



National Farmers Union-NB
Union nationale des fermiers - N.-B.



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Farmers' Market Conference - 2025

Hosted by the National Farmers Union in New Brunswick

Final Report

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Strong Communities. Sound Policies. Sustainable Farms.

Des communautés solidaires et des politiques sensées pour une agriculture durable.



Why the conference:

Farmers markets are one of many channels that farmers use to bring their products to consumers. As such, the NFU-NB has been involved in the creation and annual update of a map of the farmers markets in the province of New Brunswick since 2016. Suzanne Fournier, Executive Director of the NFU-NB, spearheaded this event to meet a need expressed by market managers, staff and volunteers. This conference was made possible with the financial support from the Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture, and Fisheries (DAAF).

This was the first conference of its kind in New Brunswick and was intended to be a day of discussion, collaboration and learning. It was mostly devoted to facilitated discussion on topics such as programs and resources needed, nutrition coupon programs, and whether a farmers' market association would benefit NB markets.

Who attended:

The conference was well attended with participants included market managers from 17 of the province's 46 markets. About half were from volunteer run-markets, half from municipally run markets, more were from the southern part of the province but there was a good representation of markets from English and French speaking communities.

There were representatives from the Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture, and Fisheries, as well as Public Health. Representatives from Tourism, Heritage and Culture (THC) were invited but were unable to attend. The guest speakers included the Executive directors of both Farmers Markets of Nova Scotia and the Association des Marchés Publics du Québec. Representatives from Food for All New Brunswick, Savour NB, and St. Thomas University also attended.

Main themes:

Public health Q & A:

This was a lively discussion - the most asked question was who needs a public health license?

Answer: every single vendor who makes something intended to be consumed by a human, needs to be in contact with public health, this takes the burden off the market manager. Regardless of whether or not they need a license, public health will issue a letter to the vendor and the market manager stating what the vendor is allowed to sell. If they want to change or go outside of the scope, they must re-apply. Applications are free. Turn around is expected between 48 hours and two weeks.



Justin Cantafio - Nuffield Scholar, presented his research called: *Rooted in Place: The Role of Farmers' Markets in Building Sustainable Food Systems in Canada*.

Jill Mulholland - Manager of Marketing and Business Development, Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries.

She has been responsible for the local food and beverage strategy since 2018/19. This one is currently expiring and they are looking at what the process is for renewing it and what types of public engagement there will be, we should know in a few months.

There is some funding available for markets under SCAP including: market development access program, direct consumer, displays, coolers, freezers, though some of these funds are only for vendors. If markets would like to have the Buy Local van and summer students visit their market, they need to let her know and she will try.

Talked about the challenges with getting spirits and beer licensed to sell at markets - it is not her department's responsibility, needs to go through Justice and Public safety and there are policy changes that are with Alcohol NB's policies that need to be changed. Will need a dedicated effort to get them on board.

Panel on Farmers Market Association - Justin Cantafio, Executive Director, Farmer's Markets of Nova Scotia (FMNS), & Jean-Nick Trudel, Executive Director, Association des marchés publics du Québec (AMPQ).

FMNS - created in 2004, it is a non-profit cooperative, whose members are markets, has 43 member markets. Province has most markets per capita in Canada. Promotes a make, bake it, grow it policy at all the markets (no re-sellers). They focus on marketing and promotion, they create a print and digital market map, have a website, social media, they have merch, newsletter with a very high open rate, they offer training and professional development, and take on lobby and advocacy. FMNS has three full time staff, including the ED, they created a nutrition coupon program in 2018, in 2024 there was a \$2M "NS Loyal" voucher program that gave \$10 to each elementary school aged child in the province, this year expanding to high school. They charge \$1.70 / vendor / week of operation, resulting in the highest association fees in the country, but the model is what they believe to be the most equitable. It is still not enough to fund all they do and they receive government funds. FMNS was instrumental in changing the legislation to allow beer, alcohol, and sampling at the markets.

AMPQ - had the goal of representing as many markets as possible, their market fees are \$160 / year, low enough that almost no market can refuse and that the association can say that they represent 95% of all public markets in the province when dealing with government. They



receive operational funding of \$150,000 / year, which allows for 1.5 staff including the ED. The member markets are 50% urban and 50% rural. They have welcomed 40 markets over the past 5 years. Quebec also does not allow craft alcohol or sampling of alcohol at public markets, though there is a chance that that is changed by the end of 2025.

