



Vote through the [FMC Membership Portal](#).
Voting closes at 5pm PT / 8pm ET on February 10th, 2023.

2023 Board of Directors Election Candidates

Tasha Ardalan

Tasha Ardalan has over a decade of experience as a farmers' market vendor, manager, and operator. She loves farmers' markets and supporting local food systems. Tasha is a San Diego based farmers' market and agricultural regulatory compliance professional. She is dedicated to building resilient agricultural systems, increasing access to locally grown produce, and improving food justice and equity through education and incentive programs such as Market Match. Tasha is an expert at leading projects, developing actionable solutions, and facilitating collaboration among stakeholders (farmers, nonprofits, and government agencies).

Tasha's love for her corgi puppy with debilitating allergies led her to develop holistic pet products that are certified San Diego Grown 365. This means at least 85% of the ingredients are grown in San Diego County, some of which is grown on Tasha's tiny farm. She quickly went from selling her products at farmers' markets to managing farmers' markets. In 2012, Tasha started managing/operating farmers' markets and coordinating fundraising events across Southern California. She currently works in nonprofit administration and agricultural water runoff compliance, but is never far from farmers' market life.

Tasha serves on the 2023 California Small Farms Conference Steering, Workshop, and Awards Committees; and she serves on the California Alliance of Farmers' Markets Steering Committee.

What valuable or unique experience, expertise, or perspective would you bring to the FMC Board of Directors?

I have over a decade of experience working in farmers' markets as a vendor, manager, and operator. I have been fortunate to have many opportunities to develop equitable practices and direct organizations toward improved inclusion, especially of marginalized communities. The most enriching experience for me was when I managed the City Heights Farmers' Market. It was* located in a neighborhood that is considered to be both the most diverse in San Diego County as well as a food desert. This particular farmers' market exposed me to large groups of individuals displaced by conflict, famine, and climate change.

During my tenure, I developed an acute sensitivity to, and awareness of, the lived experiences of those who make up the beautiful fabric of City Heights. This sensitivity

was critical in facilitating the construction of a space where residents no longer felt like their label--refugee--but rather, they felt at home, safe and welcome. Many of the farmers are refugees themselves. They live and grow their produce right in City Heights. Agriculture provides these farmers with an income to support their families, it empowers the community-at-large, and it also eases the heartache of living in the diaspora—the farmers grow produce familiar to their cultures, and the patrons delight in the ability to recreate a taste of home. With at least 36 languages and dialects spoken in City Heights, language barriers could be challenging. However, through creative solutions, I was able to reach out to those who might otherwise be neglected so they, too, could access the benefits and services offered at the farmers' market.

In 2020, I co-authored and led a workshop on the topics of access and equity at the California Market Match Consortium. I am happy to discuss at greater length my qualifications pertaining to equitable practices, inclusivity, and anti-racism. I consider these topics to be goals to strive toward through daily practice. There is always room for growth and improvement to better understand the intersectionality of discrimination so that solutions toward progress can be formulated.

*The market's operator ceased operation of the market on December 17, 2022. The former market manager (my successor) is forming a coalition of stakeholders to restructure and reorganize. I am volunteering as a facilitator to support the future and sustained success of the City Heights Farmers' Market.

How will your experience, ideas, or connections help FMC fulfill its mission to strengthen farmers markets for the benefit of farmers, consumers and communities?

I have extensive experience building lasting relationships between farmers, patrons, and community organizations to increase overall diversity and inclusion at farmers' markets throughout San Diego County. I am adept at engaging stakeholders, listening to concerns, and addressing challenges. I am well connected to farmers, chefs, and business owners who would support FMC's mission.

Additionally, as the current program coordinator for the San Diego Region Irrigated Lands Group--a third-party regulatory compliance nonprofit--I engage with over 1200 farmers spanning across San Diego, southern Orange and Riverside Counties. I have a strong understanding of complicated agricultural regulations and the challenges farmers face in both rural and urban settings. My experience as a farmers' market vendor and manager/operator paired with my ability to initiate dialogue among growers, government agencies, and policymakers will strengthen FMC's beneficial impact on the greater farmers' market community.

Lynne Hartford

- Born and raised in the state of Kansas. Currently lives in the Kansas Flint Hills. The closest town is Olpe, Kansas. It is a 15 minute drive to town on a gravel road. The town lost their post office this past year.
- Have raised or am currently raising Paint/Pinto show horses, cattle, chickens, and is a farmer. We have a hoop greenhouse that we raise greens and vegetables for the local Farmer's Market, and are planning on adding a second hoop house this year.
- Taught fourth through high school classes in a rural school for eleven years.
- Eleven years working for a local newspaper. Jobs included reporting, interviews, photographer, proofreading, editing, and newspaper layout.
- Eleven years Federal service with the Department of Veterans Affairs as Executive Assistant for the National Associate Director of Operations, Plans and Logistics, served as the "go to" for a nation wide consolidation project.
- Farmer and vendor at area Farmer's Market, producer and supplier for four area restaurants, and deliver to regular customers locally.
- Graduate of Kansas State University with Bachelor of Science degree in Social Science with an emphasis on history.

