

Prescott College

Prescott, Arizona

A MARKET MANAGEMENT-CENTERED APPROACH TO BUILDING  
FARMERS MARKETS IN ALASKA

A capstone project submitted in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

by

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The Capstone Committee certifies that the above-named student met the required Master of Science in Sustainable Food Systems capstone project requirements and confirms the acceptance of the capstone project documents as submitted.

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## DEDICATION

This capstone project is dedicated to all farmers market managers, organizers, vendors, and volunteers across Alaska and beyond. You create magic with very little and do it because your hearts move you forward. Also, this is dedicated to Brad “Booboo” St. Pierre, one of my biggest cheerleaders, closet conspirators, and partner in all things Alaska Farmers Market Association.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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ABSTRACT OF THE CAPSTONE PROJECT  
A MARKET MANAGEMENT-CENTERED APPROACH TO BUILDING  
FARMERS MARKETS IN ALASKA

by

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Since 2006, the number of farmers markets in Alaska has more than tripled, growing from 13 markets in 2006 to 41 in 2017. In 2021, the Alaska Farmers Market Association (AFMA) counted 56, with more being planned. According to the 2017 NASS Agricultural Census, Alaska ranked first in the nation in terms of new farms, with the majority of these operations being small, under 10 acres. In addition, Alaska's direct sales have continued to rise over the last decade. Farmers markets are integral to this growth. More than ever, across the state, market managers and farmers desire connection, networking, training opportunities, and management tools for long-term success. AFMA, under my leadership, has created the general framework to support statewide farmers market management, training, and promotion, providing direct benefits to Alaska's farmers markets vendors and customers. In 2020 AFMA received a grant to develop a training toolkit for Alaska Farmers Market Managers and Specialty Crop Vendors. The toolkit provides foundational organizational materials and best practices with the goal of developing more robust, safe, and consistent markets for local food sales. Soliciting the input of market managers and specialty crop vendors in the toolkit design process is a priority. As such,

this Capstone addresses the process of developing a needs-based survey to inform the creation of training materials. Data and recommendations based on a needs-based survey serve as the basis for the toolkit, which will foster greater food security and sovereignty for Alaskans by building capacity for more sustainable production, direct-to-consumer sales, and distribution of locally grown food.



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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACROYNMS

Alaska	AK
Alaska Farmers Market Association	AFMA
Division of Environmental Health (State of Alaska)	DEC
Electronic Benefits Transfer	EBT
Farmers Market Coalition	FMC
Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program	SFMNP
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program	SNAP
United States Agency for International Development	USAID
United States Department of Agriculture	USDA
USDA Agricultural Marketing Services	AMS
USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service	USDA-NASS
United States Global Change Research Program	USGCRP
Washington State Farmers Market Association	WSFMA
Women, Infants, and Children	WIC

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The demand for local food is growing. Nationwide, farmers markets have experienced a renaissance throughout the nation and have taken root across Alaska. While the short growing season and cold climate create many challenges, farmers' markets are emerging across Alaska. In 2005 the Division of Agriculture listed just 13 markets throughout the state. In 2014 that number grew to 37, and in 2017, there were 41, with more in the planning stages. In 2021, the Alaska Farmers Market Association's directory listed 56 markets (Alaska Farmers Market Association, 2021), with more in the planning stages. In addition, the state is experiencing tremendous growth in the agricultural sector. Alaska leads the nation in agricultural growth in the number of farms. Half of which are considered to be small-scale, defined as having under nine acres under production (USDA-NASS, 2018), with the average age of a producer in Alaska of 55.2 years, compared with the national average of 57.7 years (Benz, 2019). There are no indications of this trend slowing down, further exemplifying the importance of the Alaska Farmers Market Association's support to direct-to-consumer marketers.

*Figure 1: AFMA Directory Promotion (Alaska Farmers Market Association, 2021)*



Research suggests that around half of all new markets fail within the first five years of operating (Eggert & Farr, 2009). Even in well-established operations, markets often lack training and understanding around operational concerns like strategic-business planning, liabilities, vendor development, and organizational structure that can limit success and may lead to market closures (Stephenson, Lev, & Brewer, 2008; Connell & Hergesheimer, 2014). Alaskan markets vary widely in their operational and governance capacities. Some markets have year-round, full-time staff and have permanent market space, while others depend solely on volunteers and temporary locations. Given this lack of funding, there are often no means to pay for basic advertising and staffing, let alone essential training or operational resources creation. To help strengthen farmers markets, and in turn, increase sales of local foods, the Alaska Farmers Market Association (AFMA) is creating an “Alaska Market Manager and Vendor Training Toolkit” that will provide guidance and templates for managing markets of various scales and structures.

Providing farmers markets with the tools they need to plan more efficient and equitable markets, while developing new community-based leaders and support systems for farmers, is vital. This capstone project will provide tools for building solid foundations for Alaska’s farmers markets, keeping in mind their varying place-based needs. The toolkit will provide best practices for the operation of farmers markets to facilitate better run markets, enhance food security, and foster strengthened community resiliency. It will also be informed directly by those operating and vending at farmers markets. Through improved capacity for localized food system leadership and operations and network information sharing and utilization, this project aims to foster greater food security for all Alaskans through farmers market sales of locally grown foods.

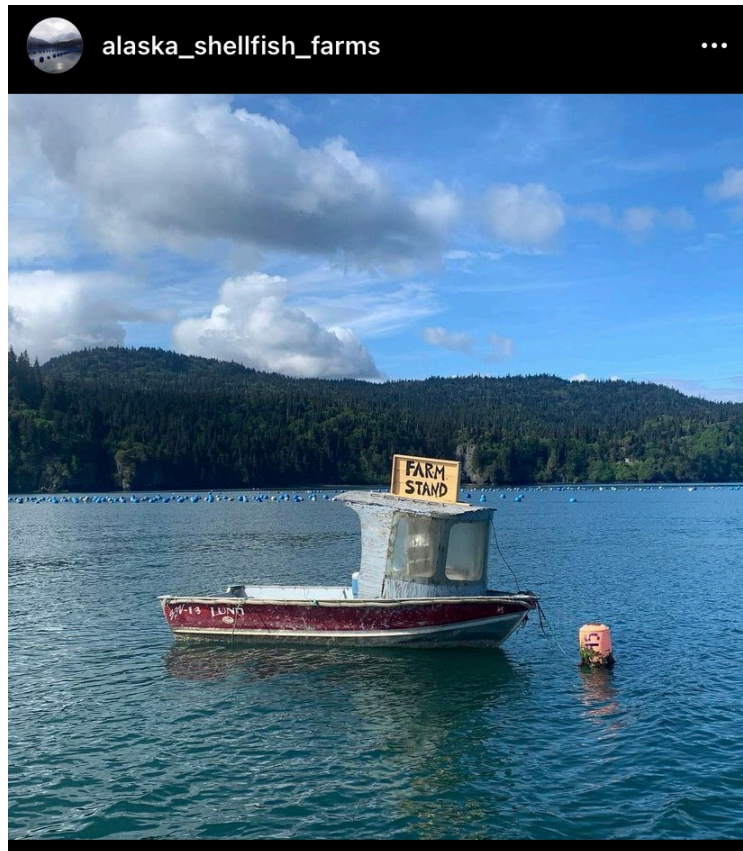
Building off the Alaska Division of Agriculture’s “Developing a Farmers Market” manual (Alaska Division of Agriculture & UAF Cooperative Extension, 2016), AFMA will

further develop a toolkit with direct input from stakeholders, based off survey responses from market organizers statewide, the focus of this Capstone project. Additionally, AFMA has the organizational support from the Washington State Farmers Market Association, which have created a robust market management toolkit (Donovan & Kinney, 2021), and the national Farmers Market Association (Farmers Market Coalition, n.d.), which have access to market resources from across the country. Utilizing existing partnerships, AFMA will also work with the Alaska DEC Food Safety and Sanitation (State of Alaska DEC, 2020) to inform these sections of the toolkit. Toolkit research and development will incorporate direct feedback from market managers. Through surveys and interviews, this Capstone project gauges what needs the toolkit might fill for these stakeholders and what other needs the organization as a whole may meet. In doing so, the Alaska Farmers market toolkit will be informed directly by current market managers, ensuring their needs are being met.

Food security and climate change are two of Alaska's most daunting challenges. The Arctic is warming twice as fast as the global average (USGCRP, 2017). Additionally, Alaskans imports 95% of its food, with rural Alaskans experiencing the most food insecurity (Meter & Philips-Goldenberg, 2014). In 2017, roughly 100,000 Alaskans, or about 14% of the state's population (Khlifi & Mixon, 2018), relied on SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) to help feed their families. Further, between 2000 - 2010, over 30% of Alaska Natives were consistently food insecure and were twice as likely to be food insecure when compared to white populations (Jerigan, Huyser, Valdes, & Simonds, 2017). The US Global Food Security Strategy theorizes that "agricultural growth is a mechanism to reduce poverty, especially for the extreme poor in rural areas" through increased access to nutritious foods, improved infrastructure, and increased economic opportunities (USAID, 2016, p. 12). By improving



capacities in food production, communities experience greater resilience, stronger localized economies, lower poverty, improve and sustain food security and nutrition, and “reduce reliance upon emergency food assistance... even in the face of recurrent shocks and stresses” (2016, p. 17). In Alaska, farmers markets are crucial to improving food security and building resilient local economies.



*Figure 2: Alaska Shellfish Farms, Farm stand in Halibut Cove, Alaska (Alaska Shellfish Farms, 2021)*

Alaska, with a population of just over 731,000 residents, is the size of a mid-size city. Our land area, around 663,00 square miles, is larger than all but 18 of the world's countries and is the biggest state in our nation, larger than Texas, California, and Montana combined. In addition, 82% of our state (Alaska Dept. of Transportation and Public Facilities, n.d.), or as many as 8 out of 10 of Alaska's communities (American Society of Civil Engineer, 2017), are not connected to the road system is not connected by the road system, with some markets in communities only

accessible by boat or plane. Community size varies vastly as well, from one of our smallest markets in Iliamna (population 109) to several markets in Alaska’s largest city, Anchorage with just under 400,000 residents.

This makes for unique conditions for our farming and market operations. For example, Farragut Farm is an off-grid, mixed vegetable farm located in remote Farragut Bay, about 25 miles northwest of Petersburg. To get to a population center to sell their products, they must boat in or barge their products to neighboring Juneau or Wrangell. In Bethel, Iliamna, and Tyonek, all predominately Native Alaska communities, just one local farm may serve the entire communities. Despite being small-scale and limited, these farmers markets, even if it includes just one local food producers, are invaluable in providing low cost, locally grown nutrition to underserved areas. Farming in much of Alaska may be tiny and struggling, but it is extremely important to the communities served. Lacking secure infrastructure like storage and long-distance transportation, farmers markets are essential for connecting directly with consumers to purchase their fresh, high-quality Alaska Grown products.



*Figure 3: Native Village of Tyonek Market Day (Tyonek Tribal Conservation District, n.d.)*

*Figure 4: Tyonek Community Garden and Students (Adapt Alaska, 2021)*

Farmers markets provide both social and economic benefits to farmers and communities (Figueroa-Rodríguez et al., 2019). Farmers markets provide space for farmers to reconnect with

consumers and capture retail dollars for their fresh, high-quality, locally grown products. For communities, farmers markets are family-friendly, community-building events that bring neighbors together, attract retail activity to surrounding businesses, create forums for civic education and involvement and provide direct access to Alaska's agricultural bounty (Russomanno & Tree, 2021). In addition, farmers markets "represent the community, its connections, and its aspirations... provid[ing] a halo effect in a community, and a vibrant market is autocatalytic, producing positive feedback loops in civic, economic, and social life... The market becomes a hinge connecting multiple perspectives to concrete practices in the services of many types of purposes" (McCarthy, 2007). Markets improve access to local food by providing regular opportunities for purchasing and interaction between farmers and local communities, as well as supporting a more equitable local food system through participation in food assistance programs like SNAP, Senior Nutrition, and WIC. They can also contribute to good public health outcomes by adhering to safe food handling protocol and improving nutritional health.

Farmers markets require a vast skillset, the willingness to work odd hours for low pay, and a true passion for local food. Catt Fields White, a long-time market operator and educator states, "We run grocery stores in the street. We move barricades, tow cars, curate vendors, create marketing magic, monitor regulations and help shape them. And that's just the tip of the iceberg romaine" (Fields-White, n.d.). Market management trainings and toolkits have proven successful in increasing sales of local foods in other states. For example, West Virginia Farmers Market Network launched a training program designed to address the needs of markets in various stages of development. This program emphasizes "shared knowledge creation and problem-solving, along with strong networking and data collection components" (Eades, Nix, Crane, 2016, p. 7). Other states like Iowa (Northeast Iowa RC&D, 2018) and Washington (Donovan & Kinney,

2021) have achieved remarkable results with similar programs.

