



CUISR:

Community – University Institute for Social Research

***Farmers' Markets in North America:
A Background Document***

**by Kim Sanderson, Michael Gertler,
Diane Martz, and Ramesh Mahabir**



Building Healthy Sustainable Communities

Community-University Institute for Social Research

CUISR is a partnership between a set of community-based organizations (including Saskatoon District Health, the City of Saskatoon, Quint Development Corporation, the Saskatoon Regional Intersectoral Committee on Human Services) and a large number of faculty and graduate students from the University of Saskatchewan. CUISR's mission is "to serve as a focal point for community-based research and to integrate the various social research needs and experiential knowledge of the community-based organizations with the technical expertise available at the University. It promotes, undertakes, and critically evaluates applied social research for community-based organizations, and serves as a data clearinghouse for applied and community-based social research. The overall goal of CUISR is to build the capacity of researchers, community-based organizations and citizenry to enhance community quality of life."

This mission is reflected in the following objectives: (1) to build capacity within CBOs to conduct their own applied social research and write grant proposals; (2) to serve as a conduit for the transfer of experientially-based knowledge from the community to the University classroom, and transfer technical expertise from the University to the community and CBOs; (3) to provide CBOs with assistance in the areas of survey sample design, estimation and data analysis, or, where necessary, to undertake survey research that is timely, accurate and reliable; (4) to serve as a central clearinghouse, or data warehouse, for community-based and applied social research findings; and (5) to allow members of the University and CBOs to access a broad range of data over a long time period.

As a starting point, CUISR has established three focused research modules in the areas of Community Health Determinants and Health Policy, Community Economic Development, and Quality of Life Indicators. The three-pronged research thrust underlying the proposed Institute is, in operational terms, highly integrated. The central questions in the three modules—community quality of life, health, and economy—are so interdependent that many of the projects and partners already span and work in more than one module. All of this research is focused on creating and maintaining healthy, sustainable communities.

Research is the driving force that cements the partnership between universities, CBOs, and government in acquiring, transferring, and applying knowledge in the form of policy and programs. Researchers within each of the modules examine these dimensions from their particular perspective, and the results are integrated at the level of the Institute, thus providing a rich, multi-faceted analysis of the common social and economic issues. The integrated results are then communicated to the Community and the University in a number of ways to ensure that research makes a difference in the development of services, implementation of policy, and lives of the people of Saskatoon and Saskatchewan.

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Farmers' Markets in North America: A Literature Review

by

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ABSTRACT

The recent renaissance of farmers' markets in North America is driven by a number of factors. Producers benefit from improved returns gained by selling directly to the consumer while avoiding the high capital cost of a storefront operation. Farmers' markets provide small producers an alternative to dealing with wholesalers who require large volumes and product specifications that may be difficult to meet. For large producers able to deal with wholesalers, farmers' markets offer an ancillary income and a venue for selling produce that does not meet wholesaler requirements. Participation in a farmers' market requires minimal capital and provides a ready-made customer base. This makes it an affordable and effective method for test marketing new products. New vendors are offered the advantage of working alongside experienced businesspersons who can offer advice and examples of successful business practices.

Shoppers visit farmers' markets because of the combined benefits of high quality, fresh products, and a sociable and interactive atmosphere. Consumers concerned about food safety can get to know the producers of their food and ask questions about the production and processing techniques used. In large cities, the farmers' market may represent the only access to fresh produce for low income, inner city residents, while for other citizens the decision to shop at the market is a lifestyle choice directly related to product quality and freshness.

Business and community groups, as well as government agencies, have demonstrated an interest in developing and supporting farmers' markets. These markets attract shoppers and have been used as a revitalization strategy for downtown areas. The social and festive atmosphere created by these markets has been credited with making city areas safe and friendly. Government agencies have collaborated with farmers' markets to offer subsidized food purchase programs that ensure that low-income families have access to high quality produce. Restaurants reap the benefits of accessing locally produced products for their clientele. These relationships form the basis for developing a regional food cuisine, a valuable component of the agri-tourism industry. Ecologists and environmentalists view farmers' markets as valuable educational tools, where consumers gain an understanding and appreciation of the food production process and an awareness of food security and environmental degradation issues created by the current global market place. By collaborating with a multitude of both private and public organizations, farmers' markets contribute to economic and social gains for the community as a whole.

INTRODUCTION

Farmers' markets have existed for several centuries in North America, at first playing a significant but then declining role in supplying produce to customers. However, over the last few decades, producers, consumers, and community groups have shown a renewed interest in these markets as a means of bringing farmers and citizens together for the direct sale of products. The past thirty years has seen a proliferation of farmers' markets across the continent as enthusiasm for this traditional form of commerce grows. This report's intent is to explore the reasons for the resurgence of farmers' markets and examine the purposes that such markets serve in today's global economy. The motivations of producers, consumers, and those responsible for initiating these markets are also discussed.

THE TRADITION OF FARMERS' MARKETS

The tradition of public markets was brought to North America from Europe and spread across the continent with European settlement (Spitzer and Baum, 1995). The first documented farmers' market in America occurred in the seventeenth century (Sommer, 1980). These first markets were the primary means of providing fresh produce, dairy, meat, fish, and poultry to urban consumers. Public markets were often the only venue for food commerce within a city because of the control that they afforded officials over conditions of trade (Spitzer and Baum, 1995). Early records from London, Ontario suggest that the farmers' market's commercial importance was significant enough that the city's elite went to great lengths to control its location and operations (Gouglas, 1996). At that time, the market was the focal point of urban commerce, attracting people into the city center.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the farmers' market served as both a food source and focal point for interaction between urban and rural dwellers. "The market," Sean Gouglas (1996) wrote, "proved a social and economic arena, a center of urban and rural relations, outside of which economic failure proved a real possibility." Public markets retained their central role in the buying and selling of food until the first decades of the twentieth century. Although these markets were profitable ventures, revenues from the markets received by public officials were often used for unrelated municipal purposes, allowing the buildings that housed the markets to fall into disarray. Competition from a growing number of private food suppliers made it difficult to justify public funding of food markets and these markets often did not receive the professional management attention needed to remain viable in an increasingly competitive food market (Spitzer and Baum, 1995).

Since then, the economic and social importance of farmers' markets across North America has fluctuated. Fifty years ago, many Saskatchewan communities hosted a Sat-

urday night ritual of rural producers coming to town to sell farm produce and purchase needed staples from town merchants or to exchange products with neighbors. Commerce in small towns exploded on those nights, meeting the economic and social needs of people who lived and worked at considerable distances from one another.