What valuable or unique experience, expertise, or perspective would you bring to the FMC Board of Directors?

Not only am I a consumer at our local Farmer's Market, I am also a vendor and a producer. I see the whole picture in a small community, and a Midwest setting. Farmer's Markets take place all across our nation, but has roots going back directly to the farmer. I come from those roots, and bring the experience and expertise of farming.

Before we became vendors, my husband and I would venture to our local market to support the community and local businesses. If elected to the Board, I see the opportunity to help improve Farmer's Markets nationwide, and also locally. Many parts of the United States are stuck in a food desert, and do not have access to healthy, nutritious food. Not only is this occurring in rural parts of the country, but also in our Nation's cities. I will bring the eyes to focus on these food deserts, and trying to provide access to nutritional choices nationwide.

While I am only going on my fourth year as a vendor, I have been raising quality produce for years. We began our journey to the Emporia, Kansas, Farmer's Market

with extra produce only to find there was a true need for quality, organically grown produce in our area. Realizing the lack of options in our community for everyone to have access to healthy food, our journey as a vendor began. We have faced the issues and questions all vendors ask. As time has passed since our first vendor outing, I can see the vendor's perspective, and have a desire improve the vendor experience. I will bring this viewpoint from the vendor's eye to the Farmers Market Coalition.

If elected to the Board, I believe that my expertise as a consumer, vendor, and farmer, can assist in strengthen our ties to each other. As I come from a very rural setting, I will bring a different perspective to the Farmers Market Coalition and I would truly like the opportunity to help shape the future of the organization.

How will your experience, ideas, or connections help FMC fulfill its mission to strengthen Farmer's markets for the benefit of farmers, consumers, and communities?

If elected to the Board, I believe that with my background, I would be a positive advocate for the farmer, vendor, consumer, and Farmer's Markets nationwide. I understand the need to preserve America's rural livelihood, as I am a rural Midwest farmer. I fight increasing production costs, and experience drought conditions, excessive rain, invasive species, and bugs. I am the "boots on the ground," rural farmer and rural consumer. I am a consumer, farmer, and a vendor.

Through my experiences as a vendor, I understand the need to support healthy communities. We all see, or live near a food desert; and it is important for all to have access to fresh nutritious food. The Farmers Market Coalition works actively with legislators to make positive changes. This could be an area that the Coalition might like to address in public policy; to provide healthy food choices for everyone.

I understand that the Farmers Market Coalition is a national advocate for Farmer's Markets. As a vendor at a small town Farmer's Market, I will bring a fresh set of eyes to the Coalition. I can be a voice for smaller markets across the country. I would also work diligently in promoting those markets, and spreading information, best practices, and resources to them.

Yescenia Mota (incumbent)

Yescenia Mota for 20+ years has been passionate, dedicated, and focused in helping to create, develop, implement, and promote the City's Farmers Market Program under the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE and MOSE). She has long lasting individual and collaborative relationships with community organizations, governmental agencies, aldermanic offices, city departments, local businesses, stakeholders, media, and vendors. She manages and oversees programming budgets, vendor selection processes, contractors, and market rules, regulations, and procedures. She is a subject matter expert in fresh food access, industry standards, and best practices. Yescenia has supervised student interns, processed permits for the long-standing Outdoor Dining Program, and worked as the Interim General Manager for the city's Maxwell Street Market. Yescenia joined the Department of Cultural Affairs & Special Events in 2003 as a Special Events Coordinator in the Programming Division. Shortly after joining the Department, she was assigned to manage the Chicago City Markets program where she overhauled the vendor application process and changed regulations to ensure only high-quality, local produce would be offered. She managed the Farmers Market Program from 2003-2022; and is now the Director of Special Events & Permits, overseeing the team that permits all outdoor events for Chicago.

Yescenia has a Bachelor's in Applied Behavior Science from National Louis University, bi-lingual in Spanish, member of the Mayor's Food Equity Council, and has served on several boards including the Illinois Farmers Market Association and Farmers Market Coalition.

In 2011, Ms. Mota was appointed to oversee a Mayoral initiative to address low food access areas and food insecurity in Chicago. She established eight markets in underserved neighborhoods and secured a \$88,000 USDA Farmers Market Promotional Program Grant to subsidize vendors at the markets. Ms. Mota is an active member of the City of Chicago's Good Food Purchasing Policy Task Force and the Chicago Food Policy Action Council, curating programs and workshops for the Annual Chicago Food Summit.

What valuable or unique experience, expertise, or perspective would you bring to the FMC Board of Directors?

