



Did you know?

93% of Ontario farmers' market shoppers rate buying from a real farmer "important". 67% of them rate it as "very important."

— FMO Impact Study 2009 Report



Did you know?

"Bronx vanilla" and "Italian perfume" are two of the 1920s diner slang terms for "garleac" or "spear leek."

We call it garlic and for many, there's never enough in any dish.

Although snubbed by North Americans until the turn of the 20th century, it dates back over 6,000 years and is native to Central Asia.



Making the Real Farmer a Hero with the MyPick™ Verified Local Farmer™ Program

The *Farmers' Markets Ontario® Impact Study 2009 Report* of 36 Ontario farmers' markets showed how important fresh, locally produced products were to their customers. It was also clear that shoppers—more than half of whom came almost weekly—preferred to buy from a farmer than from a reseller.

To build on customers' loyalty and satisfy the desire to buy from an actual farmer, Farmers' Markets Ontario® (FMO), in partnership with the provincial government, introduced the MyPick™ Verified Local Farmer™ program this year.

Farmers displaying the MyPick™ logo will sell only products from their farms, guaranteeing that customers are buying high-quality products from real, local farmers. In time, MyPick™ will become the symbol customers look for at our farmers' markets.

Why MyPick™ was necessary

In 2006 it became clear that there were increasing numbers of resellers at certain markets. Real farmers were being squeezed out. Studying similar programs in New York

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The Manager's Office:

Know Your Market to Grow Your Market

Your typical customer is 40+-year-old Canadian-born (or 20+ yr resident) woman who lives within 15 minutes of the market. She comes nearly every week for the market experience, spends around \$30, and wants to buy fresh produce from a real farmer.

Younger people, families and new Canadians are a small but growing segment. More efforts need to be directed to attracting them. Horton Farmers' Market (St. Thomas) has a weekly Kids' Activity, run by two pre-teen daughters of a vendor. Cloverbelt Country Farmers' Market (Dryden) invited the press to judge a pie-eating contest. How do you attract new customers?

Now that summer has arrived, it's time to think about harvest. Tell us about your harvest plans at: newsletter@farmersmarketsontario.com.



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City and the State of California, FMO developed a 'verified farmer' concept for Ontario. As the "Buy Local" trend spreads and awareness of the MyPick™ brand increases, we hope that only farmers who are invested in the prosperity of their farms will be at our farmers' markets.

Qualifying as a MyPick™ Verified Local Farmer™

The MyPick™ program is open to any conventional or organic grower or producer. Prospective vendors submit a full list of produce or products to be sold. Independent farm inspectors, hired by FMO, conduct annual inspections and verifications.

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The MyPick™ program covers both primary and secondary products.

Primary products include fresh and unprocessed fruits and vegetables, cut flowers, plants and nuts, graded eggs, meat and fish (fresh and frozen), herbs and mushrooms.

Secondary products must meet three criteria:

1. The "defining ingredient" must be produced on the farmer's farm and value must be added at the farm.
2. The product must be in compliance with all regulations.
3. The farmer must show evidence of appropriate inspection.

In the case of meat products, the value may be added off-farm. Some ready-to-eat "fast foods" would also qualify.

Upon verification, MyPick™ farmers receive a bundle of marketing products from FMO: vendor signs/posters, smaller cards, price cards, and a discount on a personalized shade canopy for their stalls. The MyPick™ verification process is the best way for real farmers to distinguish themselves at market. More than 75 farmers are already verified. To join their ranks or to find out more, visit MyPick.ca or contact Farmers' Markets Ontario®. See last page for complete contact information.





Profile: MyPick™ Inspector Cathy McGregor-Smith



When Cathy McGregor-Smith photographs newly verified MyPick™ farmers, pride shows in their smiles. This is what she really enjoys about inspections. “I’m

helping them show what they grow.” They realize MyPick™ is the best tool to help them sell their farm products.

In her first year as a MyPick™ Verified Local Farmer™ inspector, she expects to complete about a dozen inspections in her region west of Woodstock. With more than 25 years’ organic vegetable and livestock farming experience and five seasons of organic inspections, she can also pass along some great ideas.

“The more MyPick™ farmers are at a market, the more legitimate the market will be,” she says. The farmers she visits wish all market vendors had to prove that “what they sell is theirs.”

What we’re working on

Foodland Ontario has generously printed a large supply of three different sizes of price cards for FMO and its member farmers’ markets. Contact your manager if you’d like some.

Market Matters is a new monthly newsletter for FMO member market managers and vendors. Its purpose is to create connections and communications among farmers’ market leaders by sharing good practices and ideas, challenges and solutions.

