

2015 Annual Report

Foothills Farmers' Market, Inc.



Infrastructure & Operations

Completion of an \$818,000 construction project provided FFM with a state-of-the-art market pavilion in Uptown Shelby. The pavilion provides the amenities to make the market experience pleasant and safe for shoppers and vendors, and has helped us grow the customer base. Operations were expanded to include a seasonal Thursday evening market and a winter market in 2015.

Economic Impact

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

- 67% of vendors responding to an end-of-season survey indicated that their customer base grew from the previous season.
- 59% of market vendors reported an increase in sales. Average seasonal sales grew to \$10,458 per vendor (a 49% increase from the \$7,035 reported in 2014).
- The direct sale of local products at our markets contributed nearly 2 million dollars to the local economy by way of the local multiplier effect where every dollar spent locally multiplies six times before leaving our community.
- Our Card Services program processed \$32,672 in 2015, \$11,165 more than the previous season.
- 77% of customers surveyed rated the new market atmosphere as "Excellent".
- Eaton Corporation demonstrated its commitment to the local food movement by sourcing local ingredients for the industry's Mountain Café. Eaton purchased 30 local food boxes for employees during the Holiday season, spending an additional \$750 among six market vendors.
- 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 fresh produce, lean proteins and eggs accounted for approximately 80% of total sales, indicating a growing demand for healthy food.
- Our Card Services program made healthy, affordable foods more accessible to low-income citizens. 126 SNAP/EBT customers shopped at one or more market locations during the 2015 season, investing \$6,388 in healthy food choices.
- 100% of vendors selling EBT-eligible foods elected to participate in the Card Services program.

Social Impact

FFM coordinated and supported activities designed to increase the community's awareness and appreciation of local foods and to give back to the local community:

- Foothills Farmers' Market was saluted by the Cleveland County Fair and developed a display booth to educate inform fairgoers about local farmers, local foods, and market operations.
- Our card services program and our outreach to low-income market shoppers are being recognized as some of the most innovative and progressive in the nation.
- Farmer Foodshare® in Uptown Shelby and Kings Mountain collected over 5,755 pounds of food during the 2015 market season. This food was distributed to a number of agencies that feed the hungry in our local community, including Crossroads Rescue Mission, Presbyterian Church Shelby (food pantry), UCAN (Upper Cleveland Area Needs), Episcopal Church of Redeemer (Shelby), Episcopal Church of Incarnation (Gaffney, SC), Cleveland County Rescue Mission, Childrens' Homes of Cleveland County, Friendship United Methodist Church (community meal), Kings Mountain Community Kitchen, and Christine's Home & Sandra's Home.
- We continued to support the Community Math Academy by using local food to help at-risk students improve their math skills, learn about local foods and the importance of giving back to the community.
- Other outreach efforts included a community potluck meal at the Pavilion, sponsorship of Cleveland County Step One Fitness Challenge and Seeds to Silverware farm to table event, and market tour and local foods luncheon for fifth grade students.