

# Annual Report

Prepared by Farmers' Markets of Nova Scotia

# about fmns

Founded in 2004, FMNS is a non-profit cooperative and the only farmers' market sector association in Atlantic Canada. With over 35 unique members representing over 1,500 owner-operated businesses across the province, our cooperative is the unified voice of our region's farmers' market sector.

## Vision

Together, our organization and our members are building a cooperative and dynamic farmers' market sector cultivating successful businesses, vibrant local economies, and healthy communities.

## Mission

Our cooperative advances growth and prosperity for our member farmers' markets and their vendors through training, resources, advocacy, promotion, and community.

## Our Core Values

- **Buying Local:** Because FMNS values a "make it, bake it, grow it" policy and a buy local philosophy, we actively work to ensure that our cooperative, our member markets, and our vendors do our part to support local economic activity, create local jobs, and promote import substitution.
- **Economic Development:** Because FMNS values economic development and vibrant communities, we work to promote and strengthen our member farmers' markets to be leaders and hubs of social and economic activity in their communities.
- **Incubation:** Because FMNS recognizes that our farmers' markets are business incubators, we track, encourage, and support our member markets to enable their vendors to grow their businesses.
- **Education:** Because FMNS values education and the growth and professionalization of our sector, we offer a variety of in-person trainings, webinars, and online resources so our member markets can continue to succeed.
- **Cooperation:** Because FMNS values community, cooperation, and collaboration, we build and grow a community of practice and support, including hosting in-person and online gatherings and discussion groups for our member managers, support staff, volunteers, and vendors.

## message from the chair

2020 – what a year! It has been a pleasure to continue to serve the membership of the Farmers' Markets of Nova Scotia during what has been an unexpected, frightening, changeable and challenging year for our sector. My heartfelt thanks and gratitude to all of you who kept our Farmers' Markets alive and functioning across the province over this past year. Many of our markets looked very different, whether we were online, in person, outside, in a building, doing curbside pick up, holding shorter seasons, or closed. Yet we had great support from customers and vendors and we were able to continue to provide that all important connection between local producers and buyers.

I want to give a huge vote of thanks to our staff – Justin, Alicia and Emily – who spent many hours watching the Covid updates and creating the documents to guide our markets through Covid prevention plans and safe operations. Along with providing lots of resource materials and where to find help, they kept FMNS running smoothly and still managed to create new information as well as strongly marketing our members.

Your Board of Directors continued to meet monthly, by phone conference or zoom, to stay up to date with developments and continue the work of the Board. As you know, we delayed the Annual General Meeting until November, and were grateful that Dave Hachey stayed on as treasurer for several months after his term was finished. We welcome Gareth Winsor as our new Treasurer, along with directors Steve Hopper, Jessie Palmer, Robin Johnson, and Pauline Walker.

We were happy to have continued support from the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage which allowed us to expand the Nourishing Communities Program this year. The monies available to participating markets through this program were a great boost to vendors as well as making an impact for participants. Comments received this year again highlight how much a program like this is needed in our province, and we hope to continue to expand its reach.

We also received funding in the spring from the Department of Agriculture to support markets who wanted to purchase the software to begin an online store. Some funding has also been available to help markets with expenses incurred with their re-inventions this season, as well as marketing.

Looking ahead to 2021, I am excited to continue to work with our team to meet the goals of our strategic plan. We will continue and expand the Nourishing Communities Food Bucks Program, create the first ever Atlantic Canada Farmers' Market Conference, create our new Farmers' Market University – a professional development opportunity for market managers and staff, with accreditation certificates - and provide more social and networking opportunities for our members.

I want to acknowledge all of our member markets, congratulate you on making it through this year, and look forward to building our future together. I am proud of our Board, our staff, our organization, our markets and our sector as we faced a most difficult year with tenacity, flexibility, ingenuity and steadfastness.

Sincerely,  
Margaret Ells  
President, Farmers' Markets of Nova Scotia

## message from the ed

Looking back on our [2019 Annual Report](#), it was clear that 2020 was shaping up to be the biggest year ever for Nova Scotia's farmers' market sector. While 2020 certainly didn't unfurl as planned, I'd like to make the case that it was still monumental. But before I go any further, I'd be remiss if I didn't acknowledge that this year's farmers' market season has been exceptionally challenging and trying for many vendors. Crafters and artisans have been hit particularly hard by the world of COVID-19 restrictions. It's been a trying year for small businesses everywhere.

