



Farmers Markets as Community Infrastructure: Evidence from a Three-Year Utah Statewide Data Project (2023–2025)

Presented by Jaclyn Pace
Director, Utah Farmers Market Network



Extension
UtahStateUniversity





About Us

Mission:

The Utah Farmers Market Network supports farmers markets through communication, collaboration, and professional development – building community, uplifting agriculture, and incubating small businesses throughout Utah.

A program of:



Extension
UtahStateUniversity





Advisory Council

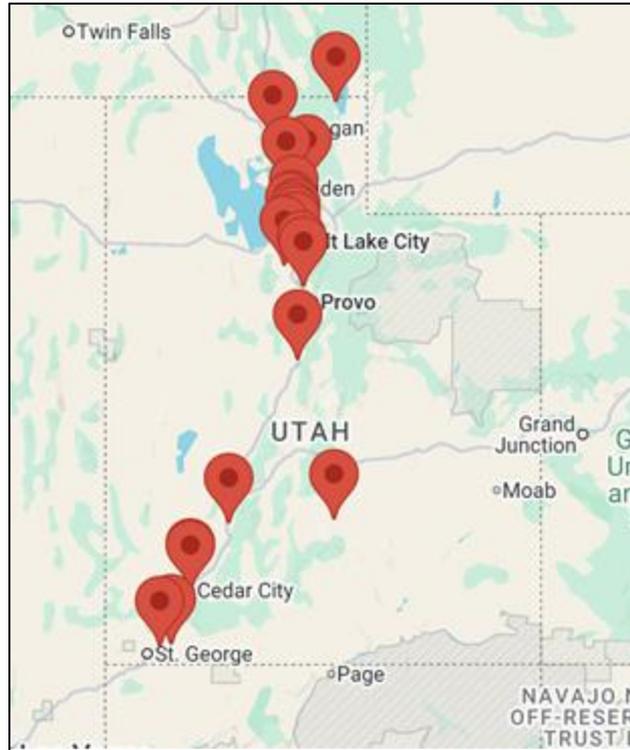
Mission:

The Utah Farmers Market Network Advisory Council provides leadership, guidance, and diverse perspectives to strengthen the impact of farmers markets statewide. We support thriving markets that connect communities with local food, empower farmers and entrepreneurs, and enhance Utah's local food system and small businesses.





Member Markets





Three-Year Data Collection Project

2023

1. Downtown Salt Lake City
2. Wheeler Farm
3. Carbon-Emery (Price)

2024

1. Downtown Salt Lake City
2. Wheeler Farm
3. Carbon-Emery (Price)
4. Downtown St. George
5. Ogden
6. Murray Park

2025

1. Downtown Salt Lake City
 2. Wheeler Farm
 3. Carbon-Emery (Price)
 4. Downtown St. George
 5. Ogden
 6. Murray Park
 7. Hurricane
 8. Festival City (Cedar City)
 9. Millcreek
-



Sticker Surveys





Questions

1. What is your age group?
 2. How far did you travel to get to this market today?
 3. How much money do you estimate you spend on an average market day?
 4. Why did you visit this market today?
 5. What percentage of your weekly grocery budget do you estimate you spend at this farmers market?
 6. How often do you visit or plan to visit this farmers market during the season?
 7. Why is this market important?
-



