



Did you know?

Elk meat is a high-protein, low-fat, low-cholesterol source of red meat, packed with iron and potassium?

The bulls grow and shed a new rack of antlers – which can extend 4 feet over their heads – each year?

Elk velvet antler (EVA) enhances the immune system, promotes the healing of wounds & connective tissue, and reduces free radicals?

Sources: animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/mammals/elk, elkusa.com, and elk-velvet-antler.com/research_uofa.html



Did you know?

Ontario has thousands of acres of bogs and sands suitable for cranberries, yet only 116 acres were cultivated in 2010?

Back in the 1700's, cranberries were the first North American fruit ever sold in Europe?

Cranberries are a low-fat source of vitamin C that prevent certain cancers and support heart and urinary tract health?

Ontario imports \$10 million dollars worth of cranberry products each year?

Sources: www.amafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/facts/cranberry.htm, www.foodland.gov.on.ca/english/fruits/cranberries/index.html



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MyMarket® : Forging Urban/Rural Connections with Food

When the Danforth East Community Association (DECA) approached FMO to establish a farmers' market in their community, the idea spread like wildfire. Since 2007, four Toronto-based communities have welcomed certified local farmers' markets under the FMO MyMarket® brand.

Collectively, the markets—hosted at East Lynn Park, Liberty Village, Bloor•Borden and SickKids Hospital—feed about 2,500 households a week, according to MyMarket® Supervisor, Diana Gonzalez. Once a year, the SickKids MyMarket® moves to Queen's Park for a day to generate publicity, spread the word about local food and thank the customers, many of whom work there.

When DECA first established the market at East Lynn Park, the goal was to “get more pedestrians walking the Danforth/Woodbine area,” states Diana. Imagine the boon to local business when you have 800 people a week showing up for market day. Danforth East is a melting pot, and the market provides a great way for people to connect with each other.

“DECA takes great pride in their market. You'll see at least 20 young families with strollers every week... Four women, Mary-Margaret McMahan, Alison McMurray, Alisha Austen and Catherine Porter started the tradition of cooking a meal for the farmers and serving it to them on china at the close of every market day,” Diana claims. Dedicated volunteers also plan market events, host a face-painting tent and organize activities for kids.

Healthy food options for employees

At SickKids, the Director of Nutritional Services approached FMO for help with a market start-up, wanting to offer employees healthy food options. At Liberty Village, the local BIA spearheaded the initiative at the community level. And at Bloor•Borden, three residents' associations (The Annex, Harbord Village & Huron Sussex) joined forces with the Bloor Annex and Harbord Street BIAs to create a community market.

Rory Sinclair, of the Bloor•Borden MyMarket®, says “what FMO was doing, attaching markets to communities, was a great fit with what we wanted to do. Creating a social place where people could actually meet, visit and talk to each other while shopping for fresh food was a great community-building exercise, and completely different from bringing a supermarket to the neighbourhood...it was the first time all five community organizations worked together.”

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THE MANAGER'S OFFICE

Do You Qualify for Free Student Help?

A number of managers have mentioned the need for more help with market logistics.

If this is your situation, and your market is a registered non-profit, you may qualify for free student help under the Canada Summer Jobs program. Typically, the program accepts applications during the month of February, so mark it on your calendar.

To qualify, you'll need to provide supervision, a work space, and full-time employment of 30 to 40 hours a week for 6 to 16 weeks, consecutively. Visit the website for more details. www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/epb/yi/yep/programs/scpp.shtml



MyMarket® - cont'd from page 1

Bloor•Borden's market manager, Joe Santos, is in his 80s. According to Rory "he's always out there doing stuff, helping out, and he's always the first one to step in." Marc Michalak, hired last summer to manage the three other MyMarket® locations has a Masters in Environmental Studies, a keen interest in urban agriculture and a deep appreciation for the value of "browsing around outdoors and taking in the bounty that exists in the GTA."

MyMarket® Supervisor, Diana Gonzalez visits each market twice a month, and reduces paperwork and waste by capturing as much data as possible on spreadsheets. And while Diana might be the first to say that numbers are important, she insists the true MyMarket® story lies in the people who make it happen. "Mary-Margaret McMahon, one of the people behind DECA's involvement with MyMarket® was just voted in to Toronto City Council...and she wants to expand farmers' markets across the city."

To read a related story, visit: <http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/yourcitymycity/article/775767--not-just-a-dreamer-but-a-doer>



Tools at Your Fingertips!

As we've mentioned before, FMO is creating a virtual toolbox to make your life easier. You can expect one or two new tools per newsletter. Please let us know what kind of information and tools you would find helpful so we can ensure that what we're offering is in keeping with what you're looking for.

For this issue, instead of tools, *Market Matters* highlights the abundant training opportunities available to you in the off-season.