At the heart of this Capstone Project, and Alaska's farmers markets are local farmers and local economies. Farmers markets can continue to grow and improve their operations in order to create more sustainable and consistent direct marketing opportunities for farmers. The Alaska Farmers market toolkit, informed through a statewide survey of market managers and a review of other states' resources, is an accessible resource aimed at increasing the operational capacity of farmers markets across the state. Alaska's over 990 farmers have the potential to grow the backbone of Alaska's food security through farmers markets, and to increase local food production and market potential around the state, through this regenerative industry.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW & DEEPER INQUIRIES

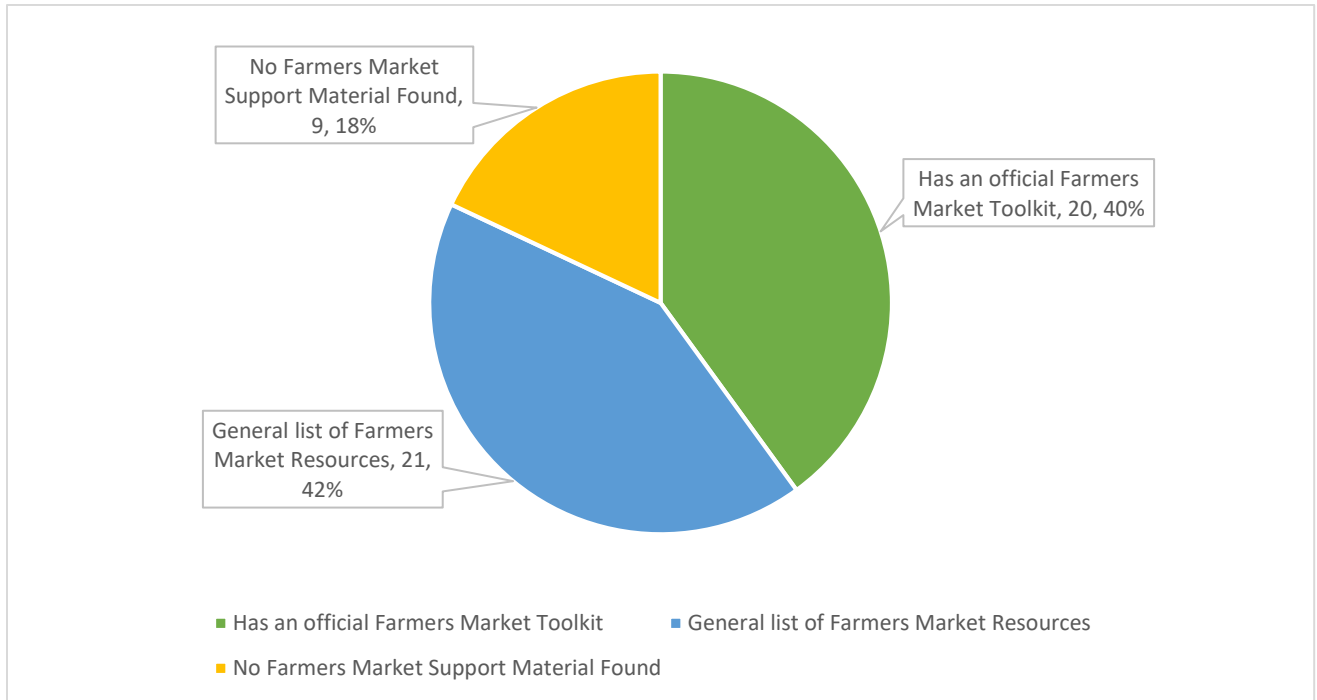
In order to design a survey tool in which to examine the needs of a wide range of Alaskan farmers markets, I completed a traditional literature review focused on farmers market operational resources by state. The survey tool, which is examined in the following chapters, revealed areas where market managers and organizers expressed the need for resources and identified topic considerations, activities, and suggested practices to be included in the toolkit. To get a better idea of what kinds of resources are currently available nationally and how they are presented, the literature review included the following search terms:

- farmers market operations
- farmers market planning
- farmers market guide
- farmers market toolkits
- farmers market association
- farmers market manual
- community food systems planning
- farmers market needs assessment
- state department or division of agriculture

The terms above were paired with each of the 50 United States state names. The search was done utilizing the GOOGLE web-based search engine within the CHROME browser.

The findings indicate that nationally, as of June 2021, there are 37 states with at least one official farmers market support organization (Farmers Market Coalition, b., n.d.), while most of

the 13 remaining states are supported by government agencies and health promotion, tourism, or economic development entities (see Appendix A for types of farmers market support organizations). Nine states have no direct support at all. Just 20 states had official farmers market toolkits, while 21 had general lists of standalone resources for both market organizers and vendors.



*Table 1: State Survey of Available Farmers Market Resource Assets*

After identifying state by state resources, I then randomly selected 13 states, out of the 41 that have either a toolkit and/or resources, and surveyed the topics covered to get a general idea of what might be of interest to Alaska’s markets. The “Topics” list was created by reviewing toolkits’ table of contents, resource lists, and incorporating expressed interest from Alaska’s market organizers gathered during previous AFMA annual meetings and events. States included in this portion of the literature review were: Arizona, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Kentucky, Minnesota, New York, Missouri, New Mexico, Oregon, South Carolina, Vermont, and Washington.

TOPIC	Percent of States with Topic Information
Organizational structure	69%
Food Safety and Sanitation	62%
Government Regulation	77%
Vendor support	15%
Staff management and training	77%
Vendor training	31%
Social Media	38%
Marketing (general)	85%
Stress/ Mental health (vendors and organizers)	0.00%
Food Access Programs (SNAP/WIC)	85%
Fundraising Strategy	69%
Business Management	62%
Budgeting	69%
Location Selection	62%
Amenity Procurement at Location	31%
Market Metrics (tracking and reporting)	54%
Legal Considerations	38%
Policy Development	77%
Insurance (for vendors and organizers)	69%
Disasters/ Severe Weather/ Emergencies	15%
Cultural Equity (ex. translations, immigration)	0.00%
Community Engagement	8%

Table 2: Survey of Farmers Market Resources by Topic

## Toolkit and Their Creators Review

Finally, I reviewed toolkits and corresponded with some of their creators for information on how the toolkits were created, lessons learned, and what feedback they received. In West Virginia, toolkit organizers identified common issues by surveying state markets and technical assistance providers, as well as nationally identified recurring needs and best practices (Eades, Nix, & Crane, 2016, p. 10). Arizona’s *The Farmers Market Toolkit*, compiled by Be Healthy Arizona’s Healthy Local Food System Working Group in 2016, was “designed to help individuals and small groups who want to strengthen their community’s access to food by creating a farmers market or improving an existing one in their local community” (Be Healthy AZ, n.d.). The toolkit’s content is “based on the experiences of successful farmers market organizers and managers in Arizona and across the country” (Be Healthy AZ, n.d.).

Iowa's *Farmers Market Manager Toolkit* was informed with both interviews and surveys with “experienced managers and vendors providing insight on farmers markets, as well as input and resources from “extension, non-profit, and government agency staff” (Northeast Iowa RC&D, 2018). In addition, the project team for the Market Manager Manual section of the toolkit “combined broad best practices with ideas and encouragement from real Iowa farmers market managers... this place-based approach offers potential market managers and existing market managers in Iowa an opportunity to connect with colleagues” to further build their markets’ capacities (Northeast Iowa RC&D, b., 2018).

The Alaska farmers market toolkit will be modeled after various state association toolkits, like those discussed above, with Washington State Farmers Market Association (WSFMA) (Donovan & Kinney, 2021) being the primary inspiration. Like many other state organizations, WSFMA has relied on their own familiarity and knowledge of running markets to inform what resources are offered. In a January 2021 email exchange with current Executive Director Colleen Donovan, I asked if any surveys or market manager interviews were utilized in creating the toolkit, to which she responded with, “No, not that I remember – it was mostly based on our experiences running farmers markets. Feel free to copy or adapt anything you’d like, we are happy to support Alaska’s association” (C. Donovan, personal communication, January 28, 2021).

I also reached out to Hawaii’s state organizers, as Alaska shares many of the same challenges of being a non-contiguous state, as well as being the two newest states in the nation, with high food costs, high cost of living (Fried, 2017), robust tourism industries (Lockhart & Giles-Sims, 2021), distinct indigenous populations displaced through colonization (Braden & Richards, 2021), and disperse rural and urban centers (de Melo Barros, 2019). They are also



early in their planning and operations stages in building a farmers market support network. In an email correspondence with Donna Mitts, Program Assistant & Garden Educator at the Kohala Center described their process: “Basically we took the results of our needs assessment and started offering some webinars to support those needs... We have Technical Assistants on each of our islands which are also counties. Our team meets monthly to discuss our progress, challenges, etc. Pretty much everything you see on the HFMA website is a result of our investigations” (D. Mitts, personal communication, February 16, 2021).

Mitts also described how they used lived experience to inform offerings, stating that “Most of our team leads have been involved with farmers markets directly, so we are mostly aware of other markets' needs.” I inquired about the process of collecting enough survey responses to adequately represent various needs. Mitts explained some challenges of working with busy market managers and stated that persistency, along with explaining goals and benefits, like market promotion, went a long way in helping garner survey responses- useful advice for planning AFMA’s survey rollout efforts. Finally, Mitts offered words of support and partnership, saying, “Let me know if you have additional questions, and we'll do our best to help support our sister state!”

The literature review and deeper inquiry with market support organizations helped me to create an Alaska Farmers Market organizers survey with a robust set of inclusions to measure what markets find valuable. The survey also helped to paint a picture of our current market landscape. Using both past personal experiences with market surveys, I also gained both reaffirming and new insight on effective dissemination and participation. AFMA believes that the Alaska farmers market toolkit will be invaluable for market organizers and vendors trying to encourage the growth and sustainability of farmers markets, from large and urban to small and

rural, and increase economic opportunities for farmers. There is tremendous value in prioritizing the expressed needs of the intended users of the toolkit- Alaska's farmers market organizers. Centering these people and their input throughout the design process ensures relevance and usability of the toolkit, while creating greater equity within Alaska's farmers markets, regardless of their capacities, location, or resources.

## CHAPTER THREE

### SURVEY DESIGN

The Alaska Farmers Market Association (AFMA) currently serves all 56 farmers markets across the state, with at least 30 markets actively participating in conversations, events, or promotional programs. The majority of Alaska's Farmers Markets have expressed interest in receiving tools and guidance for running more efficient, consistent, and safe markets. The data generated by this Capstone project will inform the Alaska farmers market toolkit. As a proposed template for creating successful, safe, and inclusive farmers markets, the toolkit will outline steps involved in forming, operating, and vending at markets and provide resources, considerations, activities, suggestions, and best practices, to foster collaborative problem solving with place-based and led design. By examining the needs and preferences of Alaska's market organizers, this Capstone project will provide AFMA with a proposed list of toolkit chapters and recommendations for its organization, dissemination, and sustainability.

The scope of this Capstone constitutes phase one of the AFMA toolkit project. It includes a needs assessment survey completed by farmers market managers and organizers across the state. The survey includes both questions traditionally asked by AFMA, like details used to inform and update the Market Directory, as well as questions specific to toolkit resources and preferences on AFMA support activities and priorities. Utilizing both AFMA's established network of market organizers and other support agencies and organizations, a wide net was cast to obtain input with regard to resources needed.

Survey participants included people living in Alaska, adults over the age of 18, a mix of age, gender, ethnicity (age/ gender/ ethnicity is not a distinguishing factor in this study), who are

Alaskan market managers or market organizers in cases where there is no formal market manager position. All 50 Alaskan farmers markets (*note: through the survey process, six additional markets were identified*) were asked to complete a toolkit needs assessment survey, given that their organizers are in the most experienced position to meaningfully inform the toolkit. For three months, from March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 to May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021, the 20-minute survey was open and promoted through email newsletters, social media posts, at the Annual Summit, and in an Annual Meeting presentation, as well as through direct phone calls. Participation, or lack of participation in the survey, will not impact markets' standing with the Alaska Farmers Market Association. The resulting toolkit will be provided to all markets regardless of participation.

The majority of the surveys were completed online through Google Forms, by an identified market manager, organizer, or authorized representative. Those without access to the internet or otherwise unable to complete the survey were called, and the survey was completed with them over the phone. The survey (see Appendix B) included questions on market demographics (i.e., vendor makeup, number of staff), market contact information (i.e., website, physical location), opportunities to rank toolkit inclusion priorities and preferences and suggest existing resources that could be shared and modified.

Once surveys were completed, I analyzed statistical responses, narrative responses, and descriptive market operational data to determine what resources markets need and/or may offer for use to other Alaskan farmers markets. Toolkit preferences were not analyzed by market identity, but rather these preferences were compared by borough location and organizational structure.

The survey revealed manager/ organizer preference on priority areas for toolkit inclusion while identifying trends in preferences in relation to organizational features and capacities,

operational structure, and geographic locations. Most survey questions were quantitative, while some open-ended qualitative questions provided additional information for toolkit preferences and organizational priorities.

