



2015

ANNUAL REPORT



An Update from the Market director

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Urbana’s Market at the Square experienced another year of success in 2015. The farmers market continues to draw nearly 4,500 customers to downtown Urbana on a weekly basis throughout the market season, and provides a venue for local farmers, businesses, and non-profit organizations to interact with residents and visitors alike.

Operating as one of the largest and most diverse farmers markets in Illinois, Urbana’s Market at the Square showcases producers from across the state, continually offers educational opportunities for children and adults, and advocates for local farmers and local businesses.

I continue to be amazed by the hard work and dedication of everyone involved with the farmers market - from the growers working hard through drought and flood, the talented art and craft vendors tirelessly perfecting their skills, and to the many prepared food vendors that offer up award-winning food to Market visitors.

Even with over 235 registered vendors and community groups, Urbana’s Market at the Square strives to provide an individualized experience for each participant. From the application process to setting up at Market, staff has helped to retain anchor vendors, attract new vendors, and keep the market a unique and exciting shopping experience for customers.

Our work, however, is never over. Staff is already planning for 2016 and looking for new opportunities to ensure the sustainability of the farmers market for many years to come. We are committed to collaborating with other groups and organizations in an effort to connect our community with local food and other products and the people that produce them.

The local food movement is vibrant and growing in our community and Urbana’s Market at the Square is excited to be at the forefront. We are grateful to the many community partners and organizations that promote our Market, the numerous City of Urbana departments and divisions that assist us on a day-to-day basis, and to the Mayor and City Council for their support of the Market’s mission and efforts.

Market Mission

Urbana’s farmers market is a vibrant market that connects the community with local food growers and producers, strengthens our local food economy, provides access to local artisans, and serves as a community gathering place.

Market Goals

- 1 Preserve and enhance the character of the Market.
- 2 Ensure that the provision of a variety of fresh, healthy, local foods remains the cornerstone of the Market.
- 3 Encourage a dynamic, diverse, and quality Market.
- 4 Promote the inclusion of stakeholders in the decision-making process for the Market.
- 5 Consider future growth of the Market that is consistent with its mission.
- 6 Enhance the quality of life in Urbana by providing community activities and fostering social gathering and interaction.
- 7 Promote the Market as an educational forum for consumers to learn the uses and benefits of quality, locally grown, or prepared foods.
- 8 Ensure that the Market continues to have a stable funding source to ensure its long-term continuity and fiscal health.
- 9 Strengthen the Market’s role in the City’s economic development efforts in the downtown area and elsewhere.
- 10 Enhance the Market’s role in the local food system.

2015 Participants

at Urbana's Market at the Square

43 **performers & buskers**
Includes acoustic musicians and performance artists busking in fixed locations throughout the Market space.

49 **Grower Vendors**
Includes fresh fruit and vegetable growers, meat and dairy producers, and fresh flower and live plant growers. All products must be grown by the seller within the State of Illinois.

49 **Prepared Food Vendors**
Includes bakers, candy makers, ice cream vendors, and other prepared foods. All items must be prepared by the seller within the State of Illinois.

63 **Community Groups**
Includes non-profit, charitable, educational and government organizations engaging with and providing information and resources to the community.

74 **ARTS & CRAFTS VENDORS**
Includes artisans producing pottery, jewelry, furniture, and more. All items must be created by the seller within the State of Illinois.



2015 visitor stats

An estimated **127,296** visitors attended the Market during the 2015 season.

That means that over the course of the 28-week season, an average of about **4,546** visitors came to visit and shop at Urbana's Market at the Square EVERY WEEK!

Jun JUL AUG are the busiest months of the farmers market season.



Going Viral

Jan and husband are probably the most famous visitors to Urbana's Market at the Square. This photo, taken by the Market Director earlier in the 2015 season, went viral within days after being posted on the Market Instagram and Facebook accounts. The photo is still making its rounds on the internet.

the bird is the word

Both traditional and new media marketing tools are used to spread the word about Urbana's Market at the Square. Traditional marketing tools include the following: print advertisements and occasional on-site broadcasts, maintaining pages on the City of Urbana website, printing and distributing posters and handbills, street pole banners, merchandise sales (Market t-shirts), press releases, and earned media coverage. New media marketing efforts have grown to become one of the most cost-effective ways to share Market happenings and include the following:



633
Followers
a 291%
increase



1,573
Subscribers
a 35%
increase



9,907
Likes
a 22%
increase



4,115
Followers
an 18%
increase

To further support our local farmers and producers, we continue to offer programs to help vendors design and fabricate signage through a cooperative banner purchase with a local printing company. We also offer unique promotional opportunities on social media through cooperative (and quite creative) advertising efforts with various local media outlets and numerous social media efforts.

