

Urban Farmers' Markets in Wales



**Starting them -
managing
them
A practical
toolkit**



**RCMA Social
Enterprise Ltd.**



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1. INTRODUCTION

Farmers' markets have been one of the success stories for the food and drink sector in Wales over the past five years and this trend looks set to continue as the demand for fresh, local produce rises in line with a growing awareness of the importance of fresh food as a part of healthy living. At the same time, more and more people are getting disillusioned and bored with shopping in supermarkets.

Whilst a number of farmers' markets have become well established in Wales, we believe there is still scope for developing more such markets in many new locations. In a break from the past a number of markets are now being considered and set up in predominantly urban environments.

The purpose of this 'Urban Farmers' Market Toolkit' is to provide a checklist of considerations and practical advice to help local groups or agencies to launch successful farmers' markets in Welsh towns and city locations and to help ensure that they grow in a sustainable way.

The Toolkit has been 'road-tested' alongside the development of a new pilot farmers' market in Newport, South Wales, and is also informed by the authors' eight years experience of developing and running the award-winning Riverside Real Food Market (a successful farmers' market – the largest in Wales - in a culturally diverse inner-city community close to the centre of Cardiff). The experiences gained from the development of these two markets, and information gleaned from numerous other markets in operation throughout the UK, offer practical insights into what works, and what doesn't, when setting up a new farmers' market in an urban setting.

The Toolkit aims to coordinate and present information in what we hope is a clear, logical way and to provide useful pointers and advice, which will be of practical value to any individual or group considering setting up or already running a farmers' market. Where relevant, this study also draws on the pioneering 'Farmers' Market Tool Kit' produced in 2004 by The Countryside Agency in collaboration with East of England Development Agency, and we are grateful to them for permission to quote from that report.

1.1 What makes farmers' markets distinctive?

At farmers' markets, food is sold by the producer directly to the public in a location as local as possible to where it was grown or processed, in this way helping to keep every pound spent circulating in the local economy for longer. There may or may not be a limit set by the market organisers on the distance from the farm or location of production to the Market, but the food must be sold by the people producing it. No bought-in produce is permitted without it having been processed locally into another product using local ingredients. The core criteria of: own produce, sourced as locally as possible and traceable - are what set farmers' markets apart from other markets.

Farmers' markets provide the public with good quality food that is fresh, relatively local and sold at a price, which is fair to both producer and consumer. They provide an opportunity for small-scale producers to sell directly to the consumer. Customers are able to ask questions about the production of their food, or how to prepare and store it, and to obtain truly knowledgeable responses. In addition farmers' markets provide other potential benefits, all of which meet sustainable development aims - environmental, social, and economic:

- reduced 'food miles', support of local food economies, and reduction of the effects of long-distance food transport including traffic pollution and food packaging;
- increased communication and understanding between farmers' and consumers; creation of a social atmosphere and improved community spirit;
- revitalised villages or town centres and increased custom for other retailers; keep every pound spent circulating in the local economy for longer – the multiplier effect
- lower costs for better-quality, fresher food for consumers;

- support for environmentally-friendly farming practices and higher margins for small farmers'.

1.2 Farmers' markets in an urban setting

In the past, several farmers' markets have been started or supported by local authorities, because the markets are seen to meet several areas of their policy priority, particularly within the context of sustainable development. These benefits are seen to include:

- Increased social equity, making better-quality food affordable and accessible for more people, whilst ensuring a better profit margin for small producers. The local economy is stimulated by provision of new marketing opportunities for small enterprises
- Encouraging participation and interaction between people from different walks of life
- Revitalising town centres and attracting additional custom for other businesses
- Rediscovery of a more social form of shopping
- Protection of the environment, by minimising food miles and packaging waste

Mechanisms and levels of support from local councils for farmers' markets varies significantly in Wales from authority to authority, but in principle there is the potential for some level of Council support or cooperation in each area.

For example, Cardiff Council provided a small amount of seed funding for the Riverside Market at an early stage which enabled the organisers to purchase basic equipment and subsidised the initial cost of running the Market for a trial period. At a later stage, Council support was crucial in gaining permission to locate the Market on Council-controlled land adjacent to the River Taff. Cardiff Council also drew up a special 'licensing agreement' for a (renewable) period of three years, which outlined basic rules and responsibilities on both sides and enabled RCMA to bypass the high license fees, which are normally charged to producers in that location (primarily fast-food vendors which locate there when there is a match at the nearby Millennium Stadium)

In the case of Newport, the city centre manager invited RCMA to run a pilot farmers' market in a central location for an initial period of six months to see whether it was something that would be supported by local people and viable in the long term. In addition to sorting out all planning and licensing details and providing an on-site electricity supply, Newport Council took responsibility for all marketing and publicity (examples of this later). Newport Council also provided a subsidy for the launch period which enabled RCMA to cover the costs of running the Market while offering stallholders a low enough rental to encourage them to try it out.

Riverside Real Food Market, Cardiff



2 THE WELSH CONTEXT

2.1 Farmers' markets in Wales – rationale and benefits

The farmers' market 'movement' more or less began in the UK with Bath Farmers' Market, which was established in 1997. Since then the growth has been exponential, with over 500 in the UK today, with a combined annual turnover of approximately £166.3 million. A recent survey indicated that 70% of markets described themselves as 'thriving', and 60% said their business was expanding.

In Wales, farmers' markets are currently found at:

South East Wales: Abergavenny, Barry, Caerphilly, Caldicot, Chepstow, Cowbridge, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouth, Newport, Penarth, Porthcawl (Bridgend), Riverside farmers' market (Cardiff), St Fagans farmers' market (Cardiff) & Usk.

West Wales : Aberaeron, Aberystwyth, Cardigan, Carmarthen, Fishguard, Haverfordwest, Lampeter, Llandovery, Mumbles (Swansea), Penclawdd, & Sketty (Swansea).

North Wales : Bangor , Celyn, Colwyn Bay, Corwen, Glyndwr, & Wrexham.

Mid Wales: Brecon, Knighton, Llandrindod Wells, Welshpool

Some other Markets were set up but have failed to survive, for reasons which we will look at in more detail later.

Farmers' markets have attracted funding support from various statutory and voluntary sector agencies because of the breadth of the benefits which they bring.

By emphasising the range of benefits (and matching the type of benefit to the priorities of particular funders), Cardiff's Riverside Market, which was set up by volunteers as an independent organisation, has attracted seed and development funding and support from a wide variety of agencies including: Cardiff County Council – Economic Development; Environment Wales; New Opportunities Fund – Enfys Programme; Shell Better Britain Campaign; Welsh Development Agency – Agrifood Division; The Prince's Trust; Awards for All (National Lottery);

Cardiff Council has recently produced a Food and Health Strategy in which they emphasise the importance of increasing the availability of fresh, locally produced food and the positive impact this can have on health and the local economy. Some other local authorities in Wales are coming to similar conclusions, with the result that there is a strong interest at local authority level in developing and supporting local food initiatives, including farmers' markets. There is also evidence of strong consumer interest in market shopping, and the beginnings of a backlash against supermarket shopping, with its inevitable uniformity and compromised quality (especially freshness, because of the great distances that much of their food has to travel). In addition, an increasing number of health agencies in Wales at the present are recognising the links between food quality, health and general well being..

The upshot of all this interest is that new farmers' markets have a realistic possibility of attracting seed or start-up funding from a wide range of different sources; it is a question of being creative in the fundraising process!

Organisations with a current interest in; possible sources of information and support for farmers' markets include: Farmers' Markets in Wales; Friends of the Earth (FOE Cymru); Food Standards Agency Wales; Health Challenge Wales; Soil Association; Wales Food Alliance. Private trusts, such as the Esmée Fairburn Trust, and local sponsorship (as achieved in Edinburgh) are also potential funding sources.

2.2 Local food - a growth area

Projects throughout the UK, and in other countries, are demonstrating how the development of local food systems can strengthen the local economy, conserve the distinctiveness of the landscape, protect rural employment, and contribute to better nutrition and access to fresh food for local communities.

There has been a significant growth in interest and business opportunities for local food producers over the last ten years. In a survey by the Institute of Grocery Distribution (IGD) in 2005, seven out of ten consumers said they want to buy local foods and 50% say they want to buy more than they do now. Freshness is cited as the main reason for this demand, but perceived taste, reputation, product integrity, provenance, and traceability all rank high on the list. Consumers also want to support their local producers and retailers, as well as the local economy and jobs. However, one in five in the survey who were not buying local food said it was generally too expensive and often higher in price than similar alternatives.

The majority of consumers (63%) expect 'local food' to come either from their county or to be produced within 30 miles of where they live or buy it. 33% of consumers see supermarkets as the place where they would expect to buy local food, followed by farmers' markets (23%) and farm shops (17%). Who, or where, the food is bought from is a more important indicator of local food for 37% of consumers, particularly those who associate 'local' with unprocessed products such as eggs or red meat. The growth in local and organic direct delivery schemes to consumers reflects this trend.

Some Producers and Supporters at Riverside Market



Numerous innovative schemes have been developed across the UK at a local level, linking better health to the accessibility of fresh, nutritious food. Many schemes are addressing the need for better food access by creating closer links between producers and consumers. This key feature of the sector – the creation of short supply chains – is now scaling up with collaborative groups of farmers working together to begin to meet the demands and contract requirements of larger consumer clients. (See the Soil Association website on www.localfoodworks.org, The Countryside Agency's www.eat-the-view.org.uk or the Sustain site at www.sustainweb.org for more information).

Local food can also be a tool in supporting and promoting appropriate change in local landscape management. In practical terms this can result in linkages between tourism, education and local food production which benefit all sectors. In Pembrokeshire for example, a local produce 'mark' has been established, allowing participating producers and food outlets such as restaurants to denote their use of locally sourced produce.

Contact with the consumer encourages farmers to review what they produce in direct response to demand. It gives them confidence in more specialised production and helps them to identify niche and new markets that can lead to diversification and product development.



Organic vegetable producer at Riverside Market

2.3 Extending the benefits of farmers' markets

Alongside the basic task of running and sustaining a farmers' market itself, it is usually possible to create a programme linking a farmers' market to educational or outreach activities in the local community. Ideas might include working with teachers to produce educational materials which fit with the requirements of the curriculum, or organising visits to the market and possibly to some of the stallholders' farms. Applications for funding to support this kind of activity could include support to cover a farmer's time (e.g. for a farm visit), for somebody to co-ordinate the programme, and to cover the costs of creating and distributing educational materials. It's important to consider costs to the schools such as transport for pupils and additional staff for supervision on visits if required.

This type of activity is a good way for farmers' markets to reconnect the consumer and the producer. Although school pupils are not generally customers, their families could well be, especially if their children become enthusiastic. Children are our customers of tomorrow, and what better way to establish sustainable shopping habits. An activity like this could also generate some good publicity, which can only help the health of the market. Riverside Market, for example, runs a programme of food and health initiatives in the local community. Activities have included lunch clubs for ethnic group and, healthy eating projects in local schools. In one project, primary school children attending a healthy eating class were given vouchers to get free fruit at the market, as long as they brought their parents with them!

RCMA has also set up a community allotment garden which will provide training for local people in gardening skills, and may soon supply small amounts of fresh produce to the market, local food co-ops and a planned mobile farm shop.

