

**POLICIES TO PROMOTE THE SECURITY AND  
DEVELOPMENT OF FARMERS' MARKETS  
IN BRITISH COLUMBIA**

by

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# Approval

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## **Abstract**

This study assesses the barriers to the growth and security of farmers' markets as part of the food system in British Columbia. Farmers' markets have increased from 60 to 100 in the province since 2000. However, several barriers reduce the ability of vendors or farmers' markets from supplying the full demand for locally grown and value-added food. The most significant barriers are that farmers' markets are viewed as a special event as opposed to a bona fide sector of the food system and the insecurity of approved public or private locations. These barriers are unique to vendors and farmers' market managers and societies. The findings are supported by surveys, elite interviews, and reviews of federal, provincial, and local government policies relating to the marketing of local food in B.C. This study develops and evaluates policy options to resolve the barriers in legislation and regulation at all levels of government.

Key Words: farmers' markets, food security, food systems, food safety, community economic development, social enterprise, nutrition, locally grown

## **Executive Summary**

The purpose of this study is to identify barriers and supports for farmers' markets in meeting the increasing demand for local food and to assess policy remedies. Conducting a study on a part of the food system involves examining several interconnecting and complex factors. Growing and selling food to neighbours in the local community at a farmers' market is not as simple as is often assumed. In an era of global trade in all commodities and especially food, numerous laws at the local, provincial, national and international levels regulate all aspects of the enterprise. Most regulations are meant for food producers, processors, and distributors that export to or import from beyond B.C. and Canada. While these laws ensure open markets for food exporters or importers, they are having increasingly negative impacts on the producers and processors that sell local food at farmers' markets in B.C.

My research employs the triangulation of quantitative and qualitative methods. Eight farmers' markets in south-western B.C. were chosen for the study because of their diversity of locations and venues as well as their accessibility to the researcher. Five are located on public land, and three used private venues to operate their weekly markets. First, the barriers were identified by conducting field studies, surveying vendors, interviewing farmers' market managers, board members of farmers' market societies, and city staff, and reviewing previous research. That served as a basis for identifying policy options that would reduce or eliminate the barriers and promote supports; these alternative options were then, systematically evaluated. The evaluation criteria were administrative ease, equity, effectiveness and cost.

The policy options, are focused on three stakeholder groups, farmers' market vendors, farmers' market societies and the B.C. Association of Farmers' Markets. The first policy option suggests ways to alter how decision makers perceive farmers' markets, which is at the core of existing barriers. The second policy option ensures the security and development of farmers' markets for vendors. The third policy option provides for support and administrative ease for farmers' market societies and the B.C. Association of Farmers' Markets. Most of the policy changes this study recommends are at the local or provincial levels of government and do not require a significant expenditure of public funds. What they do require are different ways of thinking and decision-making that respect and include B.C. farmers, local food processors and farmers' market societies.

The policy changes identified in this study and evaluated as most effective at meeting the goals of removing barriers and increasing supports for farmers' markets are the following:

- To acknowledge that farmers' markets are a bona fide sector of the food system, alter how decision makers perceive farmers' markets. This can be accomplished by removing the terms "temporary," "special event" or "agri-tourism" and replacing them with terms such as "producer only" in policies regarding farmers' markets.
- Include the B.C. Association of Farmers' Markets in the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture's online InfoBasket as a Producer / Processor Association in every commodity category in addition to agri-tourism.

## **Dedication**

For those who have challenged, sustained and inspired me.

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The growers and value-added processors were cooperative and responded at a rate that provided me with a solid foundation for analysis and policy formation. The Board of the B.C. Association of Farmers Markets' provided me with feedback that made my policy options practical. City staff and former elected officials provided me with an understanding and appreciation of the underlying political dynamics in decision making with regard to farmers' markets.

Numerous friends and family were helpful in alerting me to various media articles related to farmers' markets, food security and the Agricultural Land Reserve. The ongoing act of providing me with information indicated that they supported the academic study that I had embarked upon.

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## **1 Introduction**

In an era of globalization, peak oil, climate change, population increases and genetically modified organisms, the demand for locally grown and processed food has been increasing. Moreover, food security has been identified as an important public policy goal for the past ten years. As defined in the United Nations Rome Declaration on World Food Security (1996), food security “exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, 1996, p. 1).

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization’s, Rome Declaration stated that food insecurity should be reduced by 50 percent by 2015. Objective 7.5 of the Rome Declaration recognizes that food security is best achieved at the local level. (UN FAO, 1996). As one of the 186 signatories to the declaration, Canada established an Action Plan for Food Security in 1998. The goals of Canada’s Action Plan for Food Security are food security, public health, social justice / equity, democracy and peace.

Access to locally grown food is a key factor in food security. According to the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, “Food security is a broad concept, encompassing safety, quality and sustainability of our food supply, and access to a healthy diet.” (Vancouver Coastal Health, Population Health, 2007, p. 1). Farmers’ markets are recognized by numerous stakeholders as an essential part of the food system where consumers can access locally grown and nutritious food.

Sanderson et al. (2005) note that North American farmers’ markets were a European tradition that spread across the continent with settlement. The first farmers’ markets were established in the seventeenth century. As is the case now, those early farmers’ markets provided food produced in rural areas to urban consumers. Officials preferred public markets for the sale of food because they were the only venues that officials could regulate. Industrialized farming and food distribution made it difficult for small farmers to compete and this resulted in a lack of funding and disarray of farmers’ markets. The role of farmers’ markets diminished in the 1950s and 1960s. However, since the 1970s there has been a renewed interest in farmers’ markets that continues today.

Farmers’ markets are defined by the B. C. Ministry of Health as “a food establishment operated in a fixed location on a temporary basis in connection with a charitable or public event,

farmers' market or other event of a like nature" (Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, 2007, p. 1). Geographers such as Allison Brown have a slightly different definition. "Farmers markets are generally considered to be recurrent markets at fixed locations where farm products are sold by farmers themselves." Brown also uses the term "producer-only markets" for clarification (2001, p. 4-5). When the concept of a farmers' market as the means to improve access to local food to urban consumers was being discussed in 1995, the Vancouver Food Coalition's primary goal was food security (Your Local Farmers Market Society, 1999). Food security is the common thread that is woven throughout the literature and is a goal which the federal, provincial and some regional governments in B.C. have identified. However, farmers' markets also play a role in community economic development.

The past ten to twenty years have witnessed a dramatic expansion of farmers' markets across North America. Within Canada, the Province of British Columbia is a high growth region for farmers' markets. Since 2000, B.C. venues have increased from 60 to 100. However, farmers' market vendors, small food processors and farmers' market administrators face a number of unique barriers that prevent them from meeting the demand for locally grown and processed food. This study aims to canvass those barriers in southern British Columbia, assess their importance, and formulate and rank alternative policy options to alleviate those barriers.

In the next sub-section, I provide background on various government reports and programs that have an impact small-lot / small-scale farming in B.C. I also provide a brief history of the eight farmers' markets highlighted in the study. In section three I outline issues affecting farmers' markets. Section four identifies barriers and supports to farmers' markets, resulting from surveys, interviews and policy documents. Section five contains policy options, assessment criteria and evaluation. The final sections of the study include the recommendations and conclusion.

## **2 Motivation, stakeholders and methodological approach**

Elite interviews conducted for this study underline what motivates supporters and proponents to establish farmers' markets. Mel Lehan, a board member of the Your Local Farmers' Market Society and proponent of the Kitsilano Farmers' Market was asked why there is the need for a farmers' market in an area where there are retail food stores such as Capers and Choices. He replied that the presence of a farmers' market was important for community building and local economic development as well as the availability of nutritious locally grown or value-added food. City of Abbotsford Economic Development Officer Jay Tiechroeb stated that "Abbotsford is the

largest farm gate community in the province; therefore we really needed to have a more public exposure to agriculture and the farmers' market was certainly one thing that we pushed for." Food security was the motivation for establishing the East End Farmers' Market in the City of Vancouver (YLFMS, 1999).

What motivates consumers to shop at farmers' markets B.C. is outlined in Connell et al. in 2006. Connell et al. (2006) utilize a methodology similar to that employed in the current study: a combination of qualitative (interviews) and quantitative (surveys). Their survey, was undertaken in B.C. at 28 farmers' markets, and some of their findings can be briefly summarized. The top three reasons for shopping at farmers' markets are nutrition content, food for sale that was in season and the food is grown or processed locally. Shopping at farmers' markets every two weeks is almost equal to large grocery stores in frequency, with small grocery and specialty stores visited once per month. Increased consumer preference, for food products sold at farmers' markets has created an increase in the demand for direct farmer to consumer distribution.

In spite of growing at a fast pace in B.C., farmers' markets represent a very small portion of the food system compared to other producers and distributors. The food system in B.C. is complex and involves many stakeholders. A number of stakeholders interact with farmers' markets in a direct manner while others have a more indirect relationship. The key stakeholders are the farmers' market customers and the growers / value-added food processors that sell farmers' markets. Without these two groups, there would be no farmers' markets. The vendors' responses to the open-ended survey questions consistently stated that the main reason they sold at farmers' markets was the interaction with the people who were going to eat the food they had produced. Farmers' markets could not operate efficiently without administrative support that is usually organized as societies of volunteer board members and a paid or volunteer market manager. While this study focuses on the food related vendors, local artisans comprise about 33 percent of vendors at the farmers' markets studied.

Another key stakeholder is the B.C. Association of Farmers' Markets (BCAFM) that has been the umbrella group for most farmers' markets in the province since 1999. Until then farmers' markets operated independently. BCAFM has worked with Buy B.C. to produce a farmers' market brochure. The purposes of the society are support for growers and value-added food producers and artisans from B.C., promotion, education, development and support for farmers'

markets in B.C., to represent B.C. farmers' markets in all matters of general interest and "advocate to industry, government, agencies, commissions and boards on matters which impact and interest the members" (BCAFM, 2008, p. 3).

While it has no paid staff, the BCAFM provides members with a number of services such as a web site and affordable liability insurance for farmers' market vendors. They have received grants for one-time special projects from Investment Agriculture funded by the B.C. Agriculture Council and the government of B.C. The annual membership in the BCAFM for farmers' markets is \$200. No ongoing operating funds are provided to the BCAFM from the provincial government.

In comparison, over the past three years, the province of Ontario has provided Farmers' Market Ontario a total of \$270,000. According to the Ontario Minister of Agriculture and Food and Rural Affairs, "Supporting the growth of farmers' markets is a wise investment in our rural communities. They provide a significant marketing opportunity for farmers and are a wonderful place where consumers can buy the fresh, high quality foods grown and produced in our province." Farmers' markets in Ontario contribute \$1.9 billion annually and 27,000 Ontario producers are directly involved (Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2008).

The following stakeholders in the B.C. food system have a direct impact on farmers' markets and are referred to throughout this study:

- Regional Health Authorities

- Local government elected officials / staff

- B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Land

- B.C. Centre for Disease Control

- Vancouver City Savings and Coast Capital Credit Unions

- Community organizations and food councils

Other stakeholders in the food system that have a less direct impact on farmers' markets:

- Investment Agriculture Foundation

- B.C. Agriculture Council

- Commodity based food growers, processors, exporters and importers

- Local food and craft retailers

- Large retail food stores

As a background I provide detailed histories and circumstances affecting each of eight markets that were studied: the City of Vancouver (5), Mission City (1), City of Abbotsford (1) and Mayne Island, one of the Southern Gulf Islands (1). These locations, were chosen because they have diverse and unique characteristics that provide useful information about barriers under a range of circumstances and were accessible to the researcher.

I used a multi-faceted methodological approach with both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Field study observations, were employed to form the basis for vendor surveys and elite interview questions. Survey responses, were entered into an Excel spreadsheet set from which graphs were generated and analyzed. I used qualitative analysis of the elite interviews, which included both closed and open-ended questions. The last three survey questions were open-ended, so that qualitative analysis is used as well. Triangulation is one of the research strategies employed in this study in order to arrive at findings that are unbiased and objective. According to Esterberg (2002) triangulation is a strategy that improves reliability and dependability of findings.

The field studies took place in Abbotsford in June and December 2007, on Mayne Island in August and September 2007, Riley Park, Trout Lake and West End markets in Vancouver October 2007 and Mission City November 2007. The final field study was at the indoor Winter Market at Wise Hall in December 2007. Mary Forstbauer, a long-time farmers' market vendor and the President of the B.C. Association of Farmers' Markets, vetted the survey questions. I conducted the surveys between late November 2007 and early April 2008.

I approached current and former farmers' market managers / society board members in Vancouver, Abbotsford, Mayne Island and Mission, and gave an overview of my research plans and made appointments for interviews. Ten elite interviews of farmers' market managers, board members, city staff members, a former Vancouver Parks Board Commissioner and the Fraser Basin Trust took place between December 7, 2007 and March 3, 2008. Their responses are contained throughout this study. Techniques used while obtaining information from Farmers' Market Managers / Board Members and City Staff ranged from taped interviews to written responses to pre-set questions. Some of the barriers identified from the interviews include lack of long-term venues, onerous health regulations, exclusion from decision-making processes, agricultural or marketing boards and committees. The names and titles of those interviewed can be found at Appendix D.



This study also includes secondary data from survey responses of customers of 28 B.C. farmers' markets that was conducted by Conell et al., University of Northern B.C. and the BCAF. Survey results from both Decima Research and Ipsos Reid polls on benefits of locally grown food assisted in the formation of policy options in this study. The findings of a case study of the potential for a farmers market conducted by Ling and Link (2007) at Royal Roads University aided in analyzing policy options. A feasibility study of potential community economic development from value adding of agriculture in the Fraser Valley by Lions Gate Consulting (2001) for Community Futures South Fraser provided insights into the criteria used from a social enterprise and community economic development perspective. The study used information from articles obtained from the Internet, local media stories, and books that focused on local food security, food systems, food safety, and farmers' markets.

## **2.1 Small-lot /small-scale farming in B.C.**

In B.C. 75% of all farms are defined as small-lot farms and are less than ten acres. Small-scale farming, as defined by the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands (1999) are those that produce under \$50,000 gross per year. Seventy-seven percent of 21,600 census farms in B.C. meet this definition. In comparison, 80% of all businesses in B.C. are classed as micro businesses with under 5 employees.

Small-lot / small-scale farming in B.C. is similar to other micro businesses in B.C. that are incubators and may grow into larger operations due to their innovations. According to the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands (1999, p. 8), "Small scale agriculture also plays a vital role in the future of farming in B.C. New entrants, innovation, risk taking, agriculture entrepreneurs, occur predominantly on small scale farms."

A number of organizations in the province have an aspect of food production and distribution in their mandate. The Ministry of Agriculture and Lands has the responsibility of legislating and regulating agricultural activities in B.C. The B.C. Agriculture Council (BCAC) is the umbrella organization of the agricultural industry in the province and is comprised of representatives of the major food commodity groups and marketing boards. Small-lot and small-scale farmers are represented by the Small Scale Food Processors Association. Each Health Authority has local Community Food Action Initiative committees which include a wide range of representatives

from child care centres, schools, food banks, local businesses, community organizations and churches.

In 1993 the Provincial government introduced a program to ensure that products with the “Buy B.C.” label are 100% grown and processed in B.C. The government viewed the program as a way to support B.C. farmers and processors without offending global trade rules. Administration of the program, was transferred from the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands to the BCAC in 2002. Currently over 1,200 companies and associations, including the B.C. Association of Farmers’ Markets, use the “Buy B.C.” label and there is 75% consumer recognition of the brand. The BCAC states that demand for B.C. grown and processed food products is increasing and that there is “no better way to harness consumer demand” (BC Agriculture Council, 2007).

According to the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands (BCMAL) 2008-2009 Service Plan, 49 communities in B.C. have significant agricultural lands (BCMAL, 2008, p. 45). Agricultural advisory committees provide local governments with a link to the farmers in their community because only 1.6% of the population of B.C. live on farms. AACs are involved in advising local governments on a wide variety of matters that impact farming such as Official Community Plans, zoning, drainage, edge planning and exclusions from the Agricultural Land Reserve. AAC members are appointed by local governments and are responsible for providing input to decision makers at 12 regional and 16 local levels of government regarding policies affecting agriculture (BCMAL, 2008, p. 1). One of the Service Plan 2006-2007 goals of the BCMAL is to increase the number of Municipal or Regional Agriculture Advisory Committees (BCMAL, 2007, p. 50). While over 100 communities have farmers’ markets, there are only 28 Agricultural Advisory Committees in the province. However, recent additions to provincial programs support local agriculture.

The “Eat B.C.” campaign began in 2007 in partnership with the BCAC. Funding totalling \$287,000 is available to promote locally grown and processed food. Farmers’ markets were one of the venues included in the “Eat B.C.” media release (B. C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, 2007). Through another program, the government of B.C. provided \$7,000 in each of the five health regions for the Farmers’ Market Nutrition and Coupon Project (FMNCP). The pilot project distributed booklets of coupons worth \$15 per week to 35 low-income families in each health region to purchase locally grown food at farmers’ markets in Vancouver, Courtenay, Kelowna,

Prince George and Coquitlam. It is the first program of its kind in Canada (BC Association of Farmers' Markets 2007). According to the co-ordinator of the program, the redemption rate in the program's pilot year was 88% (BCAFM, 2008).

## **2.2 Government of B.C. Reports**

Small-scale farmers focus on the farm and its connection to the community as opposed to being commodity based. Therefore, different growing, processing and marketing methods are used when compared with the commodity sector of the food system (B.C. Ministry of Agriculture, 1999). The review noted that small-scale farmers perceive themselves as having a stronger connection to the local community in comparison to provincial or global markets. As well, because their primary market is local these farmers are the key contact between the local community and the agricultural community at large. As entrepreneurs who chose to live on a farm, small-scale farmers assert that the success of their business is tied to the quality of life in the community as a whole. They want others to see them as they see themselves as partners with large-scale farmers in supplying food to the community.

