



“CHEF FRIENDLY FARMERS MARKETS”

A report prepared for
The BC Association of Farmers Markets
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March 2006

Executive Summary

The Situation

There is an increasing interest among consumers to know where their food comes from, and the desire to support local farmers has led to an increase in consumers shopping at farmers' markets and looking for local foods when dining out. The number of tourists to BC is expected to increase with the coming of the 2010 Winter Olympic Games and with Canada's new "Approved Destination Status" with China. Chefs recognize the consumer trend for "eating locally" and many perceive this as an opportunity to differentiate their foodservice establishment on the basis of offering and showcasing local cuisine.

In September, 2004, the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, (the ministry) organized a tour to two Vancouver farmers markets for chefs and media. A post-event analysis suggested that a number of barriers may be discouraging chefs from regularly shopping at a Farmers Market. These barriers included:

- Inconvenient market day, time and location
- Limited parking
- Too busy and crowded
- Wholesale pricing not available
- Lack of a payment and delivery system
- Limited quantities of product available.

In September, 2005, the ministry contracted the BC Association of Farmers Markets (BCAFM) to research these and any additional barriers and develop a strategy to increase the amount of food products being sold at Farmers Markets to local foodservice buyers.

The Opportunity

Farmers' markets are one of the oldest forms of direct marketing by small farmers. Within the last decade these markets have become a favorite selling method for many farmers around the globe, and a weekly ritual for many shoppers. In a farmers market, a group of farmers sell products that they make, bake or grow once or twice a week at a designated public place like a park or parking lot. There are more than ninety-two known farmers markets operating across British Columbia and each is a great way for local foodservice buyers to meet local farmers and purchase fresh, flavorful, local foods.

Currently, no one is pro-actively marketing BC Farmers Markets as a convenient way for local foodservice buyers to purchase freshly made, baked or grown food products. Given that most farmers markets are located within or close to urban centers, and given the current and projected demand for locally grown, raised and processed foods in BC, there is potential for farmers markets to play a key role in increasing the amount of local food products purchased and marketed by BC foodservice buyers. In turn, this may also increase consumer's awareness of and demand for locally grown and processed food products.

Research conducted by the BC Association of Farmers Markets (BCAFM) during fall and winter 2005 suggests that a number of farmers market vendors and foodservice buyers in British Columbia are interested in and willing to participate in a program to facilitate sales from BC Farmers Markets to BC foodservice.

Key Learnings

The primary purpose of conducting research for this study was to gain a better understanding of the issues, challenges and opportunities facing BC Farmers Market vendors and chefs. More than 30 in-depth interviews were conducted by BCAF, which have led to a greater understanding of the issues, challenges and opportunities facing BC Farmer's Market vendors and foodservice customers.

- Many BC Farmer's Market vendors and chefs at white tablecloth and boutique style restaurants are interested in and willing to participate in a Chef Friendly Farmer's Market program at BC Farmer's Markets.
- Communication is limited among BC chefs and vendors and among BC Farmers Market Managers and other industry organizations. Lack of communication has led to assumptions and perceptions that may be impeding foodservice sales and cooperation at markets.
- There is a lack of trust and a high level of competition among vendors at farmers markets. Trust and competition are major hindrances to forming and maintaining cooperative delivery and/or marketing.
- Most chefs do not have time to shop at farmers markets regularly. In order to increase products purchased by chefs and markets, convenient ordering, pick-up, delivery and payment systems need to be coordinated.

- It is not reasonable to create one ordering/delivery model for all Farmers Markets in BC because each market differs in size, resources, circumstance and goals. Infrastructure to support a market based ordering/delivery system is limited or non-existent at most BC Farmers Markets.
- Many opportunities exist for farmers market vendors and chefs of white tablecloth and boutique style restaurants to cross promote one another.
- Junior chefs are taught little about how they can support local agriculture and why it's important.
- Junior chefs are often part of volunteer programs at their culinary schools. There may be opportunity to have junior chefs help execute the Chef Friendly Farmer's Market program at BC Farmer's Markets on a volunteer basis.
- Use of technologies, including computers, is not being maximized.
- Lack of human resources in BCAFM, at Farmers Markets and in Restaurants means that any strategies must emphasize the importance of saving time and must be administratively "light" to implement and maintain.
- Encouraging chefs to shop at local farmers markets is a viable opportunity because purchasing local, high quality specialty foods through mainstream distribution channels is currently difficult. If local foods, and especially local specialty foods, become readily available through large distributors in BC the opportunities for having chefs shop at local farmers markets may become limited. A focus on relationship selling and value added (i.e cooperative marketing) is required to ensure the sustainability of selling direct.
- Although there appears to be opportunities for increasing the amount of food products purchased at markets by chefs, it is difficult to assess the value of these opportunities. Estimates suggest that only 5% of market vendors are currently selling to foodservice regularly, while 40% would like too. Estimates also suggest that only 1-2% of restaurants in BC are actively sourcing local food products for their menus. Further research is needed to determine the dollar value of foodservice opportunities at BC Farmers Markets.
- Trends suggest that adult Canadians will "embrace gourmet foods and boutique brands" that are high in quality in the years approaching 2020, (*Agri-Food Canada*). Because most restaurants are consumer driven, it is likely that more chefs will be looking for ways to purchase such products in the near future. Many local food products in BC are considered to be high in quality, gourmet and boutique in nature, but unless systems are put in place to help chefs gain access to these products they are likely to be "passed over" by most chefs.

- Although many chefs within the target audience for the Chef Friendly Farmer's Market Program have a personal interest in sourcing local foods for their menus, they **also** have a business obligation to protect and maximize the profits of their restaurants. If the Chef Friendly Farmers Market Program can aid chef's in passing along any increased food costs to their customers as a result of shopping at farmers markets, and if the program can help drive more consumers into participating chef's restaurants, chefs may be more keen to participate in the program.

Recommendations

After much research, the BC Association of Farmers Markets is proposing a program to market BC farmers markets as a convenient way for local foodservice buyers to purchase local foods. The recommended program, termed the "Chef Friendly Farmer's Market" program is positioned to strengthen the linkages between market vendors and local area chefs to increase demand and preference for BC specialty foods.

The strategy for the Chef Friendly Farmer's Market program includes several detailed communication, marketing, distribution and pricing/invoicing strategies and recommends many tactics for implementing "chef friendly" services and amenities at BC Farmer's Markets.

The strategies that form this program emphasize the importance of frequent and strategic communication and cooperation between all program participants and related stakeholders and the importance of increasing efficiencies to help ensure long term financial viability and the program's sustainability.

Examples of services and amenities recommended as part of the Chef Friendly Farmer's Market Program include chef only parking spaces, chef only shopping periods, pre-ordering of product, product pick-up zones, product delivery, cooperative marketing including recognition on menus, measurable consumer promotions and networking/educational events for chefs and vendors.

To accommodate each of BCAFMs member markets, the Chef Friendly Farmer's Market program has been structured in a typically "al a carte" fashion, thereby allowing each market to implement a program catering to its immediate needs and resources.

Benefits

The benefits to British Columbia, as a result of implementing the Chef Friendly Farmer's Market Program will accrue as follows:

1. Increased and enhanced access by BC Farmer's Market vendors to local foodservice industries, resulting in:
 - Increased foodservice sales for BC Farmer's Market vendors
 - More local foods being featured on menus throughout BC
 - Diversified sales channels for BC Farmer's Market vendors
2. Increased communication and co-ordination between a) BC Farmer's Market vendors and BC Chefs b) BCAFM and other provincial organizations c) BC Farmer's Market Managers, resulting in:
 - Co-operative and cost shared marketing that will
 - Increase consumer's and industry's awareness and demand for local foods
 - Enhanced financial viability for BCAFM, member markets, vendors and restaurants committed to buying locally grown, raised and/or processed foods.
 - Increased awareness of the BCAFM brand among industry and consumers.
 - A more sustainable and better connected agri-food industry in BC
 - Enhanced business opportunities (and, therefore, financial viability) for BC Farmer's Markets and BC Farmer's Market vendors.
3. Indirect promotion of healthy eating via concentration on local and organic British Columbian products, a benefit to governmental agencies promoting active lifestyles, health and British Columbian agricultural/artisan output.

-Notice-
BC Association of Farmers Markets

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THIS REPORT IS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

There is an increasing interest among consumers to know where their food comes from, and the desire to support local farmers has led to an increase in consumers shopping at farmers' markets and looking for local foods when dining out. The number of tourists to BC is expected to increase with the coming of the 2010 Winter Olympic Games and with Canada's new "Approved Destination Status" with China. Chefs recognize the consumer trend for "eating locally" and many perceive this as an opportunity to differentiate their foodservice establishment on the basis of offering and showcasing local cuisine.

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In September, 2005, the ministry contracted the BC Association of Farmers Markets (BCAFM) to research these and any additional barriers and develop a strategy to increase the amount of food products being sold at Farmers Markets to local foodservice buyers.

1.2 ABOUT BC ASSOCIATION OF FARMERS MARKETS

The BCAFM represents over 97 farmers markets across BC. Their mission is to promote farmers markets throughout the Province. The society's goals include: supporting British Columbia producers of agricultural products, food products, and crafts; and promoting, educating, encouraging, developing and supporting farmers' markets in the communities of BC.

At this time the BCAFM operates under the direction of their Executive Director, Bertie Wells who reports to a board consisting of 9 regional representatives throughout British Columbia.

The Association's **Executive Director** is responsible for the following:

- Assisting in the formation of new farmers markets
- Ensuring member market's compliance with all association regulations
- Helping member markets expand and diversify to meet consumer needs
- Identifying best practices in jurisdictions outside of BC
- Securing funding for various association projects and initiatives
- Coordinating educational opportunities and preparing helpful educational information for market managers and vendors
- Liaising with other industry associations and with government and cooperating as appropriate
- Providing market managers and the BCAFM board with important information and materials when needed (for example additions to health regulations).
- Coordinating the annual BCAFM conference
- Maintaining the association website www.bcfarmersmarket.org

Each member market of the BCAFM operates with the help of a **Market Manager**. Depending on the size and budget of the market, Market Managers may be paid or unpaid and they may or may not report to a board of directors. A typical salary for a market manager ranges between a few thousand dollars per year for a small to medium sized market, (eg. 20 vendors) to over \$30 000 for a large market (eg, 50 vendors).

ABOUT BC ASSOCIATION OF FARMERS MARKETS (CONT.)

Regardless of how much they are paid, Market Managers typically share the following responsibilities:

- Attracting vendors to the market
- Organizing and setting up market signage
- Coordinating vendor positions at the market
- Overseeing the information booth at the market
- Surveying market to determine sales and/or # of shoppers
- Organizing market entertainment and special events
- Collecting vendor dues and paying dues to BCAFM
- Coordinating volunteers (if applicable)
- Creating marketing materials (flyers) and coordinating branding initiatives for market
- Event and activity coordination
- Relaying information and materials from the BCAFM Executive Director to vendors
- Fielding vendor and public inquiries
- Paying annual market dues (\$150 per market) to BCAFM.

