

# ***Guide to Developing***



# **A Community Farmers Market**

## Executive Summary

A farmers market is an age-old form of farm direct marketing dating back to the early history of our country. Markets bring farmers to urban and rural settings where consumers shop for fresh, locally grown foods. The direct-to-consumer connection builds relationships between consumers and farmers, giving farmers a source of income and consumers confidence in the foods they are choosing for their families.

While farmers markets were once considered a vital form of commerce, they began to lose favor post World War II with the exodus of the consumer base from cities to suburbs, the rise of supermarkets and the industrialization of foods; i.e. convenience foods, resulted in a loss of farmers markets across the nation. Consumers lost touch with their local farmers and farmers markets were lost.

Since the turn of the century, there has been an upsurge in consumer interest in eating a more healthy diet and purchasing fresh, locally grown foods. Consumers want a connection to their local farmers and farmers markets fulfill that demand. Community organizers, consumer groups, farmers and municipal leaders all seek the creation of a farmers market in their community as an answer to consumer interest, maintaining a local agriculture base and bringing economic activity back into the urban core.

This rapid growth in farmers markets is both a gift and a curse. Farmers are once again in vogue and are given opportunities to develop relationships with, earning a high percentage of the consumer food dollar. But the explosion of farmers markets also means that many were opened without the pre-opening research and work that is beneficial to develop a sustainable farmers market. The purpose of this manual is to assist market organizers to work through the steps involved in developing a sustainable farmers market that will fulfill the triple goals of all farmers markets.

- 1) The market provides a venue for farmers to sell their farm products directly to consumers.
- 2) The market creates access to fresh, healthy and locally grown foods to consumers.
- 3) A market provides health, nutrition and economic benefit to the host community.

This Guide to Developing a Community Farmers Market will steer market organizers to create a strong foundation for a successful, long term farmers market that will be a community asset and a valuable resource for both consumers and farmers.

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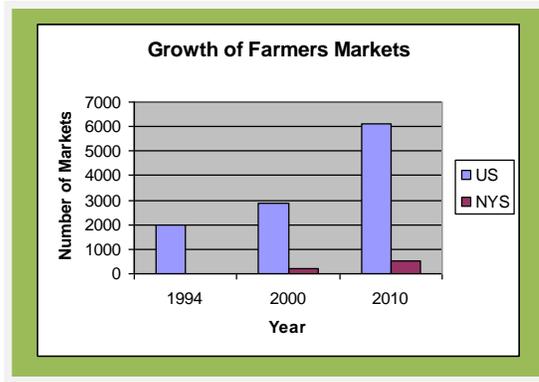
## Introduction

A farmers market is an age-old form of farm direct marketing dating back to the early history of our country. Markets bring farmers to urban and rural settings where consumers shop for fresh, locally grown foods. The direct-to-consumer connection builds relationships between consumers and farmers, giving farmers a source of income and consumers confidence in the foods they are choosing for their families.

While farmers markets were once considered a vital form of commerce, they began to lose favor post World War II with the exodus of the consumer base from cities to suburbs, the rise of supermarkets and the industrialization of foods; i.e. convenience foods, resulted in a loss of farmers markets across the nation. Consumers lost touch with their local farmers and farmers markets were lost.

Since the turn of the century, there has been an upsurge in consumer interest in eating a more healthy diet and purchasing fresh, locally grown foods. Consumers clamor for a connection to their local farmers and farmers markets fit the bill. Community organizers, consumer groups, farmers and municipal leaders all seek the creation of a farmers market in their community as an answer to consumer interest, maintaining a local agriculture base and bringing economic activity back into the urban core.

This rapid growth in farmers markets is both a gift and a curse. Farmers are once again in vogue and are given opportunities to develop relationships with, earning a high percentage of the consumer food dollar. But the explosion of farmers markets also means that many were opened without the pre-opening research and work that is required to develop a sustainable farmers market. The purpose of this manual is to assist market organizers to work through the steps involved in developing a sustainable farmers market that will fulfill the triple goals of all farmers markets.



- 1) The market provides a venue for farmers to sell their farm products directly to consumers.
- 2) The market creates access to fresh, healthy and locally grown foods to consumers.
- 3) A market provides health, nutrition and economic benefit to the host community.

Let's start the process by looking at what exactly is a farmers market. Farmers markets are defined in New York State statute, Agriculture and Markets Law, Article 22. This article states: "a building, structure or place,... intended to be used by two or more producers for the direct sale of a diversity of farm and food products... from producers to consumers and food buyers". The Farmers Market Coalition, a national association supporting farmers markets, offers a more in depth definition in an attempt to protect the integrity of the

farmers market label. They define a farmers market this way: "A farmers market operates multiple times per year and is organized for the purpose of facilitating personal connections that create mutual benefits for local farmers, shoppers and communities. To fulfill that objective farmers markets define the term local, regularly communicate that definition to the public, and implement rules/guidelines of operation that ensure that the farmers market consists principally of farms selling

directly to the public products that the farms have produced."

What is common in these definitions is the importance of maintaining a commitment to local farmers as sellers and the connections a market makes between farmers, consumers and the benefits they bring to a community. A successful farmers market meets these goals and serves the three components of this triple bottom line mission of farmers, consumers and host community.

## Getting Started

The interest in starting a farmers market may come from many sources. Government and business leaders, recognizing the economic impact a farmers market can have on a community, may spearhead a new market in an effort to revitalize their downtown business/shopping district. Farmers' markets across the country have consistently shown that they draw large numbers of people that spill over into nearby businesses. New businesses open adjacent to a market to take advantage of the consumer appeal of a market. New businesses may spin off from the markets, developing year round businesses in the community as a result of the "incubator function" of a farmers market.

Another possible catalyst for developing a farmers market may be consumers interested in addressing a need in their community for greater food safety and accountability, greater variety where traditional markets fail to reach or even exist in a given community or increase the quality and quantity of fresh foods to the local diet. With the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, the WIC Vegetable and Fruit Check program and USDA Food Stamp programs operating in farmers markets, a market is an economical source of fresh

produce and other agricultural products for low income people. Also consumers are able to talk to the producer of the foods they are buying. They learn how their food is produced, what pesticides, herbicides or fertilizers are used, how to prepare, store and preserve the products they are buying and become comfortable with the farmer and with the foods they purchase for their families.

Agricultural interest groups and farmers themselves may provide the incentive for a new farmers' market. Supporting local agriculture and small family farms is a critical element for selling agricultural products directly to consumers at retail level pricing. This provides a greater profit margin for farmers than the traditional means of wholesaling produce to grocery chains or through produce brokers, while providing product at fair market pricing. The increased profits earned from retail opportunities are often what keep a small family farm viable. Also, a farmers' market offers new entrants a low cost outlet, with a "ready-made" customer base to market their farm products at higher, retail level prices, thereby promoting local agricultural based business.

**Start with a steering committee.**

Starting a new farmers market is a much bigger undertaking than most people realize. A great deal of work needs to be done and it requires a good deal of time and a wide variety of skills. Since many hands make light the load, begin the process of starting a new farmers market by creating a steering committee. The job of the committee is to conduct the background research, develop the goals and mission for the market and oversee the creation of the market. Their efficiency and quality of the committee’s work will be critical in determining the success of the market.

To be most effective, a steering committee needs to be a cross section of the community. This ensures that the market is a reflection of the community, its makeup and its needs. Each person brings a unique perspective to the committee and a skill set that is important to market development. The list below is not exhaustive. But it will delineate key concepts that have proven helpful to steering committees with starting a new market.

- 1) **Farmers.** Any new farmers market must begin the planning process with farmers represented on the steering committee. They are well versed in what makes a market successful for their business. They also participate in other markets and can bring those experiences to the committee. Their input is vital in creating a market that fits the needs of farmers.
- 2) **Local business representation.** Business leaders have skills that help in

organizing a new market. In some cases, the local businesses community may feel threatened by a new farmers market, thinking the market will steal precious consumer dollars from them. The best way to mitigate those concerns and gain the support of this group is to involve local businesses in the research and planning. Local business associations and Chambers of Commerce may, in fact, ultimately be sponsors of the market, providing funding, providing management and promotions for the new market.

- 3) **Consumer representation.** It is important that the market reflect the needs of the consumer base in the community. Having consumers represented on the committee ensures their needs are taken into account in the development of the market. If possible this representation should come from the largest area employers to help fashion research, develop marketing opportunities and reflect the needs and expectations of a large consumer base which the market will hope to draw.
- 4) **Municipal leaders.** Representatives can provide expertise to the planning committee. Knowing what municipal laws pertain to a farmers market, what permits to operate are required and finding municipal property to operate on, as well as overcoming any of the obstacles posed by local zoning, preservation or even parking/traffic regulations. They can make the market’s case to the town/village/city board if

they are involved from the beginning, have a clear understanding of what the market's purpose is and have a hand in developing its operations.

- 5) **Key professional people** should also be added to the committee. For example, media experts provide expertise in promotions and outreach. Lawyers can help with the legal structure of the market and all incorporation and IRS applications. Accountants can develop the budget and accounting systems. You may not be able to get all represented, but try to have members with access to each of these disciplines, if possible.
- 6) **Local nonprofits**, such as food pantries, food banks and community based organizations; i.e. Kiwanis or Rotary; should also be a part of the committee. They are well versed in working in the nonprofit arena and add expertise to the organizational structure. They also have a network of employees, volunteers and contacts that can help get the market off the ground.
- 7) **Cornell Cooperative Extension** Educators in each county are familiar with farmers markets and work extensively with local farmers. Their input on a market steering committee should be considered a top priority as they will help bring others into the process, can help to contact farmers and uncover local resources needed to make for a successful market.
- 8) **Consultants** from the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets and the Farmers Market Federation of

NY. Both have extensive experience in developing new markets, creating systems for market success, training market managers and administering nutrition programs in farmers markets.

These committee members may serve part or full time, meaning that some may be called on "as needed" basis while others are expected to contribute consistently and meaningfully to the final product. As you contact people to ask them to be involved, make clear what you expect of them, as this may make it easier for them to commit for a specific reason (i.e. understanding permits or zoning) than an open ended commitment that may take more time than they are willing or able to give.

Together, the committee needs to determine the vision and/or mission for the organization. The mission should define: What is its purpose, what will it accomplish and who does it serve? As the committee strives to define its goal, they must bear in mind the three legs of the farmers market stool: farmers, consumers and community. Will the market be a viable outlet for local farmers? Will the market provide access to fresh, locally grown and nutritious foods to all consumers in its reach? Will the market be a responsible community citizen, offering health, nutrition, economic and other benefits to its host community?

*"The mission is to host a farmers' market that improves local food security, teaches entrepreneurship skills, and supports local farmers and businesses, while enriching the cultural heritage and community life of Syracuse's Eastside neighborhood."*

These goals may be influenced by the organization or person who initiated the new market. For example, a hunger relief organization may want to start a market to create access to its low income consumer base. Whatever the goal of the original impetus to the market, it must be discussed with the members of the committee to achieve a clear, cohesive goal.

Keep in mind that the goals should reflect the principles outlined in the Mission statement. It would be impractical to form a mission involving increased business for downtown merchants and then a goal which schedules market activities while more businesses are closed. Only by tying the components together will you have a clear direction to present to vendors, sponsors, consumers and the community.

## Background Research

Once the committee is in agreement on what they want the market to accomplish, they need to conduct research into the need and desire for a farmers market within the community. Market research and feasibility studies will determine the level of support from the agricultural community, consumers, local businesses and local government. This will identify who will supply the market, who the customers will be, and who the competition will be (or who might object to the market). Feasibility studies include visiting other markets to talk with market managers, sellers and customers, learning from their experiences. Also learn from the experiences of people involved in markets that have failed, whether from your own community or elsewhere.

The first step is to assess the need for the market. Start by looking at your potential consumer base. Look at the demographics in the area. What are the numbers? As a rule of thumb, it takes 800 people to support each farmer in a market.<sup>1</sup> Also, what is the ethnic make up of the local population? Does the product offerings noted in the farmers' survey match what the local people would be interested in purchasing? Is the economic status of the community sufficient to support a farmers' market? Research shows that people with incomes below \$12,000 and above

\$200,000 do not normally patronize a farmers' market.<sup>2</sup>

You can find demographic information about an area's population from many sources. The local Chamber of Commerce has demographic data, the Small Business Administration; even local media includes demographic information in their press kits. The US Bureau of Census has most of the information you would want: population numbers, age, sex, household size and income, occupations, marital status, national origin, home ownership, education level, all by census tract. All of these things will begin to tell you who the local consumers are.