In the 1950's and 1960's, people began moving away from a rural way of life to a more urban existence, and the importance of the farmers' market as a focal point for commerce and interaction diminished. Improved roads and the availability of high-speed transportation helped pave the way for the contemporary global economy. Over the past 50 years, the relationship between food producer and consumer has become quite distant. Presently in the United States, food travels, on average, 1300 miles and changes hands six times before it is consumed (Kloppenburger et al, 1996).

The 1970's began a renewed interest in farmers' markets in North America that continues today. In the United States, the number of farmers' markets increased by 63% over a six year period from 1,755 in 1994 to 2,863 in 2000 (USDA, 2001). Although comparable Canadian statistics were not found, Lencucha et al (1998) suggested that a similar revival has occurred in Canada. In Alberta, the number of farmers' markets registered with the Department of Agriculture and Food has grown from 16 in 1974 to 115 in 1998 (Lencucha et al, 1998).

POPULATION AND PURCHASING PATTERNS

Canada's population growth has slowed to an annual increase of 1.2%. At the same time, the population composition is changing in terms of age, ethnic diversity, and the size and make-up of households. Canadians are living longer, with the number of seniors doubling in the past 25 years. This longevity, combined with a reduced birth rate, has led to a rapidly aging population. Ethnic diversity in Canada is also growing through immigration. An increase in the number of single-person, lone-parent, and childless-couple families has contributed to a fall in the average household size to 2.6 people. Dual-income households, a decline in real disposable income through the 1990's, and a trend toward healthier, more interesting eating have led to changes in consumer food buying habits (Robbin, 1999). Consumers are returning to eating at home, looking for better value for their household budget, and increasing their consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables (Food Bureau, 1999). This quest for value, variety, and fresh produce helps to explain farmers' markets' increasing popularity. Govindasamy et al (1998) explained that the growing concern with nutrition accompanied by increased consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables by Americans has led to farmers' markets' expansion and continued success across the United States.

Farmers' markets are primarily dependent on local customers. Research suggests that these consumers are looking for choice, atmosphere, quality, and homegrown foods as opposed to merely price or convenience (Atkinson and Williams, 1994). The Ontario

Farmers' Market Study found that over 80% of surveyed customers purchase vegetables, making them the most commonly purchased market product. This was followed by fruit (55%) and baked goods (40%). Fish, bedding plants, flowers, and eggs were also popular items (when available). The acceptance of dairy products varied greatly between markets, and jams and preserves sold better at seasonal markets than year round markets. Spending varied between markets, but the Ontario study found that, on average, shoppers spent \$20 per visit (Cummings et al, 1999). Lencucha et al (1998) found similar spending habits in Alberta, with an average expenditure of \$20.64 per day at farmers' markets.

Farmers' market patrons are predominantly female and tend to be older. Cummings et al (1999) found that in Ontario a majority (65%) of customers were female and almost 70% of the total customer base was 45 years or older. Lencucha et al (1998) found that 80.5% of the 2761 respondents to their Alberta farmers' markets survey were female and 42.6% of shoppers were between 25 and 45 years of age, while 53.3% were over 45 years old. This likely reflects Alberta's somewhat younger overall demographics. Almost 20% of respondents to the Alberta survey indicated they were retired (Lencucha et al, 1998). A New Jersey survey of farmers' market shoppers found that 83% were female and 54% were at least 51 years of age (Govindasamy et al, 1998).

The Ontario Farmers' Market Study found that a majority of customers reside within 10 minutes of the market. Ontario customers value the access to locally grown food and the ability to converse with the community of local producers. An estimated 64% of the Ontario shoppers have patronized the local market for more than five years (Cummings et al, 1999). A survey of 331 New Jersey farmers' market patrons found that 90% agreed that freshness and direct contact with producers were the main factors influencing their decision to shop at farmers' markets (Govindasamy et al, 1998). Sommer et al (1980) concluded from their study of California markets that patron preference for farmers' market products is principally a quality of life issue associated with food quality.

ECONOMIC ADVANTAGES

One of the main reasons for proliferation of farmers' markets is the economic opportunities afforded to both producers and consumers. Small producers may not be able to sell to conventional wholesalers because of insufficient volumes and stringent demands for product consistency. Large farmers use direct selling as a sideline operation for additional revenue and a market for product that does not meet wholesaler specifications (Gale, 1997).

Farmers' markets provide producers with an opportunity to retain valuable returns that would otherwise accrue to wholesalers, distributors, and retailers who currently handle the bulk of the world's food supply. The ever-increasing corporate concentration of food distributors has led to control of the food supply by a small but powerful group of companies. The control created by a large number of producers dealing with

an ever-shrinking number of buyers significantly increases bargaining power for buyers, leading to an oligopsony market structure. With improvements in transportation and access to global markets, the producer's bargaining power is further diminished by product competition from around the world. The result is that returns to the producer through conventional distribution channels are not as high as when a product is marketed directly to consumers (Gale, 1997). There is often little ability for the producer to capture returns associated with improved produce quality through conventional distribution. Sorting often occurs at other levels of the supply chain and the sorter retains the returns from this process. The producer is provided with no incentive to improve the quality of his or her product beyond the minimum standards set by the buyer.

By utilizing a farmers' market, the producer performs all supply chain functions, including storing, grading, marketing, and retailing. With that comes the revenue and costs that would otherwise go to a long line of intermediaries (Feenstra and Lewis, 1999). It is estimated that producers realize a 40-80% increase in return on their product by marketing through farmers' markets rather than traditional brokers (Lencucha et al, 1998).

Farmers' markets also offer the advantage of improved market information through direct contact with the consumer, which allows the farmer to learn customer preferences first-hand (Feenstra and Lewis, 1999). This knowledge can be transformed into higher returns as producers adjust and add products to better meet buyer needs.

Farmers' market transactions have the advantage of being cash-based, removing the worry of delayed or default wholesaler payments. There is no risk of produce being rejected by wholesalers, who may have stringent product standards unrelated to flavour, freshness, or quality. Farmers' markets offer producers the flexibility that comes from performing all supply chain functions. Wholesalers require suppliers to commit to a scheduled delivery of produce in quantities that may be impossible for small producers to meet.

In Ontario, farmers' markets generate an estimated \$500 million in sales. The total economic impact for the province is assessed to be approximately \$1.5 billion (Cummings et al, 1999). Lencucha et al (1998) cited a recent consumer report that stated that the average Canadian family spent \$103 on groceries each week, and estimated that if the average farmers' market expenditure of \$20 was exclusively for food, this represented, significantly, 20% of the weekly grocery expense.

