

2021 Annual Report



A Fresh Look at
Farmers Markets



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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

For farmers markets, 2021 seemed a year of continual flux, challenging market managers to be even more flexible, creative, and optimistic than usual. The changing guidelines and restrictions necessitated by COVID-19 resulted in markets responding quickly and proactively to ensure safety for both customers and vendors. It meant learning from their experiences in 2020, while experimenting with new programs and efforts to reach out to customers and to enhance their markets.

The year 2021 presented challenges for the Farmers Market Federation of NY as well, requiring continual vigilance to the ever-changing landscape to keep markets informed, and seemingly constant adaptation of programs and outreach efforts. Through relevant trainings and resources that encourage markets and managers to stretch themselves to be their best, outreach that connects markets to their communities, and promotion of market incentives and coupon redemptions that increase food access for all, the Federation continues to excel in supporting the viability and success of farmers markets.

I continue to be impressed with the leadership of this organization which ensures farmers markets can thrive throughout the state, provide ready access to local foods and products for diverse customers, while supporting the farmers and entrepreneurs who are our valued vendors.

Margaret O'Neill
President, Board of Directors

“The Federation continues to excel in supporting the viability and success of farmers markets.”

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The year 2021 can be labeled as a rebuilding year. Farmers markets were heavily restricted due to the coronavirus pandemic in 2020. While those restrictions fluctuated with the level of active infections, these restrictions included such things as limiting the types of vendors within the market to food sellers only, limiting the number of customers allowed into the market at one time, not allowing customers to touch products, and ensuring social distancing with strict lanes for customer traffic and keeping a table's distance between customers and vendors.

Essentially, these restrictions kept markets from doing the extra things that make farmers markets a part of the community fabric. This included things like kid's programs focused on food and agriculture and training them to be the next generation of market shoppers; events that encourage people to mingle with their neighbors, and hosting non-profit organizations who could showcase their mission. It was all put on hold throughout 2020. It was challenging for a market to comply, but as essential operations, markets were kept open and active throughout the pandemic to ensure consumers had safe options for accessing healthy, locally grown foods.

“Managers stepped up and restarted programs and events for their 2021 market season.”

After all this, 2021 was a year marked by markets trying their best to return to some level of normalcy. Vendors excluded in 2020 were invited and welcomed back. Programming and events were restarted with the hopes that those who participated in the past would return. It was a challenge since the restrictions were not lifted until just prior to the 2021 farmers market season, leaving managers little room for planning and preparation. But as they did for the 2020 COVID-19 restrictions, managers stepped up and restarted programs and events for their 2021 market season.

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (CONTINUED)

We did find that there was a silver lining to the pandemic: Consumers learned the value of a local food supply. With shortages in the grocery store, along with risks of congregating indoors, people chose to shop locally more than ever before. Farmers' sales rose, and customers showed more appreciation for local food producers. This was true with SNAP consumers as well. The 2021 market season saw a significant increase in SNAP sales at farmers markets. We'll show you just how significant as we explore SNAP later on.

It was a bit of a rebuilding year for the Federation of NY as well. We were tied to the office throughout 2020 and unable to spend time in the markets. With limits on the numbers of shoppers allowed, we left those spaces to legitimate customers. We held Zoom networking meetings, but they didn't replace face-to-face interaction.

However, in 2021, we got back out to meet managers and farmers in the market. Our (new!) Assistant Director visited over 30 farmers markets in the summer, learning more about markets operations and needs. It was a great way to introduce a new face in the Federation, encourage others to participate in Federation programs, and hear issues markets are facing that the Federation can help to address.

We brought onboard a staff member, Kayla MacLachlan, as our new Assistant Director in 2021. Her passions for food, health and community have driven her professional journey. She grew up in rural Central New York but relocated to Virginia after college to study as a Farming and Food Systems Fellow with the Allegheny Mountain Institute (AMI). Falling in love with the mountains of Virginia and the work of AMI, she worked as AMI's Program and Fellowship Director for several years, before pursuing work as a Montessori Adolescent Lead Teacher and part-time Market Farmer. Kayla moved back to Central NY and is a valued part of the Federation of team.

As we head into 2022, we are optimistic that the worst of the pandemic is behind us. We aim to build on lessons learned, and capitalize on opportunities presented during those challenging times. Now, join us as we take a fresh look at farmers markets!

Diane Eggert
Executive Director

THE FRESH LOOK OF THE FEDERATION

Keeping with the idea of 2021 as a rebuilding year, the Board decided it was time that the Federation had a fresh look. A committee of dedicated board members and Federation staff embarked on a journey with Lindsay Wilcox, our Marketing Advisor, to undertake a rebrand. The group began with discussions as to what we wanted the logo to convey about the Federation. After several meetings and logo iterations, we present the “fresh look of the Federation” to you!