3 STARTING A FARMERS' MARKET

This Toolkit is intended as a resource for both potential and current organisers of farmers' markets in Wales. The following sections are designed to be used independently to help you save time and effort, whatever stage your Market is at. This next section covers issues you will need to consider in particular when starting a Market.

3.1 Market Rules

It is important to define the rules and protocols by which producers are invited to attend so that they reflect the recommended criteria for farmers' markets, and to require producers to sign up to these prior to attending the market. It is much more difficult to develop a set of rules and get people to sign up to them after the event and a clear set of rules which everyone can agree to makes the Market Manager's job much easier.

Failure to instigate a clear set of rules and guidelines could possibly weaken your market's image and leave you open to prosecution from producers who might feel that they have been treated unfairly. Advice on developing a set of rules for your market can be obtained from FARMA – The National Farmers' and Retail Markets Association (contact details given below).

Riverside Market requires all producers to sign up to a 'stallholder policy' and also a separate agreement between the Council and each individual producer. (See Appendix for a sample copy of the Riverside Market trader rules). It is the Market Manager's responsibility to interpret and enforce these. It is also important to have a clear grievance procedure in place should a producer take issue with a Market Manager's decision. At Riverside Market producers are entitled to put any complaints in writing and the management committee will address these. It is also important to have a disciplinary procedure for misconduct by producers or their representative. Riverside Market is working with Farmers Markets in Wales (www.fmiw.co.uk) to adopt a scheme of individual producer registration. These rules are based on the experience of hundreds of farmers' markets across the country and are very comprehensive.

Once adopted, copies of the market's core rules should be displayed clearly for all to see and the full set should also be sent to your local Trading Standards Officers. This will help in developing a constructive relationship with local authority enforcement officers who can be called upon to help assist with any difficult situations which might arise. It also has the added benefit of helping to build consumer confidence in the farmers' market movement as a whole.

3.2 Finding producers

Probably the most important element in determining the success of a farmers' market is the availability of a sufficient quantity of stallholders that fit within the recommended criteria and who are able to offer a broad range of good quality foods. If the number and range of stalls does not hold customer interest, the producers will not earn enough to sustain their attendance and the Market will wither. When asked for suggestions to improve farmers' markets, one of the most frequent responses from both producers and customers was for there to be more stalls.

When starting a new farmers' market it is always best to start with as many producers as you can possibly manage. How large is your space? How many stalls can it accommodate? How many producers have you spoken too? Whilst stallholders might be prepared to give a new farmers' market a few months to grow and develop, customers often expect more immediate returns. It is a combination of a diverse and reasonable body of producers and loyal customers that will ensure the success of any new farmers' market. If you start with too few producers, poor quality or an insufficient variety of produce, customers are likely to be disappointed and will not come back.

One good source of Welsh producer information is Farmers' Markets in Wales (www.fmiw.co.uk). The Taste of Wales listings at http://www.wda.co.uk/index.cfm/food_wales_2/producers/en3213

is also useful. Both these websites offer 'gateways' to other farmers' markets websites, which, more often than not, contain a list of producers with their names and contact details. It's also helpful to talk with the organisers of other nearby markets. Find out when they operate and then establish how best to fit your new market into this local network. Speak to the organisers and ask them for help and advice; most people working in this field are only too willing to share their knowledge and experience, and it is in everyone's interests for markets to work together rather than see themselves in competition. Also ask if other markets have any producers on a 'waiting list' that might want to attend your market. If the farmers' market movement is to grow then individual markets need to support and help each other.

Food Links organisations also often maintain farmers' markets listings. A list of food links organisations, with website addresses if applicable, can be found on the website of Food Links UK at www.foodlinks-uk.org. The Food Poverty Project website www.foodpovertyprojects.org.uk is a good source of information and best practice on various local food projects.



New York's Greenmarkets are a network of 51 markets, working co-operatively. They serve a diverse community base, including a significant proportion of trade using food vouchers given to low income families.

3.3 Linking up with other farmers' markets

One of the first things to do when considering establishing a new urban farmers' market is to research if any farmers' markets are already held in your area, and if so, the day of the week and the frequency with which they are held. Once you have contact details for any local farmers' markets you should get in touch with the organisers to try to co-ordinate dates, share information and check on their future plans.

Talking to the organisers of other markets will also prove helpful if you develop your plans, as they can provide potential partnership and save resources for everyone. They may be able to help you identify producers for your market for example, or if you decide to conduct verification visits to producers you may be able to share the work of visiting producers who trade at more than one local market.

Once you've spoken with FMIW and any farmers' markets near your area, then you can widen your search to include, for example, any nearby food festivals. These will often attract producers from further afield who will help to add diversity to your local producer database. Also ask producers if they know of any producers who might be looking for new farmers' markets to attend. They will have an interest in maintaining standards at the Market and will often recommend excellent producers who can supply things that you had not considered.

CASE STUDIES: GETTING STARTED - RIVERSIDE & NEWPORT MARKETS

Riverside Market started with just twelve producers, whose names were provided by a local cooking writer who had a strong interest in promoting the use of locally produced foods. (The market ran monthly for four years before 'taking the plunge' in late 2003 to become a weekly market). To begin with, there were relatively few customers attending the Market and it took some time for word to get around, but the stallholders sold enough to cover their costs and they mostly had confidence that in the longer term farmers' market would succeed in the Capital. A positive relationship was built up between the market organisers and stallholders, and this helped to create a sense of loyalty from them. The organisers always consulted with stallholders on issues such as: number of stalls selling the same kind of items; table locations; marketing and publicity – so that they were working with them rather than dictating to them.

Newport Market started with twenty stalls. After six months, this had increased to 24 stalls. The key was felt to be to provide a sufficient quantity and diversity of stalls to attract customers on a repeated basis, and to be consistent enough so that customers can rely on some of their staple food shopping items being available. Whilst the Riverside database has now grown to include more than 100 producers, Riverside Market itself only has capacity for an average of 30 producers per week.

Newport was able to accommodate some producers from a waiting list for Riverside Market. The starting point was to allow for a typical market to have a maximum of three producers selling food of any particular type. Above that number is likely to be counter productive for those who attend. However it may be difficult to refuse to allow specific stallholders to attend if the market is in receipt of public money. In practice stallholders will generally 'self-select' to avoid issues of oversupply by arranging dates amongst themselves or agreeing to stagger attendance (eg alternate markets) .

Part of the Market Manager's role is to introduce new producers in a way that does not upset the balance of existing producers. We have found that having no more than three of any one type of producer creates a good balance. It is important to have key products represented at the market; people will come regularly for the basics such as fruit, vegetables, meat and dairy and will then be attracted by all the 'extras' which they come across.

An advantage of having a large producer database is that the Market Manager can offer customers the best possible range and diversity of local produce. When setting up Newport Farmers' Market the Market Manager was able to invite producers from Riverside and Brecon Farmers' Markets, building on existing relationships with them. As Newport Market was being established, other new markets were being set-up in South Wales, and the Market Manager met with them to ensure that dates did not clash and Markets could support each other where possible.

A questionnaire to gather data from local producers interested in selling through your farmers' market is available from FARMA. In order to reach as many producers as possible the survey can be distributed via any local farming or producers' organisations.

As well as being the basis for establishing a list of potential producers for your new farmers' market, a producers' survey will also provide information about: the type of producers who might gain from attending farmers' markets. It will also identify the location of producers and information about their farms and methods of production of. Analysis of the producer survey results will also allow you to assess the appropriate distance from within which farmers' will be permitted to come to your market. And of course it won't only be farmers who attend the farmers' market – a healthy market thrives on a wide range of food producers including : bakers; jam and chutney makers; flower growers; and a whole range of secondary food producers. However, all traders should ideally conform to the general set of market rules as defined by FARMA.

3.4 Surveys of producers and potential producers

FARMA surveys conducted in 1999 have indicated some key issues from the producers' perspective. They were asked which day of the week would be their first choice to attend Farmers' markets. The most popular first choice was Saturday, by a wide margin. Sunday and Friday were the second and third most popular first choices respectively. When asked for their second choice of day, Saturday again scored highest followed by Friday and then Sunday.

Producers were also asked if there were any days when they would not be able to attend Farmers' markets. The days, which were most difficult for attendance, were Monday, Thursday and Tuesday. Saturday and Sunday were least problematic, as would be expected from the popularity of these days as first choices.

Since that survey was, many new farmers' markets have been established and individual producer attendance at Farmers' markets has increased. A more recent survey in the same region, conducted in winter 2002/2003 prior to the establishment of Huntingdon Farmers' market in April 2003, found that producers' preference was no longer a Saturday as they were already attending as many Saturday Markets in the area as they could. Huntingdon Farmers' market therefore runs on a Friday.

Producers' preferred frequency of attendance was also requested, in order to enable calculations to be made of the number of markets, which could be supported in the area. If a weekly Market is planned for example but producers were interested in fortnightly attendance, then a pool of twice the number of producers would be one way of achieving this. Producers were asked whether they already traded at Farmers' markets. Some already attended a number of markets, in up to six locations and up to eight times per month. One quarter of respondents registering their interest did not yet sell through Farmers' markets. In the five years since the original survey, there will be a marked change in responses to that question, but there is also a steady stream of producers who have never traded at Farmers' markets making enquiries about starting to do so.

3.5 Budgeting for the start-up phase

There are costs to establishing a farmers' market, although if the market is a success it should aim to become financially self-sufficient and to generate a small operating surplus in time. Realism in assessing start-up costs is essential. (Information on sources of external funding for farmers' markets is included in the funding section of the Toolkit).

Some costs may be reduced if you are able to involve volunteers, as staff time is one of the major resources required. Even so, you probably need to budget a minimum of £2000 - £3000 to launch a new farmers' market, and more if you have to include the cost of paid employees.

Items you should consider including in your budget, irrespective of volunteer inputs, are:

- Staff costs e.g. for a Market Manager, or for casual workers setting up and breaking down the Market
- Phone calls, stationery, postage and utilities
- Printing and distribution of customer leaflets
- Printing and distribution of producer surveys
- Advertising Banner(s)
- Insurance – Public Liability, Employers Liability (essential, even if all staff are volunteers)
- Membership of FARMA and Certification fees.
- Purchase or hire of market stalls
- Planning fee, if planning permission is required from your Local Authority
- Site costs including: site rental, electricity supply, cleaning costs if any
- Market attractions such as musicians or a children's entertainer

These costs expense will vary according to how you run the Market. It will help you a lot in your financial planning if you use a spreadsheet programme like Microsoft's Excel. This might seem daunting if you're a newcomer to spreadsheets, but Excel is very easy to use at a basic level, and it is a very useful tool in enabling you to put together and quickly adjust possible budget scenarios.

BUDGET CASE STUDY 1: NEWPORT

In Newport, the pilot Farmers' market which was first set up in November 2005, was launched and run by the Riverside Community Market Association.

The simple budget for the first six markets were as follows (per market):

Expenditure:

Stall Rental: 20 stalls @ £15 = £300 (hired from independent supplier – includes set-up)

Staff: 1 Market Manager @ £150 (One days work)

Office and other overheads: £150

Miscellaneous and contingency £50

TOTAL EXPENDITURE: £650

Income:

Stall Rental: 20 @£20 = £400

Subsidy : Newport Council = £250

TOTAL INCOME: £650

In addition, Newport Council provided a site, paid for all advertising and publicity costs (including posters, flyers, newspaper advertising, a street banner) and provided an electricity supply on the site. This was a very important and valuable contribution, as marketing is a key factor in launching a new Market.