I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge and thank each one of our farmers' market managers, vendors, staff, and volunteers for their self-sacrifice, unbelievably hard work, endless hours of slogging overtime, and the tenacity to constantly adapt to an endless sea of changes this year. You're the reason that 2020 was arguably the most impactful and most important year ever for Nova Scotia's farmers' market sector and the buy-local movement. I'd also like to thank FMNS' staff and our Board of Directors for your guidance, vision, and deep commitment to our sector.


Starting almost two weeks before the [Provincial State of Emergency](#) was called, FMNS worked tirelessly to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on our province's farmers' market sector. Since March, FMNS lobbied incessantly to ensure farmers' markets were viewed as essential infrastructure providing essential services. We secured provincial and federal funding to help Nova Scotia become the first province or state in North America to create a province-wide cohort of online farmers' market stores. We've issued [constantly updated sector-specific COVID-19 prevention plans](#), [created guides to federal and provincial funding opportunities](#), and worked one-on-one to help our markets and vendors adapt to constantly shifting market conditions. We've created grants and resources, leveraged provincial and federal funding to provide financial assistance to our members, radically increased our marketing and promotions activities to drive customer traffic to our vendors, are in the process of creating a mental health support program specifically for the farmers' market sector, and launched the only [group health insurance plan](#) for the farmers' market sector in Canada.

We've done all of this to make sure that our farmers' markets can continue operating, adapt, and have the biggest impact possible during these challenging times. And to make sure that they're there in 2021. Because it's never been more important to support local, to build the circular economy, and catalyze the community and neighbourliness built into the farmers' market model. Nova Scotia needs farmers' markets.

Through all this we've still managed to grow, bringing on 6 new member markets in 2020. Now at 36 member farmers' markets, FMNS has never been bigger. Some of our crucially important programming has been able to grow too. Our cooperative has been able to expand our [Nourishing Communities Food Coupon Program](#) in 2020, providing hundreds low-income households with access to an anonymous alternative currency redeemed at participating FMNS member farmers' markets.

As we take stock of 2020, it's important to note just how far we've come as a sector. There's still so much hard work ahead of us, and the economic ramifications of COVID-19 will continue to make themselves known now and well into the future. Know that our cooperative has only grown stronger despite the difficulties 2020 has presented. To our managers, vendors, staff, volunteers, and your loved ones: I wish you warmth, time to recoup and relax, and prosperity in the new year.

Warm regards,  
Justin Cantafio  
Executive Director

The background of the slide is a close-up photograph of numerous eggs in various colors, including shades of brown, tan, cream, and light blue. The eggs are arranged in a dense, overlapping pattern, creating a textured and organic feel. The lighting is soft, highlighting the natural speckles and imperfections on the eggshells.

## *meet the team (board + staff)*

### Board of Directors

- Margaret Congdon, President
- Steve Hopper, Vice-President
- Gareth Winsor, Treasurer
- Jessie Palmer, Secretary
- Robin Johnston, Member at Large
- Pauline Singer, Member at Large

### Staff

- Justin Cantafio, Executive Director
- Alicia Steeves, Administrative & Communications Coordinator
- Emily Lawrence, Marketing & Outreach Coordinator

# membership report

- Our cooperative currently has 36 member farmers' markets across the province!
  - Please [click here](#) for an interactive map of our member markets.
  - Please [click here](#) or a full list of our member farmers' markets.
- WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS FOR 2020!
  - This year we welcomed 6 new markets to our cooperative:
    - Annapolis Royal Farmers and Traders Market
    - Kentville Farmers' Market
    - New Germany Farmers' Market
    - Novalea Farmers' Market (Halifax)
    - Spryfield Farmers' Market
    - Yarmouth Farmers' Market
  - An additional 2 markets intended to join our cooperative but couldn't operate in 2020.
- The economic disruption from COVID-19 was extremely difficult for our sector:
  - 14% of FMNS member markets did not operate a public market in 2020.
  - 59% of non-member farmers' markets were forced to close or were unable to operate in 2020.
- In 2020, we had 5 member farmers' markets that postponed their market seasons in 2020.
- In 2020, we had 1 market permanently close and step down from our cooperative.



# fmns strategic plan (2019-2023): progress to date

Our 2019-2023 Strategic Plan was administered by the Acadia Entrepreneurship Centre and involved surveying over 150 key stakeholders, targeted focus groups with our member markets' managers, and two in-person sessions with our Board of Directors. This new Strategic Plan was formally adopted by FMNS membership at our AGM on April 29, 2019.