Small-scale farms compensate for their small size competitive disadvantage by producing farm products with higher value-added. By their numbers and by direct marketing small scale farmers are recognized as the face of farming in B.C. The report also mentions the concern that regulatory agencies "are not well equipped to understand, include and respond to the needs of small lot/scale agriculture" (B.C. Ministry of Agriculture 1999, p. 8). Other barriers highlighted include the cost and inconsistency of regulations such as those that limit the small-scale farmers' ability to supply small quantities of products.

Small-scale farmers reported that they needed to be included in the B. C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands (BCMAL) mandate and programs and that the Ministry staff should recognize that local problems must have local solutions. Continued funding from the BCMAL to support buying local, as part of "Buy B.C.," was one of the solutions recommended by small-scale farmers. Participants also wanted regulatory agencies to recognize the unique needs and impacts of small lot / scale farmers before regulations are adopted: they express a need for longer-range planning. Inclusion of small-scale farmers in the regulatory planning process was one option put forward. As a way to reduce barriers, small scale farmers recommended that a mechanism be put in place to enable their inclusion in supply management at a smaller scale and that there be support for a direct farm market infrastructure. Finally, small lot farmers want to

ensure that the integrity of the food system is maintained. The following year, local food security and agricultural sustainability were issues that concerned citizens.

In 2000, two years after the federal government introduced their Action Plan for Food Security, a reference to food security and agricultural sustainability was made by the Government of B.C in the First Report of the Select Standing Committee on Agriculture and Fisheries. Advocates for sustainable agriculture and food security told the committee that healthy food is the basis for community economy and that dependence on external food supplies compromises the ability of the community to produce local food because it reduces the economic feasibility of local food production and processing (Select Standing Committee on Agriculture and Fisheries, 2000, p.16).

Witnesses suggested that the Committee recommend a collaborative partnership among community organizations, local governments and the provincial government in support of community-based production, processing and distribution. Witnesses asked that the partners find “innovative ways to support a wide variety of community-delivered food security initiatives” including farmers’ markets among others (p. 17).

In 2003, the City of Vancouver (2007) initiated the Vancouver Food Charter, which identifies five principles for a just and sustainable food supply. Community economic development is the first principle. The Food Charter backgrounder states that there are recent changes in global food distribution that create risks to the contemporary food system. In addition, every stage of the food system from production to transportation to waste management depends heavily on fossil fuels. This leads to potential spiralling food costs and interruptions in the food supply.

The Community Nutritionists Council of B.C. (CNC) represents community dietitians who are knowledgeable in nutrition, communication that enacts change consistent with federal provincial and local nutrition standards. CNC submitted a policy paper in 2004 to the B. C. Ministry of Health (Fraser Health Authority, 2007). The Community Food Action Initiative (CFAI) is a health promotion initiative aimed at increasing food security in B.C. When the CFAI was implemented in 2005 by the B.C. Ministry of Health, it “became the first provincial initiative in Canada to recognize and financially support community led solutions to the problem of food security” (Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, 2007, p. 2). This was the result of the 2005 Provincial Health Officers’ Annual Report. The objectives of the CFAI are awareness about food security, access to local healthy food, food knowledge and skills, community capacity to address

local food security, development and the use of policy to support community food security. In 2006-2007, CFAI had activities in over 100 B.C. communities. In the Interior Health Region, one initiative was the expansion of the scope and reach of the local farmers' markets.

The availability of farmland is an essential factor in the supply of local food and food security. According to the Agricultural Land Commission, farmers lost up to 6,000 acres of farmland to development, in the early 1970s. In 1974, the government of B.C. brought in the Agricultural Land Reserve legislation to ensure food security by preserving 4,716,516 hectares of farmland as well as initiating support programs for farmers in order to provide food security to citizens. Currently 4,759,669 hectares fall within the ALR (Runka, 2006). However, the legislation allows for exclusion of land if certain criteria are met. The criteria have changed over the past 35 years and now include community need. This is of concern to a number of individual citizens and groups in British Columbia (Campbell, 2006).

While total land in the ALR has increased, 14,911 hectares of exclusions have been allowed in the agricultural regions of the province that have the best growing conditions. Campbell recommends that the exclusion process be made more transparent (2). The lack of transparency and increased speculation on development conversion has meant that the prices of farmland have tripled. For example, a four hectare property in Port Coquitlam was offered for sale for \$375,000 per hectare and the advertisement stated that the property "would logically become the focus of future residential expansion ... as development pressure intensifies" (Campbell, 2006, p. 11). A study of farm values across Canada found that the increase in the past year has been highest in B.C. Values in B.C. were 14.5% higher in 2007 than for 2006 while the average increase in Canada was 7.7% (AIC Notes, 2008). See Cavendish-Palmer (2008) for an in-depth study of this issue.

A farmland classification for property taxation was one of the public policy tools implemented to support farmers after the ALR was adopted. There are three requirements for obtaining the farm tax status. The property must meet the criterion of a farm, be over two acres and produce gross sales of \$2500 from specified primary agricultural products per year in order to qualify for the reduced property taxes. If the land farmed is under two acres the gross sales must be over \$10,000. For land that meets the criteria whether it is in the ALR or not, the assessment is at 50% of the determined value for residential purposes (B.C. Assessment Authority 2008). Moura Quayle conducted a study on the future of the Agricultural Land Reserve in 1998. Quayle

found that “preserving agricultural lands appears to have had the unintended effect of expropriating the potential for return on investment” (p. 2). As a result the negative impact is unintended hardship because there is a loss of equity for financing. Quayle noted a loss of flexibility and retirement options for farm families. Because of legislated constraints on non-farming activities and residential, commercial or industrial development, farmland has been more affordable (at the time of the report) for those wishing to practice farming either full time or part time (Select Standing Committee on Agriculture, 2000). In addition to statistics on the availability and value of farmland, information on who is farming in B.C. is reported in the Census on Agriculture every four years.

The 2006 Census on Agriculture tracks food production and information on farmers. The retirement of food vendors with low succession of young farmers, are identified as a barrier to the security and development of farmers’ markets according to market managers in Vancouver and Abbotsford. Therefore, the number of farmers who are close to retirement age is relevant to this study. The number of farmers who work off-farm is also a factor that could have implications for local food production and farmers’ markets in B.C. In her study of agriculture in B.C., Quayle (1998) advocated for an immediate strategy to encourage young people to be trained in agricultural professions and activities. The Census on Agriculture indicates that the lack of young farmers is still a concern. Statistics specific to B.C. and this study are contained in Table 1.

**Table 1 Farms, Regulations and Farmers Markets in B.C.**

Number of farms in B.C.	19,844
Number of farms with income under \$10,000	9,466
Percentage of farmers working 20+ hours/wk. off farm	66%
Average size of farms in south west B.C.	22 ha
Average age of B. C. farmers	53.6
Farmers' markets in B.C.	100 +
Farmers' markets that belong to BCAFM	71
Federal laws regulating agriculture	20
Provincial laws regulating agriculture	16
Farmers' Market food vendors surveyed	150

Sources: Statistics Canada 2006 Census on Agriculture, B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, B.C. Association of Farmers' Markets

This sub-section, has shown that the problems facing small farmers have been assessed in several instances. However, statistics clearly show that small farming is not sustainable at this point. This study will show that farmers' markets are one practical venue to preserve the livelihood of small farmers. The next section presents a short history of the farmers' markets I study.

### **2.3 History of Farmers' Markets in Four Communities in B.C.**

Farmers' markets are part of the province's history. However, after the mid-twentieth century they ceased operating for a number of years. Over the past fifteen years farmers' markets opened in over 95 communities. This study examines farmers' markets in the City of Vancouver, Mission City, Mayne Island and Abbotsford. Because some of the current barriers facing these farmers' markets have been present since their re-emergence, a review of their histories is helpful in formulating policies.

### 2.3.1 City of Vancouver

One of Vancouver's earliest farmers' markets opened in 1933. Blackburn's Farmers' Market opened at the corner of Seymour and Robson Streets in Vancouver with over 40 stalls (Davis, 2007). The period that Blackburn's was in operation is not available. However, many years passed before another farmers' market operated in the City of Vancouver. In 1994 a group of individuals began to take action on a concept that surfaced through food policy discussions. A public forum was held in 1995 with Bob Chorney, a consultant from Ontario where farmers' markets had been continually operating since 1827 (Guelph Farmers' Market 2007). Community members were invited to imagine being able to access fresh local fruit and vegetables in their neighbourhood. In order to qualify for grants and other funding the East End Farmers' Market Society was formed. In addition to food, the society decided to allow the sale of locally made crafts. Initial funders were the VanCity Community Partnership Fund and the United Church VanDusen Fund. The funding was \$9,000, which went for signage, advertising and equipment. However, a barrier to operating a venue that would be selling locally grown fruit and vegetables existed. Zoning by-laws made it illegal to sell fruit and vegetables outdoors in any area of the City of Vancouver whether it was public or private space.

Intense pressure, was placed on city council members as well as provincial politicians after repeatedly being told that a farmers' market was not possible in the City of Vancouver. Finally, approval was given one week prior to the advertised opening and the East End Farmers' Market was held in a private space at the Croatian Cultural Centre in spite of strong opposition from city staff. The Vancouver City Council gave a conditional approval, which required a review of issues such as local traffic, parking and impact on other mobile vendors. Five hundred people attended the opening day. There were eight farmers and fourteen craft vendors. The farmers were sceptical about the ongoing success of the Market. Eleven weeks later, total sales were almost \$40,000 and between 800 and 1200 people were attending on a weekly basis. During that first year the goal of the East End Farmers' Market Society was formulated:

The mission is to foster community health and local economic development through the creation of a venue where community members have greater access to safe, healthy, locally produced, and environmentally friendly food and where B.C. producers can market their goods directly to urban consumers (Your Local Farmers Market Society, 1999)

Some objectives of the society were to create economic viability for small farms and local cottage industries through the establishment of a retail venue that brought fair returns. The consumer would have a choice of fresh high quality agricultural products in a venue that would



allow interaction with the people who grew the food. A sense of community would be created in urban areas which would instil support for rural communities and farmland preservation. The farmers' market would be a medium for public education regarding nutrition agriculture and food policy issues.

In its second year, as a way to meet the mission and objectives, the East End Farmers' Market held seasonal cooking demonstrations in conjunction with the Vancouver / Richmond Health Board. VanCity provided a \$20,000 grant that was used to hire Devorah Khan as a part time market manager. The market board acknowledged that they were not the only ones experiencing barriers. Some of their potential customers had barriers that prevented them from accessing fresh local food such as "language, insufficient income, lack of transportation and social isolation". A coupon project, "Healthiest Babies Possible," sponsored by the Vancouver Health Authority and REACH Community Health Centre, enabled high-risk pregnant women to obtain fresh healthy food (Your Local Farmers' Market, 1999, p. 3).

On April 30, 1996, City Council considered whether they should amend the Comprehensive Development (CD-1) zoning by-law to accommodate the farmers' market at the Croatian Cultural Centre. CD-1 zoning is for a single lot rather than a block of lots. It would have resolved the non-compliance issues and given the farmers' market the security of being a legitimate part of the city. However, after staff advised against such a policy the rezoning decision was tabled to allow for further investigation. A large number of sites are zoned under the CD-1 District Schedule according to the city web site (see Appendix F).

According to a 2003 City of Vancouver review of farmers' market zoning, the West End Farmers' Market began at Lord Roberts School in 1999. When the matter of the West End Farmers' Market was being discussed by City Council it came to their attention that the Chief License Inspector had some qualms. After making a field observation in 2002, city staff reported a reduction in craft booths. However, they were concerned about the presence of community groups. Staff warned about changing regulations that would give legal approval which would reduce the ability to control future situations. The West End Farmers' Market was relocated to Comox Street adjacent to a city park as it did not meet School Board criteria for the use of school property (Tove, 2006). In 2002 Your Local Farmers' Market Society received permission to hold a third farmers' market at Nat Bailey Stadium / Riley Park (City of Vancouver, 2003, p. 10).

The farmers' markets have overcome these obstacles as is evident by continued presence of the Trout Lake (East End), Riley Park/Nat Bailey Stadium and West End farmers' markets. In 2007, YLFM grew once again with the addition of the Kitsilano Farmers' Market located at the Kitsilano Community Centre and the bi-weekly Winter Market located at Wise Hall near the Commercial Drive area of the city. In its second season the Winter Market has an average of 1200-1300 customers on a typical 4 hour market day with sales totalling \$35,000 of which 80% are agricultural products (YLFM, 2008).

Buying local and social enterprise are addressed in the Food System Assessment for the City of Vancouver. Barbolet, Miewald et al. (2005) note that the "buy local" phenomenon is gaining notice in the industry press. For example, Nature's Path Foods' initiative "Harvest to Home" is responding to a market demand that is growing 20 per cent per year. The role of credit unions and Community Futures (part of the Western Economic Development Corporation) in mobilizing a significant amount of capital has assisted small business start-ups all over B.C. The report also has statistics regarding the ratio of consumers to grocery stores. They range from less than 200:1 in the DTES to 12,000:1 in Oakridge (p. 94). In comparison Tove (2006) found that the ratio for farmers' markets in Vancouver is 158,000:1 from April to October. For the Winter Market the ratio is the population of the whole city to one.

### **2.3.2 Mission City Farmers' Market**

The constitution of the Mission City Farmers' Market Society is dated April 10, 1996, and the farmers' market has been continually operating for 12 years. It has experienced four relocations because all but the most recent site have been on private property. The first market was on the West Coast Express parking lot. The next location was uphill and closer to the downtown area of Mission City on the PharmaSave parking lot. The next move was to the parking lot at Pals. All of the private locations were eventually developed, and the most recent site is finally on public space at Lane Creek next to the library. Farmers' market board member Marge Robertson related that location has always been a barrier to expanding the market. "Historically, we have always been on privately owned parking lots. 2007 was the first time we have secured public land on the Fraser valley Public Library parking lot, but it is a limited space that cannot hold more than 12 vendors." She states that the City of Mission is not as supportive as it could be.

### **2.3.3 Mayne Island Farmers' Market**

While Mayne Island has a history in agriculture and an Agriculture Hall that celebrated its centenary in 2000, a farmers' market was launched only in 2001 by a number of island farmers and artisans. The farmers' market is held on the grounds of the Agriculture Hall, which is owned and operated by the Mayne Island Agriculture Society. The award winning Fall Fair has been the focus of the society, and the farmers' market has a tenant relationship with the Agriculture Society similar to numerous other community organizations on Mayne Island. The farmers' market is held from 10 am to 1 pm each Saturday from July to October and is a destination for the numerous tourists that visit the island for lengthy vacations or day trips on bicycles. The location is in the commercial core of the small island, which is two miles from the ferry terminal and a short walk from the government dock. However, there are also numerous residences in the neighbourhood. Few of the permanent wood shelters on the perimeter of the grounds of the Agriculture Hall for the first five seasons of the farmers' market remain in place, which has resulted in vendors having to supply their own shelters. Some vendors have vans or trailers that are set up for selling. Fortunately, Mayne Island is in a rain shadow, and trees shade the vendor stalls on the perimeter of the grounds.

### **2.3.4 Abbotsford Farm and Country Market**

In spite of being located in the most intensely farmed jurisdiction in Canada (B. C. Ministry of Agriculture 2004 p. iii), Abbotsford has the most recently established farmers' market among those included in this study. The implementation of this farmers' market was somewhat unique according to Stacey Corriveau, a current board member of the Abbotsford Farm and Country Market Society. She has been involved in the market since its inception through her employment with Community Futures South Fraser. According to her speaking notes for the Surrey farmers' market workshop in November 2007, the Abbotsford Farm and Country Market was "run from a community economic development standpoint" from the very beginning. The initial concept of this market was the result of a feasibility study done for Community Futures South Fraser and funded by the Western Economic Diversification Fund (WEDF). WEDF is a branch of the federal government that promotes social economy or social enterprise which is defined as "A grass-roots entrepreneurial, not-for-profit sector, based on democratic values that seeks to enhance the social, economic, and environmental conditions of communities, often with a focus on their disadvantaged members" (HRSDC, 2005, p. 1).

The project became a separate society in the spring of 2004. The funds were used for the feasibility study and hiring a full time market manager for the first year of the market, which began July 2004. One of the early factors that the market faced was that “we could not compete on price but we could compete on quality, eating local and supporting the local growers” (Corriveau, 2007, p. 1). In its fourth year, the annual revenues from sales were \$200,000. According to market manager Bruce Fatkin, 16 vendors sell fresh or value-added food. Initially the farmers’ market was located on a city parking lot on the main street of the downtown business district due to lobbying by the Downtown Business Association (DBA) rather than a site recommended by the consultants. While a couple of downtown businesses view the market as disruptive, the DBA maintains strong support. The City of Abbotsford was a sponsor and strong supporter from the outset. Economic Development Officer Jay Teichroeb stated that the farmers’ market should collaborate with a secure entity such as the DBA.

### **3 Issues affecting farmers’ markets**

Local food, farmers’ markets and food security have been research topics over the past twenty years. Studies at the University of Northern B.C. (Connell et al., 2006) and Royal Roads University (Ling and Link, 2007) are particularly relevant to my study. The Connell et al. study reinforces the factors that have caused an increase in consumer choice for local food and farmers’ markets. Ling and Link outline the ingredients required to establish a successful farmers’ market. I also cite studies that examine and compare food systems in North America and B.C. that have an impact on food security and nutrition: Jaffe and Gertler (2008), Kloppenburg (1993), Kneen (1995); community economic development: Barbolet and Miewald (2005), Ninacs and Tove (2002), Sanderson et al. (2005); and uncertainty and marginalization; Tove (2006), Gunton et al. (2003).

