

City of Courtenay  
Council Meeting

**December 6, 2023**

**Comox Valley Regional District Civic Room  
770 Harmston Avenue Courtenay BC**



# Who/What/When/Where/Why of the Comox Valley Farmers Market:

We have been growing, making, baking, raising and wild harvesting fresh local and nutritionally dense food for the Comox Valley and beyond since 1992

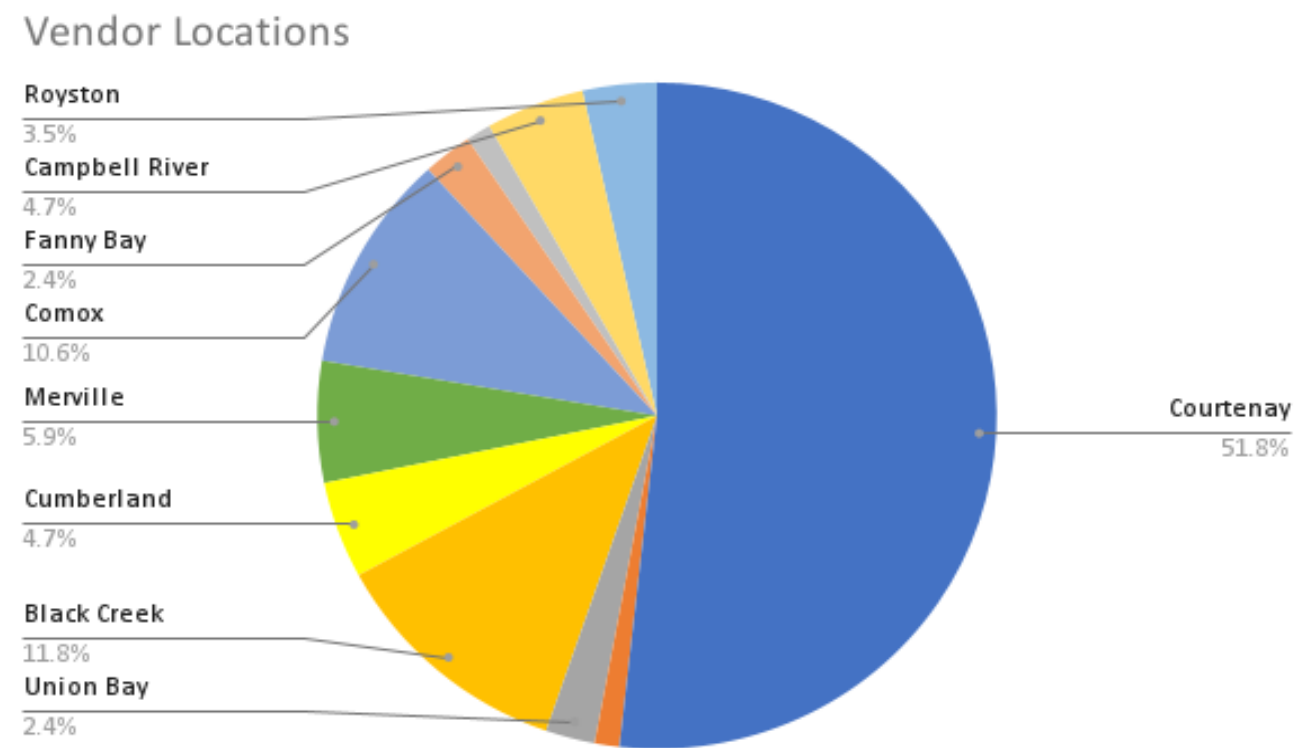
Our mandate is to:

- To Promote the economic health of the local farm and food community
- To provide quality locally grown farm products
- To educate the community on agriculture issues
- To promote and support local agriculture