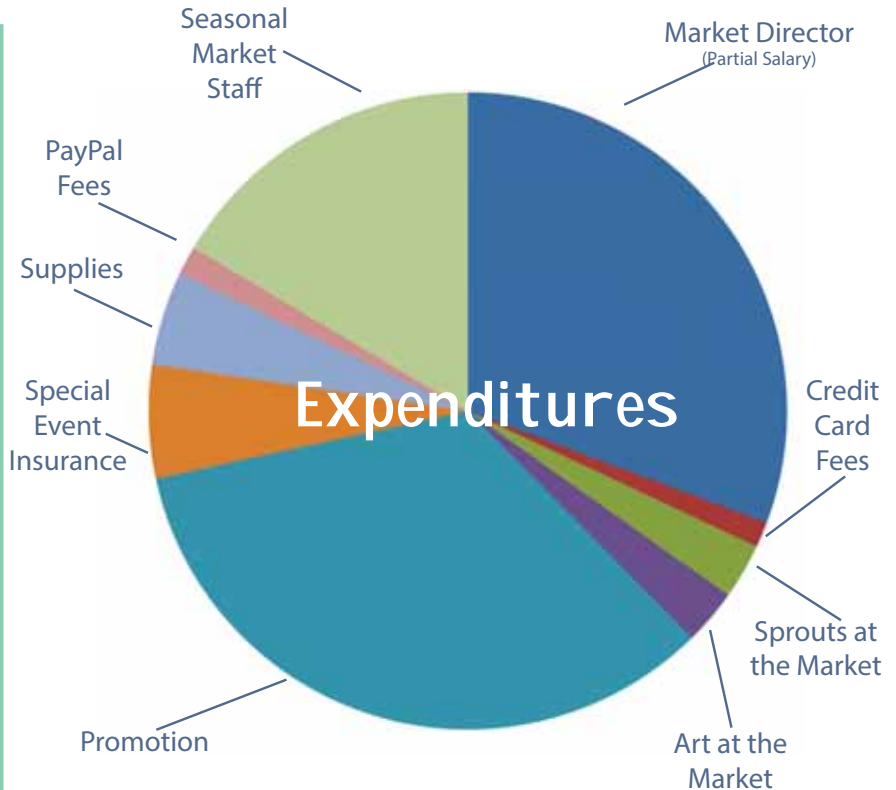
Financial Insights

for the 2015 farmers market season

The Market is focused on making incremental adjustments each season as a way to work towards becoming more financially sustainable and as a self-sufficient program of the City of Urbana. By continuing to attract a steady number of vendors and community group participants each season, and controlling staffing and administrative costs, the Market can control expenditures and boost revenues.

The information contained on this page reviews the 2015 Market at the Square expenditures and highlights overall Market revenue, as noted by the season.

In 2015, Market operating expenditures totaled just over \$63,499, while revenue reached just over \$78,500. Revenues and expenses remained steady from the 2014 Market season.



Revenue by Season





ASK US HOW YOU CAN USE YOUR LINK CARD OR WIC FMNP VOUCHERS TO BUY FARM FRESH FOOD!



SNAP/LINK/EBT

SNAP is the supplemental assistance program, formerly known as food stamps, administered through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Office of Food and Nutrition Services.

SNAP is a federal program that helps low-income individuals and their families buy the food they need for good health. In Illinois, benefits are loaded onto a card called the LINK card through an EBT or electronic benefits transfer system. This allows recipients to access their SNAP benefits from their LINK card, similar to a debit card.

Urbana's Market at the Square developed the "Market Scratch" program in 2010 in order to enable Market patrons receiving SNAP benefits to purchase fresh and local fruits and vegetables as well as food-bearing plants, fresh baked goods and other food items at the farmers market.

During the 2015 season, Urbana's farmers market distributed \$15,414 in combined Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and double value incentives, which is an increase of \$8,061 over the previous season.

WIC at the Market

Urbana's Market at the Square was awarded a \$1,000 grant by the Illinois Farmers Market Association, as part of a broader program funded through the Lumpkin Family Foundation, to incentivize Women, Infant and Children (WIC) Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) vouchers during the 2015 season.

The bulk of the grant funding was used for matching the WIC FMNP vouchers and the remaining funds were used for printing the vouchers, and promoting the program. The Champaign County WIC office assisted in distributing the vouchers and came to the farmers market on a regular basis to help with the following: acclimate WIC recipients to the farmers market, give tours of the vendors eligible to accept the WIC FMNP vouchers, and answer any questions.

Market staff commented that they had never seen so many customers wishing to use WIC FMNP. Overall, it was a tremendous success and another fantastic way that Urbana's Market at the Square was able to expand access to fresh, healthy, locally grown and prepared food.



free Programming

at Urbana's Market at the Square



Art at the market

For the last seven Market seasons, the Public Arts Commission has supported free arts workshops at the farmers market through programs called Art at the Market and Performance at the Market. Art and Performance at the Market help to showcase local talent and expose residents to a variety of art media and a range of musical styles. There were six of these workshops and performances during the 2015 season, with some events attracting nearly 1,000 participants.