Once you know who your potential customers are, use a survey to assess their interest in a farmers' market. (Appendix B) After explaining the desire to start a farmers market in the community, with the stated mission, ask the following questions:

- Would they shop at a farmers market for farm fresh products? Do they shop at others?
- Which products would they think should be available within a community farmers market? (Provide a list to choose from.)
- Is it important that products offered at a market be locally grown, produced or made?
- How far would they travel to shop at a farmers market?

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Marr, Karen Gast, A Guide to Starting, Operating, and Selling in Farmers' Markets, Cooperative Extension Service, Kansas State University, 1991.

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<sup>2</sup> Jim McLaughlin, SoCNY RC&D, farmers' market seminar held January 14, 2000 in Norwich, NY.

- What location do they think would be ideally suited for a farmers' market?
- What days of the week would they shop at a market and what times of the day would interest them the most?
- What types of services should a market provide for consumers?

Find creative and cost-effective ways to distribute the surveys. They don't need to be scientifically accurate; they only need to provide a sense of the consumer interest in a farmers market. Work with local schools to place them in students' backpacks to reach their parents, place the survey on the Chamber's website, include the survey in church bulletins, housing newsletters, and nonprofit organization newsletters. Ask local businesses to stuff bags with your survey and visit Little League Baseball, soccer and football games and hand the surveys to parents in the stands. Make arrangements with local businesses for drop off boxes. Often the post office, local supermarket and library will agree to maintain a drop box for survey responses. Just be sure to pick up returned surveys frequently, keep the boxes neat and remove each box after the survey is done. You'll want to include a list on the survey form with the names of the places where completed surveys can be left. Finally, include a deadline on your survey, preferably with no longer than a 2 week turnaround.

Next, look at the potential farmer base for the market. Determine if there is an interest in participating in a new market, when they are available for a new market, and seek their input. A farmer survey would ask:

- What outlets were used last year to sell their products, degree of satisfaction?

- Would you be interested in participating in a local farmers' market if one was available to you?
- How far would you drive to participate in a farmers market?
- What products would you have to sell?
- Preferred day of the week, times of the day?
- Name the qualities of the ideal site?
- How much space would they expect to have for their booth?
- What would you pay? Would you prefer a weekly or monthly rent or an entire season with discount?
- What months of the season would you have product to sell at a farmers' market?
- Should crafts be allowed in a farmers' market?
- Do you prefer the market be a producer-only market, or the opportunity to bring neighboring farmers products as well?
- What types of services do you desire/require from the market?

There are many ways to reach farmers to conduct this survey. Visit other markets in the general area and talk with the farmers there. Most farmers will either talk with you there, if you are respectful of their need to continue to make sales while you are there, or allow you to visit them at the farm to talk about a new market. You can contact your county Cornell Cooperative Extension office to help you reach the farmers and growers they work with. While they won't give you a mailing list outright, they may agree to mail a survey to their growers for you. The county Farm Bureau may also help to contact local farmers. Contact the NYS Dept of Agriculture and Markets for a list of farmers and their contact information in

your area. Also look at agricultural organizations to help you reach out to farmers and producers in your area, i.e. NY Cheesemakers Guild, NOFA-NY, etc.

Personal interviews with the farmers would be the most effective way to get the information you need. But, if surveys are to be mailed, including a self-addressed, stamped envelope for their return will boost the rate of return on the surveys. Be sure to include a deadline for returning the survey. Then a week or so following the deadline, phone calls can be made to prompt replies to the survey.

Next, look at the business community and local government. You want to introduce them to the concept of a community farmers market and the rationale behind it. Discuss the benefits a farmers market brings to local businesses, such as the increased customer traffic during market days, the spillover of customers from the market into local businesses, and the increase in awareness of local businesses when a market brings new consumers to the area. Get their feedback on a market before the planning begins. Will they support a farmers market? Are there businesses that oppose having a farmers' market nearby? And can these objections be overcome? Some business owners will be concerned that the market would compete for consumers' attention and create traffic and parking problems. Restaurants, florists and farm stands may see a farmers' market as direct competition. Try inviting them to participate in the market as an added profit source for their own business. Not only will they be able to sell more of their product at the market, but they would be able to promote their businesses to customers for off-market

days. Sometimes, however, even this won't appease business owners that object to a farmers' market. In that case, are there compromises that can be made that will not compromise the integrity of the market, while capturing the support of local businesses?

Also visit local governmental offices, the town clerk, mayor's office, Parks Department, etc. and explain the project, the goals or mission of the market and ask if they would support a farmers' market. Ask:

- Could they provide a site to hold the market?
- Would they participate in planning the market?
- Could they provide any financial or in-kind support; i.e. development funds, pay for a market manager, provide insurance coverage, fund promotions, personnel to put out/collect signage, trash removal, etc.?
- Would they work with the steering committee to overcome any zoning restrictions, obtain necessary permits, and other legal issues?

Your background research should also look at markets nearby. Would you be sharing the same farmer base? The same consumer base? The worst thing a new market could do would be to cannibalize an existing, successful market by siphoning their farmers and customers. You want your market to be an appropriate distance, based on population size and transportation. Also keep it on alternate days of the week. If it is determined that a new market would be too close to an existing market, the committee may want to consider working with the existing market to include their potential customer

base through additional consumer outreach and adding programs and services to the market.

Look also at the local restrictions on hosting a farmers market in the community. You'll need to consider any local zoning issues that may prevent a farmers market, such as no street peddling. It may be possible to get a waiver, but it must be considered as an obstacle. What permits or approvals will be required of the market or its vendors, i.e. city council approval, street closing permits, event permits, park use permits, parking permits, etc. How difficult will the permits be to obtain and what is the cost? Can any of them be waived?

The survey results will help you gauge the level of interest in a farmers market and any obstacles that you may need to overcome. Did you get enough positive responses from consumers to feel comfortable that you will have a critical mass of shoppers at the market? What about the farmers? Are there enough farmers willing to participate in the market? Is the diversity of product broad enough to

attract consumers? Is the market far enough from the nearest operating market so as not to impede on their consumer base? Are there any "surprises" in the results that differ from what you had expected? Keep these in mind going forward as they could be the key to meeting your community needs!

Match the responses from the consumers with the farmers. You'll need a "meeting of the minds" to determine day and time for the market – consumers are able to attend and farmers are available to participate. What about possible locations? Review the responses for overlap and investigate the potential of each site. Also, the surveys will help you define your market – who is eligible to sell and what can be sold.

Finally, weigh the positive versus the negative comments and the numbers of surveys returned compared to the numbers issued. Determine whether the market may be able to overcome any noted obstacles. If the responses are positive and you have critical mass, then the committee can move forward with planning the market.

## Planning the Market

When the surveys confirm that a farmers market is both wanted and needed by the community of farmers, consumers and local business and government leaders, the steering committee is ready to move forward in the planning process. Because there is a significant amount of work to be done to launch a new farmers market, the steering committee should break into subcommittees. This makes the best use of the committee member's time and expertise.

Each subcommittee will be assigned a specific task to research and complete that will further the development of the market. Each subcommittee will report on progress at each full committee meeting to discuss progress, consider other committee members contributions and allow for full committee ratifications of any subcommittee recommendations. Often the

“subcommittee” can be one committee member who is asked to recruit others to be involved with their portion of the assignment. This is where their contacts can become valuable. For instance the spouse of a local lawyer could take on “by-laws and rules” knowing that they will solicit the expertise of their wife/husband!

Consider the following committees:

- Site selection/on-site management
- Market organizational framework/organizational by-laws
- Market rules
- Marketing; including advertising, promotions, outreach and events planning
- Farmer recruitment
- Financial – budgeting and fundraising

## Site Selection/On-Site Management Subcommittee

The site selection/on-site management subcommittee has a number of tasks to perform, starting with finding the most advantageous site to hold the market.

“Location, location, location” is the rallying cry for site selection. But this is only partially true. It is important that the site be visible and easy to access. But there are many characteristics to consider when choosing the appropriate site for the market.

The first set of characteristics we look at is location characteristics. We want a site with high visibility – a highly trafficked road, with the market prominently situated where passersby will easily see the market. Traffic could be car traffic or public transportation or foot traffic. If you choose a relatively secluded park or lot, you will have to invest in more signage to direct people and raise awareness.

Measure also the proximity to the business or retail district. Consider the amount of time people have during lunch breaks or after work before they need to pick their children up from day care. They need to easily reach the market, have time to shop and get on with their work or family business.

Another location characteristic is parking. Consider how frustrating it is to go to a shopping center and drive around looking for a place to park. Market customers should not have to experience that kind of frustration. If the location itself does not have adequate parking, look for locations

adjacent to the site that can help with parking. For example, a church next door to the market may allow the market to use their parking lot on market days.

In addition to customers, you need to provide parking for your farmers. Some sites will require farmers to off-load and remove their vehicles from the market. This happens often in park settings or small lots trying to accommodate a growing number of farmers. When this is the case, you need to provide secure parking for the farmers’ vehicles. If possible, not too far from the market so that they have the opportunity to periodically restock their booth with product still held in their trucks.

Next, look at the physical characteristics of the site.

- Is there room for the farmers’ trucks? Most farmers will prefer to work off the back of their trucks. Consider the size of pickup trucks, cube trucks and reefer trucks. You’ll need to provide the length, plus working space as well as table space.
- Is there room for expansion? As the market grows you’ll need to accommodate additional farmers. Is the location large enough to accommodate growth without requiring you to limit growth or find a new location?
- Special events are a great way to draw customers to the market. They may entertain, educate or inform them. Whatever their purpose they cause people to remain in the market longer, spending more money, but they also attract new customers, introducing

them to the market. So you want to be sure that the site has enough room to accommodate special events.

- What is the surface of the site? Grass is attractive, but can be difficult for people with wheelchairs and walkers. Pavement is smooth, easy to walk on or roll wheelchairs. But it does throw heat in the summer. Sidewalks, if in good repair, are easy for customer walking. But what is the width? Will it allow customers to easily pass each other while yet others are stopped at a vendor table? Customers in the process of purchasing, who are interrupted by being brushed against by passersby, tend to forego the purchase and move on.<sup>3</sup> Gravel can be dusty and more likely for customers, especially people wearing heels, to twist their ankles.
- What is the slope of the site. Too steep and it is difficult for customers to comfortably walk and difficult for farmers to set their tables up.
- Finally, look at the general cleanliness and repair of the site. Sidewalks in good repair, potholes filled in, no crumbling curbing, etc. Also we want to present a wholesome environment, so it should be clean – trees and bushes trimmed, leaves and branches cleared away, no litter and garbage, etc. Some communities use a market as a means to rally the community to take ownership of the space, clean up a park and develop pride in their community. But you need to know that is the goal of the project before choosing a site that will require that level of work now and throughout the market's existence. Establish who is responsible for what at

the site so that the right people can be aware of and called in as needed on market days to clean, repair or help set up the market.

- Is the site safe? Again, it is our duty to provide a safe environment for our farmers and our customers. If the neighborhood is perceived by the public to be unsafe, then make arrangements for police presence in the market. Then publicize this fact so that customers feel safe shopping there.
- Is there shelter, such as a pavilion or shed that farmers could set up under to keep product and customers out of the elements? What about trees that could provide some shading?
- Public restrooms are a requirement for any market. Customers and especially their kids need to use the facilities. If we don't provide for that, then they will leave the market to take care of their needs and our farmers will miss out on sales. Not only do they leave, but they may not come back, because we failed to provide for their needs and it was not a pleasant experience. Bathrooms could be public restrooms associated with the park, a neighboring business that is willing to open their restrooms to the market's clientele, or rented port-a-johns.
- Lighting will be important if the market is to be run during dusk or dawn hours.
- Electricity may be important to some of your farmers if they need to run refrigeration units for meats, cheeses or dairy products.
- Water may also be needed by vendors and customers. If the water is not from a municipal source, it must be tested to ensure potability.

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<sup>3</sup> Underhill, Paco. "Why We Buy: The Science of Shopping". Simon & Schuster, 2000.

- Is there storage space at the site that could be used for the market's equipment – tents, tables, signs, banners, etc.

Next is ease of use characteristics.