The stated benefits for participating in the survey included:

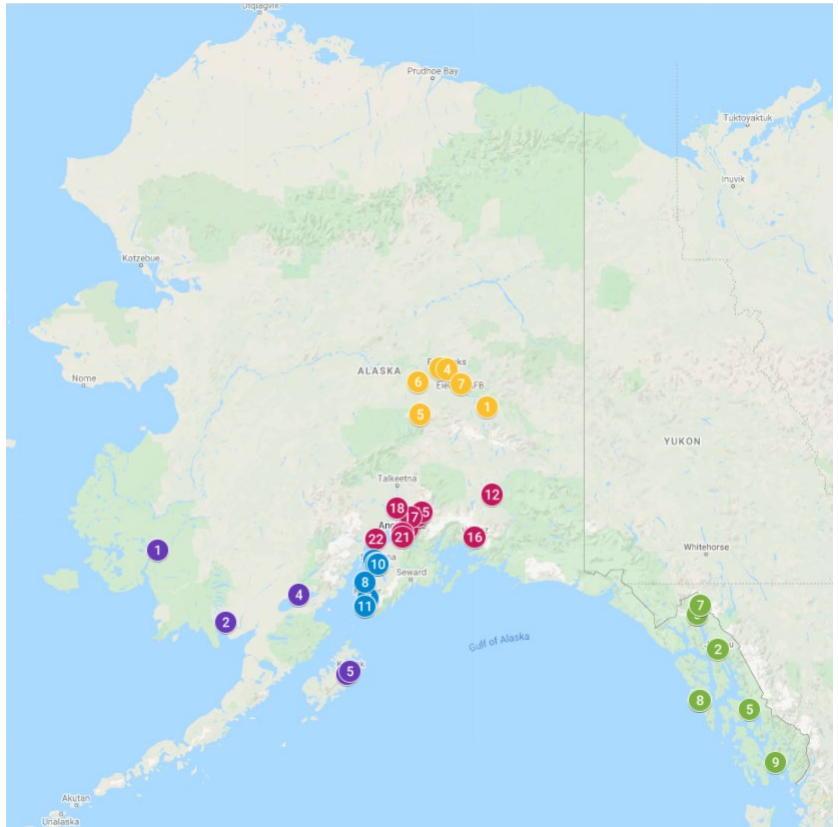
- increased marketing for participating markets through advertised market listings
- access to resources to improve market management and operations
- an opportunity to contribute toolkit resources for the greater good of all Alaskan markets

Most importantly, the recommendations for the toolkit were crowdsourced and informed directly by those operating and managing farmers markets, giving those who will be utilizing the resource a voice in its creation. Resources gleaned and created through the survey will be shared and accessible to the general public, with a specific focus on sharing with Alaskan farmers markets and with farmers market communities beyond Alaska.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### SURVEY RESULTS

This chapter provides both visual and narrative analysis of the survey data collected, revealing themes across responses. A synthesis of both qualitative and quantitative analysis will directly inform recommendations to the Alaska Farmers Market Association for toolkit creation, found in the following chapter. Of the 56 markets identified statewide, 30 markets responded by the cutoff date of May 31<sup>st</sup>. This equates to a 54% survey response rate, and it is important to note this limitation – not all markets were represented, but multiple attempts were made to reach each and every market.



*Figure 5: 2021 Alaska Farmers Market Directory (Alaska Farmers Market Association, 2021)*

#### **Market Demographics**

The first section of the survey included demographic and location information, used primarily to inform AFMA’s interactive Market Directory, the state’s only actively updated list of Alaska’s farmers markets. The directory is used to inform consumers about market location, operating hours, and what benefits (like SNAP) are accepted, and to provide additional

information like phone number and website. The directory is especially useful for those markets that lack their own websites or social media accounts and is updated annually. Directory specific questions included:

- Market name and contact name
- Market physical location and mailing address
- Market email and phone number
- Market season dates, market days, and hours
- Market website, social media

Additional questions were asked that explored borough location and year established to gain a better sense of the different needs by location and length of time operating. The survey received the most response from the Kenai Peninsula and the Municipality of Anchorage, both areas with the most markets (see Fig. 5 above).

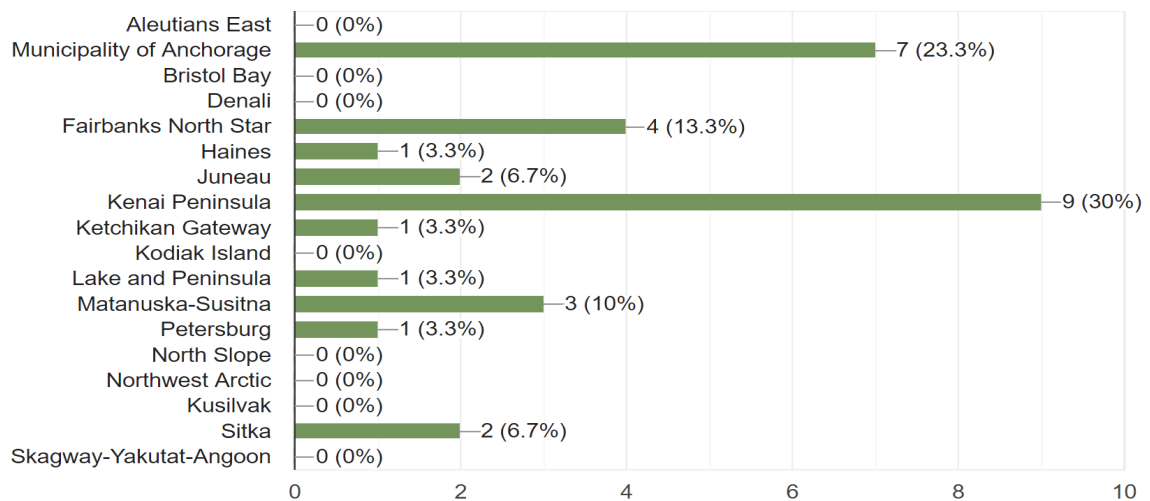


Table 3: Physical of Farmers Market - Borough

Reviewing the year various markets were established reveals that most markets developed within the past decade, and five were established in the last two years, a very impressive number given

the economic and social challenges of the COVID19 pandemic.

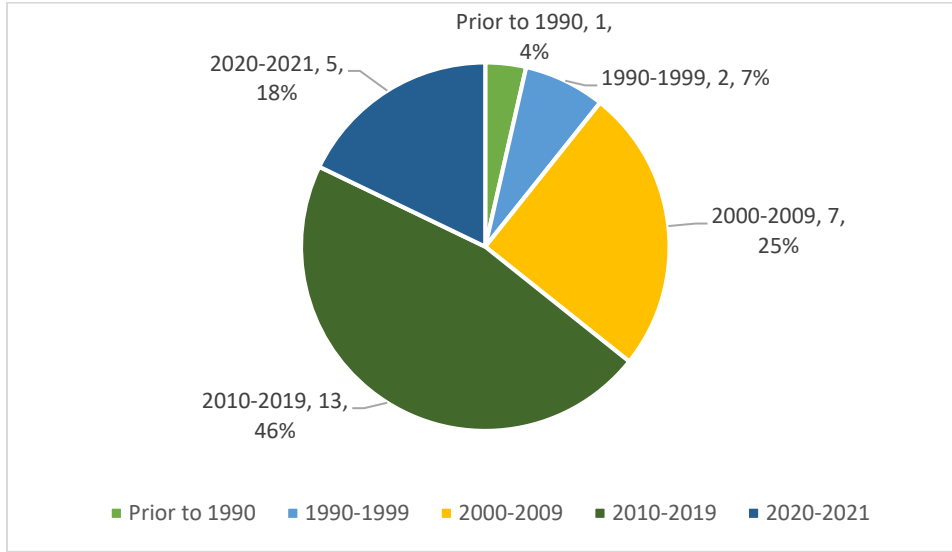


Table 4: Market's Founding Years

There is at least one Alaskan farmers market operating each day of the week, with Saturday and Wednesday being the most popular days for markets. Some markets operate on multiple days. Additionally, the majority of the markets have 11-20 operating dates. Five markets have 51 or more days/ annually; those were located in larger population centers like Anchorage and Juneau.

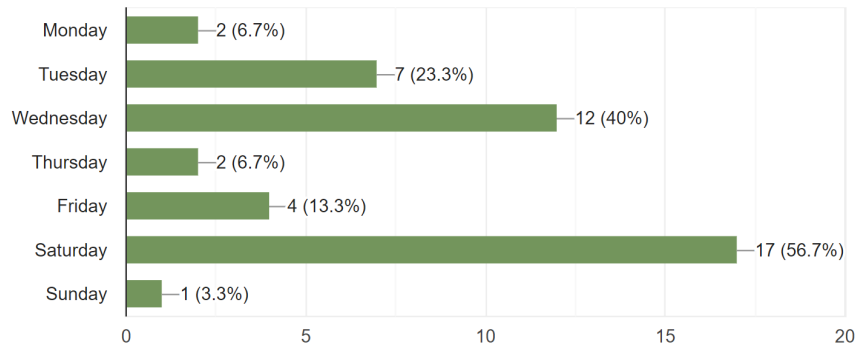


Table 5: Market Days of Operation



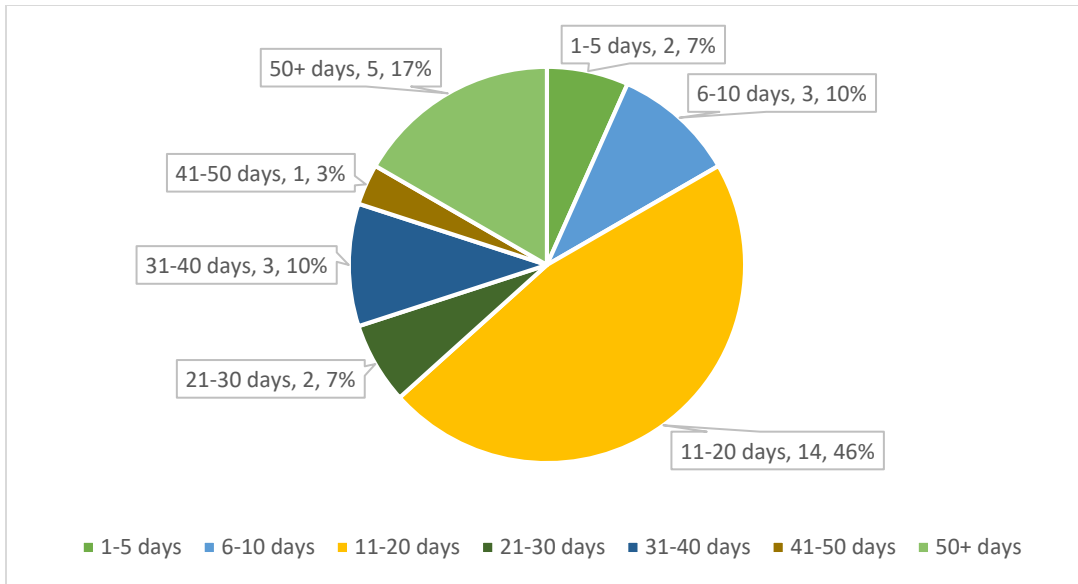


Table 6: Average Number of Annual Operating Days

Also included in the demographics section of the survey were questions about infrastructure and access. Most markets (67%) are accessible via the Alaska road system, while the rest are fly-in or boat in only. All 30 responding markets were located in within cell phone coverage, while access to electricity, water, ATM, and internet varied.