BUDGET CASE STUDY 2: RIVERSIDE

Riverside Market, which is a weekly market and has become well established over the eight years since its inception, has the following annual and weekly costs:

Expenditure per market:

Set-up staff: £180

Income per market::

Stall Rental: 25 @ £30 = (average over year is £700)

Tea stall income: £50 (average)

WEEKLY INCOME: £570 (x50 = £28,500)

Annual costs:

Market manager (half week): £11,500

Office, equipment, insurance, advertising and other overheads: £13,500

Local Authority License and audit : £3,000

ANNUAL PROFIT: £ 500

If a market is to be financially sustainable in the longer term, stall fees must reflect the cost of running your market even if you have funding to subsidise costs in the initial stages.

Some on-costs, including canopy and table rental, storage area, set-up staff and electricity can be significant cost items. For each of these, a purchasing strategy is needed which takes a long term view of investment needs, depreciation costs, and the costs and benefits of ownership versus rental to work out whether it is better to rent or to buy certain items of equipment.

Although all of the possible costs described above need to be considered, they are not all necessary expenses for each market. Depending on the choices you make about how you will run the market, some items may not be applicable. For instance if you decide not to provide market stalls for producers (who would therefore have to) have their own stalls, there will be no purchase or hire costs nor any associated labour cost. However you will have to weigh that decision against not being able to guarantee a smart appearance for the market and concerns about whether stalls will present Health and Safety issues since they will not be under your control. If producers are required to provide their own stalls, there is the possibility that you may exclude small producers who are not yet established at farmers' markets and who could not yet justify purchasing a stall.



Riverside Market's van – a mobile storage unit for canopies, tables and other equipment and a permanent advertisement!

CASE STUDIES: EQUIPMENT - RIVERSIDE AND NEWPORT

After renting a set of canopies for the first year, Riverside Market decided to buy its own canopies to reduce overhead costs, and they were able to raise some capital in the form of a grant from a local environment agency in order to do this. By good fortune, they also gained permission from the Cardiff Council's Parks department to use an unused 'Ranger's Hut' in the local park to store the canopies. This had advantages in terms of reducing monthly costs, however it also created more work for volunteers putting up and taking down the canopies. This approach worked while the market was only monthly, but when it moved to weekly operation, because of the much heavier workload, it was necessary to hire a Market Manager and a crew of casual workers to set up and take down the stalls.

The market continued to rent trestle tables and an extension canopy from a local company, but at a certain stage raised money to buy out the tables and to purchase more canopies. It was a question of balancing income, cash flow and overheads. However the newly purchase equipment no longer fitted in the Rangers Hut, so a large van was purchased which also served as a 'mobile shed'. To date this approach works well, but does render the market vulnerable to theft.

In Newport for the pilot stage, canopies and tables were provided by a Bridgend-based company which has a simple and economic system of stall units – the only drawback being that they are left on a trailer overnight and do not look very appealing. In the longer term it will be much better for the Newport Market organisers to have their own canopies, provided they can arrange suitable storage and organise a reliable crew to set them up. Because of the early start required for a market to be ready for operation, it can be a major headache to find reliable set-up staff. All farmers' market organisers have horror stories of being let down by staff and having the panic of finding last-minute replacements (or doing the work themselves!) in order to get the stalls ready in time

Electricity supply was another critical issues at Riverside Market in th early stages. For the first five years of operation, a generator was rented. This was far from ideal, as the generator created unwanted noise and pollution, and there were regular problems with breakdowns, hiring, and finding a secure overnight location . Finally some capital funding was raised to enable a permanent high-wattage power supply to be installed on the market site. The funding for the electricity supply was conditional on there being a licensing agreement with the local authority to allow the market to trade on that site for a period of at least three years, and acquiring this agreement involved some lengthy lobbying and negotiations! However, having an on-site electricity supply has removed a major headache and it is strongly recommend it if at all possible.



*Newport Farmers Market
(November 2005)*

3.6 Market Certification

In June 2002 a Certification programme was launched by what was then the National Association of Farmers' markets in order to uphold the principles and criteria of Farmers' markets and distinguish genuine Farmers' markets from poor imitators by the awarding of distinctive logo. This process is being carried forward by the Farmers' and Retail & Markets Association (FARMA). Markets are independently verified as meeting the criteria before being awarded Certified status.

The FARMA criteria are as follows:

- 1. Locally produced:** Only produce from the defined area shall be eligible for sale at a Farmers' market. Producers from the area defined as local must be given preference.
- 2. Principal producer:** The principal producer or a representative directly involved in the production process must attend the stall.
- 3. Primary, own produce:** All produce sold must be grown, reared, caught by the stallholder within the defined local area.
- 4. Secondary, own produce:** All produce must be brewed, pickled, baked, smoked or processed by the stallholder using at least one ingredient of origin from within the defined local area. No bough-in produce is allowed unless significantly altered and the end products includes as much local ingredient as possible.
- 5. Policy and information:** Information should be available to customers at each Market about the rules of the Market and the production methods of the producers. The Market should also publicise the availability of this information.

6. Other rules: Certified Markets may establish other criteria in addition to the above, provided they do not conflict with them. Guidance on interpretation of these criteria is set out on the Farmers' market website www.FarmersMarkets.net or available in printed form from FARMA.¹

You don't have to be a member of FARMA to follow their criteria, or to access advice on their website, although you do need to join to become a certified farmers' market. As a new Market setting up, adopting the criteria is probably the simplest option as that will leave you the choice of joining FARMA in the future and become a certified market without having to change your rules – FARMA will send an example set of rules and producer application form on request, and you will be more likely to attract producers who are concerned about maintaining high standards. If you adopt the FARMA criteria and later decide to apply for certified farmers' market status you will have little additional work to do, other than completing some simple forms.

If you do choose to join FARMA² you will be able to access practical information and support services, it may be a false economy to wait until your market is established before doing so as many of your questions will arise during the establishment phase of the market. For example FARMA have details of insurers for both farmers' markets and producers; they also provide other services such as help with media coverage locally and nationally, retail and business training.

CASE STUDIES: CERTIFICATION - RIVERSIDE AND NEWPORT

At Riverside Market in Cardiff, the approach to certification has been to gradually work to the point where all producers meet the FARMA criteria. At an earlier stage, in order to attract as many stallholders and customers as possible, Riverside were more flexible about who could attend. At one time there were stalls selling imported fruit and vegetables, with the proviso that they did at least have to be certified as Organic. Riverside also has a number of stalls which sell take-away food, the contents of which may not be local but which are processed and produced in the locality. However they have been strict about the use of terms such as 'local' and 'organic' to make sure that the Market retains its credibility and its 'unique selling point' as a producers Market – in addition there are legal restrictions to the use of food description terms such as 'organic' which will be upheld by Trading Standards Officers.

From the outset it was decided that Newport Farmers' market should seek to adopt the FARMA accredited Farmers' markets rules, as it is easier to adopt these from the beginning than to introduce them at a later date. All stallholders are then required to re-apply to attend the Market on an annual basis. This helps to ensure that all information kept on stallholders is up to date.

3.7 Relationship with Stallholders

Farmers' markets need to maintain high standards or they risk loss of custom due to consumer cynicism, and being undermined by competition from other types of markets and retailers. Certification ensures that the key features of farmers' markets are upheld.

In addition to any standard 'certification' standards such as those approved by FARMA, it is useful for a market to have its own terms of agreement which can be discussed with stallholders and to which they must agree to comply (see example below). It is always better to have these things clearly agreed and on paper at the outset to avoid misunderstandings later on!

As farmers' markets become more popular, it is inevitable that some less-than honest people will see a business opportunity and may try to trade at a market under false pretences. A market manager must always follow up on any suspicions in this regard, ideally by contacting the appropriate regulatory body such as Trading Standards or Environmental Health. It is essential

that the credibility and good name of Farmers Markets is not compromised in any way; if any doubts arise in customers' minds, they are likely to "vote with their feet".

The Riverside Market Stallholder Agreement includes the following terms:

1. All stallholders are required to sign the Stallholder Policy Agreement with RCMA and Cardiff Council, encouraged to complete a Riverside Real Food Market membership application form, and display a Farmers' markets in Wales (FMIW) accreditation form.
2. Producers must have an appropriate Food Hygiene Certificate and clearly display them on the stall at each market. Relevant stallholders are required to meet all legal food hygiene requirements with regards to the production, transport, display and serving of food.
3. Each producer must have a minimum £5,000,000 Product Liability Insurance, appropriate Public Liability Insurance and display a copy of their Certificate of Employers Liability Insurance (penalty £2,000 per day). Up to date copies of these should be made available to the Market Manager upon registration and these will be kept on file for attendance duration.
4. All produce sold at the market should reflect the aims and objectives of RCMA in promoting healthy foods, local produce and social enterprise and reflect the expectations of the customer for fresh, wholesome "artisan" (non-industrial) products.
5. All produce must adhere to Local Authority regulations and all producers must be registered with their own Local Authority as a 'food producer' where applicable.
6. All produce should be labelled with the name and address of the producer with the weight in metric and clearly priced accordingly, where appropriate.
7. The allocation of stalls will be decided by the Market Manager according to regularity of attendance, locality of production and attendance history. Where possible we will assist stallholders to coordinate their attendance at the market to avoid any problems with over supply of any one item.
8. Stallholders wishing to attend the market should book at least one week in advance. Preference will be given to those who are able to give a detailed attendance schedule and attend on a regular weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis.
9. At least 3 days notice is required for non-attendance. Failure to notify the market manager of non-attendance will result in the full booking fee being paid.
10. Stallholders should arrive in time to set up ready for trading at the start of the Market at 10am and should not cease trading until the close of market at 2pm unless in extenuating circumstances and in agreement with the Market Manager.
11. The Market manager has the right to determine where stallholders will be located. Late arrivals may forfeit their right to a covered stall though the market manager will make every reasonable effort to provide this where available.
12. Stallholders are responsible for removing any waste from their stall and cleaning up their stall area before leaving the market.
13. RCMA reserves the right to exclude any stallholders who do not comply with the above conditions. Any appeal against decisions made by the Market Manager can be made in writing to the RCMA Committee, whose decision will be final.
14. Anti-social behaviour means stallholders will be excluded immediately.

3.8 Identifying potential consumer interest and concerns

It can be very useful to do market research with target consumers to find out what may need to change to create a successful Farmers' market (more on surveys later). You can also contact FARMA to request that they carry out a Retail Health Check at your Market – this is an intensive day of gathering lots of different types of data about your Market and its customers; the Cardiff results led to a realisation of some simple changes that could be made to greatly improve customer access. Concerns which are normally high on people's lists of priorities are that the produce is freshly harvested or made; that buying local saves on fuel costs; and that it helps to support local business and the local economy.

CASE STUDY: RIVERSIDE MARKET SURVEY: A survey was carried out at an early stage in the development of Riverside Market. A small grant was obtained to pay a professional to design the questionnaires, which were aimed at local small businesses and local residents. We sent out a team of volunteers with clipboards and forms to collect the information. This was a good way to let local people know about the idea for the Market, as well as giving them the feeling that they had some input and 'ownership' of the development process.