#### **3.1 Food security, food safety and nutrition**

Whether a community is food self-reliant is a measure of food security according to the Community Food Action Initiative. When Quayle (1998) speculated on what a British Columbia agri-food policy would include, she referred to the addition of a new article in the Swiss Constitution in 1996 that tasks the agriculture sector with ensuring guaranteed food supplies for the population. A number of years later a study was completed in B.C. regarding food self-reliance.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Lands conducted a report in 2006 regarding the ability of B.C. agriculture to feed the province’s growing populations. The study employed novel methods in that it “examines farm gate production rather than wholesale value, uses land in production and average yields, estimates the amount of land needed for current and future self-reliance and compares production to the recommended consumption according to *Canada’s Food Guide for Healthy Eating*” (B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, 2006, p. 5).

**Table 2**

<b>Summary of Comparison of Food Consumed in B.C. and Food Produced in B.C.</b>			
<b>Food Group Grown in B.C.</b>	<b>B.C. Consumption Million Kg's</b>	<b>B.C Production Million Kg's</b>	<b>% Self-Reliant</b>
Dairy	1080	617	57%
Meat and Alternatives	467	298	64%
Vegetables	764	331	43%
Fruit	172	273	159%
Grain for Food	315	43	14%
<b>Total - Grown in B.C.</b>	<b>2798</b>	<b>1562</b>	<b>56%</b>
Fruit - Not Grown in B.C.		310	
Vegetables- Not Grown in B.C.		1	
Sugar		136	
<b>Total - B.C.</b>	<b>3245</b>	<b>1562</b>	<b>48%</b>

The statistics shown in Table 2 indicate that fruit is the only food group in which B.C. is self-reliant. With ethanol using grain, it is unlikely that B.C. will be able to maintain 14% self-reliance in grains. While the B. C. Ministry of Agriculture itself admits that B.C. is only 48% self reliant overall, the Agricultural Land Reserve that preserves food growing land in B.C. has been diminishing due to exclusions for other uses. In 2005, 600 acres were removed from the ALR in Abbotsford (Campbell, 2007). The area of land excluded was highest on Vancouver Island, with a net loss of 17,000 hectares or 12.9% of the ALR between 1974 and 1999. The Southern Gulf Islands, which are part of the Capital Regional District, have the highest concentrations of land in the ALR with 6,000 hectares or 45% of their total area (MacNair, 2004).

Kloppenburger et al. (1993) note that the average distance travelled by most of the food consumed in the U.S. is 1,300 miles. On average food changes hands a half dozen times before it reaches the consumer's mouth. Kloppenburger suggests that food be conceptualized as a "foodshed" similar to water in a watershed. He asserts that this way of looking at how food flows enables a better analysis of food systems. Rather than directly confront the dominant food system Kloppenburger et al. recommend the use of alternatives. He points out that a number of elements can be used as foodshed building blocks. Alternatives he cites are farmers' markets, community food councils and community supported agriculture.

Jaffe and Gertler (2006, p. 1) discuss how "consumers vote with their currency in the market place to elect the kind of products they want and concomitantly, the kind of lifestyle and food system development they prefer." One problem they highlight is that consumers are having fewer choices to "vote" for and are becoming deskilled in food selection and preparation. They assert that this de-skilling also has a negative impact on health outcomes as nutrition and health are connected.

Two Vancouver journalists documented the availability of local food as well as how to select, prepare and preserve it. In 2007, Smith and MacKinnon published *The 100 Mile Diet*, which chronicles a year of eating food that was grown within a 100-mile radius of their home city of Vancouver. In seeking out sources of local food, the authors make numerous references to the farmers' markets operating in the city. This phenomenon has created an increase in the demand for local food that will have to be met, in part, by farmers' markets.

According to the B.C. government, local fresh food sold at farmers' markets has a positive public health impact on B.C. communities. Local access to meat dairy and in-season fruit and vegetables plays a role in food security. In B.C., food security is a responsibility of the six health authorities. Various policies implemented by the B.C. Ministry of Health have both supported and created barriers for farmers' markets.

In 2005 the Provincial Health Services Authority branch of the ministry initiated the Community Food Action Initiative (CFAI), which promotes eating local food. The CFAI 2006-2007 review states that community food security exists "when all citizens obtain a safe, personally acceptable, nutritious diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes healthy choices, community self-reliance and equal access for everyone" (Vancouver Coastal Health

Authority, 2007). At the same time, the B.C. Centre for Disease Control, a branch of the Health Ministry changed the regulations for inspecting meat, which has created barriers for the small-lot producers that are most likely to sell to the local market.

Connell et al. (2006) find that consumers view farmers' markets as one way to obtain nutritious food. Consumers also expressed their opinion that meats, dairy products and eggs sold at farmers' markets were not given hormones. Food safety was fourth on the list of reasons consumers gave for shopping at farmers markets in the survey of customers at 28 farmers' markets in B.C.

The East End Farmers' Market approached the City of Vancouver in 1999 to obtain approval to sell additional foods, specifically meat and dairy products. Vancouver City Council decided to allow the expansion after receiving information from health authorities that the foods did not add serious risk to consumers. However, City staff expressed concern regarding unfair competition to neighbouring merchants (City of Vancouver, 1999). The Health Act and regulations compel farmers' market managers to ensure that food vendors have met food safety requirements. Fresh fruit and vegetables are the only foods that do not require the approval of the Environmental Health Officer. While health authorities enforce food safety regulations consumers are also concerned about other aspects of food on their health as is indicated from responses to polls and studies (Decima 2003, Ipsos Reid 2006, Connell et al., 2006).

Kloppenburg et al. examine the nutritional impact on food that has to be produced to travel 1,300 miles. Fresh produce is increasingly being treated with chemicals. The requirement of durability and shelf life is often at the cost of palatability and nutrient value. The author describes a de-skilling of farmers away from local knowledge and craft intelligence in "expectations of the land" by agribusinesses which use universalizing of inputs generated in laboratories far from the farmers' fields (p. 34-36). Kloppenburg et al. state that "the dominant dynamics of the global food system actively erode both moral economy and community." He warns that people who resist this system will have to "carve out an insulated space to maintain or create alternatives" (p. 37).

Kneen (1995) recommends that we stop viewing food as a commodity traded on the global market. He recommends the reduction of distancing the consumer from the farmer. Kneen details the concentration of control of the food system in Canada by five major corporations. Corporate

agriculture has become highly integrated with one corporation owning and controlling all aspects of a commodity. Poultry is for the most part “vertically integrated” by ConAgra, Tyson and Cargill in the United States and Maple Lodge Farms in Canada.

Pollan (2002, 2007) details the health risks associated with meat that has been produced in the industrial food system on feed lots. Because the cattle are raised in stressful conditions, they are medicated with antibiotics to prevent *E. Coli*. Pollan found that feed lots use 70% of the antibiotics in the United States. The occurrence of *E. coli* has become so widespread that the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization has established international regulations for food that is exported (UN FAO, 2008). In a report comparing grass-fed and grain-fed cattle, the Union of Concerned Scientists argue that a serious problem of antibiotic resistance has been caused by the non-therapeutic use of antibiotics in animals raised on feed lots (Clancy, 2006).

When one learns how conventional retail ground beef or rib eye steak is raised and processed it is understandable that health regulations are essential. However, the meat, dairy and eggs sold at farmers’ markets are raised in environments that differ significantly from feedlots according to information posted on their web sites. Most of the beef is grass fed, and the chicken and eggs are free range. Many are also certified organic which does not permit pesticides or antibiotics. Polls conducted over the past five years indicate that whether food has been genetically modified or medicated is a factor in their food purchases.

A Decima Research national poll in 2003 found that 91% of the respondents believe that a label should be placed on food sold in Canada that has been genetically modified. Eighty-eight percent think that labelling should be mandatory and not left up to voluntary choices by the food industry (Consumer Association of Canada, 2003). Ipsos Reid conducted a poll in 2006 on the benefits of locally grown food. Forty-eight percent of 1,091 respondents believe that locally grown food is not genetically modified, 46% said that it is healthier and 44% think that it is safer. In spite of the fact that the public has been demanding regulations and labelling for genetically modified food public policies have required only voluntary labelling and public information.

In a July 2007 letter to the federal and provincial Ministers of Health, Dr. John Blatherwick, Chief Medical Officer for the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority recommended regulations for genetically modified food as they are causing severe allergic reactions in many people and



especially children. The response to date from the federal government has been to maintain the status quo.

### **3.2 Community economic development**

Farmers' markets can be defined as social enterprises or as co-operatives. Co-operatives of the twenty-first century can be understood to be "an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically controlled enterprise" (Conn, 2005, p. 4). Tara McDonald, Executive Director of Your Local Farmers Market Society stated that YLFM is a member of Enterprising Non Profits in partnership with Bell Canada, Coast Capital, VanCity and a number of other funders who have collaborated to support social enterprises. "We really stand out as a success model as a social enterprise." She also asserted that there is little or no financial support from governments at the local or provincial level when compared to farmers' markets in other provinces or the city of Seattle, Washington.

Ninacs and Toyé (2002), state that social economy and community economic development (CED) are intrinsically interwoven in spite of CED also being involved with conventional business. They find that social enterprises make good sense because local demand already exists in the form of need, and small amounts of private and public funds can transform the demand into markets that are impervious to global economic fluctuations (p. 39).

Sanderson et al. (2005) point out that farmers' market vendors have an economic advantage because they perform all of the supply chain functions such as storage, grading, marketing and retailing. This results in the vendor capturing the revenue and costs rather than the long line of intermediaries in the industrial food system.

Barbolet and Miewald's (2005) assessment of Vancouver's food system by the City of Vancouver's Department of Social Planning and Simon Fraser University's Centre for Sustainable Community Development asked whether social enterprise and community economic development could be used to help create a sustainable, local food system. One of Barbolet and Miewald's key findings was that a balance is needed among social, environmental and cultural goals in order to create an economically sustainable local food system. Because of an over-reliance on imported food, Vancouver's food system is vulnerable. The very limited food production in Vancouver necessitates production and consumption links between the City and

regional farms. The re-design of the entire food system must centre on local food enterprise development as the central component of capacity building by reinvestment through local ownership.

Barbolet and Miewald's (2005) study also notes the lack of appropriate zoning, the number of farmers able or willing to become vendors and the ability for the markets to operate as a "special event" rather than as a permanent part of the food supply in the City of Vancouver (p. 58-59). Sanderson et al. (2005) state that, "Actively recruiting vendors to ensure that there is both selection and variety in the products offered is fundamental to a healthy farmers' market" (p. 17).

Connell et al. (2006) find that neighbouring businesses acknowledge the positive impact of a farmers' market in their vicinity. While 11.3% found farmers' markets to be very to somewhat negative, 63.6% responded that farmers' markets were somewhat to very positive. The authors make reference to the value of farmers' markets beyond the positive economic impact. They find that there are other values such as community sustainability, cultural viability consistent with "food democracy," "buying local" and a positive impact on community development.

### **3.3 Uncertainty and marginalization**

Decision makers do not perceive farmers' markets to be a bone fide part of the food system. Therefore, farmers' markets are excluded when policies are being formed relating to food production and distribution. This causes barriers to development and results in uncertainty for vendors and farmers' market societies alike. Ling and Link (2007) use case study methodology to examine whether conditions existed for a successful farmers' market in the Royal Oak area of Saanich, B.C. These include factors that are specific to potential farmers' market vendors such as low cost and a location with parking, power, toilets and visibility. The study concludes that a number of issues must be resolved before the farmers' market proceeds such as location, scheduling, health regulations, market standards regarding local and organic products and accessibility and inclusion of low-income consumers. Factors that producers should consider when organizing a farmers market include: a manager to run the market, support from other farmers in organizing the market, land / site for the market and a critical mass of producers to participate in the market.

Ling and Link find that the main characteristics of successful farmers' market are a high level of repeat customers, high participation by small-scale farmers, prices close to or slightly higher

than large grocery stores, significant spillovers to neighbouring businesses and importance of direct interaction between producers and consumers. They also found that there is a connection between land available through the Agricultural Land Reserve, the production of local food and the success of farmers' markets, "A significant limitation in the local production of foods is the decrease in available agricultural land" (p. 10).

Ling and Link assert that political support for the industrial food model constrains local food systems such as farmers' markets. Local food systems have become embedded in and constrained by the rules, interests and policies of local and national governments and international agencies, which are geared toward global markets rather than local markets. This can manifest itself in municipal by-laws or provincial legislation regarding land use within the Agricultural Land Reserve or production and export decisions made by international agencies all of which undermine the viability of farmers' markets (p. 5).

Tove (2006) compared interactions between farmers' markets proponents and city planners in three cities in Canada and the United States, including the City of Vancouver. She notes that farmers' markets in all three cities are concerned about long-term security and have difficulty dealing with city bureaucracies (p. 79). After analyzing surveys, elite interviews and city documents, Tove recommends that farmers' market proponents be included in the city planning process. While that would aid in adding expertise and knowledge to the process there is an imbalance in the power of various stakeholders. Therefore the decision making process needs to be changed from an exclusionary to a collaborative one, in order to make it more effective and equitable.

After studying the B.C. Land and Resource Management Plans (LRMPs), Gunton et al. (2003) defined collaborative planning (CP) as a "collective process for resolving conflicts and advancing shared visions involving a set of diverse stakeholders" (p. 1). A basic tenet of CP is a balance of power among the stakeholders. In the LRMP study, Gunton et al. identified a number of benchmarks that can facilitate successful collaborative planning. (See the benchmarks at Appendix G).

### **3.4 Barriers to farmers' markets**

#### **3.4.1 Small-lot property assessments**

Knox (Times Colonist, 2007) reports pressure from the B.C. Assessment Authority to disallow the farm tax status for farms on the Saanich Peninsula, which is one of Vancouver Islands' most productive food producing areas. The farm classification is allowed for properties between two and ten acres that produce at least \$2,500 in gross sales per year. The land does not have to be in the Agricultural Land Reserve to receive the farm tax classification. Apparently the tax authority wants to make sure that the land owner is actually farming. The tax assessment authority can apply two separate classifications on different portions of the same parcel of land. The farm classification carries a much reduced tax rate relative to the other classifications.

One of the local small-lot farmers, who has sold walnuts and herbs at the Moss Street Farmers' Market in Victoria for 16 years, is being re-assessed. While she has a functioning farm, six of the 11.6 acres that are forest and rock have been re-assessed as residential. While she has no plans to develop the property as residential, the tax increase will be between \$3,000 and \$4,000 per year. For the past 25 years, the income earned from the other five acres has met the criteria for farm status designation. Knox reports that this policy change will affect farms beyond Saanich including the Southern Gulf Islands. If the assessors determine that under 2 acres is being used for farming, the gross farm income required for the reduced taxation rate will increase to \$10,000 per year.

Moneo of the Globe and Mail (November 6, 2007) uses the example of land being farmed that is assessed at \$100,000 which would be taxed \$805 per year. If the same property is assessed at the residential rate it would be valued at \$700,000 and taxes would be \$2,268 per year. Knox (2007) states that the tax assessment authorities may have the best of intentions but it is difficult for local farmers to be sympathetic as they face labour shortages at harvest time and increased costs due to the new meat processing regulations. The split property assessment and the increase in property taxes may create a financial disincentive for small-lot farmers to produce food. This may in turn reduce the number of food producers who are vendors at farmers' markets.

Harold Steves, a former Member of the B. C. Legislature, one of the authors of the Agricultural Land Reserve Act, the current Greater Vancouver Regional District Chair of the Agricultural Advisory Committee and Richmond City Councillor, is concerned about the new B.C. Assessment Authority farm status policy. He states:

When the assessors started harassing small-lot farmers in Richmond I got an organic free range egg farmer to make a written presentation to the Richmond Planning Committee, which I chair. From there we sent the report to Richmond Council asking for a Provincial Review.

Then there is the crackdown against small farmers who processed their own livestock on the farm.

Large farms use money, expensive equipment, herbicides and pesticides to produce food. Small farms can produce much higher yields with just their own labour as input. At a time when we need to be adding to our ability to feed ourselves we seem to be going in the opposite direction.

The B.C. Minister of Small Business and Revenue has just announced a review of the farm status assessment policies. The terms of reference state, “[The] Government supports initiatives encouraging the public to be aware of approaches to address Climate Action and Green Communities, such as the 100 Mile Diet concept.” The mayors of Richmond and Saanich are on the eleven-member panel. The B. C. Ministry of Small Business and Revenue (2008) press release notes that the panel members are from all regions of B.C. and have a diversity of expertise. However, the panel has no representation from small-lot farmers, even though they comprise 75% of B.C. farms.

### **3.4.2 Onerous health and meat inspection regulations**

Managers of the farmers’ markets in Vancouver and Abbotsford and the B.C. Association of Farmers’ Markets have had discussions with numerous local health authorities over the past two years in order to create consistency in how B.C. health regulations are enforced. While farmers’ market vendors may sell the same food products in multiple jurisdictions the products are not regulated the same. This is confusing to vendors and can cause misunderstandings between vendors and managers as managers are responsible to ensure that health regulations are being met. In addition, food sold locally is regulated as if it is being exported to the global market. This has caused a significant change to inspection procedures and raised costs above the incomes of small-scale producers.

Abbotsford Farm and Country Market manager Bruce Fatkin is concerned about the impact of the meat regulations because a number of farmers produce a mix of meat, fruits and vegetables. Meat earns higher revenues for most farmers. Tara McDonald, Executive Director of Your Local Farmers Market cites substantial barriers to the sale of meat at farmers’ markets including the

new provincial meat regulations. She also observes that this has already had an impact on the farmers' markets in Vancouver. In 2004, the B.C. Ministry of Health amended regulations that have caused serious concern among meat producers selling custom butchered beef, pork, lamb, chicken and rabbits from the farm gate. The new regulations, which came into effect in 2007 have made this generations-old agriculture practice illegal. The meat regulations were the result of a plan that was initiated in 2003.

