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## Introduction

The Alberta Farmers' Market Association's 2003 study identified a need for training and educational materials for farmers' market managers.

The purpose of this manual is to help managers of Alberta Approved Farmers' Markets operate economically successful, community-based farmers' markets across Alberta. It is designed as a reference manual and is divided into sections to allow easy access to information on an as-needed basis.

### How to Use this Manual

You can customize this manual for your market. The three-ring binder makes it is easy for you to add updates and information that is specific to your market. For example, you should include:

- Copies of your market rules
- Annual health permit
- Insurance information
- Vendor attendance list
- Lease/rent contracts
- Societies registration (if applicable)
- Copies of your market layout
- Promotional materials (copies of news articles, ads, pictures, posters, etc.).

*Tab any pages needed for quick reference (insurance, food regulations, etc.). Photocopy any checklists before you use them.*

*Use the pocket folder at the back to store smaller loose items.*

### Contents

The manual is organized in a logical progression of market activities by first outlining the manager's expected responsibilities, followed by information on how to carry out those duties. The following sections are found in the manual.

### Starting a New Market

This section looks at market sponsorship and incorporation, health regulations and the importance of insurance. Even if you are part of an existing market, you may want to review this section to ensure you have met the necessary regulations.

## Managing the Market

This section looks at the day-to-day administration of the market. It covers vendors, meetings, market rules, market mix, market layout and conflict resolution.

## Promoting the Market

This section deals with the critical topic of promoting your market. Topics covered include signage, branding, fundraising, media advertising and special events.

## Market Evaluation

This section has some forms you can use to evaluate your market.

## Alberta Farmers' Market Association (AFMA)

This section contains AFMA information, contacts and forms.

## Appendix

The appendix contains Alberta Approved Farmers' Market Guidelines, society forms, new generation cooperative forms, sample bylaws, other resources and contacts.

## Symbols

Throughout the manual are some symbols to guide you.



### Checklist

This symbol tells you to fill in a checklist.



### Example

This symbol tells you there is an example.



This symbol tells you of the experiences of a farmers' market manager.

### **For More Information**

This symbol tells you where to find more information on a topic.

Keep this manual up to date. It then becomes your reference for sharing accurate information with vendors and making the administration of your market as easy as possible.

## Benefits of Farmers' Markets

Farmers' markets have enjoyed an upsurge in popularity in the last few years. There are many reasons why they have been so successful and why so many communities support them.

### For Consumers...

- Wide selection of fresh products
- Quality of the products is often perceived to be higher than found in the grocery stores
- Support local farmers and gives the opportunity to build a relationship with the farmer who grows your food
- Social atmosphere of the farmers' market makes it a great place to gather with friends

### For Producers...

- Direct contact with consumers gives the producer an opportunity to educate consumers about how products are grown and prepared for market
- By eliminating the middleman, producers are able to enjoy higher returns for their products and receive immediate payment.
- Opportunity to test market products because feedback is immediate
- Minimum start-up costs and low overhead costs

### For the Community...

- Businesses in the community benefit as consumers, vendors and their employees spend additional money in the community on market days
- There is also a social impact as members of the community come together

### Farmers' Market Manager

A farmers' market manager is much more than just someone who opens the doors and assigns the tables. A farmers' market manager is a(n):

- leader
- catalyst
- analyst
- goal setter
- organizer
- decision maker
- communicator
- evaluator

With all these roles, you can see how the success of the market hinges on the skills of the manager.

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*The market manager has a critical role in the success of a market.*

## Role of Farmers' Market Managers

Regardless of whether you are a paid or volunteer manager, you are the most important element in creating a successful farmers' market. Being a manager is big job; you set the tone for operation and organization of your market, as well as set the standards for the market. A good manager can make or break a market. The way you represent the market to the public will have a big impact on how customers perceive it.

Alberta Approved Farmers' Market Managers must demonstrate that they:

- Are committed to the goals of the Alberta Agriculture and Food (AF) program
- Are willing to undergo the training and learning this position requires
- Understand the role of the manager, the remuneration and benefits this position offers, to whom to direct their market concerns and to whom they are accountable.



From Sharon, Sherwood Park Farmers' Market, Sherwood Park. "If you visited the Sherwood Park Farmers' Market any Wednesday evening between May and October you would think that my role as manager was to direct new vendors to their spaces, chat with vendors about their sales, direct shoppers to vendors, stamp passports, collect vendor fees and generally be everywhere, coordinating the weekly event.

In reality most of my work is done behind the scene. It involves working with vendors, both new and existing, to ensure satisfaction with our market remains high. It involves promoting and positioning the market by building personal relationships with politicians, editors of the local newspapers, health department inspectors and educators and local businesses. It involves coordinating our activities with other markets in the county, and in the central area of Alberta to ensure residents in the area are getting the best market experience possible.

In the end, both the weekly on-sight activity and the behind the scenes work is done to improve the profile and recognition of farmers' markets with vendors, shoppers and the larger community. Advocating for Alberta made product — encouraging local vendors to be the best they can be — developing healthy communities — having fun — life doesn't get much better!"



## ✓ Checklist

### Duties of Market Managers

- Ensure your market is operating in compliance with AF guidelines.
- Ensure appropriate documents are filed with AF annually.
- File appropriate documents to Alberta Registries if you are a registered non-profit society or a new generation cooperative.
- Serve as the primary contact regarding food safety and public health issues and ensure that all market operations comply with Alberta Health and RHA regulations.
- Ensure that all vendors are complying with applicable provincial and federal legislation in addition to the Alberta Public Health Act and Food Regulation.
- Be responsible for a market mix that meets vendor, customer and AF regulations.
- Ensure that there is an advisory committee or board that represents the vendors and the sponsor.
- In conjunction with your sponsor and advisory committee or board, ensure that there is a good set of market rules that reflect the wishes of the vendors, customers and sponsors. Be sure these rules are enforced.
- Ensure that the market and vendors carry adequate liability insurance.
- Ensure that proper financial systems are in place and that the market is financially sound.
- Ensure that there is a procedure for conflict resolution in the market rules including a vendor committee that can mediate.
- Be fair and honest with all vendors in interpreting rules and regulations.
- Be responsible for advertising and promoting the market.
- Arrange for special market days and events.
- Arrange regular meetings with your vendors to get feedback and communicate changes and concerns in the market. Liaise with your sponsor on these meetings.
- In conjunction with your sponsor, arrange the annual general meeting.
- Ensure that sponsors are knowledgeable in the operation of the market and understand all aspects of market administration.
- Hold regular update meetings with the sponsor.
- Include a sponsor representative at your meetings.

#### **For More Information**

*See AF Guidelines in the Appendix.*

*Have an assistant manager or someone who can take over if you can't be at the market to set up, oversee general operations, collect rent and take down.*

*Remember that VENDORS ARE YOUR CUSTOMERS. Without them there would be no reason for anyone else to come to the market.*

*Without you, your market will not operate smoothly, and your clients, vendors and community will not do as well they should.*