Market **vendors** are farmers who grow and/or process local foods from their farms and sell these products at a farmers market. Many vendors will sell at several markets, in different regions, throughout the province. Vendors are responsible for complying with all provincial and municipal health and safety regulations and having proof of this compliance each time they attend a market. Vendors are also responsible for setting up and taking down their booth and displaying, packaging and selling their products. Some farmers markets require vendors to track and report their daily, monthly and/or yearly sales. Sales information is used by some market managers to track market growth, and in some cases to determine vendor dues.

ABOUT BC ASSOCIATION OF FARMERS MARKETS (CONT.)

BCAFM has been operating on a limited annual budget for a number of years. Recently BCAFM secured a \$500 000 fund within the Investment Agriculture Foundation to support the growth of BC farmers markets. It may be possible to use a portion of this grant to help cover the cost of implementing the following strategy, on a proposal and matching funds basis, at farmers markets throughout BC.

There is currently a lack of coordination between BCAFM and other BC associations when it comes to marketing, event execution and program development. This is especially evident with chefs associations such as the BC Chefs Association, the Island Chefs Collaborative and the Chef's Table Society. Although some BC farmers markets have asked local chefs to participate in their markets by way of product demonstrations and to volunteer at "Ask a Chef" tables, little has been done to encourage local chefs to purchase and feature local foods from these markets. There is also a lack of collaboration among the individual farmers markets as each one tends to operate independently.

Although BCAFM would like to see more collaboration amongst its members, it cannot force the issue. The role of the BCAFM is not one of compliance, but rather one of guidance and support for all members. The association provides its members with information resources and benefits including tips on how to increase sales, access to an insurance program and a highway signage program. The association conducts research to help members stay on top of trends and will respond to enquiries from members and the public..

The Association believes this strategy is an important component of a larger, more comprehensive strategy that is designed to facilitate the growth and development of farmers markets in British Columbia.

1.3 ABOUT BC FARMERS MARKETS

A “Farmers Market” is defined by the BCAFM as a market that sells products that are made, baked or grown in BC. Farmers markets have a reputation for offering a wide range of fresh, quality products sold direct from the farmer or processor. Many of the products sold at farmers markets are specialty items prized by chefs working in white tablecloth restaurants. For the purposes of this study, the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands defines specialty food products as having one or more of the following characteristics:

- 1 Limited production in that the product is not being mass marketed to major restaurant chains or retail chains;
- 2 Perceived by consumers as a unique product (i.e. size, colour, taste, heirloom variety, produced by an artisan, organically grown, etc.);
- 3 Made from the highest quality ingredients;
- 4 Produced in a unique way;
- 5 Distributed through farmers markets, gourmet food stores, high-end restaurants, deli’s, gift shops and through mail order;
- 6 May be perceived as being home made from natural ingredients and lacking preservatives;
- 7 Fills an emerging and growing marketing niche.

Examples of specialty food products found at farmers markets include artisan cheeses, organically grown produce, wild mushrooms, heirloom variety tomatoes, rare meats and special cuts of meats, and artisan bakery products plus processed foods.

ABOUT BC FARMERS MARKETS (CONT.)

There are more than 92 farmers markets operating across British Columbia and each market a great way for local foodservice buyers to meet local producers and purchase fresh, flavorful, local foods. Farmers markets differ from public markets in that all the products sold at farmers markets are either made, baked or grown in BC and products found at public markets can be from anywhere in the world.

BC farmers markets typically operate from May to September each year, with some markets running until late October or December depending on the weather and if they have access to an indoor facility. Most markets take place once a week on either Saturday or Sunday from approximately 9:00 am to 2:00pm. Some some markets located in high-density neighborhoods also operate on Wednesdays. Wednesday markets typically open and close later than weekend markets.

The format of most farmers markets is very similar. Vendor's bring their products from areas all over BC and set up a series of tents within a public space, usually a parking lot, open field or public park. Each market has their own operating policies and rules and some may enforce very strict opening and closing times. While vendors manage their own booths, the market manager operates a market information booth and puts up any signs and blockades. The market tent, blockades, signs etc. are usually housed by the market manager who brings them to the market in his/her own vehicle. Some of the larger markets have leased trucks to hold and transport these supplies.

As a whole, BC Farmers Markets generate millions of dollars in sales each year. Sales at individual markets depend largely upon the number of vendors at each market, which ranges from approximately 10 to more than 70. On average, vendors sell between \$1000 and \$4000 each market day depending on the type of product(s) being sold, the size and location of the farmers market and time of season. Some markets in BC, especially new markets in the lower mainland, are having difficulty attracting vendors to their markets, while others have created rules to prevent new vendors from joining the market in an effort to limit competition amongst vendors selling similar products.

Although farmers markets do well attracting the business of local consumers, little has been done to attract the business of local foodservice buyers. Research suggests that only 5% of vendors are currently selling to foodservice regularly, while 40% of vendors would like to. Attracting foodservice buyers to BC Farmers Markets will provide interested vendors

ABOUT BC FARMERS MARKETS (CONT.)

with an opportunity to increase their sales and participate in cooperative marketing initiatives with local chefs to increase consumers awareness and demand for locally grown and processed food products.

The following research was conducted to provide BCAFM with a better understanding of foodservice buyers needs, wants and limitations in regards to purchasing products from BC farmers markets. It was also undertaken to assess market managers and vendor interest and capacity to increase sales to and linkages with foodservice buyers at BC farmers markets.

1.4 ABOUT BC'S RESTAURANT AND FOODSERVICE INDUSTRY

The restaurant and foodservices industry in British Columbia includes food and beverage retailers, manufacturers and processors and all varieties of restaurants. The industry generated over \$7.4-billion in 2004 and has evolved into one of the province's largest employers, providing more than 163,000 jobs in communities from Abbotsford to Zebellos. Over the past ten years, the foodservice industry has created one out of every nine new jobs in British Columbia.

Despite being seemingly strong, the future success of B.C.'s foodservice industry is far from secure. Increasing input costs for food, leases, utilities and insurance, combined with the highest labour costs in Canada, have driven down profit margins for B.C. operators to 3.1% – down from 4.9% only two years earlier. This undermines B.C. operators' ability to reinvest in their businesses and hire more staff. Less staff in kitchens has ultimately increased chef workloads, making time scarce. Some chefs who used to enjoy shopping regularly at their local farmers markets for food products menu ideas are now lucky to attend these markets only a few times each year, if at all. *(Above information sourced from the Canadian Restaurant & Foodservices Association)*

Although time is scarce, desire for local products has not waned in recent years. In fact, chef interest and demand for locally grown food products is on the rise. For some chefs, the desire to feature local products stems from consumer's increased interest in knowing where their food comes from. Thanks to the "new normal" established after 9/11, food security scares such as Avion Flu and BSE and an increase in the number of public events and promotions organized by local eating and agriculture groups, consumers are developing greater awareness of, preference for and loyalty to BC

ABOUT BC'S RESTAURANT AND FOODSERVICE INDUSTRY (CONT.)

food products, and are also starting to embrace the importance of food sustainability. Other chefs are very passionate about using local local food products and view it as a “way of life.”. Locally sourced food products are being increasingly used and identified within restaurants and foodservice establishments in BC to gain exposure and distinguish themselves from competitors and to respond to the customer’s desire to enjoy indigenous ingredients.

While interest in local products within BC’s restaurant and foodservice industry has increased during the past few years, access to these products has not. This may be one of the reasons that demand for local food has been most prominent amongst chef owned and operated white table cloth and boutique style restaurants. In contrast to chain operations, smaller, independent restaurants enjoy more flexibility when planning menus and more options when ordering and obtaining product. Lucky for them, independent and boutique style restaurants have enjoyed substantial visibility in recent years, possibly an outcome of the new celebrity status impressed upon many chefs who have become engaged through media, popular television shows, books and even commercials. Within BC, chef John Bishop and Rob Feenie serve as perfect examples. Some suggest that chefs have become food trendsetters and that their mandates to use local, seasonal food products while cooking is being imprinted into the minds of consumers who are in turn beginning to expect local choices on menus while dining out. Some BC chefs have come to recognize this influential capacity and grouped together to form organizations that support local agriculture and promote local eating in their communities. By supporting local agriculture, one of these organizations, the Island Chefs Collaborative, is successfully increasing the variety of local products available to member chefs and is proving that featuring local food products on restaurant menus is both possible and profitable.

Chef organizations have yet to tackle issues regarding the distribution of local products. To date, a formalized distribution system for local specialty food products does not exist in British Columbia. Mainstream suppliers such as Sysco and Neptune are currently unable to accommodate the needs of many local farmers due to issues with product quality, volume, seasonality, price and packaging. Adding to this issue is the fact that these large distributors do not consistently identify the origin of local products on their order guides. Therefore, many chefs, will try to source their own supply and coordinate deliveries.. Given that there are a number of farmers markets that exist within urban areas of British Columbia and each of these markets offers locally made, baked and grown food products for public purchase. It may be possible to equip these markets with the right tools and resources to successfully supply and distribute local foods to BC’s restaurant industry.

2.0 RESEARCH

Research was a large part of developing a “BC Chef Friendly Farmers Market Strategy”. Research was conducted, from August 2005 to February 2006 in the form of more than 30 in-depth interviews to gain a better understanding of the issues, challenges and opportunities facing BC Farmer’s Market vendors and foodservice customers.

The decision to develop a “BC Chef Friendly Farmers Market Strategy” was based mainly upon the following three observations/facts:

1. There are currently relatively few local products featured on BC restaurant menus
2. The recent decline in the number of chefs shopping at BC farmers markets

2.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Both primary and secondary research was used to collect information for this study.

Primary research was conducted in the form of qualitative surveys and in-depth interviews. More than 30 strategic in-depth interviews were completed for this study, most being administered by the same individual. The number of interviewers was limited to ensure the most accurate and descriptive responses. Due to the time and mobility constraints affecting most respondents, interviews were typically conducted on the spot, either at farmers markets, in chef’s kitchens/restaurants or over the phone. In some instances the interviews were conducted in enclosed, private offices and/or boardrooms. It is important to note that all interviews were pre-booked and were not surprise for any respondents. A listing of respondents interviewed for this report can be found within the “References” section of this report. Because several respondents requested anonymity during their interviews, this listing cannot be representative of all contacts made during the research phase of this study. Please also note the qualitative nature of this research. Unlike quantitative data, the recommendations in this strategy are based upon few interviews and therefore may not be representative of each respondent group (Market Managers, vendors, chefs).

Secondary research used for this report came from two major sources: websites and print materials from farmers markets and industry events.

2.1.1 Stakeholder Interviews

	Chef	Vendor	Market Manager	Other
Number Interviewed	16	14	11	10

2.1.2 Research Limitations

There are certain research limitations to be considered for this study. For a detailed description of these limitations, please refer to Appedix 'A'.

