

Farmers' Market Benefits

A FARMERS' MARKETS ONTARIO® TOOLBOX CHECKLIST FOR MARKET MANAGERS



Checklist 1: FM Consumer Benefits



How you as a consumer benefit from farmers' markets

- ✓ **You get just-picked freshness and full nutritional value.** The fruits and veggies at farmers' markets have usually been picked the same day you buy them—at the height of their flavour and with all their nutrients intact. (Imported produce is picked while still unripe and then ripened with gas during transportation. Then it often goes into storage before being sold.)
- ✓ **You get food bred for flavour, not uniform size or travel hardiness.** Since farmers' market products don't have to survive long-distance transportation or meet supermarket size requirements, you get wholesome, farm-fresh, naturally ripened taste.
- ✓ **You help keep farmers farming and keep farmland farmland.** By supporting small family farms and making farming economically viable for them,* you help prevent prime agricultural land being lost to developers. Not only is this good for the environment because it preserves agricultural green space, it also helps ensure a secure local food supply for generations to come.
- ✓ **You help stimulate the local economy.** By buying at farmers' markets and frequenting nearby stores, cafés and restaurants, you're helping keep consumer dollars circulating locally, helping to preserve jobs and create new ones. (For every agricultural job saved or created, another 1.8 local jobs related to farming are saved or created, too.)
- ✓ **You reduce your carbon footprint.** The average distance produce travels to the supermarket is 2500 km. At farmers' markets, the distance is less than 100 km (and usually < 60 km). Also, at farmers' markets, there's no excess packaging, so you reduce your carbon footprint even further.
- ✓ **You can learn exactly how the food you serve your family was produced.** At farmers' markets, you can learn exactly what production methods the farmer employed—and on small family farms, those methods tend to protect the land better and treat animals more humanely.
- ✓ **You can find out how to choose, store and prepare the food you buy.** Farmers are experts on the products they sell; and they're only too happy to share that knowledge with you.
- ✓ **You get to enjoy specialty products you'd never find at the supermarket.** Some fruits and veggies are too fragile to survive long-distance travel so you'll only ever find them at local farmers' markets (e.g., rainbow-hued heirloom tomatoes, red carrots, green garlic and other delicious rarities).
- ✓ **You can buy food with no—or far fewer—chemical preservatives.** Because produce from small family farms will be eaten within days, waxes and chemical preservatives aren't necessary.
- ✓ **You get to enjoy what's in season as the seasons change.** Farmers' markets connect you with the rhythms of nature: asparagus in the spring, sweet corn in the summer, and baked goods made with pumpkins in the fall.
- ✓ **You discover how much fun food shopping can be.** Strolling around outdoor stalls of fresh produce, chatting with vendors and fellow shoppers is a lot more enjoyable than pushing a supermarket cart.

The bottom line: farmers' markets are good for everyone in every way.

** When you buy produce from the supermarket, the farmer gets only 10% of the price you pay.*