

---

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 19, 2020

## Press Release:

# Moving Nova Scotia's Farmers' Markets Online: Supporting Local Producers and Feeding Nova Scotians in Difficult Times

With new measures announced by Premier McNeil on Tuesday March 17<sup>th</sup>, Farmers' Markets of Nova Scotia (FMNS) and our members have taken swift and decisive action to safely move forward with supporting as many of our local producers as possible while safely providing food and goods to Nova Scotians. We've done so by recommending that all farmers' markets in Nova Scotia cease operating their market events and immediately shift to establishing online stores, offering centralized pick-up points and potentially even door-to-door service.

The Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture has provided FMNS with \$30,000 to help Nova Scotia's farmers' markets make this transition. FMNS is working with a cohort of farmers' markets and regional hubs across Nova Scotia to roll out this strategy, and with this generous funding from the Province, FMNS is able to cover the cost for our markets to participate.

"We are moving quickly to help our farmers' markets to transition into online businesses so Nova Scotians can continue to have safe access to the locally-produced farm food products they love, even during this period of COVID-19 response," said Keith Colwell, Nova Scotia's Minister of Agriculture.

People need safe spaces to pick up food and goods during these critical times, and people will need food delivered to their door. FMNS is working to make the necessary changes as quickly as possible, and encourages Nova Scotians to reach out to their farmers' market right away to start placing orders. Wolfville Farmers' Market 2 Go is already operating an online market with distribution, and even though the other online stores may take a week or two to get up and running, many farmers' markets are already taking orders and doing their best to make sure that Nova Scotians can safely pick up products at their market soon. Delivery options will soon be available in some areas and will evolve quickly over time to best serve Nova Scotians.

As of the time of this press release, the following farmers' markets / regions are confirmed to be participating in this project, with more to join soon:

- **Annapolis Valley:** [Wolfville Farmers' Market](#)
- **Halifax Regional Municipality:** [Halifax Brewery Farmers' Market](#)
- **Truro & Central NS:** [Truro Farmers' Market](#)
- **North Shore:** [New Glasgow Farmers' Market](#)
- **South Shore:** [Lunenburg Farmers' Market](#)
- **Cape Breton Regional Municipality:** [Cape Breton Farmers' Market](#)
- **Digby & Annapolis Counties:** [Annapolis Royal Farmers and Traders Market](#), [Annapolis Royal Winter Farmers' Market](#), and [New Digby Farmers' Market](#)

- **Southwest Nova Scotia:** [Yarmouth Farmers' Market](#)

“By launching these online stores as a unified cohort, we're showing Nova Scotians that our farmers' markets are committed to both safety and cooperation, and that farmers' markets will continue to play an incredibly important role in Nova Scotia, even during difficult times,” says Justin Cantafio, Executive Director of FMNS. “FMNS will work tirelessly and cooperatively with our markets across Nova Scotia, to rally community, coordinate masses of volunteers, create distribution networks, and get our food and goods to Nova Scotians. We look forward to working with our markets as we launch this province-wide cohort of online marketplaces. By working cooperatively, we can continue to serve Nova Scotians in a safe manner, while continuing to support our local producers.”

FMNS has partnered with Local Food Marketplace, an online marketplace software program that is already being successfully used by one of FMNS' member markets, the Wolfville Farmers' Market, for their highly successful WFM2Go service. Local Food Marketplace allows farmers' markets to create online stores, which can be used easily by shoppers to place orders directly from local producers and pay for it all in one easy to use online portal.

“We can do this! I am immensely proud of our sector's passion and dedication to feeding people local healthy food in good times and now in hard times,” says Kelly Marie Redcliffe, Manager of the Wolfville Farmers' Market. “As a Farmer's Market offering an online service called WFM2Go for three years now, we know that it works. We now see, even more than ever, the value in building a robust local food system fair to our farmers and our community. We will be expanding our services to operate twice weekly, and looking forward to sharing some of our experience with our fellow markets as they take the important step of moving on line at this critical time.”

## **FMNS' Next Steps & Additional Information**

- FMNS released an official statement at noon on Wednesday, March 18<sup>th</sup>, directing all farmers' markets in Nova Scotia to cease holding market events and to immediately shift their efforts to establishing and operating online marketplace stores.
- FMNS has secured multiple licences from [Local Food Marketplace](#) with generous funding support from the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture.
- FMNS will issue these licences to at least 10 farmers' markets or regional hubs of markets across Nova Scotia. We have already established relationships with the markets listed above.
- FMNS is actively working with partners in the following regions:
  - Dartmouth & Eastern Shore (HRM)
  - Rural Cape Breton (in partnership with the [Pan Cape Breton Food Hub](#))
  - Antigonish
  - St. Margaret's Bay
- A project lead will attend several webinars issued by Local Food Marketplace, with the first one starting on Wednesday, March 18<sup>th</sup> at 2pm Atlantic.
- FMNS will work with each cohort member to establish best practices for online sales, centralized pick-up points, and possible delivery options.
- Farmers' markets will likely take a grassroots approach to gathering orders for the weekend of Saturday, March 21<sup>st</sup>, with an objective of having their online stores ready for Saturday, March 28<sup>th</sup>.