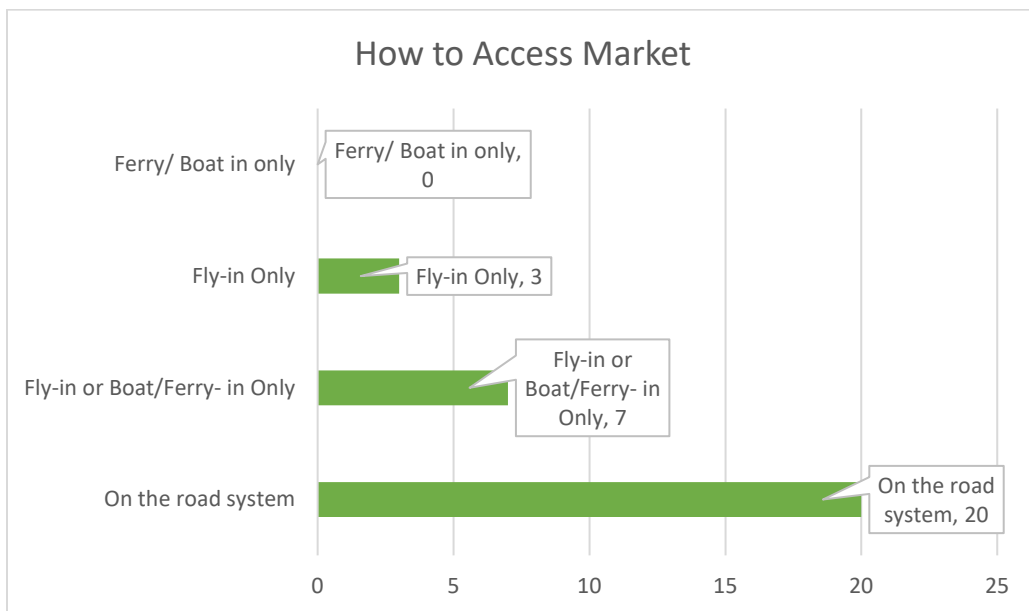


Table 7: How Market is Accessed

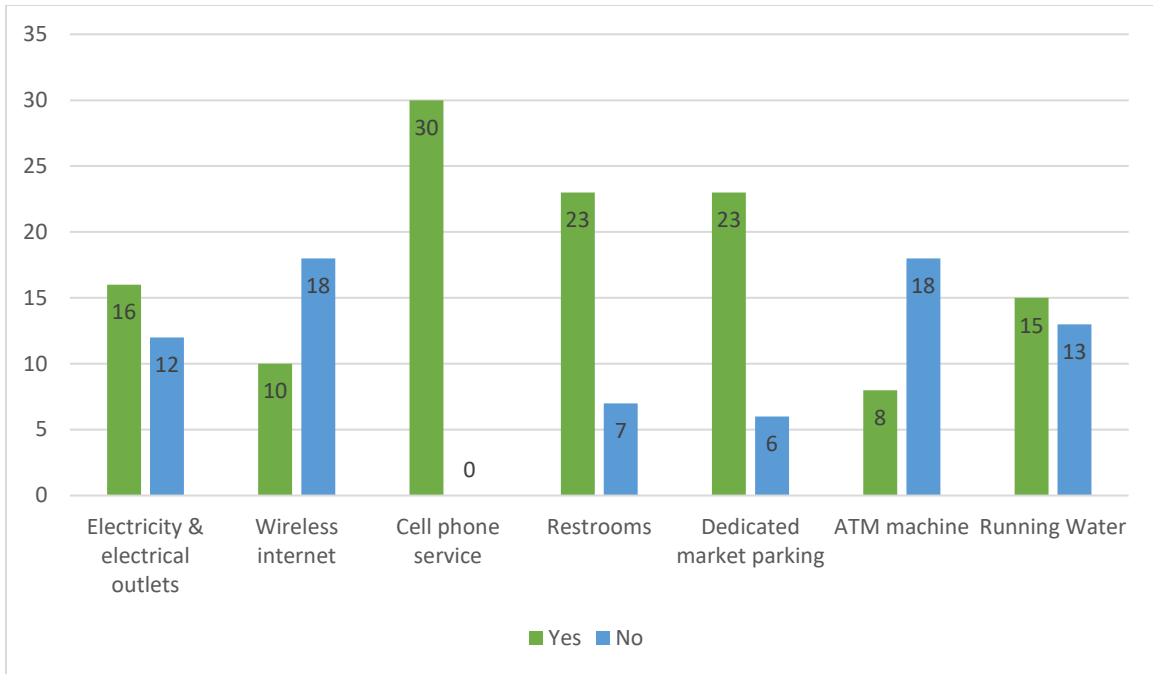


Table 8: Infrastructure & Services Available at Farmers Markets

### Market Organizational Structure

The survey reveals the various governance and operational structures present in Alaska’s farmers market sector. All markets reported at least one person helping with daily operations of the market: 61% (2-4 employees/volunteers), 28% (just one person), and 11% (more than five employees/volunteers). Most utilize a variety of paid and volunteer time. No single market offered year-round, full-time employment.

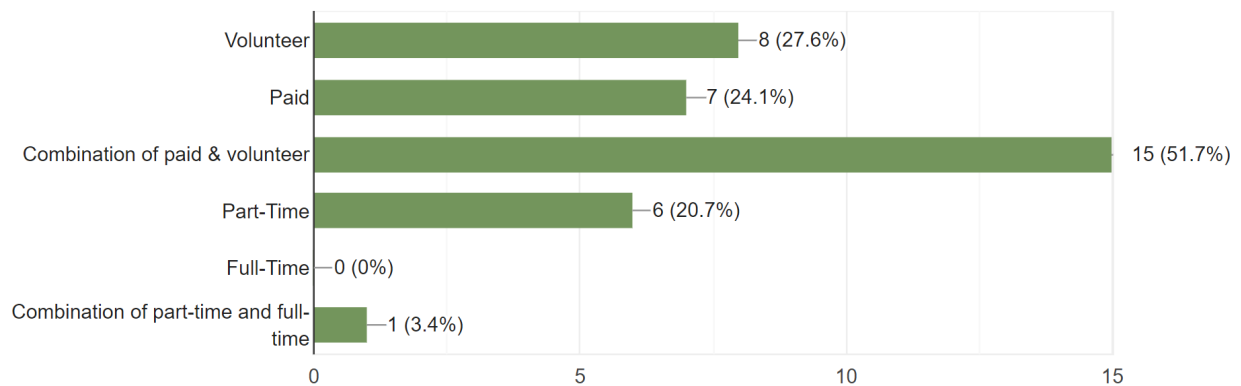


Table 9: Employment Status of Market Operators/ Managers

In terms of governance, 40% of markets do not have a governing body like a board of directors or planning committee, though some are directed by sponsor/parent organization steering committees or boards. Over half of Alaska’s markets depend on vendor fees to support their markets financially, while just under half rely on grants and business donations/ sponsorships.

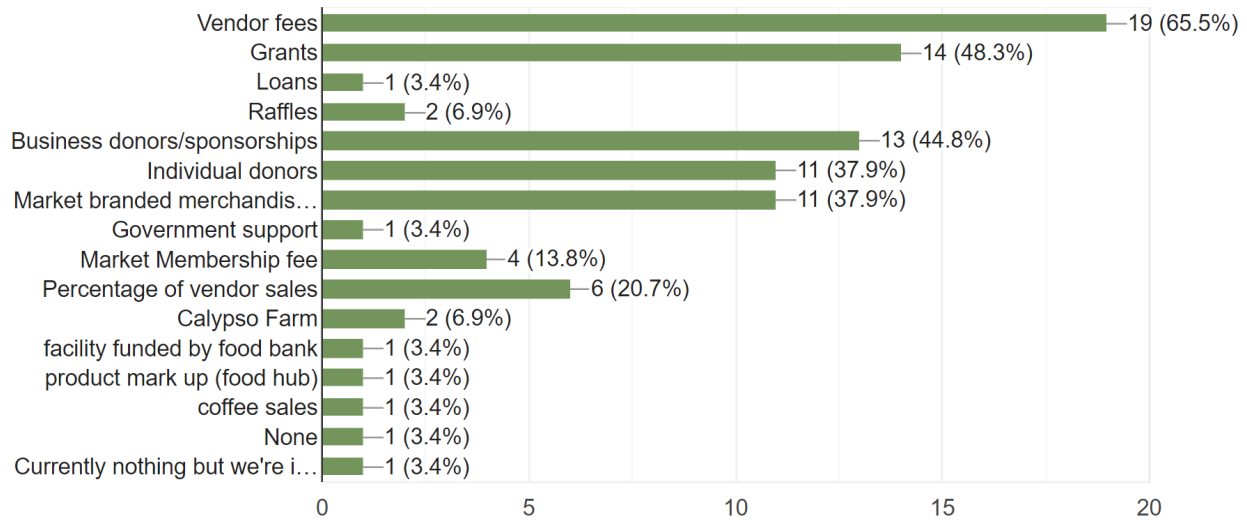


Table 10: Financial Support Activities

## Vendor Demographics

The survey also seeks to build a better overall picture of the makeup of vendors at markets. The total number of annual vendors at a market correlated strongly to the length of time a market had been open, as well as to the number of other markets located nearby. The longer the market had been open, the more vendors were present. Areas with a higher density of markets saw fewer overall vendors per market. All markets had at least one produce grower, a requirement to be considered a farmers market by the Alaska Farmers Market Association. AFMA defines a farmers market as “a venue that is available for a gathering of vendors of local food, whose director publishes regular business hours and is actively seeking farm vendors” (Alaska Farmers Market Association, 2021).

Crafters were present at most markets, while seafood/shellfish and meat vendors were harder to find, possibly correlating with strict state permitting for processing these types of products, as well as the low number of processing facilities. Interestingly, prepared food offerings were connected to markets with higher attendance counts.

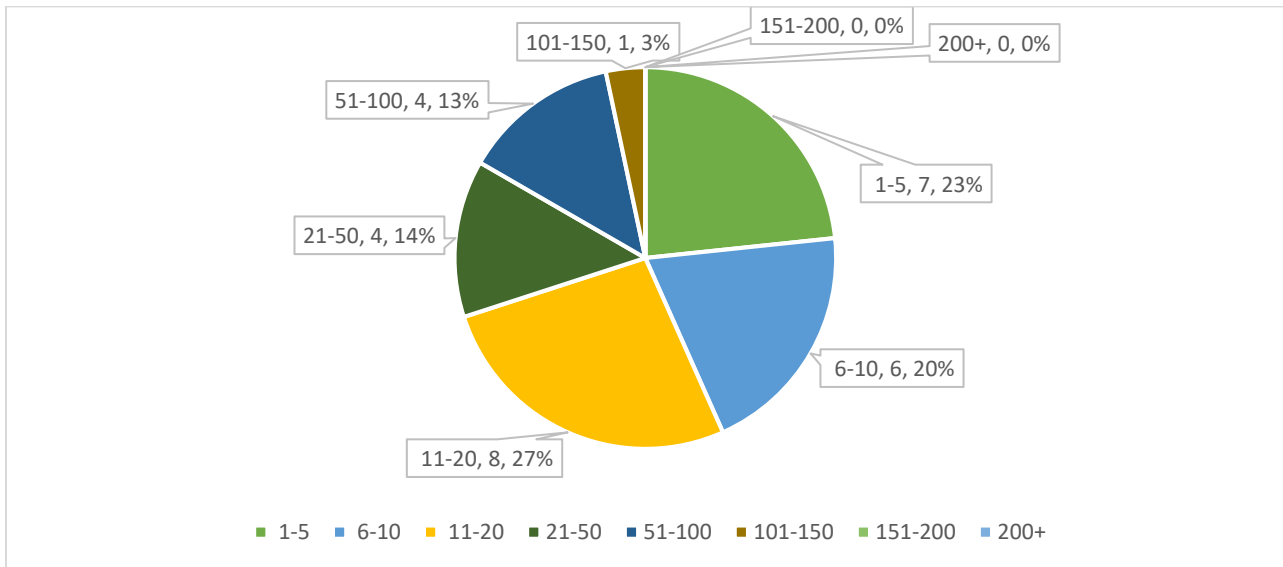


Table 11: Total Number of Vendors Annually

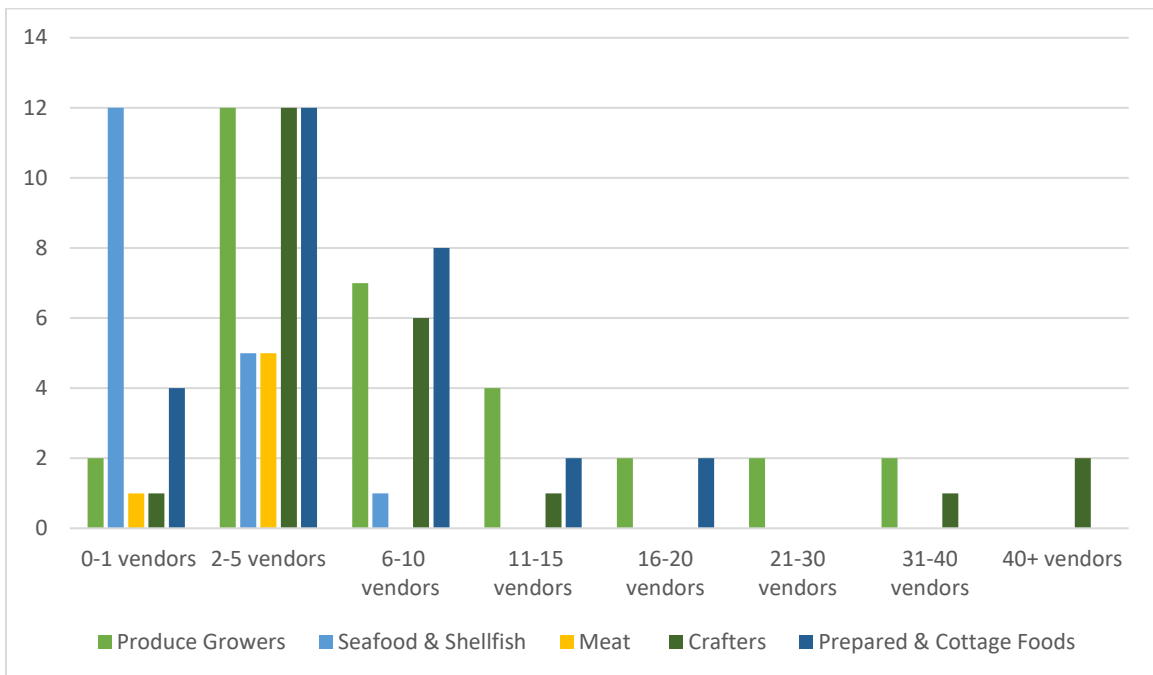


Table 12: Vendor Types Per Year

The survey also examines the relationship between vendors and market organizations in terms of helping support costs of operating. Less than half of the respondents answered questions in this section. 50% report vendors paying a daily or annual vendor fee, and only one market reports requiring vendors to pay a membership fee. Additionally, only one market requires vendors to pay a percentage of sales to the market, a model that has been employed in other states to spread the burden of funding markets amongst vendors. Interestingly though, this is contradicted by the survey question “how is your market financially supported,” where six markets indicated that they collected a portion of vendors’ sales.

