrance is created in the middle of the market on the top side to allow customers an easy access point from the above parking lot—and to allow for an escape route in the case of an emergency.

A portion of the parking lot is blocked off for each market. Traffic cones prevent people parking in the lot before the market opens and from driving into the market portion of the lot when it is open.



Vendors are allowed to park behind their stall so they can utilize their vehicles for extra storage, change, and other conveniences.

The vendor stalls in the lower row are placed further into each parking spot with the back tent poles on the center line. This gives extra space to the open aisle running down the center of the market, allowing for easy foot traffic.

Around a Park Example



Population: 800

Market location: City-owned downtown park/town square

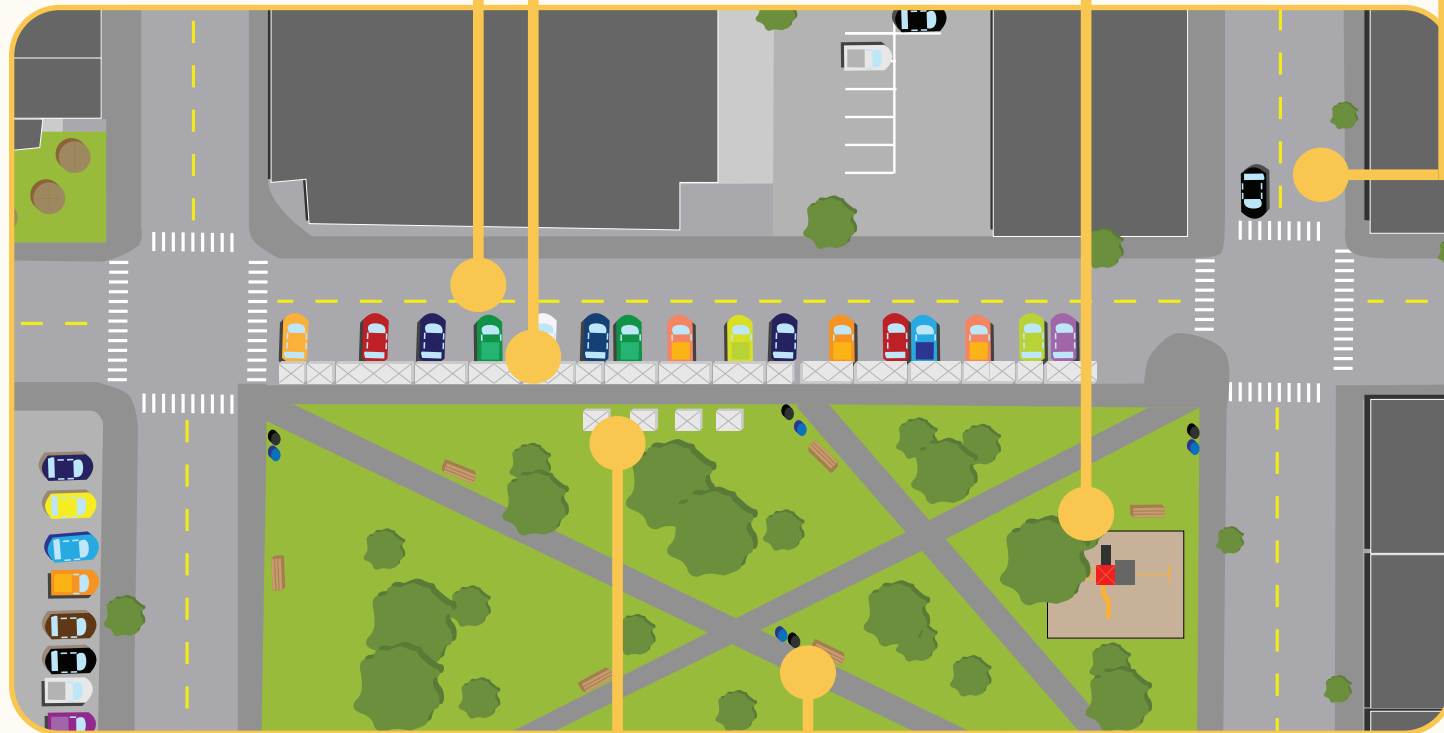
Description: The park is large enough for multiple activities to occur simultaneously and offers additional amenities to attendees--like a playground, benches, and trash/recycling.

Vendors are allowed to park behind their booths, making it convenient to store additional product or personal supplies with easy reach.

No streets are closed during market hours, which allows for the normal flow of traffic.

Stalls are placed side-by-side and close together to prevent customers coming in from between the vendors' parked vehicles.

There is green space for families to picnic and kids to play.



Additional booths are placed in the park adjacent to the street parking vendors. These are for the information booth, non-profit space, and vendors with easy-to-move product.

There are benches and trash/ recycling cans throughout the park.

Downtown Streets Example



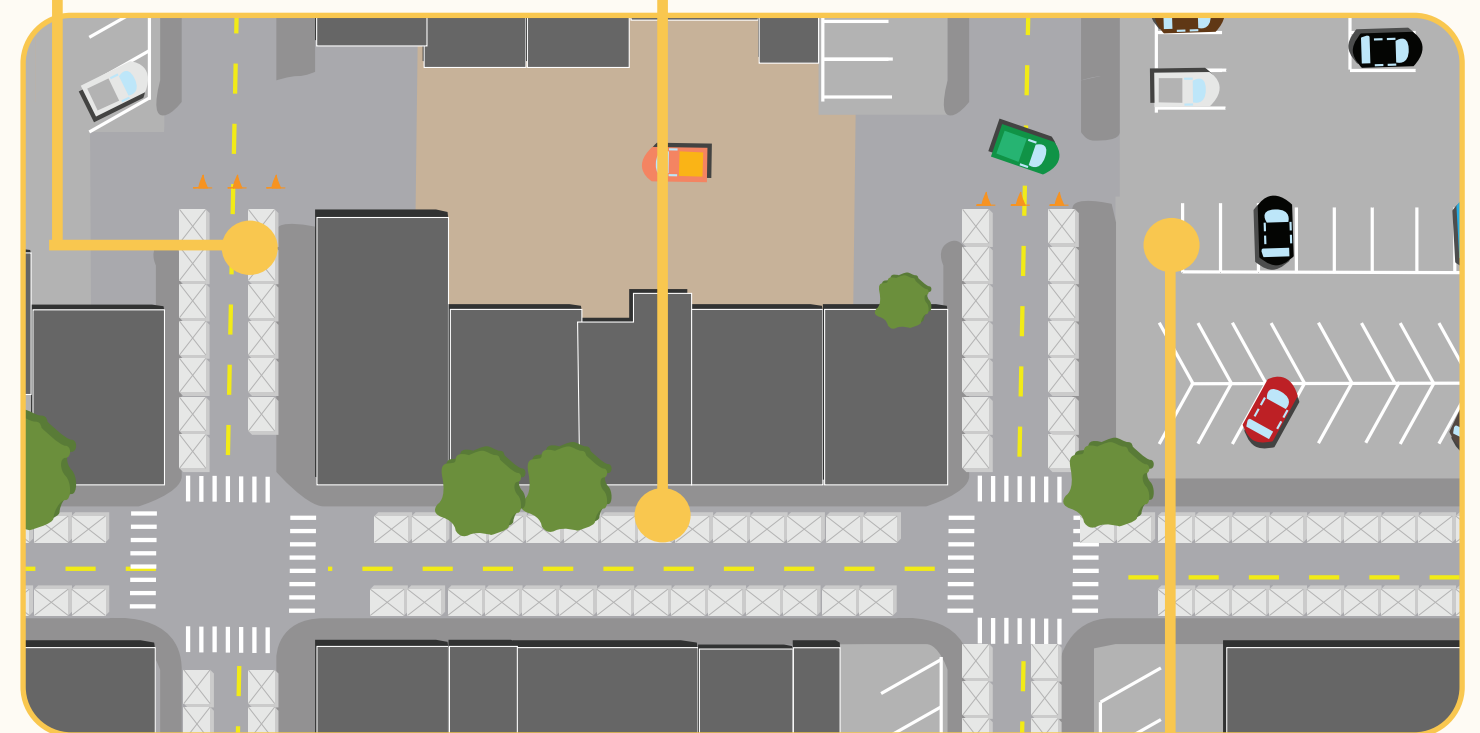
Population: 10,000

Market location: Downtown streets

Description: The market is located on two streets and spans two blocks downtown. Nearby businesses have appreciated the market in this location, seeing a bump in business when the market is open.

Vendor booths are kept tight together, one right after the other. It not only makes the market appear full, but also eliminates open spaces that allow customers to slip in and out of the market other than at designated entrances.

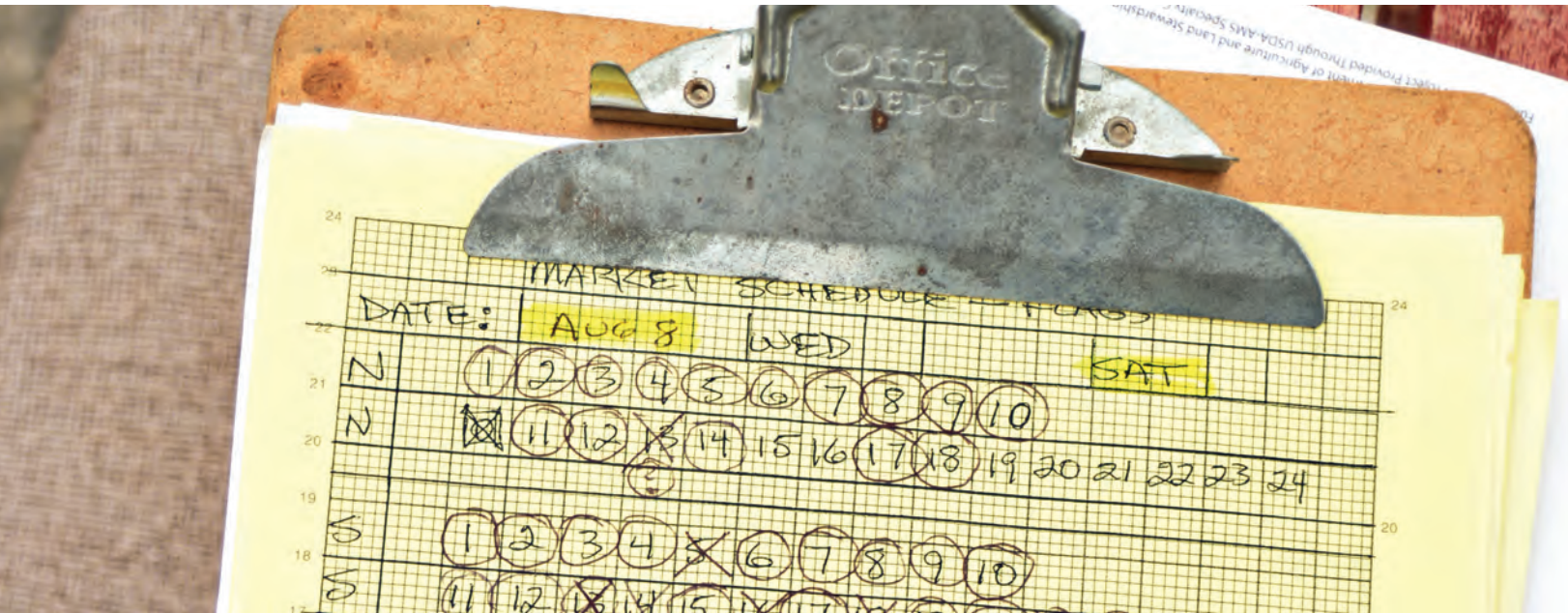
Traffic cones are used to close the streets to vehicle traffic during the market.



Customers can park in nearby downtown lots.

ADMINISTRATION

RECORDS, REPORTS, & COMMUNICATION



RECORDS

Organized and consistently maintained records have several benefits:

Accuracy: Rather than relying on your own memory—or the memories of vendors and staff—good records will help you accurately recall agreements, obligations, and other important details.

Paper trail: If a legal issue arises and your market needs to prove its actions, records will provide a paper trail and needed evidence—especially regarding contracts, insurance, leases, and rules/regulations.

Transitions: Volunteers and part-time staff may come and go each season. Board members may rotate every couple years. Records will help bring people up to speed on the market's past activities.

Decision-making: Records can help you and the market board make more strategic decisions. For example, past visitor counts can inform special event scheduling.

WHICH RECORDS TO KEEP

Important legal documents: Incorporation documents, insurance policies, lease/rental agreement, SNAP authorization paperwork, copies of annual tax returns

Market operation documents: Rules and regulations, weather/emergency policies, safety procedures, sponsor/partner agreements, volunteer contact info

Marketing and communication: Marketing contacts, login credentials for social media/e-newsletter service, email, marketing calendar/plan, past press releases

Vendor records and information: Contact information, applications, signed contracts

Past market data: Special event details, attendance, expenses, press coverage, dated day-of records, attendance counts, how many vendors attended, who vended, weather conditions, sales data, coupon redemption, rule violations/no-shows, survey feedback or complaints

Staff and board member records: Contact information, job descriptions, signed contracts/agreements

BEST PRACTICES FOR TRACKING PURPOSES

ORGANIZATION



If your market has an office and other staff need access to files, consider a filing cabinet or market binder(s) divided with folders and tabs.

SHARING & STORAGE



To store, backup, or easily share records, upload digital copies to Google Drive, Drop Box, or another cloud service.

RECORDS



Remember to type up and save any market day records you took on pen and paper—vendors, weather, sales data, coupon redemption, etc.

REPLICATE



If you pull something from your files to have at the market or take to a meeting, make a copy so you always have the originals in storage.

SECURITY



If you keep records with confidential information (such as SSNs for employment), store paper records securely and encrypt electronic records.

REPORTS

If your farmers market is a non-profit or operates under the umbrella of another entity (such as a chamber or city department), you might be asked to compile an annual report. Even if you're not obligated, creating one is good practice—and can benefit your market in marketing, fundraising, and grant-writing.

The Beatrice Farmers' Market prepares an annual report at the end of their market season. They share it with their vendors, their non-profit umbrella organization and others involved. It is a good way to gather information, reflect on the year as a whole, and track changes from year to year. Their report includes:

- Number of vendors at each weekly market
- Vendor fees
- Analytics from the web-demographic information of people who engage with Facebook posts and who visit the market's website
- Number of followers on social media and website visitors
- Yearly market budget and expenses
- Market and vendor layout with traffic flow
- Descriptions of any special events or programs at the market
- They've been tracking this information since 2014, and are able to show changes from year to year

Michael Sothan, Manager at the Beatrice Farmers Market explains, "We use that report to provide good end of the season information to our vendors and umbrella organization, and use it to pose questions for feedback and present some data to discuss. The conversations that come from the report's information will hopefully help us be stronger going forward."

You should also present your annual report to vendors/board members at the annual meeting to recap the year and compare to previous years. It's a great idea to share your annual report on social media, post it to your website, and send it to any partners, sponsors, and newsletter subscribers. It will also come in handy when reaching out to potential sponsors and applying for grants.

COMMUNICATION

As market manager, your communication responsibilities are twofold: internal and external. Internal being communication with your market vendors, volunteers, partners, and committee. External being communication with customers and the general public. Whether communicating internally or externally, it's important to use a variety of communication channels to reach your audience.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media—Facebook especially—can be a valuable tool for reaching out and responding to a large portion of your market audience.

Internal: Facebook Groups

Facebook groups are pages that enable a group of people to interact around a common theme. Groups can be public or private. Consider creating a private vendor group that you're part of so you can answer questions, gather feedback, and share important updates (weather, parking, rule reminders, changes, etc.). You may also want to create a private group for your board or committee.

Whether you're creating a group for your vendors or your board/committee, make sure that you're a member of a group and make yourself group administrator.

External: Facebook Page & Events

A Facebook page for your market can help with not only marketing and promotion, but also communicating important updates about parking, or weather, and

“Take advantage of social media! We post photos of vendors and their booths every single week to our farmers market Facebook page, and about four other local Facebook groups and websites, like the local buy-sell-trade Facebook page. People saw our photos and came because of them!”

-Helen Gartner, Plattsmouth Community Market

Hastings Downtown Farmers Market
July 26 · 🌐

It's a B-I-G week at the downtown market this week:
🔴 Growing season is nearing the peak! Grab your locally-grown produce!
🍔 MeanBone BBQ & Burgers makes its ONLY public appearance this week.
🎸 Gracie's Uncles takes the grassy stage at 6:00
Plus, Buy Fresh Buy Local Nebraska will be here!
#farmersmarket #downtownhastings #supportlocal #supportfarmers

LIVE MUSIC
6:00-7:00 P.M.
DOWNTOWN MARKET
GRACIE'S UNCLES
FOOD TRUCK:
MEANBONE BBQ & BURGERS
MUSIC SPONSORED BY: HASTINGS arts

The Hastings Downtown Farmers' Market posts multiple times a week. This post is a great example of how social media can be used to share important messages like special events or cancellations.

sharing news about upcoming events, new vendors, or what's for sale at the next market. A text post is easy to scroll past. Make it stand out by including an eye-catching image or graphic with text overlay. You can also create standalone or recurring Facebook events for the dates and times of your market.

Plattsmouth Community Market
July 30 · 🌐

It's Market Day! We are OPEN & READY for BUSINESS...
Your Local growers...makers...producers...
have a bit of everything to offer from fruits & veggies, jam & seasonings, home goods & jewelry...
Shindigs Event Center
209 S 24th Street... See more

Plattsmouth Community Market
Makers, Producers, Community

EMAIL

Collecting email addresses is an important and direct way for you to reach your vendors, committee members, and market attendees.

Internal: Email Lists

Compile separate email lists for vendors, volunteers, committee/board members, and community partners and sponsors.

This way, you can email a specific group all at once to make an announcement, share volunteer or vendor recruitment needs, or give a friendly reminder about upcoming meetings or changes.

External: E-Newsletter

Use an online e-newsletter service (such as Mail Chimp or Constant Contact) to design, write, and schedule weekly e-blasts to subscribers.

Each week, spotlight new and returning vendors, share market news and upcoming events, let customers know what will be for sale, what's in season at the

The Sunday Farmers Market in College View sends out a weekly email newsletter via Mailchimp. It provides essential information like vendors who will be there, what they might have, rule reminders, etc. and fun seasonal themes, like recipes, activities and special events.