Year 1 Findings

Downtown Salt Lake City Farmers Market		Wheeler's Farm Farmers Market		Carbon-Emery Farmers Market		
Vendors reported an average of \$18,198 in season sales (\$1,401,261 aggregate sales)		Vendors reported an average of \$11,609 in season sales (\$371,500 aggregate sales)		Vendors reported an average of \$2,100 in season sales (\$10,500 aggregate sales)		
\$52	The amount an average customer reported spending per day.	16%	reported spending \$100 or more	\$50	The amount an average customer reported spending per day.	
14%	reported spending \$100 or more	\$19	The amount an average customer reported spending per day.	21%	reported spending \$30 or more	
70%	of vendors reported being a woman/nonbinary owned business	10%	were minority owned	The average farm-based business covers 17 acres (231 total owned/leased aggregate acres).	68%	of vendors reported being a woman/nonbinary owned business
15%	were minority owned	The average farm-based business covers 1 acres (6.8 total owned/leased aggregate acres).	40%	of vendors reported being a woman/nonbinary owned business	73 acres	The average farm-based business covers (292 total owned/leased aggregate acres).
<p>Customers from ages 40-59 spend on average \$10 more per visit than younger and older customers.</p>		<p>Customers from ages 40-59 spend on average \$11 more per visit than younger and older customers.</p>		<p>Customers from ages 30-49 spend on average \$7 more per visit than younger and older customers.</p>		
Produce was the top reason to visit the market. 28%	\$43,161	worth of food was distributed to low-income households through state nutrition incentive programs.	Produce was the top reason to visit the market. 29%	\$12,910	worth of food was distributed to low-income households through state nutrition incentive programs.	
Produce was the top reason to visit the market. 60%	\$2,508	worth of food was distributed to low-income households through state nutrition incentive programs.	5% of customers polled were from out-of-state.	26%	of responding vendors (2) launched their business at this market	
51%	at a farmers market (24)	3%	of customers polled were from out-of-state.	26%	of responding vendors (13) launched their business at this market	
69%	of customers reported visiting the market at least once a month	22%	reported visiting every week	70%	of customers reported visiting the market at least once a month	
24 states represented	26%	of customers reported visiting every week	12 states represented	26%	of customers reported visiting every week	
80%	of responding vendors (5) launched their business at this market.	89%	of customers reported visiting the market at least once a month	31%	reported visiting every week	

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Year 1 Findings

Impacts of Utah Farmers Markets

Based on 2023 data collected at 3 Utah farmers markets by the Utah Farmers Market Network and Utah State University.

Help Build Community	Stimulate Local Economies	Support Local Businesses
Up to 89% of customers reported visiting the market every week	Customers spent an average of \$29-\$52 per day at the market	Vendors reported an average of \$2,000-\$18,000 in season sales
More than \$43,000 worth of food was distributed to low-income households through nutrition incentive programs	51%-80% of vendors reported starting their small business at a farmers market	40%-70% vendors reported being women/nonbinary owned businesses
Increase Access to Healthy Foods	Support Small Businesses	Support Gender Equality

National Farmers Market Week
August 4-10, 2024

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Year 2 Findings



Utah Farmers Markets: Statewide Social and Economic Impacts

Bryn Watkins, Jaclyn Pace, Steven Price, and Roslynn McCann

Utah is home to over 45 markets where local farmers and artisans sell their homegrown food and homemade wares. These markets gather community, stimulate regional commerce, champion nutrition for Utahns from all backgrounds, and most of all, create a home for local agriculture to flourish.

The Utah Farmers Market Network (UFMN) supports local agriculture in Utah by promoting farmers markets and supporting increased capacity through communication, collaboration, technical assistance, and professional development. For the second consecutive market season, the UFMN researchers surveyed customers and vendors roughly once a month, from June through October 2024, at six key markets across the state (see box at right).

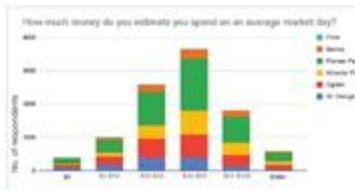
WHAT DID WE LEARN IN 2024?

Traveling for Fresh Food

Most customers visit farmers markets to buy fresh and local groceries, but many others see farmers markets as a tourist destination. Survey respondents visiting from across the country or globe valued farmers markets enough to prioritize shopping at the market over other local activities.

Spending for Fresh Food

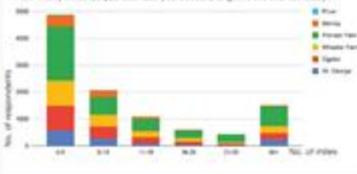
Customers generally spend \$26–\$50 at the farmers market, redirecting roughly 20% of their weekly grocery budget to local growers (U.S. Census Bureau, 2024).



Key Utah Farmers Markets

1. Farmers Market Ogden
2. Downtown Salt Lake City Farmers Market
3. Wheeler Farm Farmers Market (Murray)
4. Murray Park Farmers Market
5. Carbon and Emery Farmers Market (Price)
6. Downtown Farmers Market (St. George)

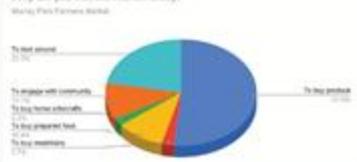
How many miles do you estimate you traveled to get to the market today?



