

2016 Annual Report

Foothills Farmers' Market, Inc.



Infrastructure & Operations

Foothills Farmers' Market operates from the City Pavilion, providing the amenities to make the market experience pleasant and safe for shoppers and vendors. Expansions included a seasonal Thursday evening market in Kings Mountain, a Winter Market at Hip-O-Kat and a Holiday market held at City Pavilion. Our Health Department location moved to the new Cleveland County Public Health Center, and a pilot pop-up market was offered at Cleveland Regional Medical Center. Operations were supported by funding of the Market Manager position through Cleveland County Government, grants totaling \$55,752 from the USDA's Farmers' Market Promotions Grant and the Healthcare Foundation of Cleveland County, and the support of 26 Friends of the Market.

Economic Impact

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

- 56% of vendors responding to an end-of-season survey indicated that their customer base grew from 2015.
- 78% of market vendors reported an increase in sales. Average seasonal sales grew to \$ 11,685 per vendor (a 12% increase from the \$10,458 reported in 2015).
- The direct sale of local products at our markets contributed \$2 million 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 \$45,162 in 2016, \$12,784 more than the previous season.
- Eaton Corporation demonstrated its commitment to the local food movement by purchasing 50 local food boxes for employees during the Holiday season, spending an additional \$1,000 among seven 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 of 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. 113 SNAP/EBT customers shopped at one or more market locations during the 2016 season, investing \$4,873 in healthy food choices, and increasing our rate of returning low-income customers.
- Over 400 local government employees were reached through participation in local health fairs.
- POP Club participants exercised the ability to make healthy eating choices 2,986 times, by allowing children to purchase their own fruits or vegetables.

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:

- 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 3 tons of food during the 2016 market season. This food was distributed to a number of agencies that feed the hungry in our local community, including Presbyterian Church Shelby, Episcopal Church of Redeemer, Episcopal Church of Incarnation, Cleveland County Rescue Mission, Childrens' Homes of Cleveland County, Christine's Home & Sandra's Home, and Calvary Baptist Church.
- We continued to support the Community Math Academy by using the market 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 meals 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 fourth grade students.
- Over 300 students visited the market as a part of organized field trip experience with local schools and organizations.