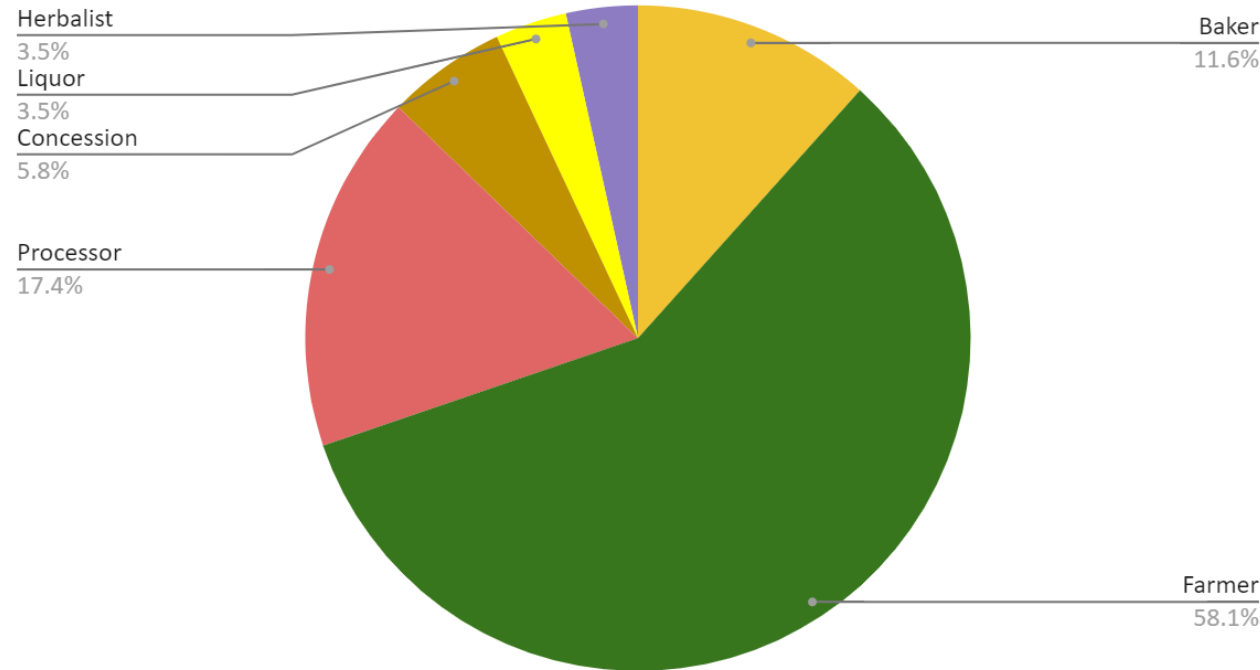
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Although our catchment area (CVRD/SRD) goes from Sayward in the North, Fanny Bay in the South, Cortes Island in the East and Kyuquot to the West, the bulk of our vendors (~90%) are within a ~20 Km radius of the CV Exhibition Grounds while the remaining ~10% are within less than a ~50km radius



We are a food only (outside of a couple of soap/body care products and value-added agriculture products (ex: bees wax, candles)) Farmers' Market with an emphasis on farmers and fishers (~ 60% farmers/fishers)

Vending Category



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There are currently 3 markets operated by the CVFMA including:

- Saturdays Year Round
- Sundays in Cumberland
- Wednesdays in Downtown Courtenay



**Saturdays: Oct –April at Natives Sons Hall**



**Saturdays: April to Oct at CV Exhibition Grounds**



**Sundays: June –September in Cumberland**



**Wednesdays: June –September in Downtown Courtenay**



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We participate in the BC Association of Farmers' Markets Nutrition Coupon Program which feeds more than 200 families and seniors over a 16-week period and provides them with access to fresh locally produced vegetables, fruit, nuts, dairy, eggs and meat and fish.

Our Community Partners, Healthy Families, MIKI'SIW Métis Association, Upper Island Women of Native Ancestry and Cumberland Community School Society focus on supporting pregnant individuals and families with children under 6 years of age as well as some seniors.

In addition, Healthy Families also partner with School District 71, Immigrant Welcome Centre, the Wachiay Friendship Centre's and Maple Pool Campground.



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In 2023 this program has provided ~\$80 000 in coupons to residents of :

- Courtenay,
- Comox
- Cumberland
- Other regions across Vancouver Island



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Since 2018 we have partnered with Lush Valley on their Farm Gleaning Program.