While 2020 was an incredibly unique and unpredictable year for both our cooperative and our sector, FMNS was able to use our Strategic Plan as a roadmap to steer us through unfamiliar times and continue to make progress towards our priorities.

Here's where we stand to date on our 2019-2023 Strategic Priorities:

- Clearly and concisely communicate the benefits of membership in our cooperative to member and non-member markets
  - FMNS unveiled a brand-new website in 2019 to better communicate what our organization does and what the benefits of being a member are, and we re-organized our online resource library.
  - We've continued to strengthen and grow our cooperative, bringing on 5 new member markets in 2020.
- Promote the sector and increase member market visitor traffic (and improve vendor sales as a result)
  - We secured funding from the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture and the Atlantic Canadian Opportunities Agency to help create online stores and radically increase our marketing and promotions activities for our members to drive visitor traffic to both public markets and online marketplaces.
  - We launched several grants to provide our members with funding that covered the cost of marketing and promotions activities in their very own communities.
  - We launched a new Marketing Strategy in 2020 to better serve our members.
- Advocate as a leader and voice for the sector
  - More importantly than ever, FMNS has been the official sector association for Nova Scotia's farmers' market sector, constantly working with provincial and federal representatives to have our sector recognized as essential service providers, ensure our farmers' markets can stay open and safely operate and secure funding for our members.
- Ensure long-term financial sustainability for through diversified revenue streams
  - FMNS was able to secure some administrative funding from

# fmns strategic plan (2019-2023): progress to date

- Continue and enhance community building for member market managers
  - We've engaged with our member managers through several online webinars.
  - FMNS has built and maintained our FMNS Market Managers & Staff private Facebook group, which allows managers to communicate with one another, ask questions, and share best practices. If you're a manager and you'd like to join this group, please email [outreach@farmersmarketsnovascotia.ca](mailto:outreach@farmersmarketsnovascotia.ca).
  - FMNS sent out several surveys on topics such as mental health and online programming to better assist our member managers.
- Affordable membership
  - FMNS membership dues are based on a levy of no more than \$1.90 per vendor, per week of operation, and all members pay the same rate. Our levy is designed to remain affordable even as our member markets grow their vendor base or extend their season length.
  - FMNS has worked with each individual member farmers' market to ensure that their membership dues reflect the reality of their 2020 farmers' market season.
  - To learn more about our annual membership fees, please [click here](#).
- Maintain and increase our HR capacity to better serve our members
  - We formally extended the contracts for Alicia and Emily in 2020 and are in a strong financial position to maintain these incredibly important employees into the future.
- Empower our markets to better empower their vendors
  - FMNS provided constantly updated guides to financial assistance and funding opportunities for farmers' markets and vendors, and a host of other resources for our member markets and their vendors throughout 2020.
  - FMNS provided funding to member markets to cover the cost of physical adaptation, marketing, and promotions to help optimize markets and vendor sales.
- Help markets and their vendors navigate and react to new food safety regulations
  - FMNS provided constantly updated sector-specific COVID-19 prevention plans for our member markets and their vendors, providing clear guidance to navigate constantly changing health and safety restrictions.
  - [Click here](#) to view the most recent guide.

# summary of covid-19 adaptation activities

With a Provincial State of Emergency declared before the major farmers' market season could even get underway, FMNS quickly pivoted our resources and efforts to ensure we could help our sector adapt and make necessary changes. We lobbied on behalf of the sector to ensure public markets could operate, lobbied for the use of physical barriers at farmers' markets, issued constantly updated health and safety directives, significantly increased our marketing and promotions efforts, provided financial guides for our members, and created and issued grants to cover the cost of creating online stores, marketing grants for farmers' markets and BIPOC-owned businesses, and adaptation grants for sanitizer, PPE, signage, coolers, tables, and more. Here are a few highlights:

