

Annual Report

2021



FARMERS'
MARKETS
of Nova Scotia






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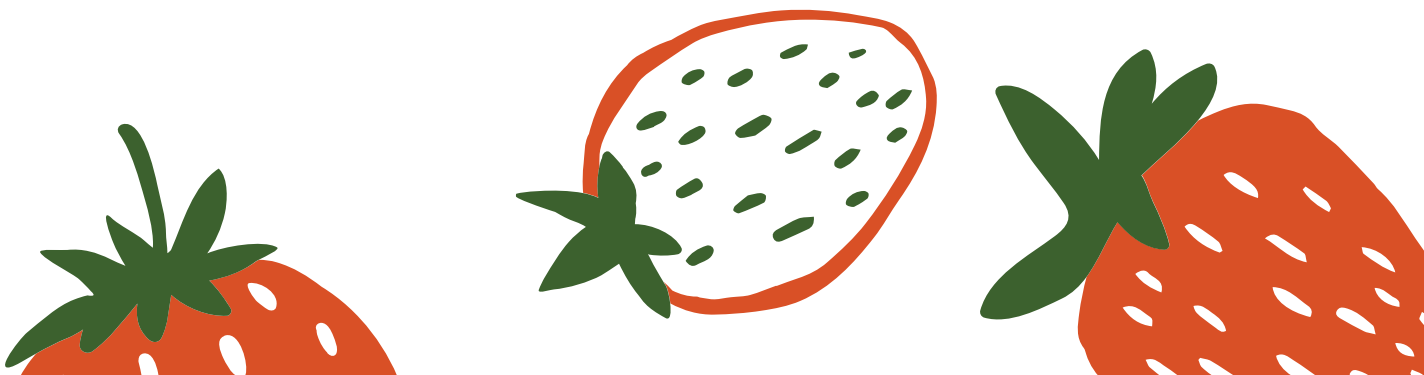
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ABOUT FMNS

Founded in 2004, FMNS is a non-profit cooperative and the only farmers' market sector association in Atlantic Canada. With over 40 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

FMNS | 03

It has been an honour to serve as President of our organization in another challenging, but very rewarding year.

My thanks to our amazing staff – Justin, Alicia, Emily, and Hannah – for their hard work and sharing their considerable talents with all of us. Through their efforts we have grown our membership, engaged our members and the public, improved our website, offered online training programs, and most of all, supported our member markets in so many ways.

I also want to thank the Board of Directors: Jessie Palmer, Gareth Winsor, Robin Johnston, Steve Hopper, and Pauline Singer for all their hard work on behalf of our co-operative. We had only one in-person meeting, but our regular Zoom meetings have been very productive. With very comprehensive updates from Justin, we are able to stay up to date and contribute to the work of Farmers' Markets of Nova Scotia.

We are very happy to welcome new markets to our co-operative, and thrilled that we are seeing strong growth in our sector, despite covid related restrictions.

We were also very appreciative of the continued support from the Nova Scotia Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage in expanding our Nourishing Communities Food Coupon Program. We have grown that program from a pilot to an ongoing program and considerably expanded the number of markets taking part, allowing us to impact even more people who experience food insecurity in Nova Scotia. This program continues to make a difference for so many, and we can now offer year round funding for markets that operate through all seasons, which will mean support for participants throughout the winter months when it is so needed.

As we look toward 2022, we will be reviewing our Strategic Plan, as many of our goals have been met. We will continue to provide training and professional development opportunities for our members, whether in person or online. Justin has represented us at the national and international level and been instrumental in the development of organizations for our sector at those levels, and we will continue to contribute to those.

Please have a full look at this Annual Report, as I have only touched on a few of the many things that have happened this past year. I want to express the Board's appreciation to all our member markets who continue, or have started, to connect our local makers, bakers, growers, and producers to customers. Our talented, committed, and dedicated vendors are what keep all our markets open and in operation, and it continues to be a pleasure to represent you on the FMNS Board.

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

MESSAGE FROM THE ED

FMNS | 04

It's no secret that the past two years have been incredibly challenging, yet despite the hardships, restrictions, and unpredictability of 2021, our sector still managed to thrive. The coming of the New Year gives us an opportunity to reflect and appreciate the triumphs experienced amongst our sector and our membership throughout 2021. It's been far from easy, but the hard work, dogged determination, passion, and creativity of our farmers' markets, their vendors, and the staff and Board here at Farmers' Markets of Nova Scotia, have left us with much to celebrate.

The volatility and unpredictability of COVID-19 restrictions and the hardship they've had on our small businesses cannot go unstated. At the start of 2021, farmers' markets were restricted to operating at only 25% capacity. It wasn't until mid-July that we finally returned to 100% capacity for an extended period, which lasted until late December. Throughout these changes, FMNS has continued to provide support and guidance to our sector in the form of constantly updated sector specific [COVID-19 prevention plans](#), lobbying the government to ensure our sector remained open and recognized as essential, and provided funding supports to our membership for adapting, marketing, and promoting their markets.