I have a wide range of experience not just managing markets, my background includes maintaining a yearly 400k budget, creating and implementing policy, and event planning. All extremely useful skills that could help out FMC's board.

How will your experience, ideas, or connections help FMC fulfill its mission to strengthen farmers markets for the benefit of farmers, consumers and communities?

In my 20 years of public service with the City of Chicago, I have not only worked on Food Policy but managed the farmers market program for 20 years, at one time I managed 30 markets, and 200 vendors all while still performing other duties such as coordinating talent stages at various City festivals. I come with experience and knowledge of farmers markets and the people who sell at them.

Shawn Menard

Shawn is the Executive Director of Seacoast Eat Local in Dover, NH where he works to build bridges between local food producers and consumers. His role includes program development, fundraising, grant management, and everything in between.

Originally from Maine, Shawn has lived in New England all his life. He enjoys building relationships with farmers and food producers to help share their story with the community. His work with Seacoast Eat Local has enabled the organization to increase its capacity in farmers market management and achieve all-time highs in SNAP and incentive usage. He also serves on the Network Leadership Team for the NH Food Alliance and is a recent cohort member of the Network Leadership Institute at Food Solutions New England.

Prior to working with Seacoast Eat Local, Shawn worked in management of local food co-ops for several years. In this role he gained valuable insight to consumer shopping behavior and worked with farmers to make their products retail-ready. He earned a Masters of Science in Management with a Sustainability concentration from New England College. At home, Shawn enjoys tending to his fruit trees and flower gardens with his wife and two-year-old son.

What valuable or unique experience, expertise, or perspective would you bring to the FMC Board of Directors?

With experience in both food co-ops and farmers' markets, I bring a unique perspective of working to build relationships between vendors and customers in many ways. I have worked directly in that space to provide farmers a platform to sell their products while also working closely with consumers to educate them on the value of locally grown food. As a life-long New Englander, I also bring the perspective of the challenges of farmers' markets in one of the coldest and most seasonal regions in the

country. My educational background in Psychology and Management gives me the skills to listen and interpret the needs people have, which would be a valuable skill for any board member.

How will your experience, ideas, or connections help FMC fulfill its mission to strengthen farmers markets for the benefit of farmers, consumers and communities?

Having spent the past 10 years working to connect people to local food, I understand how to bridge the communication gap between farmers and consumers. I bring a problem solving approach to my work and often look for new ways to think about a project. In a world that is becoming more and more virtual, I'm constantly looking for ways to utilize technology and the internet to improve the success of farmers and markets. My work in both Maine and New Hampshire has given me dozens of valuable connections in the New England Food system. I have served on the Network Leadership Team for NH Food Alliance for three years, completed the Food Solutions New England Network Leadership Institute, and participated in the inaugural Food System Resilience Fund Gifting Circle through New England Grassroots Environment Fund.

Mandy Moody

Mandy Moody, MNA is a purpose-driven, people-focused leader who turns ideas into action, providing the leadership necessary to achieve an organization's vision and mission. As a results-driven professional, she balances strategic thinking with innovative brainstorming to drive continued growth. Decisive and highly-organized, she is adept at bringing order to chaos while exuding a calmness that inspires confidence. Contrary to the nonprofit industry trend of high staff turnover, she creates stability and teams that are committed to long-term strategies that will ensure an organization's ability to meet its program objectives.

Currently, she serves as the Executive Director of Green City Market in Chicago, a nonprofit organization that is securing the future of food by deepening support for sustainable farmers, educating our community, and expanding access to locally-grown food. Green City Market operates a year-round farmers market and is best known its flagship market held in Lincoln Park. Since becoming Executive Director, Mandy has established critical organizational infrastructure and has led a team to grow the organization's revenue to \$1.2M (from \$750k) in less than 2 years.

What valuable or unique experience, expertise, or perspective would you bring to the FMC Board of Directors?

In particular, I believe my knowledge and expertise as a career nonprofit professional, and in particular that of a fundraiser would bring value to the FMC Board of Directors. For example, this year alone I have driven a 60%+ year over year growth in revenue at GCM.

How will your experience, ideas, or connections help FMC fulfill its mission to strengthen farmers markets for the benefit of farmers, consumers and communities?

I believe that it will be through collaboration with my fellow board members that my experience, ideas, and connections will help FMC to fulfill its mission to strengthen markets of farmers, consumers, and communities

How to Vote:

1. Go to FarmersMarketCoalition.org
2. Log In via the upper righthand corner
3. Once logged in to your member account, click on the "What Would You Like to Do?"
4. Select "2023 Board and Amendments Vote"
5. Follow the links for voting on the Board of the Directors election and the proposed bylaws amendments.



Vote through the [FMC Membership Portal](#).
Voting closes at 5pm PT / 8pm ET on February 10th, 2023.