SUPPORT WITHIN REACH

The Federation exists to serve every person and organization involved in a thriving farmers market. The hand in the logo symbolically lifts up and provides support that empowers market managers, farmers and producers, consumers – and their communities. It’s also a visual reminder of the human element intrinsic in today’s farmers markets: Goods are hand-produced and then shared with customers in a personal manner.

PROMOTING GROWTH

The verdant green leaves and field suggest a bountiful harvest, fresh ideas, and constant growth – all elements of a successful farmers market, which the Federation aims to make possible for all. Combined with the ripe berry and earth tone, the colors also celebrate the seasons and the natural world.

COMMUNITY + COLLABORATION

The logo text lightly encircles and connects many images: a hand, leaves, fields, market tents, and a town building. It is an image of interconnectedness, which is at the core of a vibrant farmers market. The Federation aims to foster connections and enrich communities. Note that the circle is “open” which signifies a welcoming warmth: the Federation invites anyone to get involved in promoting and supporting markets!

SNAP/EBT AT NEW YORK'S FARMERS MARKETS

	2020	2021	RATE OF CHANGE
FARMERS MARKETS	\$2,932,748.37	\$4,929,928.04	85%
MOBILE MARKETS	\$69,554.84	\$191,637.36	175%
FARMERS/CSAS	\$229,260.71	\$423,571.69	85%

“Markets provided customers with safe access to food at a time when they were concerned about being in crowded stores.”

Throughout 2021, we had 164 active farmers markets and 5 mobile markets participating in the SNAP program. Plus, 81 farmers accepted SNAP in 2021. For each category, the number of transactions nearly doubled. The average transaction size for farmers markets went down slightly, from \$28.88 to \$24.28. But the increase in SNAP dollars is a success story.

Prior to the pandemic, many farmers markets were experiencing downward trends in customer participation. But the pandemic highlighted the fact that markets provided customers with safe access to food at a time when they were concerned about being in crowded stores. Farmers markets offered the opportunity for outdoor shopping. Customers also appreciated the precautions that markets took to ensure a safe shopping environment: limiting crowds, hand sanitizers available, and spaced-out footprints for social distancing. Because of these efforts, consumers took advantage of shopping at farmers markets and helped markets to recapture their role within their local food systems.

This was true of all types of consumers. But it was especially true for SNAP shoppers. With the concerns of the pandemic, and the increased benefits offered by USDA, SNAP sales at farmers markets skyrocketed in 2021. USDA responded to the pandemic and the rising unemployment by increasing the size of SNAP benefits, as well as adding “Pandemic” EBT or P-EBT. This gave consumers greater funding to spend on food and many chose to eat local and healthy with their increased benefits. The best place for purchasing fresh, healthy and locally grown food is at a farmers market!

In addition to the work each market engaged in to attract more SNAP consumers, the Federation ran a social media campaign from May through October. Posts included features of SNAP farmers markets, nutritious recipes, nutritional info for seasonal produce, and hints for preparing, storing, and preserving local food. Each post elicited good discussion with some garnering 3,000+ comments and shares. With over 27,500 followers, this effort was an important outreach method to help steer SNAP customers to markets.



NUTRITION PROGRAMS

With renewed interest in supporting local farmers and producers, use of nutrition programs increased. The NYS Farmers Market Health Bucks program led the way with a whopping 63% increase, followed by a 24% increase in Fresh Connect checks, both of these programs are SNAP incentives and the higher use of SNAP at farmers markets drove the demand for SNAP incentives. This was a boon to farmers as they saw increases in sales as a result.

The Farmers Market Nutrition Program showed a slight decline over 2020. But the WIC portion still was plagued with pandemic issues. Many WIC offices remained closed with virtual client meetups. It made it more difficult to distribute coupons to WIC families. The Senior portion of the program showed higher coupon use, even with fewer coupons distributed to Seniors. All eyes are on the 2022 market season as we anticipate more face-to-face meetings and better distribution of WIC FMNP coupons. With more consumer interest in supporting local, we hope for increased FMNP redemptions.

“The NYS Farmers Market Health Bucks program led the way with a whopping 63% increase, followed by a 24% increase in Fresh Connect checks.”