**Food Access: SNAP/WIC/SFMNP**

Across the state, markets operate in low-income and low-access areas, where some residents depend on public assistance programs to meet basic needs. Many markets are community centers where people seek healthy, fresh foods, with accessibility increasing every season. Less than 25% of Alaska’s farmers market are certified to accept SNAP benefits (Khlifi & Mixon, 2018). There are 13 markets statewide that accept SNAP, the majority of which established programs after 2011. There are 14 markets that accept WIC, and 12 accept SFMNP coupons, but many more individual vendors accept these benefits as well. Of those

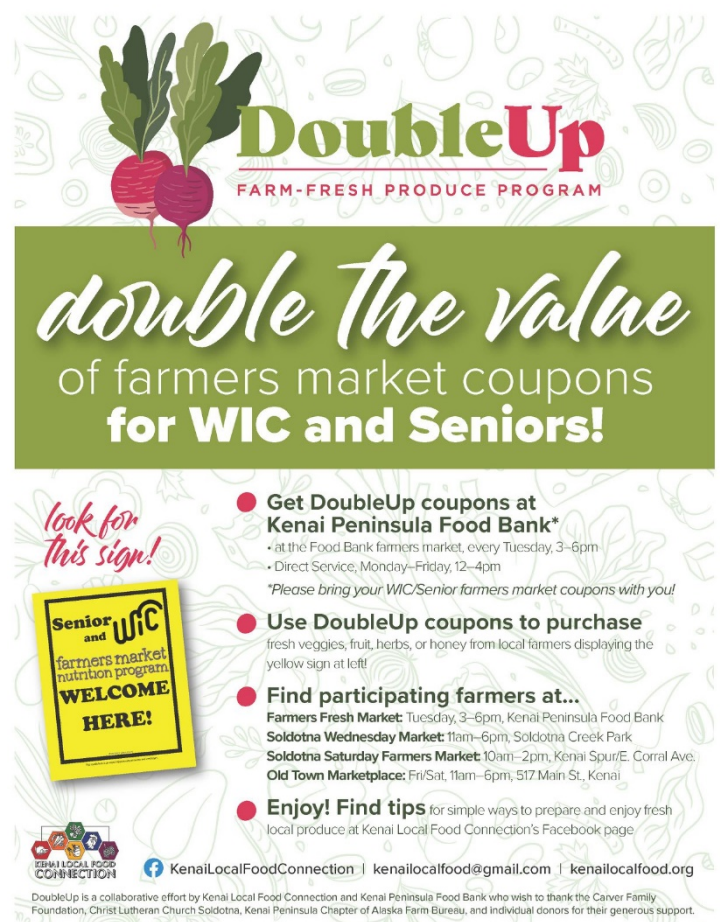


Figure 6: DoubleUp Farm Fresh Produce Program Flyer, Kenai Central Peninsula (Facebook, 2020)

who accept food assistance programs, more than half offer a doubling program to match the amount of money people spend at the market, a win-win for both customers and producers. The doubling programs are often funded through community fundraisers, private donors, and grants. None of the doubling programs in Alaska are currently government-funded, like those in other states like Michigan (Fair Food Network., n.d.) and (WSFMA, n.d.) Of markets that do not currently accept SNAP, more than half are interested in learning more about how to set it up at their market. The survey showed that seven markets were not aware that farmers markets and eligible vendors could accept SNAP cards.

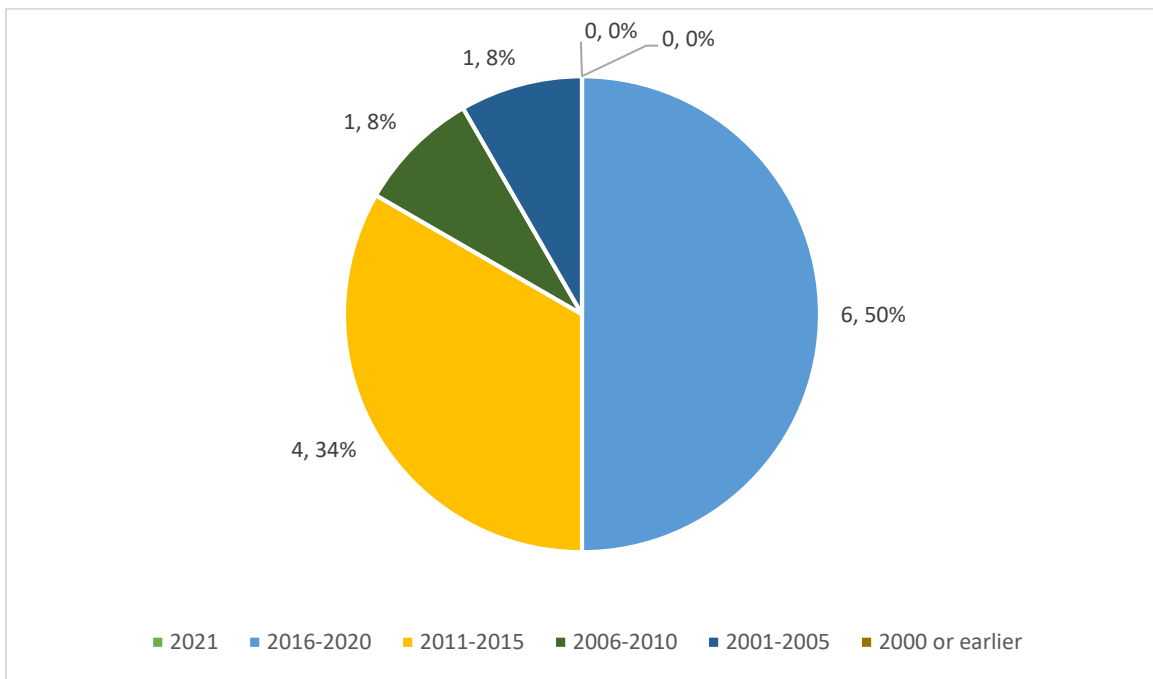


Table 13: Year Market Became Eligible to Accept SNAP Benefits

Annual redemptions of SNAP benefits at markets varied amongst markets, but those with higher redemptions correlated with higher overall sales in general, as well as with markets with more staff and volunteer capacity.

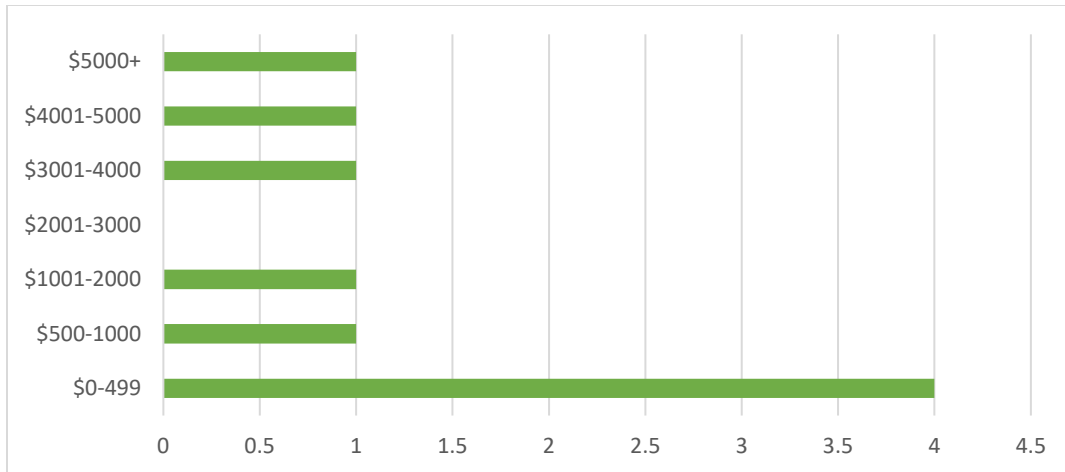


Table 14: SNAP Benefits Redeemed Annually

### Shopper and Market Activity

The statewide survey found that half of all markets have 1-100 shoppers per week, not unexpected given the small population sizes of many host market towns. One market, one of the oldest in the state, reports between 5001-10,000 weekly shoppers. While some markets don't collect sales data from their vendors (in fact, roughly 45% do not), those that do provide an idea of how much money people are spending at farmers markets. Of the reported sales data, about 30% of markets have sales of \$20,000 annually, and one market brings in over one million dollars annually. It's also interesting to note that those with ATM machines, dedicated parking, and restrooms often reported higher sales than those without access to those.

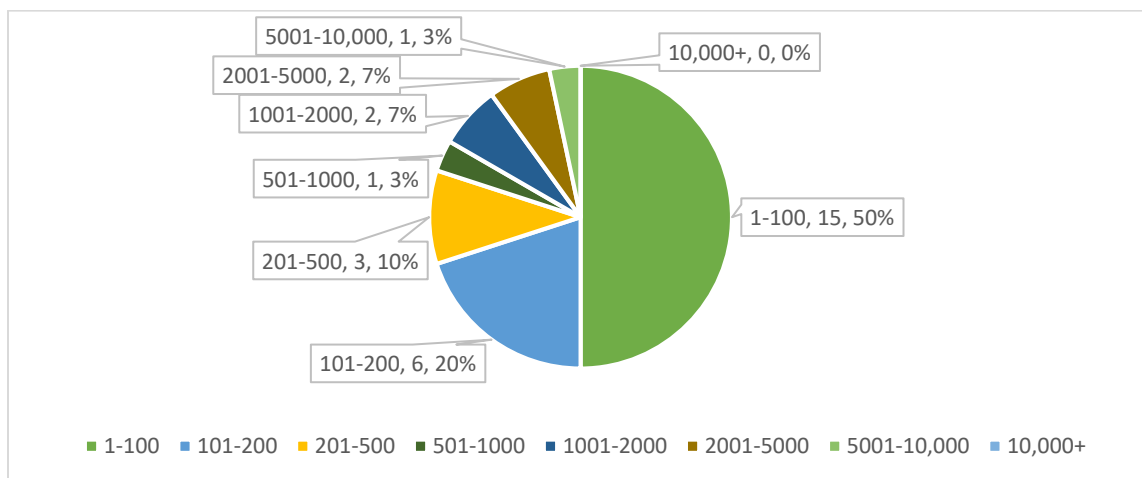


Table 15: Weekly Farmers Market Shoppers

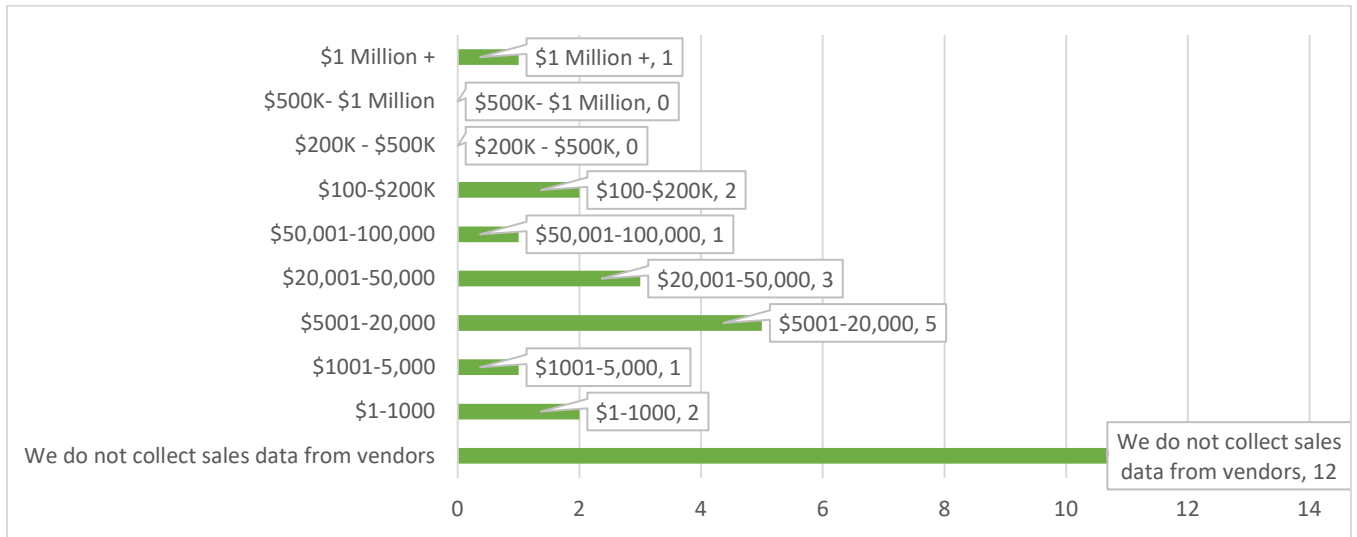


Table 16: Estimated Total Annual Sales Per Market

Markets often host a variety of educational and entertainment activities intended to increase community engagement and visitors to the market, in turn increasing sales for its vendors, and to “offer events that showcase the market as being a place for many segments of the Community” (Biasillo, Eggert, & Ott-Wilcox, 2020, p. 45). A third of the markets reported collaborating with local food access organizations, like a food bank or soup kitchen, to glean or accept food donations.

