



Did you know?

Kingston Farmers' Market was formed in 1780.

Ottawa's ByWard Market was created to supply "food for the canal builders."

27 Ontario farmers' markets are more than 100 years old, and two markets (Kingston and Toronto's St. Lawrence) have been connecting farmers and customers for 200+ years!

There are currently at least 20 Ontario markets open all year.



ByWard Market, circa 1911

Did you know?

The Big Apple is in Colborne, Ontario – *not* NYC.

Colborne's Big Apple has produced over three million fresh apple pies.

The humble apple unifies seven eastern Ontario municipalities, farms and businesses along the Apple Route.

See www.go4quiz.com/205/apple-quiz/ for an apple trivia quiz to use at market.



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Planning Ahead with 20/20 Vision

What a difference a decade makes! In 1999, sales at Ontario farmers' markets totalled \$500 million with an economic impact of \$1.5 billion. Today, Ontario farmers' markets sell \$641 million worth of produce and provide an economic impact of \$1.9 billion in Ontario. Now that's growth!

Y2K brought the first-ever market managers' conference to Ontario. At that time, the number of member markets was 92, while today there are 154. Gradual change, while unpredictable, has come about largely by design.

Planning, partnership, leadership and funding have been the key ingredients in market growth across Ontario, at both local and provincial levels. Provincially, Farmers' Markets Ontario® provides leadership and planning through its board of directors and dedicated staff, Bob Chorney and Catherine Clark. Their partners include member markets, potential member markets, farmers, market managers, OMAFRA and Foodland Ontario, along with multiple other government agencies and funding partners.

Local Funding & 20/20 Vision

As you plan for the market year ahead, think forward to the next decade. Does your board

have a vision of where your market will be and what it will achieve in the next 10 years? Do you?

A good vision creates a rallying point to attract partners and grow membership. It creates goals and actionable steps to work towards and achieve. A well-communicated vision tells people that while your market may be struggling today, your board is planning for tomorrow, and this builds credibility.

As you expand your partner network, remember: these are the people and agencies that will help you secure funding. Most proposals require proof of partners in the community. Unless your market is a registered non-profit, you'll likely submit some requests under the auspices of a non-profit partner, a charity or a municipality. (Local Chambers of Commerce are usually registered non-profits.)

Here are four potential funding sources worth exploring:

1. **Municipalities** usually have grant processes for local projects. Ask a local councillor for guidance, do a little investigating online or visit your town/city hall. Does your market serve more than one municipality?

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THE MANAGER'S OFFICE

Growing the Vendor List

Winter is always a good time to focus on growing the market vendor list. Do you have a clear sense of what your market has to offer newcomers? Consider the following approaches:

Form a membership committee to determine goals, draw up a list of benefits and help with farmer/vendor outreach. How many new vendors do you want to attract?

Assess your vendor diversity. Does your market offer enough of a mix to shoppers? Why not target potential vendors that broaden your market's appeal?

One-on-one and word-of-mouth works! Approach people individually, telling them about the benefits & supports your market provides. Ask existing vendors to spread the word.

Hold a meeting. Ask each vendor to bring a potential member. Leverage the MyPick™ program, play the new DVD and use the materials from your manager's toolkit.



20/20 Vision - cont'd from page 1

2. The Community Futures Development Corporation announces two grants each spring, available in all rural municipalities for local projects. Both tend to be infrastructure-focused. **The Community Capacity Building Fund** may provide up to 75% of around \$15,000, with submitters supplying the rest. **The Local Initiatives Fund** is in the \$7,000 range and matching dollars are not required. Submissions need municipal support. Visit this web page (www.ontcfdc.com/frame3.asp?lang=english) and click on your region or call 1-866-668-2332.

3. OMAFRA's Ontario Market Investment Program (OMIF) is a 50/50 matching fund for promoting Buy Local programs. Why not approach the BIA, Chamber of Commerce, municipality and membership for the matching portion? Visit www.ontario.ca/omif for details.

4. Farmers' markets in the Golden Horseshoe may look into the **Greenbelt Foundation**. For more information, visit www.greenbelt.ca/greenbelt-grants/guidelines-deadlines/grant-making-focus.

Tools at Your Fingertips!

Whether you're marketing your farm or your farmers' market, time-saving tools are always a help. As part of its ongoing effort to create useful tools and resources for Ontario farmers' market managers and vendors, Farmers' Markets Ontario® has sponsored:

A MyPick™ DVD: NEW RELEASE! This video explains the advantages of the MyPick™ program in detail. It's a great tool for recruiting new MyPick™ vendors and includes testimonials from MyPick™ vendors about why it's such a great program. Play it from the website, share it with vendors and with your community to promote MyPick™ – a program that can add value to your market. You could even run it during markets (if indoors) to inform your shoppers. For more details or to get a copy, email fmo@farmersmarketontario.com.

An Image Library Download lovely photos of markets, stalls & produce at www.flickr.com/photos/mopani/collections/72157623205684396/ Images can be laminated for display use or included in newsletters and are available in high-resolution format on request. There is no charge for the use of these images, but please credit the photographer if you use them: Tracy Lamb, Mopani Communications. Let us know if you are making use of the images – and if there are other images you would like to have available in the future.

A Planning Timeline A timeline checklist is available on the FMO website to help you plan your key milestones between now and when your market opens. Timing is everything – use this tool to help ensure that details are "on your radar" at the right time to ensure a successful market season. To access the checklist, go to the FMO website, click "Member Login" and go to "Member Library".

Market Manager's Toolkit All market managers recently received a marketing toolkit complete with a set of MyPick™ brand posters, sample MyPick™ vendor posters and cards, 3" x 5" MyPick™ brand cards and a supply of MyPick™ vendor recruitment brochures. (Please let us know if you didn't get yours.)