CONSUMER BENEFITS

Consumers gain economically through both price and quality when shopping at the farmers' market (Sommer et al, 1980). The consumer often shares in the improved returns associated with avoiding the conventional wholesaler supply chain. Prices may be below

or equivalent to those seen in the supermarket while quality is generally considerably higher. In their research of 15 farmers' markets in California, Sommer et al (1980) found that, on average, prices were one-third less at farmers' markets compared with supermarket chains studied, yet they concluded that the main reason that patrons bought from the market was food quality. Research linking food quality with specific places suggests that there is an implicit assumption that "local" food is of high quality, and that therefore the farmers' market provides an environment where products take on a connotation of quality by virtue of being locally produced (Holloway and Kneafsey, 2000).

A mail survey administered to 500 residents of two Oregon cities by Lev and Stephenson found that consumers consistently voiced beliefs that locally grown products are of superior quality (Novak, 1998). Similar results were found in a consumer survey of 336 shoppers at the New Jersey farmers' markets in 1997, where 98.5% of respondents indicated that they expected that produce quality sold at farmers' markets to be better than that in other retail facilities (Govindasamy et al, 1998). This New Jersey study found that quality was selected by 63% of respondents as the factor that they valued most, ahead of freshness, price, and convenience (Govindasamy et al, 1998). In a survey at two Oregon farmers' markets, customers were asked what they would be willing to pay at a farmers' market for an item that cost \$1.00 at the grocery store (Lev, 2001). Of those who responded, 69% indicated a willingness to pay at least \$1.25, or 25% more, for the same product at a farmers' market (Lev, 2001).

Many farmers' markets require that vendors be directly involved in the production of the goods sold (Holloway and Kneafsey, 1999). Because of this, producers tend to be smaller, with strong production controls that allow for a consistently high quality product (Kloppenburger et al, 1996). Unlike those dealing with a long and complicated supply chain, producers distributing through the farmer's market have a shorter field-to-consumer time span that allows produce to be both fresher and more mature when it is harvested (Kloppenburger et al, 1996).

ACCESS TO FRESH PRODUCE

A recent report on food buying trends revealed that consumers are spending a larger portion of their grocery dollars on fruits and vegetables (Marcotte et al, 1999). Consumers in 1998 were eating 40% more fresh products than in 1970 (Lencucha et al, 1998). Consumers are also demanding a wider selection of fruits and vegetables to satisfy a desire for healthier eating and increased variety in their eating experiences (Marcotte et al, 1999).

This quest for fresh products has made farmers' markets popular with consumers. The Ontario farmers' market study found that freshness was customers' number one attraction to farmers' markets (Cummings et al, 1999). Other recent studies have also found freshness to be one of the main reasons that consumers shop at farmers' markets (Lencucha et al, 1998; Govindasamy et al, 1998).

INNER CITY RESIDENTS

For inner city residents, the farmers' market may provide the only access to fresh produce. Supermarkets are scarce in the heart of large cities as city center commerce is reserved for retailers with large profit margins who can afford high real estate costs (Burns and Johnson, 1996). Consequently, those who live in the core of the city do not have easy access to fresh fruits and vegetables through conventional supermarkets. These residents often have low incomes, making it difficult to access food sources outside their own neighborhoods. In some cities, farmers' markets have developed to serve these economically disadvantaged groups by providing food preparation demonstrations, utilizing innovative food stamp programs, and participating in food security programs that help meet low income individuals' needs (USDA, 2000; Kloppenburg et al, 1996; Feenstra and Christopher, 1999). There is a tendency for downtown markets to be older and publicly owned because of the cost associated with developing and operating farmers' markets in or near a central business district (Atkinson and Williams, 1994).

PERSONAL SERVICE

Closely linked to quality are the services that consumers receive when shopping at a farmers' market. The ability to speak directly with consumers provides a producer with a marketing tool unmatched in a conventional retail setting. Understanding how to use and prepare a new product is essential to ongoing consumer demand. A recent consumer trends study warns that although consumers are looking for new fruits and vegetables to purchase, a key concern is meeting consumer need for education on the use and preparation of these products (Marcotta et al, 1999). Consumers want to know about not only a product's use, but the conditions under which it was produced (Gale, 1997). The farmers' market provides the necessary contact to meet this consumer need.

FOOD SAFETY

Food safety concerns are a driving force behind the spread of the farmers' market phenomenon in the European Union in the last decade (Holloway and Kneafsey, 2000) and contribute greatly to its growth in North America. The growing number of strictly organic farmers' markets provides evidence of this. Organic farms are often small and the farmers prefer the premiums associated with direct selling, while consumers of these products prefer to deal directly with the producer so as to increase their confidence that the product is organic (Gale, 1997). Surveys of consumers who visit farmers' markets suggest that the primary reason that some visit the market is to search for organic produce. Even those not specifically looking for organic produce may have environmental or ethical concerns. For example, they may have a preference for welfare-friendly or free-range conditions for animals, or concerns about the pesticides to which they and

their food are exposed (Holloway and Kneafsey, 1999). There is a general desire to know and understand the food production process and to have some assurance of the quality, freshness, and safety of the food consumed (Gale, 1997). Lev (2001) cited an Oregon statewide survey in 1997 that found 41% of Oregonians think that foods produced in Oregon are safer than food imported from outside the state.

VARIETY

Variety is another reason that both producers and consumers benefit from farmers' markets. Vendors can grow or make a variety of products that may not be suitable for wholesale distribution. Producers can cater to niche markets for a variety of artisan products and receive a fair return for doing so. The market for certain specialty products may be too small to warrant wholesaler involvement. A good example of this is the production of ethnic foods that are of interest to people of a particular cultural background. The volumes sold at any one location may not be sufficient to warrant a retailer providing the product, or the product may not be conducive to an extended handling and storage period. The low overhead associated with selling through farmers' markets makes specialty product vendors more viable and meets a growing consumer demand for new and unique food experiences.

MULTICULTURAL EXPERIENCE

Canada's population growth has slowed, with most of the expansion over the next decade expected to come from immigration (Robbins, 1999). This growing group of consumers from diverse cultural backgrounds wants access to special "ethnic" foods, including particular vegetables, fruits, and baked goods. These specialty items are not always available through the supermarket, and so farmers' markets provide a means by which buyers and sellers of these unique products can gain access to one another (Robbins, 1999). Spitzer and Baum (1995) argued that the results of their national farmers' market survey indicate that more farmers' markets will be established in response to the growing demand for fresh produce purchased directly from the producer. They noted a trend of Southeast Asian immigrants entering the urban farmers' markets with interesting new products from their native lands, providing a new "flavour" and much needed revitalization to small farm communities in certain American states. The Alberta survey of farmers' market consumers found that high income and well-educated shoppers showed an interest in purchasing organic and specialty "ethnic" products (Lencucha et al, 1998).