The British Columbia Food Quality and Safety Steering committee produced a plan for 2004 – 2009 in 2003 for the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. It addressed agricultural safety and quality issues beginning with the then-current food safety and quality programs and possible new regulations. The plan acknowledged that those who do not (or cannot) participate might lose markets. It also recognized that there was no identity preservation and traceability or “gate to plate” tracking and that setting up an identification program is “costly and requires infrastructure to collect and maintain data.”

The report states that “governments at all levels are unable to take any new inspection / audit roles” and that “only a limited number of commodities / processors are inspected / audited” and “national programs may not be suitable for small-scale operations.” All commodities are identified as needing some form of regulation to assure food quality and safety. The British Columbia Food Quality & Safety Steering Committee Strategic Plan (2003) Environmental Scan stated that the price of food will increase due to requisite regulatory changes. Currently a limited number of processors or commodities are audited or inspected. Regulations for fruit and vegetables may cause the same disruption to small-lot B. C. growers that meat producers are currently experiencing. Conflict between small-lot / small-scale producers, processors, farmers' markets and health inspectors have been taking place for a number of years according to farmers' market managers that I interviewed.

Tove (2006) found that health regulations prevent farmers' markets in Vancouver from providing a “complete spectrum of food products, so that customers can purchase everything that they need at the market” (p. 88). Tove suggests that a valuable role for planners would be to assist in overcoming barriers to farmers' markets. A study of the impacts of the meat regulations on farmers and processors was conducted by the North Okanagan Regional District in late 2007. It may provide useful information for small-scale farmers and decision makers in other regions of the province.

In the North Okanagan, numerous local beef, pork, lamb and poultry producers announced that they would have to quit raising meat due to the new meat inspection regulations. The Regional District agreed to have a survey sent out to meat producers and processors via their web site. The results of the surveys are very disturbing and it is likely that the impacts of the new meat regulations found in the survey are province-wide. Some of the impacts include the loss of processing for chicken for 762 producers. Four red meat processors have closed. Processing capacity for 1,875 beef, 3,000 lambs and 2,775 pigs has been lost. The economic value is estimated to be over \$4 million annually. (Johnson, 2008)

When comparing dollar value to the revenues and expenditures of global and industrial agricultural entities, the amount appears to be miniscule. However, when a small-lot farmer is attempting to reach the \$2,500 gross revenue benchmark to maintain farm status the value lost can mean being exempt from the reduced property taxation status referred to earlier. This could result in a decrease in small-lot farmers who prefer to grow food for the local market. Small-lot farmers are more likely to sell their products at farmers' markets rather than the global market. If the government has the objective of increasing the supply of local food the retention of small-lot farmers is an important public policy.

In a letter to *The Vernon Daily Courier* October 2, 2007, local resident Karen Bright of Lumby B.C. wrote about the impact that the meat regulations are having on meat producers and warns that by 2009 the same will be true of fruit, vegetables and honey:

The Honourable Pat Bell, Minister of Agriculture and Lands informed a meeting of the Union of BC Municipalities that they should get used to the new regulations because fruit, vegetables, wine and honey will face similar regulations by September 2009. These regulations would spell the end of the Farmer's Markets. Also, we would no longer be able to go to a local orchard to buy our fruit as we have done in this Valley for 150 years.

Inspections at facilities approved by federal or provincial health authorities prior to 2007 have not always been able to ensure that meat is safe. McMullen (2006) studied the rate of multiple drug resistant (MRS) *E. coli* and salmonella from licensed and inspected commercial abattoirs in Canada. In 2005, there were 189 cases of MRS *E. coli* from pork, beef and poultry. There were 87 cases of salmonella from poultry and pork in 2005. The MRS *E. coli* cases were the same as in 2002 while the salmonella cases had decreased. There are no statistics available regarding MRS salmonella or *E. Coli* cases from farm gate sales in Canada.

Barbolet and Miewald (2005) assert that a crisis in the dominant food industry heightens consumers' consciousness about food safety. This in turn creates pressure on small-scale or informal parts of the food system. The impact on them is pressure to fully formalize their facilities and processing practices. A letter written by the President of Feathers Canada in September 2007 to the Minister of Agriculture and Lands regarding the impacts of the new meat regulations is a case in point. The annual gross income from an average small-scale farm from beef or poultry is \$4,500 and a net income of \$1,500, while the cost of building a processing plant to comply with the new regulations is \$150,000.

The Investment Agriculture Foundation Islands Agri-food Initiative, Strategic Plan 2004-2008 for small lot farms on Vancouver Island acknowledges some of the challenges for farmers such as the high cost of land and energy and the lack of effective marketing of local production. They also find that the dominant retail food distribution sector conflicts with the development of customer loyalty in buying local. There is also agreement about a fundamental need for change due to the recent reduction of food processing capacity on Vancouver Island.

Secondary data, reports and literature cannot begin to expose or explain the unique barriers to the development and security of farmers' markets that my hypothesis asserts are present in B.C. The focus of my study is the area of south-western B.C. as it is a region with successful and struggling farmers' markets. Most barriers identified in this study may be experienced by farmers' markets in other regions of the province.

## **4 Primary Research**

The study of barriers to farmers' markets in B.C. through enquiries posed to those directly involved in the issue has not been included in previous research. Connell et al. (2006) conducted primary research on farmers' market customers and economic impacts in B.C. Ling and Link (2007) studied elements required for successful farmers' markets. My study is from the perspective of farmers' market food vendors, managers, societies and local decision makers. My research employs both qualitative and quantitative methods. Field studies took place between June and December 2007. Vendors who grew or made value-added food for sale at eight farmers' markets completed surveys. I interviewed farmers' market society board members and managers, city staff and an elected representative between December 2007 and March 2008.



There was a high response rate to the surveys and the interviews provided additional details that aided in identifying the barriers and potential policy that would promote development by reducing those barriers.

### **Farmers’ Market Venues Studied**

More than 100 farmers’ markets operate across British Columbia (BC Association of Farmers’ Markets 2008). They are accommodated at a wide variety of venues with most operating on public land and a few on private land. The areas covered in this study are described in Table 3.

**Table 3 Venues Used for Farmers’ Markets**

Winter Market Vancouver	Wise Hall *
Abbotsford	City parking lot / lane closure summer market Church parking lot summer/ winter markets * Church Hall winter market *
Trout Lake Vancouver	Trout Lake Park parking lot
Riley Park Vancouver	Riley Park parking lot adjacent to Nat Bailey Stadium
West End Vancouver	Street closure adjacent to Nelson Park
Kitsilano Vancouver	Community Centre parking lot
Mayne Island	Agriculture Society grounds *
Mission City	Library parking lot

\*Private land

Of the eight farmers’ markets studied, five are on public land, two use private land and one uses a combination of public and private venues. Until 2007, Mission City Farmers’ Market was located on various private parking lots within the commercial core. Trout Lake and Riley Park are located at 2010 Olympic venues. Tara McDonald, Executive Director of Your Local Farmers Market Society, stated that discussions between YLFM and the Vancouver Parks Board are taking place in order to accommodate both the farmers’ markets and sports facility construction.

### **4.1 Field Studies of Abbotsford, Mayne Island, Missions City and Vancouver Farmers’ Markets**

I had attended three of the eight farmers’ markets prior to this study but had not observed any of the five located in the City of Vancouver operated by Your Local Farmers Market Society (YLFM). While farmers’ market web sites are very informative, they do not capture the interaction between the vendors and customers. I had accessed the YLFM web site prior to the field studies in order to compile vendor information. I wanted to observe the farmers’ markets in

the study before finalizing the vendor surveys. Each of the markets studied has unique characteristics.

The Abbotsford Farm and Country Market was a community economic development initiative in a city with a significant agricultural economy. The market is located on public property. The Mayne Island Farmers' Market is on private property and tourism forms a large part of the customer base. The longest operating urban farmers' market in the region remains at Trout Lake Park, where it has been located for over ten years on Saturdays. Riley Park Farmers' Market is on Wednesday afternoons and located on a parking lot adjacent to the baseball park. The West End Farmers' Market operates on a city street on Saturdays and is accessed primarily by local residents. The Mission City Farmers' Market has operated as long as Trout Lake but has had to locate on private land until recently. Winter markets are recent additions to the traditional schedules in Vancouver, Mission and Abbotsford.

Upon arriving at each location, I contacted the farmers' market managers to advise them that I was conducting a field study for a Simon Fraser University Public Policy research project. I had a short discussion with them about the possibility of an interview. I also advised them that I would be asking vendors to complete a survey. I met Mary Forstbauer, a vendor at the Riley Park, Trout Lake and the Winter Farmers' Markets and President of the B.C. Association of Farmers' Markets (BCAFM) during my field study of the Riley Park market. She indicated that the BCAFM would be interested in the findings of the study and that she would like to peruse the survey and possibly add questions. She encouraged me to study farmers' markets that were struggling as well as those that were successful. We agreed to communicate via e-mail or telephone. I discussed the study with vendors during each of the field studies. Details of the field studies are in Appendix A.

## **4.2 Vendor Surveys and Elite Interviews**

The vendor survey consisted of 34 closed-ended and three open-ended questions. The survey is in Appendix B. The survey forms were distributed to all of the vendors who sold food that they grew or added value to (processed) at the farmers' markets in the City of Abbotsford, City of Vancouver and Mayne Island. Seventy-four surveys and informed consent forms were hand delivered or mailed to vendors from late November to mid-December 2007. They included pre-addressed stamped envelopes and a nice pen to keep as a token of appreciation.

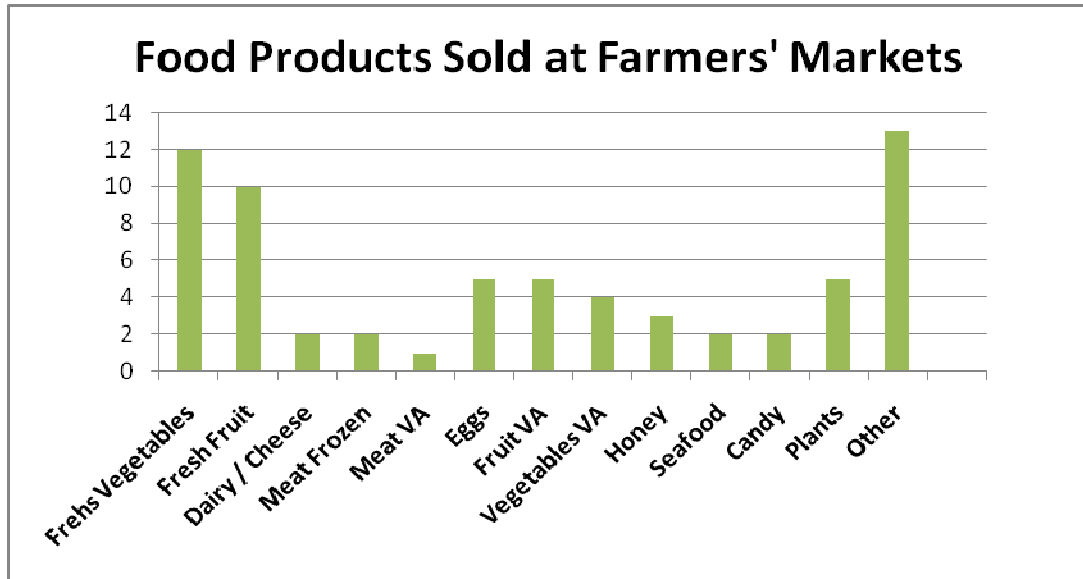
Thirty-three surveys or 44+% were completed from those that were hand delivered or mailed by Canada Post. Cost factors constrained me from mailing surveys to all relevant vendors. Therefore, Your Local Farmers' Market Society agreed to send the survey and informed consent out via e-mail to all vendors with a request for completion by those who had not already received it. The return rate of the online distribution was much lower; only two of the prospective responses were completed. Thus, of a total 150 surveys that were distributed; 35 were completed for an overall 23% response rate.

I used Excel to create a data set from the responses to the 34 closed-ended questions in the survey returned by vendors from all of the markets included in this study. Some of the questions, for instance -- which food products(s) the vendor sold -- could elicit more than one choice and therefore the charts generated from the survey are the actual number of responses to that question as opposed to percentages.

The statements provided in quotation marks or block quotations are vendors' responses to the three open-ended survey questions or from farmers' market manager interviews. One producer submitted four single-spaced typed pages explaining how they had worked collaboratively with other farmers in their region, which is three hours from Vancouver to economize and co-operate in order to stay small and maintain their high quality meat product. Some of the responses to the open-ended questions are in Appendix C.

## 4.2.1 Production and distribution decisions

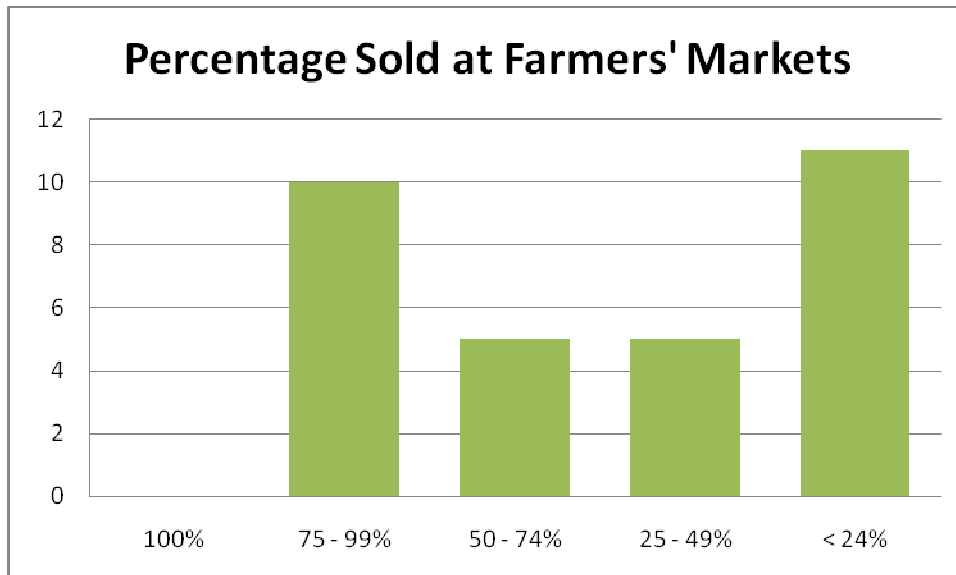
Figure 1



VA = value-added

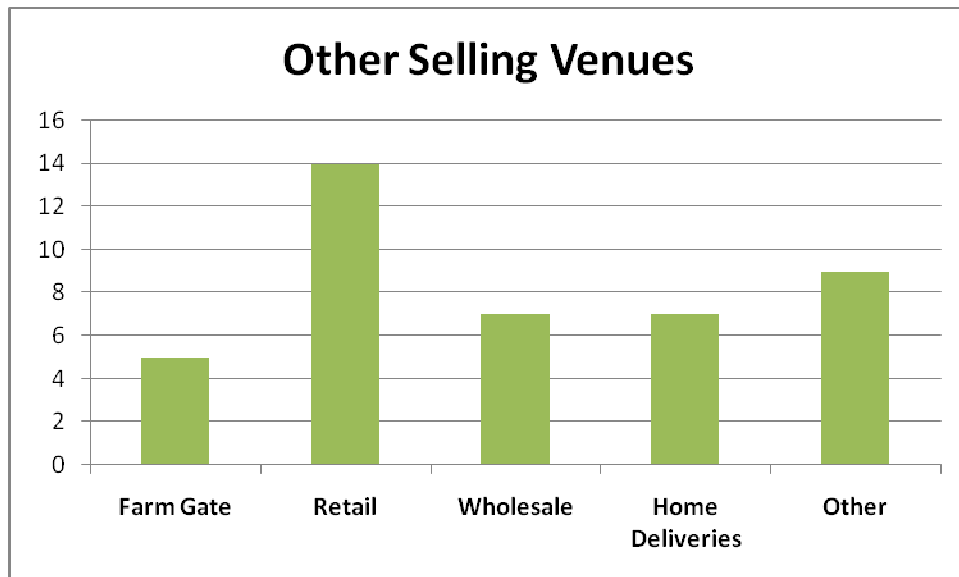
Figure 1 shows the distribution of food items sold by farmers' market vendors. Some sold more than one product at farmers' markets. The "other" may account for nuts or value-added food products such as bread that were not listed as choices in the survey. The impact of the health regulations can be seen in this graph when comparing the number of vendors who sell meat, eggs and dairy for sale to the number of vendors who sell fresh vegetables and fruit.

Figure 2



As indicated in Figure 2, none of the 35 vendors chose to sell 100% of their food products at farmers' markets. The majority of growers and processors sold their food products at venues other than farmers' markets. The administrator for the Fraser Basin Trust, Fraser Valley Region stated that farmers' markets need to have clearly articulated business plans. She also added that in a study of a potential farmers' market in Agassiz, one grower asserted that it would cost her \$400 to sell at a farmers' market because of the "grow it, make it, bake it" rules that do not allow re-selling. That meant that she would not be on the farm producing food or she would have to hire someone else who was connected with the farm to sell her products at the farmers' market.

**Figure 3**



Vendors are not willing to risk selling all of their products at one venue as plotted in Figure 3. Nearly half of the respondents chose to sell at retail outlets. In addition to farmers' markets, 5 of 33 respondents sell at the farm gate, 14 sell at retail venues, 7 sell to wholesalers, 7 sell via home

deliveries and 9 through other means. The farm gate is not the preferred selling venue for most vendors, perhaps because those who responded did not sell only fresh fruits and vegetables. In the 2006 Guidelines for B.C. Producers and Processors on Selling to Food Service Distributors, the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands advise growers and processors that diversification is a wise business approach (37). It appears that vendors do not put all of their eggs in one basket.