Beyond COVID supports, FMNS also increased our marketing efforts to attract more shoppers to our markets, including TV and radio ads, print advertising, billboards, and social media marketing. We shifted our training efforts online, launching our Marketing your Market info series and our Training Tuesdays weekly webinars in March and April. We brought back our print maps and distributed 25,000 of them, and redesigned our [website](#), our [blog](#), and our [newsletter](#) to increase our touchpoints with market shoppers.

Despite the challenges we faced, this past year our sector flourished in more ways than one. Our cooperative welcomed six new members, reaching over 40 for the first time. In the spring of 2020, the [Government of Nova Scotia announced](#) that our Nourishing Communities Food Coupon Program would become permanently funded, with a minimum of \$350,000 guaranteed toward the program, and we created a [donor program](#) to raise more funds to support our programming. We've built a national and international network of farmers' markets organizations to ensure we bring the best to our sector right here to Nova Scotia—FMNS was the founding organization of [Canadian Farmers' Markets](#), which itself played a key role in the formation of the first ever [World Farmers' Markets Coalition](#) in July.

As we wind down the year, it's important to take some time to rest, reflect, slow down, and disconnect. While it's impossible to know what challenges lie ahead for the year to come, we can all take comfort in knowing that our sector has never been more important and impactful for our communities than it is right now. Our farmers' markets will continue to play a crucial role as we look toward the future and work to re-localize our economies, to make our communities more inclusive and representative, and to build regional prosperity. I look forward to the year ahead with optimism and deep gratitude for all of those involved in making our sector so special.

Warm regards,
Justin Cantafio
Executive Director

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
- Emily Lawrence, Communications & Creative Lead
- Hannah Estabrook, Membership & Programs Lead
- Alicia Steeves (on parental leave until September 2022)



MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Our cooperative currently has 42* member farmers' markets across the province!

- Please [click here](#) for an interactive map and information about our member markets.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS!

- This year we welcomed 6 new markets to our cooperative:
 - Alderney Landing Farmers' Market (Dartmouth)
 - Barrington Farmers' Market
 - Fairview Clayton Park Farmers' Market (Halifax)
 - Hants County Ex Farmers' Market at the Fairgrounds (Windsor)
 - Pugwash Farmers' Market
 - Shelburne Guild Hall Market

* In 2021, we had 5 member farmers' markets postpone their market seasons for the year due to COVID.



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.

Clearly and concisely communicate the benefits of membership in our cooperative to member and non-member markets

- FMNS unveiled a brand-new website in 2021 to better communicate what our organization does.
- We've retooled our members-only password protected resource library. All staff, managers, board members, and vendors of FMNS member farmers' markets can get their own unique password to our library. Email info@farmersmarketsnovascotia.ca if you don't have your password yet.
- We launched a brand-new members-only monthly industry newsletter in 2021.
 - Email info@farmersmarketsnovascotia.ca if you'd like to be added to the list.
- We've continued to strengthen and grow our cooperative, bringing on 6 new member markets in 2021.

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 for marketing activities again in 2021, enabling FMNS to continue providing increased marketing and promotions support for our sector and our members to increase visitor traffic and sales opportunities for vendors.
- We printed and distributed 25,000 physical farmers' markets maps throughout the province in 2021.
- We offered grants to provide our member farmers' markets with funding that covered the cost of marketing and promotions activities in their very own communities.
- For further information, please go to our Marketing Report on Page 18.

Advocate as a leader and voice for the sector

- FMNS has continued to ensure that we're recognized by the Province of Nova Scotia as the official sector association for Nova Scotia's farmers' market sector.
- We constantly worked with provincial and federal representatives to have our sector recognized as essential service providers and ensure that our farmers' markets could stay open and safely operate throughout 2021.
- FMNS personally met with several Ministers with the newly formed Government of Nova Scotia in 2021.

Ensure long-term financial sustainability for through diversified revenue streams

- FMNS was able to contribute to this strategic priority by working with the Nova Scotia government to permanently include our Nourishing Communities Food Coupon Program into the provincial budget. Starting in 2021, a minimum of \$350,000 will be provided by the Nova Scotia government towards this program.
- FMNS also soft-launched its brand-new Donor Program in late 2021, enabling individual, small business, and corporate donors to support FMNS and our activities. You can view the donation page by [clicking here](#).

Continue and enhance community building for member market managers

- We've engaged with our member managers through several online webinars and virtual townhall events.
- 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 info@farmersmarketsnovascotia.ca.

Affordable membership

- FMNS worked one-on-one with each individual member farmers' market to ensure that their membership dues reflect the reality of their 2021 farmers' market season.
- 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.
- To learn more about our annual membership fees, please [click here](#).

Maintain and increase our HR capacity to better serve our members

- New as of 2021, our Communications & Creative Lead and our Membership & Programs Lead positions are now permanent and no longer on a contract basis.

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 2021.
- 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 issued constantly updated [Farmers' Market Sector-specific COVID-19 Prevention Plans](#), working directly with the NS Department of Environment and Nova Scotia Health to ensure FMNS member markets received up-to-date information to continue safely operating.
 - [Click here](#) to view the most recent guide.
- FMNS successfully lobbied the NS Department of Environment to allow for the return of vendor product sampling at farmers' markets in Nova Scotia.