Activity Type	Percent of Markets Offering
My market does not provide any additional activities	18%
Cook Demonstrations	43%
Kids Activities	46%
Cooperative extension demonstrations/ outreach	21%
Non-profit outreach	50%
Musical guests or other performances	54%
Community Potlucks/ Meals	11%
Other community outreach (other than non-profits)	4%
Community gardens/ planting	11%

Table 17: Community Activities Offered at Farmers Market



## Toolkit Preferences: General Operations & Vendor Considerations

To ensure the Alaska farmers market toolkit is meeting the expressed needs of market organizers, respondents were asked to rank a variety of market operations topics for their usefulness. They were also able to suggest more topics that were not listed as options. Interest in both general topics and vendor-focused topics was measured. Additional topic suggestions included: SNAP for food hubs and online sales of local food, employment status (contractor vs. employee), and regional tax laws and licensing requirements for vendors.

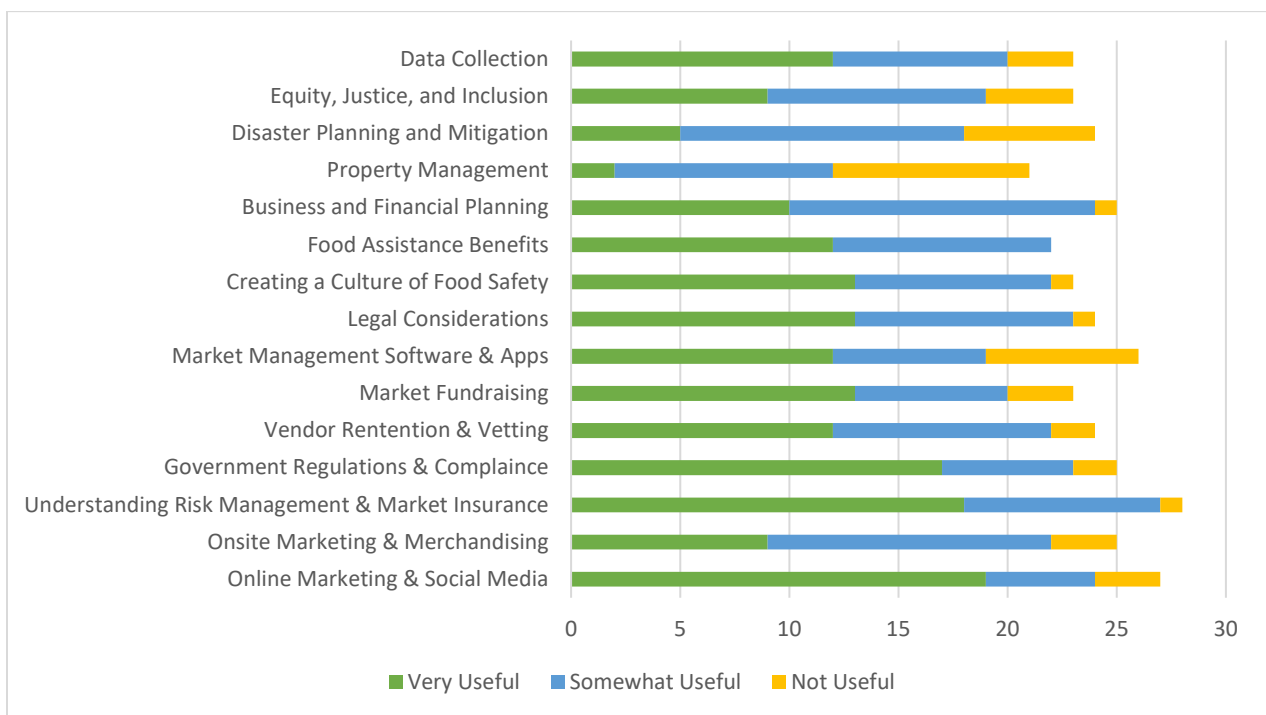


Table 18: General Topics: Which of these training & resource topics are most useful for your market

Most topics received “very useful” or “somewhat useful,” while only one topic, property management, received a large portion of “not useful” rankings. Given how relatively new markets in the state are, coupled with low staffing capacity, it’s no surprise that most topics would be ranked as very to somewhat useful. The majority of survey participants did not have resources to contribute to the toolkit, with the exception of the following topics (*note: only those topics with more than one offer are listed*):

- Vendor Registration/ Sign-up forms (6 markets offered help)
- Creating a Culture of Food Safety; Data Collection; Disaster Planning and Mitigation (3 markets offered help)
- Understanding Risk Management/ Market Insurance; Government Regulations and Compliance; Fundraising; Market Management Software; Food Assistance Benefits; Equity, Justice, and Inclusion

The survey also asked market organizers to rank training and resource topics that would be useful for their vendors. Every category received at least 11 “very useful” rankings, and most were seen as very to somewhat useful. This may be linked to Alaska’s relatively new farming workforce: the state leads the nation in the percent of new and beginning producers. Almost half – 46 percent – of the state's farmers have ten years or less experience on any farmers (USDA-NASS, 2018).

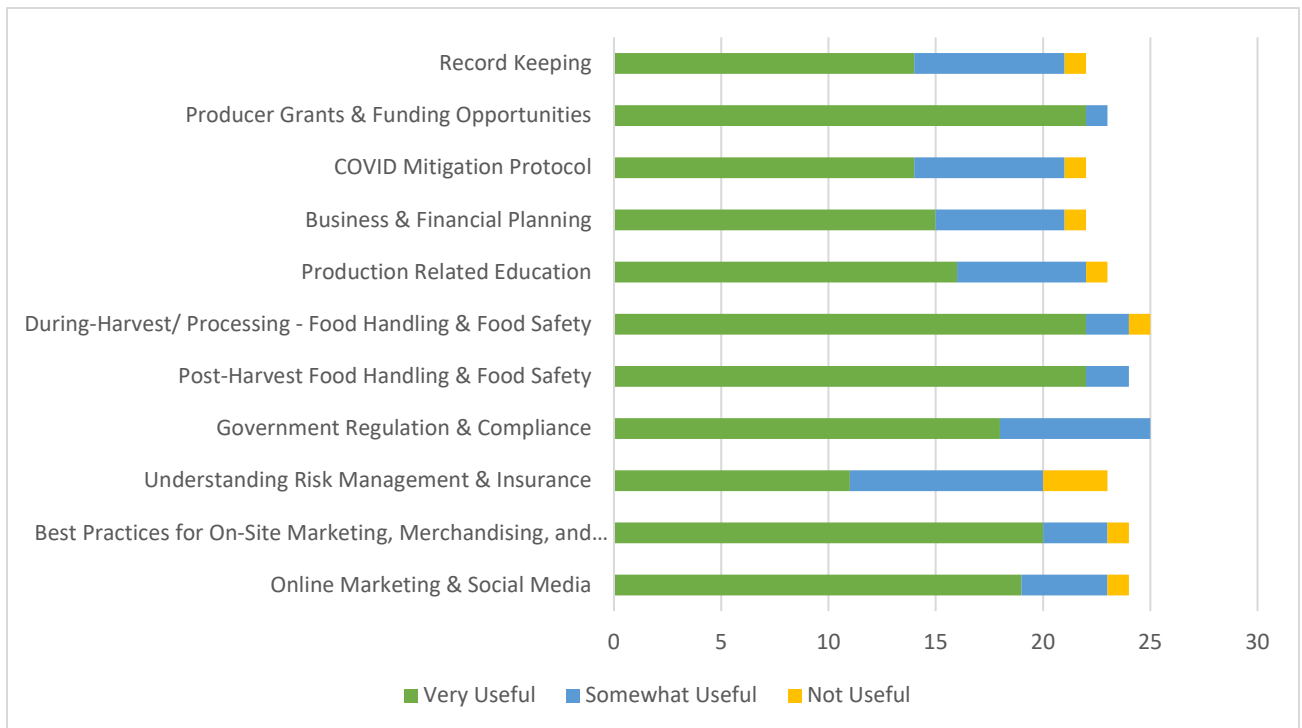


Table 19: Vendor Topics: Which of these training & resource topics do you think are most useful for your vendors?

Once again, the majority of survey participants did not have vendor related resources to contribute to the toolkit, although every topic garnered at least two markets with resources to share, with Record-Keeping and Online Marketing & Social Media topics receiving three offers of shared resources. Those who did offer resources tended to be the longer-established markets.

### **Preferences for Alaska Farmers Market Association Support Activities**

The final section of the toolkit needs assessment survey included questions gauging preferences for how to connect across the Alaska Farmers Market Association network and for activities and initiatives. These responses will contribute to long-term strategic planning for the organization, informing financial planning while insuring optimal accessibility to resources and opportunities. Local/ regional in-person meetings and an email listserv, along with a Facebook group, were shown as the most useful networking and communications methods. For training and networking formats, most prefer annual gatherings, like conferences and summits, which have been held online for the past two years.

Online guides and resources were also preferred to printed ones, though “geography and infrastructure still make it challenging to get reliable internet service to rural communities” (Matanuska Telephone Association, 2021), making a case for hybrid delivery of programming and resources. Potential AFMA offering preferences reiterate the need for more funding for Alaska farmers markets, with fundraising/grant writing workshops and market mini-grants as the most popular selections, followed by market manager training programs and joint marketing campaigns.

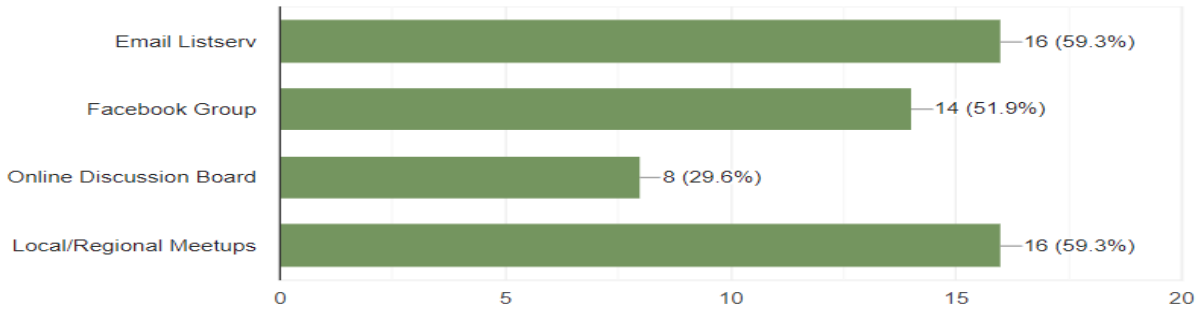


Table 20: Preferred networking & communications methods for Market Managers/ Organizers Network