The purpose of this program is to increase the impact of local growers by supporting members of our community who often lack access to fresh healthy food, while promoting local food production, and reducing food waste.

Through this program **~5000 lbs** of fresh fruit and vegetables that would have otherwise been composted or thrown out was redistributed.

This food used in their Hot Meal Program, Good Food Box and various meal kits that were then distributed to 15 social service agency partners including tenants at BC Housings Washington Inn, members of the Komoks First Nation, Students and Food Bank Recipients.



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## 2023 Economic Impact Study



A provincial wide assessment of the “**Economic and Community Impacts of Farmers Markets in British Columbia**” completed in 2006 and 2012

The Comox Valley Farmers’ Market Saturday and Wednesday markets participated in both surveys



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In 2023 another provincial wide assessment was completed.

All three of the Comox Valley Farmers' Market participated.

Sunday (Cumberland)- July 1, 2023

Wednesday (Downtown Courtenay)- August 23, 2023

Saturday (Courtenay- CV Exhibition Grounds)- September 16, 2023



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# What are Economic and Community Benefits?

## Economic Benefits=Direct Benefits

The **amount of money spent by market shoppers** (referred to as direct benefits) is an effective way to measure economic benefits of a farmers' market. This benefit is the measure of total annual sales of a farmers' market. Annual sales are calculated as follows:

Average expenditure X Number of spending X Number of sessions X Seasonal  
by customer customers per session per year factor

Multiplier effect: Another measure of economic benefits of farmers markets is to measure the ripple effect of people spending dollars at the market. The **ripple effect includes** both the **profit to the market vendor** and the **monies the vendor spent on inputs to get to the market** (e.g., seeds, feed, ingredients, etc.). Economic benefits, which can include direct, indirect, and some induced effects, are **measured in terms of revenue (\$), output (\$), and employment (jobs)**.

In this study revenue benefits are calculated using a **conservative multiplier of 1.5**.



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## Community Benefits

Community Benefits are the '**spillover**' effect that the Comox Valley Farmers' Market has on its neighbouring businesses. Based on survey results, it can be estimated the impact of market customers spending additional dollars at local businesses on the day of the market.

Using the same formula (**multiplier effect**) as above, the annual economic impact of additional spending at other neighbouring businesses is an estimated



## Preliminary Results (Combined)

- The combined estimated economic and community benefit of the Comox Valley Farmers' Market on the local economy is approximately **\$9 million annually**

### 2023 BC Farmers' Market Economic Impact Study\*

Market	Economic Benefit (\$)	Community Benefit (\$)	Total Benefits (\$)
Saturday	\$4,200,000.00	\$3,400,000.00	\$7,600,000.00
Sunday	\$268,000.00	\$332,600.00	\$600,600.00
Wednesday	\$260,000.00	\$587,000.00	\$847,000.00
Total (All Markets Combined)			<b>\$9,047,600.00</b>

\* Preliminary Results

- The estimated combined number of market customers on assessment days: 4,086 customers
- 19% of survey participants identified as tourists or day-trippers
- Average customer spending per visit – Sunday: \$27.05  
Average customer spending per visit – Wednesday: \$17.61  
Average customer spending per visit – Saturday: \$50.35
- 39% of all survey respondents visit a Comox Valley Farmers' Market either 'regularly' (almost weekly) or 'frequently' (2-3 times per month)



# Preliminary Results (Saturday Only\*)

## 2023 BC Farmers' Market Economic Impact Study\*

Market	Economic Benefit (\$)	Community Benefit (\$)	Total Benefits (\$)
Saturday	\$4,200,000.00	\$3,400,000.00	\$7,600,000.00
Sunday	\$268,000.00	\$332,600.00	\$600,600.00
Wednesday	\$260,000.00	\$587,000.00	\$847,000.00
Total (All Markets Combined)			\$9,047,600.00