2.1.3 Scope of Research

Research for this project was limited to investigating how BC Farmers Markets can increase the linkages between BC farmer's market vendors and BC chefs. Limiting the research scope for this project made it possible to generate targeted recommendations that are both realistic and achievable.

2.2 RESEARCH QUESTION

The purpose of research conducted for this report was to answer the following question:

“Are the current sales and marketing practices at BC Farmers Markets resulting in the most amount of foodservice sales possible, and if not, is it possible to increase the amount of foodservice sales at these markets through various kinds of supports?”

2.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Specific research objectives were identified at the beginning of this study to provide direction when creating the interview discussion guides and to ensure that an answer to the research question was obtained:

1. Determine how BCAFM can increase sales of BC grown and processed foods to chefs.
2. Identify the resources, training and/or infrastructure needed to facilitate successful sales and marketing relationships between market vendors and local chefs.

2.4

SITUATION ANALYSIS

<p>Strengths/ Positives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BCAFMs commitment to strengthen linkages between BC farmers markets and BC chefs. • There is high interest in developing a “Chef Friendly Farmers Market Program” among BCAFMs members and BC chefs working at white tablecloth restaurants. • Chefs within organizations such as the Island Chefs Collaborative and the Chef’s Table Society have shown commitment to supporting local producers and processors. • BUY BC program may be re-launched and will help raise awareness of the quality and variety of local products and educate BC consumers who can become informal ambassadors of the program. • Examples of successful programs in other regions add credibility to the process and provide benchmarks for success • The Ministry of Agriculture and Lands and the Ministry of Health have demonstrated a commitment to help support increased awareness and demand for BC products among chefs. • Growing interest among consumers who want to know where their food comes from. • \$500,000 fund within the Investment Agriculture Foundation earmarked to help market and grow BC farmers markets.
<p>Opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing the linkages between BC farmers markets and BC chefs. • Building collaboration among vendors. • Capitalizing on niche markets. • Building the BC Farmers Market brand with BC restaurants and consumers. • Focusing on niche or “specialty products.” • Helping chefs recognize the value of buying and featuring local foods on menus. • Increasing foodservice sales at BC farmers markets. • Raising consumer awareness, demand and preference for BC food products. • Stimulating cooperation amongst BCAFMs and other BC associations. • Establishing criteria standards for selling to foodservice at BC farmers markets • Determining a clear path for moving forward with a foodservice program at BC farmers markets • Incorporating a local food component in the curriculum at culinary schools.

Situation Analysis Cont.

Problems/ Challenges/ Weaknesses

- High level of competition among vendors
- Lack of communication and understanding between vendors and chefs
- Lack of coordination between BCAFM and other BC associations
- Lack of infrastructure for deliveries to chefs
- Lack of time (chefs/vendors/market managers etc.)
- Lack of resources to implement/manage and evaluate program (human and financial)
- Lack of cooperation between BC farmers markets.
- Limited number of vendors (decrease in the number of new farmers due to price of land).
- Market dates, hours and structures that do not meet the needs of chefs
- Perception among chefs that market products do not meet health and safety regulations
- Perception among vendors that chefs buy in small quantities at reduced prices and can be very difficult as customers
- Perception that farmers markets do not need chefs' business
- Lack of trust that program will move forward
- Overlapping initiatives due to lack of communication and cooperation
- Moving perception of program from an advertising/promotions tool to an economic generator and foundation for a sustainable local food industry.
- Perceived role of BCAFM amongst members
- No quality controls currently in place at farmers markets
- Perceived cost of program
- Potential to grow the program too quickly without adequate industry consultation
- Range of experience among vendors who know how to effectively build relationships with chefs and diversify into the foodservice market.
- No collection of foodservice sales in any of the markets. The size of this market is unknown.

2.5

SPECIFIC FINDINGS

Market Managers Cont.

COMMUNICATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Act as the liaison between BCAFm and vendors● Act as the liaison between their market and local government● Most market managers are willing to help establish linkages with local chefs by making first contact with them (for example, visiting them to discuss what local products are available at farmers markets and then inviting them to the market to meet vendors)● BC Farmers Market Managers do not communicate often with one another. For this reason, great ideas/events/projects implemented at one market often do not make their way into other markets. Market Managers do have opportunity to network at the BCAFm annual conference, but many choose to “stick together” with their own regions at these conferences. <p>Bertie Wells, Executive Director of BCAFm interviewing Duncan Farmer’s Market in the Square Manager, Jennifer Woodard</p>
GOALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● To operate an organized, fun and safe farmers market● To generate as much traffic at the market as possible● To provide vendors with an opportunity to sell as much product as possible.

Market Managers Cont.

<p>PLANNING</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Most farmers markets do not have a business plan or marketing plan. Reasons for not having business plans include lacking the resources to create them and not knowing how. ● Markets that have business plans tend to be larger markets located in areas such as Vancouver and Kelowna or markets that receive support from their local government/city, such as Duncan Farmers Market. ● Most market managers had not thought of making their markets more chef friendly before being interviewed. When asked why, a common response was that their vendors never asked them about bringing chefs to the market to purchase product and/or that there didn't seem to be a need. Most food vendors sold all product well before the end of each market day. Most market managers who had previously thought about attracting chefs to the market did so in a promotional capacity for the purpose of increasing consumer traffic at the market. The exception to this is Your Local Farmers Market Society which hosted a chef tour to two of their markets: Nat Bailey and West End in Vancouver in September 2004.
<p>KNOWLEDGE\ EXPERIENCE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The knowledge and experience of market managers varies greatly. Some managers are previous or current market vendors while others have backgrounds in business/marketing/management. Other market managers are community volunteers, sometimes retired, who manage the market as a hobby. ● Individuals who have a combination of farming, business, marketing and management experience and/or education seem to be managing the most dynamic and successful farmers markets in BC.

Market Managers Cont.

MARKETING	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● BCAFM offers a Highway Signage program to members and operates www.bcfarmersmarket.org, which contains listings of and links to all of its member markets.● In 2001, the association produced a farmers market brochure in partnership with the Buy BC program. (Appendix D).● Some markets in BC have initiated independent branding/marketing initiatives to create a community-based identity for their market(s). Examples of branding/marketing initiatives include logo development, signage, websites, weekly/monthly consumer flyers, market based community events and the creation of promotional items such as bags, t-shirts and buttons.● The amount of marketing/branding done by markets is dependant upon the size of the market, its budget and the number of paid and volunteer staff working at the market.● Market Managers are very enthusiastic about getting their market referenced on restaurant menus.
PERCEPTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Market Managers were generally enthusiastic about implementing a chef friendly farmers market program at their markets.● Some managers had concerns about collecting sales information from vendors as a way to track the success of the program, as most vendors prefer to keep this information private.● There may be confusion amongst market managers regarding the purpose of this program. Some managers believed that BCAFM wants to encourage chefs to attend the market for promotional purposes. Others understand the true goal of the program which is to increase market sales to the foodservice industry.

Market Managers Cont.

RESOURCES

- Almost all market managers run the market with assistance from volunteers or additional market staff. These persons help staff the association's information booth, sell raffle tickets and take questions from the public. Some markets have enough financial resources to maintain staff to oversee vendor business development opportunities and coordinate events, promotions and develop marketing and business plans.
- Most Market Managers indicated that they would be able to access the necessary human and financial resources to operate the program, or parts of the program, if assistance was provided by BCAFM to help set up the initial infrastructure.
- When asked what they would use funding for, many Market Managers first priority was networking (establishing relationships with chefs). This was followed by marketing (ie. advertisements, promotions, displays, marketing tools, etc.) followed by distribution (i.e. organizing a convenient way for chefs to order and receive products).
- The market manager is usually busy running the market, therefore, it may not be realistic to assume that they can also implement and monitor a program to increase foodservice sales at the market. Help from volunteers will likely be needed. If not a dedicated part or full time person.
- The budget for each market depends on the size of the market, its location, resources etc. A small market typically has an annual budget of \$1,000 or less, medium markets operate with approximately \$5,000 and larger markets may have up to \$30,000 or more to work with annually.

Market Manager Cont.

<p>COMMITMENT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Given the feedback provided by Market Manager's during this study and given their continued interest in the progress of this study, there appears to be a high level of optimism and commitment to this project. (See Appendix B). ● The program will need strong buy-in from vendors to succeed. ● Most market managers have chosen this profession because it interests them. Few manage markets "for the money", especially those managing small and medium sized markets.
<p>DISTRIBUTION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Market managers are too busy at markets to deliver pre-ordered products to chefs. ● Market managers do not have time available to be involved in sales transactions between vendors and chefs (for example, collecting money from chefs and distributing it to vendors). ● Some market managers in larger markets have access to a leased truck that is used to store and transport market signage, blockades, booths etc.. It may be possible to make these trucks available to help deliver food products to local chefs from the farmers market, but only if HACCP regulations are met and if fuel and vehicle operating costs are adequately compensated for.
<p>COMPETITION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Appears to be some competition amongst market managers to operate "the best farmers market". ● Competition to secure a sufficient number and variety of market vendors.
<p>TECHNOLOGY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Technology at the markets is often limited since they are usually held outdoors with limited or no access to electricity. There are no computers available at farmers markets. ● Most Market Managers have a cell phone. ● Most Market Managers are not provided with an office. This limits ability to send/receive faxes, make photocopies and carry out other office functions. Most Market Managers have a computer at home with internet access.

SPECIFIC FINDINGS CONT.

2.5.1 Market Vendors

FINANCES

- Vendor sales at markets fluctuate depending on what they sell, how much they have to sell and what market they are selling at. Obtaining sales information from vendors was very difficult, as they prefer to keep this information to themselves.
- Some vendors will only participate in a market if they know that they will make a minimum amount of money during the day. Although this fluctuates for each vendor, one vendor minimum was \$4000.
- Vendor costs include their market materials (tent, product displays, bags, scales, cash registers etc.), mileage, fuel, vendor fees and staff fees (where applicable).
- Vendor fees are set by the market, and usually range from \$10 to over \$100 on a weekly, monthly or annually. Some markets have been successful at collecting sales information from their vendors and some markets use a percentage of sales to calculate appropriate vendor dues each week. Vendors value this method of fee collection because if they have a “slow day” they are able to pay a lower market fee. The percentage of sales method of collection operates on the honor system.
- For many vendors the farmers market is their major source of income.
- The financial situation of each vendor interviewed varied, however all agreed that if they could increase their income and maintain it through the off-season (when markets are closed) they would be better off.

Market Vendors Cont.

COMMUNICATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Most vendors have little or no communication with local chefs. Many vendors wanting to build sales/marketing relationships with chefs weren't sure how they could initiate and maintain the relationship.● There are currently no communication tools, events or activities helping vendors communicate/network with chefs in BC.● Vendors are unsure of what products chefs want and how they want them packaged.● Lack of communication has led to assumptions about chefs that make some vendors reluctant to sell to them. Some of these assumptions are that chefs will only pay wholesale, that they are difficult buyers, that they buy in small quantities, that they change their minds often and that they are not loyal to their sources.
COMPETITION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Vendors at farmers markets compete with one another. They compete to attract market customers to their booths and many would like to have a monopoly in regards to the products they sell at the markets (for example, only one cheese booth or one lamb booth per market).● Some vendors in certain product categories, such as cheese, were more competitive than other types of vendors. Some competing vendors are known for speaking poorly about other vendor's products to market customers, sometimes even suggesting that the products are unsafe to consume.● Vendors selling to foodservice feel that there are a limited number of foodservice buyers to sell their products to. For this reason vendors do not like to reveal their customers or prices to one another.

Market Vendors Cont.

COOPERATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Few vendors who sell at farmers markets are part of a marketing cooperative. Vendors prefer to work independently, because they are fearful that cooperation may negatively impact their sales, dilute their brand and/or take too much time to set up and maintain.● When asked about forming a cooperative distribution system with other market vendors selling similar products, most felt that their sales would decrease since their customer pool would be exposed letting other vendors steal their customers.● There is a general lack of trust amongst vendors in regards to forming a cooperative distribution system. Vendors question the reliability of others and are fearful of losing their customers should the system fall apart.● When asked about cooperating to sell to foodservice, vendors felt that it would be a good idea but had concerns about sharing buyers and about other vendors knowing their prices. Many vendors didn't know how they could cooperate with other vendors and many weren't sure how they could benefit.
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Market Vendors Cont.

<p>PRODUCTION /CAPACITY/ VARIETY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Specialty vendors tend to have limited amounts of product and these products frequently sell out before the market closes. ● There may be opportunity to help specialty producers increase production if they receive education on how to do so and if they are able to see/hear about successful examples in BC. ● There may be opportunity to help specialty producers increase their profit margins if they work closely with chefs to plan their crops. Some chefs are willing to pay top dollar for unique products grown/raised specifically for their restaurant. There have been instances where products meant for the garbage or compost have turned out to be highly prized by chefs. In these instances producers have received money for these products that they would have otherwise lost. Similarly, some chefs desire specific parts of products (such as beet tops) that are typically discarded by farmers. ● Some vendors who have the capacity to produce more product refrain from doing so because they aren't sure that they can sell it. Most vendors in this situation are very interested in selling to foodservice. ● Some vendors were interested in growing/raising specialty products just for chefs, but needed a way to guarantee the sale of these products to avoid financial loss. ● Financial assistance to support the planting of rare varieties of crops is desired by vendors to help offset financial risk.
<p>MARKETING</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Limited marketing materials. ● Some vendors have signs with prices and names of products. ● Few vendors have marketing materials such as brochures, product listings, business cards etc. ● Limited effort placed on creating visually pleasing product displays due to lack of time and knowledge of importance. ● All vendors are keen to have chefs come their market for things such as product demo's and "ask a chef booths" because it creates public interest and increases market traffic.

Market Vendors Cont.

<p>PERCEPTION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Perceive their products to be of superior quality and of great value. ● Many perceive BC's foodservice market to be a low profit opportunity and a difficult market to access and maintain.
<p>HUMAN RESOURCES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Most vendor farms are operated by family with little outside help ● Only one or two people per vendor booth and they are very busy tending to customers. It would be very difficult to spend one on one time with a chef at a market. ● Time is spent on production; sales is a secondary priority. ● Time spent on administration is limited, and not enjoyed. ● No time to spend cold calling foodservice buyers
<p>SALES/ DISTRIBUTION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Approximately 5% of market vendors are currently selling to foodservice at farmers markets and approximately 40% are interested in selling to foodservice. ● For many the farmers market is their only distribution channel or their main distribution channel. ● Some vendors distribute independently to a few chefs, either at the market (keeping product for chef in separate container hidden away) or by delivery. ● Most vendors selling to chefs were approached by chefs who asked them for product while shopping at the market. ● Many vendors who deliver products to chefs are not HACCP certified. ● When asked about cooperative delivery to chefs from the market most vendors thought it was a good idea. ● None of the vendors interviewed for this study were cooperating with other vendors/farmers to distribute their products to local restaurants or foodservice establishments.

Market Vendors Cont.

<p>EDUCATION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Many vendors lack education in business, marketing and customer service. ● Several vendors are unaware of how to increase their production capacity and their margins. ● Unaware of their need for education in most cases ● Some vendors are set in their ways and do not want to learn a different way of doing things, even if it will increase their sales. ● Most vendors do not know how to sell to foodservice buyers. ● Many are not aware of the benefits of selling to chefs.
<p>PACKAGING</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Most vendors supply produce bags. ● Products are either supplied in bulk with little or no effort on visual appeal (dirt still on etc.) or pre-packaged by weight.
<p>TECHNOLOGY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● High-risk products such as meats and dairy are stored in portable fridges or freezers kept cool by generator supplied power. ● No vendors have computers at the market, but most have computers and access to internet at home. ● Some vendors have electronic scales at the market and calculators, but very few use cash registers. ● Most vendors do not use software programs to track sales and customers regardless of whether they have access to the software.

SPECIFIC FINDINGS CONT.

2.5.2 Chef Interviews

<p>AWARENESS KNOWLEDGE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Most chefs interviewed had experience working with local producers and were aware of the many challenges faced by local producers when selling to foodservice. ● All chefs interviewed expressed interest in learning more about what grows in BC and when. Some chefs visit farmers markets to find out what is in-season so they can order it from their regular suppliers and foodservice distributor.
<p>COMMITMENT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Several chefs at independent restaurants are committed to using local products as often as possible. ● Most chefs interviewed indicated that they shop at farmers markets for their restaurants whenever time allows, but this can be as infrequent as 1-2 times per year. Most chefs indicated that they visit farmers markets less often than in the past. Many chefs purchase food products at farmers markets for personal use only. ● Some chefs participate in farmers markets in a promotional capacity by offering market tours, conducting product demos or manning information booths.
<p>COMMUNICATION WITH VENDORS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Most chefs currently have limited or no communication with market vendors but would enjoy opportunities to network with them. ● Many would like to form long-term working relationships with vendors. ● Chefs often initiate communication with vendors when they shop at their local farmers market, but find it difficult to engage in meaningful communication when the market is busy. ● Most chefs expect producers to be pro-active and to follow-up with them shortly after their first meeting if the vendor is interested in establishing a business relationship with the chef outside of the market. ● Phone, email and fax are common forms of communication between chefs and their suppliers.

Chef Interviews Cont.

<p>COMPETITION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Competition among chefs for suppliers is limited. Most chefs share the attitude that more collaboration within industry is necessary.
<p>COOPERATION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● None of the chefs interviewed were cooperatively ordering BC product from BC producers. ● Chefs wish local suppliers would collaborate on delivery and invoicing of products. ● Several chefs expressed interest in working with producers to plan their menus for the upcoming season.
<p>DISTRIBUTION DELIVERY & PICK-UP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Most do not have vehicles to transport products from market to restaurant in accordance with HCCAP. Some chefs do not have vehicles at all. ● Prefer product to be delivered versus picking it up. ● Need products delivered on time and consistently. ● Would appreciate a product-loading zone and help transporting product from market to vehicle if picking up. ● Most chefs are not able to pick up products due to limited staffing in their restaurants and are willing to pay a delivery charge for products if they receive added benefits such as marketing assistance that will drive consumers into their restaurants. ● If a delivery charge or participation charge is necessary at farmers markets, chefs able to pick up products would like incentives (i.e. a chance to waive that fee) for volunteering their time at the market. ● It is difficult for chefs to purchase in larger quantities at farmers markets due to the inconvenience of physically carrying and transporting product safely from the market to the restaurant. ● Time is of the essence when chefs come to the market. They enjoy spending time shopping for products and interacting with farmers. They do not enjoy spending time looking for parking, waiting in line to pay, sifting through boxes to find clean product, guessing what products are and determining how they can be prepared.

Chef Interviews Cont.

JUNIOR CHEFS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● There are several culinary schools in British Columbia and it appears that junior chefs would benefit from visiting farmers markets and to interact with the producer. That said, it is not possible to plan field trips to markets for junior chefs during school time due to their tight curriculum and the timing of most markets (Saturday/Sunday).● Chef instructors suggest getting junior chefs involved with BC Farmers Markets by encouraging them to join organizations such as the BC Chefs Association to participate in the association's activities, such as farm field trips and chef-producer dinners.● Chef instructors are interested in having guest speakers talk to their students about BC specialty products, especially if samples of these products can be made available for students.● Executive chefs come from all different backgrounds. Some have life- time experience while others are recent graduates or new to BC from other countries. Junior chefs are educated in business relating to the foodservices industry, but know little about farming. With the increasing publicity being awarded to local producers and chefs using local products, junior chefs are becoming more interested in learning more about local BC products and their availability..
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Chef Interviews Cont.

LABOUR

- BC's restaurant and foodservice industry is currently experiencing a shortage of skilled workers and increased staff turnover. Some within industry attribute increased turnover to low wages for chef positions and increased competition with other industries due to a shrinking labour pool. Having a shortage of chefs in the kitchen often requires the Executive Chef to spend more time in the restaurant cooking and less time sourcing product and planning new menus. Similarly, increased turnover also results in Executive Chefs spending more time in the kitchen to train new chefs.
- Research suggests that restaurants maintaining long-term selling relationships with local producers and processors experience less turnover. The reason for decreased turnover is attributed to the creation of a "connected" working environment that extends beyond the kitchen and into the lives of suppliers. Locally sourced product often has a history known by chefs, which may make it more exciting and rewarding to work with. In addition, restaurants sourcing local food products may offer more dynamic workplaces as employees often have opportunities to visit supplier's farms and participate in harvesting and menu planning. These excursions are not only exciting, but also educational, thereby enhancing the value of the product.
- There is an increase of ethnic chefs and cooks within BC for whom English is a second language. Some chefs felt that language is becoming a new barrier in the kitchen, sometimes making it difficult to communicate frequent menu changes.
- It is not uncommon for chefs to work 15-16 hour days.

Chef Interviews Cont.

MARKETING	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Restaurants are keen to market themselves to attract customers and they welcome the concept of promoting their restaurants at local farmer's markets.● Chefs would like more information about local food products and producers so they can share these stories with restaurant patrons.● Some restaurants are willing to identify specific vendors suppliers and/or their local farmers market on their menus. Others are hesitant to "clutter" their menu, or do not have the support of the restaurant owner to add such descriptors.● Most chefs are interested in working cooperatively with vendors and BC Farmers Markets to attract consumers into restaurants and to provide information on local foods.● Few chefs dress in their chef's uniform when shopping at the market. When asked why, many chefs indicated that they keep their uniform at work and that when they visit the market it is usually on a day they aren't working or before their shift starts. Some chefs choose not to wear their uniform to save time at the market (get delayed by consumers/sellers when recognizable).
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Chef Interviews Cont.