- Sector support newsletter
  - Our newsletter grew substantially, going from an industry newsletter to a sector support newsletter, loaded with information, resources, and supports. While lengthy, these newsletters became an important monthly digest for our membership.
- Financial support for online stores
  - FMNS secured funding from the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture and federal funding through the Atlantic Canadian Opportunities Agency to assist with COVID-19 adaptation efforts, including covering the cost of establishing online stores for over 15 of our member farmers' markets.
- COVID-19 Prevention Plans for Nova Scotia's farmers' market sector
  - FMNS has worked incessantly with provincial health and safety representatives to stay on top of all restrictions. Since March, we've regularly released provincially accepted sector-specific COVID-19 health and safety guidelines.
  - You can view the most recent guide by [clicking here](#).
- Guides to financial resources and funding opportunities for Nova Scotia's farmers' market sector
  - FMNS worked with provincial and federal partners to learn about all the financial supports available to individuals and small businesses, along with identifying new grants and funding opportunities. We regularly created guides to help distill this information specifically for Nova Scotia's farmers' market sector.
  - You can view the most recent guide by [clicking here](#).
- Resources (include but aren't limited to):
  - [Guide for safely operating online stores and pre-purchase pick-ups](#)
  - [Guide to mask use](#)
  - [Online store social media kit](#)
- Grants
  - Funding support for online stores
  - COVID-19 Adaptation Fund
  - [Market\(ing\) Grant](#)
  - Handmade Holidays Grants

# summary of other key projects/activities

- Data collection
  - The new challenges presented by COVID-19 left little time for our member market managers and staff to collect data on weekly sales for their public markets.
  - However, the beauty of using online sales platforms is that we've been able to work with our managers to secure anonymized monthly sales by category reports, which we can then use to demonstrate the economic impact of our sector during COVID-19.
  - FMNS is working with the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture, using this data to find ways for the department to further support our sector.
- Changes to our website
  - Market map (online stores)
    - With so many markets shifting and adapting their operations in 2020, we wanted to make it easier for customers to find their local market and learn how they could support their vendors. We redesigned our online farmers' market map to make this easier.
    - You can view the new map design by [clicking here](#).
  - Blogs
    - We restructured our blog to connect with our membership and our farmers' markets' customers more clearly.
    - Our blog is now structured into two separate sections: 1) [FMNS Sector News](#) for important updates, funding opportunities, and resources for our sector, and 2) [The Basket Blog](#) for sharing stories and engaging material for our market shopper audience.
- Farmers' Market University (FMU) 2020: Professional development training
  - Brand new for 2020, FMU is our new curriculum for farmers' market manager and staff in-person intensive training. While COVID-19 caused some disruption, we were still able to run 6 classes through the NS Department of Labour and Advanced Education Professional Development Fund. FMU is an intensive formal training program for individuals seeking the only professional accreditation specifically for farmers' markets available in Atlantic Canada.
- Management without Borders
  - We worked with 3 groups of master's students from Dalhousie University's Faculty of Management through their Management without Borders program. FMNS was fortunate to receive 3 comprehensive reports based on the topic of "futureproofing farmers' markets".
  - This partnership allows brilliant minds to dig into high-level concepts that might be beyond the normal scope of FMNS' daily operations and has provided us with deeply detailed insight as we work to make sure we're ready for future disruptions such as the one we faced this year.



## summary of other key projects/activities

- New video
  - FMNS released a special video and press release on Monday, September 28 to celebrate the fact that through thick and thin, we've seen our farmers' markets rise to the occasion, constantly adapting to safely bring the best of Nova Scotia directly to Nova Scotians. From online marketplaces to physical stores to public markets with social distancing, barriers, and health and safety plans, our farmers' markets have been leaders in this province to make sure Nova Scotians can continue safely shopping local.
  - You can view the Essence of Farmers' Markets video by [clicking here](#).
- Marketing activities
  - For a review of our marketing and promotions activities, please view our Marketing Report later on in the report.



# nourishing communities food coupon pilot project

## About the project

The Nourishing Communities Food Coupon Project (NCFCP) involves FMNS working with our member farmers' markets and partner social organizations to increase food security, help break the cycle of poverty, and support individuals and families in need across Nova Scotia. The NCFCP allows project participants to use an anonymous alternative currency, or "food bucks", which can be redeemed at any vendor stall at participating markets.

Working with 1 to 2 partner social organizations, such as food banks, shelters, or senior care facilities, each farmers' market manager selects the partner social organizations based on those organizations' mandates and the individuals they serve. Partner organizations select individuals, couples, and families in need who will benefit from reduced food insecurity and increased social inclusion.

2020 marked Year 2 of our program, where we expanded to 13 member farmers' markets thanks to generous funding provided by Communities, Culture and Heritage Nova Scotia and from Food Rescue, a charitable organization.