Customer Ages and Motivations

Markets that prioritize farmers, such as the Murray Park Farmers Market, draw a greater diversity between generations.

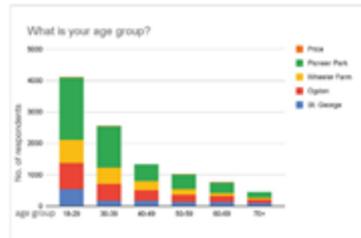
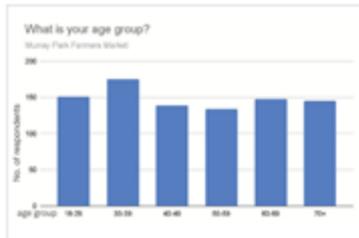
Why did you visit the market today?





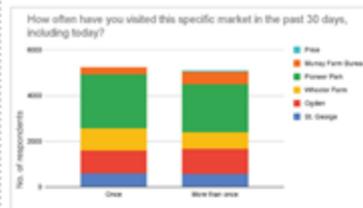
Year 2 Findings

At other markets, many younger people valued the ambience or “vibes” of the farmers market atmosphere, frequently coming just to be with their community, try local food, and look around.



Customer Numbers

Across the state, markets routinely attracted as many new customers every month as repeat customers.



Statewide Social, Fiscal, and Farmer Impacts

By averaging the spending across all markets during the summer season, customers spent between an estimated **\$3.46 to \$7.09 million** at these six markets alone. Statewide, the commerce generated by all 40 network markets would be much higher.

The data show that farmers markets play a crucial role in:

- Building local economies.
- Fostering intergenerational, multicultural community.
- Proudly supporting Utah’s farmers.

With more robust financial support, they could achieve greater impacts. Contribute to the Utah Farmers Market Network by becoming a member at: utahfarmersmarketnetwork.org/membership.