BUSINESS INCUBATOR ROLE

Farmers' markets also function as business incubators. Innovators wanting to test market new or differentiated products find that farmers' markets offer an efficient and inexpensive means of reaching the consumer. Minimal capital is required to begin selling and the presence of the market creates a ready clientele for new products. Farmers' markets provide a safe environment to experiment with small volumes of product that might not be economically feasible to market through conventional retail channels. This is an important function of the market and one of the reasons that vendors work through farmers' markets (Feenstra and Christopher, 1999). New entrepreneurs benefit from exposure to experienced sellers who offer advice and answer questions in the difficult start-up stage of a fledgling business. For the consumer, this product innovator role makes the farmers' market shopping experience an adventure that can lead to the discovery of new and interesting products.

A movement toward diversification and value-added products has accompanied producers' renewed interest in farmers' markets (Lencucha et al, 1998). Vendors can test market these products through the farmers' market and obtain higher profit margins from their products (Lencucha et al, 1998). A vendor survey conducted by Cornell University scholars (FAP, 1995, cited in Lencucha et al, 1998) indicated that roughly three-quarters of vendors had successfully introduced a new product through a farmers' market and one-third of vendors believed that the farmers' market gave them the opportunity to add value to their products through processing.

SOCIAL BENEFITS

Next to the economic benefits afforded to both producers and consumers, the social atmosphere of the farmers' market is often cited as a reason that both vendors and patrons attend the market (Cummings et al, 1999). The interaction between buyers and sellers is of significant value to both parties. A survey of vendors at nine rural farmers' markets in New York state revealed that the most important reasons given by sellers for attending farmers' markets were social (Gale, 1997). Lev and Stephenson concluded that the enjoyable buying experience was an important contributor to consumer interest in buying at local farmers' markets (Novak, 1998). Almost half of the Oregon customers surveyed indicated that they came equally for the products and the atmosphere (Lev, 2001). In the survey of Alberta farmers' market vendors, direct contact with consumers was cited most often as the reason that producers choose to market through this venue, followed by earning additional income, and enjoyment and recreation (Lencucha et al, 1998). Farmers' markets can be described as multicultural festivals where individuals from different ethnic, social, and economic groups converge to interact in the spirit of the Saturday night markets prevalent in the 1940's and 50's. Bonds develop between sellers and buyers through these social interactions based not only on commerce but also interpersonal relationships.

Customers believe that the market satisfies an important social need by providing a meeting place for friends and community members (Cummings et al, 1999). Cummings et al (1999) found that the Ontario customers tended to linger at the market and enjoy the atmosphere. He noted that 55% of the 2472 people surveyed spent more than 25 minutes at the market. The study also found that those surveyed quite often frequented the market throughout its operating season (Cummings et al, 1999). Roth (2001) suggested that shoppers may spend hours browsing and talking with friends and farmers while making purchases.

In some cities, farmers' markets have been established to revitalize downtown business districts or provide a much needed supply of fresh produce to inner city residents. Such markets have been credited with "cleaning up" neighborhoods and helping neighbors get to know each other (Roth, 2001).

CONSUMER/PRODUCER BOND

The bond that develops between buyer and seller leads to a sense of partnership in the production process (Novak, 1998; Jablow and Horne, 1999). The Oregon survey by Lev and Stephenson (Novak, 1998) showed that although consumers believed locally grown produce to be superior in quality, they also frequented the market because they wanted to support the producers and community by buying local produce. Cummings et al (1999) found that Ontario farmers' market shoppers shared this sentiment, with over 90% stating the importance of supporting local growers at their markets. The Ontario study also found that this loyalty extended to specific vendors, with both vendors and customers emphasizing the special relationship between buyer and seller that developed over time (Cummings et al, 1999).

This "cultural" exchange and interaction between urban and rural citizens is part of the unique farmers' market shopping experience and cannot be duplicated in the mainstream supermarket. Those who patronize farmers' markets share the burden of worry over early frosts or dry conditions that can not only impact their supply of produce but the economic viability of the producer on whom they have come to trust and rely. This relationship has created an understanding of the importance of supporting the local producer and neighbor as an economic unit and also supporting the rural way of life. Farmers' markets are a tangible connection between the consumer and the earth. The interdependency of seller and buyer becomes real through these direct market interactions and this, in turn, strengthens the producer/consumer relationship.

FOOD SECURITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Many researchers and scholars applaud the resurgence of farmers' markets as both an educational tool and a means of fighting globalization's destructiveness (Kloppenburger et

al, 1996; Wilkins, 1995; Norberg-Hodge, 1998). Consumer alienation from knowledge of how their food is produced, processed, and transported has contributed to a high level of ignorance with respect to the ecological and social impacts of production (Kloppenburger et al, 1996). Environmentalists and ecologists believe that consumer awareness of these processes will lead to a better understanding of food security and environmental degradation issues created by the current global marketplace. Food security concerns have been raised over the reliance on distant producers to feed local populations. A reliance on highly industrialized and concentrated commodity chains around the globe leaves consumers vulnerable to political disputes, market power, and environmental disasters that can disrupt the supply of food at any time (Kloppenburger et al, 1996). Advocates of a more local foodshed¹ suggest that greater self-reliance in food production allows for greater control over access to food.

The self-reliance associated with proximity is closely linked to both social and environmental sustainability. A community that depends upon its human neighbors, neighboring lands, and native species to supply the majority of its needs must ensure that the social and natural resources it utilizes to fulfill those needs remain healthy. A consequence of proximate self-reliance is that social welfare, soil and water conservation, and energy efficiency become issues of immediate practical concern. ... In the foodshed, collective responsibility for stewardship of people and of the land becomes a necessity rather than an optional virtue (Kloppenburger et al, 1996).

Transporting food great distances has led to concerns over the consumption of fossil fuels, excessive packaging, and greenhouse gas emissions. Large-scale production systems may sacrifice prudent land management in favor of higher returns from the land. Concerns with contemporary, industrial, long distance food systems include soil erosion, ground water contamination, air pollution, build-up of toxins in the soil, rapid decline in the number of farms leading to the loss of rural communities, and loss of an economically viable way of life for farmers (Wilkins, 1995). The ecological impacts of these agro-industrial systems cause great concern for many who have studied the situation closely. The growth in farmers' markets is seen as one positive alternative. It is believed that development of direct relationships between consumer and producer will lead to a reconnection with the land and awareness of consumers' responsibility and personal stake in protecting it.