MARKET MUCH?
Stay Market Fresh
GET YOUR MARKET ON - COLLECT PUNCHES AND GET FREE STUFF!
sound & music
10-11am sound therapy with Sammie
11-1pm willowood

next market, and give reminders about parking or market changes.

OTHER FORMS OF COMMUNICATION

While the Internet makes online communication convenient, don't discount "old fashioned" ways of getting the word out. Not everyone checks their email regularly. Not everyone is social media savvy. It's important to use several channels of communication, ranging from digital to personal.

Internal: Call, Text, or Talk Face-to-face

It's crucial for you to have the best phone number for contacting each of your vendors and board/committee members. If you need to make an important announcement about weather or a last-minute change, pick up the phone and make the calls yourself. For less-urgent information and reminders, a phone tree can help spread the word from vendor-to-vendor with each person responsible for calling another. You can also send text messages. Be sure to talk to your vendors as some may have communication preferences.

Especially when communicating a problem or change to the market (such as fees or rules), make sure you're reaching out to your vendors in-person. Certain topics may also need to be addressed in-person at meetings.

External: Printed Products

Posters, flyers, and brochures are still great ways to get market information in front of the public. Hang posters on community boards and speak with local businesses about putting out a stack of flyers or brochures.

External: Media Relations

Reach out to local TV and radio stations, magazines, and newspapers. When communicating something in advance (first market of the season or a special event), send out a press release. If it's a last-minute announcement (weather cancellation or sudden change in parking availability due to road construction), reach out directly.

External: Website

Post announcements and need-to-know information to the homepage and calendar section.

THE RULES

VENDOR & MARKET REGULATIONS

SETTING GUIDELINES

"Good management, including rules everyone follows, is key to a happy market" says Chris Gress, Manager of the Nebraska City Farmers' Market. Rules help your vendors and customers know what's expected and acceptable when it comes to participating in the market. Rules and regulations vary from market to market and may be dictated by the market manager (you), the market board or committee, or the entity operating the market (such as a Chamber of Commerce or Parks and Rec Department). Some rules may apply based on your location. For example, if your market takes place in a city park or parking lot, the city may require that the market follow certain rules. You may also need to follow county, state, or federal regulations.

If you're assuming management of an existing market, there may already be a set of rules in place. In most cases, it's best to wait until you have a year of experience before making changes to those existing rules—unless there's something unsafe or that needs urgent attention.

If you're helping to create a brand new market, launch your market with the rules already in place. Aim to have your rules and guidelines established 3-6 months before your market start date. While you may be recruiting vendors before the rules are set, be sure to communicate the rules early.



YOU DON'T HAVE TO START FROM SCRATCH

If you are starting a new market, or hoping to add written rules or policies to an already existing market, you can look to other markets for inspiration. Look to markets in your region - see if they have their rules or vendor policies available online. Better yet, call them up and have a conversation about market rules and policies. It's likely that your fellow market organizer will be happy to talk about their system and share a copy of their rules, policies, and vendor applications or agreements. From there you can make a few tweaks to align with your own community. Aim to have your rules and guidelines established 3-6 months before your market start date.

Emily Thompson, Market Manager for the Fall City Farmers Market says, "If you are starting out, have rules from the get-go. When we started we didn't have a strict start time or structure, so it was hard to enforce anything. I started handing out the rules at the beginning of the season to make it easier to enforce them, and keep things consistent."



SLOW AND STEADY

If you're assuming management of an existing market, there may already be a set of rules in place. In most cases, it's best to wait until you have a year of experience before making changes to those existing rules—unless there's something unsafe or that needs urgent attention.

In this case, Chris Gress of the Nebraska City Farmers Market agrees. He says, "You can't just go in and change everything right away. Work with what's been done, try to improve it, but change things slowly and not try to irritate everybody. Get input, and try to make the best decision possible."

Rules Examples

HERE ARE COMMON MARKET GUIDELINES:

Some rules and regulations are more standard, such as requiring vendors to have all necessary permits and proof of insurance. You may find that others do or do not apply to your farmers market. For example, an indoor-only market probably won't require vendors to use tent weights. Choose the guidelines that make the most sense for the size, location, and goals of your farmers market.

VENDOR PRODUCER POLICY



Many farmers markets require the vendor that sells at the market be the producer who grew, produced, crafted or processed the goods being sold at the market. To implement this policy, you must indicate it in your rules and regulations.



PETS

A pet policy is a common point of contention for vendors, managers, and attendees. If a market has such a policy and does not post "no pets allowed," the market is held responsible if an incident does occur and the rule was not enforced.

TENT WEIGHTS



All tents must be weighted (XX lbs minimum), no drilling or staking is permitted into pavement.

PROOF OF INSURANCE



A typical amount of at least \$500,000 or \$1,000,000 in liability coverage is suggested.

SUBLEASING



For markets that require vendor insurance, A typical amount of at least \$500,000 - \$1,000,000 in liability coverage is suggested. See Chapter 4 for more details about insurance.

DAMAGE OR LOSS OF PRODUCT



The market is not held responsible for damage or loss of use that the lease may incur because of acts of God, or any other cause not under the market's control.

SHARED VENDOR BOOTH



A vendor may share their space with another vendor. Example: ABC Farm and XYZ go in on a market stall together. ABC Farm attends the market on Wednesday and XYZ Farm attends on Saturday.

CODE OF CONDUCT



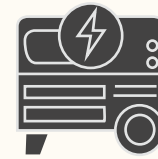
Fraudulent, dishonest, and deceptive practices; inappropriate conduct and activities; and display or sale of obscene, illegal, or unsafe merchandise is prohibited, the determination of which is at the sole discretion of market staff.

TRASH



Vendors are responsible for removing all waste, rubbish, recyclables, or trash that they generate during the course of selling at the market.

GENERATORS



Vendors are permitted to use generators that do not exceed XX decibels when the market is in operation. Generators must be quiet and not emit offensive fumes.

NO SMOKING



No smoking or use of tobacco, smokeless tobacco, or e-cigarettes is permitted by attendees or vendors.

NO SPACE HEATERS



Space heaters (electric and propane) are prohibited at the farmers market.

DRUG & ALCOHOL POLICY



If a vendor(s) enter the market under the influence of drugs or alcohol, they will forfeit the stall for a minimum of one day, and a maximum of the remainder of the market season.

VENDOR EMPLOYEES



Family members or employees paid hourly, on commission, or by salary may sell a vendor's products at the market. Vendors are responsible for making sure all persons who work their booth are aware of the market rules and regulations.

PLASTIC BAG BAN



This ban will be for single use grocery bags with handles and similar plastic bags used at the end of a typical transaction. Vendors are not allowed to recycle and use these bags for distribution.



NO HAWKING



Prohibits the calling of attention to products in a loud, repetitive public manner and selling products in an aggressive manner.

COMPLIANCE



Vendors must comply with all city, county, and state ordinances/regulations and federal laws.

LICENSES & PERMITS



All permits necessary to sell must be on display at all times. It is the responsibility of the vendor to obtain and provide to the market manager copies of all licenses and permits required for the sale of the vendor's products at the market.

EXTENSION CORDS



Cords or anything in the walkway of market attendees must be taped when the cords cross walkways.

FOR YOUR MARKET

MONEY MAKES THE MARKET GO ROUND

KEEPING FINANCIAL RECORDS

Markets need to be keeping track of the most basic level incomes and expenses. Typically, income at a market will include vendor stall fees, donations, or sponsors. Expenses will vary depending on where your market is located (rent), what programs you run, events, marketing, and more. Tracking each can be done as simply as using a pen and paper or as complex as using a software program on a computer.

ACCOUNTING SOFTWARE

Accounting software comes in all varieties, prices, and functionality. With all the accounting software options available, it is best to research the options and find the one that best fits your budget, use, and skill or comfort level. The most commonly used software is Quickbooks, as it offers a wide range of functions to assist with commonly required tasks—all at a reasonable price. Depending on your scale, you may not need accounting software at the moment. You may be satisfied using a spreadsheet program such as Microsoft Excel (paid), or Google Sheets (free).

MANAGING A BANK ACCOUNT

If your farmers market is operating under the umbrella of another entity (such as a Chamber of Commerce or City Parks and Recreation Department), that entity may also act as the fiscal agent for your market. Your income and expenses would be routed through that entity's bank account, or one it has created for you.

Whatever business structure your farmers' market is, it's best to keep personal and business/farmers market bank accounts separate.



When opening a bank account, the bank will need:

- A copy of your LLC's articles of organization, certificate of formation, or an equivalent document, depending on the state in which you registered your LLC
- LLC's federal taxpayer identification number (EIN or Employer Identification Number)
- LLC operating agreement or some other document which sets out the authorized signee for your LLC

CENTRALIZED CREDIT CARD SYSTEM

A centralized credit card system is a shared credit card terminal that allows all market attendees to access market currency while at the market. The system is typically implemented with the plan to distribute food assistance program dollars at the market and allows all vendors to participate while not having to purchase and manage their own credit card terminal. Types of market currency are dependent on the programs the market participates in (e.g., SNAP) but always include some form of "market bucks" with wooden nickels being commonly used as market currency.

How to Create a Budget for Your Market

1. START WITH LAST YEAR'S NUMBERS

When creating your market budget for the upcoming year, it is recommended to look at last year's income and expenses to assist with planning the following year. If you do not have this data from previous years, the example Income Accounts and Expense Accounts tables to the left highlight the most common line items.

2. ADD PROJECTED EXPENSES

List the current year's projected costs related to staff wages, legal and professional services, supplies, rent, advertising and marketing, live music, special events, membership dues, insurance, other miscellaneous costs, and (potentially) SNAP. Miscellaneous costs may include: Utilities, Permits, Office Overhead, Portable Restrooms, Central Credit Card Terminal, Transaction Fees, Monthly Wi-Fi, etc. Remember to plan and save for future long-range projects, too.

Use the actual expense rates when possible, as this will keep your budget more accurate in the long term. Once you think you have a complete list of expenses, it's always good practice to plan on some contingencies (things you don't expect that cost money). Surprise costs usually come up—it's always nice to have money set aside for those.

3. ESTIMATE EXPECTED INCOME

Now that you know the cost to operate the market in the coming year, list the current year's expected income from stall fees, membership dues, donations, promotions, sponsorships, and (potentially) SNAP.

4. COMPARE THE NUMBERS

Take a look at expenses versus income. For a market to be sustainable in the long term, a market will need a positive balance (Income - Expenses). If your projected expenses are more than your expected income, you will need to either get creative with finding additional dollars or you will need to trim your budget. As a general rule, it is easier to find additional dollars for programs or events than for your general operating expenses (rent, fees, insurance, personnel).

EXAMPLE INCOME ACCOUNTS

INCOME ACCOUNTS	INCOME AMOUNT	PERCENTAGE OF INCOME
Vendor Booth Fees	\$7,000	52%
Sponsorship Fees	\$1,000	7%
Grants & Donations	\$5,000	37%
Other Income	\$500	4%
Total Income	\$13,500	100%

*If you accept SNAP another row would be included

EXAMPLE EXPENSE ACCOUNTS

EXPENSE ACCOUNTS	EXPENSE AMOUNT	PERCENTAGE OF EXPENSE
Employees or Contractors	\$3,600	38%
Legal & Professional Services	\$300	3%
Supplies	\$300	3%
Rent	\$1,000	10%
Advertising/Marketing	\$3,500	36%
Market Music & Events	\$500	5%
Membership Dues	\$20	<1%
Insurance	\$300	3%
Miscellaneous	\$100	1%
Total Expenses:	\$9,620	96%

*If you accept SNAP another row would be included

EMERGENCIES

PLANNING FOR THE SAFETY OF YOUR VENDORS



The safety of the farmers market vendors, market manager, and customers must be the highest priority of the market. Every market should include a Weather and Emergencies Policy in their rules and regulations and designate who makes the decision in the case of inclement weather or an emergency (typically the market manager). You also need a plan for how you'll notify both vendors and the general public.

As market manager, you may need to cancel or a close due to severe storms, extreme heat or cold, or an imminent weather emergency, like flooding. But in order to ensure the success of your farmers market, it's important to enforce a "rain or shine" policy--meaning the market will remain open in the rain and not close except for inclement weather.

RAIN OR SHINE

If the market gets a reputation for closing due to rain, customers will check the weather instead of making the market part of their routine. **Mark Wall, Producer on the Farmers Market Channel**, stresses the importance of keeping your market open rain or shine:

"Rain or predicted rain is no reason not to show up at the market. It is a decreasing spiral downward. If there are fewer farmers in the rain, then fewer customers. If there are fewer customers, then fewer farmers.

Here's my policy: If a vendor signs out of the market a week in advance—which is allowed, and for which there is a form and clipboard—then that absence is permitted. Otherwise, all vendors must show up on a rainy or predicted rainy day. If a vendor does not, that vendor pays \$1 for every vendor that DOES show up on that day. It is \$1 for each farmer or maker. It is paid to the market, and the market distributes it to the farmers who were present. Last time it was invoked it was \$86. If your market is smaller, make it \$2 per vendor.

This policy does three things: One, it rewards the farmers and makers who are keeping the market open. Two, it punishes those that are afraid of the rain. And three, it is a memorable penalty that everyone talks about.

Since the market isn't open all day, rain often comes when we are not open—earlier or later. Most importantly, **our sales are about 85% of normal on rainy days."**

Considering Your Weather & Emergency Policy



RAIN OR SHINE POLICY

The market is a rain or shine event and will not close for rain. This lets market attendees know that the market will be open unless severe weather is present.



SEVERE WEATHER

The market will be canceled in the event of severe weather: lightning visible or within a 10-mile radius; wind speeds over 40mph; and large hail, tornado, or flood warnings.



EXTREME HEAT

If the heat index is greater than 103 degrees Fahrenheit (putting vendors and attendees at risk of heat-related illness) the market will be canceled.



EXTREME COLD

The market will be canceled if a certain wind chill temperature is expected or in the event of inclement winter weather such as a blizzard or ice storm.



DECISION MAKING PROCESS

The market manager has the final authority to cancel a market and will take all necessary actions and precautions to ensure the regular and safe operation of the market.



COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

The market manager will notify vendors via email, text message, and/or phone call. Community members will be notified via e-blast, social media, and market website.



RAIN DATES

If you're planning a special event, program, or night/holiday market for your farmers market, consider a backup plan or rain date/location in the event of a weather-related cancellation.



CPR & FIRST AID

It's encouraged that market managers be CPR trained. Also, make sure staff, vendors, and volunteers know where to find first-aid kits and what to do in case of an emergency.



EMERGENCY READY

In case of a full-scale emergency or active shooter situation, all markets should have an emergency action plan and share it with vendors ahead of time.



AUDIBLE SYSTEM

An audible system can be used at larger markets to assist with the implementation of an Emergency Action Plan.

MARKET SEASON

INSURANCE

IS YOUR FARMERS MARKET COVERED?

Insurance is a means of protection from financial loss. It is a form of risk management, primarily used to protect against the risk of an unexpected loss. An entity which provides insurance is known as an insurer, insurance company, insurance carrier, or underwriter.

Here's an example: A shopper tripped over one of the bungee cords that ties down a vendor's tent and needed to get stitches. They sue the farmer for personal injury.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN TYPES OF INSURANCE?

Product liability: Covers claims related to the product that the farmer sells which typically includes fruits, vegetables, eggs, baked goods, etc.

General liability: Covers claims brought against the farmer that are not related to the product that the farmer sells.

Here's an example: A consumer buys a dozen eggs, and later claims that those eggs made them sick. They sue for food poisoning or personal injury.



Insurance, rule enforcement, conflict resolution, WIC, SNAP, DUFBI, market satisfaction, special events--**This section of the toolkit will cover these topics and much more.**



WHAT KIND OF INSURANCE DOES MY FARMERS MARKET NEED?

All farmers markets should hold a General Liability Insurance Policy. Many markets are required to have Liability Insurance and many property owners will require this of a farmers market if you do not own the property. Talk with an insurance agent about the amount of coverage you need for your market, which can vary from market to market depending on a number of factors.

If your position as manager is contracted employment, you will need to purchase your own Contractor Insurance Policy. It is illegal for the market to directly pay for this policy.

For added assurance, also have a "Hold Harmless" clause. A "Hold Harmless" clause is an agreement vendors sign agreeing that they will not hold the market liable for any loss, damages, liability, claims, suits, costs, or expenses they incur related to their involvement in the market. See an example of one at: <https://northeastowarcd.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/4-Vendor-Insurance.pdf>



If your farmers market is a non-profit, you should also hold a Directors and Officers Policy (D&O). The D&O insurance policy protects a non-profit's board of directors in case of a lawsuit stemming from a decision that the board made relating to the market's operation.

Where Should I Look For Insurance?

1. Is your Farmers Market sponsored by another organization that holds its own insurance such as a 501(c)3 non-profit, business, or Chamber of Commerce? **Reach out to your partnering or sponsoring organization to see if the farmers market and its activities can be added to the existing insurance policy.** Usually this is the best first step and easiest way to access the insurance coverage that you need.
2. **Reach out to knowledgeable groups, organizations, or other farmers markets in your area or region.** Ask about their policies and providers. More information and contacts for farmers markets in Nebraska can be found on the Buy Fresh, Buy Local Nebraska website.
3. **Talk to your home or vehicle insurance provider,** and find out about their policies for insuring farmers markets.
4. **Find a national or state company that is familiar with farmers market insurance,** such as Nebraska Farm Bureau.
5. The Center for Agriculture and Food Systems has created a wonderful resource with in depth information about Farmers Market insurance and other topics. **Check out the Farmers Market Legal Toolkit section on insurance here:** <https://farmersmarketlegaltoolkit.org/risks/insurance/#undefined>

Communicating &

ENFORCING RULES

YOUR MARKET, YOUR RULES

As market manager, it's your responsibility to not only communicate, but also enforce the market's rules and regulations. There are many ways you can do this, and it's a good idea to do it in as many ways as possible—from writing the rules to putting them on display to discussing them in-person. Vendors, customers, volunteers, and market staff should all have easy access to rules that pertain to their role at the market and be held to those rules at all times.

Developing a set of rules for your market can take a considerable amount of time, so start early and seek input from vendors, customers, and other market managers where you can. Think of your rules as a living document, subject to change based on the needs of the market, your vendors, and customers.



