



# FARMERS MARKET COALITION

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## Farmers Market Talking Points

### Farmers markets and COVID-19

- The pandemic strained farmers market organizations to keep markets open: [93% of markets reported added costs to operate while 74% reported decreased income](#).
- Farmers market operators worked tirelessly to keep markets open last year. [72% of the market organizations operated the same number or more market days](#) during summer 2020 as in summer 2019.
- Farmers markets and CSAs saw an increase of 35% in those using these outlets in 2020, [according to the 2020 Local Food System Response to COVID Consumer Food Insights Survey](#), showing the potential for growth in new shoppers during pandemic recovery. “Meal kits, farmers markets (as well producers selling direct), supercenters, and food boxes appear most likely to gain new customers in the future.”
- The pandemic attracted new long-time farmers market customers. [According to consumer research](#), 31% of those new to farmers market shopping during COVID were still shopping there 5 months later.
- The amount of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, benefits redeemed at farmers markets reached [\\$1.4 million in May 2020 and has continued to trend upward, reaching \\$1.75 million in September 2020](#). A 50 percent increase over 2019.
- The Maine Federation of Farmers’ Markets reports total SNAP/EBT spending at farmers markets in Maine was [up 66% in 2020 over 2019, an increase of over \\$90,000](#).

### Farmers markets support connected communities

- There were 31,609 volunteers contributing their time across 5,078 markets according to the [2020 USDA/NASS Market Manager Survey](#).
- Many farmers markets have programs to donate local produce. The Grove Market in Greensboro, North Carolina [purchased 30,000 pounds of fresh produce from participating farmers this season](#) and donated it to local churches and food banks.
- [The American Fitness Index](#) includes the number of farmers markets per capita as a factor contributing to community health, using it as an indicator for community members’ access to fresh fruits and vegetables.

- Over 90% of participants in [Wholesome Wave's Double Value Coupon Program](#) reported that the amount of locally grown fruits and vegetables that they purchased at farmers markets made a difference in their family's diet.

## Farmers markets fuel local economies

- [There are 3.5 times as many U.S. farmers over the age of 65 as there are under 35.](#) Farmers markets provide one of the only low-barrier entry points for new farmers, ranchers, and food entrepreneurs allowing them to start small and test new products. [For young and beginning farmers direct marketing through CSAs and farmers markets make up the majority of their income.](#)
- Direct marketing farmers experience [lower rates of farm business failure or bankruptcy](#) than growers who sell exclusively wholesale.
- Farmers who directly market to consumers are more likely to continue farming than those who do not, [according to data from the USDA.](#)
- Growers selling locally create [thirteen full time farm operator jobs per \\$1 million in revenue earned.](#) Those that do not sell locally create only three.
- The percent of markets that had locally grown labeling totaled nearly 84.7 percent according to the [2020 USDA/NASS Market Manager Survey.](#)
- Farmers markets generate \$2.4 billion dollars in sales for American farmers according to [an estimate based on 2017 USDA Ag Census Data.](#)
- 53% of Farmers Market Managers that responded to the 2020 USDA/NASS Market Manager Survey said they were paid employees
- For every dollar of nutrition incentives spent on farm direct purchases, such as at a farmers market, it is estimated to result in a contribution of [up to 3 dollars to the U.S. economy.](#)

## Farmers markets support conservation and education

- According to a study conducted by the American Farm Bureau, [72% of consumers know "nothing" or "very little" about farming or ranching.](#) Farmers markets serve as invaluable educational sites and a rare bridge between urban and rural communities.
- [Multiple research papers](#) indicate that by facilitating farmer to consumer interactions, farmers markets shift both purchasing habits of consumers and the growing practices of farmers and leads to the adoption of more sustainable practices.
- 81% of direct marketing farmers incorporate cover crops, reduced tillage, on-site composting, and other soil health practices into their operations. 78% of direct marketing farmers use practices consistent with Organic standards according to the [American Farmland Trust.](#)

Do you have your own talking points or data you'd like to share with us?

**[Fill out this form](#)** — we can't wait to hear from you!