Recent surveys suggest that some consumers are happy to "cut out the middlemen" and "support the local farmer" by patronizing a farmers' market (Holloway and Kneafsey, 2000; Novak, 1998). Although it cannot be assumed that these comments reflect a strong commitment to address the ecological concerns discussed above, they suggest a sense of the partnership that has developed between buyers and sellers. Ecological concerns

may not be a salient motive for the typical producer or consumer who participates in a farmers' market, but awareness of these issues likely reinforces their commitment to use the farmers' market as a distribution channel. In Britain, the re-emergence of the farmers' market is associated with consumer interest in food safety, leading to a desire for not only a traceable food supply, but sustainable and ecologically-friendly agriculture (Holloway and Kneafsey, 2000). Govindasamy et al (1999) found that 80% of the 331 New Jersey farmers' market patrons surveyed reported that they cared where the fresh produce that they purchased was grown. Lev (2001) reported that in a recent mail survey administered in two Oregon communities, 72% of the approximately 300 respondents indicated a preference for "local" products over those produced elsewhere in Oregon.

The farmers' market is considered a means of taking back control from the multinationals and contributing to local communities' revitalization. Norberg-Hodge (1998) wrote about the movement to regain control over jobs, food, communities, environments, and lives. Among the strategies used to address these concerns, some of the most successful have involved local food links (Norberg-Hodge, 1998). Norberg-Hodge (1998) argues that "[f]ood production should be at the very heart of localization," and warns that plans to revitalize communities and sustainable agriculture are likely to fail if they do not fully integrate food and farming issues.

COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND CULTURE

There is a nostalgic attraction to farmers' markets that is difficult to specify or quantify. The farmers' market provides a mechanism and atmosphere that allows urban dwellers to capture and share a sense of farming, rural life, and a traditional marketplace. The popularity of museums and heritage parks with themes that build on or allude to rural life and communities of the past suggest an abiding fascination of, attraction to, and interest in traditional agrarian activities. The farmers' market is a means by which urban residents can reconnect with this tradition and experience the romance and excitement of working more directly with the land. It is no accident that some farmers' markets have asked vendors to wear straw hats and traditional aprons, and use bushel baskets to create an atmosphere similar to that of a general country store. This can be an effective marketing tool in some larger urban venues and underlines the potential popularity of such markets as tourist attractions.

[W]hen people are buying food directly from the people who have produced it, the food becomes part of a story. It loses its status as a commodity, packaged, faceless and distant. The task of getting accurate information is a matter of interpreting a Dutch or Punjabi accent, rather than squinting at tiny print on the side of a box. And the "package" is the market itself where you meet neighbors and friends and stop for coffee and a butter tart (Kneen, 1997).

Cummings et al (1999) found that seasonal changes in farmers' markets are often used by patrons as a means of "marking" the seasons. Markets opening in April or May are seen by many customers as a sign of spring and become a vehicle for reconnecting with other community members (Cummings et al, 1999). The availability of different produce throughout the growing season signals the progression from spring to summer to fall. Where markets close in the winter months, this is also a marker of the production season's end and winter's arrival. Cummings et al (1999) suggested that part of the enjoyment of the market cited by Ontario shoppers during the winter months is the anticipation of a new market season.

The public attraction to this market culture accounts for the general support given to farmers' markets by business communities and the municipalities in which they operate. Lev and Stephenson (Novak, 1998) discovered through a survey of customers at two downtown farmers' markets in Oregon that the market was the primary reason patrons visited the downtown shopping district. Some businesses located near the market and operate during hours that coincide with the market to benefit from the customer traffic (Feenstra and Christopher, 1999; Cummings et al, 1999). Many Ontario merchants interviewed about the impact of the farmers' market indicated that it generated additional sales for their businesses. Almost 50% of farmers' market customers patronized other businesses during their shopping trip (Cummings et al, 1999). Lencucha et al (1998) found similar results when surveying Alberta farmers' market patrons, with 61.4% of respondents indicating that they shop at other retailers in the area. In many communities, the city provides space or in some way subsidizes the acquisition of space for the market in recognition of its cultural and economic contribution to the community (Atkinson and Williams, 1994; Spitzer and Baum, 1995). Public support for farmers' markets has created bargaining power for vendors who, with this backing, are capable of creating strong, effective political pressure when conflicts occur with the host city (Atkinson and Williams, 1994).

PARTNERING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Farmers' markets have successfully created a unique connection between commerce and community by offering both product and social relationships to customers. Farmers' markets also represent an important "thread" in the community fabric by partnering with a multitude of organizations, both private and public, in dynamic ways that provide economic and social gains for the community as a whole. Some farmers' markets have formed relationships with schools or school food programs, offering not only tours and contact with local farmers for the children but also providing food to the school cafeteria (Feenstra and Lewis, 1999). Government organizations are working with farmers' markets in food stamp and voucher programs that facilitate access to fresh produce by low-income individuals (Feenstra and Lewis, 1999; Kloppenburg et al, 1996). Other farmers' markets donate surplus produce to local food banks.

Farmers' markets have been instrumental in revitalizing stagnant business districts. Downtown business owners and redevelopment agencies often cite the revitalization role as a motive for initiating a farmers' market (Feenstra and Lewis, 1999). The Pasco Farmers' Market in Washington state provides a shining example of how development of farmers' markets can be instrumental in revitalizing an otherwise "dead" downtown business district (Spitzer and Baum, 1995). The Pasco Farmers' Market started as a festival sponsored by downtown business and property owners and was such a success that the group worked with the city to find a permanent location for the farmers' market (Spitzer and Baum, 1995). Regeneration of the downtown commercial district began with the market's inception. The success of this original open air market led to the development of an additional year-round indoor farmers' market location and establishment of an adjacent marketplace where those who were not necessarily producers could benefit from the market's traffic. By hiring a local organization to manage the market, a further community benefit was created when this organization used the facility to train clients who learned sales, maintenance, and basic management skills (Spitzer and Baum, 1995). The success of the Pasco Farmers' Market eventually drew not only customers but businesses back to the downtown area (Spitzer and Baum, 1995).

Producers working through farmers' markets often provide product to the local food service industry. By combining these revenues with that generated from farmers' market sales, producers are able to create a viable business, while consumers and retailers benefit from access to a variety of locally produced products. This unique variety of product provides an opportunity for development of a regional food culture. Some markets are directly involved in promoting linkages between their member vendors and other marketing venues such as restaurants, retail stores, schools, and hospitals (Feenstra and Christopher, 1999). Restaurant chefs who have learned the value of fresh, locally grown produce patronize the markets and feature local product in their entrees (Jablow and Horne, 1999). This local production and consumption partnership nurtures the development of a regional food identity that can be a significant component of the tourism industry. Locally distinctive foods become part of the community's culture and can be enjoyed by local and visiting patrons alike.