ORDERING

- Large foodservice distributors offer convenience and reliability, but often do not allow chefs to buy in quantities desired (for example some products must be ordered in 10lb increments) and do not usually provide enough information about products (origin, history, producer information, uses etc.). These distributors also lack selection and proper identification of specialty BC food products.
- When asked about the possibility of implementing a pre-order system at farmers markets, all chefs thought it was a great idea. Many asked if it would be possible to order online from the farmers market in advance.
- Chefs appreciate flexibility in all aspects of ordering, delivery etc.
- Most ordering is done during the week because weekends are too busy.
- Many executive chefs have Sunday/Monday or Monday/Tuesday as their days off.
- Most are willing and excited about the potential of working with vendors to plan menus.
- Ordering to be as convenient as possible. Do not have time to wait in line at the market.
- Chefs place most of their orders in the morning, though some chefs prefer to order late at night once their shift is over (can be as late as 2am).
- Like to sample products before ordering if possible.
- When ordering product, chefs often ask questions about quantity, weight, size, volume etc.. It is helpful when suppliers have tools (rulers, scales etc.) ready and available to answer these questions when chefs order products.
- Appreciate weekly updates on the availability and price of product.
- Chefs at white table cloth and boutique style restaurants know that most BC food products are seasonally available and are not consistent in shape, size or appearance. It would be helpful if vendors provided chefs with seasonality charts and kept them updated on crop changes (late/early harvest times, failing crops etc.). Chefs would also appreciate ordering similar sized products together.

Some chefs order between \$60 and \$800 worth of product at farmers markets during each market visit.

Chef Interviews Cont.

<p>PACKAGING PRODUCT & DISPLAY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prefer products to be clean and pre-packaged and in pre-determined sizes to reduce their kitchen preparation time (see example below). ● Have limited storage within kitchen, so card board boxes that can be easily broken down or stackable containers are preferred. 	
<p>PAYMENT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Would prefer consolidated invoices from vendors and would like payment terms of net 7 to net 14. Paying cash at the market or upon delivery is difficult. If paying by cheque, there is a strong preference to issue one cheque to cover all purchases. ● Chefs who are not owners of their restaurants often have limited access and authority to write cheques or access petty cash. It is common for invoices to be submitted to an accounting official for payment. This is why payment “at the door” can be difficult. 	
<p>PERCEPTION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Many chefs feel that market vendors are flourishing and do not need their business. ● Very few chefs interviewed were aware that all products sold at Farmers Markets meet provincial health regulations. 	

Chef Interviews Cont.

<p>PRICING</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All chefs operate within a food budget decided upon by themselves or the owner/manager of the restaurant. ● Although food costs are important, chefs at white table cloth restaurants weigh price of the product against quality, convenience, consistency, origin and supplier. Often price is not the most important factor, which is why several chefs with a mandate to serve local foods are willing to pay premium prices for specialty products. ● Appreciate consistent pricing. Some chefs work with producers to establish price ranges for products at the beginning of each season. ● Foods purchased at BC Farmers Markets often cost more than imported foods.
<p>REGULATIONS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● One incidence of food poisoning at a restaurant can damage the establishment's reputation forever. For this reason, many chefs are reluctant to purchase products that do not meet local health and safety regulations. ● None of the chefs interviewed were aware that all products sold at BC Farmers Markets meet provincial Health Regulations.
<p>RELIABILITY /CONSISTENCY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● When chef's order product they generally do not have a back-up supplier that can supply missing products just in time. For this reason, it is important for product to be ready and consistently delivered on time.

2.6 BEST PRACTICES IN OTHER JURISDICTIONS

NETWORKING & EDUCATION

Farmer Chef Connection and Fishermen-Chef Connection

The Farmer-Chef Connection and Fishermen-Chef Connection are annual one day events, created by Ecotrust (www.ecotrust.org) and the Portland Chapter of the Chefs Collaborative (www.portlandcc.org). These events aim to “create and sustain relationships between local farmers, ranchers, fishermen and buyers, thus growing the supply and demand for locally produced and prepared foods”.

Each Farmer-Chef Connection conference consists of breakout sessions, open forum discussions, presentations and networking opportunities. Delegates are provided with helpful hints pages (Appendix C) during the conference to facilitate meaningful networking and are also given colour coded name badges to wear that indicate their occupation (for example, red = chef and green = grower). Conference helpful hints pages can also be accessed by delegates after or before the conference via the farmer-chef connection website, www.farmerchefconnection.org.

Breakout sessions at Farmer-Chef Connection events are tailored to meet the needs of delegates and are usually led by persons who have overcome industry challenges or who are experts in their field.

Admission is free at Farmer-Chef Connection events in order to maximize the number of attendees. In February 2006, Seattle held its first ever Farmer Chef Connection event, successfully attracting over 144 producers and chefs who arrived by plane, boat and car from as far as four hours away. To limit expense, each conference is promoted via stakeholder



Chef Chad and rancher Brian making a “connection at Seattle’s Farmer Chef Connection event in February 2006

BEST PRACTICES (CONT.)



Farmer delegates donate and deliver their products to chef delegates before each Farmer-Chef Connection Conference. Chefs then prepare these products at their restaurants and bring it to the conference for a pot-luck style lunch. This is not only a tasty and economical way to put on lunch, but it also offers an opportunity for chefs and farmers to connect.

organizations who email members information about the conference and who post information about the event in their newsletters and on their websites. No print advertising is purchased for these events.

At the end each conference surveys (Appendix C) are used to evaluate the success of each event and to collect delegate contact and product information. This information is then used to create a local resources guidebook. The guidebook is mailed free of charge to all attendees and includes the following information:

- Names, contact information, delivery radius and product lists for local producers and processors able to supply foodservice
- Names, locations and contact information for chefs using local food products in their restaurants
- Seasonality Availability Charts for locally grown fruits and vegetables
- Tips for farmers on how to successfully create and maintain sales relationships with chefs
- Tips for chefs on how to successfully create and maintain sales relationships with farmers

Farmer-Chef Connection events cost an average of \$10 000 USD to execute. Funding for these events is supplied by state and local governments and by local stakeholder organizations. Stakeholder organizations with limited financial resources often provide human resource support, though Ecotrust maintains as the lead coordinator for each event. Direct revenue is not a priority of these events, although associations and delegates have the opportunity to purchase display space for their products.

BEST PRACTICES (CONT.)

CONSUMER & INDUSTRY PROMOTION



Dine Out Alberta

The "Dine Alberta: Savour the Regional Flavour" project showcases local agriculture products, family owned farms, and value added processing for a period of one month each year. The project incorporates producers, processors, distributors, restaurants, chefs, media, and consumers. The project was developed by Alberta Agriculture's Regional Cuisine Initiative of the Rural Development Sector in partnership with the Industry Development Sector, tourism industry and various Producer Associations. In 2003 the Dine Alberta project was started as a pilot for the month of October and will run during the month of September in 2006.

The purpose of Dine Alberta is to encourage Alberta residents and tourists to choose locally sourced menu items while dining out during a specific month each year. The program also encourages restaurants to source local products and provides a database of local producers and processors to facilitate their search.

Dine Alberta is superior to similar programs in British Columbia, such as Dine Out Vancouver, because it encourages restaurants and consumers to support local agriculture in addition to enticing them to "dine out" at local restaurants. Unlike Dine Out Vancouver, Dine Alberta also does not require participating restaurants to feature special, low cost menus during the promotion. In addition, featuring low cost menus as part of a local food promotion in restaurants is not realistic considering restaurants typically pay more for locally sourced food products.

Dine Alberta is raising consumer's awareness of locally available foods, and it is hoped that consumers will eventually prefer Alberta grown and processed foods over imports. As consumer preference for local foods builds, restaurants will likely respond to this demand by featuring more local products. In regards to Farmers Markets, Dine Alberta extends an invitation to all Alberta Farmer's Market vendors through the Alberta Farmers Market Association to encourage vendors to sign up as suppliers for the promotion.

Details about Dine Alberta can be found at www1.agric.gov.ab.ca.

BEST PRACTICES (CONT.)

CO-OPERATIVE MARKETING

Portland Oregon Farmers Market Brochure & Eat Local Promotion (Appendix D)



In 2005 the Portland Oregon Farmers Market Association produced a brochure in conjunction with EcoTrust and the Sustainable Industries Journal as part of a three month Eat Local promotion and challenge within Portland. The overall goal of the Eat Local promotion was to increase awareness of and dollars spent on local food product. The promotion encouraged consumers to dine out and eat local and it challenged restaurants to feature as many local items as possible on their menus. Restaurants were issued score cards to track their local purchases, which they could send in at the end of the promotion for entrance into a prize draw. Collected score cards were used to determine how effective the promotion was at increasing purchases of local products. The promotion also included organized farm tours, community events and the creation of a consumer “Eat Local” brochure.

Over 40 000 copies of the Eat Local brochure were printed at a cost of \$6000 (printing/paper fees only) to EcoTrust and the Portland Oregon Farmers Market Association.. Sustainable Industries Journal was responsible for the remaining costs and entrusted with the graphic design, management, production and distribution of the brochure. Copies of the brochure were distributed as an insert within the Sustainable Industries Journal’s Chinook coupon book for sustainable products. The brochures were also distributed to participating restaurants, farmers markets and tourism info booths for consumer pick-up.

The layout of the brochure was simple, purposeful and professional. The brochure featured restaurants (listed by region) using local food products. To be listed, restaurants were evaluated for their use of local product by Sustainable Industries Journal and were required to pay a fee. Advertising spaces were also sold in the brochure to finance it. In addition to restaurants, the brochure featured a seasonal local products chart and listing of local farmers markets.

Unfortunately no effort was made to evaluate the impact of the brochure, however, visually, it is likely the best example, to date, of a brochure featuring both farmers markets and vendors.

BEST PRACTICES (CONT.)

FARMER-CHEF COOPERATION

Island Chef's Collaborative (ICC)



The Island Chef's Collaborative began as a social gathering and has evolved into a non-profit group comprised of progressive chefs dedicated to promoting Vancouver Island cuisine. The ICC is committed to using locally-grown, high-quality ingredients.

Mission Statement:

"We are passionate about good food. We believe that food nourishes us both in body and soul, and that the sharing of food immeasurably enriches our sense of community. We believe that good food begins with unpolluted air, land, and water, and is dependent on environmentally-sustainable farming and fishing. We are frustrated with the abundance of mass-produced and toxic foodstuffs overwhelming today's marketplace; in response, we emphasize locally-grown, organic, seasonal, and minimally-processed ingredients. We support growers and producers who rely on sustainable farming practices, and we are committed to utilizing their products by educating our customers to help to further their efforts."

The ICC supports local farmers in unique and exciting ways. These include:

- 1) Offering grants to new farmers to help them become established
- 2) Spending time working on farms to help harvest and learn more about local products and farmers
- 3) Donating \$1 from a designated local menu entrée to local farms
- 4) Sharing product pick-up at farms with other chefs
- 5) Working with farmers to establish reasonable price ranges for products
- 6) Paying farmers a year round salary in exchange for tailored growing
- 7) Organizing an annual meeting of farmers and chefs to review seed catalogues to plan menus
- 8) Fundraising for local farms by hosting dinners
- 9) Helping farmers recognize opportunities to increase product margins and sell non-traditional parts of plants.
- 10) Speaking at conference and events.