Local businesses felt predominantly positive about the idea of the Market, feeling that it would bring more people into the local area which could only be beneficial for trade. The survey helped to allay any fears they may have had about the Market infringing on their level of sales – and the Market organisers received some useful information and advice. As it turned out, some local producers even took stalls at the Market for a while, and to date there has been no resistance or objection from them. On the contrary, some have found that their level of trade rises on Market days due to the increased number of people in the area. The personal contact gave them the feeling of being consulted and taken into consideration, and they realised that the organisers of the Market were trying to benefit the whole community, and not just wanting to make money.

You may also wish to measure your impact on local businesses by talking to them before and after you begin a Market. In general other retailers' initial worries about competition are allayed by the increased opportunities they gain from higher footfall on Farmers' markets days (see section on impact on other businesses) but you will wish to know if that is the case for your Market (and to aim to convince any doubters of such benefits).

CASE STUDY: SURVEY OF LOCAL BUSINESSES - NEWPORT

In Newport, a survey of business adjacent to the Farmers' market site was undertaken. Predominantly they felt positive about the Market, in that it brought more people to the city centre although they only experienced a slight improvement or no improvement to the level of their own business. Many of the staff shopped at the Market themselves and that it was, in its own right, a valuable asset to the available food purchasing choices. However, for a small number of businesses they reported a negative effect on their turnover, and felt this was due to the fact that the Market tended to obscure their shop front. This effect was not particular to the Market as these businesses noted a similar effect when other events were taking place on the Market site. It is hard to know how to completely avoid the risk of this effect, other than to consult such businesses on how any negative effects can be minimised.

3.9 Stakeholders

Farmers' markets involve and impact on many sectors of the community. It is important that as many groups as possible are involved in the process of a Market's development and growth. These may include the following:

- local authorities (various departments need to be included, such as licensing, economic development, planning, trading standards and environmental health)
- other public sector agencies such as the WDA Food Directorate
- business groups such as the Chamber of Commerce
- local retailers
- local community groups and residents' representatives, including local councillors
- food and farming organisations
- other interested groups such as Friends of the Earth, consumer groups, PTA's

CASE STUDY: STEERING COMMITTEE, NEWPORT PILOT FARMERS MARKET:

A Steering Group was set up at an early stage in developing Newport Farmers' market. The Group included representatives from local voluntary sector organisations, local businesses and the local authority. The purpose of the group was to inform members about the background, aims and objectives of the Market and to solicit their ideas and advice on how it should best develop. It was also an opportunity to sound out any interest from local groups in running the Market in the longer term, as it was an aim from the beginning for it to be 'owned and operated' locally once the initial pilot period was over. The Council pledged long-term support but didn't want the responsibility of running the Market.

The following organisations were invited to take part in the development of the Market:

- Community Enterprise Wales
- Careers Wales Gwent
- Business Eye
- Cylch (an umbrella organisation to promote sustainable resource use)
- Charter Market Manager
- Newport Chamber of Trade
- The City Centre Manager
- Newport City Council Sustainable Development Officer
- Building Society on John's Frost Square
- Community Design Gwent
- Communities 1st Co-ordinator
- Allway Community Project
- Stow Hill Community Project

3.10 Identifying potential market sites

The following checklist of necessary and desirable qualities of potential sites for Farmers' markets was drawn from information gathered in researching the case studies, as well as from surveys at Farmers' markets. It is of course possible to overcome the lack of some of these qualities, for instance whether producers can run chiller units from generators and carry their own supplies of water for hand-washing. However, some can't be avoided and others are key to success.

Unavoidable requirements

- If the Market takes place more than 14 times a year - Planning Permission from the Local Authority to hold the Market (unless it is held on a privately-owned site)
- Consent of the Market Charter holder if applicable.

Key site requirements

- high footfall (potential customers passing by)
- customer access (public transport, cycle or walking routes, and nearby car parking)
- cash machines nearby (most producers only accept cash and you don't want to limit customers' spending once you have got them to the Market)

Necessary site attributes

- site available on a day popular with shoppers and producers that reflects the local catchment e.g. consider weekday if in a commercial rather than retail centre (Surveys³ conducted in 1999 found that Saturday had a clear lead in popularity, followed by Sunday - but this may have changed for producers now that many of them are committed to Markets on both days)
- Market site visible to public or well-signed on approach roads, if possible, as well as at the site
- Farmers' market clearly distinguished from other nearby Markets

- vehicle access for producers
- producers' parking available nearby
- power and water supplies available for producers
- trade waste collection
- Accessibility to prams and wheelchairs

Desirable site attributes

- weather protection
- attractive location
- site available at low or no cost
- site large enough to allow for more stalls if demand requires
- toilet facilities

CASE STUDY: LOCATION - RIVERSIDE MARKET

Riverside Real Food Market is held on a Sunday due to an initial objection from the Cardiff Council legal department, based on the Market Charter Act, which states that no other market can exist within 6 miles of the existing charter market (i.e. Cardiff Central Market). Many towns in the UK have a similar law and there has been a variety of interpretations and responses to it.

Riverside Market began in Dispenser Gardens, a small public park in the centre of Riverside. While Riverside Market was held here, it did not come into conflict with the Market Charter byelaw because park land comes under a different set of byelaws. It operated there on a monthly basis and the location served well for the launch of the Market as it was a pleasant environment central to the community and avoided licensing and planning issues.

However as the market developed a more central and high-profile location was required and in any case the Parks Department required that we move out after two years. A new location on the opposite side of the River Taff from the Millennium Stadium provided an ideal location, as it was still within the community of Riverside, much closer to the center of Cardiff and easy to find. Additionally the riverbank location is a traditional and ideal location for a market as it provides a pleasant walking and sitting space in good weather. This move required the setting up of a Licensing Agreement with Cardiff Council which was finally drawn up and agreed after several meetings involving all interested departments such as Highways, Planning, Licensing and Economic Development. Riverside Market was given permission to trade on the designated site for a period of three years in return for a nominal rent, and provided that the Market agreed to certain conditions, such as to clean up the site after use, and to maintain adequate public liability insurance – things which they would have been doing anyway.

In making the transition to public land, it was important to coordinate input from a number of different Council departments such as Highways, Licensing, Planning, and the legal department. Coordinating discussions and agreements between so many different departments can be difficult to say the least, and we were helped immeasurably in this process by the Director of the Department of Economic Development, who agreed to host and coordinate the necessary meetings, and took charge of chairing the meetings to ensure that agreement was reached. From this experience we concluded that it was essential in this kind of process to have a 'champion on the inside' who could move the agenda forward and be taken seriously. The Market also had an important level of support from local councillors, and from the Deputy Mayor of Cardiff who had seen a Farmers' market in Germany which she was keen to see replicated in Cardiff. She also felt that the Market was a good thing from the point of view of economic development and regeneration of the city of Cardiff.

Common suggestions for improvements which arise in feedback from Market customers include: weather protection, better parking, more space and selection of stalls, and a greater range of produce. Suggestions from stallholders have also emphasised issues of: space; number and layout of stalls; and range of produce - as well as parking (for both producers and customers), weather protection and ensuring the Farmers' market was distinct from other markets in its identity.



Newport Farmers Market, John Frost Square - located off the main shopping street

CASE STUDY: LOCATION - NEWPORT FARMERS MARKET

Location is a key factor in Market success. Newport Market started in John Frost Square, a very central area of the city but one which is off to the side of the main shopping street (Commercial Street). A relatively small number of people originally came through the square, and most of those that did were on their way to a specific shop or to the bus station. There was not much opportunity for impulse shopping by casual passers by. This is where the marketing and publicity became essential. Flyers were handed out on Commercial Street on Market day, and a number of A2 advertising boards were attached to trees and lampposts in busy areas. (As it turned out, this was against a city bylaw, and these boards were quickly removed and destroyed. However, it was permissible for us to place A-frame boards at street level, and these had a very positive effect in directing shoppers to the Market). A large street banner was also put up by Newport Council which remained permanently in place for the duration of the pilot Market. This was supported by newspaper advertising and other publicity – all supported by word of mouth, with the effect that footfall at the Market showed a steady increase from the outset. If a market cannot be set up in an area of high footfall – and there are often many reasons why this may be the case, especially in an urban setting – it becomes absolutely crucial to use as many kinds of publicity material to attract the attention of shoppers and to let them know that the Market is on and how to find it. Boards and signs put out on the day of the Market are very effective – see below for photos of examples

Within three months, the footfall for the Newport Market in John Frost Square was greatly increased, as people became familiar with the time and location, demonstrating the success of a coordinated and intensive marketing approach.

Note: Since the first writing of this Toolkit, Newport Farmers Market has relocated to a much higher profile location in the centre of Newport, and all traders report a much-improved footfall and level of sales, demonstrating how important location can be for a market. The market has also become bi-monthly as it is felt there will be enough demand in the new location.

:



Newport Farmers Market's new City Centre location

One of the key decisions in setting up a Farmers Market will be whether to locate indoors or outdoors (provided a choice of sites is available). The rationale for this decision is explored below.

Indoor vs. outdoor

Indoor: advantages

- Shelter from the elements.
- Ready supply of electric/water.
- Tables may be available
- Can be cheap/free.
- No stalls to set-up/down/store.
- Less reliance on market staff.

Indoor: disadvantages

- Can be awkward for stallholders and customers to access.
- tables to put up unless producers bring own
- Space can be severely limited.
- Can be difficult to generate a 'market' atmosphere and sense of identity.
- Can be more difficult to get people to attend

Outdoor: advantages

- Open to the elements!
- Usually easier to access and usually plenty of space to expand.
- Easier for stallholders.

Perfect for creating the 'market' atmosphere and sense of identity.

Outdoor: disadvantages

- Open to the elements.
- Can be difficult to arrange electric/water.
- Need to supply market stalls and/or tables and cabling. Storage.
- Time required to set-up/down.
- Storage space & transport required.
- Staff/volunteers required to set-up etc.
- More risk involved (Health & Safety).

This list is not exhaustive and you should prepare a list for your own area. You will need to take a wide variety of factors into account before making a decision. Ideally carry out a survey of where local people would like to have a Farmers' market providing a list of the options available and do your own research such as footfall counts, who uses other shops or facilities nearby.

4 RUNNING A FARMERS' MARKET

4.1 Physical set-up

Key considerations which need to be addressed in running the Market include the following:

- Canopies and tables or table tops (unless producers bring their own)
- Electricity supply (could be a generator)
- Water supply and hand-washing equipment (stallholders may bring their own)
- nearby toilets
- unloading access
- parking for producers
- parking for customers
- storage facilities (if Market has own equipment)
- waste disposal (may involve paying local authority commercial rate)



*Setting up at
Riverside Market*

CASE STUDY: PROVISION OF STALLS - NEWPORT FARMERS' MARKET

In Newport, the following approaches were adopted:

- An external contractor (a small producer collective) provided up to 25 modular 3mx3m stalls at Newport Farmers' market. The stalls were transported to the site and erected for a fee of £15 per stall. A handful of producers also brought their own trailer stalls. All stallholders were charged a flat rate of £20 per stall, which covers the cost of stalls and market admin.
- Electricity supply was arranged with Newport City Centre Manager, as there is an outlet already on the site. The alternative would be to use a generator. Electricity was used by stallholders primarily for chillers, scales and tills; heat for cooking should be provided by gas where possible and ensure there are adequate fire extinguishers. Any producer requiring electricity should carry their own extension cable and adapters suitable for outdoor use and the means to make sure cables don't become trip hazards.
- There is no water supply on the Newport site. Any producer requiring water will need to bring their own. This is also the case for hand-washing facilities. It is the legal responsibility of the producer to bring adequate hand washing materials.
- Toilets are located near to the Newport site. Stallholders often attend the Market alone and having to walk a long way to the nearest convenience means that sales can be missed and security threatened.
- Waste is collected by the local authority at the end of trading on the day. The Market

Manager should keep an eye open for any build up of rubbish as this can lead to negative perceptions of the Market.