INCENTIVE PROGRAM	FUNDER	2021 # REDEEMED	2020 # REDEEMED	% CHANGE DEC FROM 2020
<i>Farmers Market Nutrition Program</i>	<i>NYS Ag & Markets</i>	762,547	798,355	-4.5%
<i>NYC Health Bucks</i>	<i>NYC Dept of Health & Mental Hygiene</i>	890,801	546,278	63%
<i>FreshConnect Checks</i>	<i>NYS Ag & Markets</i>	269,241	217,046	24%
<i>CNY Health Bucks</i>	<i>Food Bank of CNY</i>	5,380	5,868	-8%



FARMERS MARKET WEEK: AUGUST 1 – 7, 2021

The Federation celebrated National Farmers Market from August 1st through the 7th along with the markets across New York State. To help prepare everyone for the celebration, the Federation provided markets with support. We titled the 2021 celebration “Always Essential... Now They’re Better Than Ever.”

This follows a year of COVID restrictions at markets that limited their offerings, services, and crowd controls. In 2021, many markets were able to add back their normal programs and services, along with any new projects that were sidelined due to COVID. In our eyes, farmers markets are now better than ever!

Along with the theme for National Farmers Market Week, the Federation created a toolkit for markets to utilize in their own celebrations. The toolkit contained a variety of materials:

- General description of Give Back NY and the expectations of the program
- Statewide list of community level food pantries and emergency food programs
- Instructions for markets to contact local food pantries to partner for Farmers Market Week
- Tips for food pantries and emergency food programs to participate in farmers markets
- Promotional pieces for onsite signage and social media

To encourage markets to utilize the toolkit, the Federation held a webinar to showcase the toolkit and the many ways that markets could celebrate the week in their own unique way.

“In 2021, many markets were able to add back their normal programs and services, along with any new projects that were sidelined due to COVID.”



THE FEDERATION'S FIRST VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

New for 2021 was our first ever virtual conference. Because of the ongoing pandemic, we were unable to bring market managers together for our annual in-person Market Managers Conference. But we were determined to host a conference as everyone worked so hard through the pandemic that we all needed the companionship and camaraderie! We needed to hear how we all managed to keep markets operational, farmers in business, and provide customers with fresh, local and nutritious food. In a nutshell, everyone needed to shine their light and be replenished by our comrades-in-arms.

The Federation staff planned 4 days of educational sessions, a virtual farm tour, and even a virtual happy hour to complete the conference. The educational sessions were half days to prevent screen fatigue. In addition, brief exercises were shared to reduce the stress of sitting in a chair facing a screen. Beyond educational sessions, each day featured a Zoom networking session conducted over Zoom, allowing everyone to virtually socialize. The sessions were topic specific and facilitated by Federation board members. Attendance in each exceeded our expectations!

Attendance was roughly double the usual registrations for a face-to-face conference. With the reduced cost of registration, no hotel and meal fees nor traveling, people came out in droves. Including speakers, 142 people attended the conference. We had representation from throughout New York State, but also from 11 other states as well.

Conference evaluations cited the high caliber of sessions, quality of information, and the diversity of topics and relevance to markets of all sizes. Attendees said they learned many new things to take back to their markets. Here are a few evaluation comments:

"CONTENT-RICH + INTERACTIVE"

"I think you did an amazing job using technology and creativity to present a content-rich and interactive conference and you achieved a good level of engagement despite the daunting challenges imposed by the pandemic. BRAVO! Also, I think your session speakers did a good job of speaking to both neophyte farmers market managers and veteran market staff - that's not easy, to address a range of experience and skills and provide something for everyone."

"A SPECIAL OPPORTUNITY"

"Amazing work. All of the different sessions and celebrations/tours complemented each other well. I really enjoyed the week more than I expected given virtual format. It still felt like a special opportunity."

"GRATIFYING EXPERIENCE"

"As a featured speaker during the digital conference, I felt that all attendees were very focused and engaged. This is a testament to the commitment managers have to their markets: they are a dedicated group, eager to learn, ask questions, and share ideas. It really was a very gratifying speaker experience."

FMM PRO COHORT TRAININGS

In 2020, the Farmers Market Managers Professional Certification (FMM PRO) program was to begin a new phase: face-to-face learning. A small group of managers would go through the course together, encouraging one another through the process and with everyone coming out with the certification. However, COVID had other plans. As the virus was surging, the event changed to a virtual platform.

Using Zoom, the group met every two weeks for 3 months, January through March of 2021. The sessions of the course were condensed within 6 sessions. Guest speakers were able to cover 3 of the course sessions within each Zoom meeting, with lively discussions during and in between each session. This was as close to a face-to-face arrangement as we were able to accomplish given COVID's unrelenting presence.

The course began with 12 farmers market managers, ready to learn the skills that would make them a certified, professional market manager. In between the biweekly sessions, managers completed the homework assignments assigned to each session. It was a quick turnaround for a lot of effort to complete the assignments, but everyone pushed through to complete each assignment on time. Ultimately, a few managers were forced to drop out due to illness and conflicting work schedules. But we were able to graduate 8 market managers of the original 12, and these graduates are listed below.