One question that I posed to Bruce Fatkin, Abbotsford Farm and Country Market manager was “Are there any factors that undermine the ability of the farmers’ market you manage to provide locally grown food/value-added products to customers? If yes, what are they?” He stated:

Yes, the number of vendors. We clearly have a demand for more vendors with more products at the market. I think that if we had 45 – 50 vendors at that market on a consistent basis I would do a good job at ensuring diversity amongst those vendors. I think that would serve this community well not to say I would not take more. That is the level at which the market would do what it needs to do for this community.

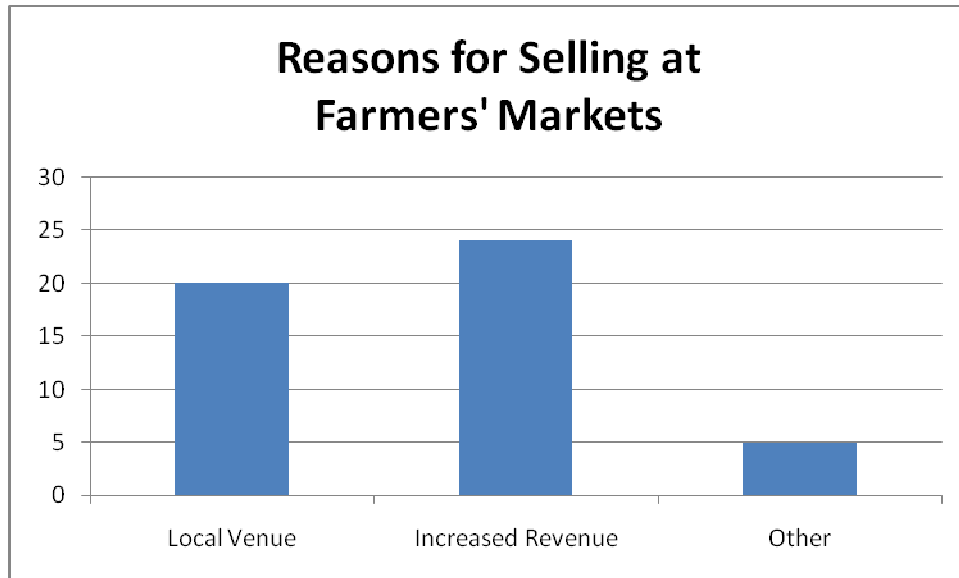
Your Local Farmers’ Market Executive Director Tara McDonald said that Vancouver is also in need of more vendors. She expressed a concern about the farmers who are starting to retire and therefore a need for more young people to become involved in agriculture.

For all farmers’ markets, the lack of an agreement for longer than one year is a barrier to security for vendors. Anita Romaniuk, a former Vancouver Parks Board Commissioner stated that community gardens have five-year agreements with the Parks Board when they are operating on parkland.

Vancouver Food Policy Council staff member Devorah Kahn stated during an interview that the issue of use of public space is very different today than the first few years when the Your Local Farmers Market Society had to make annual submissions to City Council for a relaxation of zoning by-laws:

I think there would be a huge public outcry if any market was not approved. Truly, I really cannot imagine such a thing happening and believe the markets are secure. With the Olympics around the corner and upgrades to community centres, insecurity has increased. I appreciate the concern. The markets have not been denied permits, but the land may not be available due to construction. I do not believe this would change with a permanent or long-term permit.

**Figure 4**

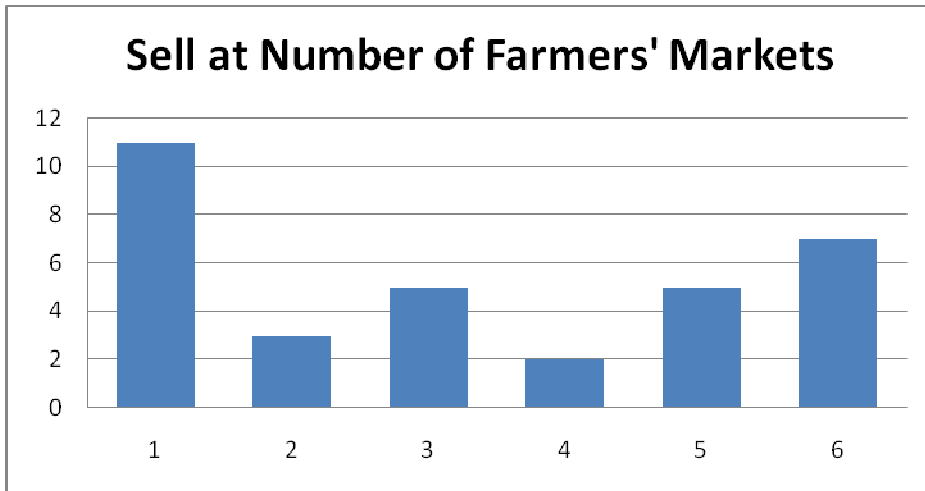


As shown in Figure 4, vendor responses on the survey and in the open ended responses both increased revenue and the connection with the community were major motivations for selling at farmers' markets. One responded:

“Community, integrity of food issues, great margins and lots of fun.” Another stated:

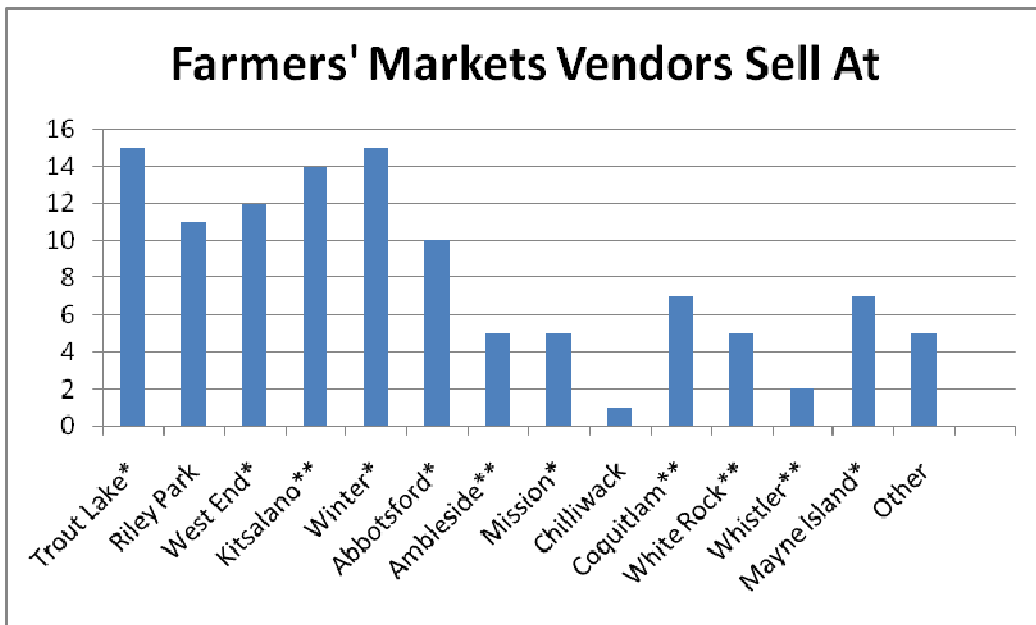
I sell at farmers markets because. 1. I enjoy the direct contact with the consumer. 2. It gives me the best return on my product. 3. It allows me to sell small amounts of product that I could not sell into retail or wholesale unless I had large volumes. 4. It reduces my packing costs. 5. It reduces my risk of price fluctuation in the market place so I can plan better.

**Figure 5**



As shown in Figure 5, most vendors sold at more than one market. Because of their location, the six vendors from Mayne Island do not have the opportunity to sell at more than one farmers' market. Therefore, there were five vendors out of 28, or 18%, who sold at one farmers' market even though they could have sold at more than 12 markets if more markets were at times other than Saturday mornings. (See figure 5).

**Figure 6**



Held on: \* Saturday \*\* Sunday

Figure 6 shows that vendors most prefer farmers' markets as far west on the Lower Mainland as possible because they are more likely to obtain premium prices. One vendor states that there was a much better market in the city than in his community because his product was readily



available to his neighbours. Urban dwellers do not have easy access to farm gate options for buying fresh local food. The Winter Market responses may be skewed, as it was the venue where most of the surveys were hand delivered. Vendors responded that they sold at farmers' markets that were not part of those surveyed and those venues have been included in the applicable graphs.

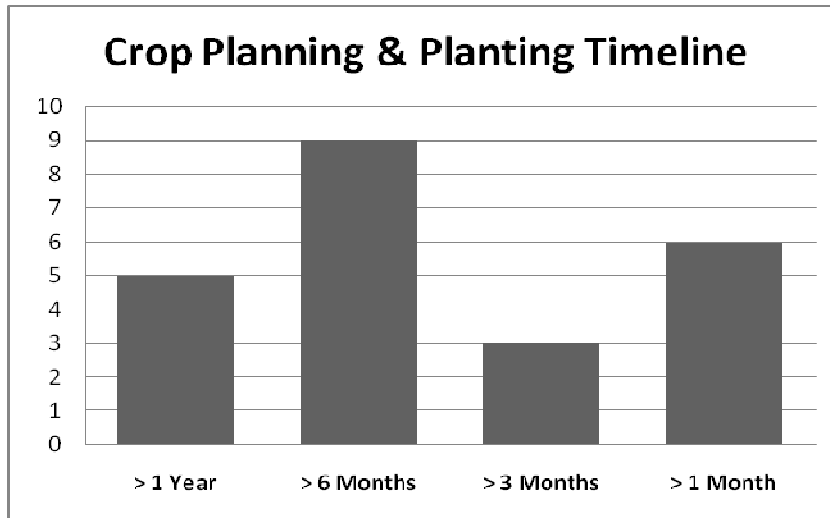
Tara McDonald, Executive Director of YLFM said that the farmers' markets in Vancouver have been tracking income and customers since they began in 1997.

Our markets in 2004 did just under \$1.5 million last year. We are going to be up around \$3 million. The very first market year was in 1995, started up in July, and finished in mid fall sold \$50,000 and then as you can see Trout Lake does over \$1 million just that market. It is a draw for vendors – apparently to drive four to five hours.

#### **4.2.2 Planning and preparation**

Growers and value-added processors need time to prepare the land, plant crops, harvest and process food prior to distributing it. The time required depends largely on the food that is being grown or processed. For growers the lead-time could be well over one year if establishing a farm is included. A value-added food vendor may have to construct or rent a commercial kitchen in order to process food. Under the new meat regulations, a meat producer may have to book time over one year in advance of slaughtering. In addition to time for growing and processing, time is needed to obtain the required health authority approvals. Security of location for farmers' markets and relevant health regulations are of increasing importance in direct relation to time required to plan and execute growing, processing and health authority approvals.

**Figure 7**



As shown in Figure 7, most crop planning time takes between one to six months. Of the five vendors that need more than one year, one produced meat and the rest grew fruit and vegetables.

**Figure 8**

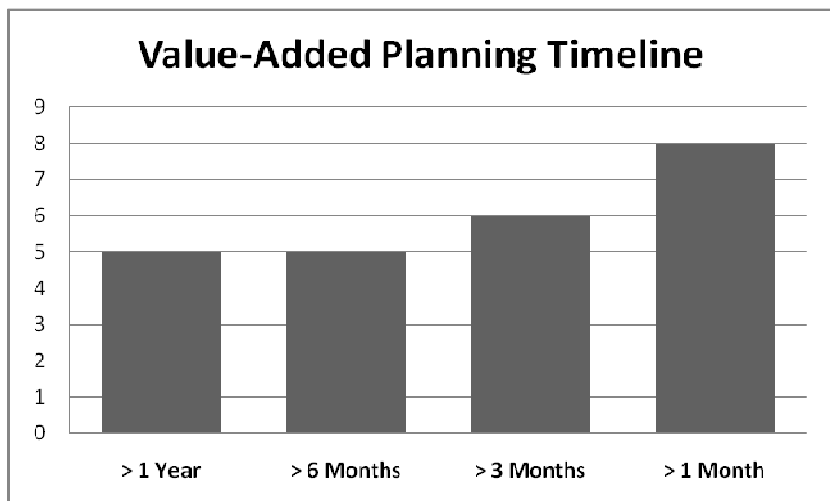
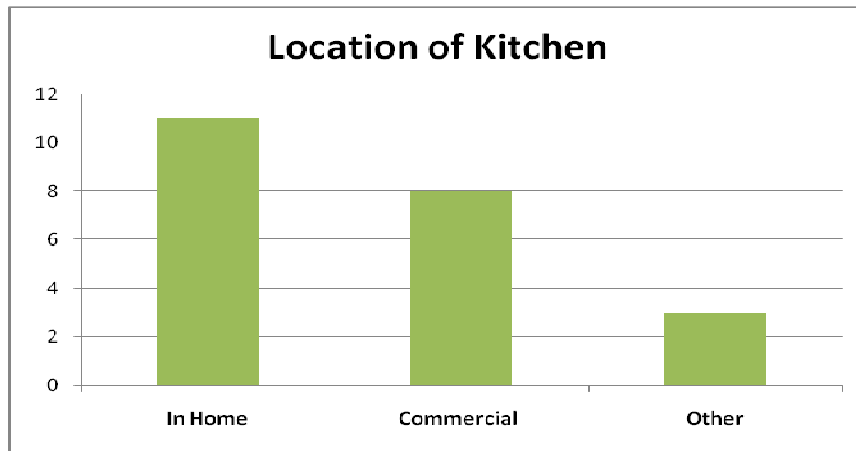


Figure 8 shows that planning for value-added processing takes from one to six months for the majority of vendors.

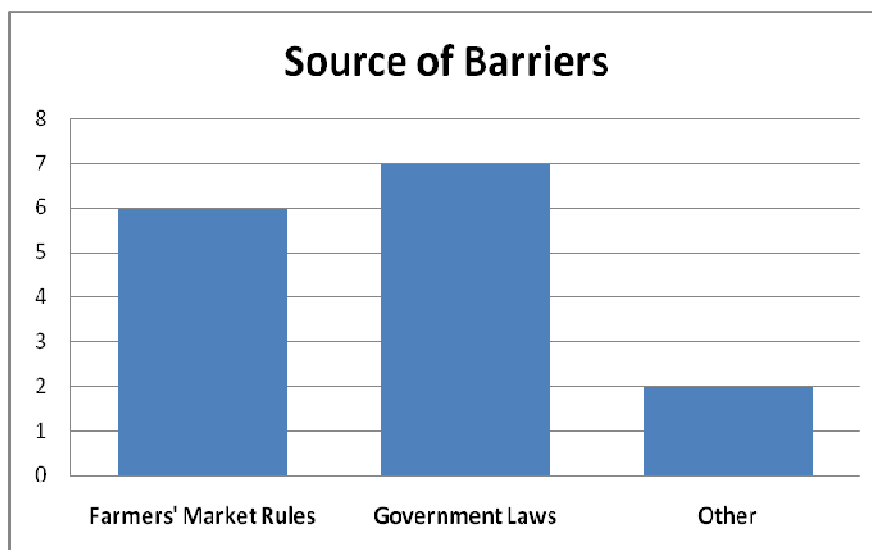
**Figure 9**



Just half of the respondent value-added vendors use their own kitchen for processing food as plotted in Figure 9. The use of in home kitchens limits the value-added food products that vendors can sell at farmers' markets to obtain health authority approval. However, commercial kitchens cost more to operate and therefore reduce the net income of value-added processors.

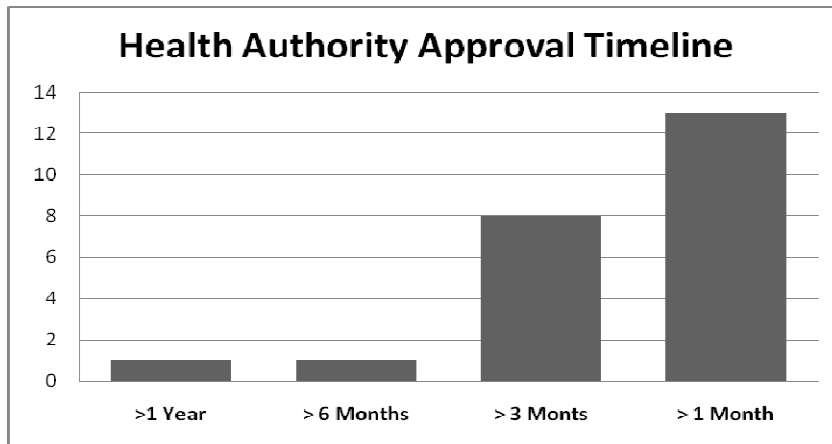
#### **4.2.3 Sources of barriers identified from surveys and elite interviews**

**Figure 10**



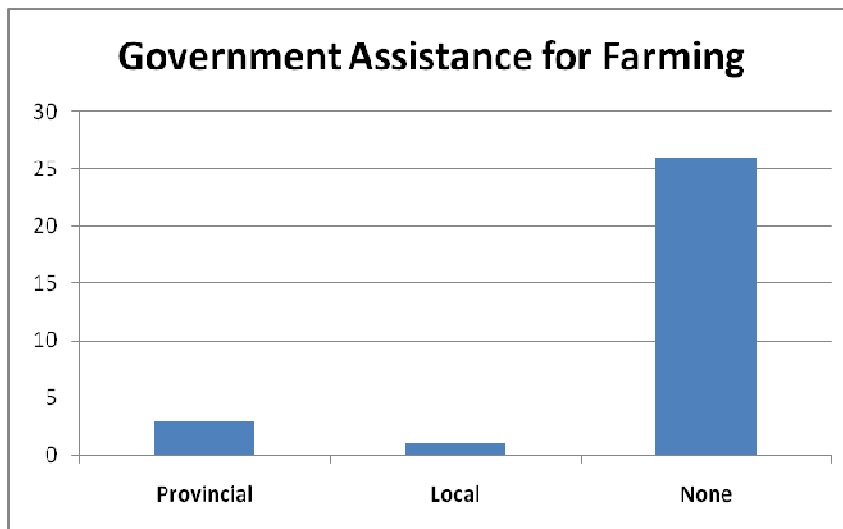
Farmers' market rules may actually be health authority rules that farmers' market managers are required to enforce. More than one vendor stated that "farmers' market board politics" does come into play with regard to barriers experienced by vendors. Vendors were given a list of the types of government regulations that could be viewed as barriers, but very few responded to the list provided in the survey. However, one respondent stated that Your Local Farmers' Market Society has a seniority policy and it is difficult for new vendors who are seeking a space in Vancouver to get one or two days per season (See Figure 10).

