



## Did you know?

Food is connected to every major problem we face as a society – rising medical costs, poverty and hunger, declining farm incomes, the paving-over of farmland, wildlife protection, urban sprawl, youth unemployment, and communities at risk. . . Local farmers' markets, community and school gardens, food co-ops, urban gardens, farmer training programs, Alternative Land Use Services, new certification regimes – all of these emerging possibilities support healthier, tastier food for all.

*Source: Food Connects Us All: Sustainable Local Food in Southern Ontario, Metcalf Foundation, February 2008*



## Did you know?

Broccoli is chock-full of vitamins A, K and C, along with calcium, folate and the tumor-suppressant indole.

It is thought to be a natural detoxifier because it contains sulforaphane.

Studies suggest that eating broccoli can reduce the risk of prostate, ovarian, breast, lung, liver, colon and bladder cancers.

*Source: Top 10 Fall Vegetables; <http://www.marksdailyapple.com/fall-vegetables/>*



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## Savour Ottawa Field House Fosters Collaboration.

A collaboration between the City of Ottawa, Savour Ottawa (a buy-local food proponent) and a group of local producers recently opened the doors on a unique initiative in the form of the Savour Ottawa Field House at Parkdale Market.

This past year the Parkdale Market has undergone a radical facelift thanks to a federal infrastructure grant. The \$1.2 million makeover includes a brand new, highly appealing public space and a complete renovation to the Field House – former change room and eyesore – transforming it into a funky, functional retail outlet for local producers.

“When we finally gained access to the facility this March, we held an open meeting with Savour Ottawa members to discuss possibilities. From that, we received two proposals: the successful candidates were notified on April 1st, giving them four weeks to be up and running,” says Philip Powell, former Manager of the city’s markets.

“We knew, based on market research, that consumers wanted to see eggs, cheese and meat offerings at Parkdale. And as a public market, open seven days a week, we had to consider the number of days a week the candidates could be open,” Powell continues. The results?

Ten local farmers pitched in and purchased the necessary refrigerators and freezers to display and sell their products four days a week, from Thursday to Sunday. Each farm retains its

own identity, but the staffing and responsibilities are shared. They refer to the arrangement as a marketing collaborative.

The shop is tiny, 300 to 400 square feet, so space is at a premium. Two producers work the store at a time, selling on behalf of all the others. So far the concept is working well for the farmers, who make deliveries on the way to other markets, knowing their product will be properly stored, merchandised and available for purchase four days a week.

Participants include **Bryson Farms** (veggies & gourmet products), **Dusty Lane Farms** (hormone-free lamb), **Beking's Eggs**, **Fromagerie les Folies Bergères** (goat, sheep & cow's milk cheese) **Le Coprin** (mushrooms), **Halsall's Honey**, **Hall's Apple Market** (apples & cider), **Trillium Meadows** (wild boar & red deer), **Stanley's Olde Maple Lane** (maple syrup) and **Acer Farms** (red Angus beef, hormone- & antibiotic-free) .

*cont'd on page 2*



## THE MANAGER'S OFFICE

### Create your own survey!

How hard have you tried to solicit feedback from market consumers and market vendors? Does it feel like pulling teeth sometimes? Maybe you just need the right tool, and an anonymous medium.

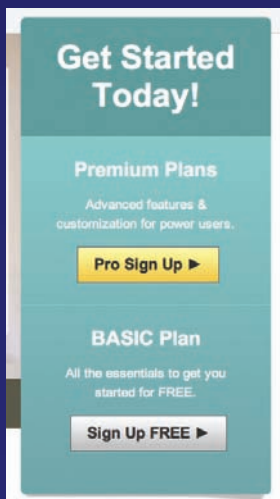
To create an online survey, go to this site: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/> and sign up for the free basic account, then follow the instructions.

Basic accounts are limited to 10 questions per survey. You can "borrow" questions from the myriad templates available on topics from market research, customer service, volunteer feedback and community events – or just create your own.

If you have a website or Facebook page, post the link there or simply email the link to people you'd like to respond. Then, sit back and let Survey Monkey tabulate your responses! It's that simple.



On the Survey Monkey home page (above), click on **Sign Up for FREE** (close-up detail shown below).



Field House - cont'd from page 1



It's a pilot project with strong potential to become a year-round, indoor market, once the kinks are worked out. And there are kinks: on the hottest day of the year, one of the freezers gave out, resulting in product loss. "We've added additional fans for now, and hope to put the compressors on the outside of the building, so we're working with the city on that," says Marianne Lindenmann of Trillium Meadows.

