

# Farmers' Markets

The Come to the Table Project: [www.cometothetablenc.org](http://www.cometothetablenc.org)

## What is a farmer's market?

A farmers market can be as simple as a few farmers selling produce from the beds of their pick-ups on a Sunday afternoon. Some farmers markets host hundreds of farmers and tens of thousands of customers. A market can be held at a rural community center, in a church parking lot, or in a city park. Most charge vendors a small fee. If fresh food is scarce in your neighborhood, a market can help bring it in. If a market already exists, look for ways to support it.

## Farmer's markets need:

Community support

A steering committee of farmers and community members

Enough customers to make sure farmers can make money

Products that customers can afford and want to buy

A site that's visible, fairly flat, and, ideally, shaded in the summer

One dedicated market manager to enforce policies and collect fees

Support and advice from the proper government agencies

## Why start a farmer's market?

Provide fresh, healthy food

Build community

Support the local economy

Get to know farmers

## What ideas can help markets succeed?

Provide transportation to low-income families and seniors on market day.

Hold cooking classes, canning and freezing demonstrations, or pass out simple storage and cooking tips.

To welcome folks of different ethnicities, offer familiar foods and actively recruit farmers from diverse groups.

Connect farmers who need sales staff with members of the community who could use a job, especially where language or culture would otherwise separate vendors from shoppers.

Use donations or a percentage of profits to buy market coupons for seniors or low-income families.

Have a buy/ sell/ trade market, where people can swap what they have for what they need.

Add fun activities such as harvest festivals, summer celebrations, or live music.

Ask local businesses and organizations to sponsor the costs of starting a market.

Participate in the WIC Farmer's Market Nutrition Program or accept EBT cards.

Have the market at the same time as a church supper or community weekly event.

Bring baskets of produce from the market to shut-ins.

## For more information:

**The Mountain Tailgate Market Association**, [www.asapconnections.org/MTMA.html](http://www.asapconnections.org/MTMA.html), works with markets in western North Carolina and has great resources for markets anywhere.

**The WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program**, [www.nutritionnc.com/wic/fmarket.com](http://www.nutritionnc.com/wic/fmarket.com), provides farmers market vouchers to low-income mothers in certain counties of North Carolina.

**Eat Smart Move More North Carolina** has a guide, *Bring Fresh Produce to Your Setting*, and surveys at [www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/FreshProduce/FreshProduce.html](http://www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/FreshProduce/FreshProduce.html).

**Leaflight's 21st Century Farmers Markets** program, [www.leaflight.org](http://www.leaflight.org), provides grants and technical assistance to markets to accept EBT cards, which are the equivalent of food stamps.