**Figure 11**



As indicated in Figure 11, currently most vendors need one to four months to obtain health authority approval for their products. If the new health regulations are applied to honey, fruit and vegetables the time needed for approval will most likely be longer and could take up to a year.

**Figure 12**



The survey did not spell out the various kinds of government assistance such as lower property tax assessments for farm classification or ALR classification. Figure 12 shows that the perception of vendors with regard to a lack of government assistance is evident in the agriculture budgets in B.C. over the past thirty years. Now B.C. provides the lowest percent of agriculture GDP back to farmers in Canada, and Canada is third from the bottom of OECD countries in agricultural funding (Hansard, 2008). The responses were the same regarding the absence of funding from provincial or local governments for value-added food production.

The survey results and information from elite interviews indicate that growers and value-added processors are not prepared to risk selling the majority of their local food products at farmers' markets. In spite of the opportunity for 28 of the 33 vendors to sell at over 10 farmers' markets in the Fraser Valley and Metro Vancouver, 21 of the 28 respondents chose to sell at between 2 and 5 farmers' markets. Twenty-five percent or 7 of the 28 sold at six or more. Some of the vendors are reaching retirement age and farmers' market societies face challenges in recruiting younger replacements. Government regulations were cited as barriers by 7 survey respondents while 6 respondents replied that farmers' market society rules themselves create barriers for vendors.

### **4.3 Analysis of findings from surveys and elite interviews**

One fundamental barrier to the viability of farmers' markets is that they are marginalized by being viewed as temporary or "special events" by provincial and municipal policy makers. There is a lack of awareness, understanding, accountability and / or responsibility on the part of local, regional, provincial and federal officials (elected and staff) in acknowledging that farmers' markets are a positive factor for community economic development and a bona fide component of the food system. The dominant import / export food system demands high volume production and wholesale pricing that is below the cost of production for many small-lot farmers.

While other businesses in a community have representatives on Economic Development Commissions, there is no formal relationship between the Economic Development Commissions in the City of Vancouver and Mission City and Your Local Farmers Market Society and the Mission City Farmers' Market Society and therefore most likely other farmers' markets in B.C.

There are not enough vendors to meet the expansion of farmers' markets especially if the rule of "grow it, bake it, make it" and the disallowance of re-selling is applied stringently to all vendors. This may be partly due to lack of information or understanding among the majority of small lot farmers and small value-added producers about the benefits of selling their locally grown or value-added products at farmers' markets. In addition, vendors are not willing to risk selling a higher percentage of their total production at farmers' markets.

The cost of farmland close to urban centres is increasing due to speculators purchasing ALR lands and applying for exclusions from the ALR over the past seven years. The Agriculture Land Commission criteria now include "community need" when considering ALR exclusion applications. This has resulted in a decrease of farmland in areas that have the highest agricultural capabilities.

Due to recent policy changes of the B.C. Assessment Authority property taxes on farmland might be increased. This is the result of splitting the assessed values of the land into residential as well as farm components. This change could cause significant financial disincentives for small lot farmers who are more likely to be farmers' market vendors.

Farmers are aging and retiring and there are no clear succession policies or assistance by local, provincial or federal governments to bring in new or young farmers. The provinces public school curriculum has no formal inclusion of agriculture, nutrition or food preparation.

There are no food security policies implemented or proposed in the Metropolitan Vancouver Regional District or the City of Abbotsford and possibly other regional or local jurisdictions in B.C. In the City of Vancouver, the Food Policy Council recognizes farmers' markets as a source of local food and a factor in food security.

Canadian consumers lack appreciation of the impact of cheap food on farmers. This may be due in part to the lack of a voice or presence of small-lot / small-scale farmers or farmers' market organizations on government committees at the local, provincial or federal levels and government funded and recognized farm organizations such as the B.C. Agriculture Council. This has resulted in regulations that are more onerous on small-lot farmers who are most often farmers' market vendors. The exclusion of farmers' market representatives extends to industry organizations such as the B.C. Agriculture Council, and the Poultry, Berry and Vegetable Marketing Boards. The

only reference or link to the B.C. Association of Farmers' Markets on the Ministry of Agriculture's web site is under "Agritourism" in the InfoBasket web site.

Small-lot meat producers will incur extra expenses and spend more time processing their meat due to the B.C. Meat Regulations that came into force in September 2007. There is a lack of traceability for farmers to ensure them that their organic or free-range raised animal will actually be returned to them or their customer after slaughter and / or butchering.

## **5 Policy Options**

### **5.0 Status quo**

The establishment and administration of farmers' markets is entirely the responsibility of growers, processors, artisans, farmers' market societies and the B.C. Association of Farmers' Markets with minimal intervention or support from local or provincial governments. Decision makers at the local and provincial levels of government perceive farmers' markets to be "temporary," "special events" or "agri-tourism" rather than a bona fide part of the food system. Health regulations for small-lot producers and processors that sell all of their products to the local market are similar to those of large corporate agri-businesses that export to the global market.

### **5.1 Policies to alter decision makers' perception of farmers' markets**

The acknowledgement that farmers' markets are a bona fide sector of the food system in B.C. requires changes to terminology within local and provincial policies. Under this policy option, the Health Authorities' definition of farmers' markets would remove the word "temporary." The term "special event" would be removed from the definition of farmers' markets in any provincial or local policy or by-law. Local and provincial policies for farmers' markets could include terms such as "producer only" or "grower / value-added processor only."

In addition to the agri-tourism category, the B.C. Association of Farmers' Markets would be included in the B. C. Ministry of Agriculture online InfoBasket as a Producer / Processor Association in every food commodity category. The addition of the BCAFM would inform small-lot producers and processors of the option to market their food products at local farmers' markets. The BCAFM would be included with the other producer / processor associations in the provincial food system. This inclusion could affect how decision makers perceive farmers' markets.

### **5.2 Policy options to increase the security of farmers' market vendors and farmers' market societies**

Local government would enact local zoning by-laws, for instance the CD-1 in Vancouver, when there is no formal agreement regarding the use of public or private space for farmers' markets. This policy would enable farmers' markets to operate at permanent locations, which have the required health amenities and include the option to operate twelve months of the year. There would be agreements between local governments and farmers' market societies, allowing their operation and renewable every five years rather than every year. The agreements could include conditions that farmers' market societies must operate under, for instance grower / producer / processor only vendors.

The B.C. Centre for Disease Control would implement food safety regulations relevant to growers and value-added processors that offer their products to the local market only. Health regulations for local markets would not be more onerous than the regulations for global / corporate food producers, which export outside of B.C. / Canada. Health safety regulations for food grown and produced for the local market only would be based on scientific evidence and farm to fork traceability. All B.C. meat / poultry offered for sale could have a stamps or labels that would distinguish them for sale to local or global markets for quick identification and enforcement by health authorities.

### **5.3 Policies to increase the representation of farmers' market societies and the B.C. Association of Farmers' Markets on agriculture committees in B.C.:**

The following policies could improve communications between farmers' market societies, the B.C. Association of Farmers Markets and decision makers at the provincial and local levels of government. Improved communications would reduce the prospect of decisions that negatively impact farmers' market vendors and societies.

Farmers' market managers / board members would be included on the B.C. Agriculture Council, local government Agricultural Advisory Committees and regional Health Authority Population Health committees, and Marketing Boards.

Representatives of the farmers' market societies would be added to economic development commission and / or agricultural advisory committee of each local government in B.C. where a farmers' market is located.



Annual grants would be provided to the B.C. Association of Farmers' Markets by the Investment Agriculture Fund or the Community Food Action Initiative to enable them to operate with at least one paid staff member as opposed to being funded for occasional special projects.

Local and provincial governments would entrench the Collaborative Planning Benchmarks identified by Gunton and associates to all decision-making processes that engage civil society, stakeholders and community organizations when making policies affecting food security and specifically farmers' markets. See Appendix G for the benchmarks.

## **6 Analysis of Policy Options**

The criteria for evaluating my policy options are four-fold. The first is effectiveness at removing barriers to the sustenance and growth of farmers' markets in B.C. The second is cost to farmers' market vendors, farmers' market societies or the BCAFM. The third criteria is the use of existing administrative structures in the community. This could result in farmers' markets being viewed as a bona fide sector of the food system. Equity for farmers' markets as a stakeholder in the food system is the fourth criterion. These criteria are what I determine are most relevant in relation to reducing barriers specific to farmers' markets.

Effectiveness in achieving a stated goal is the most essential criteria as all other criteria relate to it. Cost in both dollars and time is a criterion that both government and farmers' market representatives have to consider before the implementation of one policy over another. Governments need to show that there is a benefit to tax dollars expended on initiating a policy. Farmers' market representatives have to use scarce funds and staff/volunteers hours to their highest impact. Due to the lack of funds from governments for agriculture in B. C. there is a need to use administrative structures in the province or community that are already in place in order to reduce barriers. The equity criterion for farmers' markets is in comparison to the policies in place for dominant stakeholders in the food system.

There are a number of ways to rate policy options to assist in ranking one policy over another. Some analysts use numeric ratings from 1 to 10 or merely use high, medium or low. I decided to assign a score of 3 for options which have the most desired impact, 2 for those policies which have some impact but not the greatest and 1 if there was minimal impact.



<b>Criteria Measures Scores</b>	Status quo	Alter decision maker perceptions	Increase security of venues; less onerous health regulations	Increase representation on boards and committees	<b>Scores</b> High 3 Medium 2 Low 1
Effectiveness					
Number of farmers' markets in B.C. and the number of food vendors at farmers' markets	Minimal increase in the size or number of farmers' markets in B.C.	Farmers' markets are perceived to be bona fide part of the food system in B.C.	Farmers' markets have more security and certainty in where they are located.	Number of farmers' market representatives appointed to committees and boards that have an impact on their security and development	H = 200 M = 150 L = 100
Diversity and percentage of local food products sold at farmers' markets	Onerous health regulations on local dairy / meat		Health regulations for local only sale. Increase in diversity of foods sold.		H = >75 M = >40 L = < 19
Cost to either farmers' market societies or local / provincial government					
Farmers' market society	Hours / week or dollars	Hours / week or dollars	Hours / week or dollars	Hours / week or dollars	H = >20hrs M = <8 hrs L = <5 hrs
Local or provincial governments	or combination of both	or combination of both	or combination of both	or combination of both	H = 1000K M = <500K L = <100K

<b>Criteria Measures Values</b>	Status Quo	Alter Decision Maker Perceptions	Increase security of venues; less onerous health regulations	Increase representation on boards and committees	<b>Values</b> High 3 Medium 2 Low 1
<b>Administrative Compatibility</b>					
Duration of approval for farmers' markets  Separate health regulations for local distribution	Annual approval process allows for "special event" status only	Farmers' market societies and BCAFM included in existing food decision making processes	Long-term approval for the use of existing facilities in community Sale of dairy eggs meat approved	Farmers' market societies and BCAFM included in existing food decision making processes	H = >5 yrs. M= >3 yrs L = <2 yrs.  H = all M = dairy & eggs L = none
<b>Equity</b>					
Number of farmers' markets on committees	Absence of farmers' markets in food policy processes	BCAFM and farmers' market part of collaborative processes	Use of public facilities equal to other stakeholders	BCAFM and farmers' markets part of collaborative processes	H = >100 M = >55 L = <28

<b>Effectiveness</b>	<b>Score</b>
High: will reduce or eliminate the barrier	3
Medium: will partially reduce the barrier	2
Low: will not reduce the barrier	1

Status quo: The status quo creates barriers to farmers’ markets. It does not enhance the strengths or supports of farmers’ markets in meeting the demand for locally grown food. Score = 1

Alter perceptions: The policy would alter how decision makers perceive farmers’ markets and therefore, farmers’ markets would be viewed as a bona fide sector of the food system in B.C. If the BCAFM was listed as a producer / processor association on Infobasket farmers and value-added processors would be able to have easy access to information about the benefits of selling at farmers’ markets. Score = 3

Security/regulations: This policy would provide long-term food-safe amenities required by health authorities, which would assist farmers’ markets in meeting health regulations. Unique food labelling for local food that will not be marketed beyond B.C. would enable small-lot meat dairy and egg producers and value-added processors to sell their products at farmers’ markets without onerous health regulations that are more suited to global export markets. Score = 3

Representation: BCAFM inclusion on committees and boards would increase communications and decrease decisions that have a negative impact on farmers’ markets that do not have an opportunity for input in status quo decision making. Inclusion of farmers’ market society on agriculture advisory or economic development committees would increase communications and decrease decisions that have a negative impact on farmers’ markets that do not have an opportunity for input in status quo decision making. Ongoing funding for an executive director would enable the BCAFM to increase their services to farmers’ market vendors, managers and boards. Due to an increase in communications through an improved collaborative process, farmers’ market vendors would benefit from zoning by-laws and regulations that are more suitable to small-lot and value-added producers. Score = 2

<b>Cost</b>	<b>Value</b>
High: will incur minimal cost	3
Medium: will incur some costs	2
Low: will incur high costs	1

Status quo: The status quo ensures low cost for local and provincial governments and high costs for small-lot dairy egg and meat producers and value-added dairy egg, and meat processors that are farmers' market vendors. Vendors will have to pass higher costs on to farmers' market customers. Score = 2

Alter perceptions: Changes in terminology will incur low costs as actual changes to documents could proceed when other changes to policy documents occur. Use of online documents is increasing which also results in a low cost. The inclusion of the BCAFm as a producer / processor association on the Infobasket web site would incur minimal cost as the site already exists and includes the BCAFm information on one of the commodity pages. Score = 3

Security/regulations: The addition of a small structure that would include water, toilets and electricity would cost approximately \$100,000 as a one-time capital expenditure for each location that does not have these amenities. Health regulations that are applicable to small meat producers and processors that sell to the local market only, would result in significant savings. According to the North Okanagan Regional District, the potential economic loss due to meat regulations more suitable for export markets for that region alone is in excess of \$4 million annually. Score = 2

Representation: Inclusion of BCAFm on various boards and committees could yield a cost savings as negative decisions impacting farmers' markets could be avoided with input from the BCAFm. Having farmers' market society representatives on local government agriculture advisory and economic development committees could reduce costs as negative decisions impacting farmers' markets, vendors and value-added processors could be avoided with input from the farmers' market representative. The salary for an executive director or facilitator is approximately \$50,000 annually, a low cost when compared to other expenditures made by government to the stakeholders in the dominant corporate agriculture sector in B.C. and Canada. Collaborative planning would have a low cost impact or possible cost saving as communications between decision makers and farmers' market societies and the B.C. Association of Farmers' Markets would be improved. Score = 2

<b>Administrative Compatibility</b>	<b>Value</b>
High: will be most compatible	3
Medium: will be somewhat compatible	2
Low: will be least compatible	1

Status quo: The status quo makes it difficult for farmers’ market societies to be certain that there will be a secure venue for growers and value-added processors for more than one year. This creates an administrative burden for farmers’ market managers / societies and local governments because both have to deal with the approval process annually. Score = 1

Alter perceptions: Changes to how farmers’ markets are perceived by decision makers would increase administrative ease as interaction between farmers’ market societies and decision makers would be similar to other stakeholders in the local food system. The addition of the B.C. Association of Farmers’ Markets to Infobasket would improve information available to local growers and producers which could improve communications and reduce inquiries to the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands regarding farmers’ markets. Score = 3

Security/regulations: Facilities such as power, water and toilets that would assure that farmers’ markets meet food safety regulations already exist within most communities at parks, sports arenas or schools. This option may require building a small structure to house power hook-up, water and toilets. A labelling scheme or stamp would clearly identify farm gate products. This would ease the requirement for increased health authority enforcement officers. Score = 3

Representation: BCAFM representatives on committees would incur minimal administrative burdens as committees and boards already exist. Inclusion of farmers’ market society on economic development and agriculture advisory committees would not increase administrative burdens since economic development committees exist as part of a number of local governments. However, only 28 of the 100 communities have agricultural advisory committees. With a full-time executive director, the BCAFM would be able to better serve the growing number of farmers’ markets in B.C. Collaborative planning would aid in reducing administrative burdens. There would be an effective process in place to include input from all stakeholders, thus reducing decisions that result in negative impacts on farmers’ markets, vendors or value-added processors. There would be an initial administrative burden while the new process is implemented. Score = 2

<b>Equity</b>	<b>Value</b>
High: will be the most equitable	3
Medium: will be somewhat equitable	2
Low: will be least equitable	1

Status quo: The status quo features a lack of equity for small-scale producers and processors when compared to government support that is provided to the industrial food sector that exports to the global market. Score = 1

Alter perceptions: A change in how decision makers perceive farmers' markets would result in their being acknowledged as a bona fide part of the food system. This would enable farmers' market vendors, societies and the BCAFMS to achieve a more equitable standing in the local food system. Being listed as a Producer Representative in all of the commodity groups on Infobasket would result in BCAFMS having equal status with other food marketing groups. Score = 3

Security/regulations: Security of space would bring equity to the sellers and buyers of local food rather than being marginalized as is the case in maintaining the status quo when compared with other sellers in the food system. Distinctive labelling would allow small meat producers and processors to take part in the local market without threatening the ability of the corporate producers and large processors access to exporting meat globally. Score = 3

Representation: Placing BCAFMS on committees and boards would bring equity to BCAFMS when compared to other stakeholders in the food system in B.C. Farmers' market society membership on agriculture advisory and economic development committees would bring equity to farmers' markets when compared to other stakeholders in the community. An annual grant to the B.C. Association of Farmers' Markets to hire an executive director would bring equity to BCAFMS when compared to other stakeholders in the food system in B.C. such as the B.C. Agriculture Council. Collaborative planning would reduce the power imbalance in consultations and bring equity to farmers' market societies rather than being marginalized. Score = 3

The policies identified have a high ranking on average. I arrived at some scores of 2 as a result of my analysis of former research, current government priorities and elite interviews. The status quo ranking is low due to the number of barriers and inequities for farmers' markets that exist.