Markets are sponsored by a wide range of community groups, including, but not limited to, charities, churches, chambers of commerce, and downtown promotion organizations (Roth, 2001). What these groups bring to the market is equally as varied, encompassing management, provision of a site, promotion, funding, and running events in conjunction with the market's operation (Roth, 2001). Farmers' markets benefit from the commitment and ownership generated by these partnerships in the community (Roth, 2001).

Connections between rural farmers' markets and local crafts people, cottage industries, "u-pick" businesses, and bed and breakfast operations generate agritourism benefits for all parties involved (Feenstra and Lewis, 1999). Farmers' markets spon-

sor special events, such as cooking demonstrations and pumpkin decorating, creating market traffic, and providing another dimension to the overall experience (Lencucha et al, 1998). Joint activities with other community functions, such as auctions and fairs, add to the atmosphere of farmers' markets while generating additional economic gains for all parties involved through the shared customer traffic. Roth (2001) stated that in communities with viable farmers' markets and other attractions, tourists may make up as much as one-third of market shoppers.

FORMULA FOR SUCCESS

Quality, freshness, and variety, coupled with the social atmosphere of the market, are major reasons that consumers patronize farmers' markets (Cummings et al, 1999, Lencucha et al, 1998, Lev, 2001). Successful and viable farmers' markets are able to meet their customers' expectations in these areas (Roth, 2001). Farmers' markets that are able to internalize and promote themes of quality and freshness in their products as well as in their atmosphere and image increase their clientele. Customer interest and curiosity is captured by including a wide variety of vendors who make available a changing product mix throughout the growing season (Roth, 2001).

A large number of vendors with a good variety of products within a food category and an ample range of categories are important to a farmers' market's success (Cummings et al, 1999; Atkinson and Williamson, 1994). Drawing power is strengthened by the presence of several vendors selling the same category of products, such as fish, chicken, vegetables, or sausage. It is also recommended that these vendors be clustered together in their respective categories because easy comparison of products and prices improves the patron's shopping experience. The study of three Oregon farmers' markets found that approximately 60% of those surveyed stated that they quit shopping because there was nothing else that they wanted to buy (Lev, 2001). This indicates that there are opportunities to add other vendors to these markets, thereby increasing the product mix available to shoppers. Roth (2001) suggested that competition among vendors is healthy, for it encourages producers to hone their marketing skills and distinguish themselves in terms of product quality. Market managers should locate visually pleasing vendors selling products such as flowers near the market's entrance and locate meat vendors near the back (Atkinson and Williamson, 1994).

The issue of variety for customers is linked to the debate over the definition of "locally produced" and how this criterion is interpreted and enforced. Farmers' markets struggle with the issue of whether to allow wholesalers or short-line vendors, who offer one or two "seasonal" items and may or may not be local producers, to attend the market on an irregular or seasonal basis. Inclusion of these vendors adds to the variety of products offered throughout the market season, attracting customers. However, it can be viewed as an unfair advantage by regular vendors who anchor the farmers' market the

entire season or year, even when patronage and sales may be low (Cummings et al, 1999). Roth (2001) suggested that personal observation indicates that those farmers' markets that include only producers selling their own products are the most successful.

Although the "correct" answer to the question of who should be allowed to participate in the farmers' market is unclear, it underlines the importance of establishing and enforcing regulations that express the philosophy and image that the farmers' market wants to portray (Cummings et al, 1999). Failure to provide clear and consistent regulations will lead to vendor dissatisfaction, which will erode the friendly, cohesive sense of a community shopping experience that attracts both vendors and customers. Although rules are not always popular, they are necessary to ensure that internal conflict does not divide the vendors (Roth, 2001).

Product mix at the market is important to farmers' markets' viability. For a farmers' market to retain its identity, it is important that a high proportion of vendors primarily sell food (Atkinson and Williams, 1994). Atkinson and Williams (1994) suggested that non-food items or crafts should be displayed in a separate area of the market. Cummings et al (1999) found that vendors had varied opinions on inclusion of non-food items in the market and whether the presence of these other vendors should be limited. The study also found that some farmers' markets specifically avoided including crafters in favor of maintaining a purely produce market (Cummings et al, 1999).

Cummings et al (1999) found that some farmers' markets experienced difficulty maintaining a sufficient number of vendors. If vacancies are not filled and the number of vendors continues to fall, patrons will be given the impression of a "depressed" market and lose interest. If the number of customers falls, this becomes a "chicken and egg" situation, which further discourages producers from participating in the market and leads to more vendors leaving the market. Actively recruiting vendors to ensure that there is both selection and variety in the products offered is fundamental to a healthy farmers' market. Producers also stress the importance of regular vendor attendance and recognition of their role in ensuring that the farmers' market maintains a healthy image (Cummings et al, 1999).

Attracting new customers is important to farmers' markets' continued viability. Cummings et al (1999) found that Ontario markets varied in their success in attracting new customers. They cited vendors' concerns about patron loss through the natural aging of the customer base and difficulties in attracting different age groups to the market (Cummings et al, 1999). The New Jersey farmers' market study found that 68% of the consumer households had no children under the age of 18, suggesting that young families are less likely to frequent farmers' markets (Govindasamy et al, 1998). Offering products, services, and an atmosphere that attracts customers from a spectrum of age groups was identified as both important and a vendor concern in Ontario (Cummings et al, 1999). The Alberta Farmers' Market study (Lencucha et al, 1998) identified dwindling rural community populations, inability to replace the market manager, and renovations to the

market site as the primary factors causing farmers' markets to close either temporarily or permanently.

Atkinson and Williams (1994) pointed out that reliance on local customers makes a residential area the prime location for farmers' markets. However, they also indicated that markets located close to downtown workplaces successfully attract the local workforce, who frequent the farmers' market at lunch hour and after work (Atkinson and Williams, 1994). Cummings et al (1999) pointed out that many seasonal farmers' markets are located outside, which sets them apart from the conventional shopping experience. This is a great attraction for customers who associate the outdoor farmers' market experience with freshness. Customer surveys revealed that although shoppers were accepting of the idea of some sort of shelter for the farmers' market, they were not enthusiastic about an entirely enclosed facility (Cummings et al, 1999).