- Individuals are asked to contact their individual farmers' markets directly. They can find a farmers' market closest to them by going to FMNS' farmers market directory: <https://farmersmarketsnovascotia.ca/find-a-market-2/>
- FMNS has created a private Facebook group for all cohort members participating in this project, to share best practices, resources, and to work collectively to solve problems and generate solutions.
- FMNS will coordinate with various individuals, groups, and organizations to ensure each cohort member has adequate human resources, including volunteers.
- FMNS has created an online database, tracking all local businesses doing local deliveries, and will connect these businesses with the appropriate online stores to help make it easier for Nova Scotians to access local food and products.
- FMNS has also created an online volunteer database, keeping track of all groups and individuals in various regions across Nova Scotia with the ability to help at pick-up locations or to do door-to-door delivery for any of the online stores. We will connect these groups and individuals with our cohort members.
- FMNS will encourage all of its member markets to follow all health and safety protocols issued by the Province and the Federal Government.
- FMNS will create and distribute a comprehensive how-to guide for doing safe product pick-ups and door-to-door deliveries, specific for a Nova Scotian context.
- FMNS will work with various NS Government Departments on how to best run our *Nourishing Communities Food Coupon Program* in 2020, which may involve integrating into the online stores if required. For further information on our *Nourishing Communities Food Coupon Program*, please [click here](#).
- FMNS will update our [online map](#) to allow individuals and consumers to find out which markets presently have online stores.
- Any farmers' market that hasn't been contacted yet by FMNS is encouraged to reach out to us immediately to join our program.
- FMNS is providing this service free of charge to all of our member markets.
- Markets currently operating are encouraged to contact us immediately. Seasonal markets may join as well.

## **More Info about Farmers' Markets of Nova Scotia and this Project**

2020 was slated to be the biggest year ever for farmers' markets in Nova Scotia. With the most per capita in Canada, and over 30 members in our cooperative and growing, we were strategically positioned to increase the economic and social impact of our markets through a variety of exciting programs and projects. Our cooperative in collaboration with our member markets to create jobs, incubate small businesses, replace imports, generate rural economic growth, and lay the groundwork for our thriving agri-tourism sector. Our farmers' markets are more than just local economic powerhouses. They're also social and cultural hubs, bringing people together and building community while creating a space to promote more local consumption of healthy food while reducing food insecurity.

However, things have changed, at least temporarily. "In less than 2 weeks, we've seen our farmers' markets go from vibrant spaces for purchasing local goods and social gathering spots, quickly pared down to strictly population-controlled grocery stores, all in an effort to keep safely offering local products to Nova Scotians" says Justin Cantafio, Executive Director of FMNS. "In these tumultuous weeks, we've continuously adapted to fast-changing conditions to

**Farmers' Markets of Nova Scotia Cooperative Ltd.**

9 Chestnut Lane, Dartmouth, NS, B2Y 3X1

Phone: 902-932-7282

FMNS@farmersmarketsnovascotia.ca

www.farmersmarketsnovascotia.com



---

continue supporting our regional producers and small businesses while ensuring as many Nova Scotians as possible have access to healthy, local food and necessities.”

Founded in 2004, Farmers’ Markets of Nova Scotia (FMNS) is a non-profit cooperative of farmers’ markets for farmers’ markets. As the only farmers’ market association east of Ontario, and with over 30 members representing over 1,500 independent businesses and growing, we’re the unified voice of our region’s farmers’ market sector.

Our vision is for a cooperative and dynamic farmers’ market sector cultivating successful businesses, vibrant local economies, and healthy communities. We accomplish this through our mission: FMNS Cooperative advances growth and prosperity for our member farmers’ markets and their vendors through training, resources, advocacy, promotion, and community.

---- 30 ----

**For more information or to request an interview, contact:**

Justin Cantafio

Executive Director

Farmers' Markets of Nova Scotia Cooperative

902-932-7282

[FMNS@farmersmarketsnovascotia.ca](mailto:FMNS@farmersmarketsnovascotia.ca)

Find us online at [www.farmersmarketsnovascotia.ca](http://www.farmersmarketsnovascotia.ca)

Facebook: Farmers' Markets of Nova Scotia

Twitter: @MarketFreshNS

Instagram: @marketfreshns