SUMMARY OF COVID-19 ADAPTATION ACTIVITIES

The Provincial State of Emergency remained in force for all of 2021, and health and safety restrictions varied throughout the year. FMNS continued to lobby on behalf of the sector to ensure public markets could operate and issued constantly updated health and safety directives to provide guidance for our sector. FMNS was able to secure funding in 2021 to maintain our significantly increased marketing and promotions efforts 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 from 2021:

Financial support for online farmers' market stores

- FMNS secured funding from the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture to assist with COVID-19 adaptation efforts, including covering the cost of establishing and/or annual subscription costs for online stores for several 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 2020, we've regularly released provincially accepted sector-specific COVID-19 health and safety guidelines.
- You can view the most recent plan by [clicking here](#).

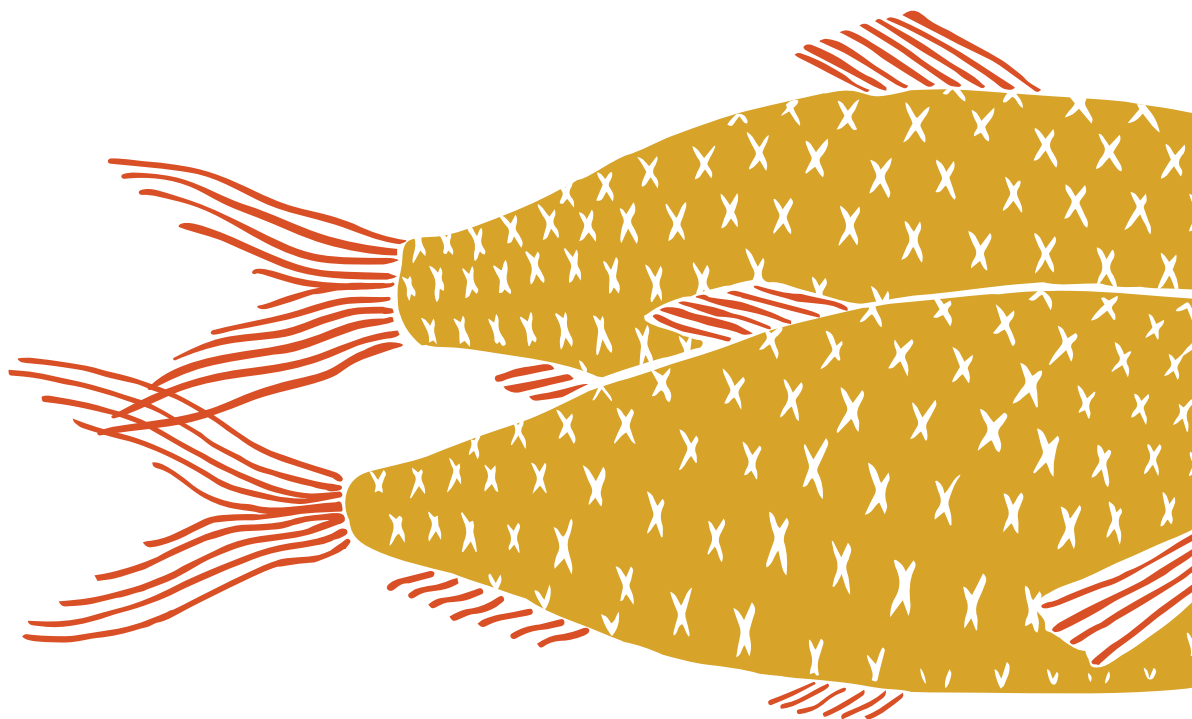
Guides to financial resources and funding opportunities for Nova Scotia's farmers' market sector

- 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.
- Just like in 2020, in 2021 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](#).

Lobbying

- FMNS successfully lobbied to ensure that farmers' markets were viewed as essential economic infrastructure during all of 2021, making sure that farmers' markets could operate at full capacity and without the need to require proof of vaccination.
- FMNS successfully lobbied for the return of product sampling at farmers' markets in 2021.

- Grants
 - Funding support for online stores:
 - FMNS covered the cost associated with setting up an online store and annual subscription fees for its member markets.
 - COVID-19 Adaptation Grant
 - FMNS provided up to \$750 per market for expenses related to adapting farmers' market to conditions related to COVID-19 restrictions. Conditional top-ups were also made available in late 2021.
 - Market(ing) Grant
 - FMNS provided up to \$500 per market for expenses related to marketing and promoting their farmers' markets.
 - FMNS also set aside 10 \$200 grants specifically for BIPOC-owned farmers' market businesses.



SUMMARY OF OTHER KEY PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

Collaboration

- FMNS continues to be a leader in regional, national, and international collaboration, building and strengthening a network of farmers' market organizations to learn and share best practices so that we can bring the best of the best to our cooperative:
 - FMNS is the founding organization of the Canadian Farmers' Markets coalition, which was founded in November 2020. Canadian Farmers' Markets now has every provincial farmers' market association in the nation in its membership and meets once a month to share resources, opportunities, and ask each other questions.
- Official formation of the World Farmers Markets Coalition in July 2021, with FMNS securing funding from the United Nations and from the NS Department of Agriculture to attend the United Nations World Food Summit event in Rome. The World Farmers Markets Coalition now meets approximately once a month and has representatives from all continents.