BEST PRACTICES (CONT.)

Part of the Island Chef's Collaborative's success likely stems from their geographic proximity to local farmers.. On Vancouver Island agricultural areas are significantly closer to urban areas than on the mainland and this closeness makes it easier for Island chefs to purchase and pick-up fresh products for their restaurants and cooperatively plan menus with local farmers. The ICC is currently "Island Focused" but recognizes that there may be opportunity to form mainland branches of their organization in the future to help chefs other regions in BC establish local links with their agriculture community.



Interviewing Executive Chef David Mincey, President of the Island Chefs Collaborative, at his restaurant, *Camille's*, in Victoria, B.C..



BEST PRACTICES (CONT.)

“CHEF FRIENDLY” INITIATIVES

Veggie Valet

A complementary parcel pick-up service is made available to Portland Oregon Farmers Market (PFM) customers. Customers check their purchases at the staffed PFM information booths. When done shopping, they may drive right up to the information booth to load their purchases into their car. Market volunteers staffing the booth are available to help customers load their purchases.

Chef Assistants & Parking Passes

Whistler BC Farmers Market offers shopping chefs assistants to help them carry products around the market and back to their vehicles. Chefs that shop regularly are also provided with parking passes that allow them to park close to the market in areas restricted to the public.

Vendor Guided Market Tours

California Farmers Market offer chefs one-on-one tours at their market. At the end (or beginning) of the tour chefs have the opportunity to sit down in a special booth with their vendor guide to review seed catalogues and discuss unique options for upcoming menus. California farmers market organizes these tours on behalf of vendors. The tours are so popular that they are occasionally booked up to a year in advance.

Product Processing

Vancouver Farmers Market understands that chef's time is limited and that it can be difficult for chef's to source BC food products during winter months. For this reason, chefs shopping at Vancouver Farmers Markets may soon have the option of purchasing processed (cleaned, sliced, packaged, preserved etc.) local foods from market vendors. Offering processed foods to chefs will help cut preparation time and will increase opportunities for using local foods during winter months when farmers markets are closed. Providing vendors with opportunities to process their products will likely help them generate sales for “left over” products during and towards the end of the growing season. At this time, Your Local Farmers Market Society that operates 3 farmers markets in Vancouver,, is gathering information to better understand processing opportunities that may be available to their vendors.

2.7 RESEARCH SUMMARY

The primary purpose of conducting research for this study was to gain a better understanding of the issues, challenges and opportunities facing BC Farmers Market vendors and chefs.

Key Learnings

- Many BC Farmer's Market vendors and chefs at white tablecloth and boutique style restaurants are interested in and willing to participate in a Chef Friendly Farmer's Market program at BC Farmer's Markets.
- Communication is limited among BC chefs and vendors and among BC Farmers Market Managers and other industry organizations. Lack of communication has led to assumptions and perceptions that may be impeding foodservice sales and cooperation at markets.
- There is a lack of trust and a high level of competition among vendors at farmers markets. Trust and competition are major hindrances to forming and maintaining cooperative delivery and/or marketing.
- Most chefs do not have time to shop at farmers markets regularly. In order to increase products purchased by chefs and markets, convenient ordering, pick-up, delivery and payment systems need to be coordinated.
- It is not reasonable to create one ordering/delivery model for all Farmers Markets in BC because each market differs in size, resources, circumstance and goals. Infrastructure to support a market based ordering/delivery system is limited or non-existent at most BC Farmers Markets.
- Many opportunities exist for farmers market vendors and chefs of white tablecloth and boutique style restaurants to cross promote one another.
- Junior chefs are taught little about how they can support local agriculture and why it's important.
- Junior chefs are often part of volunteer programs at their culinary schools. There may be opportunity to have junior chefs help execute the Chef Friendly Farmer's Market program at BC Farmer's Markets on a volunteer basis.
- Use of technologies, including computers, is not being maximized.

Research Summary (Cont.)

- Lack of human resources in BCAFM, at Farmers Markets and in Restaurants means that any strategies must emphasize the importance of saving time and must be administratively “light” to implement and maintain.
- Encouraging chefs to shop at local farmers markets is a viable opportunity because purchasing local, high quality specialty foods through mainstream distribution channels is currently difficult. If local foods, and especially local specialty foods, become readily available through large distributors in BC the opportunities for having chefs shop at local farmers markets may become limited. A focus on relationship selling and value added (i.e cooperative marketing) is required to ensure the sustainability of selling direct.
- Although there appears to be opportunities for increasing the amount of food products purchased at markets by chefs, it is difficult to assess the value of these opportunities. Estimates suggest that only 5% of market vendors are currently selling to foodservice regularly, while 40% would like too. Estimates also suggest that only 1-2% of restaurants in BC are actively sourcing local food products for their menus. Further research is needed to determine the dollar value of foodservice opportunities at BC Farmers Markets.
- Trends suggest that adult Canadians will “embrace gourmet foods and boutique brands” that are high in quality in the years approaching 2020, (*Agri-Food Canada*). Because most restaurants are consumer driven, it is likely that more chefs will be looking for ways to purchase such products in the near future. Many local food products in BC are considered to be high in quality, gourmet and boutique in nature, but unless systems are put in place to help chefs gain access to these products they are likely to be “passed over” by most chefs.
- Although many chefs within the target audience for the Chef Friendly Farmer’s Market Program have a personal interest in sourcing local foods for their menus, they also have a business obligation to protect and maximize the profits of their restaurants. If the Chef Friendly Farmers Market Program can aid chef’s in passing along any increased food costs to their customers as a result of shopping at farmers markets, and if the program can help drive more consumers into participating chef’s restaurants, chefs may be more keen to participate in the program.

The learnings from this study have been used to formulate strategies and tactics for increasing the amount of local food products purchased by chefs at BC Farmers Markets. These strategies can be found within the “Recommendations” section of this report (next page).

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are strategies and tactics for a Chef Friendly Farmer's Market Program in BC. Farmer's Markets wishing to participate in or build their own "chef friendly" programs would benefit from implementing as many of the following strategies and tactics as their resources allow.

3.1 COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES & TACTICS

The first step in building linkages between BC Farmers Market Vendors and BC Chefs is to establish and maintain communication with and between these two groups. The following communications objectives, strategies and tactics offer ways to increase and maintain communication between BC Farmers Market Vendors and BC Chefs.

3.1.1 Frequent Communication

Chefs are busy and often have a lot going on at one time. Increasing the frequency of communication will help keep Farmers Markets at the forefront of chef's minds thereby increasing the likelihood of making purchases at markets.

Tactic: Having Market Managers create a schedule for chef communication. Market managers could then create and distribute these chef communications themselves or delegate another staff member/volunteer to do it.

3.1.2 Consistent Communication

If all communications are sent at the same time each day/week/month chefs will come to expect and look for communication from BC Farmers Markets. Receiving communications at the same time each day/week/month will help BC Farmers Markets appear organized and professional to chefs. Although the information will change each communication, it is possible to create visually consistent messaging by always including the same logo, addressing communication from the same individual/group, using the same colors and layout and/or the same type of paper/email background etc.. It is also possible to create consistency when sending different targeted messages to various stakeholders by ensuring communication remains true to the core theme of the program.

Tactic: Having BCAFM create electronic communication templates that can be accessed and used by participating market's managers via the BCAFM website. Examples of beneficial templates include newsletters, coupons, flyers, vendor product information sheets, business cards etc..

3.1.3 Concise Communication

With little time to spend reading anything at all, short and precise communication will increase the likelihood of having chefs read, remember and act upon.

Face to face communication should be kept concise as well. Being prepared for scheduled and unscheduled face to face meetings by having product, distribution and contact information ready and on hand will increase the value of these meetings and will decrease the likelihood of having to pause or reschedule them to gather information.

3.1.4 Relevant Communication

In order to spark interest and result in action, communication with chefs must be relevant. Relevant communication will address the specific needs and desires of chefs.

Tactic: In order to keep "in-tune" with chef's needs and desires, it may be necessary to request feedback from them from time to time. Surveys, interviews and focus groups are common ways of obtaining feedback. Participating markets should strive to obtain participating chef's feedback at least once each year to ensure that the market's communication methods and messages are still meeting the needs and desires of chefs.

3.1.5 Packaged Communication

Even the most compelling messages need the help of packaging. The story being told can be creative, compelling and personalized to grab and hold the reader's attention.

Tactic: Electronic templates created by BCAFM that can be accessed by participating market's managers via the BCAFM website. See Tactic 3.1.2.

3.1.6 Planned Face-to-Face Communication

Providing market vendors, chefs and managers with opportunities to communicate with one another will increase the likelihood of communication taking place. Planned communication is also something that can be prepared for, which means vendors will have time to gather information about their products and distribution capabilities, and chefs will have time to assess their product needs and desires. Planned communication will also increase the quality of communication because it will be the focus of meeting.

Tactic: Organizing regional half-day or one day networking events will provide chefs and vendors with opportunities to discuss sales and marketing opportunities with one another. These events would benefit from being organized in a way similar to the Farmer-Chef Connection events hosted by EcoTrust in the United States (see Best Practices section). The following are suggestions for holding BC Farmer's Market hosted Farmer-Chef Connection events.

- BCAFM to provide a "how to guide" for market managers to help them organize and execute networking events. This guide should be prepared with guidance from EcoTrust and should cover topics such as event promotion, financing, activities and event evaluation.
- Electronic templates for any necessary handouts (i.e. agenda, business cards/product info sheets for vendors) to be provided by BCAFM.
- Events should be hosted by individual or groups of markets to cater to the immediate needs of attendees.
- Events should be no more than 2-4 hours if held during late spring and summer months and no more than 8 hours long during late fall, winter and early spring.
- Should be free for chefs, market vendors, market managers and media to attend. Distributors and other stakeholders should be charged a fee to attend.
- Events should be open to all BCAFM vendors for free and to non-member farmers for a fee. (The event can be used to help attract new vendor members into BCAFM).
- Held in conjunction with other associations/organizations where possible to help recover costs.
- Emphasis should be on networking activities (such as bee hiving) and interactive educational seminars specific to the needs of vendors and chefs. Suggestions for educational workshop topics include:
 - "Best practices" or, "Real Life Success Stories" for vendors, chefs and market managers.
 - Creative distribution ideas
 - Time saving technological solutions
 - Relationship Selling
 - Product Packaging & Display

- Public Relations
 - Cooperative Marketing Ideas
 - Branding
 - Others as appropriate
- Event venue should be able to accommodate vendor product displays
 - The success of each event should be measured via on-site and follow-up surveys and by participation.
 - Each event should have a “take away” for attendees, such as a listing

Other planned networking opportunities include organizing chef tours at BC Farmer’s Markets, vendor/chef dinners and farm/kitchen field trips in conjunction with appropriate provincial and regional associations such as the Island Chef’s Collaborative and Farm Folk, City Folk.