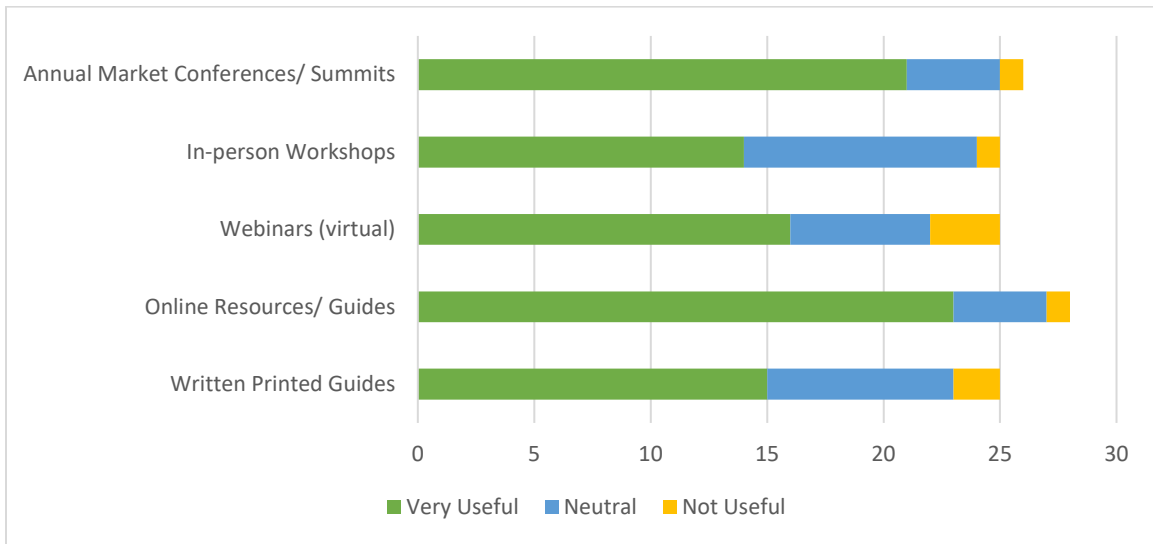


Table 21: Preferred Training Formats

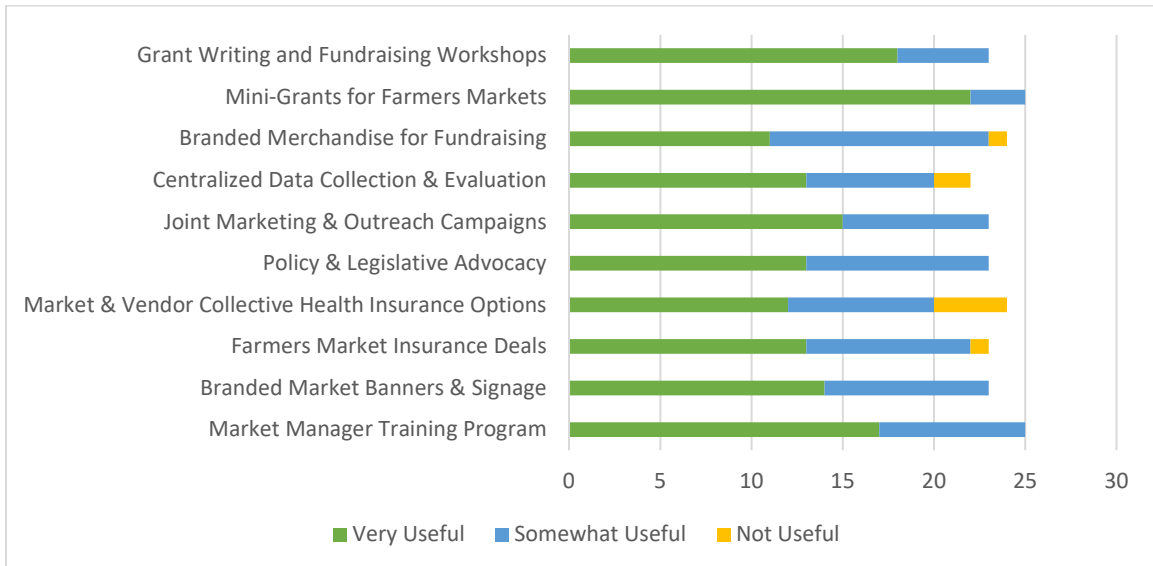


Table 22: Projects, programs, or benefits would you find most useful as potential AFMA offerings

## CHAPTER FIVE

### TOOLKIT RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations for the toolkit emerged from the process of collecting and analyzing the data provided by the statewide needs assessment survey:

#### **Formatting & Dissemination:**

- The Alaska farmers market toolkit should be designed and formatted for printing as well as for digital dissemination. The Alaska toolkit will be modeled aesthetically after Washington State's *Farmers Market Management Toolkit* (Donovan & Kinney, 2021), which allows for continuous revision and additions. Every market listed with AFMA will receive both a free physical copy of the Toolkit, as well as a link to the online digital version, which will be hosted on the AFMA website, available for both viewing and downloading. The Toolkit link will be available for any agriculture or food support agencies, non-profits, markets, or adjacent organizations to share freely with their network, post on their websites, and use in technical training activities.
- Efforts should be made to promote the Toolkit annually, especially during the late winter/early spring market planning season. This can be accomplished through outreach within the AFMA network, promotional activities like newsletters, and through existing partners' networks. In addition, AFMA should host, record, and share at least two webinars to introduce the toolkit and provide instruction on how to use it.
- AFMA should also present the Toolkit during at least one Alaska-based agricultural conference. Initial evaluation by market organizers should ascertain areas for

improvements, additional topics to explore and collect shareable resources. Continual evaluation will be necessary to stay remain current and incorporate new information in the farmers markets field.

Additionally, Colleen Donovan, Executive Director for WSFMA and co-author of the *Washington State Farmers Market Toolkit* provided AFMA with a plethora of resources and suggestions (C. Donovan, personal communication, July 7, 2021):

- Create a style guide for consistent formatting (see Appendix C for an example)
- Use plain language and avoid jargon – there will always be toolkit users who are new to the industry
- Remember that the value you are offering markets is by filtering through copious amounts of information – look for quality and relevancy. Focus on curating and adapting.
- Decide ahead of time how the toolkit will be integrated with existing resources and how often updating will happen.
- Honor the quirkiness and personalization that farmers markets embody instead of trying to standardize everything.
- Avoid the term “best practices” and instead offer resources that are open to interpretation and modification to meet individualized market needs.
- Don’t be overly prescriptive – there are many ways of doing things. A good approach is to offer questions to guide planning, with customizable templates.
- Set up your analytic tools before launching to measure what sections are being used and at what rates. Also, be sure the toolkit meets web security and accessibility requirements
- Choose functionality over aesthetics. For example, spell out full hyperlinks or provide instructions for locating specific resources. Websites and organizations change.

## **Toolkit Content: Chapter Suggestions**

- Marketing and Promotions
  - Online Marketing and Social Media
  - On-site Marketing, Signage, and Merchandising Best Practices
  - Traditional Marketing Routes (ex. newspaper, radio, word of mouth)
- Business & Financial Planning
  - Fundraising for your market
  - Creating a Market
  - Tools for Success (ex. Google Drive overview, QuickBooks)
  - Grants and Foundations
- Creating a Culture of Market Food Safety:
  - Pre-, During-, and Post- Harvest Food Handling Best Practices
  - Regulations & Compliance (Ex. DEC/MUNI permitting)
- Data Collection
  - Tracking and Reporting Techniques and Tools
- Happy Vendors, Happy Markets, Happy Customers
  - Tools for Stress Management and Mental Health
  - Conflict Resolution
  - Gathering and Implementing Community Input
- Infusing justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion into markets
  - Translation services
  - Creating Local Community Partnerships
  - Non-profit Outreach

- Market Operations
  - Selecting a Location
  - Agreements with Property Owners
  - Selecting Amenities Offered
  - Disaster Planning and Mitigation (ex. wildfire, flooding, COVID-19)
  - Rule & Policy Development
  - Staff Management
  - Day of Operations Checklists for Vendors and Market Organizers
- Marketing and Promotions
  - Online Marketing and Social Media
  - On-site Marketing, Signage, and Merchandising Best Practices
  - Traditional Marketing Routes (ex. newspaper, radio, word of mouth)
- Supporting Greater Food Security at Farmers Markets
  - Access/ Processing Nutrition Benefits (SNAP, WIC, Senior FMNP)
  - Working with Food Access Organizations
  - Matching Programs
- Understanding Legal Concerns: Liability, Risk Management, and Insurance
- Vendor Management
  - Recruitment and Retention
  - Vendor Registration/ Sign-up form templates
  - Market Management Software and apps



## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSIONS AND LOOKING FORWARD

The sole mission of the Alaska Farmers Market Association is “to support and promote vibrant and sustainable farmers markets throughout Alaska” (Alaska Farmers Market Association, b., n.d.). Throughout the last five years of operations, as Executive Director, I have worked with numerous market organizers to identify the needs for sustainable success of the state’s farmers markets. Alaska markets often look outside the state for resources and information, but those findings do not always translate well to our specific needs and conditions. The idea for an Alaska farmers market toolkit was hatched after years of researching various government sites, taking inspiration from other markets and state associations, and listening to the expressed needs from market organizers around the state. The needs assessment survey developed for this Capstone project creates a means for those articulated needs and desires to be met while also giving Alaska a roadmap for future farmers market endeavors and priorities.

For example, our 2021 statewide market organizer survey directly informed the objectives and activities of a 2021 USDA AMS Farmers Market Promotion Program grant proposal. During the pandemic, all AFMA activities moved online, and the organization offered a number of educational webinars and summits, often with government agencies as co-presenters, that were free to anyone interested in getting involved. The survey reflected overwhelming support for these virtual webinars, as well as Annual Summits, with interest in building capacity around grant writing and fundraising. Additionally, 100% of respondents stated “high interest” and “somewhat interested” in AFMA initiating joint public marketing and advertising campaigns,

branded market banners and signage, and promotional materials. With this information, AFMA intends to continue improving these offerings moving forward.

Other initiatives informed by the survey are in the works at AFMA. For example, an emerging AFMA project, the “Alaskan Farmers Market Trail,” is aimed at promoting farmers markets as “agritourism,” much like Vermont’s Farm and Food Trail (Dig in VT, n.d.). AFMA also plans to increase low-cost skills training for Alaska’s market organizers and farmers through storytelling and writing workshops that develop skills, build resilience, and increase promotion capacities. Democratic storytelling methods, like digital storytelling, will give a voice and a relatively accessible platform to farmers and markets that choose to share their perspectives and experiences. Workshops will be held virtually and in-person.

As mentioned previously, Alaska shares considerable challenges with other non-contiguous states and territories. In this, there is great potential for examining the overlaps between our local food systems and looking for replicable and sharable solutions. The Alaska farmers market toolkit will be a living document that’s freely open to everyone – it is AFMA’s hope that it is utilized and improved upon by our stakeholders as well as our neighbors.

The survey has given market organizers a platform to indicate their needs for various resources related to farmers market organization and provided a roadmap for AFMA’s future endeavors for the Toolkit and beyond. Priorities for the Toolkit and other Alaska Farmers Market Association activities include:

- Tools to improve and streamline statewide data collection tools and sharing between markets
- Resources for increased SNAP, WIC, and SFMNP outreach for greater benefit redemptions

- Using the Toolkit as a foundation to create and launch a statewide management and training certification program to better professionalize farmers market operations
- Offer new marketing and outreach strategies to create perennial resources for direct to consumer producers
- Provide tools and trainings to markets for creating greater equity, justice, and inclusion in their operations and outreach

Alaska’s agricultural future is bright, but not without its challenges. “Alaska is warming twice as fast as the rest of the country, with winters some 6 degrees warmer than they were 60 years ago. The warming climate has brought new insect infestations and wreaked havoc on some wild game, but it also means apple trees and other plants that were once unable to survive here are now thriving” (Langlois, 2017). A changing climate is opening new growth opportunities, for better and for worse, simultaneously. Alaskans are buying more local food than ever, and more farmers are going into production. The current administration is working to open more lands up for agricultural development (Ellis, 2021). In order to support and measure the growth in direct-to-consumer sales through farmers markets, the Alaska Farmers Market Association required a needs assessment survey to create the scaffolding for a meaningful and useful Toolkit to build more robust, diverse, and well-functioning farmers markets.

Looking forward, these baseline measurements can be used to track improvement, growth, and changing needs over time.



Figure 7: Alaska Grown Logo (Alaska Division of Agriculture, n.d.)

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[https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Full\\_Report/Census\\_by\\_State/Alaska/](https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Full_Report/Census_by_State/Alaska/)

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WSFMA. (n.d.). SNAP EBT Matching Programs. Retrieved July 11, 2021, from Washington State Farmers Market Association: <http://wafarmersmarkets.org/food-access-2/ebt-match/>

APPENDIX A: Organization types contributing to farmers markets toolkits, resources, and general support of farmers markets:

- State departments or divisions of agriculture (ex. Alaska Division of Agriculture)
- State farmers market associations (ex. Washington State Farmers Market Association)
- Statewide agriculture associations or organizations (ex. Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont)
- Environmental organizations groups (ex. The Ecology Center in Berkeley, CA)
- Tourism promotion agencies (ex. From the Land of Kansas)
- Cooperative Extension Service (ex. Purdue – Indiana Cooperative Extension Service)
- Health and Human Services Departments or Health promotion agencies (ex. Arkansas Coalition for Obesity Prevention)
- Grassroots, non-structured or formally established groups (ex. Facebook groups like US Farmers Market Managers Network)
- National organizations supporting all farmers markets (ex. Farmers Market Coalition)
- State chapters of national organizations supporting farming industry (ex. Illinois Farm Bureau)



## APPENDIX B: Survey Tool



# Alaska Farmers Markets - 2021 Market Listing Updates & Toolkit Survey

Hello Alaska Farmers Market Managers and Organizers! We working to update your market information and gearing up for the 2021 Market Season! We are also seeking input from those operating farmers markets to inform our current project- Alaska Farmers Market Manager & Specialty Crop Vendor Toolkit (you may skip any questions in this section). Your voice and opinions are critical to creating resources that truly represents your diverse needs.

The Alaska Farmers Market Association, in its fourth year of operation, will be promoting your market in a number of ways including collective advertising & campaigns aimed at encouraging support of local products and farmers.

Please be sure to indicate if you'd like join (or renew your membership) AFMA and we will send more details, outlining all the ways we plan to support markets, education and planning tools, and more.

Deadline: Monday, April 12, 2021 (note: you may still make updates to market listings after this date, but there may be a delay in getting your listing updated)

This survey should take about 15 minutes|

\* Required



Basic  
Market  
Information

Please let us know if there have been any changes to your market organization or operations.