Training Tuesdays webinar series

- Based on feedback we received in our 2020 Annual Membership Survey, FMNS designed a series of 8 live webinars that took place once a week during the months of March and April.
- These webinars were designed specifically for farmers' market vendors, staff, and board members.
- We will be continuing the Training Tuesdays webinar series in 2022!

New newsletter format

- After internal discussions and receiving feedback through an E-News survey to our membership, we decided to segment our former E-News newsletter into 2 separate monthly newsletters:
 - 1) Our members-only industry newsletter, which includes resources, news, grants, and opportunities for farmers' markets and their vendors.
 - 2) The Basket, our public-facing newsletter specifically for farmers' market shoppers, providing them with news, recipes, and stories to build the farmers' market shopping community and drive more customers to our markets.
- This has allowed us to greatly increase the amount of people we can directly communicate with, and to better organize our content. We increased our newsletter subscriber base by over 250% in 2021!

FMNS Donor Strategy

- Soft launched in December 2021 with a plan to officially launch in early 2022, FMNS has put together a tiered donor strategy to attract individual, small business, and corporate sponsorship dollars that will support our core activities and programming and contribute to increasing the impact of our Nourishing Communities Food Coupon Program.
- Donors have the option to receive 50% of the value of their donation back to them as food bucks at a market of their choice.
- For more information about our new Donor Strategy, please [click here](#).

FMNS Marketing Education

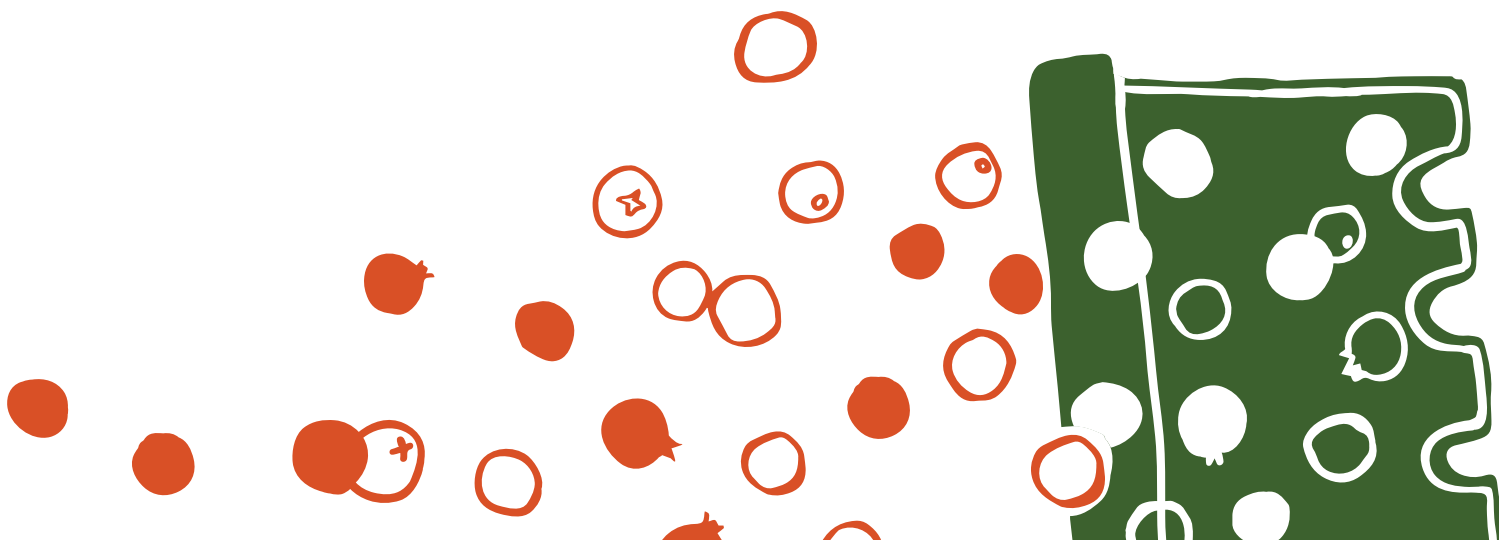
- While FMNS already provides one-on-one support for our members, we launched our “Marketing your Market” campaign in early 2021 aimed specifically at helping our member farmers’ markets increase the effectiveness of their marketing and promotions activities.
- This campaign took place in the form of webinars, consultations, and quick tips guides.
- Our members can find these materials by accessing our password-protected resource library.

FMNS Farmers’ Market Shopper Facebook Group

- Launched in January 2021, I ♥ NS Farmers’ Markets is a private Facebook group that serves as an online community for FMNS to interact directly with farmers’ market shoppers.
- This group, along with our segmentation of our blog and our new Basket Newsletter, is part of FMNS’ increased efforts to grow and celebrate the community of farmers’ market shoppers, driving more people to our member farmers’ markets.
- You can join this group by [clicking here](#).