- Some locations will require a fee for use of the space. It might be a flat rental fee from the property owner or city government. It might be a fee equal to the lost revenue that would otherwise be acquired by the owner. One example is a market that must reimburse the city for lost parking meter fees when the market sets up on the street. Other fees might be charged to cover the cost of services to the site; i.e. sanitation, police presence, etc.
- Zoning and permit requirements need to be identified. Some may be community-wide, but others may be site-specific based on the zoning district.
- What about the cooperation of the property owner? Will you be allowed to erect signs and banners. Many markets are placed on closed off streets? Will the city provide traffic barriers? Garbage cans, park benches, etc.
- Finally, what is the length of time the site is available. You want a site that will be available to the market for the long haul. Moving a market can be difficult, at best. Not only do you go through all these steps all over again, but you must get your customer base to move with you. No amount of promotion of a move and new location will reach everyone and you will leave a percentage of your customers behind when you move. It can literally take years before the customer base reaches the same level in the new site as it enjoyed before the move.

Using a Farmers Market Site Evaluation (Appendix E) to rate each of these characteristics for each potential site will guide the subcommittee to choose the best possible site for the market.

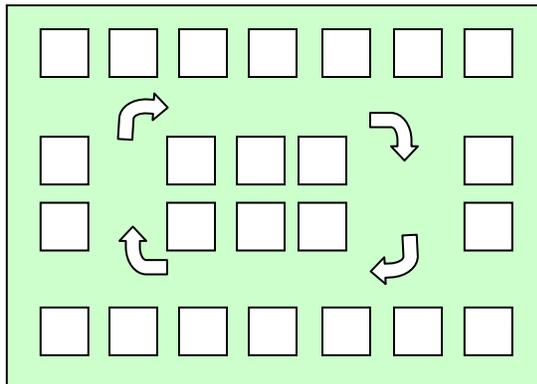
Once the site is selected, the subcommittee is then charged with making the site workable. Creating an effective layout of the market is very important for proper space allocation for vendors and for ease and comfort of customers shopping the market. Vendor stalls should be 12' by 40' to accommodate trucks parked side by side. If there is not room for sellers to park their trucks at their stalls, then space needs to be allocated for their vehicles elsewhere. However, most sellers prefer to sell off the backs of their trucks, so it is best to try to accommodate their trucks at their stalls.

The center aisle between rows of sellers should be a minimum of 10 to 12 feet wide to give plenty of room for customers to shop at the stands on either side of the aisle with 4 feet down the center for others to walk comfortably through. This also allows space for consumers to stop and visit with neighbors they meet at the market, fostering the community spirit that is often evident at farmers' markets.

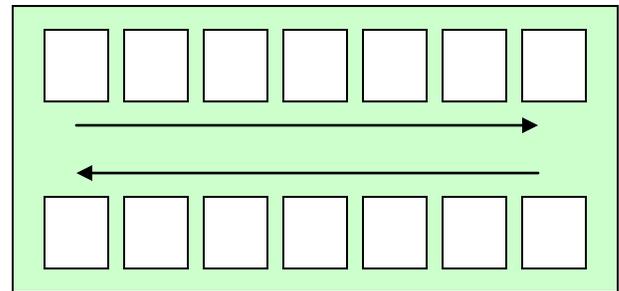
The flow of customer traffic through the market is important, as well. Vendor booths should be kept tight together, one right after the other. It makes the market appear full, but it also eliminates open spaces that allow consumers to slip in and out of the market other than at designated entrances. In other words, consumers are "forced" to shop the full market, giving each farmer an equal opportunity to present their products to all customers. Customer flow also means that movement through the market is a

natural flow. No abrupt ends of aisles of farmers that require consumers to backtrack to continue to shop. Backtracking or “dead end” aisles are usually overlooked as inconvenient. Farmers on these aisles will suffer a loss of sales. Many markets use a circular traffic pattern, with farmers on both sides of an aisle or one straight line with farmers on both sides. This allows customers to flow naturally through the market aisles.

The layout of market stalls should allow easy access to farmer’s assigned spaces,



while allowing for the flow of customer traffic. Vendor booths must be kept grouped together to keep the market whole and looking full. And there should be no barriers to the flow of traffic, keeping movement continuous. This means no aisle should have an abrupt end, but should circle around to the next row of sellers. In the example that follows, there are four rows of sellers with room for customer traffic to flow between the rows and around each end.



Moving cars and vendor trucks into and out of the market while hosting customers strolling through the market requires careful planning to ensure everyone’s safety. Market entrances should be blocked off to prevent cars from entering the market. Driveways and walkways should be clearly delineated, using barriers if possible, to prevent traffic from intermingling with foot traffic. Likewise, farmer truck traffic needs to be segregated from customer traffic and should be halted during market hours.

When assigning selling space to farmers, space sellers of similar products throughout the market rather than grouping them together. It is more appealing to see a variety of vendor selections throughout the market and more profitable for the farmers. Customers will tire of the same thing if like vendors are together and will purchase from the first seller and ignore the rest.

The site selection/on-site management subcommittee is also tasked with ensuring the market complies with all local regulations. The committee must obtain all approvals and permits necessary for the

market to operate. That may mean making appearances before the city council, applying for permits or knocking on doors to obtain signatures for a street closing.

If police presence is needed, then this committee will make those arrangements. Same with the Department of Public Works, arrangements will need to be made, including any fees required, to get street closure barricades put up each market day, arrange for sanitation needs and acquire park benches or picnic tables for customer convenience. Bathrooms are a necessity for every market and this subcommittee will need to make these arrangements, as well.

Most markets will need liability insurance coverage. This protects the market in the event of a claim, as well as providing a layer of protection for the property owner. This committee will need to seek adequate coverage, whether a market-owned policy, a rider under the umbrella of a sponsoring agency or finding coverage under the municipal plan.

Another task of the site selection/on site management committee would be to determine which nutritional programs the market will participate in and enroll. There are several options, each attracting its own customer base and providing added revenue options for participating farmers and vendors.

The WIC and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program provide a once-per-season benefit to WIC families and low income seniors. These are \$4 checks that can be spent on fresh fruits and vegetables from bona fide, participating farmers. The market must be certified with the NY State Department of Agriculture and Markets

before farmers in the market may apply to accept the checks. This is a simple procedure that asks for a list of participating farmers and a set of the market rules. Once certified, the market manager will need to accept applications for the program from participating farmers, sign them as an attestation that the farmer is, in fact, a bona fide farmer.

Farmers may also choose to participate in the WIC Vegetable and Fruit Check program. This program provides WIC families with checks to purchase fruits and vegetables at all WIC venues. In the farmers market, the purchases must be on fresh fruits and vegetables and from farmers who are also participating in the WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program. While the market itself plays no role in the WIC Vegetable and Fruit Check Program, farmers and customers will have questions and it is important that the market manager be up to date on the process.

Finally, markets may choose to accept electronic payments through a central Point of Sale (POS) terminal. This is the NYS Farmers Market Wireless EBT program administered by the Farmers Market Federation of NY on behalf of the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets and the NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance. The program allows access to your market for consumers on food stamp benefits. The program provides markets with a POS terminal that is capable of accepting electronic food stamp benefits, as well as debit and credit transactions, if the market chooses. The terminal is operated under the market's USDA Food and Nutrition Service authorization uses tokens as EBT scrip for food stamp transactions.

This committee needs to consider the administrative needs for each of the program, the opportunities they bring to increase consumer access to locally grown foods and the opportunities to add revenue to farmers and make the market more attractive to potential participants. While some of the programs require constant staffing, such as the EBT program, it does not have to be a market manager. It can be a volunteer(s) or community partner assisting in the administration of the programs.

Finally, the site selection/on-site management subcommittee must find someone to manage the market. They will need to develop a job description (see Appendix F) and determine an appropriate compensation package. There are several ways to compensate a market manager:

- **The Volunteer Manager.** A volunteer manager may be best suited for a new farmers' market, because financial resources are usually limited and enthusiasm for the market is very high. However, there are drawbacks to a volunteer manager. The time they will have to spend on management duties will be limited because they will have to have another job to support themselves. So the market duties will be secondary to them. More importantly, volunteerism tends to fade, typically dissipating after about five years. If the market has not made plans to make the job a paid position, a volunteer manager will often resign by five years time. The market can be adversely affected if plans have not been to keep up the momentum of the enthusiasm the original market organizers had.

- **The Consultant Manager** – a contract is executed with an independent consultant to act as manager. They are paid a flat hourly rate with an agreed upon timeframe and weekly, monthly or annual limits to what they will be paid. The advantage to them is that they do not automatically pay taxes, but instead receive a 1099 at year end. The Market does not have the expenses associated with FICA, workers compensation, unemployment insurance, etc. The market runs the risk of running out of money before the job is done, but the work can be focused and directed at maximum budgetary efficiency.
- **The Paid, Part-time manager.** A part-time, paid manager is another option for compensating a farmers' market manager. Because the person is paid, they are recognized as a figure of authority by the market sellers. Also, offering a salary tends to eliminate the fading enthusiasm of a voluntary manager. However, there are drawbacks to being part time, as well. The position is typically paid only when the market is in season. But the manager's job continues year round with recruiting sellers for the market, promoting the market, and planning for the next season. The manager should be reimbursed for this time spent on the market as well as when they are managing the operation of the market during the selling season. Another drawback is that the manager's job is secondary to the manager's full time job. There may be times when the two jobs will conflict and the manager will be obligated to fulfill the needs of their primary job.

- **Paid, Full-time manager.** A full time, paid manager is the ideal strategy. Their entire focus will be on the successful operation of the farmers' market on a year round basis. However, most markets cannot afford to pay someone a livable salary to be a full time manager.

Finally, a manager should not be one of the market's vendors. This may seem to be a convenient option, but it is fraught with pitfalls. A vendor's job in the market is to build their customer relationships, sell their products and build profits to sustain the viability of their own business. When a vendor is also manager, there will be conflicts when the needs of the market must be responded to at the expense of their own business. This is an unfair position to place a vendor in, but even more important, a vendor who is also a manager has the appearance of, if not outright,

conflict of interest. Decisions made must be for the benefit of the market. Any decision made by a manager/vendor will always be suspect. Was the decision based on what was good for the vendor/manager's business or the market? It also appears to give a vendor/manager an unfair advantage. Customers seek out market managers and that gives the vendor/manager's booth with their own farm products more accessibility to consumers. Will this influence consumers purchases unreasonably? Some in the market may think so.

While it sounds daunting to hire a market manager, the right person is out there. This person will have passion for food and farming, be strong, articulate, fair and honest. Being a market manager is a labor of love, but one that also requires broad shoulders.

## Rules Subcommittee

Another committee will develop the rules and regulations that will govern conduct of the farmers market. While some farmers moan at the idea of rules, they are important to the successful operation of the market. Rules maintain the integrity of the market. Customers know what to expect when they come the market, because the rules define the market and all farmers are obligated to abide by the rules. So, for example, if the rules are that the market be 100% producer only, customers know that anything they buy is grown by the seller. Sellers know that rules will be enforced through farm inspections and other means to ensure compliance and maintain the integrity of the market's rules.

Because the rules establish conduct for all to follow, it ensures that all market participants conduct business on a level playing field. No one has an advantage over the other. The rules spell out conduct of behavior and all participants know what is expected of them. They know what their responsibilities are, what their rights under as market participants, and know ahead what the consequences of noncompliance will be.

The rules should attempt to plan for all possible issues that may arise in the marketplace. Since it is impossible to foresee everything, the rules should be written with the opportunity for review and revisions to include new issues that arise. The rules need to be clear and concise. All parties should be able to fully understand what the rules means, without needing an interpreter. If the rules are clear and

unambiguous they will eliminate potential conflicts in the market.

Finally, each rule must be enforceable. This goes along with being clear and unambiguous. A rule that everyone understands can be followed. Markets must then have the ability to enforce the rules of conduct. This would include an inspection process to verify sellers are complying with grower rules. It should also include systems for dealing with non-compliance.

While every market needs to develop rules that reflect the needs of the community and the market's mission, there are some common elements that should be in every set of market rules.

Identify the markets' organizational structure. Spell out who operates the market, establishes the rules and sets market policy. Is this a market board of directors, a sponsoring agency, a municipal government? Then define who will have the responsibility of applying those rules and policies and enforcing their compliance. Spelling this out in the rules allows everyone to understand at the outset, who sets the market policies and who is charges with carrying them out in the marketplace. Both farmers and consumers know the appropriate person to address their concerns, comments and suggestions.