While each policy could be implemented in concert with the others it is unlikely that all of them would be implemented at the same time. Given that the B.C. agriculture budget is the lowest in Canada the likelihood of any funds being provided to reduce barriers is low.

<b>Table 4 Analysis of policy option status quo</b>				
<b>Ranking Maximum 12</b>	<b>Effectiveness</b>	<b>Administrative Compatibility</b>	<b>Equity</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Status Quo	Creates barriers to farmers' markets. Does not enhance the strengths or supports of farmers' markets in meeting the demand for locally grown food.	Difficult for farmers' market managers to ensure that there will be a secure venue for growers and value added processors.	Lack of equity when compared to government support that is provided to the industrial food sector who exports to the global market.	Low cost for local and provincial governments. High costs for small-lot dairy, egg and meat producers and value-added dairy, egg and meat processors.
<b>Total Score 5</b>	Score = 1	Score = 1	Score = 1	Score = 2

**Table 5 Analysis of policy option to alter decision makers' perception of farmers' markets**

<b>Ranking Maximum 12</b>	<b>Effectiveness</b>	<b>Administrative Compatibility</b>	<b>Equity</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<p>Changing the terms used in policy from “temporary”, “special event” and “agri-tourism” to “producer only”</p> <p>BCAFM listed as a marketing group on Ministry of Agriculture web site InfoBasket.</p>	<p>The policy would alter how decision makers perceive farmers' markets and therefore, farmers' markets would be viewed as a bona fide sector of the food system in B.C.</p> <p>Farmers and value-added processors would be able to have easy access to information about the benefits of selling at farmers' markets.</p>	<p>Would increase administrative ease as communications between farmers' market societies and decision makers would be clarified.</p> <p>Improved communications could reduce inquiries regarding farmers' markets.</p>	<p>Farmers' markets would be acknowledged as a bona fide part of the food system.</p> <p>BCAFM would have equal status with other food marketing groups</p>	<p>Low cost as actual changes to documents could be accomplished along with other changes to policy documents. Use of online documents is increasing</p> <p>InfoBasket web site in operation, minimal cost to include references to BCAFm</p>
<b>Total Score 12</b>	Score = 3	Score = 3	Score = 3	Score = 3

**Table 6 Analysis of policy option increase the security of farmers' market vendors and farmers' market societies**

<b>Ranking Maximum 12</b>	<b>Effectiveness</b>	<b>Administrative Compatibility</b>	<b>Equity</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<p>Local zoning by-laws allowing farmers' markets. Agreements allowing operation of the farmers' market between local governments and farmers' market societies renewable every five years rather than every year.</p> <p>Food safety regulations relevant to growers and value-added processors who offer their products to the local market only. All B.C. meat / poultry offered for sale could have a stamps or labels that would distinguish them for sale to local or global markets for quick identification and enforcement by health authorities.</p> <p><b>Total Score 11</b></p>	<p>Longer tenure of space is one of the most effective ways to reduce or eliminate barriers to the security or development of farmers' markets.</p> <p>Would enable small-lot meat, dairy and egg producers and value-added processors to sell their products at farmers' markets without onerous health regulations that are more suited to global export markets.</p> <p>Score = 3</p>	<p>Some local governments have zoning that encompasses extraordinary uses ie. City of Vancouver CD1 zoning.</p> <p>A labelling scheme or stamp would clearly identify farm gate products. Would ease the requirement for increased health authority enforcement officers.</p> <p>Score = 3</p>	<p>Would bring equity to farmers' market societies as compared to other stakeholders in the food system.</p> <p>Labelling would allow small meat producers and processors to take part in the local market without threatening the ability of the corporate producers and large processors access to exporting meat globally.</p> <p>Score = 3</p>	<p>Medium cost as local governments make zoning decisions on an ongoing basis. There may be a one-time \$100K cost for electrical and water hook-ups for health regulations</p> <p>For small producers and processors there would be a significant savings. According to the North Okanagan Regional District, the potential economic loss for that region alone is in excess of \$4 million annually.</p> <p>Score = 2</p>

<b>Table 7 Analysis of policy to increase the representation of farmers' market societies and the B.C. Association of Farmers' Markets</b>				
<b>Ranking Maximum 12</b>	<b>Effectiveness</b>	<b>Administrative Compatibility</b>	<b>Equity</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Inclusion of farmers' market managers / board members on the B.C. Agriculture Council, local government Agricultural Advisory Committees, Health Authority Population Health committees	Improved communications could prevent decisions that have a negative impact on farmers' markets.	Minimal administrative burden as committees and boards already exist.	Would bring equity to BCAFM when compared to other stakeholders in the food system in B.C.	Minimal cost for government and BCAFM as these committees and boards are in place.
A representative of the farmers' market society on economic development commission and / or agricultural advisory committee of each local government in B.C. where a farmers' market is located.	Improved communications could prevent decisions that have a negative impact on farmers' markets	Minimal administrative burden as most local governments have these committees.	Would bring equity to farmers' market societies when compared to other stakeholders on local economic development committees	Minimal cost as these committees are in place.
Annual grant to the B.C. Association of Farmers' Markets by the Investment agriculture Fund or the Community Food Action Initiative.	The BCAFM would be able to increase their services to farmers' market vendors, managers and boards.	BCAFM would be able to better serve the growing number of farmers' markets in B.C.	BCAFM would have equal opportunity to address issues of concern to farmers' market societies similar to other stakeholders	\$50,000 annually

<b>Table 7 Analysis of policy to increase the representation of farmers' market societies and the B.C. Association of Farmers' Markets</b>				
<b>Ranking Maximum 12</b>	<b>Effectiveness</b>	<b>Administrative Compatibility</b>	<b>Equity</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Collaborative Planning Benchmarks (Gunton)	Farmers' markets and vendors benefit from collaborative planning	Improved communications between farmers' market managers and local / provincial government staff.	Equity to farmers' market societies rather than being marginalized	Low cost impact or possible cost saving as communications would be improved
<b>Total Score 10</b>	Value = 2	Value = 3	Value = 3	Value = 2

## **6 Recommendation**

The acknowledgement that farmers' markets are a bona fide sector of the food system in B.C. requires changes to terminology within local and provincial policies. There should be changes to the Health Authorities' definition of farmers' markets by removing the word "temporary." The term "special event" should, be removed from the definition of farmers' markets in any provincial or local policy or by-law. Local and provincial policies for farmers' markets could include terms such as "producer only" or "grower / value-added processor only".

The B.C. Association of Farmers' Markets should be included in the B. C. Ministry of Agriculture online InfoBasket as a Producer / Processor Association in every commodity category. Because this option addresses the root cause of barriers, a low cost and administrative compatibility, it earned the maximum value of 12.

While the other two policy options earned close to the maximum, they were more costly and would not address the root cause of the barriers. Policy option security/regulations had a lower value for cost and option representation had a lower value for administrative compatibility because there are only 28 agricultural advisory committees established by local governments while there are 100 farmers' markets in B.C.

However, any of the policy options could be initiated as a package or separately as they are not in conflict with each other or interdependent. Various non-government entities and different levels of government would be responsible to implement the policies. Therefore, no one agency or department would be overwhelmed by the changes. While two policy options have cost components they are relatively small when compared with other government expenditures such as the cost of population health due to poor nutrition. One essential component in recommending any specific policy option over others is political will.

## **7 Conclusion**

Farmers' markets play a modest but growing role in assuring the supply of safe, local food to residents of B.C. However, their sustainability and future growth are hindered by several barriers which have been identified in this study.

I conducted qualitative and quantitative research which supported the hypothesis of this study; farmers' market vendors and societies face unique barriers when compared to other actors in the food system. Some barriers relate to perceptions and others are more reflective of how the dominant stakeholders in the food system have been the only voice allowed to provide input to local and provincial governments. This has had negative impacts upon farmers' markets and consumers of local food. The barriers range from zoning by-laws and insecure space allocations at the local level to a non-transparent ALR exclusions process and meat regulations at the provincial level.

The most significant needed action is to end the marginalization of farmers' markets in the food system of B.C. The University of Northern B.C. report, which has been acknowledged by the Minister of Agriculture, indicates that farmers' markets are emerging as an important sector of the agricultural and tourist economies of B.C. The Community Food Action Initiative has asserted that access to local food via farmers' markets will improve the health of British Columbians.

Policy makers should seize upon the opportunity and acknowledge that farmers' markets are a bona fide part of the food system rather than just "special events" or tourist attractions. The steps that can be taken to alter this misconception are low cost and use existing administrative structures. It is essential to local economic development to treat farmers' markets as more than recreation or entertainment. Farmers and value-added processors need to be assured that if they are willing to sell their products at farmers' markets, they will have security of the venue and regulations that are not onerous.

Recent heightened interest in local food, places an increasing demand on farmers' markets especially in urban communities. If farmers' markets are going to be able to supply the demand public policy and the attitudes of decision makers need to change. The exclusion of the B.C. Association of Farmers' Markets and over 100 farmers' market societies from provincial and local committees that make decisions regarding food distribution and safety is a barrier that works against collaborative decision making. These exclusions result in decisions that have a negative impact on farmers' markets and thousands of consumers who are increasingly demanding locally grown and processed food.



In addition, farmers' markets cannot be accessible only for higher income groups. Low-income consumers should be able to access healthy, local food as well. At the same time, farmers need to obtain premium prices to compensate the time they spend not only growing food but also the time that it takes to be a vendor. Therefore, it is important that public policies minimize the costs borne by vendors while still ensuring proper standards of food safety. Non-government agencies, health authorities and the provincial government have high expectations regarding the role of farmers' markets as a primary source of local food. If farmers' markets live up to their expectations, it will be crucial to reduce or eliminate the barriers identified in this study.

A number of other considerations related to the barriers faced by farmers' market touched in this study warrant further examination. They include issues that are currently being brought forward by the United Nations and the World Bank on balancing local food security and food distribution while at the same time accommodating a free-flowing market within the global food system.

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## **Appendix A**

### **Field studies**

#### **Abbotsford Farm and Country Market (June 16, 2007 and December 1, 2007)**

I conducted field studies at this farmers' market twice because I wanted to observe conditions during both the traditional summer season and the emerging off-season. On June 16, 2007, there were 16 local growers and processors and 10 craft vendors. My observation confirmed what the Abbotsford Farm and Country Market web site states: lots of activity with vendors setting up, customers conversing with vendors and each other, live music and a volunteer handing out balloons to children and the *Market Thymes* newsletter to adults. Poor weather does not seem to have a significant impact on the number of vendors or consumers according to the farmers' market web site. In December 2007, the winter market is located at the United Church Hall and the adjacent parking lot. There were fewer customers and vendors at this market than there were on June 16, 2007.

#### **Mayne Island Farmers' Market (August 11 and September 22, 2007)**

I conducted two field studies of this market. B.C. Ferries statistics note that Mayne Island experiences an influx of people well in excess of the local population over the summer (Island Trust, 2008). For the last six weeks of the farmers' market Mayne Island has a resident population of approximately 1100 (B.C. Stats, 2008). I wanted to observe the farmers' market when the majority of customers were tourists in comparison to when the customer base comprised of local residents. Connell et al. (2006) find that two of the largest farmers' markets in B.C. are in areas with significant tourism. The first observation, was conducted in August, when many tourists are on the island and many of them are at the farmers' market. Children play on the hill near the 107-year-old Agriculture Hall while their parents buy local fruit vegetables and crafts or visit with each other while having a cup of fair trade coffee. Two of the vendors are children selling their own crafts. In comparison, at the September farmers' market on a sunny Saturday at noon there was a small crowd of some of the local island residents, which means there are far fewer customers and vendors than in the summer. The high numbers of both vendors and customers is from July to the end of August as Mayne Island is a summer vacation destination. At the September market, there were six farmers, three value-added food vendors and four local artisans. The community booth is hosted by the Mayne Island Naturalists.



### **Riley Park Farmers' Market (October 5, 2007)**

The field study of the Riley Park Farmers' Market took place close to the end of the season in October. It was a windy, wet and cold Wednesday morning. However, there was a full complement of vendors and numerous customers. I talked with some of the vendors and told them that I would be sending out surveys. They were very interested in the study and eager to share information. During my visit, a class of elementary school children was being enlightened about the wide variety of squashes at the Forstbauer Natural Food Farm in Chilliwack. A City of Vancouver worker who was on strike also visited the vendor booths and was given fresh fruit and vegetables by a number of vendors to share among the CUPE members who were picketing at the Community Centre across the street.

### **Trout Lake Farmers' Market (October 8, 2007)**

The field study of this market was on a wet and cold Saturday on Thanksgiving weekend. The community booth was hosted by the 100 Mile Diet organizations. In spite of the weather, there were crowds of shoppers. All of the vendor stalls appeared occupied. I checked in with the market day manager, told her about my study, and proceeded to do the rounds of all of the vendors. Vendors and customers were having conversations and one of the market staff was taking around an information package on a benefit plan.

### **West End Farmers' Market (October 8, 2007)**

I conducted my observation of the West End Farmers' Market on the same day as the Trout Lake market. I arrived just at the end of the market and was most likely the last customer of the day. This market had fewer vendors than the other markets. A trio of musicians performed under a tent out of the rain. The West End Farmers' Market was different from the other two Vancouver markets as it was on a blocked off street rather than the parking lot of a city park. There were a good variety of vendors including a cheese maker from Mission who also participated at the Mission Farmers' Market.

### **Mission Farmers' Market (November 10, 2007)**

This was a combination outdoor and indoor farmers' market at a local church. Upon entering the church hall, I filled out two surveys as this was the day that the farmers' market society was holding a community consultation as well as a market. They have had some challenges and believes that the community can provide useful guidance. The large hall was set up for vendors and a small adjacent room was set up for community input. There were three vendors selling

fresh vegetables, fruit and nuts, a local cheese maker, and two value-added processors with a wide variety of barbeque and hot sauces and salad oils and a few artisans.

**The Winter Farmers' Market (December 8, 2007)**

The Winter Market at Wise Hall is one block north of the popular Commercial Drive in Vancouver. It is a neighbourhood of heritage houses, ethnic food stores and trendy bistros. The hall is next to a small community park. The street was full of parked cars and smiling people walking to and from the farmers' market. Stalls with fish, fruit and vegetables were lined along the street in front of the hall. Inside customers were making purchases, chatting and milling around. Vendors were busy but had time to chat with their customers. From the YLFM web site information, I discovered that a number of the vendors at Trout Lake, Riley Park and West End markets sold at the Winter Market. Therefore, I had surveys ready to hand deliver to the vendors. The survey package included self-addressed stamped envelopes. This enabled vendors to take surveys home, complete and mail them back to me.

## Appendix B

### Farmers' Market Vendor Survey

#### Marketing your locally grown food and / or value-added products

**1 What percentage of your farm product(s) were sold at farmers' markets in the last year?**

1  100% 2.  75% - 100% 3 50% - 75% 4  25% - 50% 5  less than 25%

**2 Do you sell your products at venues other than farmers' markets?**

1  Yes  2 No

**3. If yes where?**

1  Farm Stand  2 Retail Stores  3 Wholesalers  Home Deliveries 5  Other

**4 Why did you choose the markets that you sell at?**

1  Sales  2 Local  3 Other

**5 Have you stopped selling at any farmers' markets?**

1  Yes  2 No

**6 If yes, did you stop selling at one farmers' market because you chose to sell at another farmers' market that is open at the same time?**

1  Yes  2 No

**7 Do farmers' markets that you sell at require you to be a member?**

1  All  2 Some  3 None

**8 Is there a jurying process for value added or craft items?**

1  Yes  2 No

**9 How has this impacted your ability to prepare and sell your value added or craft item?**

1  Made it easier 2  Made it more difficult

Please give details:

**10 Do the markets you sell at have geographical boundaries?**

1  Yes  2 No

**11. Have you been refused a vendor space because you do not live in the geographical boundary?**

1  Yes  2 No

**12 How many farmers' markets do you sell your products at?**

1  one 2  two 3  three 4  four 5  five 6  six +

**13 Which market(s) do you sell at?**

1  Trout Lake  6 Abbotsford  11 White Rock

2  Riley Park  7 Ambleside  12 Whistler

- 3  West End                       8      Mission                      13  Mayne Island  
 4  Kitsilano                       9      Chilliwack                      14  Salt Spring Island  
 5      Winter Wise Hall                       10      Coquitlam                       15      Other

**14 How many selling days do you get per market season at each market?**

Market	Selling Days	Market	Selling Days	Market	Selling Days
1 Trout Lake	_____	6 Abbotsford	_____	11 White Rock	_____
2 Riley Park	_____	7 Ambleside	_____	12 Whistler	_____
3 West End	_____	8 Mission	_____	13 Mayne Island	_____
4 Kitsilano	_____	9 Chilliwack	_____	14 Salt Spring Island	_____
5 Wise Hall	_____	10 Coquitlam	_____	15 Other	_____

**15 Do you sell at farmers' markets that limit the number of selling days you are allowed?**

- 1  Yes    2  No

**16 Would you sell more days if allowed?**

- 1  Yes    2  No

**17 Are there items that you have sold at farmers' markets that you no longer sell?**

- 1  Yes     2      No      Please specify:

**18 If yes, why did you stop selling items?**

- 1  Low sales     2      Did not pass jurrying process  
 3  Did not pass health regulations    4  Ingredients difficult to obtain  
 5  Other vendors selling the same item  6      Other    Please specify:

**19 Have you been able to access other venues to sell your locally grown and / or value-added food product(s) at as a result of being a vendor at a farmers' market?**

- 1  Yes    2  No

**Planning Requirements**

**20 How much notice do you need to enable planning and planting crops?**

- 1  More than one year?                      2  More than six months?  
 3  More than three months?                      4  More than one month?