The importance of location should not be underestimated. A high traffic location that allows for adequate flow through and around the farmers' market is important for attracting customers. Parking for shoppers is another important consideration. The ability of customers to park close to the farmers' market is essential, especially when they must be able to carry their purchases without aid of a shopping cart or car service. Govindasamy et al (1999) noted that insufficient or inadequate parking has an adverse effect on market patronage. The ability of the farmers' market to consistently locate in the same place is also important for maintaining and building a customer base (Roth, 2001).

Farmers' markets have been described as part of the larger community culture or identity, and, as such, have relationships or "connections" with many other facets of the community. Farmers' markets offer a unique shopping experience that is inseparable from economic impacts with respect to vendors, patrons, or neighboring businesses. Recognition of the role or place of the farmers' market in the community is critical to its viability. This often means collaborating with other businesses, public services, or tourism agencies to provide the patron with a satisfying shopping experience. Farmers' markets are often located within or adjacent to other shopping areas, a combination that draws a large and varied clientele. Farmers' markets can be publicly or privately owned, but they must work well within the tapestry of the larger community to be successful.

Changes in population composition, convenience, and socioeconomic factors such as lifestyle and income all influence what consumers demand and what producers bring to the farmers' market (Govindasamy et al, 1998). The economic viability of the farmers' market is contingent on the availability of current and accurate intelligence on consumer trends and preferences (Govindasamy et al, 1998). Farmers' markets, like any business, must continually assess the needs of their customers and adjust to meet those needs. Cummings et al (1999) recommended that farmers' markets implement a formal means of handling customer comments to ensure that the market provides a consistently high quality experience for shoppers. The social atmosphere of the farmers' market is an integral component of patrons' experiences (Gale, 1997; Lev, 2001). The value that

customers place on the social atmosphere is an important consideration for the location, design, and regulation of any farmers' market.

CONCLUSION

Farmers' markets are a growing sales outlet for agricultural produce across North America. They play a vital role in enabling producers and consumers to come together in a dynamic commerce experience that combines economic exchange with social relationships. For the producer, it offers an opportunity to increase profit margins; the consumer benefits from high quality food sold directly by the grower in a relaxed social atmosphere (Burns and Johnson, 1996).

The uniqueness of each farmers' market suggests that its "personality" comes from the community in which it resides. It is the combination of products and people at a farmers' market that make it special (Roth, 2001). The culture that develops in a market is dependent on its location and the influence of both vendors and customers. Types of products offered at the market are combined with the atmosphere to generate a local identity for the market and the goods it supplies. The high value that patrons attach to the ability to purchase local produce and crafts demonstrates the importance of this authentic and homegrown culture.

Farmers' markets are a vehicle for food security and sovereignty for cities and regions. They furnish valuable services and opportunities for participants and others who realize indirect benefits. They are good neighbors and provide a venue for a variety of cultural activity. They are important links between rural and urban economies. As an alternative market, they increase the local economic and social multipliers associated with production and distribution of food and other locally crafted products.

NOTES

¹The term foodshed is used to refer to the physical, biological, social, and intellectual components of the ecosystem in which people live and eat (Kloppenborg et al, 1996).

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Appendix A. Farmers' Markets: An Annotated Bibliography.

Alberta Approved Farmers' Market Food Safety and Program Guidelines

- These guidelines include a brief description of food handling requirements, a list of non-hazardous and hazardous foods, and outline requirements to be an approved Farmers' Market in Alberta.

Alberta Farmers' Market Association. 1998. *Analysis of Direct Marketing of Cottage and Market Garden Products at Approved Farmers' Markets.*

- This study looked at the how farmers' markets contributed to local economic development in Alberta. Market managers, vendors, and customers were sent questionnaires by mail. The study looked at types of products sold, why customers and vendors came to the farmers' market, how customers knew about the farmers' market, estimated annual sales, market generated employment, and recommendations for farmers' markets.

Alcantara, Leslee. 1999. Farmers Markets as a Stimulus for Economic Development. *Catalysts for Growth.* A green paper of the Economics Institute.

- This paper documents the economic impact of the Crescent City Farmers Market in Louisiana.

Anderson, Jim, Raymond Smoley, James Morris and Errol Bragg. 1993. *Regional Farmers' Market – A Marketing and Design Study Conducted for Springfield and Columbia, MO.* USDA. Online resource (www.ams.usda.gov/directmarketing/WAM017.htm Downloaded January 2001).

- This report includes a farmers' market feasibility study conducted by the Missouri Department of Agriculture. Farmers and consumers from existing farmers' markets were surveyed to determine the need and interest in establishing additional farmers' markets.

Atkinson, Maureen and John Williams. 1994. Farmers Markets: Breathing New Life into Old Institutions. *Public Management.* January: 16-20.

- This article looks at the contribution that a farmers' market can make to a community. It discusses public versus private markets and the benefits and disadvantages of each from the perspective of city administration.

Burns, Arthur and Denny Johnson. 1996. *Farmers' Market Survey Report.* Executive summary. USDA. Online resource (www.ams.usda.gov/directmarketing/WAM024.htm Downloaded January 2001).

- This report offers a summary of of farmers' markets' economic contribution in the United States.

Byward Market Business Improvement Area. *General Membership Information,* Ottawa.

- This information package outlines BIA membership benefits, including discounts on long distance rates, office supplies, restaurants, services and boutiques, health insurance plans, co-op advertising, and association credit card rates. Board committees and responsibilities are listed. A description of special events undertaken annually by the market is provided, as are promotional activities including tear-off maps and brochures.

Community Food Security Coalition. *Hot Peppers and Parking Lot Peaches: Evaluating Farmers' Markets in Low Income Communities*.

- This study explores a variety of issues associated with direct marketing in inner city communities.

Cummings, Harry, Galin Kora, and Don Murray. 1999. *Farmers' Markets in Ontario and Their Economic Impact 1998*. School of Rural Planning and Development, University of Guelph.

- A study of the economic and social impact of Ontario farmers' markets. The study focused on 19 markets in which managers, vendors, local businesses, and customers were surveyed. This document contains valuable information on the social and economic impact of Ontario farmers' markets. Economic measures include: the value of sales by vendors for each farmers' market in 1998; the value of purchases made by customers during 1998; and the number of jobs associated with activity at and in preparation for the farmers' market. Community impact was assessed through interviews with farmers' market managers, customers, vendors, and businesses operating near the farmers' markets. The farmers' markets generated an estimated \$500 million in sales and an overall economic impact of \$1.5 billion in Ontario.

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- This is a study done on the Clover Valley Farmers' Market as part of a larger study on Ontario farmers' markets. Specifics on the farmers' market are provided.

