



Did you know?

47% of vendors earn more than half their farm income at markets.

50% of vendors create up to 5 jobs due to their market participation.

Ontario farmers' markets generate up to \$1.9 billion dollars of economic impact yearly.

— FMO® Impact Study 2009 Report

There are 148 member markets across Ontario in 2009.

— FMO® data on file



Did you know?

A potato provides more potassium than a banana and contains vitamins C, B1 and B6. The tuber was first cultivated in Peru more than 6000 years ago, and Spanish conquistadors brought it to Europe. Sir Walter Raleigh made a gift of it to Queen Elizabeth I and in the 1700s, potato starch was used as a wig whitener.



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Customer Appreciation Day at the Kenora Harbourfront Farmers' Market

Kenora Harbourfront Farmers' Market always winds up the growing season in style. Customer Appreciation Day is the market's largest annual promotional event, according to Buck Matiowski, the Community Events Coordinator.

A full-page advertisement in the local newspaper publicized the event and invited customers to be appreciated, share in the harvest and say farewell to summer. The ad told people exactly what to expect, with liberal use of the word "free" throughout. Cost-sharing provided sponsoring vendors with an extra boost: their logos were clearly visible on the ad.

Was the day a success? You be the judge. City councilors served more than 350 free cobs of corn and 450 free cups of coffee. Vendors provided free treats at their booths and donated prizes for a central draw. Local students provided musical entertainment while contestants tried to "guess the pumpkin weight" and spun the Bingo wheel.

On Customer Appreciation Day, market management showed its appreciation for vendors, too.

Plaques of recognition were given out to two outstanding vendors, while 44 bags of wild rice (a traditional staple of the Aboriginal diet) were given to the vendors in appreciation. In other words, all participants were amply thanked for their efforts throughout the season.

The market has been getting bigger and better, year after year.

In its sixth year, the Kenora Harbourfront Farmers' Market experienced steady growth in its numbers of buyers and sellers. In 2009, eight new vendors were welcomed into the fold. "Our farmers' market can be classified as an agri-tourism concept . . . unique and successful, with a major economic impact on the city," says Buck.

While vendor numbers varied throughout the season, they rarely fell below 30 and were often closer to—or over—70.

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The Manager's Office:

Planning for next year.

Now is the time to reflect on last season: thank your vendors, get their feedback and note what worked and what didn't.

Can you maintain visibility throughout the winter months with a regular column in a local newspaper? What special events will build the attraction factor for 2010/2011? Here are some suggestions:

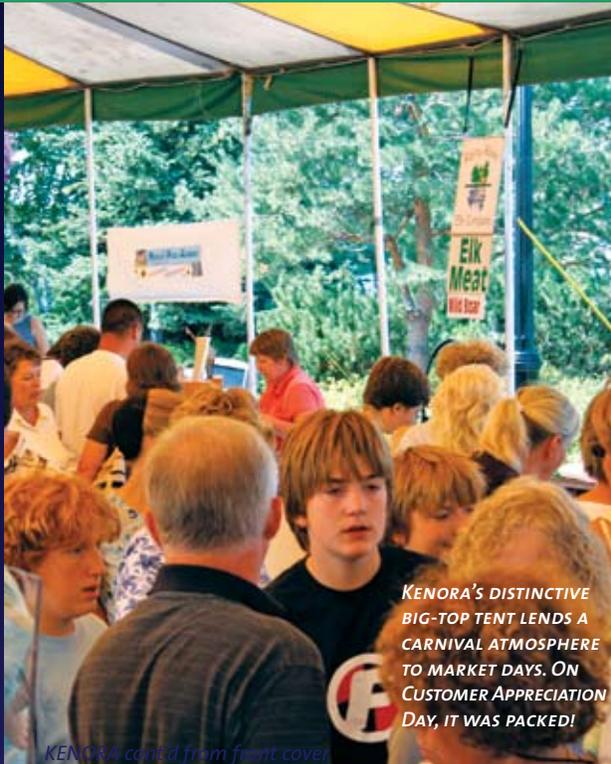
A farm/food parade at the season opening. Could other local events complement your market's launch?

