



Princeton Board of Health
May 14, 2018
Monument Hall – East Meeting Room, Princeton, NJ 08540

Literature Review of Articles Discussing Access to Fresh Fruits and Vegetables at Farmers' Markets

1. Systematic Review of Factors Influencing Farmers' Market Use Overall and among Low-Income Populations

Key Summary Points:

- a) Recent evidence indicates a widening gap in fruit and vegetable (F/V) consumption between high- and low-income Americans. This gap is related, in part to decreased access to food retailers that sell fresh F/V in low-income communities. Farmers markets are identified as a strategy for improving F/V consumption by increasing access to these foods.
- b) Factors influencing Use of Farmers' Markets were coded into one of five factors: economic, service delivery, spatial, social, and personal
- c) STRATEGIES:
 - Focus on establishing markets with the goal of having greater diversity among both vendors and customer bases.
 - Reduce the costs for vendors to participate in farmers' markets through provision of resources needed for market operation such as tables, tents, and cooperative market stands;
 - Offer flexible schedules for vendors to take part
 - To increase diversity among consumers, use more targeted outreach and use of marketing materials in multiple languages to promote awareness about the market, especially among underrepresented groups
 - Establish vendor policies to ensure the quality and variety of foods sold in markets in low-income communities is high
 - Implement activities to make the market more welcoming to new customers (i.e. first time shoppers, receive a first-time complimentary reusable shopping bag and market tour).
 - Market models that include more hours of operation on more days per week may make it easier to habituate farmers' market use
 - Acceptance of food assistance benefits and healthy food incentives at farmers' markets
 - Farmers' markets may enhance programming to attract more customers through activities related to advertising and communications, inclusion of nutrition and food preparation education onsite, taste-testing events to encourage consumers to try new items, implementation of sale and coupon programs and integration of social events in the market space – especially those targeting children and families.

2. Identifying with Values: Examining Organizational Culture in Farmers Markets

Key Summary Points:

- a) Study examines culture, values, and identification in farmers' markets as organizations that function as an alternative to the mainstream food/grocery industry.
- b) Findings indicate that individuals identified with four main values of farmers markets through their communication: economic interests, nostalgia, fellowship, and education.
- c) Farmers' markets are characterized by their unique structure and relatively loose hierarchy (typically administered by market managers)
- d) Values are important for all market constituents – farmers' markets' form of direct marketing can "build relationships through one-on-one interaction, from which emerge loyalty, trust, and reliability," and that "growing interest among some consumers in caring for the earth and their bodies has led many to seek out organic farm produce"
- e) VALUES:
 - I. Economic interests: Quality Products, and Local Economy were important values which market constituents identified with.
 - II. Nostalgia: Participants often referred to feeling nostalgic when they visited the markets, whether it was reminiscing about their childhood or seeking opportunities to "get back to our roots"
 - III. Fellowship: Whether among members of their own family or with other market constituents, participants voiced the importance of fellowship at the markets. Descriptors such as "We're like family here" or "There's really a sense of community" were often used by participants to explain markets.
- f) Does the community see the market impact in the same way that market members do or does this represent a small community about which the larger community is unaware?

3. Chapter 4: Farmers Markets

Key Summary Points:

Strategies: Public Health Role in supporting existing markers, with an emphasis on providing nutrition assistance program benefits at the markets.

- a. Accepting nutrition assistance program benefits at Farmers' Markets
- b. Implementing incentive programs at Farmers' Markets
- c. Working with Farmers' Markets in Underserved Communities
- d. Research programs at the U.S. Department of Agriculture Related to Farmers Markets
 - a. USDA-wide
 - b. Agricultural Marketing Service
 - c. Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)
 - i. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
 - ii. Special Supplemental program for WIC – Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP)
 - iii. Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP)
 - iv. WIC Cash Value Vouchers (CVVs)
 - v. SNAP-Education (SNAP-Ed)
- e. Collaborate with market managers
- f. Provide training, technical assistance and education for stakeholders who operate farmers market. There are opportunities for training in marketing, market management, and education
- g. Partner with social service and faith-based organizations

4. University of Maryland Extension: A Booth at the Farmers' Market: Profit or Loss

Key Summary Points:

- a. Major advantages to producers who sell at farmers' market
 - i. Command best prices (receive 40-70% more than selling through wholesale outlets)
 - ii. Producers have limited liability for customers, because they are not on the farmers' premises
 - iii. Parking space, restroom, and other facilities are not the farmers' responsibility
 - iv. Attracting customers is a function of the market. Marketing techniques may be unfamiliar to many farmers
- b. Major **DISADVANTAGES** to farmers include:
 - i. Time required to transport and sell
 - ii. Market hours controlled by the policies set for the farmers' market; advertising – or lack of it – is controlled by the market. Markets that are poorly located may not attract consumers
 - iii. Many market vendors don't have a good accounting of the true costs of participating in their markets (booth rental, total labor, transportation, equipment, product liability insurance, state and local licenses and permit fees, etc.)

When working with market manager, encourage vendors to measure true profitability from a market before implementing strategies to improve it.

5. Cultivating Better Food Access? The Role of Farmers' Markets in the U.S Local Food Movement

Key Summary Points:

- Several neighborhood socioeconomic status, the quality of the neighborhood infrastructure, participations rates in social support programs, and the prevalence of poverty.
- Other studies have found shoppers to be motivated by a perception that goods available at farmers' markets are of high quality.
- National and geographically, farmers markets appear in more areas with low levels of commuting elsewhere and have a higher number of markets than southern states, areas with high levels of commuting.
- Literature found that the farmers market shopper tends to be older and more educated as well as have a professional occupation (middle or upper social class)

In comparison to the displaced kind of shopping that occurs at conventional food outlets, studies suggest that face-to-face interactions build social value between market participants and shift the shopping experience toward positive and pleasant interactions.

Strategies:

- Allow alternative space that allows promotion of small-scale productions that provides freshness, variety, and exploitation-free goods.
- Increase support for local farmers and increases their profits.
- Offer a space where community building and maintenance can occur that might not be available otherwise.