COMMUNICATING THE RULES

Signed contracts/agreements: Give each vendor a copy of the clearly-stated rules and regulations. Have vendors sign an agreement stating that they read, understand, and accept the rules. Any vendor who is unwilling to sign and agree to the rules should not be allowed to sell at your market. Additionally, anyone who is a non-vendor is not allowed to sell at the market. If your market does not allow vendors who did not raise, grow, or make their items, that should be noted (i.e., vendors who purchase produce at the grocery store and try to sell it at the farmers market).

Rules signage: Create signs that are easy to read and understand, then place them strategically throughout your market so that visitors are informed and reminded of the rules.

In-person conversations: If you're adapting a set of rules for the first time or making changes to existing rules, touch base in-person with your vendors—at a meeting or one-on-one—to make sure they fully understand and accept them.

Other visual demonstrations: For example, when trying to prevent customers from shopping outside of market hours, a manager might mark off the area with a ribbon. This creates a physical barrier and visually communicates vendors are not open for sale.

Auditory demonstrations: Many markets use bells, whistles or other auditory clues to notify customers and vendors when the market has opened and closed for the day.

ENFORCING THE RULES

Expectations for following the rules: Vendors may try and enforce the rules rather than coming to the market staff, manager, or volunteers. Encourage vendors to come to you or other market staff with their concerns and build trust by following through and addressing them.

Consistency: Be consistent with rule enforcement from vendor to vendor and customer to customer. The same rules apply whether they're a new or long-time seller, whether the customer is your friend or a stranger.

Protection from liability: When you have rules, you must enforce them. If an accident occurs related to an unenforced rule, the market may be liable.

EXAMPLES

Market A has a "No Dog" policy but does not enforce it. Someone brings a dog to the market, but the broken rule goes unaddressed. Another person trips over the dog and is injured. The market and the pet owner can both be held liable for the accident.

Market B does not have a "No Dog" policy. Someone brings a dog to the market. Another person trips over the dog and is injured. The pet owner can be held liable for the accident.

Market C has a "No Dog" policy. Someone brings a dog to the market. Staff addresses the issue. The pet owner must leave, but can return without their dog—enforcing the rules and protecting the market.



Sample Rules Policy

1. All rules of the market are enforced by the Market Coordinator or their designee, who has ultimate on-site authority. Complaints or problems should be directed to the Market Coordinator in a timely manner.
2. If a vendor does not abide by the rules of the market or comply with federal, state, and local regulations applicable to market participation, the Market Coordinator or designee may take any action deemed appropriate, including revoking the vendor from selling at the market for future market days.
3. Customer complaints will be forwarded to vendors and kept on file. Complaints may result in disciplinary action, including revocation of authorization to participate in the market.
4. The market reserves the right to visit and inspect the farm or business of any vendor and to request any documents verifying business or employee status.
5. Vendors must remain current with all financial obligations. Vendors who become delinquent in paying financial obligations to the market shall immediately have their market privileges suspended until full payment is made. No refunds of vendor fees will be made. Prior to any suspension, the market will provide the vendor with notice of the delinquency, and allow at least seven (7) calendar days for the vendor to pay the delinquent amount.
6. The host organization or designee reserves the right to make an exception to these market rules and guidelines at its discretion.

Examples of vendor agreements and rules can be found in the Appendix.

“Clear rules are very important with 100+ vendors on site and help to mitigate conflict. Make the rules and regulations very detailed and specific to your site. **Review your rules and regulations at the end of each season, adapt them at the beginning of the season.** Vendors must read all rules and regulations which are listed on their application and sign. Also posting clear rules on our website and social media so that the public knows the expectations.”

- Kristen Beck, Omaha Farmers Market

RESOLUTION

TIPS FOR KEEPING THE PEACE

The farmers market isn't immune to conflict. As a market manager, it's your responsibility to ensure things run as smoothly as possible—for vendors, for customers, and the market as a whole. Patience, positivity, and proactive preparation goes a long way.

10 TIPS FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

1. ADDRESS CONFLICT IN PRIVATE WHEN POSSIBLE

Conflict will arise, but you can take measures to prevent it from impacting customer experience. Whether it's an issue with a vendor or customer, take it aside privately to avoid creating an uncomfortable situation for others.

2. TALK ABOUT FEELINGS

Let the other person express their feelings and concerns while you listen and do not interrupt. Don't react to emotional outbursts. Instead of yelling back, acknowledge their concerns and perspective. It doesn't take that much effort—and it can help calm their emotions.



3. BE AN ACTIVE LISTENER

Rephrase what they say and express. For example, say: "I hear you. Let me see if I'm understanding you. You're saying that "___" and then ask: "Do I have that right?"

4. USE "I" STATEMENTS

Don't focus on the other person or use "You" statements. For example, instead of saying "You make me mad when you ___" or "You did ___" Say instead, "I feel frustrated when ___ happens and I would like ___."

5. TAKE YOUR TIME... BUT DON'T ALLOW PROBLEMS TO FESTER

Avoid knee jerk reactions and don't jump to quick judgments. Ask questions and gather information so that you can find a solution for everyone. Unresolved problems can damage relationships and the market long term. Resolve issues as they arise. Be proactive in making problem-solving an efficient process.

6. GET HELP FROM YOUR BOARD OR ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

If you have a board, allow them to establish a policy for conflict resolution at the market. Create a policy that allows the manager to handle day-to-day issues, then pass larger conflicts on to the board to be addressed. This removes you from difficult situations and makes you neutral. **If your market does not have a board, reach out to other market managers or trusted vendors in your area for advice.** Other resources include: Buy Fresh, Buy Local Nebraska and the Farmers Market Legal Toolkit.

7. GET IT IN WRITING

As part of the conflict resolution policy, allow vendors to send written complaints to the board about issues they don't want to bring up to the manager. Likewise, give a written warning. Make written records of conflicts, violations, and resolutions to create a paper trail. Enforce appropriate suspensions and fines which need to be spelled out in the rules at the beginning of the market season.

8. BE CONSISTENT

Regardless of your relationship with a vendor, be consistent in enforcing the rules and in how you handle conflicts, infractions, and other issues.

9. UTILIZE OUTSIDE RESOURCES

Sometimes a conflict simply can't be solved by you, or even by involving the board. In these situations, document as much as you can in writing, reach out to a third-party service such as the Nebraska Mediation Association or Nebraska Legal Aid. Additionally, take time to get additional training and hone your skills in conflict resolution. Local universities and organizations might have opportunities for professional development.

10. GET ADDITIONAL TRAINING

Conflict resolution is a skill that can be learned, practiced, and improved. Check with local community colleges and universities or other market managers for possible trainings in your area.



MORE ADVICE FOR PROBLEM-SOLVING

"Always be open to feedback from your vendors, include them in decision making and creating rules and policies. Follow-up each year to get feedback on how things should change."

- Aliza Brunsing, West Point Farmers Market

"We have an advisory council of 3-4 people so you don't go it alone. **We approach the problem as a team.** Our market has rules and regulations that each vendor agrees to, and we also have a process spelled out for addressing issues."

- Alan Kruger, Highland Park Farmer's Market (Hastings)

PROGRAMS

ACCEPTING FOOD PROGRAMS

Food assistance programs can be a great way to make your market a space for all people to access fresh produce, and it can provide an economic boost to your vendors. The world of food assistance can seem daunting and complicated, but there are several resources across the state that can help implement these programs at your market. There are also strategies to increase the use of these benefits at your market. This section will lay out the basics of the programs, how to get started, and how to expand their use once your market is approved to accept them. There are two main food assistance programs: FMNP and SNAP.



FARMERS MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAMS (FMNP)

- Run by the Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA)
- Includes the Women, Infant, and Child Program (WIC FMNP) and the Senior FMNP
- Benefits come in the form of paper checks, which are referred to as checks, vouchers, and/or coupons
- Customers use the checks at vendor booths for eligible food items, and vendors deposit the checks as they normally would at their bank
- Eligible purchases include unprepared, fresh fruits, vegetables, and herbs that were grown in Nebraska or a county that borders our state
- Honey is allowable
- Farmer vendors must be certified by NDA and follow all guidelines to participate in the program. Recertification is required every 3 years. See below for details.

In Nebraska, WIC FMNP vouchers are distributed at four Omaha WIC clinics between June and October. Participants must be eligible for and participating in the WIC program. Seniors FMNP vouchers are distributed at AAAs and Senior Centers across Nebraska, June through September and while supplies last. Nebraska Department of Agriculture recommends contacting your local WIC Clinic or local Senior Center to inquire about information.

SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP)

- Run by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
- Benefits are expended through Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards, similar to a debit or credit card
- This program was formerly called food stamps
- SNAP recipients are allocated a monthly amount based on the number of people living in their household, total household income, and a number of other factors
- Eligible purchases include any food item that is not prepared hot, for immediate consumption (ex. Fresh sweet corn at the market is allowed, but cooked corn on the cob to eat at the market is not allowed)
- SNAP participants can also purchase seeds and plants with their SNAP benefits, as long as they are for food producing varieties

IMPLEMENTATION IS A TEAM EFFORT

Bill Price of the Lyons Farmers Market stresses, "It is important to have vendors that accept SNAP/WIC/Senior Farmers' Market coupons because that is a large part of the customer base."

To fully implement these programs, it takes involvement from vendors and the manager. Expect to have to take the lead on reminding vendors to complete applications, field questions from customers and vendors, and coordinate the implementation of the program. Promoting the program before and during the market season will help draw SNAP customers to the market. Find partner organizations in your area that can help with these efforts, like a local hospital or non-profit working on food access issues. Help vendors get invested by communicating the value of these programs, from increased sales opportunities to healthier community residents.



ACCESSING FOOD NUTRITION PROGRAMS IN NEBRASKA

In Nebraska the FMNP WIC and SFMNP programs are overseen by the Nebraska Department of Agriculture. Training covers what is necessary to participate, be certified, and implement the program as a vendor. Each vendor must **individually** attend training and become certified to accept WIC and SFMNP vouchers. For up to date information and contacts visit; <https://ourbesttoyou.nebraska.gov/programs.html>

Currently, the contact for FMNP, WIC and SFMNP is:

Casey Foster
Nebraska Department of Agriculture,
(402) 471-6857
casey.foster@nebraska.gov

For more information about your market becoming SNAP eligible contact MarketLink, <https://marketlink.org/> and see page 68 for more detailed information.

What You Need to Know:

WIC & SFMNP

WOMEN, INFANT, AND CHILD & SENIOR FMNP

WIC is a nutrition program for pregnant, breastfeeding women and families with children younger than five. In Nebraska, WIC helps approximately 35,000 people at over 100 clinic sites. It helps eligible families with healthy food, breastfeeding support, nutrition education, health and community resources. The WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) is associated with WIC. Eligible WIC participants are issued FMNP coupons in addition to their regular benefits. These coupons can be used to buy eligible foods from farmers, farmers' markets or roadside stands that have been approved to accept FMNP coupons by the state agency.

WIC FMNP coupons are available at four Omaha WIC clinics between June-October (while supplies last).

The **Senior FMNP** provides low-income seniors with vouchers that can be exchanged for eligible foods, like fruits, vegetables, honey, and fresh-cut herbs, at farmers markets, roadside stands, and community-supported agriculture programs. Senior FMNP benefits are distributed at AAAs and Senior Centers across the State. Coupons are disbursed June-September (while supplies last). Participants can spend them at markets throughout the season.



HOW DO PARTICIPANTS USE FMNP CHECKS?

After receiving the checks, participants will visit the market anytime between June 1st and October 31st to use their checks. Each check is worth \$3 and can be spent on fresh, local, unprepared fruits and vegetables at vendor stalls that display their "Nebraska Farmers Market Nutrition Program Checks Accepted Here" sign. No change will be given for FMNP checks.

HOW DO VENDORS ACCEPT FMNP CHECKS?

Vendors must:

- Attend a 1 hour webinar hosted by the Dept. of Ag. at least once every 3 years.
- Clearly display their "Nebraska Farmers Market Nutrition Program Checks Accepted Here" sign
- Make sure checks are not past their expiration date
- Make sure that all items purchased are eligible (i.e. unprepared, fresh fruits and vegetables)
- Make sure the customer signs the check before handing it over to the vendor
- Stamp the check with their unique stamp provided by NDA
- Turn in the checks to get reimbursed by NDA. (Checks must be submitted on or before 15 days after the expiration date printed on the check.)

HOW DOES A MARKET BEGIN ACCEPTING FMNP?

In the State of Nebraska individual vendors, not markets, must become certified to accept FMNP vouchers.

WHAT DO VENDORS NEED TO DO?

In order for Farmers Market Vendors to accept FMNP vouchers they must attend a training to become certified which is offered each year by the Nebraska Department of Agriculture.

Farmers must also meet the following requirements;

- Reside and grow eligible foods within Nebraska or a county adjacent to Nebraska's border
- Be 18 years or older and electronically sign a farmer agreement that outlines the rules and regulations of the program.

Re-certification is required every three years by attending the training again. Certified farmers who complete the training can accept the coupons anywhere they sell produce (i.e. farmers market, roadside stand, or u-pick).

Farmers who attend the training will receive a handbook detailing all of the rules and regulations.

What You Need to Know :

SNAP

SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a federal program administered by the USDA Office of Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) and managed by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). SNAP benefits can be used to purchase farm fresh foods for the household to eat, such as: breads and cereals; fruits and vegetables; meats, fish, and poultry; and dairy products. Seeds and plants that produce food can also be purchased.

HOW DOES A MARKET BECOME CERTIFIED AND BEGIN ACCEPTING SNAP BENEFITS?

Both individual farmers and farmers markets can become certified to accept SNAP. If a farmers market

becomes certified to accept SNAP they can process SNAP cards at a main market booth and use a form of tokens distributed to shoppers. This is one of the most common ways. In order for a farmers market to become certified they must first submit an application on the USDA Website. The application can be found here: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/farmer-producer>

Farmers and Farmers Markets must first determine if they are eligible and provide the correct paperwork and information for the application. This process can be a little difficult and currently the State of Nebraska does not have an entity assisting with this.



USING MARKETLINK FOR FARMERS AND FARMERS MARKETS IN NEBRASKA

Currently, the best way to become certified as a farmer or farmers market in the State of Nebraska is through MarketLink. MarketLink is contracted by USDA to provide application assistance and the SNAP equipment to farmers for a specific period of time at no cost. If a Farmers Market or individual Farmer would like to become SNAP authorized and receive equipment contact MarketLink for assistance. They will walk you through the application process and once you are authorized will assist you in getting equipment.

Farmers markets will need;

- A bank account, be able to provide their bank account number and routing number.
- If the market is operated by a 501(c)3 non-profit organization they still have to provide their information; but the market manager's personal information will not be entered into the application
- It is the same application questions for farmers and farmers markets. The only difference is what information will be input if the farmers market it sponsored by a 501(c)3 organization or not. An individual farmer who wants to apply to accept SNAP will apply as a "retailer." These details will be covered by MarketLink.

Contact MarketLink by visiting www.marketlink.org Select the "Get in Touch" tab to schedule a call with a representative who will walk you through the steps to become SNAP authorized and apply for your equipment.

HOW DOES THE MARKETLINK FUNDING FOR SNAP EQUIPMENT WORK?

MarketLink will assist you with your USDA SNAP application. Once you submit MarketLink will provide you with the equipment to process SNAP cards at no charge. You will receive a chip reader that only processes SNAP cards. This chip reader is yours to keep, but you will need to provide your own smartphone or tablet either Android or iPhone. MarketLink has a grant that will cover the subscription fees for 1-year. After 1-year the subscription is \$19.95 per month to continue.





WHAT'S A POS AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

Markets may opt to manage a centralized Point of Sale (POS) system for the entire market. This allows customers to use their credit, debit, or EBT card and receive "market bucks," which they can use to purchase items from market vendors. The most common market buck is a wooden token with the market logo and dollar amount printed on it.

Markets should make a distinction between tokens used for credit/debit and those used for EBT—usually this is done by making the design on the token a different color. Credit/debit are often in \$5 tokens, and customers can receive change from the vendors. EBT/SNAP are often \$1 tokens, because customers cannot receive change for EBT funds.

TIME & MONEY INVESTMENT FOR MARKETS

To establish a centralized POS station at your market, first consider if your market has capacity to invest the time and money needed to purchase a POS system and tokens, apply to become a SNAP-authorized retailer, train market personnel, manage market-day transactions and an accounting system, and reimburse vendors on a weekly/monthly basis.

MY MARKET DOESN'T HAVE A CENTRALIZED POS. CAN VENDORS ACCEPT BENEFITS ON THEIR OWN?

Yes, even if your farmers market doesn't have a centralized SNAP system, your vendors that qualify as direct marketing farmers can become authorized SNAP retailers. Individual market vendors/farmers can apply to be SNAP retailers through the USDA Food and Nutrition Service.

For assistance with filing this application encourage individual farmers to contact MarketLink. Individual farmers will fill out the "retailer" application.

MAKING GOOD, HEALTHY

FOOD AFFORDABLE FOR EVERYONE IN THE COMMUNITY

Anna Curry of Whispering Roots who oversees the "Nourish Farm Stands" in partnership with The Big Garden in Omaha, Nebraska found working with MarketLink incredibly beneficial. Nourish Farm Stands became SNAP authorized and were able to accept SNAP at multiple market locations. Anna completed the USDA application process, became authorized, and received equipment all with assistance from MarketLink.

In the first year their markets saw little SNAP redemption, but Anna is hopeful that the program will grow and expand as they continue to promote it. **The importance of farmers markets accepting SNAP and other food assistance programs increases access and removes barriers for under-resourced communities.**



FOOD BUCKS

WHAT IS THE DUFEB PROGRAM?



In Nebraska, **Double Up Food Bucks (DUFEB)** is a program managed by Nebraska Extension and the Nebraska Community Foundation that aims to improve access and affordability of fresh fruits and vegetables. For every dollar that a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipient spends on fresh fruits and vegetables, that customer receives a dollar-to-dollar match to spend on more fruits and vegetables. This match is capped at \$20 per day. It's like free money that can be spent at participating farmers markets and grocery stores in Nebraska.

There are over 70,000 families in Nebraska that receive SNAP benefits. Nebraska Double Up Food Bucks is a private-public partnership that incentivizes those SNAP recipients to purchase more fresh fruits and vegetables from local farmers and retailers for the triple win.

Nebraska Extension began a Double Up Food Bucks pilot in partnership with the Nebraska Department of Agriculture, Children's Hospital & Medical Center,

CHI Health, three markets and one grocer in 2017. Since then, they have grown to six markets, five grocers, a mobile market, and CSA, as well as additional partnerships with the Nebraska Community Foundation, American Heart Association of Nebraska, Share Our Table, the USDA, and a number of other community-based organizations.