Next spell out the general operations of the market so that farmers know what the expectations are.

- When is the market – day, times, season
- Where is the market located

- Identify set up and tear down hours. This helps farmers to plan their arrival and how much time they have to pack up once market is over.
- If you intend to have a policy on farmers leaving early or arriving late, then it should be very clearly spelled out here. It is recommended that farmers remain in their spaces throughout the full market day. When farmers leave early it signals an early end to the market for customers. Customers feel cheated that they have lost some of their time in the market and lost out on their choices of farmers and product. It could result in a loss of customers if it continues. If vendors arrive late they may disrupt the business for everyone concerned in getting to their spot or in setting up their booth. Farmers should be encouraged to bring enough product to provide customers with selection throughout the market day.

One of the most crucial rules will identify who is qualified to sell at the market. You will have learned through your customer and farmer surveys what the expectations are and your mission will have refined this for you. Now your rules will define it in clear, unambiguous terms. If producer only, will it be 100% or will there be any supplementing with product missing from local growers? If so, this would be clearly spelled out – what can be bought for resale, where it must be from, i.e. whether from another farmer within a defined region or from a broker house, or anything goes; how much of the farmer’s sales can be from resale, and the process for approval to resell. If vendors other than farmers are to be allowed in the market, identify who they may be and how they can qualify. For example, craftspeople must be 100% self

made and approved by a jury. Or bakers can sell in the market, provided their main ingredient is a product that is grown by themselves or another producer in the market.

Most vendor definitions include the term “local”. This has a different meaning for everyone. It is important that your rules define local for your market, allowing farmers to comply with the rules, but especially to show market customers that when they are buying “local” food at the market, they know what this means and the rules will maintain the integrity of the definition.

Along with identifying who can sell in the market, you must identify what can be sold. Some markets limit the products to locally grown foods, but others open up to crafts, prepared foods and local non profit agencies. Again, your customer and farmer surveys and your mission will help you to determine what should be sold in the market.

Many of the products that are sold in the market require government licenses, permits, inspections, etc. to maintain the safety of the foods consumers purchase. Market rules should state that all farmers and vendors must adhere to the government regulations covering their product, providing the market with copies of all up-to-date licenses and permits. Examples of licenses, permits and certificates required in New York State include: health permits for processed foods, sales tax certificates, greenhouse licenses, farm winery permit or meat processors license and appropriate slaughter stamp.

In New York, there is a growing number of meat vendors participating in farmers markets. This is a great benefit to customers and farmers, as well. Government regulations for meat vendors are extensive, from how the regulatory agency is, to the license required by slaughter facilities and the slaughter stamp required on meat packaging. Violations of these regulations can impact the market as a whole if a customer is sickened by any of these products and it is determined that the market allowed illegal products to be sold. So it is important that markets make sure that farmers understand all regulations pertaining to their product and show proof of compliance.

A section of the rules should issue guidelines for selling in the market, in other words, what is appropriate conduct for the market sellers. Each market must determine what is appropriate for their community, but some common conduct rules are listed here.

- All farmers and vendors are required to post signs both price signs to maintain price integrity, and farm identification signs.
- Treat all customers fairly and with respect and dignity. This creates a positive atmosphere in the market and all customers enjoy their experience.
- Hawking of any kind is prohibited. Noise distractions can make the market very chaotic and uncomfortable for customers.
- Insurance requirements for participating in the market – usually product and general liability insurance naming the market, its sponsor and the property owner as an additional insured are required. All requirements are clearly spelled out in this rule.

- All product being sold must be fresh and first quality. The manager will require all product of an inferior quality or showing signs of deterioration to be removed from sale.
- Dogs are the perennial question. Do we prohibit dogs in the interest of safeguarding food and run the risk of alienating dog owners or do we allow dogs and run the risk that dogs will contaminate food products or potentially bite customers? There is no good answer. Sometimes you have to look at the market setting, the customer base, the insurance carrier or the county health department to get your answer. But if you intend to have any restrictions on dogs in the market, it must be very clearly defined, so that everyone understands and can comply. Remember: Not all pets are dogs and you may need to restrict all personal animals to make sure lemurs, monkeys and parrots are accounted for! Service animals will need to be excluded from any restrictions on allowing animals in the market.

Another section of the rules will deal with vendor space and fees. Explain how vendor fees are assessed. Include whether there are discounts for an entire season or if opportunities for daily vending exist. Dictate when the fees are due, whether in a lump sum up front or each market day and if on a seasonal basis, can they be paid on an installment plan.

Often when a vendor is absent, the market takes the opportunity to place a daily seller in the unoccupied space. This prevents having an open space in the market, but also allows the market to generate additional revenue. A rule should indicate

that gives the market the right to “re-sell” a vendor’s space in their absence and what the terms for doing so are.

This section should also define vendor stall space or selling space. Give the dimensions of the space, whether trucks can be parked at their space or if product must be off-loaded and the trucks parked off-site. This portion would also include details on how space assignments are made and whether the vendor has rights to the same space in subsequent years.

And finally, if a season leaseholder withdraws from the market, is any part of his fee refunded?

Compliance is an important topic in a market’s rules. This is what makes the rules work! So it needs to be clearly spelled out and workable.

Complaints should have a process identified in the rules. These are complaints of farmers against farmers, as well as farmers against manager. Vendors should be told in the rules where they can address these complaints, the process for having them heard and what action will be taken. For example, a rule may stipulate that a farmer who registers a complaint against another

farmer must put up \$50 to have the complaint heard and investigated by the market management. Once this is done, the manager will conduct a thorough investigation into the complaint, interviewing both parties, conducting farm inspections if needed. Once the investigation is done and the management makes its decision, the complainant will receive the fee back if the allegation was correct. If the complaint was found to be groundless, the money is forfeited to the market’s general funds to cover the cost of the investigation.

The rules should outline the consequences for noncompliance with rules. This is usually a series of warnings, fines and finally, if it cannot be resolved, expulsion from the market.

A grievance procedure brings fairness to the compliance process. Any vendor who has been found to be in violation of the rules should have the opportunity to address the violation with the markets authority, allowing them to provide evidence in their defense, plead for a lesser penalty, etc. The grievance procedure must be defined in the rules and available to all vendors to review.

## Market Organization Development Subcommittee

The organizational structure of a farmers market is the governing body of the market. There are a number of structures that a market can adopt.

### **1. Voluntary Structure**

A voluntary structure is the quickest, easiest to establish and requires a minimum of time and capital investment. The group simply agrees to establish a farmers market. All decisions are voted upon, with each member receiving one vote. Since little or no funds are collected, the market site is usually on donated land and a market manager is usually a volunteer from among the market sellers.

While this is an easy way to establish the organizational body, there are many pitfalls to this type of structure. First is the risk to members. This type of structure is considered a partnership and is subject to all the legal pitfalls of a partnership. Therefore, each market member is liable for all debts and legal actions against the market. Another downfall is the need for all decisions to be voted on. This means decisions cannot be made rapidly enough to respond to situations as they arise. The best defense to these outcomes is to decide what is needed to be decided upon and clearly delineate the areas in which the Market Manager's decisions will guide the market and how best to support your Manager.

No matter how strong or effective this person is as a manager, disagreements will arise over what others will perceive as conflicts of interest. That is, some decisions

made by the manager will be seen as self-serving by others. Also, volunteer enthusiasm tends to fade over time. This means that the inspiration and drive of a volunteer manager or organizing committee will disappear over time leaving the future of the market in jeopardy. Without a more formal organization to support the market and provide for continuity in the event of manager turnover, the market will be in jeopardy of collapse.

### **2. Non-profit Corporations.**

An incorporated, non-profit association or agricultural cooperative is another management structure for a farmers' market. This type of market management is used by many of the markets in New York State. Here, the formal regulations dictated by the incorporation process help to ensure the success and the future of a farmers' market. The association must establish a set of bylaws. Bylaws set down the requirements for membership, how membership meetings are called and how they are run, how voting is done and directors and officers are elected, the duties of each of the officers, as well as guidelines for managing the association. Once incorporation is filed with the state, a filing to the IRS is done to establish tax status. Most markets would become trade associations, either a 501 (c) 5 or (c) 6. This type of association is written into IRS tax code.

“Reg. 1.501(c)(6)-1 defines a business league as an association of persons having a common business interest, whose

purpose is to promote the common business interest and not to engage in a regular business of a kind ordinarily carried on for profit. Its activities are directed to the improvement of business conditions of one or more lines of business rather than the performance of particular services for individual persons.”

To meet the requirements of IRC 501(c)(6) and Reg. 1.501(c)(6)-1, an organization must possess the following characteristics:

1. It must be an association of persons having some common business interest and its purpose must be to promote this common business interest;
2. It must be a membership organization and have a meaningful extent of membership support;
3. It must not be organized for profit;
4. No part of its net earnings may inure to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual;
5. Its activities must be directed to the improvement of business conditions of one or more lines of business as distinguished from the performance of particular services for individual persons;
6. Its primary activity does not consist of performing particular services for individual persons; and
7. Its purpose must not be to engage in a regular business of a kind ordinarily carried on for profit, even if the business is operated on a cooperative basis or produces only sufficient income to be self-sustaining.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> “IRC 501 (c) (6) Organizations. By John Francis Reilly, Carter C. Hill and Barbara A Braig Allen. 2003.

As dictated by incorporation law, the bylaws define the make-up of the board of directors, who is eligible and how they are determined. Some market bylaws require that all board members must be sellers in the market. Some markets have been very successful with this set-up, but it does create a built-in conflict of interest for the board members. The decisions they make must be based on what is good for the market, overall, even if not in the best interest of one or more of the board members. It is often hard for a farmer/board member to overlook their own needs when making decisions in the board room. If you properly structured, and sufficiently diverse in character, your steering committee, you will have most of the elements needed in place to transition to a proper Board of Directors for your non-profit.

Memberships to the association provide funds for hiring a market manager, at least on a part time basis. This helps to eliminate some of the pitfalls of fading enthusiasm of volunteers. The by-laws also give a clear definition of the roles of each person, and gives strong support for the day to day decisions made by the manager.

Incorporating also offers financial advantages. It protects the membership against the legal debts and actions against the association. It also has tax advantages. By filing for non-profit status with the Internal Revenue Service, funds collected by the association are not subject to federal income tax, however, they would not be exempt from state income or state sales tax. If the gross income of the association exceeds \$25,000, the organization must file an annual IRS 990, Return of Organization Exempt from

Income Tax. Of course, this will require someone (usually a member of the Board or paid consultant) to track the finances and prepare for auditing or third party review.

While the 501 (c) 6 organization is a tax exempt organization, it is not a charitable organization. That means that donations and contributions to the organization are not tax deductible. This disallows the organization from grant funding from private foundations. However, government funding is usually available to trade associations. It is also possible to apply for funding under the umbrella of another, 501 (c) 3, charitable non-profit, organization.

### **3. Sponsoring Agency.**

Many farmers markets have chosen to operate under the umbrella of a sponsoring agency. Typical market sponsors are municipal government agencies and nonprofit organizations that believe in the value of farmers markets and believe that a market may help to fulfill its mission. Market sponsors will differ in the level of involvement with the market, some offering little more than general support, while others will operate the market as a project of the sponsor agency.

The advantages of operating under a sponsor differ with the level of involvement of the sponsor. Commonly sponsoring agencies will lend their charitable, nonprofit status (501 (c) (3)), allowing the market to apply for and receive grants and accept tax-deductible donations and contributions. In many cases, the sponsor will act as the fiscal agent of the market, taking responsibility for collecting monies owed the market, paying the bills generated by the market, and providing financial reports to the

market members. As fiscal agent, the sponsor may include the market as part of its liability insurance program, saving the market the expense and hassle of obtaining its own liability insurance.

#### **Elements of Nonprofit Corporate By-laws**

1. Organizational Name
2. Nonprofit purpose/goals of the organization
3. Membership
  - a. Definition
  - b. Rights and responsibilities
4. Board of Directors
  - a. Eligibility
  - b. Terms
  - c. Rights and responsibilities
5. Officers
  - a. Define positions
  - b. Duties
6. Committees
  - a. Standing
  - b. Ad hoc
7. Operations of the organization
8. Amendments
  - a. Procedure
9. Termination of organization
  - a. Maintaining nonprofit continuity

Many sponsoring organizations will lend management support to the market. They may provide a manager for the market and incorporate the salary into their own payroll system, deriving the revenue from market stall fees to offset the expense. This

allows the market to have a paid manager, while freeing the market from having to obtain unemployment and disability insurance and from payroll reporting obligations. Along with providing a manager, the sponsoring organization has additional resources and in-house talent that can be lent to the market, such as advertising and promotion resources and skills, events planning, legal advice, etc.