\*\*This survey is for MARKETS only (individual vendors should not complete this - only those organizing/ managing the market should participate)\*\*

1. Market Name \*

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2. Market/Vendor Location \*

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3. Contact Person \*

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4. E-Mail Address \*

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5. Phone Number \*

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6. Mailing Address (include street/PO, city, state, zip) \*

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7. Would you like to receive promotional material, free of charge, from us? (if so, make sure you've completed the mailing address question above)

*Mark only one oval.*

Yes

No

8. Edible Alaska magazines highlight Alaska's bountiful local food scenes. Would you like complimentary issues to give out to your market visitors?

*Mark only one oval.*

Yes

No

9. Physical address of market (for mapping) \*

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10. Market Website

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11. Market Facebook

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12. Market Instagram, Twitter, Etc

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13. What year was your market established?

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14. What borough are you located in?

*Check all that apply.*

- Aleutians East
- Municipality of Anchorage
- Bristol Bay
- Denali
- Fairbanks North Star
- Haines
- Juneau
- Kenai Peninsula
- Ketchikan Gateway
- Kodiak Island
- Lake and Peninsula
- Matanuska-Susitna
- Petersburg
- North Slope
- Northwest Arctic
- Kusilvak
- Sitka
- Skagway-Yakutat-Angoon

Other:  \_\_\_\_\_

15. Do you intend to continue managing this market in the future?

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

16. 2021 Opening Date (enter as MM/DD)

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17. 2021 Closing Date (enter as MM/DD)

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18. Please select the days of the week your market operates

*Check all that apply.*

- Monday
- Tuesday
- Wednesday
- Thursday
- Friday
- Saturday
- Sunday

19. Hours of operation (if multiple days- indicate which day serves which hours)?

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20. What is the average number of days your market operates annually?

*Mark only one oval.*

- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-20
- 21-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51 or more days/ year

21. Is your market held "rain or shine"

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No
- Other

#### Market Demographics & Characteristics

22. How is the the town/city/area your market is located in accessed? (check all that apply)

*Check all that apply.*

- On the Alaska road system
- Fly-in only
- Fly-in or ferry/boat-in only
- Ferry/boat-in only

Other:  \_\_\_\_\_

23. At your market location, do you have access to:

*Check all that apply.*

	Yes	No
Electricity and electrical outlets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wireless internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cell phone service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Restrooms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dedicated market parking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ATM Machine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

24. Estimate the number of produce growers your market hosts ANNUALLY

*Mark only one oval.*

- 1
- 2-5
- 5-10
- 11-15
- 16-20
- 21-30
- 31-40
- 40+

25. Estimate the number of crafters your market hosts ANNUALLY

*Mark only one oval.*

- 1
- 2-5
- 5-10
- 11-15
- 16-20
- 21-30
- 31-40
- 40+

26. Estimate the number of number of prepared food or cottage food vendors your market hosts ANNUALLY

*Mark only one oval.*

- 1
- 2-5
- 5-10
- 11-15
- 16-20
- 21-30
- 31-40
- 40+

27. Do vendors pay a vending fee?

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No



28. Do vendors pay a membership fee?

*Mark only one oval.*

Yes

No

29. Do vendors pay a percentage of their sales to the market?

*Mark only one oval.*

Yes

No

30. Approximately how many people do you have helping with your market operation?  
(include only those who help during operational days)

*Mark only one oval.*

Just me!

2-4 employees/volunteers

More than 5

No one - the vendors organize themselves

31. What employment status do your market staff/ operators hold (check all that apply)

*Check all that apply.*

Volunteer

Paid

Combination of paid & volunteer

Part-Time

Full-Time

Combination of part-time and full-time

32. Does your market have a governing body like a Board of Directors or a market committee?

*Mark only one oval.*

Yes

No

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

33. Who makes decisions for the market? (board, individual, fiscal sponsor?)

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34. Does your market have a sponsor or parent organization?

*Mark only one oval.*

Yes

No

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

35. How is your market financially supported? (check all that apply)

*Check all that apply.*

- Vendor fees
- Grants
- Loans
- Raffles
- Business donors/sponsorships
- Individual donors
- Merchandise Sales
- Government support

Other:  \_\_\_\_\_

36. Who manages your market's finances?

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37. Does your market provide education and/or entertainment? If yes, please describe:

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38. Does your market work with local food access organizations like a food bank or soup kitchen to glean or accept produce donations?

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes  
 No  
 Unsure

39. Number of seafood producers

*Mark only one oval.*

- 1  
 2-5  
 5-10  
 11-15  
 16 or more

40. Estimated total number of vendors present at your market throughout the whole season?

*Mark only one oval.*

- 1-5  
 6-10  
 11-20  
 21-50  
 51-100  
 101 or more

41. What is the average number of weekly shoppers at your market?

*Mark only one oval.*

- 1-100
- 101-200
- 201-500
- 501-1000
- 1001-2000
- 2001-5000
- 5001-10,000
- 10,000+

42. Does your market accept the following

*Check all that apply.*

- Credit cards
- Debit cards
- Checks
- Food Stamps/SNAP/EBT
- WIC
- Senior Nutrition Coupons

43. How many vendors accept food assistance redemptions?

*Mark only one oval.*

- All vendors that are eligible (our market accepts SNAP on behalf of markets)
- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16-20
- 21+

44. Estimated total sales for your market last season

*Mark only one oval.*

- We do not collect sales data from our vendors
- \$1- \$1,000
- \$1,001 - \$5000
- \$5001 - \$20,000
- \$20,001- \$50,000
- \$50,001-\$100,000
- \$100K-\$200K
- \$200K-\$500K
- \$500K-\$1 Million
- \$1 Million or more

45. Are you aware that your market and eligible vendors can accept SNAP Quest Cards at your market?

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No

46. Does your market currently accept SNAP Quest Cards?

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes    *Skip to question 47*
- No    *Skip to question 51*

Yes, our market/vendors accept SNAP benefits

47. What year did you start?

*Mark only one oval.*

- 2021 (this will be our first year)
- 2016-2020
- 2011-2015
- 2006-2010
- 2001-2005
- 2000 or earlier

48. How much in SNAP benefits are redeemed at your market annually (whole market - not per vendor)?

*Mark only one oval.*

- \$0-\$499
- \$499-\$1000
- \$1001-\$2000
- \$2001-\$3000
- \$3001-\$4000
- \$4001-\$5000
- \$5001 or more

49. Do you offer any doubling programs (ie. if a SNAP customer spends \$20, the market doubles the benefit to \$40)

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No

50. Has there been an increase in SNAP usage during the COVID19 pandemic?

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

*Skip to question 54*

No, our market does not accept SNAP benefits at this time

51. Has your market been asked the market to accept SNAP Quest Cards? If so, who?  
(check all that apply)

*Check all that apply.*

- No
- Yes, vendors
- Yes, shoppers
- Yes, community partners
- Yes, state or local government agencies

52. Are you interested in learning how your market can accept SNAP Quest Cards?

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No



53. Can we follow up with you to provide more information on how your market can participate in accepting SNAP? (you can learn more here - <https://www.alaskafarmersmarkets.org/future-of-farmers-market-quest-program-in-alaska-2018-report/> )

*Mark only one oval.*

Yes

No

*Skip to question 54*

**Alaska Farmers  
Market Manager  
& Specialty  
Crop Vendor  
Toolkit**

We are seeking input from those operating farmers markets to inform our FM Toolkit project, funded by Alaska Specialty Crop Block Grant (2020-2022). Your voice and opinions are critical to creating resources that truly represents your diverse needs.

54. General Topics: Which of these training & resource topics are most useful for YOUR MARKET? (Please check all that apply)

*Check all that apply.*

	Very Useful	Somewhat	Not Useful
Online Marketing & Social Media	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
On-Site Marketing & Merchandising	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding Risk Management & Market Insurance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regulations & Compliance (ex. DEC/MUNI permitting)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vendor Registration/ Sign-up form templates	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fundraising for Your Market	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creating a Culture of Market Food Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Market Management Software & Apps	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Legal Concerns (ex. market site liability)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Processing Nutrition Benefits (Ex. SNAP, WIC, Senior FMNP)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vendor Recruitment & Retention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Business & Financial Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Property Management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disaster Planning and Mitigation (ex. wildlife, flooding, COVID19)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cultural Equity (ex. translations, immigration)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Data Collection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

55. Are there any other topics we should include?

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56. General Topics: Which of these training & resource topics are most useful for YOUR MARKET? (Please check all that apply)

*Check all that apply.*

	Very Useful	Somewhat	Not Useful
Online Marketing & Social Media	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Best Practices for On-Site Marketing, Merchandising, and Signage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding Risk Management & Insurance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regulations & Compliance (ex. DEC/MUNI permitting, cottage food)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Food Safety and Food Handling (Post-Harvest)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Food Safety and Food Handling (During Harvest/ Processing)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Production Related Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Business & Financial Planning (ex. budgeting, QuickBooks)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
COVID Mitigation Protocol	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Producer Grants & Funding Opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Record Keeping	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

57. Are there any other topics we should include?

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58. Which networking & communications methods would be useful to connect to other Market Managers?

*Mark only one oval.*

- Email Listserv
- Facebook Group
- Online Discussion Board
- Local/Regional Meetups

59. Which training format(s) are most preferable/useful for you and your team?

*Check all that apply.*

	Very Useful	Neutral	Not Useful
Written Printed Guides	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Online Resource Guides	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Webinars (virtual)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In-person Workshops	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Annual Market Conferences/ Summit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

60. Which of these projects, programs, or benefits would you find most useful as potential AFMA offerings?

*Check all that apply.*

	Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Not Useful
Market Manager Training Program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Branded Market Banners & Signage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Farmers Market Insurance Deals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Market Health Insurance Collective (with other ag/farm organizations)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Policy & Legislative Advocacy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joint Public Marketing & Advertising Campaigns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Branded Merchandise for Fundraising	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joint Data Collection & Evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mini-Grants for Farmers Markets (ex. for marketing, COVID adaptation, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

61. Are there any other activities/ initiatives we should focus on?

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Thank you for participating!

All markets (that indicated interested) completing this survey will be sent farmers market marketing materials in the spring of 2021.

62. Have you heard of the Alaska Farmers Market Association before today?

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

63. We are hosting a one day AFMA Summit on April 9th (it will be free and virtual!). Will you attend?

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

64. The Association will be planning a lot of activities to support markets this year. Would you like to join the association? (sliding scale membership fee - NO MARKET WILL BE TURNED AWAY FOR INABILITY TO PAY) This form will serve as your membership application; to pay your membership, please visit: TBD WILL FILL IN ONCE ACCOUNT IS SET UP \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No

65. Anything else we should know about your market?

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APPENDIX C: WSFMA Toolkit Formatting Guide 1/25/2016  
(C. Donovan, personal communication, July 7, 2021)

Arial Narrow 12 point Black, left justified and Title Case 0.3 height

**Garamond 24 Bold & Cream 1.1 ht  
Left Justified Vertical Center, TC**

Arial Narrow 12 point Title Case Dark Brown, 0.3 ht

Month Year

.3 height, no line

One of the first things to do is to go to Change Styles and make sure it is set on “Austin.”  
Go Texas!

PAGE:

Margins – 1.25 L and R; 1” top and bottom

The text is Calibri (Body) 12.

Arial Narrow	LINK	NOTES
<b>Farmers Market Nutrition Program</b>	<a href="http://extension.wsu.edu/farmersmarket">extension.wsu.edu/farmersmarket</a> look for link to “Market Locations” (360) 236-3628	Online only; list of FMNP markets and farm stands is currently maintained by WSU Extension.



*This star means a “tip.” The text is 11 pt and in italics.*

Page 1 does not have a header.

The footer on page 1 is different than the footer on following pages.

## **Main headers are Garamond 18 bold and this green**

Line spacing: 24 before and 12 after

And they are in Title Case

The green is a little darker than the apple green

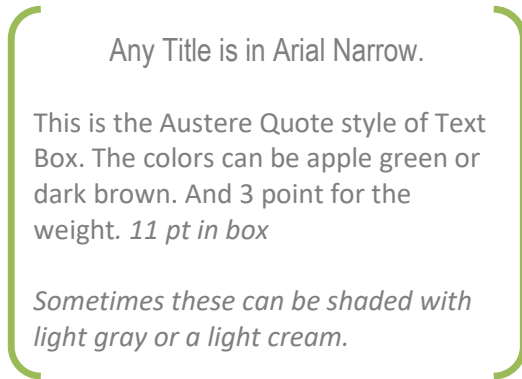
**Subheadings are in Arial Narrow and sentence case and 14 point and bold.**

There is no space after this level of subhead

The headers on the rest of the document are Garamond 10 point in gray with a gray solid line underneath.

The footers are Arial Narrow 10 point in gray with a gray line above it.

The footer should say “Washington State Farmers Market Toolkit” on the left and have the page number on the right.



Any Title is in Arial Narrow.

This is the Austere Quote style of Text Box. The colors can be apple green or dark brown. And 3 point for the weight. *11 pt in box*

*Sometimes these can be shaded with light gray or a light cream.*

Photos: 1 pt border, black

Hyperlinks: orange, no underline

Ampersands only in section and chapter titles

File names should have Title of Piece Month Year. For example: FMNP Dec 2012.