- NB: commercial refuse sacks may be available from the local authority and arrangements can be made with waste services for a collection an hour after the Market has ceased trading. This gives the organisers and staff time to put stalls away, clean up and prepare waste sacks for collection. However there is a cost for this service.
- In Newport stallholders are supposed to un-load their vehicles and park off site. However, using the stalls as a screen allows stallholders to keep their vehicles close at hand, allowing them to bring more stock and keep their overheads down. The vehicles also help to demarcate the rear of the stalls and deter opportunist theft.
- Ideally stallholder and customer parking should be made available as near to the Market as possible. Many stallholders require on-site parking, or at least unloading facilities, as they often have to bring heavy equipment and produce. Some stallholders bring refrigerated vehicles to store stock during the day. Where on-site parking is not available parking vouchers should be provided to help keep costs to stallholders to a minimum. (I'd question the need for this as any cost is likely to be reflected in stall fees anyway)

4.2 Managing the market – regular tasks

Many Farmers' markets start off with purely voluntary labour, although most find that if and when the Market expands it becomes necessary to employ someone on at least a part-time basis to oversee operational aspects. In any case, someone needs to take on responsibility for making sure all aspects of the Market run smoothly. Managing a Farmers' market takes time and can be at unsociable hours. Tasks include:

- Co-ordinating stallholders and managing the Market on the day
- Creating and managing a budget and identifying funding / other resources
- Managing staff
- Researching and making contact with other Farmers' markets in the area
- Identifying producer interest and availability
- Measuring potential customer interest including preference of Market day
- Identifying and securing a suitable site
- Defining the management structure for the Market, facilitating meetings and agreeing rules
- Commissioning publicity materials, such as leaflets and banners. Agreeing designs and specifications, arranging printing, etc.
- Creating and following up news releases to the local media
- Networking and liaising with local community organisations.

CASE STUDY: MARKET MANAGER - NEWPORT FARMERS MARKET

In Newport, the key activities for managing the Farmers' market manager are as follows:

- The Market Manager is responsible for ensuring that all producers and stalls are booked preferably, no later than a week before the Market. On the morning of the Market the Manager should be on-site to oversee stall erection and placement and make any last minute changes to set-up and layout. At Newport, RCMA provides the electrical cables and these are laid out in good time ready for producers arrival. The Market Manager then allocates stalls to producers, as they arrive, and subject to their requirements. Stallholders may disagree with their allocated position – where possible their preferences will be accommodated, but the manager's decision must be final. The overall aim is to solve all problems as they present themselves with good communication and a positive attitude and to create a friendly and cooperative relationship between the Manager and the stallholders – this will make future serious disputes much less likely and help maintain a pleasant atmosphere at the Market.
- The Market Manager is responsible for ensuring that the stall and electrical set-up is carried

out with Health and Safety in mind, and that a Risk Assessment is carried out prior to the Market. The Manager is responsible for overseeing overall Health and Safety for the duration of the Market. Additionally all staff and stallholders have a responsibility for Health and Safety and stallholders are required to carry out a Risk Assessment for their own stalls and to report any problems to the Market Manager. Any accidents, which take place during the Market, should be reported to the Market Manager and logged in an accident book, with action points noted along with the names and contact details of anyone involved.

- The Market is often the only time that the Market Manager is able to meet with stallholders and customers 'in the flesh'. It is therefore an ideal opportunity to check over stalls for quality of produce, and to offer any advice on presentation. During the Market the manager should be available for customers and stallholders to discuss any issues and offer feedback on the running of the Market. A useful way to organise this is to have a tea stall and/or information stall on site where customers can find out more info on local activities etc. and to leave feedback. Selling refreshments can also serve as an additional source of income, especially when run by volunteers but must meet legal requirements.

4.3 Financial Administration

It is important to make sure that transparent and effective tools for financial management are adopted from the outset – even if the process involved is as simple as collecting stall rental money on Market day, issuing receipts, paying expenses and banking the balance. By keeping clear accounts and banking money promptly you will be sure that all financial matters are kept well in hand – this is especially important if at any stage you are the recipient of public funding. It's also important to have an agreed and consistent policy regarding the cost of renting a stall. If you start to give special discounts to stallholders for whatever reason, word will soon get around and this will create mistrust and resentment from the other stallholders. You want your relationship with stallholders to be based on a spirit of trust and cooperation. Without them you have no Market – and keeping all financial matters carefully recorded, clear and consistent right from the beginning is an important step in this process.

The spreadsheets included in later in the Toolkit give an indication of a useful format for this.

4.4 Preparing a Business Plan for the Market.

A Business Plan is in essence a statement of how you intend to have developed the Market in, say, three year's time – a map, in effect, to guide the development of the Market. Without a map, how can you be sure where you are going and how would you plan to get there? Many funders will require a business plan as a condition of giving a grant, and undertaking such a plan will be a very useful exercise for everyone involved in running the Market, as it will force you to be clear about your priorities and to find out whether everyone involved has the same idea about what these are. There are many sample business plans and sources of advice on the Internet (for example see www.busesseye.org.uk or www.smallbusinessadvice.org.uk/busplan/suplan.asp). This is an essentially logical process which will give everyone involved confidence about the long term sustainability of the Market, and a tool for identifying if the Market is deviating in any important financial or other way from the plan so that remedial action can be taken in good time.

4.5 Dealing with your Local Authority

As an organisation dealing directly with the public you will have to comply completely with all the relevant legislation. You will inevitably be required to have some form of Public Liability insurance. Your Local Council may have a blanket policy covering the activities of community groups which you can sign up to much more economically than taking out a separate policy. If you employ staff on a regular basis, you will also need Employers Liability Insurance, and your stallholders will also require their own Public, Product and Employee Liability insurance to cover £5 million. You must ask to see clear evidence from stallholders that they have the necessary coverage in order to have been seen to exercise 'due diligence' in your role as Market Manager. Past that point, conflicts or claims relating to the produce from a particular stallholder will be with the individual business rather than with the Market as a whole. Similarly, the Market must always abide by established Health and Safety procedures, if not, the Public Liability Insurance will not provide coverage for any accident which may happen on the site of the Market. Many Local Authorities can offer special rates for Public Liability Insurance to local community groups – or may be able to provide coverage for a Market under their own existing insurance.

Environmental Health: Farmers' market producers are required to meet the same legal requirements on Environmental Health as any other producers. It is essential not to cut corners in any way in this area and to make sure that all stallholders are completely compliant with the law. Stallholders must be registered with the Environmental Health department in the Local Authority area in which they operate. Because food consumption is so directly linked with health, you want to avoid the slightest risk of a problem as this would create a bad reputation for the Market from which it would be hard to recover. In any case, the Market will at some stage receive a visit from Environmental Health inspectors, and if they are not entirely satisfied with any standards they are within their rights to close down individual stallholders or the Market as a whole. Most stallholders who have been running their business for any length of time are very familiar with all the legal requirements, and you are unlikely to have any problems with them. It's important to inform producers who may be starting out what the legal requirements are, for example, anyone selling food items which are prepared in their kitchen at home must have had the kitchen inspected and approved – better still refer them to their Environmental Health Officer.

Those producers who are new to direct marketing may require assistance and guidance, either from the Market organiser or directly from Trading Standards or Environmental Health Officers. In many areas the Trading Standards and Environmental Health Departments have prepared written guidelines which Market organisers can send to prospective Farmers' market producers for their information.

Trading Standards: All Market producers must comply with regulations regarding labelling, weights and measures, pricing and so on. Again, it's important to make sure all producers understand and comply with the regulations, as the Market is bound to receive a visit from the inspectors at an early stage. It is much better to start out developing a relationship of confidence and good communication with all the Local Authority departments than to make errors which will then be difficult to correct later.

Highways Department: This department would need to be involved if a road closure is required for a Market or if directional road signs were needed. (See guidance on signage in the Publicity and Promotion section of the Toolkit.)

It will be helpful to get advice on all this from your local Councillor who will be a valuable ally or you in getting information and support from the Authority. Even better, see if you can get support for the Market from a senior officer in a particular department such as Economic Development, who can then explain how the Council operates and act as a 'champion' for you within the Council.

4.6 Marketing, Publicity & Promotion

Publicity is one of the key factors to success of Farmers' markets. Asked about support needs for Farmers' markets, existing producers mentioned promotion more frequently than any other factor and as frequently as all other responses put together.⁴

CASE STUDY: PUBLICITY - RIVERSIDE MARKET

For the first two years of the Riverside Market, there was very little budget available for marketing and publicity. We decided that the most cost effective way to get the word around was to have thousands of A6 black and white leaflets printed and to put them in all the public places where we thought potential customers might gather. A number of local shops let us put them up in the window or on the counter – especially useful in health related businesses such as Health Food Shops. We also distributed a number of them door to door in the local area. RCMA also paid someone to put up hundreds of posters, continually renewing them to make sure that, slowly but surely, knowledge of the Market got through to people. Although it was labour intensive, this was much more cost effective than purchasing advertising in the newspaper, which in any case would not have been so well targeted at the right areas. Start up funding in Riverside helped to pay for the cost of large banners (see picture later in this report) to complement signage and leaflets. From an early stage, Riverside Market developed a good relationship with local reporters, and attracted a lot of interest from the local papers, receiving regular coverage including illustrated features.



Banner, Riverside

Cost-effective exposure for your Farmers' market can be gained in the following ways:

- Banners and signage
- Leaflets, postcards and posters
- Media - particularly the local press
- Websites and email lists
- Entries in local produce or local business directories
- Nurture word of mouth – your most effective form of advertising, also your worst if a customer isn't happy about something so beware
- Encourage standards of produce quality, customer service, presentation of both people and stalls – first impressions are the most important

Customer surveys at farmers' markets reveal the importance of traditional publicity such as press releases, leaflets, posters and signage, as well as the importance of having the Market in a location where passers-by can be attracted to shop. In Cardiff, running the Riverside Market on Sunday mornings has meant that banners and signage could be put up before the Market and were less likely to be taken away by over zealous street cleaners, than if they had stayed up through the week. Banners left up after the Market, either through accident or design, did not stay up very long and highlight the importance of speaking to your local authority for permission to erect permanent signage. Explore the options for this, as they need not be expensive. The large banners for Riverside Market cost about £300 each to produce.

Leaflets can be produced fairly cheaply and often the simplest designs work the best. At Riverside the organisers have found that well presented, easily reproduced black and white A6 leaflets placed in cafés and shops around the city and given to stall holders attending food events are an excellent way to promote the Market.



