

PRINCE GEORGE COUNTY 2020 FARMERS MARKET UPDATE



2020 Market Highlights

An online ordering guide was developed to allow customers to pre-order by Thursday of each week for Saturday curbside pick up. This was utilized throughout the season by customers and will likely remain in place for 2021.

A new EBT machine was received and paid for by the State. The market was unable to accept EBT benefits until approximately August 2020.



Discount flyer initiated for Father's Day weekend.

Facebook Live presence is strong. Started doing a Facebook live video from the market. Customers make comments about how much they enjoy this every week. Vendors have expressed that their sales have improved because of it.



2020 Vendors

On average, there were 25 vendors that participated through August. The number dropped to approximately 21 vendors in September and about 18 scheduled for November.

Almost every week there have been new inquires as to how to become a vendor for the 2020 season.

Vendors have sold the following types of items:

- Produce (limited fruits)
- Herbs
- Local Honey
- Plants
- Handmade Jewelry
- Woodworking
- Fresh Eggs
- Homemade Dog Treats
- Homemade fudge and candy
- Crafts/face masks/Home décor
- Handcrafted Greeting Cards
- Pickled Green tomatoes
- Custom made wreaths
- Handmade Soaps and Scrubs/face creams
- Handmade pin cushions, threaders, scissor stands for sewing



Financial Data

- Processed \$3,430 in credit/EBT transactions through October 3rd.
- Paid \$104.56 in card transaction fees.
- Collected \$1,030 in vendor booth payments through October 3rd.
- Collected \$398.24 by selling hot dogs/chips/drinks at the market. [\$698 collected minus \$299.76 spent to replenish].
- Bank account has increased by \$869.72 from the end of April through the end of August.

Although this isn't bad, for the market to grow and be sustainable, we need to have more revenue coming in to the market.

Vendor Survey Conducted

In a recent survey that was conducted and shared with the Board of Supervisors, 22 vendors responded and the majority would like to see more of the following for 2021:

- Food Trucks (68%)
- More activities for kids (53%)
- More fruits (47%)
- Advertising and marketing (90% feel it's extremely important)
- Growth in customer base (77% feel it's extremely important)
- 2 expanded markets
- Live Music (82% would enjoy having this option)
- Continuing the pre-order/curbside pickup option (82% want to continue)
- Meat & Dairy Options
- More breads and baked goods
- Gutters, improved lighting, fans and better drainage
- Market closing for July 4th weekend (55% chose this)



Vendor Feedback & 2021 Goals (depending on COVID-19 regulations)

- Search for meat, dairy, seafood and baked good vendors
- Add 2 expanded markets to the season – aligned with children’s activities (making bird house, growing a flower, painting pumpkins, etc.)
- Incorporate a loyalty Program (# visits to the market earn entry for a gift basket)
- “Christmas in July”
- Fresh veggies/fruit scavenger hunt
- Children’s recipe contests (children design their own recipes using ingredients from the vendors)
- Live streaming educational opportunities (produce and honey vendors)
- Search for Food truck vendors who are scheduled to attend
- Create a calendar with activities and events
- Send flyers home with school-aged children
- Story time at the market w/ free book giveaway (some books have already been donated prior to COVID-19, working with the regional library for more donations)
- Live Musicians (if possible)

Current Fee Structure

- Farm Bureau members pay \$40 annually to Farm Bureau and pay nothing to the market for the season.
- The Market doesn't have a partnership with Farm Bureau and reaps no rewards from those memberships.
- Non-Farm Bureau members pay \$10 per week that they set up at the market.



Surrounding Market Fee Structures

Market	Cost	What is included	Vendor must provide	Misc.
River Street	\$15 per market/ \$200 season	Nothing	Tent, table, chair	
Hopewell	\$10 per market (1st market of the season fee is waived)	Nothing	Tent, table, chair	
South of the James	\$150 application fee (includes advertising and parking) \$30 weekly fee or \$35 if part time vendor selling on select days. Food vendors pay \$40 to set up	Nothing		
Colonial Heights	12'x12' space - \$10 per week or \$30 per month paid the first of the month or 12'x40' space - \$15 per week or \$45 per month paid the first of the month. Annual dues are an option for \$300	Table	Tent, chair	75% of the vendors must be Farmers. Only 7 vendors attend that are not Farmers.
Dorey Park	\$25 application fee and \$15 per market	Nothing	Tent, table, chair	

Proposed Changes for 2021

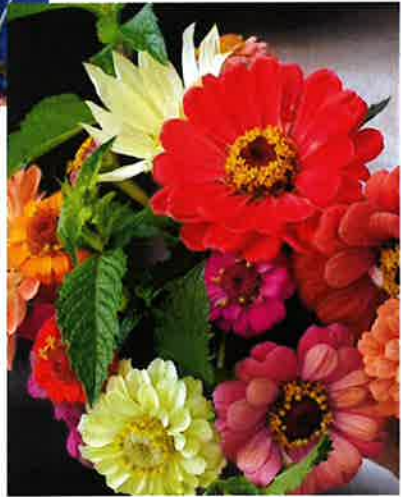
- The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) has released information that as of July 1, 2021, no dogs will be allowed in the market area where food is being prepared or sold. (This notice would be included in the Spring newsletter to citizens and advertised online and posted at the market next year). ***Service dogs will be allowed.**
- Stop all Farm Bureau memberships being honored and replace it with the following:
 - Vendors selling produce, honey, herbs, flowers/plants (80%) – Offer an annual membership cost of \$50 payable to the Farmers Market on the first market of the season or \$3.00 per week if they do not pay in advance.
 - All other vendors under the pavilion - \$10 per market or an annual membership of \$150 that is payable to the Farmers Market on the first market of the season. [\$6 per market if pre-paid at beginning of the market].

Proposed Changes for 2021 Cont..

- Do not allow vendors to drive on the grass. They will need to use a hand truck to unload and load their merchandise.
- Expansions of the market to be located in the parking area beside the field nearest to Beazley Elementary.
- Produce, honey, flowers/plants and herb Vendors (those that sell 80% of these items) will get first pick of the space they want for the season. Preference on vendor locations will always be given to these types of vendors.
- Work towards SNAP matching benefits (example, customer can get \$20 in produce for only \$10 – this is offered at other markets).



2020 Market at-a-glance



A Quick Recap & Request to Proceed

- Communicate the “no dog” rule
- Work to expand fruit, meat, dairy and baked goods offerings
- Continue to advertise and promote the market
- Offer loyalty or reward program incentive
- Live stream from farms during prime season
- Explore food truck / onsite food options (COVID-19?)
- Explore SNAP matching benefit and senior programs
- Story time with free children’s book giveaways (COVID-19?)
- “Hands on” learning opportunities for all ages (COVID-19?)
- Stop Farm Bureau membership offering
- Offer Prince George membership OR “pay as you go option”
- Work towards growth of the market

Questions?