Making people in the community aware of the Field House, improving signage and holding events nearby has helped increase foot traffic. Savour Ottawa hosted a Harvest Table on the Field House doorstep the last weekend of August, featuring some of the producers' product.

Lindenmann acknowledges that there's a learning curve involved. "It's key to know about the other vendors' products: how the animals are fed, how to cook the meat, whether the chickens are free-range. You have to ask each other the questions," she says. Having two people working helps, particularly during the busy times, and vendors feature samples of their own products on the days they're in the store.

At present, the Field House is open until Christmas, with reduced hours beginning in the fall. As for consumers, "people living in the area want it," says Lindenmann. Some of her customers at the Ottawa Farmers' Market have been delighted to learn they don't need to go all the way to Lansdowne to buy her product, that "there's finally something in the neighbourhood."

The Savour Ottawa brand is similar to the MyPick® brand, but specific to the city of Ottawa. It's a pedigree of quality and origin, informing consumers that growers are verified and produce the food they sell locally. In the past, the number of unidentified resellers doing business at the public markets in Ottawa has been the subject of controversy. A new city by-law and clear signage rectified the problem at Parkdale Market this season, while Byward Market is slated for new signage next year.

Today canopy signage at Parkdale tells consumers whether the produce is local, what percentage is vendor-produced, and identifies resellers clearly. And consumers who want 100% verified local food can make a beeline to the Savour Ottawa Field House!



## Tools and training at your fingertips:

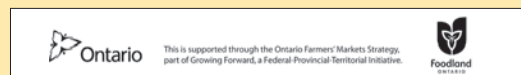
### Please complete a confidential FMO survey.

This time, instead of introducing a new tool, we're asking you for feedback on the tools we've already created. So please copy and paste the following link into your browser window and complete our anonymous survey to let us know what you're thinking and what we could do to help you better in the future:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/FR6S2V7>

## FMO: Leveraging the power of partnerships for 20 years

The story of FMO over the past two decades is one of partnership. Forging and leveraging the bonds of partnership with OMAFRA and other provincial agencies,



local farmers, communities, food organizations, local markets, group insurance providers and consumers is fundamental to the FMO approach.

"We've had a relationship with Co-operators Insurance for our members' Group Liability Insurance since 1993," says Executive Director, Bob Chorney.



"It's a true partnership: they even collaborated with us on the Symposium Scholarship/Travel Grant program this past year." And while access to affordable liability insurance through FMO has been a big boost to market start-ups, there's so much more.

Connecting real farmers with a verification process that tells consumers the grower is "the real deal" is the direct result of a strong OMAFRA partnership.



FMO's MyPick® brand and Verified Local Farmers® program are possible through OMAFRA funding. And providing markets with a certification process has resulted in five MyMarket® locales in communities across the GTA, delivering freshly-picked local food in the heart of the city.

Partnering with the Ontario Farm Fresh Marketing Association resulted in other funding from OMAFRA and the Ontario Small Town and Rural Development Initiative to produce food safety materials, marketing and merchandising equipment



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## Profile: Rosemary Rognvaldson



Howick Farmers' Market is ready to wrap up its first season, thanks to some dedicated volunteers, strong support and leadership from the local Agricultural Society, and a generous 3-year Trillium grant used in part to hire manager Shelley Miller Cameron. But it all began with Rosemary Rognvaldson, a former municipal councillor and reeve who recognized the need for economic development and something to keep local money circulating in the Township's economy. "With a total population of just under 4,000 and many citizens commuting to larger centres on a daily basis for work, we needed something," she says.

Three years after she first suggested the idea, the Agricultural Society formed a steering committee and got busy forming a market. The new market's results are promising: "We averaged about 13 vendors per week, and four of those are from the local Mennonite community – we had to install a hitching rail so they could tie up the horses and sell from their buggies. We drew about 200 customers per week, and we estimate we kept about \$50,000 circulating locally," states Rognvaldson. Hon. Carol Mitchell, MPP for Huron-Bruce and Minister of OMAFRA made the Trillium presentation to the Agricultural Society and said "When we buy Ontario food, everyone wins. It's good for farmers and processors, good for families, good for the environment and good for the rural economies."

## THE VENDOR'S STALL

### Community partners

In keeping with this issue's theme of partnership and collaboration, think about the community groups, musicians, performers, face-painters, restaurants and agencies who have shown up to support and promote the market this past season.

Do you have a connection with a group or individual who might be an asset at market? If so, approach them now for next season. Do your market manager a favour, as a way of saying "thanks" for his or her efforts this year.