Seven benefits an association offers:

1. Resilience - a continuity when many markets have new managers (staff or volunteer) almost yearly
2. Networking - all the market managers are working in isolation
3. Solidarity
4. Representation
5. Standing up for common interests
6. Captures and disseminates information
7. They interact with government on behalf of their members

Areas for further discussion / opportunities:

Craft alcohol:

It is the jurisdiction of the Department of Justice and Public Safety (JPS) to implement the Liquor Control Act and its subsequent regulations. Currently only cottage wineries and meaderies are permitted to sell at farmers' markets leaving craft beer, cider, and spirits out; there is no sampling of any alcoholic beverages at public markets.

This discussion has been ongoing with the Craft alcohol producers pushing it as well as markets. There are next steps but it needs a coordinated effort and will need to go through political channels to be changed, as it is not in the Liquor Control Act, nor any of the subsequent 7 regulations. It must therefore be a policy of NB Liquor.

Creation of a Farmers Market Association:

A breakout group met to discuss the value of creating a farmers' market association for New Brunswick. Justin Cantafio and Jean-Nick Trudel advised that at least 10 markets would be needed to start an association. Maxime Gauvin, ED of the newly established SavourNB was present and shared that under the mandate of his organization there would be space to either house a market association (the fastest option) or be hired to handle the day to day of a separate association. The NFU-NB noted that this is the markets decision to make and their organization is not trying to force the issue, but support markets' needs.

Marketing of Markets:

Many managers, staff, and volunteers were interested in learning how to better market



their markets. Almost all have social media, but would like to get wider reach beyond their communities. Many markets already use local radio stations and the free not-for-profit or community radio lines. This seems to be the best way to expand the market reach at an individual level.

Future Farmers' Market Conference:

There was interest in making this type of conference an annual thing, but dates / locations / hosts were not discussed.

Information to circulate:

- Contact information of public health officers and business growth offices
- Information on funding opportunities

Outcomes and Next Steps

General

The NFU-NB will continue to act as a liaison to NB farmers' markets and represent NB at the Canadian Farmers' Markets coalition, until such a time a formal association has been created. This will also include sharing the above information to circulate with all NB markets.

Creation of an NB Association

All market managers, staff and volunteers who attended the meeting were polled for their interest in continuing conversations about creating an association. 16 of the 17 markets in attendance expressed their interest. From further email communication with market managers, staff, and volunteers who were unable to attend the conference, an additional 5 markets also expressed interest.

The NFU-NB with support from DAAF, Savour NB and CFM associations will pursue and facilitate meetings and discussion with NB farmers' markets. Funding opportunities, organizational structure, administration and other details will be decided solely by NB farmers' markets.

Craft Alcohol

The NFU-NB will continue to work with farmers' markets, DAAF, Savour NB and JPS to pursue policy changes that expand craft alcohol sales at farmers' markets.

Annexes:

1. Agenda
2. List of attendees
3. List of all comments left by participants - unedited, as written



Annexe 1 - Agenda

National Farmers Union in NB - Union Nationale des Fermiers du N.-B.

FARMERS' MARKETS CONFERENCE / CONFÉRENCE DES MARCHÉS FERMIERES

AGENDA / ORDRE DU JOUR

Sunday, May 4, 2025 / Dimanche le 4 mai, 2025

9:30 am / 9h30	Registration / Inscription
10:00 am / 10h00	Welcome and translation information. Ice breaker session Accueil et informations sur la traduction. Séance « Faire connaissance »
10:45 am / 10h45	Department of Health – Question & Answer Session: Health and Safety Regulations Ministère de la Santé – Séance de questions-réponses : Règlements en matière de santé et de sécurité
11:15 am / 11h15	Justin Cantafio - Executive Director, Farmers Markets Nova Scotia, Nuffield Presentation Directeur exécutif <<Farmers Markets Nova Scotia >> Présentation de la recherche Nuffield
12:00 pm / 12h00	Lunch prepared by The Happy Baker Dîner préparé par Happy Baker
1:00 pm / 13h00	Jill Mulholland - Department of Agriculture Manager of Marketing and Trade Gestionnaire de Marketing et commerce du ministère de l'Agriculture
1:20 pm / 1h20	Panel - Justin Cantafio (FMNS) & Jean-Nick Trudel (AMPQ) discuss how their associations were created and current programs, such as nutrition coupons Discutent de la création de leurs associations et de leurs programmes actuels, tels que les coupons nutritionnels
1:55 pm / 13h55	Break / Pause
2:10 pm / 14h00	Discussion session: Supports and Resources needed Does NB need a Farmers' Markets Association? Séance de discussion : Soutiens et ressources nécessaires Le Nouveau-Brunswick a-t-il besoin d'une association des marchés fermiers ?
4:00 pm / 16h00	Meeting Wrap up / Réunion ajournée