## The impact

Year 1 of our province-wide program was a tremendous success, and you can view the impact of our 2019 program by [clicking here](#). However, this program has perhaps never been more important than it is right now. COVID-19 has made a difficult situation even worse in Nova Scotia. Over 41,000 children in Nova Scotia lived in poverty in 2018. In 2014, over 15% of Nova Scotians experienced food insecurity, including 22% of children. A 2015 study found that Nova Scotia's food insecurity rates were the highest in all of Canada.



## *nourishing communities food coupon pilot project*

In 2020, our project has increased food security and supported well over 200 households, positively affecting low-income individuals, families, and seniors in six regions across Nova Scotia. This project has allowed FMNS and its partners to:

- Contribute to systematically overcoming Nova Scotia's high rates of food insecurity;
- Provide much needed opportunities for social and community engagement for people experiencing poverty, food insecurity, and social isolation throughout Nova Scotia, and;
- Support the production and availability of locally grown and produced foods.

FMNS is actively developing a long-term funding strategy to continue building upon our success of the NCFCP and expand to more markets and partner organizations. FMNS is working to make sure we can grow our program and its impact in 2021 and beyond.

\*\*\* We look forward to expanding this project in 2021! If you're a market manager and would like to join the Nourishing Communities Food Bucks program in 2021, please email [fmns@farmersmarketsnovascotia.ca](mailto:fmns@farmersmarketsnovascotia.ca)! \*\*\*

# group health insurance plan

FMNS is proud to announce the launch of a Group Health Insurance plan specifically for Nova Scotia's farmers' market sector—the first and only of its kind in Canada!

Members of FMNS are now able to take advantage of a unique Employee Benefits Package designed specifically for self-employed farmers' market vendors and/or farmers' market-based businesses with 1 to 5 employees.

The program has been made available through FMNS' partner broker, Owens MacFadyen Group, and is administered by RWAM Insurance.

This group health insurance plan provides individuals, their dependents, their employees, and their employees' dependents with the opportunity for the following coverage, customized especially for members of FMNS:

This group health insurance plan provides you, your dependents, your employees, and your employees' dependents with the opportunity for the following coverage, customized especially for members of FMNS:

- Life Insurance
- Dependant Life Insurance
- Accidental Death and Dismemberment
- Out-of-Province/Country
- Extended Health Care
- Dental Care (optional)
- Critical Illness
- Survivor Benefit

People who are eligible for the program include:

- Staff (and that staff person's dependents) of a FMNS member farmers' market
- A vendor (and that vendor's dependents) who regularly sells at a FMNS member farmers' market
- Staff (and that staff person's dependents) of a vendor who regularly sells at a FMNS member farmers' market

If you would like to take advantage of this great opportunity, please [click here](#). Please note that this program is only available for FMNS member farmers' markets and their vendors.

# marketing report

- Social media numbers
  - Instagram followers (annual growth = 92.18%)
    - December 11, 2019: 3,261
    - December 11, 2020: 6,267
  - Facebook followers (annual growth = 42.14%)
    - December 11, 2019: 8,338
    - December 11, 2020: 11,852
  - Twitter followers (annual growth = 2.98%)
    - December 11, 2019: 8,644
    - December 11, 2020: 8,902
  - Total followers on social media (annual growth = 33.48%)
    - December 11, 2020: 20,243
    - December 11, 2020: 27,021
- Market Vendor Connect
  - Market Vendor Connect is a private Facebook group that serves as an online community for FMNS to interact directly with farmers' market managers, staff, and most importantly, vendors. In response to the disconnect between vendors and FMNS that was noted during our Strategic Plan process, FMNS has taken a targeted effort to increase the membership and usage of the Market Vendor Connect community.
  - Members (annual growth = 34.04%)
    - December 11, 2019: 379
    - December 14, 2020: 508
- Monthly Newsletter
  - Subscribers (annual growth = -2.88%)
    - December 11, 2019: 1,110
    - December 11, 2020: 1,078

The background of the page is a photograph of three chilled bottles of sparkling wine in a metal bucket. The bottles are covered in condensation and have a light orange or pinkish hue. The central bottle's label is partially visible, showing the brand name "Petite Rivière" and "VINEYARDS" below it. The text "marketing report" is overlaid on the left side of the image in a black, handwritten-style font.