Ideally a sponsoring agency will come prepared with a Board of Directors of their own which represents or includes many of the elements previously outlined. If not, an Advisory Panel or “friends of the market” committee may be formed to help manage the market and report to the full Board as circumstances require.

Of course, there may be disadvantages, as well. If the sponsor is setting policy for the market, it needs to have a complete understanding of agriculture and farmers markets. The market may want to become active in the sponsor’s organization, helping the sponsor to make appropriate decisions for the market. When the sponsor has taken on the management of the market, they may choose to assign one of their staffers to act as market manager. If the staffer is passionate about farmers markets, this could be an excellent fit for the market. However, if the market is an added responsibility to the staffer, it may be a burden that doesn’t fit their time schedule or their interests. In this case, the market could suffer from neglect and may ultimately fail.

#### **4. Farmers Market Management Company.**

Some markets are organized and managed by professional management companies. In this case, the catalyst for the market may be the municipality, local farmers, or consumers; but it is usually the management company is contracted to organize, develop and operate the market. They will use the policies, rules and processes that they have developed and used within the network of markets they manage. The markets using this organizational structure benefit from an organization that has professionalized the role of market manager. Managers are paid staffers of the management company and benefit from the training and support they receive from the management company. The drawback of the management company arrangement is that it requires a large financial investment to contract for services.

#### **5. Market Authority.**

A market authority is established through legislative action. It has a purpose to support local agriculture and act as a regional food hub. The authority plans, develops and manages the market. An example of a market authority is the Central New York Regional Market Authority in Syracuse, NY. This type of management is rare, although a new market authority has recently been established in Suffolk County, Long Island to provide ready-access to a market for the county's agricultural producers and commercial fishermen.

## Marketing Subcommittee

A marketing plan uses a mix of advertising, promotions, outreach efforts and special events to build knowledge among the potential consumer base about the market and its offerings. This plan must take into account the funds available, the demographics of the potential customer base, the media and communications options, partners' roles and resources, as well as the mission of the market.

Advertising gets your market message out to the public. Generally it entails the use of traditional media sources, television, radio and print. Before attempting to build an advertising campaign to create awareness for a new market, you must first understand who your potential customer base will be. The more focused your efforts, the better the results, as a weekday market may target senior citizens, while a weekend daytime market seeks families. An evening market could become a social event for singles and seniors. Use this information to match to media sources. Each media will be able to provide data on the demographic most attracted to their television station, radio station or print medium.

An effective advertising campaign is built on frequency. In other words, a consumer hears your message enough times that they will act on it. Match your advertising budget to the medium that will give you the greatest number of delivered messages to your target audience. If using radio or television, contract for the time slots that show the greatest audience for your demographic. Supplement all paid media with signage in local businesses, build a community e-mail to send out reminders,

permanent signage at the site of the market so when it is not going on people may be reminded of it and directional signage to guide people to the market.

Promotions are generally short term activities that will boost consumer participation in the market. Promotions can be no cost or low cost for the market, but can be very effective in reaching consumers with your message and generating customer traffic in the market. For example, the Seneca Falls Farmers Market distributes market coupons to local businesses to share with their employees. This creates the opportunity to build awareness of the market, as well as the incentive to test-shop the market with the coupons. A no-cost promotional idea is Farmers Market Bingo. Playing this game at the local senior center, using market coupons as prizes, creates a "buzz" for the market, educates consumers about farmers market products and encourages participants to visit and shop the market. Have a scavenger hunt where people are encouraged to have each vendor mark a card showing that they have visited and then draw a winner from those submitted for a "gift card". Make certain to capture any and all contact information you can from these activities for future follow up.

Outreach is a direct approach to get your market message out. It could be making presentations to local civic organizations, for example, to discuss local agriculture and the farmers market as a community benefit. Internet marketing, such as Facebook and twitter is a form of outreach. Engaging consumers in discussions through these

social networking mediums gets the market's message out, creates dialogue about the market and generates interest in shopping for locally grown foods in the market.

Special events play key roles in the markets plan to create awareness for the market and build a consumer base. Because they are active; music, contest, cooking or craft demonstrations, etc.; special events entertain customers and add excitement to the market. The excitement is a draw for media attention. Press releases for each special event, especially if they include defined photo opportunities, will bring local media to the market for "free" market promotion. As local reporters get more familiar with your market, they will look the market up for stories and activities to help them meet editorial deadlines.

Special events help build community and can become a great venue for community education on such topics as health and nutrition, environmental issues, agriculture and gardening or other issues that are important to your customers. The market benefits each time they promote their appearance at the market, while the organization benefits by reaching their target audience with information on their organization and its mission, fundraise or deliver services. Try to design events which appeal to your particular market "target". If you are seeking senior citizens, a blood pressure or diabetes screening would be more appropriate than face painting or child safety presentations.

Finally special events are important because they help to introduce new consumers to the market. Those who come for the music or for the health screening offered by a

community organization appearing at the market, they will be introduced to the offerings at the market, and farmers have the opportunity for additional sales. Often, once introduced to the market, a consumer will return.

Merchandising is another consideration that may serve a dual purpose. Sales of market t-shirts, tote bags, aprons, etc. will help to get the market's name out in the community. They become walking billboards promoting the market as consumers proudly wear their market tees or shop through downtown or the local mall while carrying their market tote bags. While the initial cost of acquiring the merchandise may be an obstacle, a partnership with a local sponsor may provide underwriting costs for such a venture. Include their logo on the front and yours on the back for the price of printing, or maybe they will support a promotion linked to the item, such as "win a free soda at Burger Jack's if you are spotted on (non-Market Day) wearing your local market/Burger Jack's T-shirt".

The marketing plan requires close work with the finance subcommittee. They will need to know the budget they must work with and determine the appropriate mix for an effective marketing plan. The two subcommittees can also work together to raise additional funds to help promote the market or build the proper approach or message for potential underwriters or partners.

Because this will be a new market, opening day must be special. Target a fair share of advertising and promotions to opening day as a way to attract as many consumers as possible at the start of the market. Special events on opening day will add to the

attraction and create the excitement in the market that will encourage return visits. Invite local dignitaries like politicians, business leaders, community activists and make certain to make a “big deal” out of their joining you. If you can, try to prepare a season long schedule to share with opening day guests so they can “plan” to come back on future dates. Make sure to have a growing schedule available so people will know when to expect corn or squash or their other favorites.

Creativity is key with marketing a farmers market with limited funds. Posters, fliers and signage are essential ingredients in a market’s promotional campaign. Placing these about town will be a constant reminder to consumers about the market. Signs can be permanent signs if local zoning laws and the property owner permit. Banners can be hung on lamp poles or across busy city streets, with the permission of the municipality and their assistance in

erecting the signs. Electioneering style signs can be put up each market day reminding consumers, and directing them to the market. Other creative suggestions might be developing a promotional piece on a home computer and printing copies for local businesses to use as a bag stuffer to promote the market. Or it could be standing on street corners on market day with hand held signs promoting the market. There are a lot of ways to market the market without a large promotions budget.

This subcommittee will be responsible for developing a comprehensive plan to promote the market, building greater awareness of the new farmers market. They will also be responsible for the execution of the marketing plan, whether at their own hands or overseeing it being done by other volunteers, the market manager or other market staff.

## Recruiting Farmers Subcommittee

While farmers should be part of the market's steering committee, bringing the farmer perspective to planning, it is also necessary to develop a strategy for reaching farmers and encouraging participation in the market.

The Farmer Recruitment subcommittee is also responsible for finding farmers with an adequate diversity of product to round out the market, giving customers a variety of choices in both product and farmers. There are many sources to use. The first source is the Cooperative Extension Educators. They work with farmers in the area on a daily basis and if they are involved in the market planning, or are kept well informed, will promote the market to their farmers. Contact educators in several surrounding counties to reach as many farmers of as many different products as possible. Next, use the NYS Dept. of Agriculture and Markets. Through their Farmers Market Nutrition Program, they have a comprehensive list of farmers who are actively direct marketing at farmers markets. They are always willing to share farmer contact information. Farm Bureau may also be a source. Notices in county newsletters will reach a large number of farmers. Finally, reach out through production organizations to help target farmers in the area that may be interested in farmers markets. They may put a notice out on their list serve or through their newsletter or in rare cases, will give you a contact list for a specific region.

The growing number of farmers markets in the state means that farmers are probably already participating in at least one other

market. But farmers rarely depend on one marketing venue. They may be involved in wholesale marketing to supermarkets or institutions, direct to restaurant sales, participating in online farmers markets, host an on-farm farmers market or offer a farm based Community Supported Agriculture program. To attract farmers to participate in another marketing venture, you must be prepared with information that will help them make the decision to participate in a new farmers market. When reaching out to farmers, be prepared with the following information:

- Where and when the market will be held. Does it match with the farmers' schedules?
- A finalized set of rules. Farmers need to understand market eligibility and what is expected of them as a market seller.
- Cost of participation. Is the cost justified by the farmers' anticipated sales?
- Demographics of the community. Does the potential consumer base match the farmers' product line?
- Marketing plan. Farmers will want to know that enough is being done to attract consumers to the market.
- Nutrition programs offered at the market. Farm revenue will be greater whenever the market makes state and federal nutrition programs, such as WIC and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program and SNAP, available to customers to use in the market.
- Market restrictions that may impact the farmer. Insurance is a common

requirement that farmers will need to have for market participation. What level of insurance is being required? Some markets must make compromises in their products they allow for sale. And farmers will need to know if this will impact their sales and revenues. For example, a farmers market in the Hudson Valley was opposed by a local florist. The concern was that farmers selling fresh cut flowers would take business from the florist. In order to overcome the florist's objection to the market, it was decided to eliminate fresh cut flowers as an eligible product.

- Commitment. The Farmer may be giving up some other element to participate in your market and the decision maker in this process may be the sense of commitment they get from your organization during this process.

While this information is collected, the subcommittee will develop a market application and/or agreement. The agreement is a contract between the vendor and the market for space and the right to sell within the market. The contract will include basic contact information, crops to be sold, including a crop plan to allow for farm inspections, and a time line of when the crops will be available. The contract needs to include a statement that indicates that the vendor has received and read the market rules and agrees to abide by them. It should further stipulate that the vendor agrees to comply with all laws of the state, local and federal government overseeing products sold. Most markets will include an indemnification clause, with the vendor holding the market harmless. Finally, the

contract needs to include a agreement that the farmer attests to the accuracy of the information provided. With the signature of the vendor, he is acknowledging and agreeing to all statements and conditions of the contract. With the signatures, the contract becomes a binding agreement between the market and the vendor. A sample market agreement is located in Appendix H.

When farmer participation is not high enough to provide a diversity of product and choices in the market, it may be important to consider alternative marketing strategies. If the community is small and will not support a large number of farmers, or you are finding it difficult to recruit particular products, say maple or honey, you may want to get creative. Allowing farmers to use a cooperative arrangement, working together to bring one another's products to the market may encourage greater farmer participation. For example, 4 farmers work together selling one another's products. This way each farmer only has to commit to being in the market once a month. Another example is a farm stand concept used in a low income neighborhood. The market makes arrangements to meet farmers at other larger markets in more affluent neighborhoods to pick up product. Then the product is brought back to this market, located in an economically challenged neighborhood. The community gets the benefit of a variety of products from a variety of farmers, and the farmers get to participate in a market they would otherwise have passed on.