Bike to Market

Champaign-Urbana Bike to Market Saturdays are held by Champaign County Bikes every Market day during the month of May at Urbana's Market at the Square. Bike to Market Saturdays are an opportunity to promote the use of cycling for routine errands, like shopping at the farmers market. Bicycling resources and even a bike valet were available during this popular program.



May 2 • All Things Locally Grown
8:00 a.m. - Noon

This summer you can visit with library staff at **READ at the MARKET**, a monthly event at **URBANA'S MARKET at the SQUARE**, located at the corner of Illinois & Vine Streets in downtown Urbana. You can sign up for the **Summer Reading Program**, enjoy a story on the **Magic Reading Carpet**, learn about programs, services, and what's new on the shelves. We'll have unique activities each month for everyone in the family!

COMING TO THE MARKET

- * Saturday, June 6 Summer Reading Sign-up
- * Saturday, July 4 Give Up Your Bike for Independence Day
- * Saturday, August 1 Celebrate the 40th Annual Inventors Festival
- * Saturday, September 5 Battle of the Books Extra
- * Saturday, October 3 Family History Month

Read at the Market is sponsored by The Urbana Free Library in collaboration with URBANA'S MARKET at the SQUARE

Read at the market

The Urbana Free Library joined the Market on a monthly basis during the 2015 season to present a variety of gardening guides, food-related novels, recipes, and cook books. The library also had a fun sitting area where librarians read to children, passed out helium balloons and distributed information to parents and adults about the many free and low-cost programs available at the library and within the community.

Sprouts at the Market

Sprouts at the Market is a **FREE** nutrition and farm literacy program geared towards kids ages 3-8 years old. Join us from 9:30-10:30am on these Saturdays:

- MAY 16th** Growing Healthy Habits with the Family Resiliency Center. Go to a neighbor's front to meet local farmers, plant seeds to start your own garden, and make your own oatmeal. Featuring healthy seasonal ingredients!
- JUNE 20th** Get Your Heart 'Beating' with sprouts with Illinois Farmers Market Association. Healthy foods are important to help your body get moving! Learn about heart foods you eat and that will keep you healthy and active.
- JULY 18th** Farmers Market Food Lab with Champaign-Metrol. Learn the secrets behind growing produce and spend a creative day using local ingredients in the Sprouts market laboratory.
- AUG 15th** The Great Sprouts Expedition with CUPSEL WIC Office. Sprouts will get a map and set off on a farmers market expedition. Will you find the treasure?
- SEPT 19th** Fun with Flavor with Planet Organic Feed Store. Learn about herbs, how they grow and why we use them! Be sure to bring your taste buds as you sample herbs that grow in Illinois.
- OCT 17th** From the Root to the Stem with Cascade Ground Coop. Learn about various plants that grow in Illinois and benefit parts of plants you may never have thought to eat!

Sprouts at the market

Now in its 8th season, Sprouts at the Market provides opportunities for kids to taste fresh and in-season produce, and receive nutrition information about these foods, while also meeting the farmer/producer responsible for the food. In 2015, a total of six events, each averaging over 50 participants, were held. Sprouts at the Market is our way of helping to reinforce the need for healthy eating habits beginning at a young age.

eating seasonally is deliciously easy

Farm Fresh & Fast was a new initiative of Urbana's Market at the Square created in partnership with WCIA News Channel 3's afternoon program *ciLiving* and designed by Maria Ludeke of Creative Health. Each week during the Market season a recipe card was printed and published online featuring seasonal ingredients. The recipes are quick, easy to prepare and cost less than \$2 per serving. Every Thursday, the Market Director and Maria Ludeke demonstrated how to cook the recipe on *ciLiving*. It was a great opportunity to highlight Market vendors, seasonal produce, and easy (and tasty) ways to eat local without breaking the bank. Some of the most popular recipes included the Black Bean Sweet Potato Boats, Mini Pumpkin Pie Shooters, Raspberry Rhubarb Crisp, Lemon Asparagus Pasta and Fall Vegan Pot Pies. The printed recipe cards were available at the main Market at the Square information tent, located each week in the northwest corner of the Market, and many recipes were asked for by name from customers that tuned in to *ciLiving* to watch the cooking segments. Plans are underway to replicate the program in 2016, with a twist...Illinois wine pairings with each dish.



a special shout out to these fine folks:



and to Urbana's Market at the square advisory board:

- Shea Belahi
- Robert Kleiss
- Alderwoman Diane Marlin
- Kent Miles
- Stan Schutte
- Carrie Welter

2nd annual csa fair

Urbana's Market at the Square led the charge in hosting a second annual Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) fair in mid-December, bringing in 16 growers and producers that offer buying clubs and CSA shares as part of their business plans. The event, co-sponsored by The Land Connection and the Urbana Business Association, was well attended and helped to educate the community about additional ways to support local businesses and farmers. Some of the CSA and buying club offerings available in our area, and showcased at the CSA Fair, include produce, meat, goat cheese, bread, flowers, honey, and grains. Pick-ups for CSA and buying clubs happen throughout Urbana-Champaign, with numerous pick-ups occurring directly at the Market.