A "gardening day" to encourage local gardeners, involve youth, local florists & gardening groups

Local restaurants cooking meals on-site

In-season celebrations (strawberry or tomato fests, pumpkin-carving, harvest)

Seek partner support and remember: events should promote the market's mission, use management resources effectively, complement marketing efforts and be measurable!



With 25,000 square feet of vendor space, a big-top tent, kiosks and tail-gate sales, this is one busy market. Being situated on the harbour, right near the boat slips helps immensely.

Clearly, this is a market that has garnered ample support from the city and the Kenora business community. While it's not fancy, a web page tells potential vendors exactly what to expect, including table prices, allowable produce/merchandise, market days and season dates. It lets the vendors know that they have support, including "market jockey" staff for help with unloading, set-up and loading.

The big-top Market Dome lends a carnival atmosphere to market day, and there are plans to expand it to cover all vendors. As the market's web page claims: "our farmers' market is more like a street festival."

Congratulations on creating a market with staying power, Kenora!

The Free Press Advantage

Creating and keeping the market buzz alive throughout the year is a challenge you can meet by developing a clear strategy. Studies have proven that word-of-mouth advertising and free media coverage are the most effective ways to gain and maintain market visibility.

Engaging Local Media

Beginning with the basics, make a list of local media contacts for print, radio, cable and television. First and foremost, understand that the media has space to fill—if you can make their job easier by planning ahead, you'll earn some of that space.

Take time over the winter months to develop a pre-season press kit that includes market dates, times, location and special events. Vendor profiles and a calendar of the upcoming in-season produce provide great background information for a potential story.

Forward the kit and follow up with a phone call. The goal is to build a relationship and gain an understanding of their needs. Sound familiar?

You might know a vendor who would do a monthly cable show or a regular radio spot on local foods. Perhaps someone can write a monthly food/farm column—or offer interviews and content suggestions to those who already do.

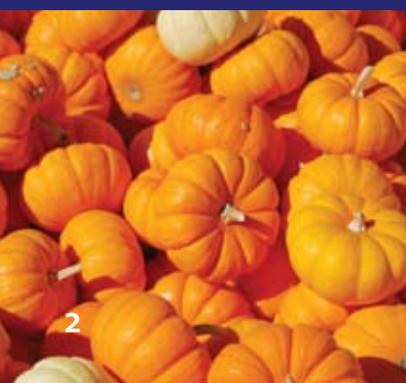
If there's a food editor, can you provide recipe or cooking tips? Do you have an event with enough human interest or a news angle to warrant media coverage? Can you partner with an existing event for cross-promotion? Who is already promoting your community and how can you partner with them to gain free media attention? Take advantage of the community calendar listings in local media outlets. These are regular, free promotional tools.

Engaging the Locals

Continue to beat the drum over the winter months by participating in community events. Put a float in the Santa Claus Parade! Take out a table at other local gatherings to keep the market front and centre. Why not participate in local home and trade shows?

Organize your community organization participants for next year's market now. Engaging the school band or youth choir is a great way to bring families out to support their kids. Read farm/food/agriculture books to children at a local bookstore or library.

All of these efforts will keep the buzz going and generate word-of-mouth advertising.





Profile: MyPick™ Inspector John Finlay



“The MyPick™ program is really catching on. The beauty of it is seeing vendors sell it to the public and other growers. My last two farm visits were referred by other farmers,” says John Finlay.

John is amazed by the commitment and hard work the growers demonstrate—particularly at chemical-free farms. As a former manager of the Horticultural Crop Unit at OMAFRA, he enjoys learning about new crops and varieties during farm visits.

John inspects participating farms west of Highway 400 all the way to Kingston. Peterborough Farmers’ Market has 12 MyPick™ vendors and “it’s wonderful to see how the posters engage customers.”