\* Preliminary Results

- The estimated combined economic and community benefit of the Comox Valley Farmers’ Market – Saturday on the local economy is approximately **\$7.6 million annually**
- The estimated number of market customers on assessment day: 2,346 customers
- Over 382 market visitors participated in the study
- Average customer spending per visit: \$50.35



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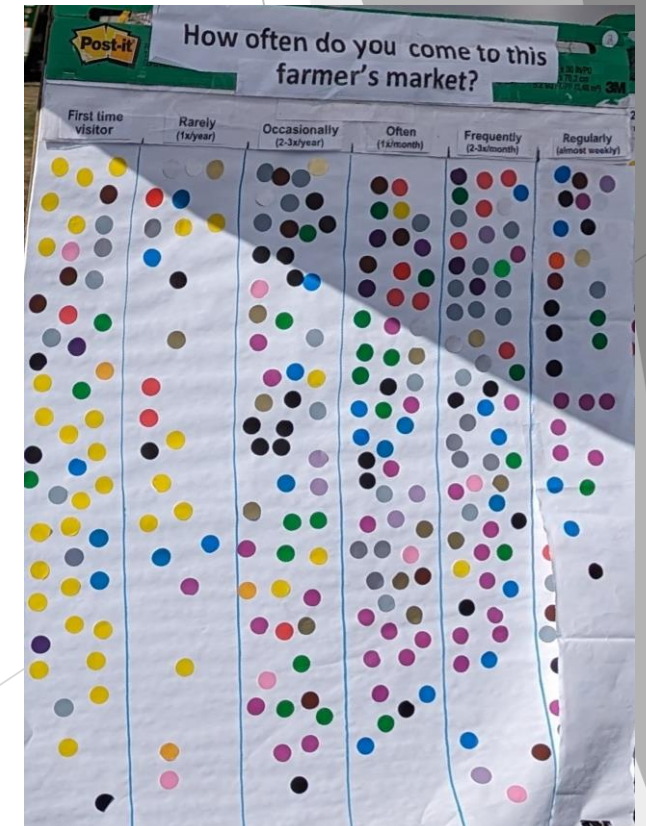
## Saturday Highlights continued:

**47%** of the survey respondents visit the market either '**regularly**' (almost weekly) or '**frequently**' (2-3 times per month)

**27%** of respondents are long-time, loyal customers who have been attending the market for more than **10 years** while **22%** of survey participants said that they have been shopping at the market for **five to nine years**. **21%** began attending the market this year, in **2023**.

## Where do Customers Live (who attend the Saturday Market):

Courtenay	<b>46.3%</b>
Comox	19.4%
Cumberland	3.7%
Comox Valley Regional District	11.8%
Strathcona Regional District	2.9%
Vancouver Island/Gulf Islands (outside of CVRD/SRD)	3.1%
Other	<b>12.8%</b>



## Preliminary Results (Wednesday Only\*)

### 2023 BC Farmers' Market Economic Impact Study\*

Market	Economic Benefit (\$)	Community Benefit (\$)	Total Benefits (\$)
Saturday	\$4,200,000.00	\$3,400,000.00	\$7,600,000.00
Sunday	\$268,000.00	\$332,600.00	\$600,600.00
Wednesday	\$260,000.00	\$587,000.00	\$847,000.00
Total (All Markets Combined)			\$9,047,600.00



\* Preliminary Results

- The estimated combined economic and community benefit of the Comox Valley Farmers' Market – Wednesday on the local economy is approximately **\$847,000 annually**
- The estimated number of market customers on assessment day: 1,194 customers
- Over 121 market visitors participated in the study
- 36% of the survey participants were tourists or day-trippers in Courtenay