We encourage new and experienced market vendors and managers to use the newsletter as a way to ask for help and share successes so that markets and vendors and customers benefit. Don’t re-invent the wheel. Are you looking for “How To” tips? Have you run an amazing event you’d like to tell us about? How do you promote your products? Yourself? Your market? Please email your comments, ideas, questions and tips to: newsletter@farmersmarketsontario.com.

The Vendor’s Stall:

5 Ways to Improve Your Visual Display So You Go Home Empty

- 1. Get close.** Tables set back from the main path discourage customer interaction.
- 2. Use space.** Use the entire table frontage. Add stall space if you can.
- 3. Build up.** Use tiered levels to make more room. Bushel baskets and crates help stack your produce. Build up to shoulder height. Keep things off the ground.
- 4. Tilt.** Products tilted towards the customer look better. Produce tumbling out of a basket looks abundant.
- 5. Use colour.** Put coloured produce among the greens. Use tablecloths to accent produce colours. Make signage colourful. Use photos and your farm logo.

A little extra effort can go a long way. Let us know if you try any of these tips in the next month—and tell us how you build customer interest and loyalty. Email your tips to: newsletter@farmersmarketsontario.com.

Tip of the Month Contest:

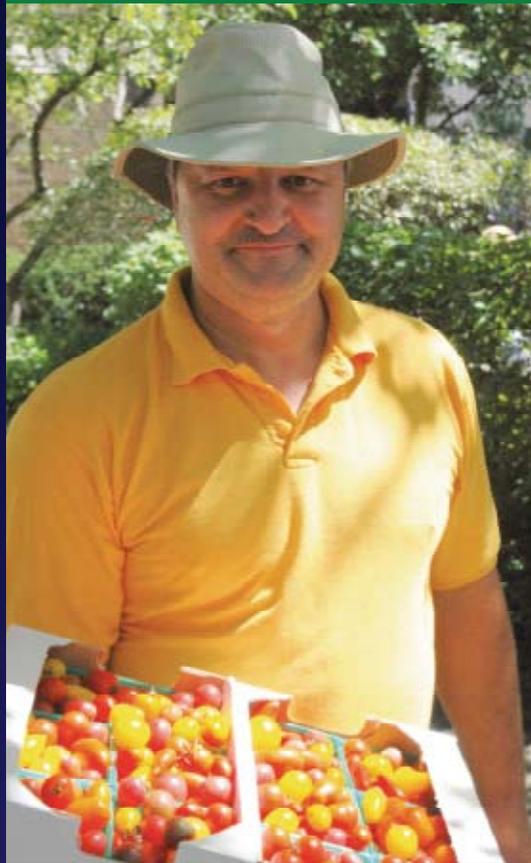
Here's your chance to win special FMO merchandise by sharing your "What Works" tip with other managers and vendors.

To Enter: Email your tip(s) plus your name and mailing address, your market's name and a photo (JPEG, 300 dpi), if applicable, to us at: newsletter@farmers-marketsontario.com.

This month's winner of an FMO vest is Dee Biggar, Covent Garden Outdoor Farmers' Market, London.



Dee's winning tip: She encourages her customers to bring their own containers for her spectacular baked goods—like butter tarts or lavender shortbread cookies. It reduces packaging and eliminates the dreaded baked goods "squishage" problem.



Profile: MyPick™ Verified Local Farmer™ Boz Toic, Bosco Farms

Frustrated with cheap imported produce flooding Ontario markets, Boz Toic, who used to be strictly a wholesaler (he's the largest Ontario producer of fresh basil) now also grows and sells his own as a MyPick™ Verified Local Farmer™.

It's not easy. "I have to be in two places at once," he says. "Buying and selling is easier than growing and selling." Verification was an ethical and financial choice. He firmly believes in Ontario farmers producing Ontario produce for Ontario consumers. He now has a venue for fresh produce and can promote Ontario-grown to customers.

"The MyPick™ brand will grow if the distinction between farmers' markets and other markets is maintained," says Toic. "Customers don't know that there may not be any farmers at their farmers' market."

Upcoming Market Events

Aug 15	Port Hope Farmers' Market	Farmers' Market Week Win a box of fresh, local produce and hand crafts.
Aug. 19	Bloor•Borden MyMarket®	Peach Festival
Aug. 20	East Lynn MyMarket®	Peach Party Movie Night
Aug. 22	North Bay Downtown Farmers' Market	Corn Festival Check FMO website. Details to come.
Aug. 22	Barry's Bay Farmers' Market	Taste of the Valley Sample Renfrew County vendors' products.
Sept. 12	Port Hope Farmers' Market	Celebrating our Seniors Free coffee and treats for senior customers. Guests: Port Hope Historical Society.

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: September 14 • **Theme:** Harvest • **Deadline for submissions:** September 2.

Contact Farmers' Markets Ontario®

Find out more on new MyPick.ca



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

