

# ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING A FARMERS MARKET





# FIND FARMERS/ARTISANS

- Make the farmers/artisans part of the process from the beginning stages of planning. A farmers market will only succeed if you have farmers.
- Find people in the local area who want to establish a farmers market and are willing to make a commitment to make it happen. Create a farmers market board/planning committee.
- Establish long term and short term goals for the farmers market.
- Establish what type of farmers market you want to have: Producers-only? Will you allow buyers and resellers? Will your market be on a weekday or weekend? Be flexible and willing to change your day or time if it doesn't work for your community.
- Conduct a survey with the local community to determine the level of interest for a farmers market.
- Conduct a survey with potential vendors to determine what type of products they grow, number of weeks they grow, degree of participation interest.



# FIND LOCAL RESOURCES TO HELP MARKET THE FARMERS MARKET

Make a farmer's market information sheet that can be given to potential resources to acquaint them with the market and its activities. In that information sheet include:

- Location/time of the market
- Dates of the market season
- Proposed activities and promotions
- Benefits the market will bring to the community
- Benefits the market will bring to the prospective resource
- Needs of the market
- Farmers Market contact person, email, phone number

Some examples of prospective resources are banks, local businesses, charities, community colleges, feed and seed stores, garden centers, local restaurants, news media, and professional organizations.



# FUNDING A FARMERS MARKET AND THE COSTS

There are many costs associated with a farmers market. Below are some to consider:

- Rental or lease of market site
- Farmers Market Liability insurance
- Printing, postage for marketing materials
- Advertising: Art work, website, printing, posters, print advertisements, signs
- Market manager's salary
- Miscellaneous supplies





# FARMERS MARKET INCOME

The market should financially support itself unless you have unlimited personal capital to keep it running. Here are some ways to help the market pay for itself:

- Collect booth fees from vendors, either seasonally or daily. Some markets collect \$10-\$20 flat fee per market day, while other markets have a sliding scale fee based on vendor sales. Example: 0-\$200 is \$10 fee, \$201-\$400 is \$15, \$401-600 is \$20, etc. With a sliding scale, vendors tell the market manager their sales at the end of the market and the manager collects fees based on that.
- Get donations of supplies, marketing materials, farmer's market site or labor to cut down costs.
- Ask local businesses to sponsor the market, and in turn put that business on the market advertising materials. Invite them out to the market to set up a free booth once a month, hand out materials from their business or do a chef demonstration (for restaurants).



# MARKET OPERATION

- Decide what day and hours will best fit your community needs. Consider also the farmers/vendors you will be able to have. Many farmers do several Saturday markets and may not be able to do another one. On the other hand, having a farmers market every day of the week leaves the farmer no time to farm. Talk to your farmers/vendors and the community to decide what day and hours will work best.
- Who can and cannot sell at the market? Decide if you want a producers-only market (only local farmers may sell products they grow) or if you want a market that allows buyers and resellers (people who buy produce that may or may not be local and resell it). Many consumers assume that what they see at a farmers market is local and grown by the person selling it. If the market allows buyers and resellers it is best to be honest and open on where the produce is coming.

# MARKET MANAGER DUTIES

- An on-site manager is needed to collect fees, open and close the market and enforce market rules. A market manager is also needed to settle disputes, deal with complaints, accept suggestions, assign stalls to vendors and be a communication link between all facets of market operation and development.
- Market rules should be clearly defined before the start of the season and should establish the market manager's right to monitor the quality and authenticity of products being sold. Rules should be easily understood and made available to all members and sponsors.

## MORE RESOURCES:

### **Pick Tennessee Products (PTP) Farmers Market Directory:**

We offer a **free** farmers market directory on our PTP website: [www.picktnproducts.org](http://www.picktnproducts.org)

For the online application for the PTP website:

<https://www.agriculture.tn.gov/MarketingApplication/default.aspx>

### **Farmers Markets Resources:**

[A Guide for Considering and Developing a Farmers Market in Tennessee](#)

[Direct from TN Farmers Markets: Observations, Quotes and Data from Market Managers, Vendors and Customers](#)

[Tennessee Association of Farmers Markets](#)

TN Department of Agriculture

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