# marketing report

- Bell Media Holiday Campaign
  - FMNS worked with Bell Media to create a holiday marketing blitz campaign aimed at building awareness and directing customers to our member farmers' markets during the holiday season.
  - We created 30-second television and radio commercials, over 130 of which were featured provincewide during primetime hours on CTV television and C100 radio over a period spanning from December 10 to December 23, 2020.
  - FMNS sponsored a highly popular radio contest on C100 radio.
  - FMNS's very own Alicia Steeves was also featured on CTV Atlantic Morning Live on Monday, December 14. You can view the segment by [clicking here](#).
- 2020-2021 Marketing Strategy
  - FMNS launched a brand-new Marketing Strategy in 2020 aimed to increase and optimize our marketing and promotions activities for our member markets and their vendors. The strategy was launched in 2020 and will continue into 2021. Our new Marketing Strategy was greatly informed based on a survey and input from our membership.
  - To view a summary of our brand-new Marketing Strategy, please [click here](#).

## *funding update for 2020*

- COVID-19 Adaptation Activities
  - We secured \$35,000 in up-front funds from the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture and up to \$64,440 in pre-approved funds from the Atlantic Canadian Opportunities Agency to help us cover the cost of our COVID-19 adaptation activities.
- Nourishing Communities Food Coupon Pilot Project
  - Communities, Culture and Heritage Nova Scotia graciously contributed \$80,000 towards to project.
  - This combined with a \$20,000 grant from Food Rescue, allowed FMNS to significantly grow our program in 2020.
- Membership dues
  - We received \$38,500 in membership dues from 31 member farmers' markets in 2020. Our membership dues operate on a levy system that works out to a maximum of \$1.90 per vendor, per week of operation. This means that all markets pay the same levy, but larger markets operating year-round pay more overall than smaller markets that operate seasonally.

# coming up in 2021

- Spring webinar series
  - You asked for it, and we'll answer! Thanks to feedback from our membership, FMNS is developing a webinar series for our member market vendors that we'll officially launch in the late winter of 2020.
- Atlantic Canada Farmers' Market Conference
  - After great progress was halted and we decided to postpone by one year, FMNS is again excitedly working with leaders from all four Atlantic Provinces to bring to you the first ever Atlantic Canada Farmers' Market Conference, which will take place in Truro in November 2021. Stay tuned as things develop!
- Farmers' Market University Class of 2021
  - Brand new for 2020, this is our new curriculum for farmers' market manager and staff in-person intensive training. We'll run 6 classes through the NS Department of Labour and Advanced Education Professional Development Fund. This will be an intensive formal training program for individuals seeking the only professional accreditation specifically for farmers' markets.
- New newsletter format
  - After internal discussions and receiving feedback through an E-News survey to our membership, we've decided to segment our current E-News into 2 separate monthly newsletters: 1) will be a sector-specific newsletter available exclusively for FMNS member markets and vendors, and 2) will be a public-facing newsletter specifically for farmers' market customers.
  - Breaking our existing E-News into these two newsletters will create clear messaging with a specific audience and allow us to better communicate with both audiences.
  - Our FMNS internal sector E-News will largely remain the same, with sector news and opportunities. We will be recruiting vendor emails to add to the mailing list from our market staff.
  - The new public-facing E-News will feature our monthly blog posts, a "what's in season" list, and market and vendor features.
- FMNS 2021 Sponsorship Strategy
  - FMNS is developing a multi-year funding strategy to help grow our Nourishing Communities Food Coupon Program while also securing a sustainable, long-term source of core funding to pay for our staff and internal affairs.
  - Stay tuned in the spring of 2021 for more information!
- FMNS 2021 Membership Strategy
  - FMNS will be launching a new membership option for farmers' markets, associations, vendors, and businesses outside of Nova Scotia.
  - This "Associate Membership" will come with fewer perks than core voting FMNS members but will offer groups outside of Nova Scotia the opportunity to subscribe to our internal newsletter and benefit from our massive resource library.