Street banner, Newport

If you are not a Welsh Speaker yourself you may need to find a well-trained and qualified translator for your publicity material. Advice on translating signs and material into Welsh, including funding, can be obtained from the Welsh Language Board (www.bwrdd-yr-iaith.org.uk).

Another useful method of promoting the Market is the local press. Avoid the temptation to purchase expensive advertising space in local press or trade magazines. Probably you will get little return for great expense. A far more effective, long term strategy is to develop a good relationship with local reporters who, more often than not, are hungry for local news, and to feed them regularly with interesting stories about the Market. By writing well-crafted press releases you are making a reporter's job easier and they are more likely to cover the story. Try and arrange your PR around any themes or issues the local paper is looking to explore.

Last, but by no means least, is the idea of a "Friends List". This is a list of customer contact details collected from your own information (at Riverside they are collected at a tea and coffee stall - an excellent point for spreading local news and gaining customer feedback!). A monthly email 'newsletter' about the Market is sent out. This kind of reminder is especially important if the Market is monthly – there are always a lot of potential customers who forget the Market date! Riverside Market has found that emails are the most cost effective way to circulate information, due to the expensive and time-consuming process of posting large volumes of material. You might feel that email-only contact excludes a number of your customers and if you have the resources, then post is still an option. The Riverside email list has grown over the years to around 750 direct respondents, with many more receiving the email second hand. It is well received by everyone as an excellent source of local food and community news as well as a reminder of what is happening at the Market.

Timing

A particular challenge for Farmers' markets, since they operate only on certain days, is reminding customers when the Market is due to be held. Ways of tackling this challenge are to erect banners and signs in the week preceding the Market and to gain media coverage in that week.

You can also ensure that your customers can see the date of the next Market both by having a sign on display and by having leaflets on each stall with all the dates of the Markets for the year available.

Ask your producers to put a leaflet into every bag of produce sold. They probably won't remember to do it every time but hopefully customers will leave the Market with more than one bag of produce and manage to receive at least one leaflet. If they get more than one leaflet they can pass it on to a friend. Your existing customers are probably the best group to target with publicity as you know they have both the inclination and the funds to shop at your Farmers' market, they can also act as ambassadors.



Welsh banner, Newport

With banners you are aiming for maximum impact. Use as few words and as large letters as possible - for example: "Farmers' market here this Saturday" Frequently a town has one or more spots where banners are regularly hung between buildings to promote local events. You could follow up who to contact at the local Council by asking the promoters of events you have seen advertised. Your local authority or town centre manager may be able to help with contacts and ideas. Alternatively, a local organisation (or resident) may have a fence to which you could fix your banner. And don't forget to remove them especially if your market is monthly – customers won't be happy if they have a wasted journey; the council are also more likely to be accommodating.

Getting a banner made

Ask local organisations whose banners you have seen who made theirs and the cost. Existing Farmers' market producers sometimes have banners for their stalls and may also be able to help with recommendations; you could look in the Yellow Pages under Sign Makers or ask FARMA if you are a member. Some companies may also be prepared to erect the banner for you on the relevant date, take it down after the Market and store it until the next use. To purchase a two-sided banner of sufficient weight that the print doesn't show through from one side to the other and strong enough to be hung between buildings (as the banner in the photograph above) you might pay as much as £350-£400 plus VAT. For a single-sided banner which can be fixed to a fence and which would therefore not need to be as strong, the price would be about half of that.

Signs

Effective and inexpensive signs can be made from Coralex, a lightweight corrugated plastic material which comes in bright colours and can be fixed in place using plastic ties or string. Typically an A4 sign with limited graphics might cost between £6 and £8.

Signs near roads - highways regulations and policies on signage

There are regulations controlling signs that can be erected along roads (on lamp posts for example) and you should take advice from your Local Authority about what is permitted, in order to save yourself the annoyance and expense of having your signs removed and destroyed. Planning Law may also affect signage as there are controls on where you may erect large signs. Away from the roads, a local authority may have policies to remove signs that they themselves haven't posted. In some local authority areas a policy is now being developed to permit community events to be sign-posted for the week up to the event. Ask for a copy of their policy. If they don't have one you may wish to suggest they develop one to control signs, without removing those that provide a service to the community! Many towns now have Centre Managers. If they are not already included in your partnership they would be a good person to get involved, as they can help you deal with issues like this. The support of the City Manager in Newport has been invaluable in developing the pilot Market there – without her support it simply would not have been possible.

The approach which appears to work best in seeking permission to post signs is to talk about directional signs which help people and traffic know where to go, rather than promotional signage, as in general, advertising signs are not permitted. Policy varies from one local authority to another. This may give you an entry point for negotiation, since if different authorities have different interpretations of the legislation, there may be room for manoeuvre within the law.



Street signage, Newport

Signs at the Market

Ideally, you should have a large sign at your Market stating your key rules so that customers understand how a Farmers' market differs from other places to buy food (e.g. 'Produce sold here is produced within x miles of the Market'. 'All produce is sold by somebody involved in production'. 'No bought-in produce is permitted without further processing' etc.) You could also leave space on the sign for the next market date, or have an additional blackboard style sign which you can also use to advertise upcoming special Market events.

If you have a vehicle dedicated to use by the Market, it is a very cost effective type of publicity to pay to have a promotional sign cut out of vinyl and attached to the vehicle.

Websites

Many potential customers of Farmers' markets will use a web-based search to identify their nearest Market, and a large proportion of your existing customers probably have access to the web. Websites have the advantages of both being easily updated and of reaching customers who are looking for information. They provide the ability to post news about the Market on a regular basis.

Websites also enable promotion of producers on days when the Farmers' market isn't on, through links to the producers' own sites, thus increasing the value to them of attending your Market and moving their and your website up the search listings.

The Riverside Community Market Association site (www.riversidemarket.org.uk) is a good example of a website which provides information on the dates of a series of Markets together with links to producers' pages, and links to maps to show where each producer is located.

Websites are essential communication tools and every market should have one. They have several functions which may include:

- market days and times
- market location and parking
- manager's details
- contact information for producers
- newsletters and information about special events
- information about farmers' markets
- links to other information likely to be useful to customers, such as other sources of local, organic and fair trade food

Websites can be stand-alone sites, which is preferable, or pages on part of a larger site such as a local authority's site. Simple websites can be developed at a minimal cost, using free software, and hosted at a cost of anything from £50 upwards (depending on functions available). Where a stand-alone site is to be created, a decision will need to be made about whether a web professional is required. It's important that whatever site is created, the FM manager can update it easily with few new software skills required; this could be by using, for example, software by Macromedia called Contribute (cost is about £80), or by creating an editing function via a content management or admin area on the site (cost for a web professional for this may be at least £500). Either way, it is best to avoid needing a web professional just to make editorial changes. Fees for designing a new site can start at about £100, but you get what you pay for, and a well-designed interactive site with a simple content management system will cost at least £1000.

Training can be provided (with the help of grants – see the external funding section of the Toolkit) to show producers how to maintain their own websites. There is also potential for producers to go on to grow their businesses by using the web for e-commerce, accepting orders and payments online.

Leaflets and postcards

As indicated above, leaflets and postcards are low-tech ways of promoting your Farmers' market, but probably one of the most cost-effective methods. You can list all of your Farmers' markets dates, set out your aims, strapline or mission statement and use photos and images to convey the impression you want to give to your potential customers.

Large print runs are much more cost-effective as there are fixed costs to preparing a print run however many leaflets are prepared, so it is worth including all your Market dates for the year and having a good supply printed. Delivery of leaflets as an insert with free local papers is a relatively inexpensive method of distribution which can be closely targeted to particular areas or communities. Another method is to involve local shops by asking them to insert leaflets into their shoppers' bags. Local businesses share the benefits of increased footfall when the Farmers' market is on and should be glad to help promote the Market, especially once they have seen the benefits for themselves.

Recipe cards, using as many ingredients from your producers as possible, are also a good way of encouraging your customers try different produce and make the link between stalls. They can also form the basis of promotions at the Market, especially if customers send them to friends.

Photographs

Take photographs of your farmers' market at every opportunity, especially when the sun is shining! The more photographs you take, the more likely you are to have a suitable picture to add to a press release, a poster or an article for a local food directory or a parish magazine. If you don't have a digital camera you can get your films developed onto CD-Rom at the same time as you get prints for very little additional cost, which will give you high quality electronic images to use in posters, publications or to send to the press with your news releases.

French bread stall, Riverside Market



' Friends' schemes and email lists

As mentioned above, your existing customers are probably the best target group for publicity. You know they have both the inclination and the funds to shop at your Farmers' market, and they can also act as ambassadors for the Market. A "friends" scheme can help to foster this relationship.

CASE STUDY: MARKET "FRIENDS" SCHEME

At one U.K. Market, everyone who signs up receives a welcome letter setting out some of the current producers' offers for members and enclosing a membership card to show producers in order to benefit from special members' promotions. Those who supply an email address also receive a reminder of when the Market is on, sent in the week running up to it, with details of any special promotions and special events. A4 posters for the Market showing the next Market date, with a photograph and details of special events, can be attached to the emails. All of the producers at the Market have agreed to offer some type of promotion to members of the scheme, whether it is a formal promotion on a particular line of produce for a limited number of Markets, an across the board discount, or an informal gesture such as rounding down the total cost of members' purchases.

Producers are encouraged to use the scheme to promote particular lines of produce, whether they are new products, something that is plentiful as it is in season, or to get customers for one type of product to try another type. It now costs £3 to join. The producer who signs up a member keeps this as an incentive to point out to customers that they would benefit from joining the scheme and that it is likely to pay for itself within one or two Market visits.

Media coverage

As mentioned earlier, media coverage, particularly in the local newspapers, can be a very cost-effective way of promoting your Market. If you have a story to tell you will be able to get the local media to promote your Market for you, all for the cost of your time in sharing the information through a press release. Paid-for advertising in the local press is expensive in comparison and appears to have a limited impact, especially when listings in "what's on" columns are usually free and your advertisement may appear on the same page. The key point to remember when looking for media coverage is that you will only succeed if you can persuade journalists that you have news. A Farmers' market starting up is definitely news, the Market being confirmed as permanent after a trial period is news, but "Farmers' market on again as usual" is obviously not.

You should always be on the lookout for a potential story, and encourage your producers to alert you when they have a story to tell. If you don't have any newsworthy events happening naturally it may be time to create some, with special events at the Market.

If you conduct customer surveys at your Market you will have the advantage of knowing who your customers are and where they come from, which will help you target them when you plan media coverage or special events. You will also know what methods of publicity reach them best. For example, local radio may give great coverage of events at your Market but since the listeners are across the whole county it may reach people who won't travel to the Market, while a local press article has a very local readership and is seen by a high proportion of your potential customers. Of course if you have a good event you can get both and raise your profile among both audiences.

Professional stilt-walker handing out leaflets for Newport Farmers Market



4.7 Management structures, Legal issues and administration

Farmers' markets can develop from several different starting points, such as: an initiative of the local authority; a private business; a collaborative initiative by producer; or through the activity of other agencies or community groups. Whatever its starting point, a Farmers' market will soon need to identify an appropriate organisational model and legal structure.