Deloitte, Haskins, and Sells Associates. 1985. *Saskatchewan Farmer's Market Program Review*. Government of Saskatchewan.

- This program review determined whether farmers' markets in Saskatchewan warrant program support. The review contains quantitative information about the farmers' markets in Saskatchewan, including estimates of revenue generated, types of products, and alternate markets for vendors and consumers. This is a good but dated report on the economic contribution of farmers' markets. The conclusion was that farmers' markets warranted program/financial support.

Farming Alternative Program. *Retail Farmers' Markets and Rural Development*.

- This project's purpose was to determine how farmers' markets promote community and economic development by studying how they act as micro-enterprise incubators for businesses. The study looks at markets in California, Iowa, and New York.

Farmers' Market Study Team. 1999. *The Role of Farmers' Markets in Agricultural Development, Downtown Revitalization and Environmental Sustainability: A Case Study of the Millburn, New Jersey Farmers' Market.*

- A small survey of vendors, consumers, the market manager, representatives of the downtown business community, and local government to look at the social, economic, and environmental impact of the Millburn Farmers' Market.

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- This is a summary of the first phase of a three phase study that explores how farmers' markets encourage business enterprises and to identify strategies for farmers and their host communities to support business growth. The study conducted by Cornell University Rural Sociology Dept. includes surveys of 60 farmers' market managers in California, Iowa, and New York. The next two phases involve surveys of vendors and six case studies of innovative markets.

Feentra, Gail and Christopher Lewis. *Farmers' Markets as Catalysts for Entrepreneurship and Community Development*. UC Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program. University of California-Davis.

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- Direct marketing plays a role in rural development by fostering an entrepreneurial climate, attracting agricultural tourists, and promoting alternative forms of agriculture. The paper discusses reasons for the return to direct marketing and explores related social issues.

Gouglas, Sean. 1996. Produce And Protection: Covent Garden Market, The Socioeconomic Elite, and the Downtown Core in London, Ontario 1843-1915. *Urban History Review* 25(1): 3-18.

- This is a history of London, Ontario's Covent Market, focusing on the control of urban elites over the market, and how this control provided them with economic gains.

Govindasamy, Ramu, Marta Zurbriggen, John Italia, Adesoji Adelaja, Peter Nitzsche, and Richard Vanvranken. 1998. *Farmers Markets: Consumer Trends, Preferences, and Characteristics*. The State University of New Jersey Rutgers.

- This is a report on a survey of New Jersey farmer's market patrons that illustrates the market's economic and social impact.

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- This is a survey of farmer's market managers that examines the characteristics of managers and farmers' markets, as well as issues related to the operation of farmers' markets.

Govindasamy, Ramu, Marta Zurbriggen, John Italia, Adesoji Adelaja, Peter Nitzsche, and Richard Vanvranken. 1998. *Farmers Markets: Producer Characteristics and Status of Their Business*. The State University of New Jersey Rutgers.

- This survey of farmer's market producers focuses on producer characteristics and issues associated with selling at the farmers' market.

Hinrichs, C. Clare. 2000. Embeddedness and local food systems: notes on two types of direct agricultural market. *Journal of Rural Studies*. 16: 295-303.

- This study looks at the social embeddedness of farmers' markets and community supported agriculture.

Holloway, Lewis and Moya Kneafsey. 2000. Reading the Space of the Farmers' Market: A Preliminary Investigation from the UK. *Sociologia Ruralis*. 40(3): 285-299.

- This paper discusses signaling quality by linking products to particular places or spaces and argues that this association between location and quality may explain farmers' markets' growth.

Jablow, Valerie and Bill Horne. 1999. Farmers' Markets: Americans Love Them, and That Means Big Business for Small Farmers—and a Mouth-Watering Harvest for Customers. *Smithsonian*. June: 120.

- This is a short history of farmers' markets' development in the United States. The paper includes a good description of farmers' markets' consumer benefits.

Kloppenburg, Jr., Jack, John Hendrickson, and G. W. Stevenson. 1996. Coming into the Foodshed. *Agriculture and Human Values*. 13(3): 33-42.

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- This article is a report on the farmers' market conference held at Nisku, Alberta. Monika Roth, an American market specialist, speaks of the importance of farm produce to a farmers' market.

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- This publication states the responsibilities of the farmers' market and vendors and outlines some good general rules.

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- This is an interesting discussion of the negative impact of globalization on rural life. The paper outlines the benefits of returning to local food production/consumption through farmers' markets, community-supported agriculture (CSA) programs, and eco-villages.

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- These conference notes offer brief descriptions of several markets and provide tips on press releases, displays, and public relations.

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- These conference notes offer brief descriptions of several markets, including promotion ideas and marketing challenges.

Novak, Theresa. 1998. A Fresh Place. *Oregon's Agricultural Progress*. Fall/Winter edition.

- This article discusses why farmers' markets are increasing in popularity. It refers to a research project that documents the economic development and social benefits of farmers' markets.

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- This provides reasons why markets are measuring their performance and what information can/should be gathered.

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- This study looks at the quality of farmers' market produce through flavor comparisons with supermarket produce and pesticide residue analysis. The study found that farmers' market produce was preferred or equal in flavor to supermarket produce. Pesticide residues were within acceptable limits for all produce tested from both farmers' markets and supermarkets.

Sommer, Robert, Margaret Wing and Susan Aitkens. 1980. Price Savings to Consumers at Farmers' Markets. *The Journal of Consumer Affairs*. 14(2): 452-462.

- This article offers a price comparison between certified farmers' markets and supermarket chains in Massachusetts, finding that farmers' market shoppers experienced cost savings compared to buying the same products in supermarkets.

Spitzer, Theodore Morrow and Hilory Baum. 1995. *Public Markets and Community Revitalization*. The Urban Land Institute and Project for Public Spaces, Inc., Washington, D.C.

- This publication includes a history and examples of public markets, as well as background information on starting a public market.

USDA AMS Farmers' Markets Fact Sheet. Online resource (www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/facts.htm).

- This fact sheet explores who benefits from farmers' markets and program linkages (WIC, food stamp, school, and hunger programs).

USDA. 1998. *Direct Marketing Today: Challenges and Opportunities*.

- Marketers and facilitated focus groups were asked to discuss the challenges facing producers involved with direct marketing. Recommendations for USDA-AMS programs are included.

Wilkins, Jennifer L. 1995. Seasonal and Local Diets: Consumers' role in achieving a sustainable food system. *Research in Rural Sociology and Development*. 6: 149-166.

- This paper explores the social, ethical, ecological, and economic benefits and barriers associated with returning to a more localized production of food.

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