# coming up in 2021

- Significant growth of Nourishing Communities program
  - We're excitedly working on securing funding to grow and expand our Nourishing Communities Food Coupon Program to at least 20 farmers' markets in communities across Nova Scotia in 2021. Our objective is to help at least 250 low-income individuals to gain access to healthy local food and social inclusion at our member farmers' markets.
- 2021 Map
  - Extremely successful over the past few years, FMNS couldn't create print maps in 2020. However, FMNS will continue to work with the NS Department of Agriculture's outreach arm to create printed maps of all the farmers' markets in Nova Scotia for 2021 and distribute them to tourism information hubs and other community facilities throughout the province.
- Table opportunities for new Canadians, LGBTQ2+, and/or BIPOC folx
  - FMNS will work with various government departments and partner organizations to help create programs that allow individuals facing barriers to entry to sell at our member farmers' markets.
  - Opportunities include funding solutions to cover the cost of table fees for vendors who might not normally be able to sell at farmers' markets.
- Data tracking
  - FMNS will re-evaluate in early 2021 to determine the best available option to continue tracking economic impact data for our sector.
  - Options include online data tracking only, in-person tracking at public markets, or a Rapid Economic Assessment similar to one conducted by FMNS in 2013.
- Annual General Meeting
  - Our next AGM will take place in April 2021 at the Truro Farmers' Market. Here you'll have an opportunity to have your voice heard, vote on FMNS affairs, connect with your peers, and enjoy a trade show. Please stay tuned for updates in the New Year!
- FMNS Marketing Education
  - While FMNS already provides one-on-one, we'll launch a "Marketing your Market" campaign in early 2021 aimed specifically at helping our member farmers' markets increase the effectiveness of their marketing and promotions activities. This campaign will take place in the form of webinars, consultations, and quick tips guides.
- FMNS Farmers' Market Shopper Facebook Group
  - Starting in January, FMNS will officially launch our Nova Scotia Farmers' Market Shopper Facebook group. This group will serve as an online community for farmers' market shoppers, building awareness, provide updates, and for sharing FMNS Basket Blog posts.

The background of the slide features a blurred image of a bottle of Ironworks Vodka and two glasses of orange juice. The bottle is on the left, with the label 'IRONWORKS VODKA' visible. The glasses are in the foreground, filled with orange juice. The overall tone is warm and inviting.

## membership benefits

Don't forget! Being a member of the FMNS Cooperative has tremendous benefits for farmers' market managers, staff, board members, and vendors. Here is a snapshot of some of the benefits you can take advantage at any time!

- Projects & Funding Opportunities
  - We're a community of practice, sharing resources and working collaboratively on projects. FMNS Cooperative members get a chance to work on group projects that benefit their market and their communities, securing free funding and resources to do so along the way.
- Training & Workshops
  - We're a North American leader in developing and delivering skill-building training programs and workshops for farmers' market vendors and personnel. We host the only Farmers' Market Conference in Atlantic Canada!
- Resource Library
  - We maintain and curate an online password-protected library of cutting edge resources for farmers' market vendors, managers, and staff. From board governance to increasing sales at the farmers' market to taking better photos and using social media effectively, we've got you covered!
- Promotion
  - We promote our member markets and their vendors through our large and growing social media following, distribute thousands of copies of our Nova Scotia Farmers' Markets map every year, work one-on-one with our markets to help them design and improve their social media pages, work with our partners to create high quality videos featuring our members, and host Nova Scotia's go-to online map of farmers' markets in the province.
- Insurance Program
  - Through our partnership with the Cooperators, we offer deeply discounted farmers' market and vendor liability insurance rates our group rate plan, allowing markets and vendors to access rates they couldn't get on their own. We're also working on developing a group health insurance plan to help farmers' market vendors and employees secure affordable health and dental insurance.
- Discounts
  - We offer 100% free training and deeply discounted rates for materials and services for our members. As a member of Atlantic Canada's only farmers' market sector association, you'll also gain access to our group discount rates on farmers' market and vendor liability insurance from the Cooperators.

The background of the slide is a light gray surface with several triangular slices of watermelon scattered around. The watermelon slices are cut into wedges, showing the red flesh, black seeds, and green rind. They are positioned at various angles, creating a casual, fresh aesthetic.

# membership benefits

- Advocacy
  - With over 30 farmers' markets representing over 1,500 owner-operated businesses and growing, we're widely recognized by government and industry as the voice of the sector. We actively campaign to support our members and the sector. Our members get their voices heard, and have the peace of mind knowing they're part of an industry association that can represent them at multiple levels.
- Community
  - A rising tide floats all boats. Our cooperative is a community of practice, sharing resources and best practices. We bring our members together, whether in person at our Annual General Meeting or annual Farmers' Market Conference, or through our online communities: Market Vendor Connect and FMNS Market Managers & Staff.

# thank you!



**FARMERS'  
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