Congratulations to Our 2021 FMM Pro Graduates!

ELIZABETH CARR	GENESEE COUNTRY FARMERS MARKET
ELYSSA ELLERSON-JONES	WHITNEY POINT FARMERS MARKET
CAROLYN FLEMING	LIMA FARMERS MARKET
NATE BASCH	CORNING FARMERS MARKET
MATT LUMIA	CORNING FARMERS MARKET
ELIZABETH IRONS	ONEIDA COUNTY PUBLIC MARKET
MARIA COLE	CANDOR FARMERS MARKET
JOELLEN RIGGS	CANDOR FARMERS MARKET

KEEP MARKETS GROWING

As part of the Federation's rebuilding effort, we undertook a fundraising effort in the spring. The campaign centered on the theme of "Keep Markets Growing". A series of short videos were created by several market managers around the state extolling the benefits of being a part of the Farmers Market Federation, which included:

- Providing resources
- SNAP assistance and support
- Training opportunities on issues important to market success
- Keeping markets connected to one another and their communities
- Advice and assistance with market-related issues

The videos, along with campaign graphics, were uploaded to social media, including Facebook and Instagram during the week of April 25. While the results for fundraising were lower than anticipated, the social media campaign reach was significant as the posts were shared by many markets statewide. This seemed to be a good start at getting the Federation known beyond the limits of just market managers.

We build **programs**
& **partnerships**
connecting NY
Markets with
families in
need

SUPPORT
The Farmers Market Federation of NY
DONATE TODAY

KEEP
MARKETS
GROWING



STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS OF JUNE 30TH, 2021

ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Cash	\$756,651
Cash – Exchange FMNP	\$27,675
Investments	\$521,594
Accounts Receivable	\$144,091
Prepaid Expenses	\$1,800
TOTAL ASSETS	\$1,451,811
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	
Current Liabilities	
Accrued Expenses	\$15,715
Funds Held for FMNP Grant	\$27,675
Deferred Revenue	\$62,402
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	\$105,792
NET ASSETS	
Unrestricted	\$1,346,019
TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	\$1,451,811
SUPPORT AND REVENUE	
Support:	
Contributions and Sponsor	\$889
Membership	\$43
TOTAL SUPPORT	\$932
Revenue:	
Government Grants	\$354,511
Coupon Service Fees	\$119,716
Program Fees	\$6,588
Interest	\$1,704
Total Revenue	\$482,519
TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE	\$483,451
EXPENSES	
Program Expenses:	
Wireless Technology	\$146,977
Training	\$108,524
TOTAL PROGRAM SERVICES	\$255,501
Supporting Services:	
Management and General	\$74,417
Fundraising	\$2,189
TOTAL SUPPORTING SERVICES	\$ 76,606
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$332,107
<i>Net Change in Assets from Operations</i>	<i>\$151,344</i>
<i>Gain on Investments</i>	<i>\$135,308</i>
<i>Change in Net Assets</i>	<i>\$286,652</i>



THE FEDERATION TEAM

Board Members

Metro Region

Jessica Douglas
GrowNYC

Melinda Meddaugh, Secretary
Cornell Cooperative Extension
Sullivan County

Northern Region

Julie Baughn
Plattsburgh Farmers & Crafters Market

Amanda Root
Cornell Cooperative Extension
Jefferson County

Central Region

Beth Irons, Vice President
Oneida County Public Market
Cornell Cooperative Extension
Oneida County

Laura Biasillo
Cornell Cooperative Extension
Broome County

Eastern Region

Steve Hadcock, Treasurer
Cornell Cooperative Extension
Capital Area Horticulture Program

Steve Riddler
Troy Waterfront Farmers Market

Western Region

Margaret O'Neill, President
Friends of the Rochester Public Market

Jackie Farrell
Westside Farmers Market

Members at Large

Beth Bainbridge
Children's Aid Society

Taisy Conk
Children's Aid Society

Chuck McFadden
Downtown Syracuse
Farmers Market

Board Advisors

Mark McMullen
NYS Dept. of Ag & Markets

Lindsay Ott Wilcox
Centermost Marketing

Federation Staff

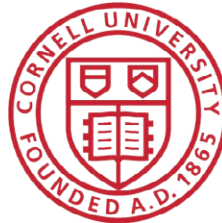
Diane Eggert
Executive Director

Kayla MacLachlan
Assistant Director

Britni Gallo
Office Manager



FUNDERS, PARTNERS, AND CONTRACTORS





*Thank You for
Making 2021 a
Successful Year*



*Together, Let's Make
2022 The Federation's
Best Year Yet*