The reach and costs of DUFEB has grown every year since 2017. From September 2020 through August 2021, a total of \$152,252 incentives were redeemed by 4,361 DUFEB customers averaging a total of \$34.91 per customer. A total of \$175,897 incentives were distributed to customers giving the program an 87% redemption rate.

All incentive costs associated with the DUFEB currency are reimbursed by the Nebraska Community Foundation, which helps keep costs to individual markets low. However, markets should consider seeking funds to build awareness through creative marketing, outreach events, and incentive needs for future market seasons.



How Does DUFEB Work at a Market?

A customer goes to a participating farmers market or stand, visits the centralized card reading station and tells the market representative how much they would like to charge their EBT card.

For example, let's say the customer wants to charge \$20:

1. The market staff charges the EBT card \$20, and gives the customer \$20 worth of EBT currency (usually \$1 wooden or plastic tokens), plus an additional \$20 worth of Double Up Food Bucks (\$2 paper checks).
2. The customer can use the \$20 of EBT tokens on any SNAP eligible foods sold at that site (fresh or canned produce, bread, cheese, eggs, or meat). The DUFEB checks can only be used to purchase unaltered fresh fruits, vegetables, and herbs.
3. No change can be given from these currencies so the vendor and customer work together to make the purchase in \$1 or \$2 increments. It's also possible that a customer earns DUFEB at a participating grocery store and then brings those to spend at the farmers market.

Credit card systems work nearly the same way: customers tell the market employee at the centralized card reading station how much they would like to charge, then receive that amount in tokens. The difference is that customers using credit card tokens (\$5 each) can receive change and they can be spent on any items at the market (crafts, ready-to-eat foods, flowers, and groceries). EBT tokens must be spent in full and cannot receive change. EBT tokens are generally one color, and Credit/Debit tokens a different color.

“Being a SNAP and DUFEB market increases access to affordable, nutritious, and local food for area residents and creates tourism opportunities. This increases the number of customers local farmers serve, profitability of farms and farmers markets. When you become a DUFEB site, you are partnering with a strong network of philanthropists, health care systems, and service providers - all working together to support and advertise your market for the health benefit of your community”

- Vanessa Wielenga, DUFEB Coordinator for Nebraska Extension

WHAT IS NEEDED TO GET STARTED?

✓ CAN YOUR MARKET COVER ONGOING COSTS?

While there are no fees for EBT/SNAP transactions, there are fees for debit/credit transactions. The markets will also have to buy and occasionally replenish market tokens, and a staff member/volunteer has to take on the responsibility of operating the card reader.

✓ CAN YOU MEET THE MANAGEMENT & REPORTING REQUIREMENTS?

Markets will need to collect transaction data, complete monthly reporting, take program evaluation surveys, communicate and enforce program rules to their vendors, ensure vendors have proper signage, and complete necessary training and agreements. Market managers distribute DUFB checks to customers who spend them at vendor booths. Vendors endorse and deposit the DUFB checks in their bank account.

✓ DOES YOUR MARKET HAVE EASY ACCESS TO WI-FI?

Markets without easy access to Wi-fi at their market may also need to purchase a "Hot Spot" (mobile Wi-fi emitter) to be able to run the EBT machine at the market. Some machines have built-in mobile internet, and do not require a separate hot spot.

✓ CAN YOUR MARKET AFFORD/SECURE A SPONSOR FOR A CENTRALIZED EBT MACHINE?

The main expense to the market is the purchase of the centralized EBT machine, which can cost in the range of \$1,000 to \$3,000. However, it could be a fitting sponsorship opportunity for a local bank or hospital. There are many EBT machine models to choose from—some can only process SNAP/EBT, others can also process credit and debit cards. There are two programs that markets can apply for to get free machines. One is through NE DHHS and they only process EBT/SNAP cards. The other is through MarketLink which has the ability to process EBT, Debit, and credit cards.

Customer

SERVICE

ENSURING SATISFACTION FOR EVERY TYPE OF CUSTOMER

Some farmers market managers describe three types of customers;

1. The Grocery Shoppers: You can tell they are grocery shopping. They have their bags. They go through all of the vendors of produce and meats. They're not going to stay to listen to music; they're here to buy groceries.

2. The Food Truck Diners: There are some that are really coming to the market just for the prepared food vendors. They'll walk through the market, maybe even buy a few things. But primarily, they are coming to eat.

3. The Experience Seekers: And then, we have the customers that do a little bit of both—shop and eat. They're also going to sit and listen to music for an hour and meet up with friends. They come to socialize, be entertained, and enjoy the experience.

And while you may not regularly think of them as such, your vendors are your customers, too.

4. The Market Vendors: Model the level of customer service you want to see them provide. Treat your vendors with the same friendliness and helpfulness you want them to show their customers.



grocery shoppers, food truck diners, or experience seekers than the market in the next town over or across the state. And you may provide certain things at your market to please those customers, from high quality, fresh produce to freshly brewed coffee to tables and chairs for sitting down and enjoying the fresh air. But in order to keep all customers satisfied—no matter why they're there—you need to provide a high level of customer service.

SET A POSITIVE EXAMPLE

You can't control every product sold or interaction that takes place between your vendors and customers. But as manager, you can set the strongest example. Think about subtle ways to create a positive experience. Consider the layout of your market, proximity of restrooms and trash/recycle bins, and location of the information booth. Coach staff and volunteers to smile, greet customers, and ask customers how they're doing—and do those same things yourself when interacting with staff, volunteers, customers, and vendors.

Sample Budget: What Does Implementing DUFB Typically Cost?

Sample DUFB Budget						
Expenses		Notes				
Checks	\$150.00	Annual (based on vendor count)				
Terminal Set Up Fee	\$99.00	1 time fee				
Terminal Shipping Fee	\$20.00	1 time fee				
EBT Fees	\$267.00	Annual (charges vary per month)				
Wooden Tokens	\$75.45	Received (250) \$1 tokens				
Market Booth Set Up Fee (canopy, 2 tables, chairs, 1 tablecloth, 1 banner, cash box, etc.)	\$500.00	1 time fee				
SNAP/DUFB Marketing Materials (flyers, postcards, yard signs, etc.)	\$300.00	1 time fee				
Staff Time (96 hrs per season; \$20/hr)	\$1,920.00	DUFB reporting, marketing, cutting checks, stuffing envelopes, customer/vendor inquires				
SNAP sales	DUFB distributed	SNAP Trans	DUFB Trans	New customers	SNAP redeemed	DUFB redeemed
\$799	\$744	99	97	55	\$696	\$755

In the sample budget, there is a line for EBT fees, which are charged with each card swipe. Below the budget is the actual SNAP sales for the associated year to show how fees and sales are connected.



Interested in learning more about adding DUFB to your market?

Contact Double Up Food Bucks Nebraska at <https://doubleupnebraska.org/>

KEEPING CUSTOMERS SATISFIED

Depending on your market's location, size, times of day, and goals, you may have or want more or less

Remember, customers are satisfied whenever they consistently receive:

- A high-quality product
- Delivered by a caring, friendly person
- In a timely fashion

CUSTOMER SERVICE

IS DIRECTLY TIED TO YOUR MARKET'S BRAND

Here are examples of what Nebraska markets are doing:

NICE DISPLAY, NICE ATTITUDE

"The most important thing is to make sure you have a product that is displayed in a pleasing manner. It's fresh and clean and nice to look at. You need to have a product that people want. The second thing is to treat your customers with respect. Be sincere. Friendly. Stand up, don't be sitting on your derriere, looking at your phone or doing a crossword puzzle."

- Cheryl Averill, Morrill Farmers Market

REWARD THE RETURNERS

"A lot of vendors are home businesses, whether it's handmade crochet goods or soap or hand-sewn items, and they make sure to let their repeat customers know when the market is starting. They seem to be really good about holding onto items and having a buy-one-get-one-free sale or clearance sales. I've been watching them because they've been doing this long enough to know how to bring back customers. It's great marketing."

- Stephanie Grafel, Broken Bow Farmers Market



QUALITY SPEAKS LOUDEST

"The repeat customers come back because the vendors provide good product. The quality of the vegetables or the food is top notch. The family-friendly atmosphere keeps people coming back."

-Alexis Massie, Original Farmers Market of North Platte

Organizing

SPECIAL EVENTS

SPICE UP MARKET SEASON

Hosting special events at your farmers market or making adjustments to make your market feel more like a community event are both great ways to attract new visitors and keep existing customers coming back. What makes a farmers market a market is the selling and buying of fresh, locally grown or produced food. By adding prepared food vendors or

food trucks, musicians or live performers, and other activities such as painting or yoga, you're creating more of an experience at each market. Your market might also hold a one-time special event, such as a holiday market, night market, or indoor winter market.



“The first thing people see is a ‘We want you here’ sign. We try to provide products for everyone: Fresh produce, meat, arts, dog treats. We have activities too--fire truck/police cruiser tours, tire changing demos, oil changes, art projects. Our community theater donated a storage container people decorated with spray paint! We’ve held a dog show and kids parade. People want to be a part of it.”

-Aliza Brunsing, West Point Farmers Market

8 TIPS FOR BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE FARMERS MARKET

Offering special events at your farmers market is important for creating an exciting, welcoming, and fun environment. It is even more important to consider who in your community may be missing, who does not feel welcome, and why. Building an inclusive farmers market takes time and intention. Farmers Market managers, volunteers, and vendors should meet to discuss how to be inclusive of all community members and identities at the market.

Aliza Brunsing of West Point Farmers Market emphasizes how important it is to bring all the cultures from the community to the market. Her biggest tip is to be open minded and intentional when putting things together.



1. OUTREACH

Reach to local businesses, faith communities, schools, and other community spaces to recruit volunteers and organizers for your farmers market.

2. REFLECT DIVERSITY

Make sure that your market managers, staff, volunteers reflect the diversity of your community.

3. PARTNER WITH ORGANIZATIONS

Reach out to key community organizations that represent different cultures in your community.

4. CONSIDER BARRIERS TO ACCESS

Start by considering what are the access issues or barriers that may prevent individuals and communities from participating in, vending at, or being present at your farmers market?

5. INCLUDE TRAINING

Encourage and require training and educational opportunities for market managers and other volunteers on diversity, equity and inclusion practices.

6. CREATE SPACE FOR CULTURAL EXCHANGE

Create space at your farmers market for different community members to showcase their culture through food, baked items, food trucks, cultural festivals and celebrations.

7. MULTI-LINGUAL COMMUNICATION

Provide language access by making sure you translate all your marketing materials and signage into languages that exist in your community.

8. OFFER FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Support under-resourced vendors by providing incentives, free and/or reduced vendor fees.

Event Planning Checklist

3-5 mo.

3-5 MONTHS OUT

- Write brief summary of event
- Determine event activities
- Create a promotional plan
- Secure the venue
- Get necessary licenses/permits
- Reach out to potential sponsors
- Recruit and secure vendors
- Book performers/live music
- Design event logo and marketing materials

1-2 mo.

1-2 MONTHS OUT

- Schedule staff and recruit volunteers
- Set attendance targets
- Rent tables, chairs, and equipment
- Create landing page on website
- Promote on social media (until event happens)

2-3 wks.

2-3 WEEKS OUT

- Create and distribute schedule
- Map out the layout
- Add to community calendars
- Send out a press release

week prior

1 WEEK OUT

- Print event materials, signage, and banners
- Continue marketing and promoting

DAY OF!

DAY OF EVENT

- Pre-event meeting with volunteers and partners (go over schedule, leadership, etc.)
- Event set-up and tear-down
- Recognize sponsors, partners, and performers



MARKET PERFORMANCE



There are many ways to encourage and measure the long-term success of your farmers market. **Raising funds and securing sponsorships** can help your market afford what it needs to be a healthy market. **Marketing and promotions** can help boost awareness and attendance of your market. And **collecting data and feedback** will help you make improvements and changes moving forward.

FUNDRAISING

IT TAKES MONEY TO MAKE MONEY

Fundraising and sponsorships increase awareness, build relationships, and engage staff, volunteers, board members, vendors, and market-goers. And a market's effort to gather data and report metrics makes a request for funds stronger. First impressions are important and so is a communication strategy that is sustainable. Be realistic. Practice your pitch.

10 WAYS TO RAISE FUNDS

I. SPONSORSHIP

Look at who is already going to or supporting the market. Reach out to businesses who support similar causes. Be sure to give the sponsor something in exchange (scaling up what you give them based on what they gave you). For example: logos on banners, materials, maps, and posters; recognition on social media and in newsletters; mentions when you talk about the market on the radio or news; a stall at the market; or handing out promotional items at the info booth.

Sponsorships can take many forms depending on the needs of the market and what resources a local business has to offer. Here are some examples of different sponsorship opportunities:

Market banner: Sell space on a large banner that will hang at every market. Offer different sizes of ad squares for different sponsorship levels, ranging from \$150 to \$1500. Estimated cost of one banner: \$450 (designed by the market manager or staff, then printed by a local print and design company). It costs more to hire a graphic designer, but you could save money by ordering printing online. The design and printing could be a sponsorship opportunity, too, by offering the designer or printer space on the banner that matches what the fees.



In-kind: Don't underestimate the impact of in-kind donations. In-kind donations are when individuals or businesses give their time or skills related in place of a direct monetary contribution. A printer in town may donate flyers, posters, a banner, or other promotional materials. Local media may provide in-kind advertising in the newspaper or on the tv or radio. Others might provide assistance by designing websites or logos, writing grants, or marketing.

Percent of sales: Partner with a grocery store, restaurant, or other business for a giving day or week. Many restaurants offer dining fundraisers. How it works: The restaurant schedules a day that your organization will benefit from sales. The restaurant will likely create a flier for you to promote and post on social media, encouraging patrons to dine at that establishment on the given day. For each diner that shows the flier on their phone or a printed copy, the restaurant will donate a percent of that patron's sales to you.

2. BRANDED MERCH

Put your market logo on merchandise for sale at the info booth. Many markets do this for cloth shopping bags, aprons, hats, t-shirts, or mugs.

3. CALENDAR

Create a calendar of images from the farmers market. This is a great option for year-round markets who can sell the calendar at the end or beginning of the calendar year. You can order inexpensive calendars in bulk online, but a local print or design shop may be willing to print the calendar at a discount as an in-kind donation.

4. RAFFLES/AUCTIONS

Raffle or auction off donated products. Have a board member who makes quilts or a vendor who bakes amazing pies? Local businesses may donate a spa gift card, wine tasting, hotel or restaurant package, or tickets to a concert, musical, or sporting event. Note: You may need a permit to do a raffle or auction.

5. LOCAL CLUBS & CHURCHES

Some markets have found success funding their SNAP programs by reaching out to local pastors to help raise funds from congregations. Community clubs (kiwanas, rotary, etc.) may do a donation at their meetings, too.

6. ONLINE FUNDRAISING PLATFORMS

Look into online platforms like Fundly (fundly.com). Give Lively (givelively.org) is free for non-profits.

7. FACEBOOK & MARKET WEBSITE

If you're a non-profit, you can apply to accept donations via your Facebook page. By providing proof of non-profit status and basic financial info, you can add a "Donate" button to your page, run fundraising campaigns, and even have other Facebook users (board members, vendors, or followers) ask for donations on your behalf.

If your market has a website, you can add donation functionality, a "Donate" button, and a donation/ sponsorship page to your website. This is a great place



to explain how funds will be used and recognize past and current sponsors with their logos.

8. SPECIAL EVENTS

Raise money by hosting a pre-season potluck, mid-season meal which a local chef prepares using farm fresh produce, or end-of-season benefit concert played by a local band.

9. VENDOR FEES

Most markets already charge fees, but if yours doesn't, consider starting. Even the smallest market offers vendors a place to sell their products. It's reasonable to charge a small fee to help support operating costs, improvements, and promotions of the market. Clearly communicate any new fee to all vendors early and in-person, and don't implement or raise rates mid-season.

10. GRANTS

Writing grants can be time-consuming, but there is a lot of potential funding to be had if you can find the right opportunity. Local businesses, area banks, and community foundations are great places to start. Consider partnering with other markets for larger state or federal grants. Know what you're getting into: before you start writing a grant, you'll want to study the expectations if awarded grantees.

6 C's to Consider When Planning Your Funding Strategy

1. CAPACITY

Consider your capacity as market manager. Coordinate your asks, activities, and stewardship accordingly. Some fundraising methods require more time and different skills than others.

2. COMMITTEE

Who can help you? Do you have a board member with grant writing experience? A volunteer who does graphic design? Can you assemble a small committee to help seek sponsors, write letters, and follow through? It's okay if you need a year to build that core team and create a strategy, then spend the next year putting a plan into action.

3. CREDIT

Give credit where credit is due. Follow through with what you promise sponsors in return for their support. Put their logos on marketing pieces. Give them a booth. Write thank you notes.

4. CORRESPONDENCE

Will your committee be making the funding request or will it come directly from you? In letters, will you use "we" or "I" when requesting donations? If you have board members with strong ties to potential sponsors, consider sending them a more personalized letter.

5. CONNECTIONS

Examine your existing relationships in the community. You probably already have supporters who are willing to invest their resources (cash, time, skills) in your market's success.

6. CLARITY

Be clear in everything you do. Provide boundaries, regular schedules, gentle reminders, and expectations for yourself, your team, your sponsors, and your vendors.



YOUR MARKET

FUNDRAISING IDEAS FROM NEBRASKA MARKETS

HOST A MEAL

"Last year was the first year we fundraised for the market. During the annual festival that Sutton does every year...we served breakfast and lunch to benefit the farmers market. The profits from that went toward paying for banners and advertising for the farmers market. It was a huge success...it helped cover some of the expenses from previous years and for last year."

- Rebecca Plettner, Sutton Farmers Market



HOLD SPECIAL EVENTS

"[We have had] music, kids activities, people come from the nearby zoo, wine night...car shows, [and the] local marching band... Vendors individually keep track of what they make. [The] Chamber of Commerce and bank [often] give funding for activities."

- Allison Gabel, Shelby Farmers Market

WORK WITH PARTNERS

"The vouchers used by low-income customers to increase access to local food...are through our community benefit outreach program, funded by [the hospital]. They very much support it, both from a health perspective for families to have access, but then also supporting vendors, knowing that's a source of income for them..."

