

Farmers' Market Benefits

A FARMERS' MARKETS ONTARIO® TOOLBOX CHECKLIST FOR MARKET MANAGERS



Checklist 2: FM Farmer Benefits



How you as a farmer can benefit from farmers' markets

- ✓ **You earn healthy profits.** With farmers' markets, there is no middleman. By selling direct, you keep every cent from every sale.
- ✓ **You set your own price.** No one can force you to sell for less.
- ✓ **All sales are cash.** There's no waiting. You get paid on the spot.
- ✓ **Regular cash flow.** From May to October, you'll have cash coming in each and every week. 51% of farmers' market vendors serve 50–199 customers each day; 67% make \$100–\$999 each day.
- ✓ **Free market research for improving or expanding your product line.** At farmers' markets, you're constantly learning what people want to buy—and what they're willing to pay a premium for. Try something new and you'll get immediate feedback. Talk to customers and you'll find out what else they wish you sold. And next season, you'll know what to plant to make more profits—from heirloom varieties to specialty ethnic crops.
- ✓ **Extremely low shipping and packaging costs.** Because you transport goods yourself and sell them unpackaged (and un-graded), your production and marketing costs are minimal.
- ✓ **No minimum quantities.** You sell what you grow—however little that may be. This is great for new producers and/or producers in the process of converting to organic crops, and/or small-scale producers who can't meet supermarket order minimums. Farmers' markets are a means of marketing crops that might otherwise be deemed unmarketable.
- ✓ **Farmers' markets are fun.** Farmers' markets are a rewarding social (not just economic) experience. You become part of a community of like-minded farmers and get to know consumers who are interested in you and what you do.
- ✓ **You get to be an ambassador for farmers and farming.** At farmers' markets, you help educate consumers about what farmers do, and make them appreciate the contributions they make—not only to their dinner table but to the environment, as well.
- ✓ **Markets are ideal for hard-to-market heirloom and antique varieties.** Farmers' market customers love these specialty crops that are often too sensitive to ship.
- ✓ **You can create employment for your family.** Helping out at farmers' markets is a great summer job for students and a fun part-time job for other relatives. Or your spouse.

The bottom line: farmers' markets can make a big difference to your bottom line.

- ✓ 60% of farmers who sell at farmers' markets sell at multiple markets within easy driving distance of their farms and their revenues from these markets average 33% of their total farm revenues.
- ✓ Many farmers have been able to avoid bankruptcy by joining the growing ranks of market vendors.

Statistics are from *The National Farmers' Market Impact study 2009* sponsored by FMC and AAFC.