**21 How much notice do you need to enable you to process value added product(s)?**

- 1  More than one year?                      2  Less than six months?  
 3  Less than three months                      4  Less than one month?

**22 How much time is required before you sell at a farmers' market to submit necessary health regulation documentation and obtain approval(s)?**

- 1  More than one year?                      2  More than six months?  
3  More than three months?                      4  More than one month?

**23 Do you sell value-added? (pickles, jams, dried herbs, salves, soaps, bees wax candles)**

- 1  Yes                      2  No

**24 If you sell value-added food where is your kitchen located?**

- 1  In the home                      2  Certified kitchen in separate building                      3  Other

**25 What items do you offer for sale at farmers' markets?**

- 1  Vegetables fresh                      6  Eggs                      11  Candy  
2  Fruit fresh                      7  Fruit value-added                      12  Soaps / lotions  
3  Dairy milk / cheese                      8  Vegetables value-added                      13  Plants  
4  Meat – fresh                      9  Honey                      14  Other  
5  Meat value-added                      10  Seafood

**26 Are there items that you have chosen to sell at farmers' markets because they have been requested by customers?**

- 1  Yes                      2  No

**27 If yes, has the addition of the product been worth the extra effort taken to produce it?**

- 1  Yes                      2  No

**28 Are there barriers have you experienced that have made it difficult for you to sell at farmers' markets?**

- 1  Yes                      2  No

**29 If yes, the barriers are due to:**

- 1  Farmers' market rules                      2  Government laws                      3  Other

**30 If yes to government laws, which level of government did the laws come from?**

- 1  Federal                      2  Provincial                      3  Local

**31 If yes, did you stop selling items due to provincial / federal / local health regulation(s) requirements or by-laws?**

- 1  Provincial health regulation(s) such as commercial kitchen for processing food  
2  Provincial meat inspection regulations  
3  Local by-law regarding outdoor sale of processed food

- 4 Local by-law governing use of outdoor public space(s) by farmers' market vendors
- 5  Local by-law regarding use of outdoor private space(s) by farmers' market vendors
- 6  Federal law for certified organic labelling
- 7  Other(s) please specify \_\_\_\_\_

**32 Have you received assistance from the provincial or local government that has enabled you to farm?**

- 1  Provincial government 2  Local government 3  None

**33 Have you received assistance from the provincial or local government that has enabled you produce the value-added food products that you sell at farmers' markets?**

- 1  Provincial government 2  Local government 3  None

**34 Which areas that do not have farmers' markets would you like to sell at?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**35 What is the worst experience you have had selling at farmers' markets?**

**36 What is the best experience you have had selling at farmers' markets?**

**37 In about 50 words please explain why you sell at farmers' markets?**

## **Appendix C**

### **Written Responses to Open Ended Questions 35 - 36**

#### **35 What was the worst experience at farmers' markets.**

Being placed outside when the rest of the market was indoors.

Stolen money

Usually always pleasant regardless of sales

Being rained (flooded) out on one or two Saturdays.

Poor weather

Very low turnout

Occasional horrific weather.

A vicious dog-fight in front of my vendor table area.

Granville Island feeding frenzies

Parking for customers

Rain damaging value added products. Mystery complaints from other vendors – no way to find out about them

Being short of help on a busy weekend and thus unable to take breaks

Cold or extremely wet days.

Rainy cold days when low number of buyers.

Very, very, very quiet markets that I kept going to to support the organizers (which have been cancelled)

Dealing with local government

Fast food people swarming the market without much care for the food they buy, just another transaction

The woman who insisted my fennel was dill!

Dealing with the politics

#### **36 What was the best experience at farmers' markets.**

The interaction with customers and having many repeat visits.

All of the compliments that the children get for being hard working diligent and friendly.

Wise Hall indoor market

Repeat happy customers

Trout Lake now great sales, community and appreciations.

Compliments like 'this is the best jam ever--'

Compliments

High sales Trout Lake

Customers and location awesome at Abbotsford

Customers coming back for years to the "the best pickles".

Cross marketing, meeting the customers face to face.

Meeting old and new friends – selling!

Repeat buyer appreciation.

#### **Why I sell at farmers' markets**

Convenient location to sell our locally grown fruit and vegetables. Receive more sales than just selling at our farm.

Best place to talk to public about honey bees value of honey in food and health, importance of honey bees in food products on (pollination of crops) and sustaining the environment. There is of course good sale of product.

I find it rewarding personally because I have always enjoyed working with people. The camaraderie of the vendors and the attitude that sure we'd like to make a buck – but if not it wasn't a wasted day. It all begins with strong management and dedicated volunteers, we have that and it helps make a pleasurable experience for all.

We have a family operated greenhouse producing peppers, cukes and tomatoes to date my father and mother operated it and the six kids managed. The next generation is now starting to get involved but because most of the work is not suitable to younger (8-12) people we chose to start them off in the “market” venue to get their eyes open to what business is all about.

The atmosphere at farmers' markets is far more pleasant than shopping at any other venue. Both vendors and customers care about our environment and the necessity of growing food in an organic and sustainable manner. I personally appreciate that people are willing to part with hard earned money indeed to pay a premium to encourage vendors and allow us to make a decent return on our labour.

Our farm is “local” in the strictest sense. We drive out from 4 hours east of Vancouver. We have found that Vancouver markets are better than the local (Penticton) market and much better than selling from the farm gate because the locals do not place as high a value on our product as people in Vancouver. This is partially because people in this area often have nut trees and share their produce with neighbours, but also because there is the mentality that “buying local means paying less” that isn't as prevalent in the city.

Community, integrity of food issues, great margins and lots of fun.

I love to make / bake / grow things, enjoy working at home and being my own boss. I enjoy the atmosphere and the contact with customers at the markets.

Marketing exposure sales geographic diversity

It is a great way to meet the public and answer their questions. We can build relations with the customers. We get valuable feedback about our product. Trout Lake has a large group of local customers who come back just to get our cheeses. We also meet other vendors who we can network with.

Good word of mouth, type of advertising. Fun day to interact with customers and friends. Because of the market our bakery sales in Ft. Langley has increased and we have become well known for our quality products.

I started selling at the E. Van. Market the year it started. It provided a venue for selling pickles that I learned to make as a child on a farm near Edmonton. Each year my sales increased and now I could make a good living selling at the markets. However, I am retiring from my “hobby” am retiring to Thailand where I might make pickles for the thousands of foreigners living there. Sad to say, I could not find anyone to take over “Big Dons Pickles” in Canada.

Offer pure healthy food, make some retail money, cross marketing, put a face to our company, boat to plate philosophy, wild salmon.

Keeps me creative – the people I sell with are like family – meeting new people – socializing folks like to talk to the artist, it helps them understand the process. The market has offered food safe to vendors and others and they recommend having food safe in their guidelines.



Local venue to promote / sell from our venture. Raise public awareness re our products. Limited selling opportunities otherwise.

I sell at farmers' markets because. 1. I enjoy the direct contact with the consumer. 2. It gives me the best return on my product. 3. It allows me to sell small amounts of product that I could not sell into retail or wholesale unless I had large volumes. 4. It reduces my packing costs. 5. It reduces my risk of price fluctuation in the market place so I can plan better.

We sell at farmers' markets as a small side line to our commercial fishing. It is fun, extra cash and you get to meet lots of nice people. Our children work with us as well and it is a good opportunity for them to be learning.

We do this as it contributes to local food system capacity and our understanding of the human culture of our environment.

Dollars, at the scale I produce to sell in retail stores would be difficult. The costs associated with getting CFIA approvals and proper labelling would make it better financially to sell by the barrel only, which would fetch a much lower price per lb. of honey

Selling at the farmers' market is a way of giving back to the community in where I live. I believe strongly in buying and eating locally. Besides growing food for my family, friends I can extend this to the local community (and its visitors) while encouraging people to seriously consider where their food comes from and how it is grown. Education and sharing of information.

This response was four single space typed pages explaining how they had worked collaboratively with other farmers in their region three hours from Vancouver to economize and co-operate in order to stay small and maintain their high quality meat product.

Because of the direct contact to the consumer. We would not be able to farm without the markets due to the low price we get at the wholesalers. We are young farmers so we need to be able to make more money. We feel very supported by the customers that go to the farmers' market. We can also grow much better products vine-ripened, tree-ripened. Can't do that if we are selling wholesale or to the stores.

Convenient location to sell our locally grown fruit and vegetables. Receive more sales than just selling at our farm.

I find it rewarding personally because I have always enjoyed working with people. The camaraderie of the vendors and the attitude that sure we'd like to make a buck – but if not it wasn't a wasted day. It all begins with strong management and dedicated volunteers, we have that and it helps make a pleasurable experience for all.

The atmosphere at farmers' markets is far more pleasant than shopping at any other venue. Both vendors and customers care about our environment and the necessity of growing food in an organic and sustainable manner. I personally appreciate that people are willing to part with hard earned money indeed to pay a premium to encourage vendors and allow us to make a decent return on our labour.

Our farm is "local" in the strictest sense. We drive out from 4 hours east of Vancouver. We have found that Vancouver markets are better than the local (Penticton) market and much better than selling from the farm gate because the locals do not place as high a value on our product as

people in Vancouver. This is partially because people in this area often have nut trees and share their produce with neighbours, but also because there is the mentality that “buying local means paying less” that isn’t as prevalent in the city.

Community, integrity of food issues, great margins and lots of fun.

I love to make / bake / grow things, enjoy working at home and being my own boss. I enjoy the atmosphere and the contact with customers at the market

It is a great way to meet the public and answer their questions. We can build relations with the customers. We get valuable feedback about our product. Trout Lake has a large group of local customers who come back just to get our cheeses. We also meet other vendors who we can network with.

Good word of mouth, type of advertising. Fun day to interact with customers and friends. Because of the market our bakery sales in Ft. Langley has increased and we have become well known for our quality products.

I started selling at the E. Van. Market the year it started. It provided a venue for selling pickles that I learned to make as a child on a farm near Edmonton. Each year my sales increased and now I could make a good living selling at the markets. However, I am retiring from my “hobby” am retiring to Thailand where I might make pickles for the thousands of foreigners living there. Sad to say, I could not find anyone to take over “Big Dons Pickles” in Canada.

Offer pure healthy food, make some retail money, cross marketing, put a face to our company, boat to plate philosophy, wild salmon.

Keeps me creative – the people I sell with are like family – meeting new people – socializing folks like to talk to the artist, it helps them understand the process. The market has offered food safe to vendors and others and they recommend having food safe in their guidelines.

I sell at farmers’ markets because. 1. I enjoy the direct contact with the consumer. 2. It gives me the best return on my product. 3. It allows me to sell small amounts of product that I could not sell into retail or wholesale unless I had large volumes. 4. It reduces my packing costs. 5. It reduces my risk of price fluctuation in the market place so I can plan better.

I can get more money selling direct to customers. I enjoy the interaction / feedback with the end user of the food I produce.

I launch new products and use the market as a conduit for other retail zones. ALSO it is time ALL vendors of food (farm or value added) have a mandatory Hep A shots. Imagine Hep A transmitted from a market in the backwater of “Atlin”. The repercussions would be felt across the industry.!!!

We sell at farmers’ markets as a small side line to our commercial fishing. It is fun, extra cash and you get to meet lots of nice people. Our children work with us as well and it is a good opportunity for them to be learning.

We do this as it contributes to local food system capacity and our understanding of the human culture of our environment.

Dollars, at the scale I produce to sell in retail stores would be difficult. The costs associated with getting CFIA approvals and proper labeling would make it better financially to sell by the barrel only, which would fetch a much lower price per lb. of honey

Selling at the farmers' market is a way of giving back to the community in where I live. I believe strongly in buying and eating locally. Besides growing food for my family, friends I can extend this to the local community (and its visitors) while encouraging people to seriously consider where their food comes from and how it is grown. Education and sharing of information.

Because of the direct contact to the consumer. We would not be able to farm without the markets due to the low price we get at the wholesalers. We are young farmers so we need to be able to make more money. We feel very supported by the customers that go to the farmers' market. We can also grow much better products vine-ripened , tree-ripened. Can't do that if we are selling wholesale or to the stores.

## Appendix D

### Interviewing Techniques

Bruce Fatkin, Abbotsford Manager Abbotsford Farm and Country Marker, BCAFMB Board	Dec. 7, 2007	In person interview, taped, transcribed
Glenda Goodman, Mayne Island Vendor, Mayne Island Farmers' Market Board	Jan. 6, 2008	Written information provided
Stacey Corriveau, Abbotsford Community Futures staff, Abbotsford Farm and Country Board	Jan. 11, 2008	In person interview, notes, written information provided by interviewee
Tara McDonald, Vancouver Executive Director YLFM, Food Policy Council member, BCAFMB Board	Jan. 16, 2008	In person interview, taped, transcribed written information provided by interviewee
Mel Lehan, Vancouver Kitsiland Farmers' Market Proponent, YLFM Board	Jan. 18, 2008	In person interview, taped, transcribed
Jay Teicroeb, Abbotsford Economic Development Officer	Jan. 25, 2008	In person interview, taped, transcribed
Devorah Kahn, Vancouver Food Policy Council staff	Jan. 30, 2008	In person, notes written information provided by interviewee
Marge Robertson, Mission City Vendor and Member of Board	Feb. 1, 2008	Written information provided
Anita Romaniuk, Vancouver Former Parks Board Commissioner	Feb. 20, 2008	Written information provided
Marion Robinson, Mission City Fraser Basin Trust Fraser Valley	Mar. 3, 200	In person interview, notes, written information provided by interviewee

## **Appendix E**

### **Interview Questions for Farmers' market Managers**

- 1 How long have you been the manager of the farmers' market?
- 2 Is your position an elected one or are you an employee of the farmers' market society?
- 3 Are you a voting member of the farmers' market society board?
- 4 If you are an employee who do you report to on the board regarding day to day administration?
- 5 Do you interact with staff at city hall? If yes, who?
- 6 Are there elected city council members who are strong supporters of the farmers' market you manage?
- 7 Are there elected city council members who do not support the farmers' market you manage?
- 8 Are there other groups that you interact with on an ongoing basis regarding how the farmers' market is administered (ie. BC Association of Farmers' markets, Chamber of Commerce)?
- 9 Are there any factors that undermines the ability of the farmers' market you manage to provide locally grown food / value-added products to customers? If yes, what are they?
- 10 Does your market have a positive or negative relationship with local health authorities?
- 11 Have you had to ban a vendor from selling due to non-compliance to health regulations?
- 12 What are your rules regarding "locally grown / locally produced" and how do you monitor and guarantee vendor compliance?
- 13 Have you had to ban a vendor for non-compliance to the "locally grown / made" rule?
- 14 Do you have a jurying requirement for value-added products? If you do please explain how it works.
- 15 Have you been able accommodate all of the vendors who apply to sell at the farmers market you manage? If not, how do you deal with too many vendors?
- 16 Do you have a shortage of vendors? Does the market board have a plan to increase the number of vendors?
- 17 Are there other factors that create barriers which prevent farmers' markets from meeting the increasing demand for locally grown food or locally made value-added products?

## **Appendix F**

### **CD-1 (Comprehensive Development) District Schedule**

#### **1 Uses Permitted**

1.1 Where an area is zoned CD-1 (Comprehensive Development) District and Council has approved

the form of development, the Development Permit Board may approve the issuance of permits for the uses listed in the by-law designating the district, subject to such conditions as it may decide, provided however:

(a) the development is consistent with the intent and purpose of this by-law and any applicable official development plan; and

(b) legal instruments are provided, where necessary, to ensure that all features related to each individual development are used, operated and maintained in accordance with the development as approved.

1.2 Sections 2 to 12 of this By-law apply to each area zoned CD-1 unless the CD-1 by-law for an area

states expressly that one or more particular sections do not apply.

## **Appendix G**

### **Gunton et al. 2003 Benchmarks for Successful Implementation of Collaborative Planning**

- clear and consistent objectives,
- strong commitment of implementing officials,
- monitoring framework with appropriate indicators to track change in each objective,
- strong provincial government support,
- sufficient information available to make appropriate decisions for land use plan implementation,
- high level of cooperation and information sharing between implementing agencies,
- strong stakeholder support,
- collaborative planning process,
- implementing officials skilled in working collaboratively with stakeholders,
- clear delineation of agency responsibilities,
- land use plan objectives well integrated within individual agency work plans,
- strong local government agencies support,
- implementation monitoring committee with public reporting requirements,
- adequate natural science data available to make implementation decisions,
- adequate financial and staff resource commitments for plan implementation,
- participation of stakeholders in monitoring,
- participation of stakeholders in land use plan development through a collaborative planning process
- power differences between stakeholders equalized through the process,
- participation of implementing officials in plan preparation,
- clear understanding of causal relationship between implementation strategies and desired outcomes,
- no conflicting government policies,

- socioeconomic data available,
- strong public support,
- favorable socioeconomic conditions in the land use plan area.

(Gunton et al. 2003 p. 9)