In 2020, one of the United Way partnerships...provided some additional funds towards our Farmer's Market vouchers...So, I approached [CHI] saying, 'Hey, would you guys be willing to support this? It would also go through the food pantry, but it can be used at farmers market.' And they were willing to do that."

- Claudia Lanuza, Schuyler Farmers Market

PLAN A WEEKLY GIVEAWAY

"Have a giveaway every week [with a] local businesses sponsor. The market gives the business a booth space, and they do a giveaway...such as hot dogs, cookies, water, koozies, pens, ice cream sandwiches, etc. [that is] available for all shoppers."

- Chris Gress, Nebraska City Farmers Market

RELY ON VENDOR FEES

"[The] office manages the Facebook page to advertise, collect fees, give permits, and provide guidelines for vendors. Vendors can pay a season rate of 50 dollars, or single market rate of 10 dollars. In some years, sponsors also help fund the market."

- Irene Mock, Wayne Farmers Market

SEEKING & SECURING SPONSORSHIPS

Sponsorships can help sustain and build your farmers market. Here are some insights and tips from market managers on securing sponsorships for your market:

LOOK TO THE COMMUNITY

"We reached out to the local bank and Chamber of Commerce for support. We also received sponsorships from local businesses who were willing to get involved by providing activities, demonstrations, and more at the market. For example, tire replacement demo by a towing company, local author providing reading of their book, a Farm to Fork event as a season closer also received support and showcased vendor products. Don't be afraid to reach out to your community and ask. In a small community you often know people who are willing to help. If you need extra funding, don't be afraid to pick up the phone and ask because you are hosting an awesome community event. Continue having the conversations as you move forward. Businesses will want to invest in the market."

- Aliza Brunsing, West Point Farmers Market

"The city of Beatrice has, in a lot of ways, been a sponsor. They have, over the last several years, provided some direct financial support to provide this as a resource to the community. We fill out an application for that. It's kind of a grant request, and we do pursue that."

- Michael Sothan, Beatrice Farmers Market

DIVERSIFY

"Our sponsorships are quite diverse such as Waste Management, Family First Chiropractic, and local radio stations. We also have specialty days throughout the market season where we have sponsorships for giveaways such as Farmer's Appreciation Day, Harvest Festival and more. We have even had a coffee shop sponsor coffee for our vendors in the past. We really try to make both our customers and vendors feel appreciated and supported."

- Angelyn Wang, Village Pointe Farmers Market



THINK OUTSIDE OF THE BOX

"Sponsorships can be outside of the box; for example Friends of the Library sponsors our farmers market."

- Emily Thompson, Falls City Farmers Market

MARKET

DEVELOP YOUR BRAND

Your brand is often a customer's first impression of your market. It's the public-facing part of your overall marketing plan. How customers perceive your brand can increase awareness, attract new customers, and build trust and loyalty that leads to return customers. From an eye-catching logo to consistent colors, there are several elements to consider. A brand can feel vague at first, but it will become more specific as you start identifying what you want customers to feel and perceive when they interact with your market.



THE IMPORTANCE OF A GOOD LOGO

With her background in graphic design and the hospitality industry, Sutton Farmers Market manager Rebecca Plettner knows how important branding is. A logo communicates a lot to customers, including consistency. "Even though it's a seasonal market, I'm treating it like a brick and mortar, reliable shop - where people can trust we will be there rain or shine, and a good logo helps me do that."

Elements of Your Brand

Personality: Think of your brand as the personality of your farmers market. What sets it apart from other markets? What are its values? Its mission? How do its products, programs, and events fit into the customer's life? What words and feelings do you want vendors, customers, and the community to associate with your market?

Voice: Consider how you talk about your market—online and in-person. How do you sound? How do you want to sound? Down-to-earth? Fun? Polished? By identifying how you want to come across, you can set guidelines for the tone and words you choose to use in social media posts, news interviews, and face-to-face interactions at the market.

Color: Colors are powerful. They inspire feelings and set moods. The colors you use in your branding will affect the overall look and feel of your market. If your market takes place in a park, green might feel right. If your town uses blue in its branding, it might make sense to incorporate a similar shade into your color scheme. Choose two to four colors—you can create additional variation by adjusting their hues. If you're feeling overwhelmed by your choices, look for examples online and at the local library. Ask local designers or community college instructors to help point you in the right direction.

Typeface: Choose 1-2 fonts to use on signage, social media, website, logo, and other materials. Stick with it. The little details matter! Is it easy to read? Does it reflect your personality? What emotions does it evoke?

Tagline: Can you sum up your market in just a few words? Brainstorm a list of ideas. Ask a few close friends, loyal customers, or vendors to weigh in. Narrow it down to the words and/or phrase that best expresses your brand (i.e., "Have fun, Eat Local" or "Local and Fresh, Our Community at It's Best"). Use your tagline in your logo, social media, website, newsletter, press releases, merchandise, posters, and more.

Consistency: Strive to be consistent in the voice, colors, fonts, logo, and tagline that you use so that people begin to recognize how your market looks and sounds. You're reinforcing your brand through all the words and visuals you use in marketing and at the market itself (info booth, signage, etc.). When something is "on brand," that means it's consistent with your market's personality. In everything you do, ask yourself: Is this on brand? Does this show our personality? It takes time to see the benefits of your marketing efforts. Be patient and it will pay off.



SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

WHERE TO POST

Social media is always changing, and a platform that is popular at the moment may not be next year. If you're just getting started, focus your efforts on Facebook. With its wide range of users (Baby Boomers, Gen X'ers, and Millennials), event functionality, and pages, it's a great way to get the word out about your market. After that, set up an Instagram account to reach more potential customers in their twenties and thirties. You can even link your accounts to automatically publish Instagram posts directly to Facebook. If you are particularly savvy with videos try tiktok.

Keep in mind that platforms are always changing which types of media receive the most views. Keep yourself updated with how these algorithms are changing.

TIMING OF POSTS

Your audience may be more active on social media on certain days and at different times. According to SproutSocial, global engagement is highest mid-day on weekdays, especially around noon when people are on lunch breaks. When it comes to posting, there's a fine line between too much and too little. One post a day is ideal, while two posts every day can be excessive. It's important to find what works for you and be consistent. If you're just getting started, aim for three posts per week.

For example:

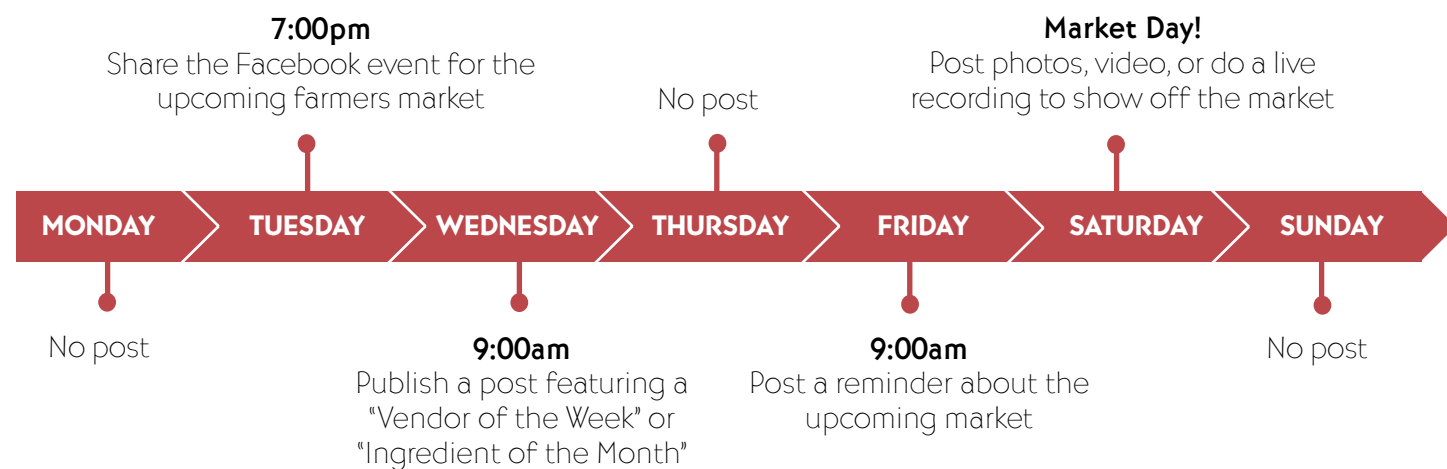


PHOTO & VIDEO RULE

Include pictures with your social media posts because they're more likely to catch the eye and get engagement than a regular plain text post. Pictures that include people often get more engagement so keep that in mind.

Short form videos like Facebook and Instagram stories or reels capture the attention of many users. Try your hand at live video - post a weekly Facebook Live tour of your market to showcase vendors and products.

COPY IS STILL KEY

Even though images and videos quickly grab people's attention, the accompanying text can make or break engagement with your content. Generally, shorter is better. Experiment until you find a winning combination.

ENCOURAGE ENGAGEMENT

Engagement is when someone likes, shares, comments on, or reacts to your post. Notice what your audience engages with and post more of that. When someone comments, like and/or reply to their comment. In all interactions, strive to be positive and helpful—social media is also a valuable customer service tool!

TAG, MENTION, & SHARE

If your vendors have Facebook, tag/mention their pages in your posts and share their posts on your page. Encourage vendors to share posts from the market,

too. Send direct messages to let them know when you have created new posts and ask them to share. Cross-promote events from your vendors or other community organizations by sharing them on your main page. This helps direct followers of your vendors and other community members to the farmers market page.

SHARE USER-GENERATED CONTENT

Pay attention to Facebook and Instagram users who tag your market in a post. Then, ask for permission to share that photo on your social media page.

TAP INTO LOCAL HASHTAGS

Identify any local hashtags used in your city/area that relate to community, events, etc. For example, the hashtags #ThinkHastings and #scottsbluff focus on the Hastings and Scottsbluff areas, while #ThisIsNebraska is statewide.



MARKETING DO'S AND DON'TS FROM MARKET MANAGERS

DO MAKE A MARKETING CALENDAR & CHECKLIST

Plan out your entire year (not just the market season) of what you want to promote and when you need to promote it. For example: You may want to promote a special event 4-5 weeks before it happens, while you want to promote consistent features of your market (like weekly musical guests, or even the market itself) at least once a week all season long.

At a glance, your marketing calendar should show what's going on and coming up. Using the calendar as a guide, stay on track with more specific to-do lists for tasks such as creating a Facebook event, posting on Instagram, or sending a press release.

Michael Sothan of the Beatrice Farmers' Market shares how they schedule their social media marketing efforts: **"We do regular Facebook posts, so there's two or three posts that the market is making every week when it's active. Plus, we do a Facebook Live at every single market that shows the vendors and what they have."**



DON'T UNDERESTIMATE "OLD FASHIONED" MARKETING

Even in an age of social media and digital advertising, word of mouth can still make a huge impact. Market manager Amy Hoagland of the Downtown Hastings Farmers' Market taps into her vendors when it comes to marketing, **"We use social media, but also word of mouth and flyers. I try to keep a lot of flyers on hand, we'll put them up around town. Our vendors will also put them up in their local area and places they frequent. The more vendors we have, the more word spreads. Each vendor draws their own circle of customers, friends and family to the market."**

The best advertising is often happy customers who have good experiences. They will likely share positive experiences with their own circles, spreading the word that this market is a good place to go. Allison Gabel, organizer of the Shelby Farmers Market, says, **"People have a great time each week and are looking for something free and fun for their family to do. We take pictures of the events and blast them all over social media to show off our 'small town' feel!"**



DO CONNECT WITH LOCAL MEDIA

To promote opening day, an event, or other exciting news, send out a press release. Reach out about free on-air interviews with local radio stations. Offer to contribute a weekly/monthly article with your local paper. If you're a 501(c)3, ask about non-profit discounts on advertising.

Cheryl Averill, an organizer at the Morrill Farmers Market, shared, **"Our connection with the local newspaper has been wonderful, and they are interested in stories about local food and farming. They will come out and talk with the vendors and always write a nice article in the paper."**

DO PUT YOUR MARKET ON EVERY CALENDAR

Local magazines, newspapers, TV/radio stations, businesses, banks, and Chambers of Commerce often have community calendars online or in print. Try writing a form email that asks to be added to their calendar and that includes an introduction, your contact information, and your market's current information including- name, location, hours, dates, website/social media, and brief description. Send it to as many local and regional calendars as you can!

"People need to know your market is there, so you have to get the news out about the hours and the place it will be," says Meredith Williams, organizer of the Beaver City Farmers Market.



DON'T PUT ALL YOUR MARKETING EGGS IN ONE AUDIENCE'S BASKET

Social media can be a great way to get in front of certain market-goers. But keep in mind, other customers may be more likely to read the newspaper, listen to the radio or see a flyer posted at local business or public space. **"You need to be able to reach different age brackets and lifestyles. You'll capture some groups with social media, but not all,"** says Alexis Massie, of the Original Farmers Market of North Platte.

Many farmers markets post on social media a few days before the market. You can also make a post featuring any special guests like musicians, local businesses, or activities that will be at the market. Using Facebook events and changing your profile or cover photo is another way to reach people.

Stephanie Grafel, organizer of the Broken Bow Market on the Square has several different avenues to advertise the market, each with its specific audience. **"We get quite a bit of response from people listening to our ads on the local radio station. Mostly from people who are listening as they are getting ready for work, or taking the kids to school in the morning. We also run an ad in our local shopper - it's a locally published weekly shopping guide available at gas stations and other businesses in the area. We've used Facebook to reach large numbers of people, especially to showcase upcoming special events or new vendors"**

The Syracuse Farmers' Market updates their Facebook cover photo with an easy to read, eye-catching graphic that clearly communicates important information like when and where the market is. They use branding components like a well-designed logo, and coordinated colors in this cover photo.

Anatomy of a Promotional Print Piece

Printed flyers and posters can be valuable marketing tools. The poster below is a great example of how to balance important details (name, date, location) with additional information (dogs allowed, produce/goods from within a 100-mi radius, sponsors) and fun, eye-catching graphics.

MAKE SURE...

...before distributing to double-check:

Is the market **name and date/time/location** prominently displayed?

Is all the info **correct**? Any typos?

Are all the fonts **clear and easy-to-read**?

Do the colors **show up well** when printed? (Medium/darker colors will show up better than pastel/neon colors.)

Does it reflect your market's **personality**?

Fun, eye-catching colors & graphics

Market name (BIG and bold)

Time

Date/Location

Social media

Family-friendly

Sponsor/partner recognition

Dogs allowed

Logo

SNAP/DUFB accepted

Measuring Your Market's

PERFORMANCE

WHY & HOW TO COLLECT DATA

REASONS TO COLLECT DATA

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Demonstrate to local government, economic development groups, and other partners the market's economic contribution.

POTENTIAL SPONSORS

Provide potential sponsors with evidence of how many customers will see their logo on your signage if they fund the market.

VENDOR RECRUITMENT

Show potential new vendors the number of customers they will see and the desire for their specific product.

PROPOSED CHANGES

Support any proposed changes to the market (e.g., change of location, change of hours, addition of programming or events.)

TREND AWARENESS

Be aware of trends in market sales, attendance, or customer demographics that can help improve the market over time.

HOW WILL DATA HELP YOU?

The time and effort it takes to collect data is an investment in the future of your farmers market.

If you are looking to add new vendors, change your hours, start new programming, bring in a new customer base, woo sponsors, or just learn more about how your farmers market is doing, data can help. While there are endless approaches to measuring your performance, here are a few tried-and-true methods for you to start implementing at your farmers market.

DATA IMPROVES...

Organized and consistently maintained records have several benefits:

Decision-making: Analyzing data helps market managers spot significant changes/areas that need attention. With relevant data, managers and boards can track key indicators over time and use that knowledge to make decisions.

Market Promotion: Having specific metrics in marketing messages makes them much more likely to be shared. Metrics also help reinforce the benefits of shopping at farmers markets.

Media Relations: Reporters typically want to know more about the market than its opening date, location, and hours. Press releases that include relevant data (such as annual attendance) are much more likely to be picked up by publications.

Advocacy: Sharing the market's community impact with public officials, partners, market neighbors, and other stakeholders helps increase understanding and support for the market.

Funding: Financial supporters want to understand the impact their investments have on the communities they serve. They often require outcome measurements.

The Basics of Measuring Market Performance

GETTING STARTED

Ready to start measuring performance? Whether you are new to data collection or a seasoned data collector, attendance counts and surveys are the two best sources for performance measurements for market managers.

If you've never collected data at your market before, you may want to start slowly and not try to adopt all these new measurements at once. Trying to do too much at one time can lead to spreading yourself too thin and getting discouraged when the data isn't collected properly.

STICK WITH ONE METHOD

An important place to start is deciding how you want to collect data over a long period of time. To be able to look at trends over time, you need to collect data in the same way. This is most important when it comes to attendance counts.

YOU SHOULDN'T (AND DON'T) HAVE TO DO IT ALONE

Develop a committee of interested individuals to help. Vendors should also be at the table. You may reach out to nearby Boy Scout or Girl Scout troops, student volunteers from a local college or high school, 4-H groups, Master Gardeners, and other like-minded groups that may be sources of volunteers for conducting an attendance count or surveying customers. For help developing customer surveys or other evaluation methods, contact Buy Fresh Buy Local Nebraska.

TRY TO RECORD SOMETHING ABOUT EVERY MARKET

Certain measurement practices, like dot surveys and attendance counts, require planning and help from outside partners. Luckily, these don't need to be done at every market (try to do these at four markets each year, more on that later in this section.) However, try to collect some data at every market. Try to answer at least these questions in a Daily Market Report: How many vendors came? What's the weather like? Is there a special event or program? Include an additional note section for other important pieces of information, like "First tomatoes of the season at the market" or "Farmer Jane says it was her best market ever."

