

2014 Annual Report Foothills Farmers' Market, Inc.



Economic Impact

Our seventh season of operation increased direct-to-consumer sales for farmers and home-based business owners and produced significant impact on the local economy:

- 80% of vendors responding to an end-of-season survey indicated that FFM had enabled them to grow their businesses by increasing production (40%), adding new products (45%), hiring additional labor (20%), and selling at new market locations (15%).
- 10 vendors growing and supplying food products for a market-sponsored CSA sold an additional \$6,202.
- Market operations led to the creation of 7 new part-time jobs. The Market Pavilion construction project supported 192 existing jobs (construction workers, architects, engineers, steel fabricators, etc.).
- Average seasonal sales increased to \$7,035 per vendor (up from \$3,357 reported in 2012). Total sales at three market locations during 2014 are estimated at \$492,450.
- Spillover of market shoppers provided additional income for neighboring businesses, including retail stores and restaurants in Uptown Shelby and Downtown Kings Mountain.

Health Impact

Market shoppers are increasing their intake of fresh fruits and vegetables, shown to reduce a number chronic health conditions:

- Sales of healthy foods (fresh produce, lean proteins and eggs) grew by \$125,052 (209%) above 2012 levels.
- Our Card Services program made healthy, affordable foods more accessible to low-income citizens.
- 100 percent of vendors selling EBT-eligible foods elected to participate in the Card Services program.
- 108 EBT customers shopped at one or more market locations during the 2014 season.
- EBT shoppers spent \$5,706 in food assistance benefits and market bucks incentives with our vendors.

Social Impact

FFM coordinated and supported activities designed to increase the community's awareness and appreciation of local foods and to grow the Market's customer base:

- The **Cleveland Grown, Cleveland Strong Farm Tour** educated 60 participants (including children) on the county's agriculture history and introduced them to conventional and organic production practices, season extension, specialty crops and value-added commodities, and wholesale and direct marketing strategies.
- **Harvest in the Garden**, a farm to table event held October 25 in Kings Mountain attracted 75 people who enjoyed local foods and a cooking demonstration by a former White House Chef who now resides in the area and shops our markets regularly.
- FFM collaborated with NC Cooperative Extension at NC State University to develop "**Eat Local, Eat Healthy**", a brochure used to disseminate research-based information about the connections between local foods and improved health.
- FFM supported the **Cleveland County Employee Health & Benefits Fair**, which engaged 750 county employees over the 3-day event. We helped the planning team procure local food ingredients for the meal, serving taste samples of healthy local foods, distributing printed materials to county employees, and encouraging their patronage of our markets.
- Our Farmer Foodshare® Program collected 4.5 tons of surplus food for distribution to organizations that feed the hungry in our local community.
- Press releases, print ads, social media posts and newsletters were distributed to local media outlets and market customers each week.
- Approximately 1,500 market customers visited our three market locations each week.