Scan to sign up for membership



Scan to pay membership fee

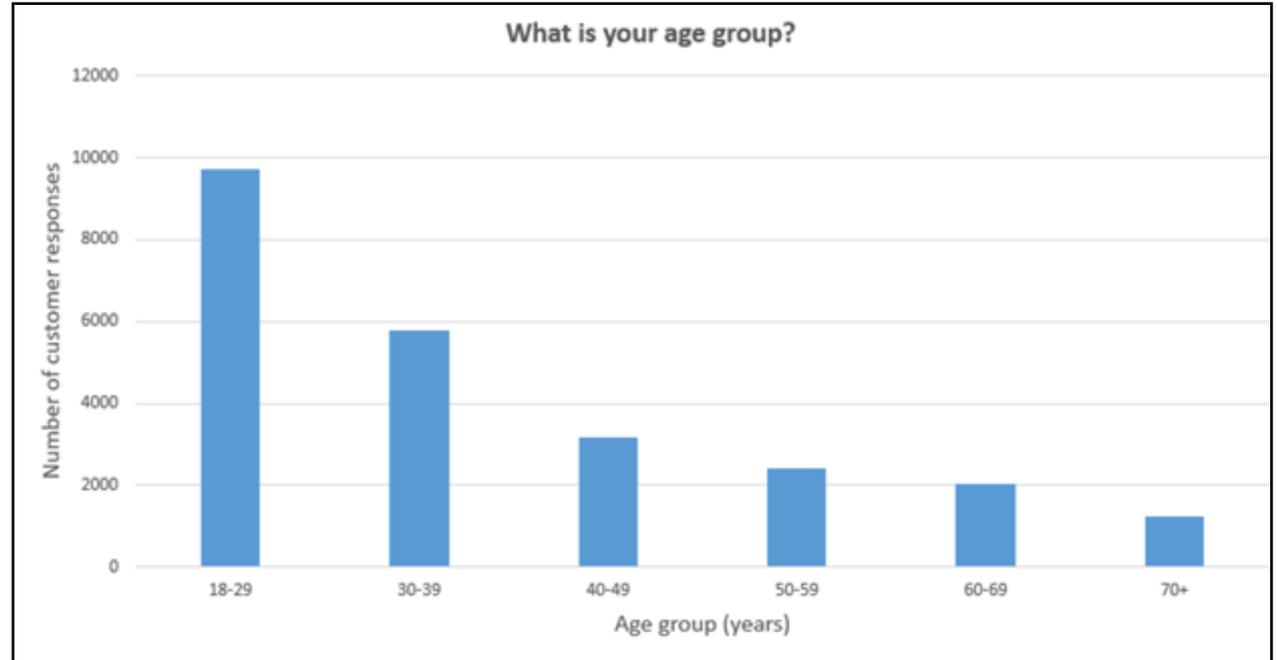


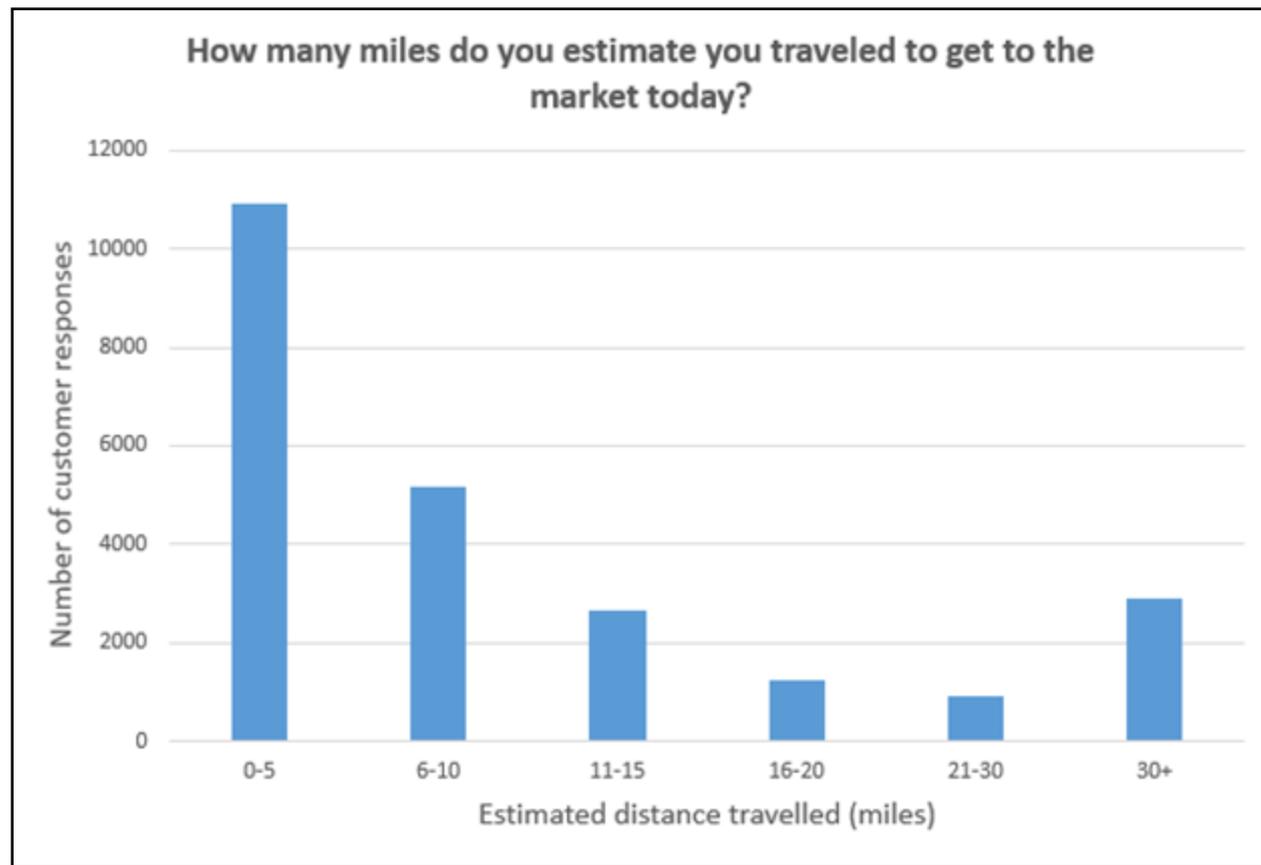
REFERENCES

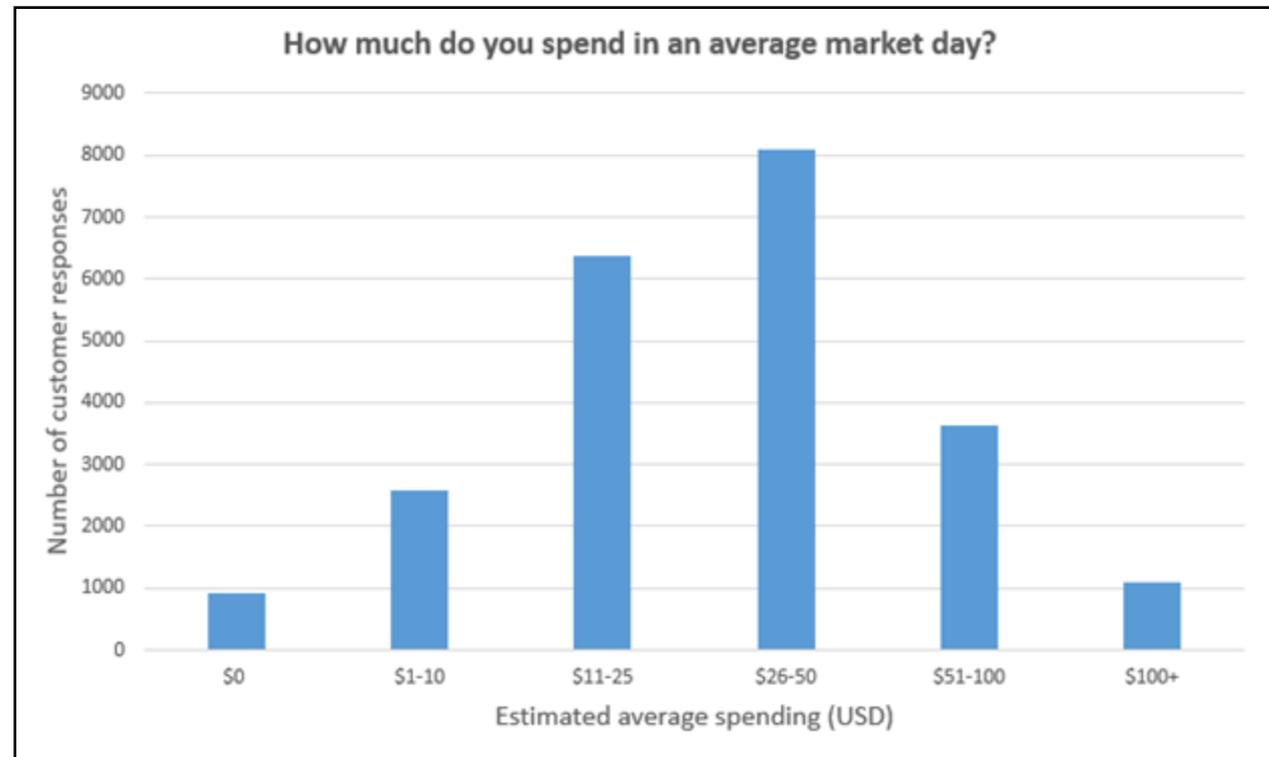
U.S. Census Bureau. (2024). Household pulse survey data tables. USA.gov. Retrieved November 18, 2024, from <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/household-pulse-survey/data/tables.html#cycle4.0>