## Finance Subcommittee

Finally, the finance subcommittee has a role to play with all other subcommittees as they perform the task of creating an operating budget and ensuring that there will be sufficient revenues to cover that budget. In creating the budget, they must look at the needs of each of the subcommittees. For example, the Marketing Subcommittee will have advertising costs, special events budgets and these will need to be reflected in the operating budget. Expenses that a market may need to cover, although not necessarily all, include:

- Manager salary
- Advertising and promotions
- Special events
- Market insurance
- Professional fees; i.e. Local Chamber of Commerce, statewide farmers market association
- Permits and licenses to operate the market
- Office supplies
- Space rental
- Port-a-johns
- Postage
- Professional development for the manager/board of directors
- Utilities

Identifying and securing sources of revenue is the largest, and most difficult, task of this subcommittee. An obvious source of revenue would come from the farmers and vendors themselves, in the form of stall fees/rents. But there are choices to be made here too. First, how will the farmers be charged? Will it be a flat fee or a

percentage of sales? How would the flat fee be assessed, daily or seasonal? What percentage of sales is appropriate? Most markets in New York State opt for a flat fee charged to farmers for space in the market. Determine the fee needed per market space based on the expenses to be covered and the number of anticipated farmers and vendors. This can be charged in one lump sum as a prepayment due at application or can be separated in daily increments, payable at setup each market day. It is common to use a combination of both methods. A daily fee is calculated and assessed to casual vendors that do not have the product to be in the market for the entire season. However, those who opt to enroll for the entire season are given a discount if payment is made in full at the time of application.

It is common in other parts of the country to charge farmers a percentage of their sales. The percentage usually ranges for 4-6% each week. Farmers and vendors are required to report each week's sales and then remit the market's share. This process requires a great deal of knowledge on the market's part to evaluate the accuracy of the farmers reported income.

To fully fund the market and meet budgetary obligations, the finance subcommittee will need to secure alternate sources of income. Many markets will seek community sponsors for the market. These sponsorships provide the market with funds or services in exchange for promotion, i.e. inclusion in the market's advertising as a

market sponsor, a banner announcing them as a market sponsor, or free booth space at the market. Because you are supplying the sponsor with promotion or space for their money, the funding is not considered a charitable contribution and the sponsor will not require the market to provide them with a tax deductible receipt.

Grant funding is another avenue that markets will pursue to provide funding. Grants can provide much needed funds to operate a market, fund a special project or support a needed service. But they require a great deal of time and skill to write a successful grant application. They are also highly competitive, which means the odds of being awarded any one grant are not necessarily in your favor. Once awarded a grant, the funds are restricted to the work plan and budget given in the grant application. They cannot be used for other purposes.

Donations can be solicited from local residents and businesses. They will often give to such causes since they recognize the benefits a market can bring to a community and they enjoy having the farmers market in the community. Donations are typically unrestricted funds and, therefore, can be used on any budget item. Keep in mind, however, that you must inform donors that any donations are not tax-deductible.

Fundraising events are highly successful at raising money for the market. Events elicit a great popular and financial response. However, they require a tremendous amount of work that can last several weeks (mailings, forming a dedicated event committee, coordinating guests, arranging event sites, moving tickets) and often require some sort of "up-front" investment (and the associated risks) before any revenue can be realized.

## Bringing it All Together

Subcommittee work is ongoing throughout the planning process, with regular meetings of the full steering committee. The full committee should hear updates from each subcommittee, helping to keep the work moving and providing input and approval as needed. Subcommittee work should be nearing completion a few weeks prior to the market opening and prepared for presentation to the community – both consumers and farmers. Plans should be made to conduct this presentation at a time before farmers are so involved with planting that they may not take the time away from the farm to attend. You should also plan it for a convenient day of the week and time that will interfere with farm work and off-farm jobs. Often a mid-week, early evening meeting works best. If your budget can afford it, get some pizza or salads to share and help make it feel like a community gathering.

The goal of the informational meeting is to create awareness of the new market within the community. It must inform them and also, seek community input to ensure buy-in from the public. Ultimately, the informational meeting should invite people to participate, the public as consumers and potential volunteers, and farmers as vendors for the market.

Before farmers will choose to participate in a new market they will weigh the opportunity with their current marketing plans, their availability during the planned market days and hours and their ability to produce enough product to add another market to their program. Simply put, will this market make money for them? You will

need to provide them with the information that will help them answer this question.

- Is the market at a convenient time, location and season
- Is the market in a location that is visible to traffic and at a time and location that will be convenient for consumers
- What are the demographics of the potential customer base? i.e. age, income, household size
- What are the market rules?
- Who can participate in the market and what can/cannot be sold?
- What is the cost to participate?
- Who is involved? What organizations and individuals?
- What are any other requirements to participate? i.e. insurance, market membership
- What will the market do to attract consumers; i.e. advertising, promotions, special events?
- What is the process for participation?
- How much space will be allotted per farm and can additional space be rented or can space be shared with another farmer?
- What nutrition programs will the market participate in, i.e. WIC and Senior FMNP, WIC Vegetable and Fruit Check program, EBT, Debit/credit cards, double value coupons

Once each subcommittee has made a presentation and these questions have been answered for the farmers, invite

additional questions, comments and suggestions.

Conclude the meeting by providing invitations to the farmers to apply as vendors in the market. Be prepared to distribute sets of market rules and market applications for participation. Some farmers will be prepared to make a decision immediately and will complete their applications and provide payment before leaving. All others should be followed up within a couple of weeks. It may be that one-on-one communication will help to alleviate any questions or concerns left from the meeting or remind them to

complete their applications to join the market. Feel free to design a discount to get people to sign up immediately for the entire season or frame a discount period of two or three weeks for the farmers to respond to your presentation.

Now the steering committee has made its pitch to consumers and farmers. Farmers are signing up to participate in the market and consumers are eagerly anticipating the market opening. Use the input from the informational meeting, make adjustments as appropriate and begin to implement market plans. You are now ready for opening day!

## Market Evaluation

Once the market is open and throughout the season, the market manager and organizational team should continuously evaluate the market. Look at the market operations from all sides, sellers, consumers, the community and the market management or sponsor. This will help to identify areas that need improvement and to plan for market growth. It will also provide you with the data you need to apply for funding, whether through grant opportunities, sponsors or donations.

Evaluate the market's season and times of operation. Was there an adequate supply of product throughout the season? Is there still a sufficient supply when the season closes? If so, perhaps the market should stay open later. Also, if market sellers can supply product to the market earlier, consider opening earlier in the season. Poll the market vendors for their opinion on what the market season could and should be. Consider also the day of the week and times chosen to operate. Is customer flow adequate or can it be improved by changing the day of the week or the times of operation to a time that will capture a larger crowd?

Is the product offering sufficiently large enough to keep customers interested and returning each week? The market can always be improved by attracting new vendors with new and unique product offerings. A larger product offering will attract a larger, more consistent customer base. What kind of "mid-season" vendor offer can you make; i.e. commit for three weeks, get the fourth week free? Try to tailor the offer so the vendor comes back for several weeks, not just one time.

Review the rules and regulations of the market. Were there legitimate complaints from sellers or customers? Were there situations over the course of the season that could have been prevented with better rules and regulations?

Were the rules easily enforceable? The answers to these questions will tell you what adjustments are needed to the market's rules and regulations.

Was the flow of customer traffic steady throughout the market season? A review of the market's advertising and promotions and product offerings is in order if the answer is no. Seek to increase the product offering during these slow times by adding new vendors or encouraging current vendors to add to their product line. Then step up promotional efforts or add a special event during the slump times. This will help to even out customer traffic through the season.

Review the market facilities as well. Are there opportunities to add customer amenities? Port-A-Johns can be rented for the season to use for restroom facilities for customers. And customers will appreciate food vendors who will offer cold drinks and snacks. Offering restroom facilities and food to eat will keep customers at the market longer, offering greater opportunities for market vendors to increase sales.

What can be done to improve the market facilities for vendors? Adding lighting or paving the market area would benefit market sellers. Is this a possibility at your market location? Another big help to market sellers would be protection from the elements. A roof or covering will keep the hot sun from wilting produce. Rain adversely affects market sales. A covering will protect market sellers and customers mitigating the ill-effects of rain on market sales.

What were sales within the market? Can you estimate vendor revenue to show how much of an economic impact the market had on local agriculture? What about the impact on agriculture itself, did participation in your market help to create new farm jobs or allow

the farm to grow or become a full time occupation? Can you determine the impact on the local economy? How much spillover from the market into local businesses can you identify? These are some of the statistics that funders will want to know before they commit their dollars to support a market.

Finally, the market manager should be evaluated. Was the manager present at each market opening and closing? How was the manager at handling conflicts that arose at the market? Was the manager friendly and helpful to customers and vendors? Were rules enforced adequately and fairly? Were records maintained

in such a way as to be helpful in evaluating the market and planning for future years? Is the manager effective in public relations efforts? The answers to these questions will evaluate the effectiveness of the market manager. If the answers are not satisfactory, then adjustments must be made.

When all aspects of the market have been evaluated, the manager, sponsoring agency, and Board of Directors should begin to make the needed adjustments to improve the market. Then plans can begin for the next marketing season.

## Appendix A: Checklist for Developing a Community Farmers Market

- ❑ Form a steering committee that is representational of the community.
- ❑ Determine goals for the market to accomplish and a mission statement.
- ❑ Assess community interest in a farmers market
- ❑ Assess local agriculture's support for a new farmers market.
- ❑ Assess local business support/potential opposition to a farmers market.
- ❑ Establish the market season, days and times of operation
- ❑ Search out legal requirements for operating a farmers market
- ❑ Research other market's successes and failures
- ❑ Evaluate potential farmers market sites
- ❑ Design the layout of the market.
- ❑ Secure necessary permits and licenses for market
- ❑ Secure garbage cans/pickup; park benches; traffic barriers.
- ❑ Secure bathroom facilities
- ❑ Secure market insurance
- ❑ Enroll market in nutrition assistance programs
- ❑ Hire a market manager
- ❑ Establish rules and regulations
- ❑ Organizational structure for the market is developed; including bylaws, incorporation and a governing body
- ❑ Establish and advertising and promotions plan
- ❑ Develop an events schedule, including community participants
- ❑ Develop a vendor application/agreement
- ❑ Recruit farmers, assuring a diverse product mix
- ❑ Establish a market budget
- ❑ Identify potential funding sources.
- ❑ Hold a vendor meeting to introduce the new market
- ❑ Perform continuous evaluation of the market.

## Appendix B: Sample Survey for Consumers

A new farmers market is being proposed for \_\_\_\_\_. We are trying to assess the level of interest of consumers in the community for a farmers' market. Providing answers to these questions will help gather information and build a market that provides the products and services you desire.

1. Have you ever shopped at a farmers market before?

- Yes
- No

2. If local farmers were to offer their agricultural products at a neighborhood farmers market, how often would you shop there?

- Weekly
- Once a month
- Occasionally
- Seldom
- Not interested in a farmers market at this time.

3. What products should be available for purchase at a local farmers market?

- Fresh, local vegetables
- Fresh, local fruits
- Eggs
- Cheese
- Maple syrup
- Bedding Plants
- Fresh cut flowers
- Fresh herbs
- Meats
- Organic produce
- Crafts
- Homemade baked goods
- NYS wines
- Homemade jams and jellies and other locally processed foods
- Ethnic foods, specify: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Other, specify : \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. How far would you travel to shop at a farmers market?

- Up to 10 minutes
- 15-20 minutes
- up to 30 minutes
- over 30 minutes
- only if located on a bus route
- only if within walking distance

5. Where do you think would be the best location for a farmers market in this community? Why?

- (*identify choices being considered*)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

6. What days of the week would be the most convenient for you to shop at a farmers market?

- Monday
- Tuesday
- Wednesday
- Thursday
- Friday
- Saturday
- Sunday

7. What is the most convenient time of the day for you to shop at a farmers market?
- Mornings
  - Afternoons
  - Mornings and afternoons
  - Evenings

8. What types of services do you think the market should offer shoppers?
- Protection from the elements
  - Restrooms
  - Lunch or snack vendors
  - Picnic tables
  - Benches
  - Refuse containers
  - Free parking
  - Other, specify: \_\_\_\_\_

9. How would you like to be informed about the farmers market once it is established?
- Newspaper
  - Television
  - Radio
  - Direct mail
  - Doesn't matter
  - Other, specify: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Including yourself, how many people live in your household?

11. How many children are living at home?

12. What is the age range of the main food shopper in your home?
- 20's
  - 30's
  - 40's
  - 50's
  - 60 plus
  - retire

13. Do you have any suggestions that you would like to offer the committee planning the new farmers market?

14. Would you like to participate in the planning committee for a new farmers market for the community? If so please provide your contact information below.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
Professional Affiliation, if appropriate: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your cooperation. The information you have provided will help us to determine the level of support a new farmers market will have in the community. It will also help us to develop a farmers market best suited to the community's interests.