Ideas for getting started with data collection at your farmers market:

- A summary of each market
- Number of social media posts you did each season
- Variety of products at different times throughout the season
- Customer and vendor counts
- Create a survey - paper, on a tablet, provide an incentive for folks to fill out the survey, have it at your main table



Methods: Counting

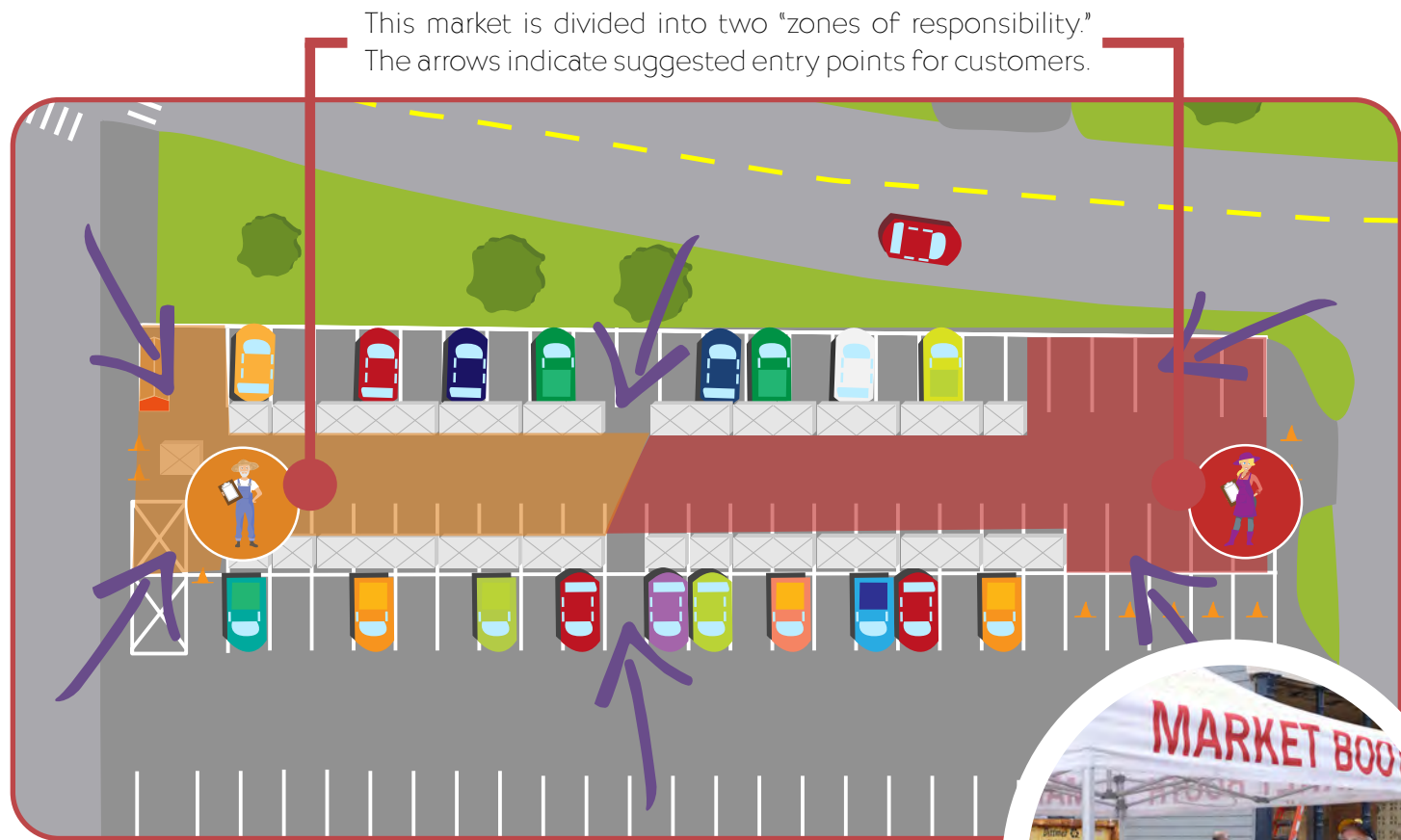
ATTENDANCE

HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE AT YOUR MARKET?

Farmers market research conducted by the Farmers Market Coalition, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Oregon State University over the past decades has advanced our understanding on how to get accurate attendance counts at farmers markets.

What they found was that the most commonly used, accurate method of measuring market attendance is a 20-minute sample count every hour of the market at a consistent time interval. This is the gold-standard, but other methods exist and should be considered depending on the specific needs and layout of your market.





COUNT METHODS

Sample Count: You will need tally counters (the object), market counters (the individual), and a count coordinator.

Market counters can be trained the day of the event, before the market starts. They need to know 1) their specific "zone of responsibility," 2) that they are only to count adults, 3) that they will only count from :20 to :40 of each hour of the market, and 4) how they will relay that information to the count coordinator. The zones of responsibility will be different for every market (see next page). From :20 to :40 of every hour of the market, the market volunteer/staff counter will stand in a designated zone of responsibility and count every new adult customer that enters that market in that area. At :40, the "count coordinator" should walk around to each counter and collect that hour's data to keep track over the course of the market. Each counter then has 40 minutes to drink coffee, eat donuts, chat with vendors, and enjoy the market until :20 rolls around again.

At the end of the market, add up all of the 20-minute interval counts and multiply them by three to get the full market attendance count.

Full Count: Every unique adult customer is counted as they enter the market for the entirety of the market. As you can imagine, this is time-consuming and would be best for markets with specific entry points.

Walk through: Market staff walk through the market at set intervals—every half hour, every twenty minutes—and count every adult at the market. This method requires an idea of how long the average customer stays at the market. For instance, if you know the average customer stays for 20 minutes, then count every adult customer during one 20-minute interval every hour. Then multiply that number by three to get the full attendance for the full hour. If it's 10 minutes, multiply the total by six. If it's 30 minutes, multiply by two. Because of the difficulty in estimating the length of stay of the average visitor, this is considered to be the least accurate method of measuring attendance.



Methods: Conducting

SURVEYS

WHAT DO PEOPLE THINK OF YOUR MARKET?

Your job is to create a survey that quickly and easily gathers information from a valuable population—customers, vendors, partners.

Here are some guidelines for conducting surveys:

- Focus on what you need to know, not what you simply want to know
- Develop simple questions that are easy to answer
- Avoid subjective questions
- Multiple choice questions are best
- Stress how important their response and information is to improving the market
- Provide some kind of incentive or reward
- Consider survey sample size and frequency



TYPES OF SURVEYS

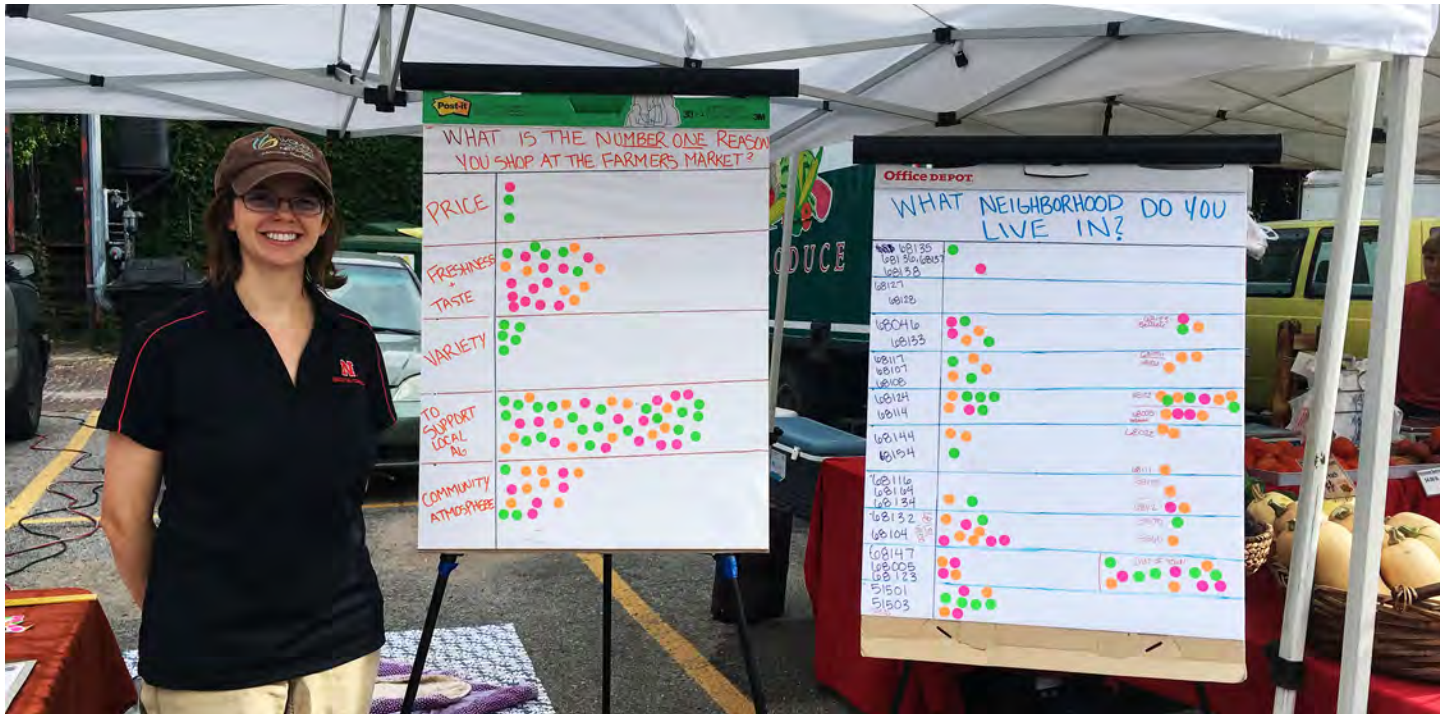
Dot Survey: A dot survey entails one question written on a poster that has several potential answers written out below the question. Customers are then given one colored circular sticker to place next to their answer. Up to four questions on four different posters can maximize the amount of information gathered.

For more information on dot surveys, check out the excellent "Tools for Rapid Market Assessments" article published by Oregon State University Extension Service.

Verbal Survey: If gregarious market volunteers or staff are available, a verbal survey is an easy way to get a high response rate from customers. Choose fewer than five, easy-to-answer questions and instruct a team of individuals to walk through the market asking questions to a random selection of customers. Don't forget to take thorough records.

Online Survey: There are many free, online survey tools (like Google Forms and Survey Monkey) that are slick ways to gather feedback on the market. This tool may be best for a select group, such as vendors, a market board/committee, or a select group of dedicated customers as response rate will likely be low if sent out to the general public. An added incentive (such as being entered to win \$50 market gift certificate) may increase the response rate, but keep in mind that this will not be a representative group of all those who shop at the market.

Paper Survey: While expensive, paper surveys can be highly effective and earn a high response rate. You can either hand out surveys at the market or mail them out with a pre-stamped return envelope. To make this work, you'll need to have mailing addresses for a targeted group of respondents.



SURVEY TIPS BACKED BY SCIENCE

The following tips are informed by the outstanding research by internationally-recognized survey researcher, Dr. Don Dillman. All surveys should focus on convincing the respondent that the benefits of answering the survey outweigh the costs to them in answering.

Benefits: A chance to win a raffle or other incentive, a sense of improving their community or the market they care about. Strategies to increase benefits and build trust:

- Stress how the survey results will help the market
- Ask interesting questions that are easy to understand and easy to answer
- Make it clear that there are limited opportunities to respond to the survey
- Share that others have already responded
- Use incentives to engage respondents (e.g., a raffle to win a market coupon or a basket of products from the market)
- Make sure respondents know how they can learn more about the survey and prove the survey is authentic
- Clearly state that all information will be kept confidential and protected
- Focus on making all communications and survey elements look professional. Ask for help if needed
- If your market hasn't built up community trust, try getting sponsorship from a trusted, legitimate organization (e.g., the town government, local chamber or economic development group, area college, etc.)

Costs: Time it takes to respond to the survey, energy to think about responses, having to share personal information or opinions. Strategies to decrease costs:

- Make the survey short with simple questions
- Limit (or avoid asking for) personal or sensitive information
- Make sure the survey method matches the target population (e.g., younger populations likely prefer online surveys, older populations likely prefer paper)

How Much to Do?

IF NOTHING ELSE:

- Fill out a daily market report that answers:

How many vendors came?

What was the weather like?

Were there any special events?

- Send out an end-of-the-year survey

WHEN YOU'RE READY FOR MORE, ALSO:

- Conduct one dot survey
- Conduct one attendance count

THE GOLD STANDARD:

- Conduct two dot surveys per season
- Conduct four attendance counts per season
- Use Farmers Market Metrics to analyze and record your data

BEYOND THE GOLD STANDARD:

If a manager is considering any big changes to the market or seeking to reinvigorate its status, a more thorough assessment (such as the Rapid Market Assessment) can be helpful. Local extension offices, Chambers, Main Street organizations, economic development groups, or tourism offices may be interested in helping markets conduct these more rigorous assessments.

Focus groups and targeted interviews can be also very helpful in conducting a more detailed assessment. These are more time-intensive than a survey and will require some skill to do well, but can be highly informative.



FARMERS MARKET METRICS

Once you've collected data, it can be challenging to know what to do with it. Two valuable tools that can help your market take that next step are Farmers Market Metrics and Farm 2 Facts.

The Farmers Market Coalition's Farmers Market Metrics offers an online data management system that includes guides on practices, provides a platform to input all market data, and includes built-in graphics. Farm 2 Facts is a farmers-market data collection toolkit produced by the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Farm 2 Facts provides practices in data collection, interpretation, and reporting data, which will hone your decision making, stakeholder relationships, and funding applications. Review both tools to see what fits best with your needs.



FOR SUCCESS

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

It's hard work to run a farmers market. It can feel isolating, especially if you're in a small rural town. But remember, you're part of a bigger network. In 2022 there are currently 90+ farmers markets of all sizes across the state of Nebraska. You don't have to start from scratch or go at it alone. You can gain inspiration from markets of any size and even managers with decades of experience are still learning and making changes.

FIND SUPPORT WITHIN YOUR COMMUNITY

Rebecca Plettner-Sutton
Sutton Farmers Market

Being a market manager can be isolating and difficult given that it is often a volunteer position. Rebecca Plettner of the Sutton Farmers Market suggests surrounding yourself

with a committee or team of individuals and work to keep them engaged: **"Try to get a committee...get the town involved, invite businesses' in for sponsorships and partnerships."**

Delegate tasks to volunteers, vendors, local businesses, and don't be afraid to reach out for support. Regular meetings can be an important aspect of getting your farmers market started. Consider what meeting times and locations are most accessible for your organizing committee. Even a small group of 3 or 5 dedicated volunteers is enough to get your market off the ground. Be inclusive of ideas and input from all committee members.

"Consistency with your market is also key, stay consistent! If only two vendors show up, that is something, maintain the vendors you have and build from there."



TAKE TIME TO BUILD MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS

Helen Gartner and Alexis Massie
Plattsmouth and Original North Platte Farmers Markets

Farmers markets build community, but it does not happen overnight. Market managers are an essential component to developing an atmosphere that brings customers back, time after time.

Helen Gartner of Plattsmouth Farmers Market suggests focusing on relationships with vendors first. She explains, "There did not used to be much camaraderie [at our farmers market]. Vendors were individuals [and] did not consider themselves a group. [Be] mindful to change that...**Walk around. Talk with each vendor, even just small talk. [Make] the environment happier and more approachable.**"

When vendors are having a good time, likely everyone else will too. Over time, the community will come to support one another and enjoy time together.

According to Massie. **"Longevity of the market is key! Our customer base is SOLID after building the market for years.** The only reason we don't see a customer at the market is if they have passed or moved, our customers are that great."



MORE IDEAS FOR A SUCCESSFUL MARKET



JUSTISE RHOADES
Aurora Farmers Market

"[It] helps to do it downtown; **Downtown opens their stores at the same time, [so it] is the community as a whole.**"



LARRY KRAMER
Bennett Farmers Market

"**We hold it in a park** and a lot of families come through with their kids... [Since] it's held in the evening... **we try to have a food vendor there to make a supper thing out of it.**"



EMILY THOMPSON
Fall City Farmers Market

"We increased our income 75%, **[by] increas[ing the number of] vendors over the past year,** and [now] more people know about the market."

Appendix A: Sample Vendor Rules

Omaha Farmers Market SATURDAY MARKET in THE OLD MARKET 2022 Rules & Regulations

Dates & Location

- Saturdays 8:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., May 7th – October 15th
 - Absolutely no public sales before 8:00 a.m. or after 12:30 p.m. No food pick-up or pre-orders before opening bell.
 - There will be a bell signaling the opening of the Market and two bells signaling its end. The first closing bell means that the market is over, and no public sales are allowed. The second closing bell means that you are allowed to bring your vehicle on-site and off-site. You CANNOT bring your vehicle on-site or off-site until the second closing bell has rung. **Do NOT pack up your booth until the end of the market.**
- The Market takes place in the Old Market Parking Lot between 10th & 11th Streets, on Jackson Street and on 11th Street.

Vendor Types

- Season Vendors** are vendors that pay a stall fee for the full season. They are assigned a particular stall that they are permitted to set-up in each Saturday of the Market. Season vendors are generally granted “first right of refusal” to reserve their stall from season to season. New season spaces are available on a limited basis each season. Please read the available FAQs (available at omahafarmersmarket.org) and then contact Kristen at kbeck@vgagroup.com if you have additional questions.
- Weekly Vendors** are scheduled for stall spaces depending on space availability, product mix and market management discretion. Weekly vendors should expect to be in a different stall each week they are scheduled. Requesting a date on the vendor application form does NOT guarantee a stall space for that day. You will receive an email a week or two in advance of the market IF there is a space available for you. Your schedule flexibility is appreciated as we continue to fill last minute cancellations up until Friday evenings.