Farmers' markets are trading enterprises. They accept fees from attending producers, and may generate income in other ways, or receive grant money or loans. They also have a duty of care to customers and stallholders. It is therefore important that there are properly administered financial systems, a constitution which defines the purpose of the Market and decision making processes, and that the organisers are protected from personal liability.

Where the Market has started life as a public sector initiative, it may be appropriate for it to continue this way with the host organisation taking responsibility for all administrative, financial and legal issues. In this case the Market manager may be salaried, with little relationship between profitability and the on-going sustainability of the Market, and the cost of equipment buffeted within larger budgets. Some well run Markets retain this model across the UK.

If the Market is established as an unincorporated community association, Committee members are personally responsible for any debts which the Association may incur. This is unlikely to present any problems as long as turnover remains relatively small and easily managed, but it is a powerful argument for incorporating as, for example, a Company Limited By Guarantee, once turnover reaches a particular scale and the possible risks and liabilities become larger.

Setting up a constituted community association is straightforward, and can be an essential step in creating a body that is publicly accountable and is able to manage finances and receive funds.

CASE STUDY: MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE - RIVERSIDE

Riverside Market was managed by a constituted community association with a volunteer committee for the first six years of its life. Setting up such an association is a relatively easy matter, provided there are three individuals at the outset who are willing to take on the Officer roles of Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. At an initial meeting, a draft constitution (and sample or template constitutions can be copied from organisations such as the Wales Council for Voluntary www.wcva.org.uk) is adopted, minutes of the meeting are taken, and these can then be presented to a bank as sufficient evidence of the existence of the organisation for a bank account to be opened in the new organisation's name.

When turnover at the Riverside Market reached the point where it was necessary to have properly audited accounts, a Company Limited by Guarantee was established to operate as a social enterprise and to be the 'trading arm' of the Association.

The Riverside Community Market Association continues as a not-for-profit community organisation run by a committee of local residents on a voluntary basis. Alongside that body, Riverside Community Market Association Social Enterprise Limited (RCMA - SEL) is a non-profit distributing Company Limited by Guarantee and acts as the 'trading arm' of the Riverside Community Market Association. The Officers of RCMA are also the directors of RCMA-SEL to ensure ongoing accountability of the company to the mission and legally constituted priorities RCMA.

The RCMA management committee currently consists of ten members that meet every quarter, and is made up of local residents, market stallholders and others with a particular interest in RCMA's aims and objectives. The intention is to widen membership of the Association, to include other stakeholders such as stallholders, local businesses and statutory organisations. The RCMA-SEL Company Directors meet on a monthly basis.

Management of farmers' markets should, ideally, adopt a partnership structure, with producer involvement to some extent in a committee, steering group or forum. In some, but by no means all cases, farmers' markets are now being wholly managed by the producers. The model of a local authority working in partnership with producer representatives, as at Bristol, may be preferable as it promotes more transparent representation of customer and local interests and shares the work of managing the Markets.

At some farmers' markets the 'auditing' of farmers' to ensure they are selling their own produce has been conducted by the other stallholders, who resent unfair competition and the threat of lowering standards. A management structure which involves producer representatives is necessary for this to function. Conducting verification visits to producers before they trade at a Farmers' market is a helpful mechanism for assuring that producers actually produce the items they sell.

A farmers' market steering group might include Local Council Officers or Councillors, any local market managers, consumers as well as someone chosen to represent the producers trading at the Market. If the organisers wish to extend the benefits of the Market to tackling local 'food poverty' issues, a suitable representative, from a local Healthy Living Centre or Housing Society for example, could also be invited to join the steering group.

You will also need to involve, or consult with, some specific Local Authority departments (see above) such as Planning, Environmental Health, Legal, Licensing, and Highways.

A more independent model may be sought by producers and other stakeholders, either in the first instance or as a successor to a Market started by the public sector. The advantages can be:

- independence from public sector, where policy changes may affect support for the Market in terms of manager input, licensing etc
- opportunities for any surplus generated to be retained by Market producers, or by the enterprise (private or community sector enterprise) running the Market; or re-invested in the Market.
- opportunity to develop related food enterprises, such as a box delivery scheme

Disadvantages may include:

- exposure to financial variations, such as a drop in income in winter months
- the need for employment of a manager and potentially of other staff, for basic tasks such as setting up stalls, clearing away and cleaning
- the need to invest in equipment

For independent enterprises, a constitution and operating protocols are clearly required, and a recognised organisational model and legal structure will need to be set up as soon as possible.

Identifying the right model is very important. This will depend on a number of factors that include:

- where should decision making lie?
- who should benefit from the activity of the organisation?
- who should have ownership of assets?
- what should happen to profits or losses?
- what is the growth potential, and what will happen to any growth in value of the Market?
- will the Market employ staff?

Some organisational models are considered below:

Sole producer or partnership. Where an enterprise is run as a business by an individual or a private partnership, it could be run as an un-constituted organisation. Tax can be less, and as partners are treated as self employed, there is no National Insurance to pay, and tax is collected in arrears. Issues to be resolved will include personal liabilities, profit share between partners, and long-term ownership.

Unincorporated association. Many voluntary sector organisations form an association, which is simply bound by its constitution. Managers or members will need to follow the rules and pursue the aims as set out in a governing document (a 'constitution'). Issues to be resolved will include personal liabilities, profit share, and long-term ownership. There can be problems too where staff are employed as the employer's responsibilities and liabilities need to be assigned clearly to its officers.

Incorporated organisations form a legal identity separate from their members. This limits liability of the members, owners or management. It is a useful structure if the Market will own property or assets which is not linked to individual members (who may come and go). Companies and Industrial and Provident Societies are examples of incorporated organisations.

Company limited by guarantee. This is a common form of company for organisations with a not-for-profit ethos. It is a company without shares, so that profits are re-cycled into the community the organisation serves. Each member guarantees a certain amount, often £1, if the company is wound up and their financial responsibility for the company is also limited to this amount, unless they can be shown to have been grossly incompetent.

Company limited by shares. A company limited by shares issues shares to defined people, reflecting their position or level of ownership of the enterprise. It is a more suitable structure when significant profits are to be allocated, which can be by means of dividends, for example.

Industrial and Provident Society. This is a structure which suits co-operatives, where each member has one vote or equal standing, and where profits may be distributed amongst the members. It can be a useful way to raise capital through member contributions.

Community Interest Company. A recent alternative to company status is to register as a CIC, which requires the enterprise to commit its profits and assets for the benefit of the community. This structure can help identify the social benefit remit of the organisation and help in attracting funding.

Charitable status. Where an organisation can satisfy the Charities Commission that it is serving charitable aims, it may seek this status. It makes the organisation tax exempt and opens up more funding opportunities, but the registration process is fairly long-winded and there are certain rules and requirements set for Charities by the Charities Commission (see www.charity-commission.gov.uk).

Social enterprise models

Social enterprises are trading organisations with 'social ownership' which operate with the primary objective of delivering benefits to the local community, through trading profits or by providing services, employment and other social, environmental or economic gains.

The most common legal structure for a social enterprise is a Company Limited by Guarantee, but depending on membership, you may opt to become an Industrial and Provident Society. The CIC model may also be appropriate as an overlay to an existing legal structure.

There is no legal definition of a co-operative, but many enterprises choose to adhere to co-operative principles as defined by adopted by the 1995 Centenary Congress of the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) see <http://www.avoncda.coop/coopprinciples.htm>. Many co-ops are set up as Companies Limited by Guarantee or Industrial and Provident Societies. Help on suitable structures is available from The Wales Co-operative Centre at www.walescoop.com.

4.8 Using education activities to link in with the local community

Educational activities at Farmers' markets have both the potential to communicate the importance of sustainably-produced local food to the next generation of shoppers (and via them to their parents) and to attract people to the Market, either because parents are bringing their children to participate in a specific activity or because of the positive media coverage that educational activities could receive.

Education resources related to farming and the countryside tend to be aimed at teachers or Farmers', but these may enable you to facilitate educational activities focussed around a Farmers' market by signposting teachers and Farmers' to the help available. If a successful link is to be established with a local school, the most important requirement is for an enthusiastic contact at the school, as without a 'champion' for the idea very little progress is likely in the face of the competing demands on teachers' time. Producers at your Farmers' market may have children in local schools and be able to help make the right contacts to get things started. Informal educational activities may also be a draw for your Farmers' market if they are organised in the school holidays when parents may be casting around for interesting activities.

CASE STUDY: EDUCATION PROJECT - “COW GOES TO SCHOOL” IN RIVERSIDE

During May and June 2005, Riverside Community Market Association (RCMA) delivered a day of activities at each of four primary schools in Grangetown and Riverside to enable pupils to learn more about where food comes from, what different fresh fruits and vegetables taste like, and why some foods are healthier than others.

A highlight of the day in each school (with the exception of Kitchener Road Primary) was a live milking demonstration by a local farmer who brought one of his cows into the school playground so that all the children could see for themselves where a popular food item like milk actually comes from.



The farmer explained all about where the cow lives, and how she is looked after. For many of the children this was the first time that they had seen such a large farm animal ‘in the flesh’ and they were enthralled and very excited. After the milking demonstration many children were eager to ask questions – and finally they had a chance to pet the cow.

During the rest of the day, the participating children had a hands-on demonstration in the classroom of how butter is made from cream. They also experienced how wheat is ground into flour which they then used to bake some simple items that were shared with their parents later in the day. Amongst many other things, the children also learned about where different fruits and vegetables are grown and had the chance to compare the tastes of imported apples with those which are grown locally. They were also able to talk about and ‘design’ a menu for a healthy breakfast.

At the end of the day, the children’s parents were invited into the school to see a small exhibition about what foods the children had been tasting and learning about during the day,

5 FINANCIAL SUPPORT

5.1 Funding

Although the long-term aim is for the Market to be financially independent, when they first start up, most Farmers' markets need 'seed funding' or 'pump-priming' support from the public sector or other grant sources, to help with the investment required in equipment and to cover cash flow in the early stages when income may be limited.

Possible sources of or advice about funding to help develop a Market may be obtainable from:

- FARMA (www.FARMA.org.uk)
- Your Local Authorities (many Councils have grant programmes for community development, environmental, and regeneration projects. Your Market may be eligible for support in at least one of these areas.
- Organisations giving grants for environmental, health, and economic development purposes
- Charitable Trusts (see below)

A website managed by the Directory of Social Change on behalf of the Home Office may help you to identify other government funding for which your project would be eligible see:

www.governmentfunding.org.uk

CASE STUDY: FUNDING – RIVERSIDE MARKET

In its first year of operation, RCMA received support from Cardiff Council's Economic Development Department, to purchase some basic equipment and supplies; The Prince's Trust, to undertake a customer and local business survey; Shell Better Britain campaign, for publicity material; environment Wales, to cover start-up running costs; and Awards For All to deliver an education project in local primary schools.

Since then Riverside Market has received development funds from the above and from a wide range of other sources for costs associated with expanding the Market, and also for its outreach and education activities, including the New Opportunities Fund and the Social Risk Fund.