3.1.7 Targeted Messages

Communication is most effective and efficient when the right message is sent to the right person. Communication should be created with a specific audience in mind and it should be sent to that specific audience.

Tactic: It would be of benefit to BCAFM, Market Managers and even market vendors to maintain databases of contacts so messages can be sent to the most appropriate persons. Owning and maintaining independent databases will help increase the meaningfulness of messages and decrease the user’s dependence upon other associations/organizations/individuals distribution channels. In the case of Chef Friendly Markets, chef communication should be targeted to executive chefs working at local white table cloth and boutique style restaurants (the identified target market for this study).

3.1.8 Capitalizing on Established Communications Channels

Provincial and regional associations and organizations usually have established distribution channels with their members and with association contacts. Tapping into these distribution channels will save both time and money when trying to distribute information and materials to consumers and/or industry. While some associations communicate strictly via email and phone, others communicate through association magazines, newsletters and events.

Tactic: Researching and contacting the following associations/organizations to determine the feasibility of tapping into their communication channels:

- Provincial and regional Chefs' Associations (BC Chefs Association, Chefs Table Society, ICC etc.).
- Chamber's of Commerce, Local Governments etc.
- Local Newspapers & Radio Stations
- Restaurant and Foodservice Association(s) (BCRFA)
- Local Food Advocate Organizations (Farm Folk City Folk)
- Culinary Schools
- Others.

3.1.9 Tapping Into Technology

Taking advantage of available technologies can have several benefits. Using computers to communicate via email is much quicker and much less expensive than sending communications through mail. In addition, learning how to use software programs may involve an initial cost and some time, but this time and money is usually more than recovered soon after the program and user become operational. An example of such software is Simply Accounting. Converting from paper and pencil invoices and inventory to computerized invoices and inventory has potential to save users significant amounts of time. Using computers also makes information much easier to share, which can give rise to additional benefits.

Tactic: Offering BCAFM market managers and vendors opportunities to learn how to use software programs that can increase their efficiency. Such programs include Excel and Simply Accounting. Vendors would also benefit by learning how to use internet based software, especially if they will have the opportunity to provide chefs with updated weekly product lists online via a Chef Friendly Farmer's Market Program website.

Chefs would appreciate having a means of contacting markets/vendors on market via a market cell phone.

Chefs participating in the Chef Friendly Market Program should be provided with an electronic listing of market vendors with corresponding product and contact information.

3.2 MARKETING STRATEGIES & TACTICS

3.2.1 Market Research

The quality of all market planning decisions depends upon the quality of the information on which they are based. One of the goals of the Chef Friendly Farmer's Market Program is to develop long-term relationships with individual chefs. This can be achieved through research by generating a base of knowledge about participating chefs so that farmer's markets can tailor their products, services and communications to their specific needs. Identifying and establishing, maintaining and enhancing, and when necessary, also terminating relationships with chefs and other stakeholders can all be aided through research. The recommendations in this report are based upon quantitative research conducted with market managers, chefs and vendors in 2005/2006. Because industry circumstances, chef needs and vendor capabilities are likely to change in time, research should be an ongoing part of a Chef Friendly Farmers Market Program.

Tactics:

- 1) Research is also needed to assess which BC Farmers Markets are best suited to pilot the Chef Friendly Farmers Market program during year one. Research should also be conducted to identify which vendors and chefs are best suited to participate in the pilot of the program.
- 2) Each market manager or designate should interview vendors and chefs regularly. Research can be formal or informal, but should be conducted at least once a year by each market. It is recommended that BCAFM provide participating markets with electronic survey templates and suggestion pages for conducting interviews and collecting/analyzing research.
- 3) BCAFM would also benefit from conducting yearly research, either alone or as part of another research study, with its markets and with industry to identify new threats and/or opportunities that may impact the Chef Friendly Farmers Market Program.

3.2.2 Retail Image, Services and Promotional Strategy

Chefs' perceptions of BC Farmer's Markets and the quality of their shopping experiences will impact the amount of time they spend at markets and the amount of products purchased. Chef's current perception of BC Farmers Markets is that they are busy, consumer- oriented markets where fresh, quality local products can be purchased – but only if you get there before they sell out! In order to make farmer's markets appealing to chefs, chefs must feel like valued customers of the market and the market/program must cater to as many of their needs as possible.

Tactics:

- 1) Promotional messages must focus on differentiating Farmers Market from other distribution channels. This can be accomplished by emphasizing the unique atmosphere of the market, by highlighting all the high quality niche products that can only be found at their local farmer's market and though a gentle reminder that they are helping to support and sustain local agriculture in their community. Promotion messages should also emphasize how farmer's markets allow personalized service and provide the venue for forming a business relationship directly with the producer. A relationship may evolve into a formalized program where the chef "adopts" a farm. Promotional messages should be created in accordance with the communications strategies outlined in the previous section.
- 2) Offering the following amenities at farmers markets will help to accommodate chef's needs and concerns, add value to their shopping experiences and the products they purchase, and increase the overall retail image of the market, thus increasing the likelihood of chefs purchasing local foods on a regular basis.
 - Chef only parking spaces
 - Valet services
 - Product carry around/carts
 - Product recipe/idea cards
 - Promotional opportunities (chef demo's, ask a chef booth, shop with a chef, chef/market dinners etc..)
 - Product listings (in advance of market)
 - Pre-ordering and delivery options
 - An on-line ordering system
 - Chef-only pick-up tents for pre-ordered products
 - Well-labeled, cleaned and packaged farm fresh foods
 - Superior customer service (possibly as part of Tourism BC's *SuperHost* program)
 - Vendors who are equipped with product information materials, professional signs and business cards.

- Cooperative marketing opportunities
- Increased market signage and visibility (so chefs can find the markets)
- Chef's Choice Vendor Award (also an incentive for vendor's!)
- Program website featuring vendors contact information, product lists, vendor schedules, information about the program and online ordering (if available)
- "Chef-Only" shopping periods (before market opens to public or on a separate day).

3.2.3 Targeted Marketing

All marketing should be targeted to a select group(s) or specific market segments to help maximize returns. The marketing campaign targeted to chefs should be distinct and separate from a consumer campaign. Direct marketing often produces the best results, thus researching chefs names before mailing information may prove helpful.

Because chefs are an extremely busy bunch, any effort to garner their support should be given ample time. Although chefs may be genuinely keen to participate in an activity, getting them to do so can often take up a great deal of time, especially at the beginning, when relationships have yet to be formed.

3.2.4 Branding

The Chef Friendly Farmers Market Program will need to be branded to create awareness, build preference and loyalty.

Tactics:

- 1) Program branding should include the creation of a brand name (possibly the Chef Friendly Farmers Market Program) and a logo. It is recommended that BCAFM create a provincial brand for this program, rather than encouraging markets to create individual brands as doing so will increase the program's perceived value and significance. A provincial brand will also help to increase the brand's retention and the program's awareness amongst its target audience while reduce costs for each participating market. The program's logo should be available for participating markets to use in accordance with usage criteria created by BCAFM. BCAFM should also create suggestions for how the brand can be most effectively used (i.e. on menus, promotional materials, signage etc..)
- 2) Market vendors should be encouraged to create individual brands for their products/companies to help support the niche value and marketability of their product.

3.2.5 Loyalty Program

Loyalty programs can be used to reward customers, generate repeat business, collect research and establish databases.

Tactics:

- 1) Execute a chef loyalty program that rewards chefs for regularly purchasing products at their local farmer's market. Chefs may receive a product (bin or fresh food) or promotional award (i.e. feature in a market's consumer newsletter) for purchasing products regularly for a specified number of weeks, months etc..

3.2.6 Relationship Marketing

Messaging should have a purpose to create, sustain and enhance the market's and vendor's relationships with their chef customers. The goal is to create long-term sales and marketing relationships between chefs and vendors.

3.2.7 Market Development

Although the program will be tailored to chefs in white tablecloth restaurants, it will be important for market managers to consider finding new markets for the program if they wish to maintain or grow the program.

In the future, there may be opportunity to extend the program to small boutique or locally oriented retail food stores (for example, Choices or Capers Markets).

Other market development opportunities may include linking the Chef Friendly Farmer's Market program to other like minded local food programs such as Spud Organic Delivery or even the Demand Status program being offered by Sysco Vancouver.

3.2.8 Cross-Promotion

Competition among vendors selling similar products at farmer's markets is high and competition among restaurants is also high. Vendors and chefs can help one another out by cross-promoting each other. Opportunities for cross promotion include:

- Chefs featuring the name of the vendor and/or farmers market on menus, fresh sheets or promotional materials.
- Vendor's posting restaurant's menus/information at their booths for customers to see. (BCAFM to provide templates for restaurant information posts).
- Chef guest appearances at the market (selling/sampling product at vendor's booth) and vendor guest appearances at chef's restaurant.
- Cooperatively organized events such as farm dinners.
- Cooperative cookbooks, recipes etc..
- Live market/restaurant webcams

3.2.9 Public Relations

No matter the marketing budget, free publicity, which is positive, is usually welcome. Most BC Farmer's Markets have limited marketing budgets; therefore, market managers and BCAFM should strive to achieve maximum publicity at all times.

Suggestions for maximizing publicity include:

- Identifying who local and provincial media are and determining their potential interests in the program
- Creating and maintaining a database of provincial food media and writers
- Creating and sending out newsworthy press releases
- Organizing FAM tours of the markets, including a "local" lunch at a participating chefs restaurant.
-

BCAFM should engage their markets by supplying public relations tips to help them gain as much exposure as possible.

3.3 ORDERING & DISTRIBUTION STRATEGIES & TACTICS

Research suggests that most chefs cannot visit farmers markets on a regular basis to purchase products, even though they value the products found at these markets. Offering chefs a way to purchase products without them having to visit farmers markets on every visit would allow them to purchase products on a more regular basis. If pre-ordered products could be delivered, or picked-up from the market in a convenient way this would maximize the amount and frequency of chef's orders. The following are strategies and tactics for how product can be ordered and distributed as part of a Chef Friendly Farmers Market Program.

3.3.1 Ordering

There a number of ways for chefs to order product as part of the Chef Friendly Farmer's Market Program. The emphasis is to provide chefs with the option to pre-order product before each market to minimize the time they have to spend at the market, or at the very least, provide them with a listing of available products at the market so they can plan their menus and shopping list prepared for the market. Each participating market's preferred system will depend upon their resources and the commitment of vendors and chefs to participate in the program.

Ordering Options

- Being provided with individual fresh sheets provided by vendors in advance of the market and then placing orders with individual vendors via phone/fax or email.
- Being provided with a collaborative fresh sheet from a designated market staff person in advance of the market and then placing orders with individual vendors. (Market staffs do not have time and do not have enough product knowledge to take orders for vendors. In addition, ordering product directly from vendors supports the program's goal to develop independent vendor/chef relationships).
- Having access to individual fresh sheets online via the Chef Friendly Farmers Market Website and then being able to order directly with vendors via an online "add to basket"
- Being provided with a market fresh sheet (individual or collaborative) before the market, but then having to come to the market to shop for these products.