Space / Stall Details

- Vendor spaces vary, some are sized to accommodate a vehicle, most are strictly 10 x 10 spaces, and some are odd shapes and sizes. Please work with the office to determine which type of space will work for you. Market Management will let you know IF a vehicle is permitted when contacting weekly vendors. If you are told it is not a vehicle space do not try to squeeze one in.
 - Please be courteous to your neighbors and remember when you encroach on aisles you are taking space from your customers and other vendors! **Vendors are responsible for working out “close quarters” concerns with their neighbors.**
 - Vendor spaces vary, most are NOT able to accommodate a vehicle. The stalls that ARE vehicle spaces may only fit a moderately sized vehicle (box trucks or oversized vans/trucks will NOT fit).
 - OFM Management asks that vendors park vehicles and drop trailers at least 2 blocks away from the Market in order to leave prime parking spots available for customers.
 - Subletting or sharing spaces is not allowed. If a season vendor is absent from the Market, OFM management has the right to fill the space with another vendor. **PLEASE let us know if you are going to be absent** - - this policy allows us to keep our vendor fees low and it helps us to keep the Market full and energized.
 - Vendors must notify Kristen Beck (OFM Project Manager) of any absence by the Wednesday (12:00pm) before the Market that will be missed.
 - Vendors are provided an empty stall space. You are responsible for bringing your own items for set-up including, but not limited to tables, chairs, tents and necessary weights, signage, cash boxes, etc. The Market does NOT have storage available.
 - Tents MUST be properly weighted (especially in inclement weather, this is for the safety of all market attendees).
 - Trash, including produce debris and food items **must** be swept up and disposed of after each market. Vendors are responsible for cleaning their own area before leaving. Brooms are available through the information booth. If you have a large amount of trash, haul it directly to the dumpster. **Do not fill Market trashcans with produce, boxes, or large items.** Market staff will pull all trashcans 15 minutes before close of the market.
 - If your booth space is not cleaned at the end of each market, management reserves the right to fine vendors a \$20 clean-up cost each market incident.
 - Vendors are **highly encouraged to have a sign with the business name and location (city or town).**
- Growers/producers should list all prices at their booth. Signs should be prominently displayed each week.**

Saturday Market – Old Market Rules and Regulations Page 4 of 5

Payments, Billing and Fees

- Please see the Vendor Application for a complete breakdown of stall, health department and electrical fees.
 - Season vendors are billed in a three-payment installment plan. Installments are generally due in February, May and July.
 - Season vendors are required to pay the *entire* season fee and associated health department and electrical fees, no exceptions and no discounts if you are absent.
- All season payments MUST be in on time! Season payments not received by the scheduled invoice dates may result in the vendor losing their space until payment is made without reimbursement for markets missed.**
- Returned checks: First occurrence the vendor will be charged an additional \$15 fee and must pay the entire amount in cash at the VGA office. Second occurrence, the fee will increase to \$25 and the vendor must pay in cash for the rest of the season.
 - Lost checks: Vendors will be responsible for the \$32 fee to put a stop on a lost token/vendor check. OFM will reissue a new check with the \$32 fee deduction. Checks must be cashed within 90 days.
 - Cash Payments: Cash payments may only be made in the exact amounts due on invoice (or payment in full). Cash payments need to be turned in at the Market Office (scheduling time to meet for payment is required with Market Manager).

General Policies

- It is the vendors’ responsibility to be familiar with the local, state, and federal regulations and permits that govern the products in which they sell. The notes and guidelines included in this document are included as a courtesy, but do not take precedence over governmental policy.
- Vendors must grow/make their products within a 150-mile radius of the market to be eligible to apply.**
- Vendors must apply in one of three categories. More information on these categories is provided in the attached “Category Descriptions & Permitted Product Info” sheet. Only one category of product is allowed per stall space. Categories are:
 - Farm & Nursery Products and Processed Farm Products
 - Value Added Food
 - Craft Items
- The Omaha Farmers Market is a “green market”, and priority will be given to the Farm & Nursery Products and Processed Farm Products and Value-Added Food categories. Product mix is also a deciding factor for space assignment.
- Vendors must complete the application process through the office before being allowed at the Market.**
- Weekly vendors are not allowed to show up on “stand-by”, hoping for a spot. Doing so will result in a violation.
- The Market is held rain or shine and refunds are not given unless the Market is cancelled prior to opening and at the determination of OFM management. In this case, refunds will only be considered for Weekly Vendors.
- The OFM Onsite Manager arrives at 6:15 a.m. each Saturday. Vendors are allowed to drive onsite between 6:15 a.m. and 7:15 a.m. Vendors arriving after 7:15 a.m. will have to handcart items. **All vendors MUST be onsite by 7:30 a.m., this includes vendors with direct street access. Vendors that are not onsite by 7:30 a.m. may have their space reallocated to another vendor.** No vehicles are allowed to enter or exit the site between 7:15 a.m. and 12:40 p.m. If there is an emergency, please work with the Onsite Manager. Not following the listed arrival times may result in disciplinary action (see rule violation section).
- OFM Management asks that vendors park vehicles and drop trailers at least 2 blocks away from the Market to leave prime parking spots available for customers.
- Vendors are not allowed to leave before 12:40 p.m. even if they sell out of product. This includes leaving your booth set up until the end of market. Leaving early may result in disciplinary action (see rule violation section).
- Vendors entering/exiting the market with a vehicle must drive cautiously. Vendors driving unsafe may lose privileges of bringing a vehicle into the market & will need to park outside of the barricades and hand cart items in/out for the remainder of the season.
- No items offered for sale may be commercially made. All products must be the original work or produce of the vendor.
 - **This includes - no sales of commercially made promotional items.**

General Policies Cont.

- Definition of “Vendor” – Vendor shall be defined as the producer of goods sold and shall include spouse, siblings, children, parents, and employees of the applicant who assist in the cultivation of the same property or assist in the production of items available for sale.
- OFM Management reserves the right to conduct on-site inspections of farms, kitchens or other workshops or spaces.
- Electricity is available on a limited basis in a specific section of the Market and must be arranged in advance by contacting the office. If vendors are approved to use electricity it is their responsibility to provide a 100-foot heavy-duty extension cord and heavy-duty mats to cover the cord.
- OFM does not permit any vendor to use a generator at the market unless it is discussed and approved by management.
- Vendors must vacate the market lot no later than 1:30 p.m. each Saturday.
- No smoking in or near vendor stalls or inside the market.
- No radios, music, or singing loud enough to be heard by neighboring vendors is allowed in vendor stalls.
- Trash, including produce debris and food items **must** be swept up and disposed of **in the dumpster** (not the market trashcans) after each market. Vendors are responsible for cleaning their own area before leaving. Brooms are available through the information booth. Only NON-FOOD cardboard may be recycled. Please break down all boxes. We want to be good neighbors to the downtown businesses.
- Non-produce vendors are responsible for collecting, reporting, and paying sales tax. Omaha’s current tax rate is 7%.
- Vendors selling woody plant material or perennials must be licensed with the Nebraska Department of Agriculture, Plant Industry. If you are not, please call the Nebraska Department of Agriculture (402) 471-2351.
- No rude or aggressive behavior toward Market staff, other vendors or customers by Vendors will be tolerated. Doing so will result in a violation. Physical threats may result in immediate expulsion from the Market with no refund of stall fees.
- By submitting an Omaha Farmers Market application all vendors acknowledge that they have read and understand, the terms presented in the Permitted Products (Categories) and Vendor Rules & Regulations. In addition, Vendors are expected to follow policies from Market Management in person and in written correspondence.**

Insurance Requirements

- Each vendor is required to submit a certificate of insurance naming the Omaha Public Market, Inc. as an additional Insured. The certificate needs to be submitted prior to the start of the market opening. If you do not submit a certificate, you will lose your deposit and will not be able to participate in the markets.
- The general liability policy must have a minimum coverage of \$1,000,000 individual/\$2,000,000 aggregate
- If you are a farmer and have a farm insurance policy, then contact your insurance agent about adding a rider to your policy to cover the markets.

Additional Insurance Information

- Per our Omaha Public Market’s insurance agent, there are policies available for vendors who earn \$0-\$25,000 per year. The minimum premium cost is \$275 per year.
- You may reach out to your personal insurance agent to obtain this insurance policy or below is the information on the Omaha Public Market’s insurance agent who does specialize in farmer’s markets insurance.

Larry Spilker
Campbell Risk Management
(800) 730-7475 ext. 203
www.campbellriskmanagement.com

Food Displays and Packaging

- All food items must be free from harmful pesticide residues and free from insects and spoilage. All produce must be washed.
- All food items, including produce, must be stored and displayed at least 6 inches above the ground.
- Pre-packaged produce must be in NEW food-grade plastic bags or plastic food wrap. Produce sold by piece or per quantity may be sold in NEW paper or plastic bags.
- Only legal scales with state permit stickers are allowed at the Market. Vendors without legal scales must sell by the piece or per quantity. If you wish to sell produce by weight, but do not have a legal scale, consider weighing and packaging items at home, but sell 'by the bag' or 'by the package.'

Douglas County Health Department

- Only products in compliance with the regulations of the Douglas County Health Department may be sold at the Market. **Vendors are responsible for securing all necessary permits and approvals.** *The Health Department will notify the Market when they approve you to sell at the Market. The DCHD will conduct onsite inspections throughout the season.*
- Season** vendors pay fees directly to the Health Department. **Weekly** vendors requiring a temporary event permit for selling prepared, time/temperature control food will pay fees directly to the Health Department (this permit is good for 2 weeks).
 - **SEASON** Vendors - The fees that you pay directly through the Douglas County Health Department **may** cover you for other Douglas County Farmers Markets held during different hours or on different days but the fees **do NOT cover you for other markets that take place on overlapping days and times** nor do they cover you for other Douglas County public events. Please contact the Health Department for additional policy information and to secure your necessary permits.
 - **WEEKLY** Vendors selling whole, uncut fresh produce, bread, cookies, fruit pies, jams, jellies, honey, apple butter, and syrups made with sugar fall under the Omaha Farmers Market umbrella permit. These vendors do not need a separate temporary permit from the Douglas County Health Department. This does not cover you for any other events or markets.
- Fresh produce, meat, poultry, eggs, game animals, and commercial bakery items, and pre-packaged foods must have a Douglas County Farmers Market Retail permit. Nebraska Department of Agriculture permits are not an acceptable alternative unless expressly stated by Douglas County. (“Ready to eat” food/beverages need temporary event permits).
- Vendors selling meat products must display proof of USDA inspection and a current manufacturer’s license/permit, on-site, each week during the Market.
- Perishable produce and other food items must be maintained at appropriate temperatures with heating and cooling devices. Eggs must be kept in a cooler at 41 degrees.
- Vendors selling **approved** products prepared in a non-regulated, non-inspected kitchen must clearly display a sign at their stand indicating such. The sign must be clearly visible and clearly worded. A sample of acceptable wording is: "Food items were prepared in a kitchen that is not subject to regulation or inspection by the Foods Division of the Nebraska Department of Agriculture.” **Only certain items (primarily baked goods) are eligible for this option, please contact the Health Department for clarification and details. DO NOT assume that your product is covered by this exemption just because you bake it. Cheesecakes, for example, are not eligible for this exception.**
- Vendors selling items produced in a regulated kitchen must display their license at every Market. **All** food items (except produce and **eligible** baked goods) must be prepared in a licensed kitchen. This includes, but is not limited to salsa, jellies, sandwiches, enchiladas, etc.
- Sampling must meet Douglas County Health Department code. Please contact the Health Department for details.
- The guidelines and application for a retail farmer's market permit can be found at www.douglascountyhealth.com.

SNAP, Double Up Food Bucks & Credit Token Programs

- Both Season and Weekly vendors are **REQUIRED** to accept SNAP, Double Up Food Bucks (DUFEB) and Credit tokens/vouchers from customers, even if you have your own credit card machine. Vendors are reimbursed FULL face value of tokens; there are no fees for vendors to participate. There is a separate packet about SNAP, DUFEB and Credit tokens available for printing and review at www.omahafarmersmarket.org.
- SNAP Tokens are GREEN and come in \$1 increments. They may only be redeemed for eligible FOOD items. Do NOT give customers change on SNAP purchases and DO NOT use them in trade with other vendors.
- SNAP Tokens **CANNOT** be given as change for other token or cash transactions.
- DUFEB Vouchers (Double Up Food Bucks) are **ONLY** to be redeemed for FRUITS, VEGETABLES and HERBS.
- Vendors will be responsible for cashing their own DUFEB vouchers. Vendors can deposit the vouchers through their bank like a check or cash.
- CREDIT Tokens are BLUE and come in \$5 increments. They are basically “Farmers Market Gift Cards” and you give change as though the customer paid in cash. They are redeemable on any item at the Market including both food items and craft items.
- Season Vendor Token Reimbursement – Season Vendors will be allowed to turn in their tokens every three weeks. There will be an email reminder before each “token turn in weekend.” Season vendors are required to turn in all tokens in the labeled and re-usable zipper pouch they receive at the beginning of the season. The pouch will be returned the following Saturday before the Market opens.
- All vendors are responsible for turning in their tokens to the information booth. If tokens are not turned in on the designated “token turn in weekend,” vendors must wait until the next designated “token turn in” to submit their tokens. Please remember that it is your responsibility to turn in your tokens. Reimbursement checks will be delivered as soon as possible.
- Season Vendor Token Reimbursement – Season Vendors will be allowed to turn in their tokens every three weeks. There will be an email reminder before each “token turn in weekend.” Season vendors are required to turn in all tokens in the labeled and re-usable zipper pouch they receive at the beginning of the season. The pouch will be returned the following Saturday before the Market opens. All vendors are responsible for turning in their tokens to the information booth. If tokens are not turned in on the designated “token turn in weekend,” vendors must wait until the next designated “token turn in” to submit their tokens. Please remember that it is your responsibility to turn in your tokens. Reimbursement checks will be delivered as soon as possible.
- Weekly Vendor Token Reimbursement – Weekly Vendors may turn in tokens at the end of each Market. Onsite managers have Ziploc baggies, counting slips and markers available at the Info Booth. Please make sure you label the outside of your bag with a permanent marker AND include a counting slip in your bag. Bags will be held in the office and reimbursed at the same time as the Season Vendors. Reimbursement checks will be sent in the mail or delivered on-site if you are participating the following weekend.
- DO NOT turn in your DUFEB vouchers with your tokens- OFM management cannot reimburse you.

Information Booth & Other Amenities

- The information booth is located at the entrance of the parking garage. The on-site manager and assistant managers are available to help vendors and customers with things including lost and found, vendor locations, token sales, souvenir sales and other Market related questions.
- Market vendors have an opportunity to donate produce and baked goods to Omaha’s less fortunate through the donation cart located near the information booth. Market management has an arrangement with Open Door Mission and Produce from the Heart to pick up donations.
- Public restrooms are available at Upstream Restaurant. Many other shops and restaurants have restrooms available on a limited basis for their own customers.

Rule Violation Policy

- Violation of any of the Rules and Regulations or policies laid out in this or future notices will be handled as follows:
 - 1) First violation results in a verbal warning, which may be issued by any member of the OFM Management team including the Onsite Manager.
 - a. If the onsite manager provides a write up at the market for failing to follow rules, the OFM Project Manager will be notified immediately.
 - 2) Second violation results in a written warning issued by the Event Manager or Executive Director of the Market.
 - 3) Third violation results in expulsion from the Market without refund for that day.
 - 4) Fourth violation results in expulsion without refund for the remainder of the Market season.
- Violations resulting in a police report or protection order being filed against a vendor may result in said vendors immediate and permanent expulsion from the Market without refund of vendor fees.
- Market Management reserves the right to evaluate each rule violation and respond with appropriate fines/warnings.

Resources

- Douglas County Health Department, Inspectors: Adam Carlson (402) 444-6886 or Dan Ludwig (402) 444-3347.
- State of Nebraska Department of Revenue (402) 595-2065.
- Nebraska Department of Agriculture, Food Safety & Consumer Protection, Weights & Measures (402) 471-3422.
- Nebraska Department of Agriculture, Plant Industry (402) 471-2351.
- OFM strongly encourages qualifying produce and food vendors to accept WIC Program and Farmer’s Market Senior Nutrition Program coupons for qualifying purchases. For more information on becoming a participating vendor in these programs please contact (402) 471-2781 (WIC) or (402) 471-4876 (Senior Nutrition) or Casey Foster at (402) 471-6857 or casey.foster@nebraska.gov.

Omaha Farmers Market Contact Information

- Vic Gutman & Associates Office (402) 345-5401
- Kristen Beck, Event Manager, extension #115, or via email kbeck@vgagroup.com
- www.omahafarmersmarket.org
- Facebook, search “Omaha Farmers Market” to become a fan or www.facebook.com/omahafarmersmarket
- Instagram, search “Omaha Farmers Market” to follow
- Omaha Farmers Market
c/o Vic Gutman & Associates
P.O. Box 31134
Omaha, NE 68131

Appendix B: Sample Vendor Agreement



Beatrice Farmers' Market 2021 — Main Street Beatrice Vendor Information, Rules, and Regulations

The Market is Run By Main Street Beatrice, Inc.

Office Location: 205 North 4th Street Mailing Address: PO Box 125 Beatrice, NE 68310 Market Location: 318 N 6th Street
Office Phone: 402-223-3244 - info@mainstreetbeatrice.org - www.mainstreetbeatrice.org



2021 Dates
Every Thursday evening starting May 20th through October 14th from 4:00-6:30 p.m.

LOCATION
Centenary United Methodist Church, 318 N 6th Street (6th & High Streets)

SET-UP
Set up time is 3:00-4:00 p.m. Vendors must check in for location prior to set up, season spots saved until 3:40 p.m.

EQUIPMENT
Vendors are responsible for their own tables, chairs, shade devices, change, bags, coolers, ice, etc. We are not responsible for lost or damaged equipment.

PRICES (more details on reverse side)

Non-Commercial stalls
\$85 for the season or \$12 each week.
Double Stall - Non-Commercial stalls
\$115 for the season or \$15 each week.
Commercial stalls
\$180 for the season or \$25 per week.

VENDOR STALLS
You will receive stall assignment upon arrival at the Market. Vendors accepted weekly on a first come, first served basis where space is available. Exception for full-season paid vendors who can reserve a vendor stall (reserved until 20 minutes prior to start time).

MANAGEMENT
This Farmers' Market is managed by Main Street Beatrice, Inc. Stall assignments, determination of suitability of items offered for sale, and collection of stall rental fees are the sole responsibility of the Farmers' Market Manager and Main Street Beatrice. You will not receive a confirmation of acceptance into this Farmers' Market but will be notified in the event no stall spaces are expected to be available for the dates you requested.

GENERAL INFORMATION

No guarantees of exclusivity of products is made or implied. Products shall be grown, sold, or made by the seller, exceptions may be allowed only with permission of the Market Manager and should be discussed in advance. The Main Street Beatrice Farmers Market will not discriminate against any applicant for stall space because of race, color, religion, disability, sex, national origin, age, or marital status.

PRODUCE/BAKED AND ALL OTHER GOODS

No item offered for sale will be commercially made, created or produced without value added by the vendor. Produce offered for sale must be free from all harmful pesticide residues, and any applications must have been made according to manufacturer's directions. All food items must be free from insects and spoilage and must be washed according to State standards. Minimally processed should be a goal.

Cut produce is not allowed at the Beatrice Market.