Marketing activities

- For a review of our marketing and promotions activities, please view our Marketing Report on page 18.



NOURISHING COMMUNITIES FOOD COUPON PROGRAM UPDATE

Updates for 2021:

FMNS was able to significantly grow our program from 13 markets in 2020 to 27 markets in 2021, issuing over \$260,000 in anonymous but fully trackable alternative currencies to over 500 low-income households facing food insecurity across the province in 2021.

FMNS ensured that at least \$350,000 will be set aside in the NS Provincial budget through the Nova Scotia Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism & Heritage for this program to be funded annually into perpetuity, thus securing a baseline funding sustainability for our program.

We soft-launched our Donor Program in December 2021, enabling individuals, small businesses, and corporate sponsors to provide funding for FMNS core operations and programming, including supporting the *Nourishing Communities Food Coupon Program*.

New to the program in 2021, FMNS provided an administrative contribution to all member farmers' markets who participated in the program. This fund will also be available in 2022.

Also new to the program in 2021, FMNS was able to provide welcome packages to all participant households. These packages included a FMNS canvas shopping bag, a welcome card, a program guidebook, and several recipes. We will be offering welcome packages in 2022.

FMNS partnered with Nourish Nova Scotia in 2021, providing over 170 households with slow cookers and recipe booklets to encourage at-home cooking. Nourish NS also generously donated \$5,000 to our program.



NOURISHING COMMUNITIES FOOD COUPON PROGRAM UPDATE

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.

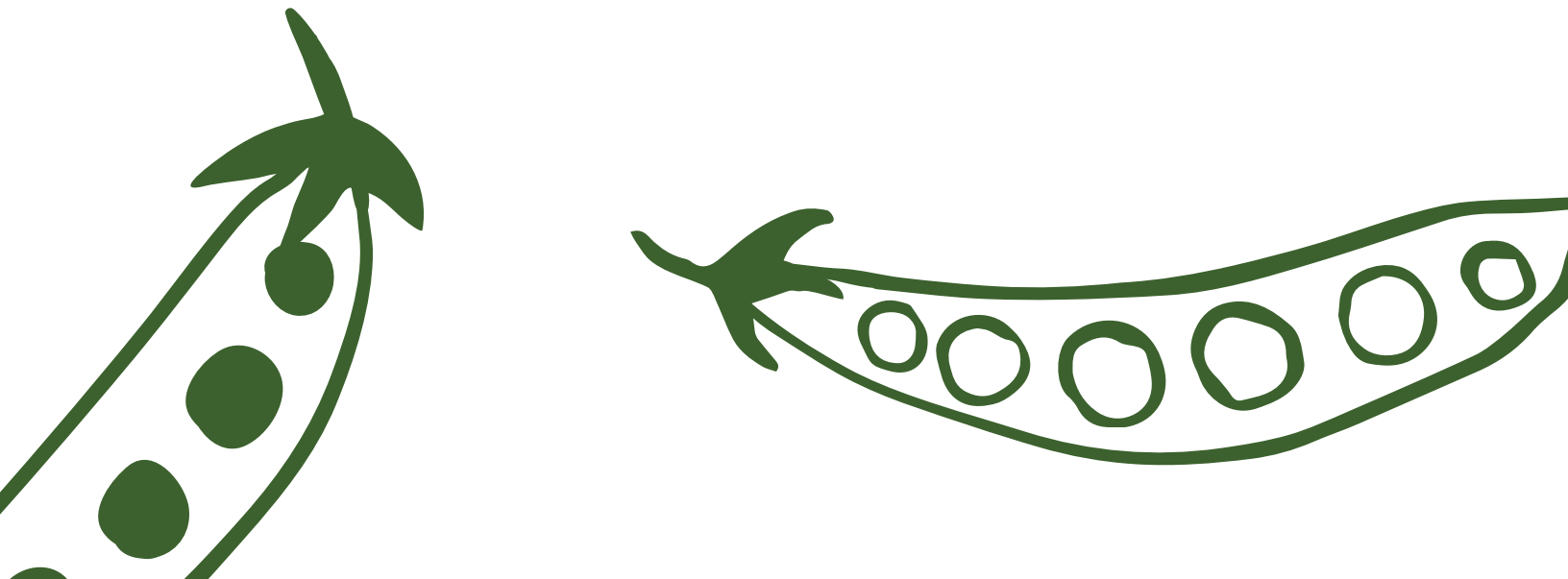
The NCFCP allows project participants to use an anonymous alternative currency, or "food bucks", which can be redeemed at any vendor stall at participating markets.

Working with 1 to 3 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.

2021 marked Year 3 of our program, where we expanded to 27 member farmers' markets thanks to generous funding provided by Communities, Culture, Tourism, and Heritage Nova Scotia and from Second Harvest Food Rescue, a charitable organization.

For more information about the program, including a report that demonstrates its incredible impact, please [click here](#).