Please complete this survey no later than \_\_\_\_\_ and drop in the Farmers Market Drop Box placed in the following convenient locations:

## Appendix C: Sample Survey for Farmers

A new farmers market is being proposed for \_\_\_\_\_. We are trying to assess the level of interest of producers in participating in the market, once it has been developed. Providing answers to these questions will help us to gather that information and in no way obligates you to participate.

**Yes**, I would like to have the opportunity to sell my agricultural products directly to consumers at a local farmers market.

1. The distance I would be willing to drive to a market to sell my products is:

- 5 – 10 miles
- 11-20 miles
- 21-30 miles
- Over 30 miles

2. I would be interested in a market on the following day(s):

- Monday
- Tuesday
- Wednesday
- Thursday
- Friday
- Saturday
- Sunday

3. Based on my schedule and my experience, the best time of the day for this market would be:

- Morning
- Afternoon
- Morning -afternoon
- Evening

4. I would have the following products to sell:

5. I would have products to sell during the following months

- |                                |                                    |                                     |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> April | <input type="checkbox"/> August    | <input type="checkbox"/> December   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> May   | <input type="checkbox"/> September | <input type="checkbox"/> Year round |
| <input type="checkbox"/> June  | <input type="checkbox"/> October   |                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> July  | <input type="checkbox"/> November  |                                     |

6. I currently market my products through:

- Other farmers markets: \_\_\_\_\_
- Wholesale brokers
- On farm market
- Restaurants
- Grocery stores
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

7. What types of products should be sold at the farmers market?

- Locally grown and produced agricultural products
- Crafts
- New York State grown products
- Out of state produce
- Manufactured (flea market style) products
- Restricted to producer only agricultural products
- Homemade baked goods
- Value-added foods
- Prepared foods
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

8. What types of services would you like the market to provide for you?

- Protection from the elements
- Lunch or snack vendor
- Paved parking
- Electricity
- Restroom facilities
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Would you prefer the market be held

- Open-air
- Under a tent or pavilion
- Inside a building

10. What location do you believe would be ideally suited for a farmers market in this community?

- (*identify choices being considered*)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

11. Do you have any comments or suggestions you would like to make to the committee that is developing the farmers market?

12. Would you like to be involved in the planning process for a new farmers market?

Thank you for your cooperation. The information you have provided will be used to determine the interest for and feasibility of developing a local farmers market. If you would like to be contacted when the market is ready to recruit a vendor base, please include your contact information below.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Business Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this survey no later than \_\_\_\_\_ and return to:

## Appendix D: Sample Survey for Local Businesses

A new farmers' market is being proposed for \_\_\_\_\_. We are trying to assess the level of interest in the community for a farmers market. Providing answers to these questions will help gather information and build a market that best serves the community.

1. A farmers market has a proven spillover effect into the community, with customers visiting and spending money at various other local businesses in conjunction with their visit to the farmers market. The goal is to build a farmers market that would benefit the local residents within the community, provide access to fresh foods, encourage entrepreneurship, and build community pride. Would you support a farmers market in our community?

- Yes, a market would be good for the community
- Yes, and I would like to participate as a vendor in the market. My product would be:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Yes, and I would like to assist in co-promoting the market along with my business.
- Yes, and I would like to assist by sponsoring entertainment or educational activities at the market
- No, I do not feel that I can support a farmers market at this time. Please explain:

2. What days of the week do you feel would be the best day to offer a farmers market in the community?

- Monday
- Tuesday
- Wednesday
- Thursday
- Friday
- Saturday
- Sunday

3. The best time of the day for a farmers market would be?

- Mornings
- Afternoons
- Mornings and afternoons
- Evenings

4. What types of products would you like to have offered at a farmers' market?

- Fresh, local vegetables
- Fresh, local fruits
- Eggs
- Cheese
- Maple syrup
- Bedding Plants
- Fresh cut flowers
- Fresh herbs
- Meats
- Organic produce
- Crafts
- Homemade baked goods
- NYS wines
- Homemade jams and jellies and other locally processed foods
- Ethnic foods, specify: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Other, specify : \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Do you have any suggestions that you would like to offer the committee planning the new farmers market to ensure its success in meeting the needs of the community?

6. Would you like to be involved in the planning process for a new farmers market? If so, please include your contact information below.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Business Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your cooperation. The information you have provided us will help us to determine the level of support a new farmers' market has in the community. It will also help us to develop a farmers' market best suited to the community's wants and needs.

Please complete this survey no later than \_\_\_\_\_ and return to:

## Appendix E: Farmers Market Site Evaluation

Use the following chart to evaluate potential sites for a farmers market.

To use the evaluation, rate each site on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being the lowest possible rating and 10 being the best. Multiply each ranking by the multiplier for a total rate. Since the importance of each characteristic will vary depending on the community, adjustments may need to be made to the multipliers to reflect the appropriate importance of each characteristic. *For example, if the market is to be held during evening hours, lighting is very important as summer daylight hours wane in the fall. The multiplier may need to be increased to 4.*

Characteristic	Multiplier	Site A	Site B	Site C
<b>Location Characteristics:</b>				
Visible/High Traffic Area: Road frontage on busy streets	4			
Visible/High Traffic Area: Foot traffic	4			
Proximity to business/retail district	4			
Proximity to Public Transportation	4			
Available parking for consumers	4			
Available parking for farmers trucks	2			
Proximity to residential area	4			
<b>Physical Characteristics:</b>				
Size of space: room for farmers trucks	4			
Size of space: room for future growth	3			
Size of space: room for events	2			
Site surface	4			
Slope of site	3			
General Repair/Cleanliness of site	3			
Safe location	4			

<b>Shade/shelter available</b>	<b>3</b>			
<b>Public restrooms available</b>	<b>4</b>			
<b>Electricity available</b>	<b>2</b>			
<b>Lighting available</b>	<b>2</b>			
<b>Storage Space Available</b>	<b>1</b>			
<b>Ease of Use Characteristics:</b>				
<b>Cost of Space</b>	<b>3</b>			
<b>Zoning/Permit Requirements</b>	<b>3</b>			
<b>Cooperation of property owner</b>	<b>2</b>			
<b>Permanence of location</b>	<b>3</b>			
<b>Total Evaluation Ratings</b>				

## Appendix F: Sample Farmers Market Manager Job Description

### Main Street Farmers Market Farmers Market Manager Job Description

The Main Street Farmers Market is a community market, supported by the Mayor's office, the City, community members and a host of other local agencies. The market will provide access to locally grown fruits, vegetables and other farm products, while creating a sense of community within the City and helping to revitalize the downtown district. This ambitious project will be undertaken as a project of the Local Development Corporation in cooperation with the State Dept. of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension, and local nonprofits to support this venture.

#### Manager Position

The Market Manager is a part time position with primary responsibility being the day-to-day operation of the farmers market. This will include an on-site presence at the market during all market hours, as well as off-site work during non-market hours. The manager will report to a market committee, who will set all market policy. In addition, the manager will represent the market to the market's vendors, the consumers and to the community.

#### Duties – in season

- Enroll farmers/vendors in the market – either through seasonal vendor agreements or as daily vendors
- Collect all stall fees owed, make accurate accounting and deposit in market account
- Arrive prior to market vendors arriving and remain throughout the market day to:
  - Properly place vendors in stalls, including assigning market stalls to daily vendors
  - Place market signs, parking signs
  - Ensure all rules and regulations are adhered to
  - Ensure all state and county regulations are adhered to
  - Answer questions for vendors and consumers
  - Resolve disputes that arise
  - Maintain market grounds in a safe manner
- Operate market manager's booth
  - Have nutritional education materials to distribute
  - Have recipes for seasonal, local foods that are available in the market
  - Operate market's EBT program
- Enroll market and market farmers in the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP)
- Act as liaison to the market's governing body, providing accounting and performance reports
- Communicate market policies, activities and rules to farmers, keeping them informed throughout the season. Bring suggestions from farmers back to the market board/committee.
- Solicit entertainment for market days, as well as sponsors for the entertainment
- Conduct periodic customer counts each market day to assess the level of growth in market usage
- Assure the market site is clean once the market is closed and the vendors have left for the day.
- Maintain database of farmers, vendors, their contact information, and any licenses or permits each vendor possesses based on the products they are selling.
- Conduct farm inspections.

**Duties – off season**

- Vendor recruitment
- Professional development for market managers
- Community relationship development
- Fundraising
- Advertising/ promotional program development, including special events planning
- Work with market board/committee to plan for market growth and development
- Preparations of site for next season, including securing location, site permits, market insurance, ensure that any maintenance or repairs needed to site are made, secure bathrooms, set market schedule, organize volunteers

**Qualifications**

- Ability to think creatively
- People person with skills in diplomacy
- Dispute resolution skills
- Good communication skills
- Organizational skills
- Marketing skills helpful
- Some financial knowledge helpful: i.e. budgeting
- Self-motivated
- Passionate about the community and local agriculture

Source:

“Farmers Market Managers Training Manual”, Farmers Market Federation of New York, funded by NE SARE, 2009. Available online at [www.nyfarmersmarket.com/publications;htm](http://www.nyfarmersmarket.com/publications;htm)

## Appendix G: Sample Rules for Farmers Markets

The following is a basic set of rules for farmers markets. Each market must address each issue in terms of its own mission and set of circumstances. This means adjusting the rules included here, as well as determining any other issues that are pertinent to each individual market and then addressing them within the adopted rules.

### Definitions

Bona fide –

- As in growers – the seller is the producer of the products being offered for sale, from lands he owns or rents, with control over the production, harvesting and marketing of the products, and a financial interest in the products.
- As in craftsperson – all crafts offered for sale are original in nature and produced in whole by the seller. No crafts shall be permitted that are derived from kits.
- As in homemade products – all products are produced, baked or manufactured by the seller and are original in nature. No baked goods from mixes or purchased for finishing off will be permitted.

Daily vendor – any vendor who is permitted to sell on the market, who participates in the market less than the full season and chooses to pay on a daily basis for any space used.

Market governing body – the market’s board of directors or committee, ultimately responsible for setting the policies of the market

Market Manager – a person or persons empowered by the Governing Body to implement market policies and directives, and to oversee the operation of the Market.

Market sponsor – any governmental agency, nonprofit organization or association that lends its support to the market in any way.

Seasonal lease – when a vendor signs for space for the full season and makes payment in accordance with the established fee structure.

Vendor – any seller or exhibitor participating in the market.

### Market Governance

1. The market will be sponsored by an independent nonprofit association (i.e. Chamber of Commerce, health related association, or other interested on profit association) and will operate with an independent market governing body.
2. The mission of the farmers market will be to improve local food security, teach entrepreneurship skills, support local farmers and businesses, while enriching the cultural heritage of the community.
3. The market manager is responsible for the orderly and efficient conduct of the market and for implementing and enforcing the Rule and Regulations. The market manager will represent the market and its governing body during market days and in community activities. The market manager will assist the market’s governing body with developing and implementing a market budget, establishing market policy, vendor recruitment, collecting fees, establishing the operational schedule, and advertising and promotion of the market.

### General Operations

4. The market will be located at 100 Lexington Avenue, along Lexington Park. The market will operate every Thursday, 3pm – 8pm (closing one hour earlier after Labor Day) and will run from the Thursday prior to Fathers Day in June through the end of October.

5. Vendors may arrive as early as 1:30pm to begin setup and must stay through the end of the market day to provide a full market to shoppers arriving throughout market hours.
6. Vendors may leave early only under extenuating circumstances and with the permission of the market manager.
7. Vendors must notify the market manager no later than 4 hours before market time if they will be absent for that market day.
8. No selling is permitted before the official opening time, as announced by the market manager.

**Who may sell at the market:**

9. The use of the market is restricted to those who are bona-fide growers, craftpersons, producers of homemade products or other vendors approved by the market manager or governing body. Vendors may, on a limited basis, supplement their product line with additional New York State only products, as long as that product is otherwise missing from the market and the market manager has given permission for the supplement. This permission is valid for one season only and must be re-applied for each new season.
10. All agricultural products may be sold at the market, including but not limited to locally grown fruits and vegetables, dairy products, meats, flowers, plants, honey products, maple products, NYS wines sold by a farm winery, eggs, herbs and related products.
11. Craft vendors may sell products that they have hand produced themselves.
12. Bakers who have baked the products themselves and who possess the proper licensing from either the NYS Dept. of Agriculture and Markets or their County Dept. of Health.
13. Prepared food vendors with a current mobile food service license.
14. Products not specifically identified must be pre-approved by the market management.
15. All applicable food safety regulations, both state and local, must be adhered to at all times.
16. All applicable licenses and permits for products sold must be obtained and kept current. Copies of applicable permits and licenses will be kept on file with the market management.
17. To ensure compliance to market rules, the Governing Body reserves the right to direct the market manager or appoint a committee to inspect any vendor's farm or establishment with advance notice. Inspections will be made only with the farmer/owner or their representative present unless written permission is given. Vendors must provide any help necessary to thoroughly document products and conditions recorded at the inspection. The vendor will be notified in writing of the results of the inspection within seven days of the inspection.
18. All new vendors will be subject to a ninety (90) day at-will probationary period commencing on the first day of selling in the market.

