

# 1.1 Farmers Markets

## SPADEWORK

BROADCASTING

GERMINATION

MULCHING

STAKING

HARVEST

SUSTAINABILITY

RESOURCES

- > *What is a farmers' market*
- > *Benefits to customers*
- > *Benefits to local farmers and producers*
- > *Benefits to the community*
- > *Key points for setting up a farmers' market*
- > *Checklist*

### ***What is a farmers' market?***

A farmers' market is a food only market specialising in authentic, regional, fresh, and seasonal produce. A farmers' market helps build community sustainability through the farming and production of local food by local farmers for feeding local people and visitors to the region. The key message of the farmers' market is fresh, regional, seasonal food, sold by farmers and makers direct to consumers at a central location. The ideas underpinning a farmers' market are that:

- > It is restricted to the sale of food
- > The goods sold are locally produced from within a defined regional boundary
- > The people selling are those who grew, cooked, raised, or produced the produce

Some market organisations may agree to allow exceptions to each of these points under their Market Rules. For example:

- > Non-food items may be sold e.g. seedlings, compost, worms and flowers and market fundraisers such as bags, aprons, books
- > Stalls from outside the region may be allowed
- > Family members and employees may be permitted to sell at the stall

### ***Benefits to customers***

- > Local supplies of fresh, seasonal food at one site
- > Knowledge of the provenance of the food
- > The ability to know the producer and learn about their production methods
- > Contribution to local environmental sustainability
- > Better nutrition for the family
- > Better value for money
- > Opportunity to try before buying
- > Weekly social activity
- > Knowledge of and education about products
- > Sensory training and experience

### ***Benefits to local farmers and producers***

- > Learn what the customer wants
- > Deliver a weekly cash flow
- > Improve marketing opportunities
- > Present the person behind the product
- > Build trust with customers

- > Opportunity to sell ripe and close to use by date or blemished product not acceptable to retailers
- > Maximize profit by reducing transport costs, cutting out middle man
- > Develop networks with chefs, restaurants, other retailers, food service
- > Give the farm a public face and a farm gate marketing opportunity
- > Opportunity to build product/brand awareness
- > Opportunity to develop farm product diversity
- > Opportunity to trial and research new products and varieties
- > Rewards and encourages sustainable farming practices

### ***The Willunga Farmers Market Experience***

As the first farmers' market in South Australia, we had to start by building an understanding within the community about farmers' markets.

Zannie organised a meeting of stakeholders in a local restaurant where the farmers' market concept was explained and the idea of starting a market in Willunga was first raised.

Targeting the right people is sometimes hit and miss. We had a few misses but that day the Economic Development Officer from the City of Onkaparinga immediately understood what we were trying to do, saw the potential and offered us funding on the spot! This meant we were able to pay for our first workshop, and it was really from this that the project got up and running. Thanks Janice!

In those early days there was debate about whether we should call it the Willunga Farmers Market or, because the Fleurieu region formed the catchment for producers, the Fleurieu Farmers Market. We think we got it right because Willunga is now synonymous with the Farmers Market and most importantly, it locates the market.

### ***Benefits to the community***

- > Promote healthy eating practices
- > Develop regional food culture
- > Help maintain rural food production and small family farms
- > Contribute to the clean green image for the region
- > Provide a community meeting place and strengthens community cohesion
- > Provide a community food and nutrition education centre
- > Help maintain rural land for food production
- > Build community pride
- > Encourage regional biodiversity
- > Help develop regional business opportunities
- > Increase tourism potential
- > Increase profile of the town and the region
- > Money spent at the market remains in region
- > Reduce food miles

### ***Key points for setting up a farmers' market***

Each region will no doubt have similar reasons for wanting a farmers' market but there will be unique regional differences as a result of the size, cultural history, the climate, proximity to and size of regional urban areas and agricultural history of the region. All the unique attributes of your region will provide the background for the development of your farmers' market.

- > Be clear and concise about all the benefits inherent in the project
- > Determine what differentiates your farmers' market from others ie name, climate, region, traditions, produce, location, people, site, history.
- > Don't reinvent the wheel – build your brand to piggyback on regional and council marketing campaigns and boundaries without compromising values.
- > Piggyback tourism marketing strategies without compromising values.
- > Establish a strong understanding of the underlying farmers' market values of authentic, fresh, regional and seasonal in all publicity and at every marketing opportunity.
- > Check that these values are evident in all aspects of the project:
  - name
  - logo
  - quality and consistency of produce
  - packaging
  - employees
  - producer behaviour

stationery  
customer service  
merchandising  
point of sale information and display  
the look and feel of the market  
look and feel of events and supporting activities  
sponsorship matching

### ***Checklist***

- > List key words that underpin the farmers market ethos
- > List key points that differentiate your region from others
- > List ways a farmers' market will benefit a region

### ***Websites***

For background information about farmers' markets see:  
Australian Farmers Market Association  
<http://www.farmersmarkets.org.au/>