Cumulative Findings

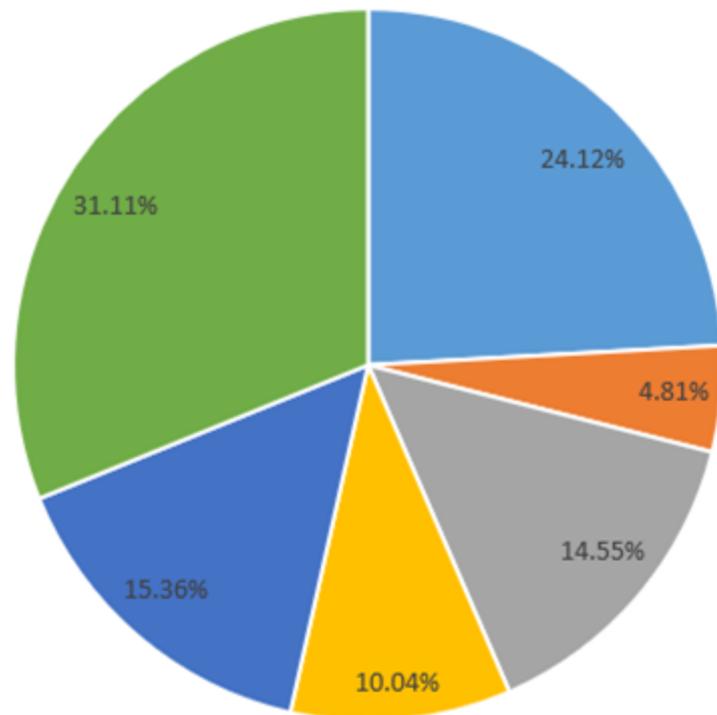








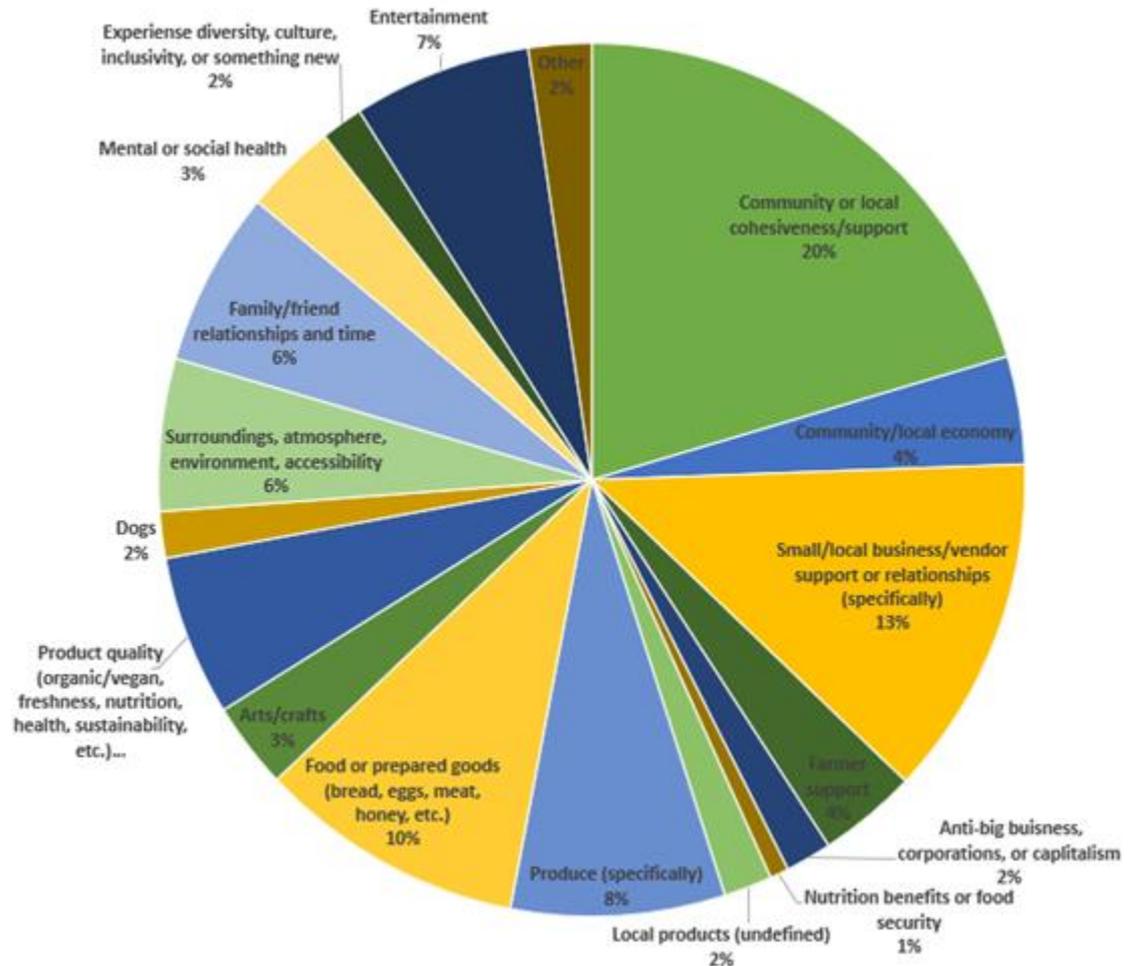
Why did you visit the market today?



