



Farmers Markets in Washington State

www.wafarmersmarkets.com

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Washington State is home to approximately 160 unique farmers markets, from the world-famous Pike Place Market founded in 1907 to new markets opening just this year. In sync with national trends, the number of markets has grown 150% in the last decade.

The demand for farmers markets is strong among shoppers, vendors, and local organizers. The WSFMA and other industry leaders are working hard to understand current issues, trends, and opportunities affecting farmers markets so that they may better serve agriculture, foster economic opportunities, and build community assets.

Most farmers markets are located in Western Washington where the highest population centers are located. However, there are strong markets throughout the state. Thirty-six out of our 39 counties have a farmers market.

Fortunately, Washington is blessed with a diversity of growing regions and micro-regions that provide a huge diversity of products and extend the seasonality of fresh produce for our consumers. Not subject to the standardization and transportation needs of other markets, fruits, vegetables, herbs, poultry, red meat, fish, dairy, flowers grown for farmers markets can be feature varieties valued for flavor, seasonality and their role in diversified and holistic farming traditions.

Farmers Markets = Face of Ag



Together, farmers markets in Washington annually generate around \$50 million in gross sales. Data is very scarce so WSU Farmers Market Research Project is currently working with the WSFMA to better understand and measure economic impacts statewide.

Farmers Markets = Jobs



Farmers markets bring hundreds to thousands of people to farm stalls for a few hours of high volume sales each week, typically from May to October. Thus, they are an efficient means for farms to direct marketing products to customers. Farms are also able to set their own prices, capture more of the retail dollar, and earn cash instead of waiting for contracts to be paid.

Over the course of seasons and years, farms get to know their customers. These relationships can develop loyalty the farm. Customers' immediate feedback can make farmers markets an excellent venue for testing new products and ideas.

At farmers markets, farms can raise their visibility, branding, and promote complementary marketing channels such as sales to chef and restaurants, CSAs, farm stands and Internet orders. Together, this builds the farm's economic viability.

Farmers Markets = Community



As farmers markets reflect and are leaders in larger trends, their goals and mission evolve as well. Building community has become an important and explicit goal of many farmers markets. This deep local connection draws people together to see friends, educate families about food and farming, as well as provide music and entertainment suitable for all ages.

Behind every farmers market is a dedicated group of people working to make markets a success. While most are non-profits, farmers markets are also run by City government, Chambers of Commerce, and some are even incorporated as businesses. Funding is tight and the hours long. And though each farmers market is unique and they share a vision of connecting local farms to consumers and being a vibrant community asset.



WASHINGTON STATE
Farmers Market Association

Founded in 1978, the WSFMA is a non-profit, membership organization representing 112 unique farmers markets.

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Farmers Markets Fight Hunger

The **Farmers Market Nutrition Program** – a Federal, State and County partnership - incentivizes seniors and low-income women with infants and children to buy fresh fruits and vegetables at farmers markets. In 2011, this program generated over \$1.4 million in sales for 747 farmers statewide.



About 65 farmers markets around the state are set up to accept Electronic Benefits, so low-income families can use federal food assistance from the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (food stamps) to buy fresh food at farmers markets.

In addition, farmers markets and vendors donate literally tons of fresh produce to local food banks, pantries and meal programs.