If nothing comes to mind, take a page from the Pembroke Farmers' Market notebook. Their local library holds its reading program on-site on market day. The kids sit around the picnic tables reading, or being read to, while their moms shop the market stalls.

## FMO news: fundraising opportunity

**The Ontario Table** by Lynn Ogrzylo is a full-colour, 320-page cookbook, guidebook and agricultural storybook that's also a fundraising vehicle for farm and market retailers, offering a \$12 return on every book sold. As of September 22, (after just 12 weeks on the market) it had already raised \$84,000 for Ontario agriculture. Order by writing to [ogrzylo@sympatico.ca](mailto:ogrzylo@sympatico.ca). Find out more by visiting [www.ontariotable.com](http://www.ontariotable.com).



Retail price: \$29.95  
Wholesale price: \$17.95

## FMO in action:

This summer, FMO approved nearly 50 new MyPick® Verified Local Farmers!

Partnerships - cont'd from page 2

and multiple projects related to leadership development and direct marketing support for members.

Of particular note is a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Farmers' Markets Ontario and **Savour Ottawa**, a regional buy-local food proponent that includes farmers, food retailers and local restaurants in its membership.

Philip Powell describes the MOU as a "nuts and bolts document" that lays out the logistics of how a Savour Ottawa grower becomes inspected and



verified, naming FMO as the verifier of choice. According to Powell it's a template for other culinary districts to follow in the future.

The impact of these multiple partnerships and initiatives, leveraged over time, coupled with strong buy-local and buy Ontario messaging from **Foodland Ontario** and others

has resulted in a renaissance of growth in farmers' markets across the province. Vendors frequently report that selling direct has kept their farm viable, putting more dollars into their pockets and promoting credibility in the eyes of consumers while delivering healthier, local food to Ontario tables.



## TIP OF THE MONTH:

### Using vehicle signs to promote your market

While you may have a farm logo or sign on your vehicle, have you considered promoting your market too? Vehicle signage has high visibility, engages the mind and it's affordable – particularly the magnetic signs. Recruiting new vendors, and staying top-of-mind with consumers year-round is simpler when there are numerous vehicles doing your advertising with statements like “Proud vendor at the XYZ Farmers’ Market!” or “Ask me about the XYZ Farmers’ Market.”



**Share your tips here:** Email us your ideas along with your name, address, market's name and (if applicable) a photo. Not only will we give you credit – we'll send you some FMO merchandise to say thanks!



## MyPick® Verified Local Farmer® Profile: Dan and Maureen Sheedy, Sheedy's Farm



“Dan loves taking care of the land. His great grandfather built the original pine log cabin here: it's still part of the farmhouse today;” says Maureen Sheedy.

She and Dan returned to the farm in 1987, undertaking a labour of love to restore the homestead and reclaim the soil. “Appreciation is a great reward. We love to hear we have the best-tasting corn, that our tomatoes are beautiful;” continues Maureen. What began as a hobby growing and selling potatoes blossomed into a thriving business the Sheedys grew in accordance with customer requests, making wonderful friends along the way.

Former president of the Pembroke Farmers’ Market and a director of FMO, Dan enjoys the market experience and acknowledges that “it takes time to build a rapport with locals and summer visitors.” Seeing the same faces return the next year makes the effort well worth it!

## Upcoming Market Events

### Cobden Farmers’ Market – Taste of the Valley

Over 70 vendors & extended hours for annual Taste of the Valley

Saturday, October 15

### Market on Broadway – Harvest Celebration

Vote on vendors’ costumes, celebrate the harvest and the last day of market.

Saturday, October 22

### Cambridge Farmers’ Market – Harvest Celebration

Free family fun day with pumpkin carving, scarecrow contest, face-painting, music, historical walks & fresh local food!

Saturday, October 29

### Post your market events on the FMO website.

If you don't have your member log-in and password, please email us at: [fmo@farmersmarketsontario.com](mailto:fmo@farmersmarketsontario.com).

**Next issue:**

December 15, 2011

**Theme:**

Planning for a great 2012

**Submissions:**

Deadline is December 1

## Contact Farmers’ Markets Ontario®

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Toll-free: 1-800-387 FARM (3276)  
Phone: 613-475-GROW (4769)  
Fax: 613-475-2913  
Email: [fmo@farmersmarketsontario.com](mailto:fmo@farmersmarketsontario.com)



Learn about the MyPick® program at [MyPick.ca](http://MyPick.ca)

**Over to you. Please tell us:**

1. What are your main challenges as a vendor or manager?
2. What would you like to ask another manager or vendor?



This is supported through the Ontario Farmers’ Markets Strategy, part of Growing Forward, a Federal-Provincial-Territorial Initiative.

