

## ***Indicators for Impact: Farmers Markets as Leaders in Collaborative Food System Data Collection and Analysis***

### **Spring market season is ripe for data collection at AFRI pilot markets**

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While farmers market shopping activity across the United States heats up, nine markets in three regions will also be springing into action with their data collection season for the AFRI-funded Indicators for Impacts project, a three-year data collection research pilot led by University of Wisconsin-Madison's Dr. Alfonso Morales and Farmers Market Coalition.

Last fall each of the AFRI pilot markets selected metrics from a menu of 37, a list that was prepared and refined from an original list of over 80 metrics identified in market reports from across the country. Each market will collect data on four common metrics as well as some selected uniquely by that market.

The common metrics selected by the AFRI project team include:

- Average number of visitors per market day:
- Total annual vendor sales at market
- Average distance in miles traveled from product origin to market
- Acres in agricultural production by market vendors

Each market was encouraged to choose a variety of success measures in order to capture the multiple benefits that vendors, visitors/shoppers and those in the surrounding civic community might gain due to the market's presence.

After metrics were selected, the research team at the University of Wisconsin-Madison spent the winter crafting data collection packages (DCP). Those protocols are designed to balance the need for disciplined collection within the Do-it-Yourself nature of most farmers markets. After many rounds of feedback from the pilot markets and Farmers Market Coalition, the customized DCPs were released to the markets throughout the month of April 2015.

Williamsburg Farmers Market in Williamsburg, Virginia was the first of the nine markets to begin data collection. During a team call the day after the first day of data collection, market leader Tracy Herner shared details about counting visitors using University of Wisconsin-Madison's adapted method and of surveying shoppers with the questions created by the team. *"It was lots of fun"* to do the surveys and the shoppers were *"excited to participate,"* she reported; only three of 147 shoppers said no to the request to complete a survey. The other markets asked questions about this first day of collection and counting and finalized their own data collection dates with the University of Wisconsin-Madison research team while on the call.

Let the season begin.

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**Calendar for 2015 Data Collection and Visitor Counts (subject to change)**

**Athens OH**

May 16  
July 11  
August 1  
September 26

**Chillicothe OH**

May 16  
July 4  
August 1  
September 26

**Crossroads OH**

June 17  
August 5  
September 23  
November 4

**Hernando MS**

April 25  
May 9  
June 13  
October 10

**Oxford MS**

May 5  
June 30  
September 8  
November 3

**Ruston LA**

May 30  
June 20  
July 11  
July 25

**Spotsylvania VA**

May 2  
May 16  
July 11  
August 22  
November 4

**Williamson WV**

May 16  
July 11  
August 15  
October 3

**Williamsburg VA**

April 11  
May 16  
June 27  
October 17

For more information: <http://farmersmarketcoalition.org/programs/farmers-market-metrics/>