We encourage you to attend Food Safety Training and Business Management Training offered through OMAFRA, and to join us for the **FMO Networking Symposium**.



Brockville Farmers' Market: Entrepreneur of the Year

At 177 years, the Brockville Farmers' Market (BFM) is one of the oldest markets in Ontario. Yet by 2007, its future lay in doubt due to a steady decline in vendor participation. During its heyday, Market Street was packed with vendors, but the numbers had dwindled to a handful until "3 people stepped forward... to save this important piece of Brockville history," according to Wendy Onstein of the Leeds and Grenville Small Business Centre.

On October 20, 2010, Wendy presented the Brockville Farmers' Market with The Entrepreneur of the Year award. "It would be wrong not to acknowledge what they've achieved... it's amazing and the community is much richer for it," she claims. Each year, the Small Business Centre presents the award to a client who takes advantage of the many resources it makes available.

Today, the market hosts 50 vendors in the summer and has extended the season to include November and December, when it moves into the Brockville Museum. "Last Saturday (Nov. 13th) the museum hosted an art show and the farmers' market and we had over 400 people through the door," says market chair, Doug Avery.

Vice-chair, Koren Manneck states that until this year the market closed in October, and re-opened in the museum for December. "Not having that break in between helps the vendors extend the customer relationship that much longer."

The market's renaissance is largely attributed to Doug, Koren and the late Peter Carter who put their heads together and started the ball rolling. "We reformed the executive, got the vendors to approach other vendors, and it really snowballed. Leadership made a huge difference" says Koren.

In a press release, Wendy Onstein credits the executive team with "perseverance, risk taking and patience... they developed a strategy, sought advice and formed alliances."

Obtaining a \$5,000 Local Initiatives grant through the Thousand Islands Community Development Corporation helped promote a professional image with a new logo, branded signage, bags, banners, aprons, t-shirts & ball-caps. And developing events with other partners has helped draw people downtown. Santa's reindeer are scheduled to show their support outside the Market in the Museum this December!



Doug Avery, Bernice Mallory, Chuck Abrams, Margaret Plume, Koren Manneck, and the Manager of the Leeds and Grenville Small Enterprise Centre, Wendy Onstein

Profile: Marc Michalak, MyMarket® Manager



Marc Michalak gained a bird's eye view on the ups and downs of market days while managing three MyMarket® locales at East Lynn Park, SickKids and Liberty Village this past season. "It was really interesting to see the different dynamics and distinctions between markets, and to try and provide instructive feedback...I learned quickly that you can't please everybody, so you do your best to maintain the guidelines and be consistent." Marc enjoyed the resilience people demonstrated despite the weather, and the camaraderie of "being in it together." His greatest impression was "the amazing difference a good, solid group of volunteers makes" on the entire day. Marc's greatest challenge was engaging people and maintaining an atmosphere of community and welcome throughout the day. "Saying hello to strangers, offering to give a farmer who's there alone a break" are little things that add up to a better day for all.

FMO in action: Travel Grants for MyPick™ Farmers & Northerners

Farmers' Markets Ontario® and Bill Doyle Insurance Agencies/The Co-operators have joined forces to help MyPick™ vendors as well as Northern Ontario market leaders, managers and vendors attend the FMO's 21st Annual Networking Symposium/AGM as well as the Ontario Fruit & Vegetable Convention & Trade Show at Brock University in St. Catharines on February 23 and 24, 2011.

MyPick™ FMO Symposium Scholarship Program Grants: Nine \$350 grants are available to MyPick™ Verified Local Farmers wishing to attend the Symposium/AGM and the Convention & Trade Show. Each grant covers \$250 for hotel accommodation and \$100 for the Convention registration fee.

Northern Ontario Travel Grant Program: Five \$600 grants are available to Northern Ontario market leaders, managers and vendors wishing to attend the Symposium/AGM and the Convention & Trade Show. Each grant covers \$250 for transportation, \$250 for hotel accommodation and \$100 for the Convention registration fee.

How to apply: Write to: Farmers' Markets Ontario, 54 Bayshore Road, Brighton, ON K0K 1H0.
Deadline: Applications must be received (or postmarked) on or before December 31, 2010.
Information: Call Catherine Clark at 1-800-387-3276 or email her at: fmo@farmersmarketsontario.com.

Note: If there are more applications than grants available, a draw will be held on January 7, 2011.

Business Management Training/Cost Sharing from OMAFRA!