*** We look forward to expanding this project in 2022! If you're interested in supporting this program, please [click here!](#) ***



MARKETING REPORT

Social media followers

- Instagram followers (annual growth = +61.2%)
 - December 11, 2020: 6,267 | December 10, 2021: 10,100
- Facebook followers (annual growth = +17.7%)
 - December 11, 2020: 11,852 | December 10, 2021: 13,946
- Twitter followers (annual growth = +1.6%)
 - December 11, 2020: 8,902 | December 10, 2021: 9,040
- Total followers on social media (annual growth = +22.4%)
 - December 11, 2020: 27,021 | December 10, 2021: 33,086

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. This online group is particularly helpful for farmers' market managers looking for new vendors.
- Members (annual growth = +7.7%)
 - December 14, 2020: 508 | December 11, 2021: 547

I ♥ NS Farmers' Markets

- Launched in January 2021, I ♥ NS Farmers' Markets is a private Facebook group that serves as an online community for FMNS to interact directly with farmers' market shoppers.
- Members: 1,563 as of December 10, 2021.

Monthly Newsletter

- Subscribers (annual growth = +242.4%)
 - December 11, 2020: 1,078
 - December 14, 2021: 3,691 (3,037 to the Basket / 654 to FMNS industry newsletter)

Social media marketing

- Regional giveaways to increase audience across the province.
- "Why shop at a farmers' market" infographic campaign to educate our audience and create our own viral content. Average reach per post was 9,747 people on Facebook and 10,981 on Instagram.
- Increased [blog posts](#) to bring more website traffic.
- We executed our new social media strategy in response to membership needs including a weekly farmers' market feature, regular artisan features, and consumer education.
- Monthly social media ads leading people to online market map and promoting seasonal eating.

Bell Media TV & Radio ads

- FMNS worked with Bell Media to create a TV and radio ad campaign to build awareness and directing customers to our member farmers' markets.
- We created a 15-second television commercial and a 30-second radio commercial, both of which were featured provincewide during primetime hours on CTV television and Virgin Radio over July, August, and September 2021.

Print ads & billboard campaign

- FMNS had print ads in various publications, including [Saltscapes](#), [East Coast Living](#), and [Curated Magazine](#), reaching tens of thousands of potential market shoppers.
- FMNS also paid for a billboard space on both sides of the Halifax-Dartmouth ferry terminal, building consumer awareness.

Campaign with Explore & Elevate Black Nova Scotia

- We partnered with René Boudreau on a promotional campaign where she (and her adorable niece) toured several of our member farmers' markets, sharing her unique experiences and profiling Black-owned market businesses.

Wholesale merchandise for members

- We provide deep discounts on our merchandise to our member farmers' markets, allowing them to sell products at their markets and generate their own revenues.
- Through orders from our member markets, we've calculated that there was a potential revenue for markets of \$7,072 in 2021.

New video

- FMNS worked with the production team Only Issue on a video to build consumer awareness about how to shop at online farmers' market stores. You can view the Farm to Table Meets Online Shopping video by [clicking here](#).
- The video reached 17,800 people on Facebook alone in 2021.

2021 Marketing Strategy

- FMNS launched a brand-new Marketing Strategy in 2021 aimed to increase and optimize our marketing and promotions activities for our member markets and their vendors.
- To view a summary of our brand-new Marketing Strategy, please [click here](#).

FMNS IN THE NEWS

The following are some examples of FMNS' press coverage in 2021

FMNS on CBC Television's Land and Sea

- Season 20, Episode 4. [Watch the episode here.](#)

FMNS lobbying for domestic power rates for farmers' markets

- CBC Radio, December 7, 2021
 - N.S. farmers markets might be forced to close due to high power bills. [Listen to interview here.](#)
- Cape Breton Post, December 10, 2021
 - Power struggle: Farmers' markets upset with Nova Scotia Power over how utility calculates what customers must pay. [Article available here.](#)

FMNS lobbying for support of craft cannabis sales at farmers' markets

- CBC News, April 22, 2021
 - Farmers' markets support sale of craft cannabis at market stalls. Article [available here.](#)
- Atlantic Farm Focus, June 11, 2021
 - N.S. farmer wants to sell cannabis directly to consumers. [Article available here.](#)

Expansion of the Nourishing Communities Food Coupon Program

- Global News, July 4, 2021
 - Farmers' Markets of Nova Scotia expanding its 'food bucks' program. Article [available here.](#)
- City News, July 2, 2021
 - Province invests in farmers market food coupon program. [Article available here.](#)



OVERVIEW OF MAIN FUNDING SOURCES FOR 2021

COVID-19 adaptation activities

- We secured \$59,400 in pre-approved funds from the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture to help us cover the cost of our COVID-19 adaptation activities for our sector. This includes our COVID-19 Adaptation Grant and funding for online stores for our membership.

Marketing and promotions

- We secured \$48,335.40 in pre-approved funds from the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture to help us cover the cost of our marketing and promotions activities for our sector. This includes our Market(ing) Grant for our membership and FMNS marketing campaign, which included digital and print ads and a television and radio commercials.