Annexe 2 - List of attendees

Name	Market / Organization / Department
Buffy Wasson	Fredericton Boyce
Stéphanie Sonier	Tracadie
Tracy Petley	Bass River
Gaetan Noel	Dieppe
Andrew MacDonald	Saint John City and Night
Erica Batten	Moncton
Susan Linkletter	Salisbury
Vanessa Blackier	Sackville
Heather Wallace	Perth Andover
Linda Copage	St. Martins
Nikki McKeand	St. Andrews
Ashley Johnston	Garrison
Levi Willet	Kingston
Norma Milne	Kouchibouguac
Alexander Milne	Kouchibouguac
Sara Shackleton	Gagetown
Lisette Côté	Grand Falls
Maxime Gauvin	Savour NB
Dr. Monika Korzun	St. Thomas University
Veronique Leblanc	DAAF Business Growth Office Bouctouche
Maïna Béland-Rahm	Food For All NB
Jill Mulholland	DAAF Marketing and Trade
Joel-Andre Hachey	Public Health
Theresa Lattrulo	Public Health
Justin Cantafio	FMNS
Jean-Nick Trudel	AMPQ



Amanda Wildeman	Facilitator
Ron Fournier	Interpreter
Sara Kivioja	NFU-NB, Community Outreach Coordinator
Suzanne Fournier	NFU-NB, Executive Director

Annex 3 - List of all comments left by participants on sticky notes - unedited, as written

Questions asked:

What does your market need to grow?

Challenges?

Specific programs / trainings / funding

Other ideas?

Many of the ideas were re-arranged by Amanda into groupings in real time and are not necessarily under any particular category:

- More local support
- More education for consumers - breaking myths about farmers' markets
- Education of consumers they have lost the connection with their food kids don't know where an egg comes from
- Ideas on how to grow our market
- How to attract young folks to markets
- Resourcing
- Collaboration with businesses and municipalities increased awareness and engagement
- Money, money, money \$
- How to increase vendors
- More variety
- More farmers
- More producers
- Getting more / new farm vendors
- More diversity in vendors + consumers + management, but no wholesalers
- Food cooperatives within farmers' markets
- Expand craft alcohol at farmers' markets
- Ability to serve alcohol - microbreweries
- Allow the sale of beer (craft) & local distilled alcohol products



- Allow for consumption of alcohol at markets
- Physical accessibility
- Infrastructure - money to expand power
- Parking
- Permanent location / lack of indoor space
- Permanent location
- Crowded indoors during winter (COVID risk, etc.)
- Better transit system
- Long opening hours
- Cancellations
- Rain or shine - weather emergency situations / plan
- How do you count crowds?
- Fridge for community store, advertising costs are high, lack of funding for equipment
- Community relations, power (hydro), competition is “bad” attitude
- Difficulty finding a financially sustainable business model
- Better compensation
- Designated role “market manager” + “market assistant”
- Pay market managers / coordinators
- Staff / labour
- Staff turnover
- Aging population can no longer volunteer, need younger people involved last lack in this area
- Conflict of interest on boards (governance + policy)
- Technology too much no sense of community
- Misunderstanding from government of the role and benefits of farmers’ markets
- Unclear regulations, processes, etc. for markets and vendors from GNB
- Annual get together with farmers’ markets
- NFUNB engage or direct entertainment, library youth reach, Science East to make up at NB markets
- Regional service commission (RSC) - Economic growth plan (Food, agriculture focus), leverage them to fill gaps, secure funds
- How are you centering the “farmer” in farmers’ market?
- How do you measure the economic and social impact of your farmers’ market
- Who’s missing from your market? Do you represent and celebrate your whole community?



- How is your farmers' market helping address food insecurity?
- Promote FM as part of food security solution
- A certification to identify farmers who are local (not wholesalers)
- Relationships w universities, students, volunteers, grants, research
- NB or Atlantic Canada FB page to pose questions and collaborate

Programs / training / funding

- Training session would be insightful
- Grant writing
- What kind of funds are available
- Funding for market coupons / market dollars
- Trainings for student workforce - Food Safe, First Aid, Farm Tours for students, grants available?
- Networking opportunities, marketing and sales programs
- Experiential tourism (SHIFT) like programs
- Grants for websites
- Marketing training for vendors
- Government multimedia campaigns promoting farmers' markets
- Marketing for farmers so they are more appealing to consumers / eaters
- More marketing & promotion of farmers' markets