To John, the program “is easy to participate in and a low-cost way” to improve farmer visibility with high quality marketing materials.

The Vendor’s Stall:

What would you change next year?

What lessons did you learn from this past season? While it’s fresh in your mind, make note of what you want to improve on next year.

Does your farm have a brand? A consistent look builds recognition, and makes it easy for customers to find you. Display your logo/slogan clearly on your banner, vendor T-shirts and caps.

Do you share recipes at market? Now is the time to prepare recipes to hand out with your in-season produce next year. Be sure to include your logo and contact information!

Do you need to improve your display? Now’s the time to see to any aspects of your display that need revamping or replacement.

Did you collect customer contact information this year? If so, why not email your customers a monthly farm update to stay “top of mind” over the winter months?

Do you have any good ideas to share with other vendors? Please email your tips to: newsletter@farmersmarketsontario.com.

FMO® in action

Issues Management Workshop for Market Managers

When: Nov. 23 & 24
Where: Courtyard by Marriott Brampton (near Pearson Airport, Toronto)

To register, contact Catherine Clark or Bob Chorney Tel. 1-800-387-3276 Fax: 613-475-2913 or email them at fmo@farmersmarketsontario.com

FMC® news

Farmers’ Markets Canada Applies for Funding.

Farmers’ Markets Canada® (FMC) recently submitted a funding application to the Canadian Agricultural Adaptation Program (CAAP) for four years of program support relating to its five-year strategic plan. For more information, please visit: <http://www4.agr.gc.ca/AAFC-AAC/display-afficher.do?id=1182366508375&lang=eng>

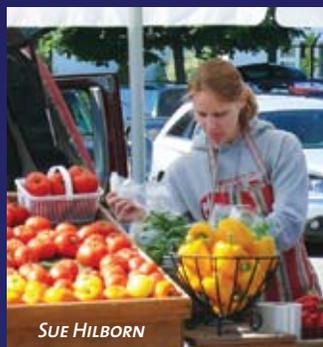
Tip of the Month

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 Sue Hilborn of Red Barn Berries & Veggies. Sue is a regular vendor at both the Woodstock and Stratford Farmers' Markets.

"The main thing I suggest to new vendors is simply to look your consumer in the eye and answer their questions honestly. If you don't know the answer, don't be embarrassed, just say so—but do your best to give them the straight goods about how you grow your produce...



SUE HILBORN

The other thing I tell my staff and new vendors is when you're setting up your stall, it's like inviting your customers to a dinner party. The tablecloth has to be straight and clean: everything...has to be of the best quality and [kept] full...so it looks like no one else has picked through your stuff."

Profile: MyPick™ Verified Local Farmer™ Sam McLean, McLean Berry Farm



SAM McLEAN
WITH SON BEN

After nearly 20 years of selling maple products and produce at market, Sam McLean welcomes increased consumer awareness. "People used to believe that everyone with a market stall was a farmer," he says.

Sam is glad to observe his own market customers educating others on who is selling "real" locally grown food. And he says that a *Peterborough Examiner* story focusing on the "real" farmers at market has helped a great deal.

Sam, his wife Jane and their children Ben and Erin transformed their farm-gate shop into an attraction by offering other local farmers' produce alongside their own. Each item indicates the miles traveled to market.

To Sam's surprise, both Ben and Erin want to carry on the family farming tradition so the future looks bright!

Upcoming Market Events

Dec. 4 & 5	Carp Farmers' Market	Christmas Market
Thursdays	Dufferin Grove Park Farmers' Market	Open 3 p.m. till 7 p.m. year-round
Saturdays	Welland Farmers' Market	Open 6 a.m. till noon year-round
Saturdays	Owen Sound Farmers' Market	Open 7 a.m. till 12:30 p.m. year-round

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: January 15

Theme: Planning ahead

Deadline for submissions: January 5, 2010.

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?

Contact Farmers' Markets Ontario®

Find out more on MyPick.ca



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