Commitment

Operating the program is going to take extra effort and commitment from vendors, market managers and staff. For this reason, a certain level of effort and commitment should be expected from chefs.

It may be advisable to implement weekly minimum orders for participating chefs. One suggested order minimum was \$70. A contract will be needed from BCAFM to enforce these minimums. Chefs who sign up for the program but forget or do not order product regularly should be supplemented with a \$70 market “fresh box” created from vendor’s product at the market. The “fresh box” would then be available for pick-up at the market. “Fresh Box’s” not picked up could either be donated to charity or delivered to the chef’s restaurant for an approved fee. To keep things simple, it may be best to have one vendor supply the contents of each \$70 box to keep invoicing and payment as simple as possible. To keep things fair, vendors could take turns creating the \$70 boxes as they are needed.

3.3.2 Distribution

Because many chefs are too busy to leave their kitchens, market able to provide delivery or easy pick-up options for chefs will likely have the most program success. Distribution as part of the Chef Friendly Farmers Market Program may include:

Short, Simple, Direct and Selective Distribution

Distribution should only be available to chefs signed up for the program and within a certain distance of the market. Distribution could be offered for a nominal fee to chefs and could occur via vendors or market vehicle, courier or local distributor. Deliveries should be made within a specific time period for chefs and should be packaged in a convenient way within a recyclable or reusable container. It is important to note the vehicle delivering product to chefs may or may not be HACCP certified, and it will be up to the chef to understand the circumstances of his/her delivery. Delivery can be arranged by BCAFM or coordinate by vendors. If BCAFM delivers they should charge chef's a fee to cover the costs of distribution, including the delivery person's time. It is recommended that vendors also charge a delivery fee, either as a lump some or by incorporating it into their product's prices.

Cooperative Delivery

In the future it may be possible to coordinate delivery with organizations such as Spud Organic Delivery, BioVia or if volume permits, larger distributors such as Sysco and/or Neptune.

Pick-up

Chefs able to pick up their pre-ordered products from their local farmer's market should have the opportunity to do so in a convenient way. Chef friendly markets are recommended to have a chef-pick up zone, where chef's products are stored for easy pick-up, with invoices enclosed. Chefs should be able to drive right up to the chef pick-up zone and load their products into their vehicle. It is important to note that the chef's pick-up tent will need a staff or volunteer to manage it.

3.4 PRICING/INVOICING STRATEGIES & TACTICS

Invoicing

When it comes to issuing invoices for their products, vendors have two options. The first is to invoice independently and the second is to invoice collaboratively with other vendors. Though chefs prefer the second option because it would allow them to only write one cheque per week, vendors prefer the first. A happy medium may involve having vendors invoice monthly, rather than weekly for their products with a net 7 pay period to help reduce the number of cheques needed from chefs. If the resources of a market allow, another option may be to have BC Farmer's Markets collect one cheque each week from each chef and then distribute funds back to each vendor.

Vendor Payment

Chefs should be required to pay vendors directly for their products in the period specified on their invoice. In situations where vendors have collaborated their invoices, the chef should be required to pay whomever the invoice indicates. Most BC Farmers Market Managers are not interested in becoming responsible for handling money intended for vendors, nor do they have the resources to do so. Chefs who fail to pay in a timely manner should not be dealt with.

3.5 FINANCIAL STRATEGY & ESTIMATES

Initial Investment

The Chef Friendly Farmer's Market Program is anticipated to require an initial investment of between \$7000 and \$10 000 in year one. These funds will be used to brand and pilot the program and to establish the templates, materials and how-to guides that may prove invaluable to program participants in the years following the pilot as it expands to all BC Farmer's Markets.

Cost Recovery

Although profit will be one of the main goals of vendors within the program, it will not be the goal of BCAFM or its member markets. As the program increase's vendor sales, it may be possible to charge vendors a fee or percentage of sale for being a part of the program to help recover any program costs. It will be important for participating markets to track vendor foodservice sales to determine the success of the program, as doing so will increase the likelihood of the program receiving sustainable funding in the future.

4.0 BENEFITS TO BC

The benefits to British Columbia, as a result of implementing the Chef Friendly Farmer's Market Program will accrue as follows:

4. Increased and enhanced access by BC Farmer's Market vendors to local foodservice industries, resulting in:
 - Increased foodservice sales for BC Farmer's Market vendors
 - More local foods being featured on menus throughout BC
 - Diversified sales channels for BC Farmer's Market vendors
5. Increased communication and co-ordination between a) BC Farmer's Market vendors and BC Chefs b) BCAFM and other provincial organizations c) BC Farmer's Market Managers, resulting in:
 - Co-operative and cost shared marketing that will
 - Increase consumer's and industry's awareness and demand for local foods
 - Enhanced financial viability for BCAFM, member markets, vendors and restaurants committed to buying locally grown, raised and/or processed foods.
 - Increased awareness of the BCAFM brand among industry and consumers.
 - A more sustainable and better connected agri-food industry in BC
 - Enhanced business opportunities (and, therefore, financial viability) for BC Farmer's Markets and BC Farmer's Market vendors.
6. Indirect promotion of healthy eating via concentration on local and organic British Columbian products, a benefit to governmental agencies promoting active lifestyles, health and British Columbian agricultural/artisan output.

5.0 APPENDIX

APPENDIX 'A'

LIMITATIONS

1. **Systematic Error** – there are two different types of systematic error: administrative error and respondent error.
2. **Administrative Error** – Because more than one interviewers was used at times, it is possible that each could have asked questions differently and used a different tone that could have implied or urged respondents to answer the question differently than they normally would. Discussing each interview question at the onset of this study and conducting the interviews in pairs where possible helped limit this error.
3. **Respondent Errors -**
Response Biases: There are five different types of response bias
 - i. *Extremely Bias* – occurs when interviewing several overly emotional or opinionated people, and few people with no strong opinion, emotion, or knowledge about the questions being asked. Unfortunately, there was no real way to overcome this bias. However, a variety of people were chosen to try to minimize getting only people who were strongly opinionated.
 - ii. *Interviewer Bias* – to ensure this study did not suffer from this bias effort was made to treat each respondent exactly the same while building rapport and when questions were being asked. Understandably, this may not have been possible in situations where the interviewer and respondent had a previous, non-research based connection, as was the case in several circumstances. In instances where a strong personal connection existed, a second interviewer was used to try and limit the bias of the first interviewer.
 - iii. *Auspices Bias* – some people will have different answers or opinions than they normally would based on their current feelings or experience at the time of the interview.
 - iv. *Social Desirability* – depending on the person being surveyed and depending on their culture (for example Japanese), persons may have answered in a way that they felt would please the interviewer, not based on their true feeling or opinion. In order to overcome this as much as possible, facial expressions and Body language were watched and probing questions were asked when the interviewers felt it was necessary.

Non-response error – this includes break offs or item omissions. This was overcome by providing clear instructions, stating the interviews purpose, ensuring confidentiality, being well organized (not fumbling with papers, etc.) and by telling respondents upfront how long the interview was expected to take.

APPENDIX 'B'

Program Feedback

“Having local chefs attend the Farmers' Market and participate by purchasing product directly from the farmers adds another level of success to our market. We aim to provide a weekly location for folks to showcase the products that they make, bake, and grow. The relationships that are forged between the farmers and chefs serve to educate... for future successful local food production and consumption. It is wonderful when chefs have local products on the menu... it is especially appreciated in a town like Whistler where so many of the patrons are visiting from all over the world.”

Nicole Ronayne
Market Manager
Whistler Farmers Market
www.whistlerfarmersmarket.org
PO Box 344, Whistler, BC V0N 1B0
604-932-5998

“The BC farmers Market Chef program is a great idea! Bringing chefs and farmers together supports local agriculture and economic development while raising public awareness about local food systems. Co-marketing between farmers markets and restaurants furthers this link. Farmers markets patrons looking for a good meal away-from-home can continue their support local food by choosing restaurants supplied by their favourite farmers market vendor. Diners looking to replicate an unforgettable meal can find the local ingredients used by the restaurant from a named farmer at a local market stall. This symbiotic relationship has incredible potential and deserves all support to make it to grow further.”

Devorah Kahn
Food Policy Coordinator
City of Vancouver
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(f) 604-871-6048

“The marriage between, producer-chef-consumer, is long over due. With these three parties working together, there will be a better awareness of what locally produced food products there are available in British Columbia, what the chef is looking for and what demands are put upon the establishment by the consumer.”

Marcus VonAlbrecht

Corporate Chef - Binner Marketing and Sales Inc.
Chairman of the Board- B.C. Chefs' Association
Area Director for Canada - AREGALA
PH1-1040 Pacific Street
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“The BC Chefs’ Association is in full support of the Farmers market. As Chefs work on daily and weekly menus, it helps their creativity in producing menu items that are suitable for that particular month. Supporting BC Products is what this province is all about. Our chefs are often asked to perform food items that are made in BC, and the customers appreciate the fact that we supply products grown in our Super Natural Province. By having our Chefs’ involved in BC products, it would increase the public awareness of all the food items grown in the province.”

Edgar Rahal

"President" British Columbia Chefs' Association
Phone: (604) 825-4100
Email: edgarrahal@shaw.ca
www.bcchefs.com

“Congratulations on all the good work regarding the BC Farmers Market Project!”

John Bishop

Owner, Bishop’s Restaurant

“At Kelowna Farmers Market we’re working towards bringing chefs to local farmers markets to bring the 100 mile diet into reality. We anticipate the BC Chef Friendly Farmer’s Market Program increasing chef’s awareness of the local food products that can be purchased from our farmers markets so they can help us reach our 100 mile diet goals”.

Bob Callioux
Market Manager
Kelowna Farmers Market
Phone: 250-878-5029
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"The Gate to Plate dream has just moved one giant step closer to reality"

Don Monsour
Chair, BC Culinary Tourism Society

As food and wine are becoming a cultural entity of many regions of British Columbia, we are witnessing an amazing transformation of menus throughout the industry. Today's customers are increasingly curious about the origin of their food and beverages; they are expecting restaurants to serve BC wines and are demanding local foods to go with it. Farmers markets play an important role in this phenomenon as they provide the customers with a chance to identify and experience some of this wonderful and often forgotten produce. On the other end, our young generation of cooks and chefs has grown accustomed to the commodity produce available at the supermarket and most wholesalers. Here again, Farmers Markets can provide cooks and chefs a chance to see, touch, smell and try these products and at the same time develop a relationship with the farmers themselves. It is this relationship that will ensure a consistent and sustainable supply of local foods for both the retail and foodservice industries and in the long run, create a true made in BC healthy cuisine.

Gilbert Noussitou
Camosun College, Chefs Instructor
BC Agritourism Alliance