MyPick™ posters and cards are great additions to an Information table – to raise awareness among shoppers and vendors about MyPick™ and why it's important to buy from a Verified Local Farmer™. The vendor recruitment brochures explain MyPick™ membership to vendors. Word of mouth is the best referral, so PLEASE put some of these items in the hands of potential verified MyPick™ farmers. To replenish supplies, please email fmo@farmersmarketontario.com.

Diane Garrington, manager of Kitchener Market, says "The MyPick™ program is one of the best win-win tools available for vendors and managers; it's free to the vendor, builds vendor credibility, informs the consumer and provides the manager with a tangible way to provide exceptional value to vendors."

Stay tuned as Farmers' Markets Ontario® creates more tools, resources and checklists for your use and be sure to let us know if you need something in particular.



Profile: Diane Garrington, Market Manager



Diane Garrington is the newly minted manager of Kitchener Market in downtown Kitchener. After managing St. Catharines' market for 10 years, Diane brings a wealth of experience to her new position.

"Passion and enthusiasm are key for market managers," says Diane. Enthusiasm led her to take on a market with three times as many vendors as at her previous market—but with only one market day vs. three. Diane says Kitchener will add more days soon.

Introducing new events, tightening floor plans, providing consistent leadership, adding diversity to the vendor mix and convincing other vendors that it's good business to do so are some of challenges involved in revitalizing the 141-year-old market. "If people come in for kettle corn and leave with bread, everyone benefits."

THE VENDOR'S STALL

Supporting Market Growth

Yes, time is limited, but supporting the growth of your local market can reap its rewards in terms of customer loyalty, community connection, shorter trips to market, and dollars earned.

Here are a few simple things you might do:

Provide feedback and positive suggestions.

Your manager needs your input, and is probably a volunteer. Talk to him or her and fill out feedback forms, if available.

Is there a problem you can solve?

Perhaps a bit of extra help is needed at tear-down on a rainy day. Maybe your neighbour could use tips to improve his or her display.

Invite a new vendor to join your market.

The better the market mix, the better the draw. If you've had a good experience, share it.

Sponsor an event or join a committee.

Ask your manager what help is needed.

FMO in action: Join us at OFVC 2010!

Ontario Fruit & Vegetable Convention 2010

When: February 24 and 25

Where: Brock University, St. Catharines, ON

To register: www.ofvc.ca

20th Annual FMO Networking Symposium

When: February 24 and 25

Where: Ontario Fruit & Vegetable Convention – Room 216 Brock University, St. Catharines, ON

To register: www.ofvc.ca
Or contact Catherine Clark.
Tel: 1-800-387-3276 • Email: fmo@farmersmarketsontario.com



Don't miss Canada's premier horticultural event Feb. 24–25.

OFVC Feature Speaker: Lori Colborne

*AUTHOR, EDUCATOR,
MARKETER, INTERNATIONAL
KEYNOTE SPEAKER*



Don't miss out on hearing this dynamic presenter! You will leave her session motivated and empowered to take your business to the next level of success.

Join Lori for a jam-packed hour of information and inspiration that will help you get the most out of the conference and take home tips and techniques to grow your business.

The following is a summary of the topics she'll be covering.

The Essentials to Growing Your Business:

- Knowing What Your Customers REALLY Want
- Building Trust
- Educating Without Irritating
- Image is Everything
- Pricing To Sell
- Learn How to Share – Everybody Wins!
- Grow in Always & Always Keep Growing
- The Power & Purpose of Goal Setting

Also, don't miss the FMO presentations and discussions on the new MyPick™ farmer verification program and Classes of Membership. See FMO contact info above for more details.



TIP OF THE MONTH

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 as thanks!

This month's contributor is Dana Thatcher of Thatcher Farms in Rockwood, Ontario. Dana and her husband Adam run a thriving farm-gate store, and Dana is a regular vendor at the Guelph Farmers' Market.

"When people spend a bit of time at your market stall or farm gate, they want to know your story. They are looking for a way to understand where their food comes from, and when they show that kind of care, you need to respond in kind. Even when your to-do list is long, take a step back, remember why you farm – why you're so passionate about it – and try to share a moment with them. Use their curiosity as a tool to educate them about what it takes to grow their food and why it's important – and enjoyable.



DANA THATCHER AND FRIEND

"People bring their kids to the farm: one little guy saw a chicken lay an egg – he didn't know that's where chickens come from!"

MyPick™ Verified Local Farmer™ Profile: Patrick and Heidi Behan, Moore Orchards, Cobourg, ON



When Patrick and Heidi Behan purchased the family orchard, they thought they knew their customers. It turns out they weren't quite prepared for the loyalty Moore Orchards inspires. Heidi delights in the fact that her parents' customers bring their grandchildren to pick apples.

Local stores have been good about stocking their fruit, and customers have been good about asking for it if it is not readily available. When 99% of the couple's apple crop was damaged by hail, people made the effort to purchase damaged fruit—and that effort made a huge difference to the orchard's debt load.

Heidi and Patrick live the Buy Local message the MyPick™ program promotes. To Heidi, "a country that can feed its own people is always rich."

Upcoming Market Events

Don't forget to post your market events on the FMO website.

If you don't have your member log-in and password, please contact fmo@farmersmarketsontario.com

Next issue: March 31
Theme: Spring Ahead: Fresh Ideas for You and Your Customers
Submissions: Deadline is March 10

Contact Farmers' Markets Ontario®

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Over to you. Please tell us:

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



Find out more about the MyPick™ program at MyPick.ca



Supported through the Ontario Farmers' Markets Strategy, part of Growing Forward, a Federal-Provincial-Territorial initiative