- To buy produce
- To buy meat/dairy
- To buy prepared food
- To buy home arts/crafts
- To engage with community
- To look around



Why Does This Market Matter? (Response Categories)





Results

These outcomes have real-world significance; farmers markets contribute to resilient local economies, healthier food systems, and vibrant community life. Documenting these benefits helps ensure that markets remain accessible, sustainable, and responsive to community needs, particularly in rural and underserved areas.



Become a Member!

- \$25/year for vendors
- [Find out more and apply here.](#)





Upcoming Events

- FREE for UFMN members.
- \$75 for non-members.
- [Register here.](#)

The banner features logos for W/SFMA, Idaho Farmers Market Association, OFMA, ofmn (Ohio Farmers Market Network), and Utah Farmers Market Network. The main title "FARMERS MARKET BOOT CAMP" is in large, bold, purple letters. Below the title, there are two event details: "General Sessions" on March 12 and 19, 2026, and "Utah 'State Day'" on March 26, 2026. Contact information for W/SFMA is provided at the bottom.

W/SFMA IDAHO FARMERS MARKET ASSOCIATION OFMA ofmn UTAH FARMERS MARKET NETWORK

FARMERS MARKET BOOT CAMP

 **General Sessions**
Thurs, March 12, 2026 &
Thurs, March 19, 2026
9:00am - 12:00pm (PT)

 **Utah "State Day"**
Hosted by the UFMN
Thurs, March 26, 2026
10:00am - 1:00pm (MT)

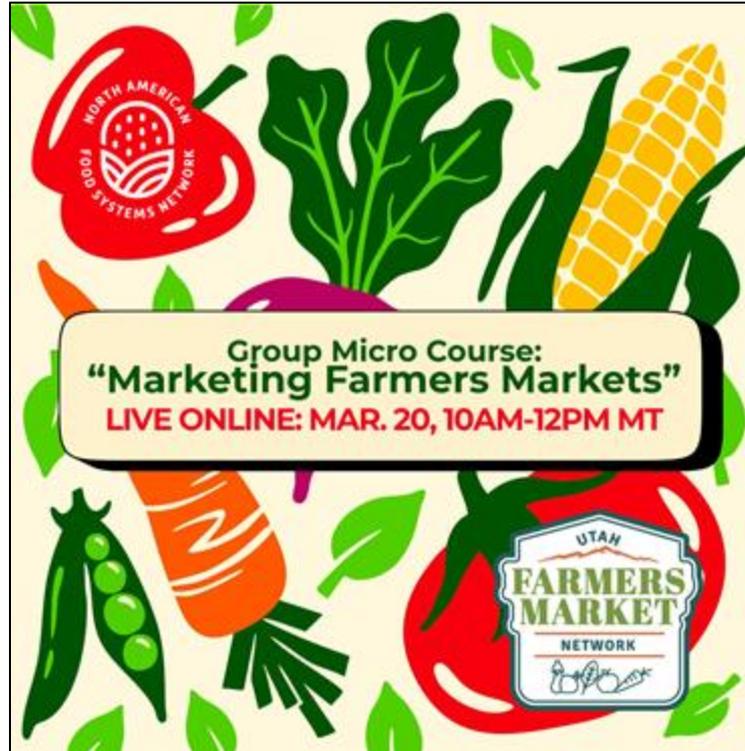
W/SFMA WASHINGTON STATE FARMERS MARKET ASSOCIATION

 www.wafarmersmarkets.org/boot-camp-2026/
 <https://bootcamp2026.eventbrite.com>
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Upcoming Events

- FREE for UFMN members
- \$20 for non-members
- [Register here.](#)





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