**Guidelines for Selling**

19. All stall spaces must be swept clean and any refuse removed at the end of each market day.

20. All vendors must have a sign clearly showing their name and location.
21. Each vendor will be responsible for all equipment and supplies for the setup of a booth. Displays should be constructed in such a way that they do not block customer walkways nor pose any other hazard to customers.
22. Vendors who provide samples and/or products that will result in waste material, such as cups, rinds, and corn cobs, must provide containers for waste disposal.
23. Vendors are required to keep their market space neat and clear of obstacles, litter and debris.
24. All produce displayed for sale must be at least 12" off the ground with the exception of heavy or large items such as pumpkins.
25. Sellers must post prices. While it is expected that prices will be fair to consumers, the seller and fellow sellers, collusion among sellers to attempt to influence prices is strictly prohibited.
26. No smoking, alcoholic beverages or firearms are permitted at the market. Exception is wine tasting.
27. No hawking, proselytizing or amplified music is permitted at the market.
28. All products offered for sale must be of good quality and condition. The Market manager reserves the right to direct any inferior goods be removed from display. Failure to remove products deemed inferior will be reported to the market's governing body and may result in loss of market privileges.
29. Each vendor in the market must be directly involved with or knowledgeable about the production of the produce or products being sold at the market.
30. All vendors must provide proof of general liability coverage in the amount of \$1 million dollars and name the market, the property owner and the market sponsor as additional insured. A current certificate must remain on file with the market.
31. Vendors are responsible for the actions of their representatives, employees or agents.

**Stall fees and assignment**

32. Stalls will be assigned by the market manager on a first come first serve basis.
33. The stall fees and payment schedule will be assessed annually by the market's governing body. Stalls may be rented on a seasonal basis or on a daily basis. Daily fees will be due and payable to the market manager prior to setting up for the day.
34. Farmers with a seasonal lease will be assigned a permanent spot for the duration of the season. These spaces will be reserved each year for the seasonal vendor, provided that all stall fees are kept current.
35. Reserved market spaces must be occupied at least 30 minutes prior to opening of the market day. After that time, daily vendors will be permitted to set up in those spaces, as assigned by the market manager. Seasonal leaseholders, arriving after that time, will be re-assigned to another space for the day.

36. Daily vendors will be assigned space by the market manager on a first come first serve basis, as space is available. Space in the market is not guaranteed, nor is it guaranteed that daily vendors will be assigned the same space each week that they are in the market.

37. No subletting of a seasonal booth is permitted and rents are not reimbursable, either in whole or in part.

38. To ensure the safety of market patrons, any vendor arriving after market opening may be required to set up on the periphery of the market.

### **Compliance**

39. All complaints must be addressed in writing to the Market Manager.

40. Complaints against another vendor, must be accompanied by a \$50 "good faith" check. The market manager will then conduct an investigation and/or farm inspection against the accused vendor. If the complaint is found to be valid, the \$50 "good faith" check will be returned. If the complaint is found to be unfounded, the check will be forfeited and deposited in the market's general funds with a letter of explanation sent to the complainant.

41. All other complaints will be reviewed by the market manager in an attempt to resolve the issue. If the manager is unable to resolve the complaint, then a written follow up may be made to the market's governing body. The governing body will address the complaint at the next regularly scheduled meeting. If the complaint is of an immediate nature, the market manager may ask for a special convening of the market's governing body to address the complaint. The decisions of the governing body are final.

42. The submission of application for admission to the market serves as the vendor's agreement to abide by the rules of the market, as established by the market's governing body and enforced by the market manager. Violations of the rules of the market may be grounds for warnings, dismissal from the market, or both.

- The first violation of the rules will result in a verbal warning by the market manager. Documentation of the warning will be kept on file by the market manager.
- The second violation of the rules will result in a written warning, given by the market manager. A copy of the letter will be kept on file by the market manager, along with any documentation of the violation.
- The third violation of the rules will result in a one week suspension of selling privileges.
- The fourth violation of the rules will result in a two week suspension of selling privileges.
- The fifth violation of the rules will result in dismissal from the market.

43. At the discretion of the market manager, when a violation occurs that jeopardizes the health of a customer, another vendor, market management or the overall health of the market, the manager may convene the market's governing body to request a suspension of the compliance procedure and call for immediate dismissal from the market. The dismissal will require documented proof of an egregious violation. The vendor will be given an opportunity to review the documentation, prepare a defense and appear before the governing body.

44. If after receiving a warning or suspension, a vendor is in disagreement with the market manager over the infraction, the vendor may make written application to the market governing body to be heard on the issue. Both the vendor and the market manager will appear before the governing body and present their sides of the issue. The decision of the governing body is final.

Source:

“Farmers Market Managers Training Manual”, Farmers Market Federation of New York, funded by NE SARE, 2009. Available online at [www.nyfarmersmarket.com/publications;htm](http://www.nyfarmersmarket.com/publications;htm)



Additional products you plan to sell, as allowed by the market's rules and regulations:

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**Farm Inspections:**

The market management reserves the right to do spot visits and farm inspections to assure that the products sold are in compliance with the market's rules and regulations.

Directions to your farm:

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**Production Methods Used:**

- Certified organic. Copy of current certificate must be placed on file with the market.
- Non-certified organic. My gross agricultural income from organic sales totals \$5000 or less annually and I comply with applicable organic production and handling requirements.
- Conventional

*Please note: Pursuant to CFR Part 205, Subpart B, Section 205.100(c)(1) any operation that knowingly sells or labels a product as organic, except in accordance with the ACT, shall be subject to a civil penalty of not more than \$10,000 per violation.*

**Market Operations:**

Selling space size and fee is specified in the market rules. Payment for booth space is due with this completed application. Non-payment may result in suspension of market privileges.

- I would like to reserve \_\_\_\_ number of selling spaces for the current season.
- I would like to be a daily vendor, paying a daily fee as I use space in the market.

The market season runs from May 1<sup>st</sup> to October 31<sup>st</sup>. Please indicate when you plan to start coming to market and when you are likely to finish.

- I plan to attend market for the full season.
- I will start attending market: \_\_\_\_\_, and  
I will be finished for the season on or about: \_\_\_\_\_

- I wish to participate in the FMNP.
- I wish to participate in the Farmers Market Wireless EBT program.

**Certificates/Licenses Required:**

- Proof of general and product liability coverage in the amount of \$1 million dollars and name the market and property owner as an additional insured. A certificate must remain current and on file with the market.
- Sales Tax Certificate, if you sell taxable items.
- All appropriate permits as required for products being sold: i.e. health permits, 20C Exemptions, farm winery permit, nursery license, dairy and meat permits, etc.

**Compliance and Indemnity Agreement**

I (we) the undersigned, have read the Rules and Regulation of the Farmers Market and do agree to abide by all rules and regulations.

I (we) further agree to operate my (our) stall in accordance with these rules and regulations and to pay all applicable fees as set out in the rules and regulations. I (we) do understand that the stall fee, length of season, and hours of operation are set in the rules and regulations, and I (we) will abide by them.

I (we) further understand that failure to comply with the rules and regulations of the Farmers Market could mean dismissal from the market.

As a vendor, wishing to participate in the Farmers Market, I (we) agree to SAVE, HOLD HARMLESS and INDEMNIFY the Farmers Market, its sponsoring agency, members and employees from any and all liability or responsibility pertaining to any damages to person or property on the sited assigned to me (us) by the Farmers Market, when such damages or liability arise out of acts on my (our) own, or of my (our) employees or associates, located as such site.

I (we) verify that all information I (we) have provided about my farm and products for sale is true and accurate.

I (we) understand that the Farmers Market operates on limited funds. I (we) also acknowledge that the Farmers Market’s beneficial purpose will be impossible to pursue if it is subjected to costly litigation. Wherefore I (we) hereby agree that as a condition of my participation in the Farmers Market, I (we) will resort to litigation against the Farmers Market, its officers, management, and affiliated entities, only after attempting in good faith to resolve the dispute. I (we) to limit any claim I (we) may have as a result of a decision by the Farmers Market management or Board of Directors which results in the denial of a market acceptance, the denial of a product to sell, or wrongful suspension or termination from the Farmers Market, to a return of market fees incurred during my (our) absence from the market. I (we) further agree that in the event I (we) am unsuccessful in my (our) litigation against the Farmers Market, I (we) will pay all costs, expenses, fees, and disbursements incurred by the Farmers Market in the course of its defense of said litigation, and I (we) will also pay the Farmers Market a reasonable attorney’s fees.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Vendor name, Please print

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Vendor name, Please print

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix I: Resources and Contacts

### Resources

**Farmers Market Managers Training Manual**, developed by the Farmers Market Federation of NY and funded by a Professional Development grant from SARE (Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education), a program of USDA/CSREES. Download at [http://www.nyfarmersmarket.com/NYFM\\_Training\\_Manual.pdf](http://www.nyfarmersmarket.com/NYFM_Training_Manual.pdf)

[www.nyfarmersmarket.com](http://www.nyfarmersmarket.com) The website of the Farmers Market Federation of NY, providing resources of information for market managers and organizers, including program offerings.

[www.farmersmarketcoalition.org/resources/](http://www.farmersmarketcoalition.org/resources/) The website for the Farmers Market Coalition Resource Library, a compendium of resources for market managers and organizers from across the country.

### Contact information

**Farmers' Market Federation of New York** 315-637-4690

#### **NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets**

Jonathan Thomson, Economic Development Specialist, Albany, NY 518-457-7076  
Robert Lewis, Special Assistant for Market Development, Brooklyn, NY 718-722-2830

#### **Cornell Cooperative Extension:**

• Albany County	518-765-3500	• Lewis County	315-376-5270
• Allegany County	585-268-7644	• Livingston County	585-658-3250
• Broome County	607-772-8953	• Madison County	315-684-3001
• Cattaraugus County	716-699-2377	• Monroe County	585-461-1000
• Cayuga County	315-255-1183	• Montgomery County	518-762-3909
• Chautauqua County	716-664-9502	• Nassau County	516-292-7990
• Chemung County	607-734-4453	• New York City	212-340-2995
• Chenango County	607-334-5841	• Niagara County	716-433-8839
• Clinton County	518-561-7450	• Oneida County	315-736-3394
• Columbia County	518-828-3346	• Onondaga County	315-424-9485
• Cortland County	607-753-5077	• Ontario County	585-394-3977
• Delaware County	607-865-6531	• Orange County	845-344-1234
• Dutchess County	845-677-8223	• Orleans County	585-798-4265
• Erie County	716-652-5400	• Oswego County	315-963-7286
• Essex County	518-962-4810	• Otsego County	607-547-2536
• Franklin County	518-483-7403	• Putnam County	845-278-6738
• Fulton County	518-762-3909	• Rensselaer County	518-272-4210
• Genesee County	585-343-3040	• Rockland County	845-429-7085
• Greene County	518-622-9820	• Saratoga County	518-885-8995
• Hamilton County	518-548-6191	• Schenectady County	518-372-1622
• Herkimer County	315-866-7920	• Schoharie County	518-234-4303
• Jefferson County	315-788-8450	• Schuyler County	607-535-7141

- Seneca County                    315-539-9251
  - St. Lawrence County            315-379-9192
  - Steuben County                 607-664-2300
  - Suffolk County                 631-727-7850
  - Sullivan County                845-292-6180
  - Tioga County                    607-687-4020
  - Tompkins County                607-272-2292
  - Ulster County                  845-340-3990
  - Warren County                 518-623-3291
- Washington County            518-746-2560
  - Wayne County                 315-331-8415
  - Westchester County            914-285-4630
  - Wyoming County               585-786-2251
  - Yates County                  315-536-5123

Note: Some offices may have moved to new offices and numbers will have changed.

## Appendix J: Bibliography

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