Nourishing Communities Food Coupon Program

- Communities, Culture and Heritage Nova Scotia graciously contributed \$410,000 towards this year's project.
- This combined with a \$10,000 grant from Second Harvest Food Rescue, allowed FMNS to significantly grow our program in 2021.
- A minimum of \$350,000 is now permanently included in Nova Scotia's provincial budget for our Nourishing Communities program moving forward.

Membership dues

- We received \$45,250 in membership dues from 36 member farmers' markets in 2021. 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 2022!

Farmers' Market University Class of 2022

- This is our 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's Professional Development Fund.
- This will be an intensive formal training program for individuals seeking the only provincially recognized professional accreditation specifically for farmers' markets in all of Canada.

Spring 2022 webinar series

- Just like last spring, we will feature 8 to 9 webinars spread out once per week during March and April 2022.
- Some webinars will be targeted towards farmers' market vendors, while others will be for farmers' market managers, staff, and board members.

Continued 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 30 farmers' markets in communities across Nova Scotia in 2022. Our objective is to help at least 600 low-income individuals to gain access to healthy local food and social inclusion at our member farmers' markets.

Collaboration with the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture

- FMNS will continue to work with the NS Department of Agriculture's promotions arm to create printed maps of all the farmers' markets in Nova Scotia for 2022 and distribute them to tourism information hubs and other community facilities throughout the province.
- FMNS will also collaborate with the NSDA on their new Nova Scotia Loyal buy-local campaign that they will be launching in 2022, ensuring that our farmers' markets are strategically positioned in their new marketing and promotions strategy, and working collaboratively on projects to enhance the public profile of our sector.

Table opportunities for new Canadians, LGBTQ2S+, 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.
- FMNS currently has an application under review through the federal Sectoral Initiatives Program and will explore other funding opportunities should this application not be successful.

COMING UP IN 2022!

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Spring Flavours Events with FarmWorks

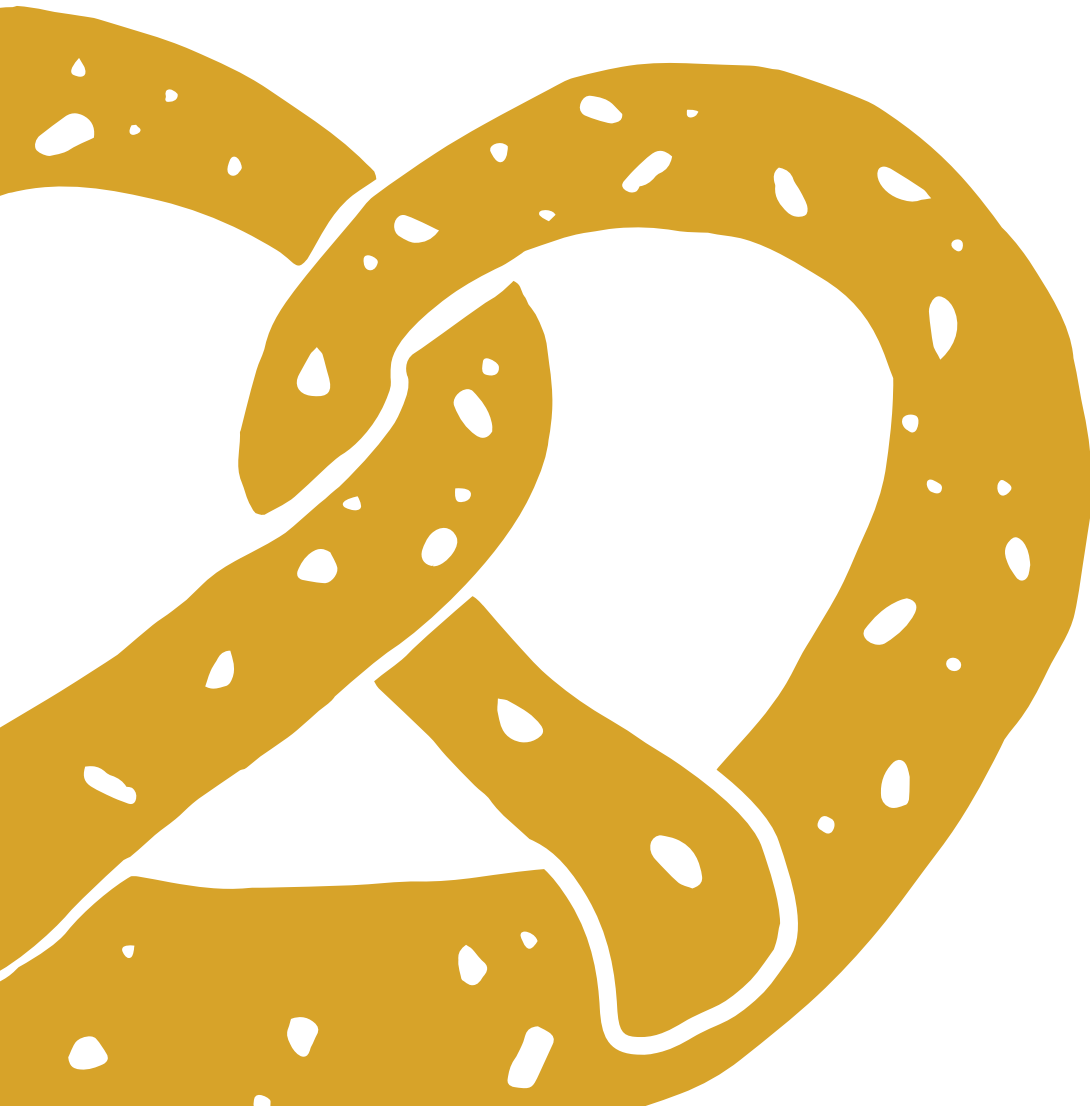
- FMNS will co-host three culinary showcase events in partnership with FarmWorks, one each in New Minas (Annapolis Valley), Halifax, and Port Hawkesbury (Cape Breton).
- These three events will feature FMNS vendors and provide an opportunity to connect with potential sponsors through our new Sponsorship Program.