Grant funding checklist

1. Identify what you need and compile evidence to make the case for that need in terms which match the priorities and agenda of the target funder.
2. Cost the proposals carefully. Under-estimating costs can endanger a project's success so funders will want to be confident that you have been realistic in your budgeting. If you are going to use voluntary input to realise the project you may be able to count this 'contribution in kind' as a match funding in applications to some grant-giving bodies.
3. Research the grants that may be available to you and which are the most suitable for the project. Double check whether the grants you are looking at
 - Fund activities / projects with aims and objectives which are similar to yours (you may have to emphasise the social benefits of a Market, for example).
 - Fund organisations with a structure like yours - you may need to be a formally constituted organisation or a registered charity to be eligible.
 - Provide funding at the level you need (some have minimum and maximum levels of grant)
 - Restrict funding to non-capital expenditure.

- Match funding. You may need to identify another source of money as match funding, as most grant sources will give a maximum of 50%. Be aware that some grants from public sector sources cannot be matched with other public sources such as local authorities which may severely limit your options.
- Deadlines for funding applications. Identify how long it takes for decisions about applications to be made. Some grants have fast-track schemes under a certain threshold. You are unlikely to get grant aid for money you have already spent, so some grants may be determined too late to be useful for you (or you may need to reschedule your plans).

Charitable Trusts

The Directory of Social Change (DSC) and the Charities Aid Foundation jointly publish the Directory of Grant-Making Trusts which lists 2500 charitable trusts throughout the country. This directory costs £80 but your local library may have a copy, either of the book or the CD-Rom, or online versions (see below). Many of the smaller trusts have very local geographical focus and if you fall within their area you may be eligible for support. In reality you may find it easier to raise money to support educational or outreach activities associated with the Market than support for setting up the Market itself, as this may be viewed by funders as an essentially commercial activity.

Details of publications are available online at www.dsc.org.uk/acatalog/Grant_making_Trusts.html

or request a printed catalogue from the Directory of Social Change on 08450 77 77 07

Email: books@dsc.org.uk

The information from the Directory is also available on CD-Rom and as an online database at www.trustfunding.org.uk

National Lottery funding

There are programmes for National Lottery Funding, such as Awards for All which fund community projects that promote education, the environment and health in the local community with grants between £500 and £5000. This grant programme is designed to be easily accessible to small groups and does not require that you are a registered charity, although you do need to be a not-for-profit group or a Parish or Town Council, School or Health body. Other statutory bodies are not eligible. For more information see: www.awardsforall.org.uk www.lotterygoodcauses.org.uk

National Lottery Funding Helpline 0845 275 0000

5.2 Commercial sponsorship

You may be able to raise funds through local business sponsorship. The Farmers' market in Edinburgh is supported by the Edinburgh City Centre Management Company, an independent company supported by the City of Edinburgh Council and over 90 City Centre organisations and businesses.

Use your local knowledge to identify local businesses who might see themselves as a natural partner for a Farmers' market, because they may benefit from the added footfall your Market creates, or could benefit from the publicity gained by being associated with you.

Sponsorship by other retailers might be confusing to the public but there are other local businesses that like to be seen as community-minded, such as banks and building societies. Estate Agents benefit directly from the enhanced image that Farmers' markets give towns as places to live and work, so they may be another possible source of sponsorship.

If you are looking for sponsorship, a personal approach is more likely to elicit a positive result than a standard letter. It will help to have some materials ready to back up your case. Bear in mind that the sponsor needs to see the benefit that they will gain from their investment. Take photographs showing the Market at its best: this is the image you are offering as a tool to promote the sponsor's business.

Since what you are offering to a sponsor is primarily publicity, it will be helpful if you can provide data on how many people will see the sponsor's name as a result of their engagement with you and what the profile of these people is likely to be.

Another selling point for a local sponsor is that research shows that around two-thirds of customers at Farmers' markets travel to the Market from within 3 miles, so publicity related to the Market will be focussed in the area the business is based in.

If you have leaflets or posters to publicise the Market, on which you could acknowledge your sponsor, the number you print and circulate of these are further figures to have to hand.

If you have won sponsorship, maintain a good relationship with your sponsor and make sure they know you have fulfilled your side of the deal, and tell them when they get extra or unexpected publicity - through press coverage for example. Keep records and document exposure of the sponsor such as copies of leaflets with their name or logo on them and photographs of any signage used at the Markets. If you can keep the sponsor satisfied they may well repeat the investment the following year, and if they decide not to, you have a dossier to show potential new sponsors how you deliver the publicity you promise.



Talking to customers at Riverside Market



6 OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES

6.1 Training

There are a wide range of courses (usually free of charge or at low costs to non-profit and voluntary sector organisations) available from Wales Council for Voluntary Action (see <http://www.wcva.org.uk>) and from local County Voluntary Councils (CVC). In any case, once you are established as an organisation, it is well worth joining your local CVC as they have a number of free information resources.

6.2 Media relations / news releases

FARMA gives support on media relations. In particular, it includes reviewing news releases before they are sent out and making suggestions for improvement where possible.

For further information contact Rita Exner at FARMA

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6.3 British Food Fortnight

A British Food Fortnight resource pack for schools, produced with the support of the Department for Education and Skills and the Department of Health, is available to download from the British Food Fortnight website or as a printed version on request by email.

www.britishfoodfortnight.co.uk

6.4 Information for producers

FARMA offers information about what producers need to do to improve their sales at Farmers' markets. It also has attractive recipe booklets to tempt customers into buying more fresh produce and continually extend the range.

As well as printed material, and the website, FARMA also organise regular events and an annual conference for producers and Farmers' market managers.



6.5 CASE STUDY: Newport Farmers Market - pilot stage

Riverside Community Market Association (RCMA) was invited to run a 'pilot' six-month farmers' market in the centre of Newport. There had been previous attempts to set up a farmers' market in Newport which had not been sustainable for a variety of reasons. RCMA was invited to contribute because of their successful track record of running an urban farmers' market in Cardiff, as well as their existing contacts with the basic ingredients of a farmers' market (stallholders, stall suppliers etc.) and their knowledge of the legal and other requirements. Newport's City Centre Manager was able to offer RCMA a small subsidy so that stalls could be made available to producers at a discounted rate to encourage them to attend in the early stages. Her primary motivation was to encourage more people to visit the City and her belief that the farmers' market could make a real contribution to the development of Newport.

There was a certain amount of uncertainty at the outset as to what the response of Newport shoppers would be to the idea of a farmers' market on their doorstep, and this was compounded by the fact that a snowstorm took place on the eve of the first Market which prevented nearly half the stallholders from attending. However, despite this, there was a reasonable amount of trade done, and the response from all customers was uniformly positive. The next Market was much busier – especially as it took place a few days before Christmas – and due to a combination of word-of-mouth, press articles, posters, flyers and advertising, there has been a steady growth in awareness about the Market since then. Feedback from all customers has continued to be very positive.

An early decision for the pilot Newport farmers' market related to location. Should it be located in the existing City Market building, where it would have the advantage of existing footfall, or should it locate in an available but little used city centre site. The key factor in choosing the city centre site was the fact that the farmers' market would have to be located on an upper floor in the City Market building – an impossible task for many stallholders with their large freezers and heavy stock, and also a disadvantage to attracting customers – notoriously difficult to get them up or down stairs. Also there was very little in the way of convenient parking. Finally the City Centre Manager was keen for the pilot market to fulfil a function in attracting more people to the City Centre location. The challenge at this location then became to inform and attract customers to the site, and a strategic marketing programme was devised to do this in partnership with the City Centre Manager, comprising paid advertising, flyers, banners, A-Frame boards and on two occasion paid actors who handed out flyers on Market days to shoppers on the nearby main shopping street .

6.6 Market surveys

In order to test some of the assumptions about benefits of Farmers' markets and to help identify criteria for their successful development, a 'Health Check' survey of producers and customers was conducted at Newport Farmers' Market during the pilot development stage. The survey involved stationing a group of volunteers with 'clickers' at key entrance and exit points in the Market to count the number of people entering the Market area throughout the period of the Market, and the proportion of them who appeared to be leaving with some items bought at the Market. Volunteers with clipboards also asked customers for their postal codes, and a number of questions pertaining to what they had purchased and their impressions of the Market.

A similar survey had been conducted at Riverside Market at an earlier stage and had been very useful in terms of providing a 'snapshot' of where most Market customers came from and what their purchasing habits were. For example, it enabled RCMA to see where there were any geographical or demographic 'black holes' in terms of public awareness of the Market, and for Marketing and publicity activities to be concentrated in those areas. Also to think of ways that the average customer spend could be increased if it appeared to be low at certain times of the day.

A reputed benefit of farmers' markets is that customers can ask producers how their food is produced. Another potential benefit is that customers can ask about how to prepare and cook the food they are buying. Producers were asked whether they did have this sort of knowledge and whether customers did ask about food preparation. Responses from stallholders were unanimously affirmative to both of these questions!

In March 2006 a further survey was undertaken of the traders at Newport Farmers' market. One aim of the survey was to assess whether the traders would be interested in taking part in a mid-week market in the Cardiff area. The survey also sought to assess the potential for one-off events, shared cost marketing and provided an opportunity for traders to make any further comments. The key findings were as follows:

- There is considerable appetite amongst stall holders for a potential second market in and around the Cardiff area on a Thursday
- There are sufficient stalls potentially interested in shared cost marketing (we would need four to agree to make this viable)
- There are a number of ideas for marketing that can be investigated further e.g. lower cost branded bags, targeting larger scale buyers, improving signage (arrows on the signs) at the Newport market.

Recommendations that result include:

- That a detailed feasibility study is drawn up to conduct a second market in the Cardiff area on a Thursday. This should include addressing the likely customers of such a market as well as the traders.
- That improvements are made to the signage to the Newport market
- That full costs are developed in relation to shared cost marketing along with a broader discussion of how we wish to proceed in marketing our markets.
- That a regular programme of market research is drawn up, based on a team of volunteers to assess the success or otherwise of specific marketing campaigns

6.7 Summary

Based on the level of footfall and sales to date, there is a strong sense by the stallholders, the Market manager and other stakeholders that Newport Farmers' market can develop into a successful and sustainable Market.

The financial model included below shows that the regularity of the market is a key factor in its financial sustainability. By going to twice-monthly, and buying its own canopies, the Market could be self-sustaining after year 3. A modest increase in stall fees for the following year from October 2007, indicates that the market can operate with a small profit.

The continuing level of support from the City Centre Manager contributes to the likelihood of a positive outcome. If the Market becomes established in a more central location, it is likely that footfall will increase significantly.

On current evidence, we anticipate that the Newport Farmers' market may peak at a level of around twenty-five stalls within twelve months. Our experience with Farmers' markets is that marketing and publicity efforts have to be maintained at the highest possible level for at least the first year of the life of a Market until levels of awareness are high enough that word-of-mouth can take over, and sufficient numbers of people come to consider the Market as a part of their regular shopping. An important potential obstacle to this is when the Market only operates on a monthly basis. Depending on the level of interest on the part of stallholders, and taking into consideration the various logistical issues involved (availability of stalls and staff to erect them; permission from the Local Authority) it will be important for the Market managers to consider whether to increase the frequency of the Market to twice monthly or weekly. (Note: It is easier for customers to remember something like '1st & 3rd Saturday' than 'fortnightly' because of the variations in the length of months).

The profit & loss spreadsheets on which the Newport Market has been modelled are copied overpage. Some assumptions had to be made about costs and income, any of which are easily adapted using the spreadsheet (which is available from the authors).