Perishable produce and food items must be maintained at appropriate temperatures with heating and cooling devices. Eggs must be kept in a cooler at 45 degrees. It is the vendor's responsibility to have an egg license. Licenses are available free of charge by calling 402-761-2216. An empty egg carton may be kept on view so customers know you have eggs for sale. Mark through brand names or grades on used egg cartons. Disallowed bakery products include high risk products such as custards and cream pies. All meat must come from a USDA approved source. Jams and jellies are allowed only if they have been water-processed. No pickles, relish, salsa, cut flowers, or dried herbs are allowed without a proper state approved license.

Only products in compliance with the regulations of the State of Nebraska Department of Ag. may be sold at the Market. You may reach the State of Nebraska's Department of Agriculture in Lincoln at 402-471-2341, you should and agree to read their guidelines prior market.

Non-Food items such as crafts are welcomed so long as they are personally crafted and sales tax is collected.

PACKAGING

Prepackaged products must be in new food-grade plastic bags or plastic food wrap. Food items sold by piece or per quantity may be sold in new paper or plastic bags. Bread bags, trash bags, garbage or leaf bags, or pre-used produce bags from the grocery store may not be used for produce or other food stuffs.

Wish to Contact Nebraska Food Safety or Weights and Measures for more details? Call 402-471-3422.

PROCEDURES

Vehicles are not allowed to operate in the Market area during its hours of operation of 4:00-6:30p.m.. In case of emergency, notify the Market manager so pedestrian traffic can be cleared and your vehicle escorted safely from the Market area.

Goods cannot be sold prior to 4:00pm. A signal will open the Market. The Market will be open "rain or shine" with the exception of a storm warning during Market operation hours. It is left to the vendor's discretion to set up in case of inclement weather.

TOBACCO/ALCOHOL

Tobacco/alcohol are not allowed on Church property, sidewalk areas can be used for tobacco product use.

CLEAN UP

Each vendor will be responsible for keeping their area clean and free of trash and clutter during and after the market. Pack out your own trash and help pick up.

FEES

Refunds and fee transfers to subsequent weeks will not be allowed under any exceptions. Unless otherwise stated by the market manager and/or the committee.

SALES TAX

NON-PRODUCE vendors are responsible for collection, reporting, and paying sales tax to the State of Nebraska. Beatrice's tax rate is 8.0%. Vendors must provide proof of application for sales tax number.

Continued On Reverse Side

Vendor Information, Rules, & Regulations continued.

Your products Should be Home Grown/Made, no "Store Bought" produce, baked goods, or items of any sort are to be sold without value being added and permission from the manager.

SCALES

Only legal scales with the state permit sticker are allowed at the Market. Vendors without legal scales must sell by the piece or per quantity. If you wish to sell product by weight but do not have a legal scale, you may weigh and package items at home and sell them by the bag or package at the Market. Weight MUST be at least what is marked on the package.

Baked Goods and items such as honey are to be sold by weight/volume. If you have questions contact Nebraska Food Safety or Weights and Measures for more details at 402-471-3422.

SIGNAGE

Vendors are required to have a sign with their name and city of location, and growers must list prices. Signs can be simple or elaborate and can have a business name rather than your personal name. Street addresses are not necessary.

PARKING

You may vend from your vehicle (ie: truck bed). If you are not vending from your vehicle please consider moving it to the parking lot to avoid crowding vendor spaces. Trailers will be approved on a case by case situation depending on space available.

RIGHT OF REFUSAL

Main Street Beatrice and the Farmers' Market Manager reserves the right to restrict the sale of any product or the use of any stall space to any vendor at any time.

PETS/ANIMALS

Pets must be leashed & under control if not in an enclosure.

PHOTOS & SOCIAL MEDIA

Please note that we will utilize photography and use of social media (posts, live video, etc.) to help promote the market. By signing the vendor application form you agree to and understand that a image or video of you may be used as part of promotions.

COVID-19 RULES & GUIDELINES

We ask that all vendors take steps to ensure health & safety. Please use social distancing and utilize and make visible hand sanitizer. Unlike 2020, masks are not a requirement.

QUESTIONS

If you have questions please contact Main Street Beatrice at 402-223-3244 or through email or Facebook.

Vendor Application Form

PLEASE PRINT:

Individual Name and/or Business Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Daytime Phone

E-Mail Address

Tax ID Number

Products to be Sold:

Please indicate how you sell your products:

Side of Vehicle Rear of Vehicle

Table(s) only; no vehicle

Please circle the 2021 dates you plan to sell at the Market:

Full season (May 20 - October 14)

May	June	July	Aug	Sept
May 20	June 3	July 1	Aug 5	Sept 2
May 27	June 10	July 8	Aug 12	Sept 9
	June 17	July 15	Aug 19	Sept 16
	June 24	July 22	Aug 26	Sept 23
		July 29		Sept 30
October	Oct 7	Oct 15		

REGISTRATION

\$12 per week non-commercial

\$85 Season non-commercial stall (12'x12' display space or less)

\$15 per week - double sized non-commercial

\$115 Season double sized non-commercial stall (12'x12' display space to 24'x24' space)

\$25 per week commercial stall

\$180 Season Commercial stall

Ask us about our Main Street contributing partner and young grower discounts.

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$

Please make checks payable to: MAIN STREET BEATRICE

Vendor's signature on the application verifies that the vendor has carefully read and understands and agrees to all provisions of this Agreement and the Farmers' Market Rules of the State of Nebraska. Any violations of the Main Street Beatrice Farmers' Market rules and responsibilities will result in the following sanctions:

•First violation results in a warning.

•Second violation for same offense results in expulsion from the Market on that day, with no stall refunds.

•Third violation results in expulsion from the Market for balance of season with no refund of vendor fees.

Checks returned by the bank will incur a \$20 fee and must be redeemed in cash. A second returned check will result in a \$30 fee in addition to the check, and any remaining fees must be paid in cash.

Vendor agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the Beatrice Farmers' Market, Main Street Beatrice, Inc., the City of Beatrice, Centenary United Methodist Church, Nebraska Extension, and their employees and volunteers from any and all causes of action which may arise from the operation of this Farmers' Market, not caused by negligence of the Main Street Beatrice Farmers' Market, Main Street Beatrice, Inc., the City of Beatrice, Country Centenary United Methodist Church, Nebraska Extension, and their employees or volunteers.

By signing this application, I acknowledge that the Agreement has been read and is understood, liability waiver granted, and I will abide by the terms presented in the Information Rules and Regulations and the regulations of Nebraska.

>>> Vendor Signature Date

Appendix C: Vendor Handouts

We asked. Market managers answered. It's hard to be an expert in everything right away. The Vendor Handout Series is intended to make being a manager a little easier. Market Managers can share links to the online versions or provide hard copies directly to vendors. Handout topics range from vendor stall layout, and licensing, and insurance.

HANDOUT 1: Business Opportunities at the FARMERS MARKET

AND BEYOND!

AND CALL LOCAL REPORT

LOCAL BURRITOS SUCCESS STORY!

By 2009, Kyle Sack saw that no one was selling hot prepared food at the local farmers market and he decided to open a burrito stand. Kyle Sack and his partner, Jeff, have since opened a burrito stand at the local farmers market. Kyle Sack and Jeff have since opened a burrito stand at the local farmers market. Kyle Sack and Jeff have since opened a burrito stand at the local farmers market.

STUDY FOOD TRENDS

As a small business owner, you can change your offerings very quickly and successfully. As a result, you can quickly respond to the latest market trends. For example, if you notice a trend in the market for healthy eating, you can quickly add more healthy options to your menu.

MARKET & FEASIBILITY STUDIES

As a general rule, you want to figure out if you're going to make any money, paying what you owe, before you start. Take a look around the farmers market. Do you see anyone else selling the items that you're interested in? If so, how are they doing? What are the challenges they're facing? What are the opportunities? This information can help you make a more informed decision about whether to start a business.

NEBRASKA FARMERS MARKET HANDBOOK

HANDOUT 2: What To Know as a FIRST TIME VENDOR AT THE FARMERS MARKET

TINY DONUTS BRING BIG SUCCESS

By 2009, Kyle Sack saw that no one was selling hot prepared food at the local farmers market and he decided to open a burrito stand. Kyle Sack and his partner, Jeff, have since opened a burrito stand at the local farmers market. Kyle Sack and Jeff have since opened a burrito stand at the local farmers market.

RESEARCH THE FARMERS MARKET

What's the best way to get a feel for a farmers market? You're going to become a vendor at the market, so you need to know what's going on. This means you need to know what's going on at the market. This means you need to know what's going on at the market.

KNOW YOUR STRENGTHS

Being a farmer is one thing, but being a vendor is another. You need to know what your strengths are. This means you need to know what your strengths are. This means you need to know what your strengths are.

NEBRASKA FARMERS MARKET HANDBOOK

HANDOUT 3: Know Before You Go: DO I NEED A LICENSE TO SELL MY PRODUCTS?

IT'S A VENDOR RESPONSIBILITY

It is ultimately the responsibility of each vendor to research and secure any necessary licenses. Start by contacting your County Health Department. The Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals (DIA) maintains Iowa's food codes. Locally, county health departments inspect and award licenses to vendors. A vendor who offers a product for sale at a farmers market shall have the sole responsibility to obtain and maintain any license or permit to distribute such products. Code of Iowa, Sec. 137B

1) FRUITS & VEGETABLES

These and other fresh fruit and vegetable products such as honey, jams, jellies, or dried products may be sold at a farmers market to consumers without the vendor being licensed as a food establishment at the market. Once a fruit and vegetable may be considered "potentially hazardous food." For example, melons, cucumbers, carrots, radishes, and other produce that require temperature control and sanitation may require a license from the Department of Inspections and Appeals.

2) BAKED GOODS

These and other baked goods such as breads, pastries, cakes, pies, and other baked goods may be sold at a farmers market to consumers without the vendor being licensed as a food establishment at the market. Once a baked good may be considered "potentially hazardous food." For example, breads, pastries, cakes, pies, and other baked goods that require temperature control and sanitation may require a license from the Department of Inspections and Appeals.

3) SHELL-STABLE FOODS

These and other shell-stable foods such as soups, dips, dressings, and other shell-stable foods may be sold at a farmers market to consumers without the vendor being licensed as a food establishment at the market. Once a shell-stable food may be considered "potentially hazardous food." For example, soups, dips, dressings, and other shell-stable foods that require temperature control and sanitation may require a license from the Department of Inspections and Appeals.

NEBRASKA FARMERS MARKET HANDBOOK

HANDOUT 4: What Type of VENDOR INSURANCE DOES MY MARKET REQUIRE ME TO HAVE?

WHY CARE ABOUT INSURANCE?

Insurance is protection against some of the risk involved in doing business. There are multiple types of policies that can be purchased to protect your business and the products you sell at the market. It is important to research insurance coverage and what will not be covered in your policy. Liability insurance is in place to cover legal claims against the insured and is commonly required for vendors at farmers markets in Iowa.

1) MARKET MANAGER

As a manager of the market, the market manager will likely be able to answer general questions and refer you to who to talk to for more detailed information. Be sure to check about insurance requirements for vendors at the market. Don't forget to ask if the market is a member of the Iowa Farmers Market Association, which may have access to marketplace liability insurance.

2) INSURANCE PROVIDER

There are several insurance providers that offer various types of insurance. When talking to an insurance provider, ask them to explain what insurance you need and how much it will cost. You may also want to ask about discounts for farmers markets.

3) SIMILAR VENDORS

Other vendors at the market may be able to provide information about insurance. They may have experience with insurance and can provide valuable insights. You may also want to ask about discounts for farmers markets.

NEBRASKA FARMERS MARKET HANDBOOK

HANDOUT 5: SETTING PRICES

THE MATH BEHIND THE MARKET

EMMA + MARCUS BUFFALO RIDGE ORCHARD

Setting prices is a critical part of running a successful business. You need to know how much it costs to produce your products and how much you need to charge to cover those costs and make a profit. This means you need to know how much it costs to produce your products and how much you need to charge to cover those costs and make a profit.

THE UNSPOKEN RULE

The general rule is that you should not sell your products at a loss. This means you need to know how much it costs to produce your products and how much you need to charge to cover those costs and make a profit.

THE MARKET'S YOURS

The market is your opportunity to sell your products. You need to know how much you can charge for your products and how much you need to charge to cover those costs and make a profit.

DIVERSITY IS KEY

Diversity is key to success in the market. You need to offer a variety of products to attract a wider range of customers. This means you need to know how much it costs to produce your products and how much you need to charge to cover those costs and make a profit.

NEBRASKA FARMERS MARKET HANDBOOK

HANDOUT 6: How Do I RECORD SALES? BEST METHODS TO TRACK ACTIVITY

TRACKING SALES: WHY & HOW TO DO IT

Having a record of sales by item at each market allows you to make critical business decisions. By tracking your sales, you can see what's working and what's not. This means you need to know how much it costs to produce your products and how much you need to charge to cover those costs and make a profit.

BOOKKEEPING TIPS & TRICKS

Bookkeeping is essential for success in the market. You need to know how much you've sold and how much you've spent. This means you need to know how much it costs to produce your products and how much you need to charge to cover those costs and make a profit.

COMPARE MARKET TO MARKET

Comparing your sales to other markets can help you understand how you're doing. This means you need to know how much it costs to produce your products and how much you need to charge to cover those costs and make a profit.

REVIEW YEAR TO YEAR

Reviewing your sales year-over-year can help you see trends and make adjustments. This means you need to know how much it costs to produce your products and how much you need to charge to cover those costs and make a profit.

NEBRASKA FARMERS MARKET HANDBOOK

HANDOUT 7: The Sale of Home-Baked Goods SELLING BAKED GOODS AT THE MARKET

A NEW TWIST ON AN OLD KNOT

For his Thompson, being served out as a hobby. When he decided to sell baked goods at a farmers market, he was looking for a way to make extra money. This means you need to know how much it costs to produce your products and how much you need to charge to cover those costs and make a profit.

DECIDING WHAT TO BRING TO THE MARKET

Deciding what to bring to the market is a key decision. You need to know what your strengths are and what your customers want. This means you need to know how much it costs to produce your products and how much you need to charge to cover those costs and make a profit.

SWEET OR SAVORY?

Deciding whether to sell sweet or savory goods is another key decision. You need to know what your customers want and what your strengths are. This means you need to know how much it costs to produce your products and how much you need to charge to cover those costs and make a profit.

PERSONAL/SNACK SIZE

Deciding whether to sell personal or snack size goods is another key decision. You need to know what your customers want and what your strengths are. This means you need to know how much it costs to produce your products and how much you need to charge to cover those costs and make a profit.

NEBRASKA FARMERS MARKET HANDBOOK

HANDOUT 8: Do-it-Yourself STAND IMPROVEMENTS

DIY WAYS TO DISPLAY YOUR PRODUCT

ASPARAGUS

3 ELEMENTS TO CONSIDER:

- 1) REUSABLE SIGNS: Signs that can be used over and over again are a great way to save money. You need to know how much it costs to produce your products and how much you need to charge to cover those costs and make a profit.
- 2) SPACE LIMITATIONS: Knowing how much space you have is important. You need to know how much it costs to produce your products and how much you need to charge to cover those costs and make a profit.
- 3) EYE-CATCHING COLOR: Using bright colors can help your products stand out. You need to know how much it costs to produce your products and how much you need to charge to cover those costs and make a profit.

NEBRASKA FARMERS MARKET HANDBOOK

HANDOUT 9: Vendor STALL LAYOUT

CREATING A LAYOUT THAT WORK

TAKING PRIDE IN YOUR VENDOR STALL

As a vendor, you want your stall to be attractive and easy to navigate. This means you need to know how much it costs to produce your products and how much you need to charge to cover those costs and make a profit.

TIDY:

Keeping your stall tidy is important. You need to know how much it costs to produce your products and how much you need to charge to cover those costs and make a profit.

SHelter:

Having a shelter can protect your products from the weather. You need to know how much it costs to produce your products and how much you need to charge to cover those costs and make a profit.

EASY TO NAVIGATE:

Making it easy for customers to find your products is important. You need to know how much it costs to produce your products and how much you need to charge to cover those costs and make a profit.

NEBRASKA FARMERS MARKET HANDBOOK

HANDOUT 10: Accepting FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM BENEFITS

FARM FRESH FOOD FOR EVERYONE

By accepting food assistance program benefits, your farmers market can help more people enjoy fresh, healthy food. This means you need to know how much it costs to produce your products and how much you need to charge to cover those costs and make a profit.

SNAP SHOP

SNAP shops are a great way to accept food assistance program benefits. You need to know how much it costs to produce your products and how much you need to charge to cover those costs and make a profit.

NEBRASKA FARMERS MARKET HANDBOOK

HANDOUT 11: Optimizing PRODUCT MIX

EVALUATING THE ITEMS YOU BRING TO MARKET

SMALL THINGS THAT HAVE BIG IMPACT

Optimizing your product mix is key to success in the market. You need to know what your customers want and what your strengths are. This means you need to know how much it costs to produce your products and how much you need to charge to cover those costs and make a profit.

FIND THE RIGHT MIX FOR YOU

Finding the right mix for you is important. You need to know what your customers want and what your strengths are. This means you need to know how much it costs to produce your products and how much you need to charge to cover those costs and make a profit.

NEBRASKA FARMERS MARKET HANDBOOK

HANDOUT 12: The Power of BRANDING

YOUR FARM AND PRODUCTS IS KEY FOR YOUR BUSINESS

BRANDING 101 FOR VENDORS

Branding is a key part of success in the market. You need to know what your customers want and what your strengths are. This means you need to know how much it costs to produce your products and how much you need to charge to cover those costs and make a profit.

PERSONALITY:

Your brand's personality is important. You need to know what your customers want and what your strengths are. This means you need to know how much it costs to produce your products and how much you need to charge to cover those costs and make a profit.

TARGET:

Knowing your target market is important. You need to know what your customers want and what your strengths are. This means you need to know how much it costs to produce your products and how much you need to charge to cover those costs and make a profit.

LOGO:

Having a logo is important. You need to know what your customers want and what your strengths are. This means you need to know how much it costs to produce your products and how much you need to charge to cover those costs and make a profit.

CONSISTENCY:

Being consistent with your brand is important. You need to know what your customers want and what your strengths are. This means you need to know how much it costs to produce your products and how much you need to charge to cover those costs and make a profit.

NEBRASKA FARMERS MARKET HANDBOOK



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