Data tracking

- FMNS will update our Rapid Economic Assessment, like one conducted by FMNS in 2013.
- This will allow FMNS to quantify the economic impact of our sector and how we've grown.

Annual General Meeting

- Our next AGM will take place in April 2022 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!



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!
- FMNS members get the opportunity to work one-on-one with our Marketing & Outreach Coordinator for targeted social media consults to improve the effectiveness of your social media channels and online marketing efforts. This service is offered free of charge to our members.
- FMNS member farmers' market managers and staff can participate free of charge in FMU, or Farmers' Market University, the only provincially accredited professional development series in Canada dedicated to farmers' market managers and staff. Participants attend six courses and receive a provincially recognized certificate of completion from the NS Department of Labour & Advanced education upon completion.

Resource Library

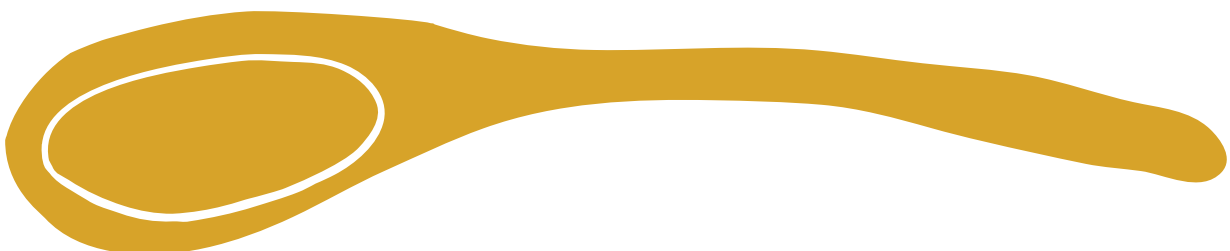
- We carefully curate two constantly updated password-protected resource libraries full of helpful information, one for vendors, and one for market managers and staff:
- For market managers: [click here](#).
- For vendors: [click here](#).

Marketing & promotion

- We promote our member markets and their vendors through our large and growing social media following.
- We list all of our member farmers' markets in our online farmers' market map, which you can view by [clicking here](#).
- We also include your market's information in our annual print map brochure, tens of thousands of which are distributed throughout the province!

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

- Group Liability Insurance Program
 - FMNS has brokered a group discount rate on farmers' market and farmers' market vendor liability insurance, securing deeply discounted rates through our relationship with the Cooperators. You can learn about these programs, exclusively available to FMNS members, by clicking [here](#).
- Group Health Insurance Program
 - FMNS has also brokered a group discount rate for extended health insurance, providing a group rate for farmers' market staff, vendors, and vendor staff. This health insurance plan is exclusively for our farmers' market sector and is the only one of its kind in Canada. You can learn more about the group health insurance benefits rate by clicking [here](#).
- 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.
- Advocacy
 - With over 40 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.



MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Community & Resources

- Our monthly members-only industry newsletter is packed full of resources, important information, and opportunities for your market and vendors. It's the only one of its kind in Atlantic Canada.
- FMNS also hosts several online communities through Facebook that you can use to connect with other FMNS farmers' market managers and vendors. We encourage you to join them right away:
- You can view the FMNS Market Managers & Staff group by clicking [here](#). This group is for FMNS member farmers' market managers and staff only and is an active community for sharing best practices and asking questions to your peers.
- You can view the Market Vendor Connect group by clicking [here](#). This group is for FMNS member farmers' market managers and for new and existing farmers' market vendors. It can be useful for vendor recruitment!

Nourishing Communities Food Coupon Program

- FMNS member farmers' markets are also eligible to participate in the Nourishing Communities Food Coupon Program, which involves FMNS member farmers' markets providing an alternative currency to low-income households. FMNS provides a cheque for an amount of money based on the size of your market. The value of this money is turned into "food bucks", an alternative currency that can be redeemed exclusively with your vendors. FMNS also provides an administration contribution and covers the cost of printing or producing your alternative currency. FMNS works with you to secure one to three partner social organizations such as food banks or shelters.



THANK YOU!

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Sign up for our newsletter by [clicking here](#)



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