The Business Management Unit at OMAFRA is busy these days. Here's a sample of the training opportunities the unit has in the works to benefit your farm business:

Growing Your Farm Business Profits: This workshop is free for producers, and is delivered through the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association. Part of the Growing Forward Business Development for Farm Businesses program. Participants complete a self-assessment and develop an action plan for their operation. Once complete, farmers are eligible on a first-come, first-served basis for cost-sharing on advisory services and skills development. For more details and to see the workshop schedule, visit www.ontariosoilcrop.org/en/Programs/GYFP091.htm. To learn more about the Growing Forward program and its related cost-sharing opportunities, visit www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/about/growingforward/busdev.htm

The Business Management Unit has developed four additional workshops, outlined at right. For more information, visit: www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/busdev/agbusdev.html

Marketing, the Next Great Idea: Learn to create new products & services, turn your idea into reality & add value to your farm business's bottom line. Business plans, pricing, profit margins and financing are just a few of the subjects covered in this two-day Quest for New Farm Value – Value Plus™ workshop.

Hog Marketing 101: This covers the marketing basics every hog producer needs to know, including the fundamentals of cash marketing, hedging, forward contracting, and how to use them in their marketing plan.

Farm Succession Planning ... Step-by-Step: Attend a one-day Introduction to Farm Succession Planning workshop where you're introduced to five key steps in the development process and given the tools to begin a smooth transition.

Cashing In Through Grain Marketing 101: Grain farmers need a basic plan – one that focuses on costs, price seasonality and target prices to meet their goals. This workshop teaches participants the basic features of the marketing tools available to manage price risk in their plan.

THE VENDOR'S STALL

Food Safety Resources

FMO is developing an online tool for best practices on food safety tailored around your market day. We intend to make it simple, useful and easy to access. Other food safety resources include:

OMAFRA Food Safety Training & Tools

- OMAFRA offers Food Safety training at a community near you beginning early in 2011: the training covers a number of components including: *FOOD SAFETY for Multi-Commodity Farms; Getting Started in Food Safety; Hygiene and Sanitation; Pre and Post Harvest Water Use; and Manure, Compost and Compost Tea*. Visit www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/food/foodsafety/producers/workshops.htm.

- For information on Food Safety training targeted to Ontario food processors, visit www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/food/foodsafety/processors/events.htm.

- A new, interactive Advantage iGAP CD includes the entire *Advantage Good Agricultural Practices* manual plus tools to help you implement food safety practices on your farm. Call **1-877-424-1300** to order your FREE copy.

- The *Advantage Producer Checklist* will help you conduct self-audits and inform customers of the food safety practices in place on your farm. For details, see www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/food/foodsafety/producers/checklist.htm



TIP OF THE MONTH

This month's tip is from Bryan Corner, treasurer for the Lindsay Farmers' Market vendor association.

Bryan says the 150 year old market enjoys "100 % support" from the BIA and the Lindsay Chamber of Commerce, who helped re-establish it at the original downtown location 15 years ago, doubling & tripling vendor sales as a result. His tip:

You can manage without a manager.

"With 28 vendors, it's not always easy to go without a manager, but it's just not in the budget. We work together, and frankly, not much changes from year to year. Everyone knows what to do, and pitches in. The main thing is to have one person vet the telephone calls, fit in the newcomers & part-time vendors and provide the guidelines."

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!



MyPick™ Verified Local Farmer™ Profile: Jim Hayward, Haystrom Farm



"Cooking the food you love and loving the food you cook" is more than Jim Hayward's motto – it's a way of life.

Jim's passion for food nurtures 400 varieties of heirloom and exotic fruits and vegetables on a 5-acre plot. Farming is Jim's third career, but a background in classic French cuisine and banking only contributes to his success. A graduate of the California Culinary Academy, Jim worked as a chef in California where farm-to-table food sourcing is commonplace. He delights in reintroducing old varieties no longer in use, along with the rare and obscure. Bulgarian carrot chili peppers, jelly melons, Mandoria cucumbers, bull's blood beets and Russian blue potatoes are names that roll off the tongue and onto the fork—and Jim gladly shares how to cook each one!

Jim welcomes visitors at Haystrom Farm, where you can pick your own produce or just "watch us grow."

FMO News: Spotlight on Mike & Diane O'Shea



2011 signals Mike O'Shea's final year of serving on the FMO Board of Directors. Presently the Board Chair, Mike is approaching the last year of his second four-year term.

A fifth generation farmer, Mike and his wife Diane have welcomed agri-tours to their farm for years. The couple recently moved, handing over the keys to the sixth generation.

This past summer Diane earned "The Ontario Agri-food Education Teacher's Award of Excellence" for her lifelong commitment to bringing agriculture into the classroom. The award was presented at Canada's Outdoor Farm Show in Woodstock, Ontario.

FMO wishes to thank The Co-operators, Bill Doyle Insurance Agencies, and William Doyle, Agent/Owner for their support in funding the Northern Ontario and MyPick™ travel grant programs.



Contact Farmers' Markets Ontario®

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Learn about the MyPick™ program at 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.