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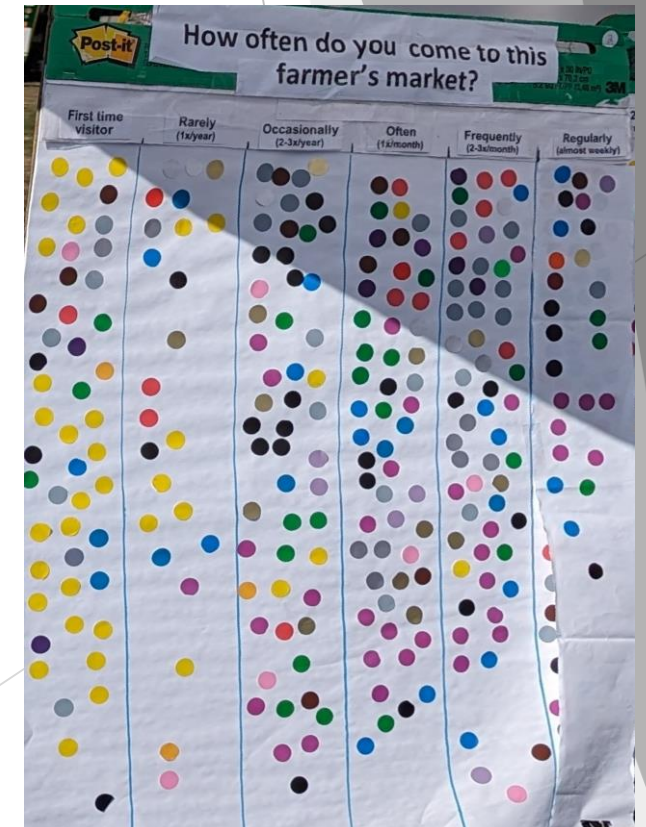
Wednesday Highlights continued:

**14%** of the survey respondents visit the market either '**regularly**' (almost weekly) or '**frequently**' (2-3 times per month)

**4.1%** of respondents are long-time, loyal customers who have been attending the market for more than **10 years** while **8.2%** of survey participants said that they have been shopping at the market for **five to nine years**. **69.7%** began attending the market this year, in **2023**.

Where do Customers Live (who attend the Saturday Market):

Courtenay	<b>41.8%</b>
Comox	10.7%
Cumberland	0.8%
Comox Valley Regional District	3.3%
Strathcona Regional District	0.8%
Vancouver Island/Gulf Islands (outside of CVRD/SRD)	13.1%
Other	<b>29.5%</b>



Total Impact to City of Courtenay: **\$8,447,000**

Notes:

Saturday Market is held at the CV Exhibition Ground and the Native Sons Hall

~20-25% of market sales occur at the Native Sons Hall

Approximate impact on downtown Courtenay:

(25% of Sat)    (Wednesday)

$\$1,900,000 + \$847,000 = \mathbf{\$2,747,000}$



## The Farmers' Market at the Native Son Hall

In a 2022 Membership Survey completed by the BC Association of Farmers' Markets, on average markets pay \$4,902.22 (with the range from \$0-\$30,000) for venue rentals. **Our fees** for just the one venue, the Native Sons Hall, for less than half of our market days are approximately **double this average**.

5 markets we operate, a total of 73 market days throughout the year (Saturday Summer, Saturday Winter, Saturday Fall, Wednesday and Sunday). We spend on average 22 market days (or 30% of the total yearly market days) between October and April at the Native Sons Hall for our Fall and Winter Markets. These 22 market days account for 72% of our yearly venue rental costs.

Since the 2008/2009 Fall/Winter season we been renting the Native Sons Hall weekly for approximately 6 months out of the year. For the past 15 years we have been a consistent long-term renter.

For other venues that we use in the Comox Valley, including CV Exhibition Grounds and Cumberland Village Square, we pay a significantly rates or no fee at all. This aligns with other markets on Vancouver Island and throughout BC.





Keeping costs down has become increasingly difficult as the cost of many things has increased significantly over the last several years. We have worked hard to reduce and eliminate expenses, as well as optimizing our paid employees and numerous volunteers.

Our Board is looking for ways to reduce market expenses without reducing programming, markets or staff. One way is to reduce the cost of venue rentals; the other is to re-visit our Wednesday market which has been underperforming over the last several years. Our preference is to have a reduction in fees so that we can continue to support a Wednesday downtown market.

## Our Ask

Given the benefits of the Farmers' Market to the Comox Valley, in particular the City of Courtenay, with respect to small business incubation, stimulating the local economy, food security, advocacy for the local farm and food community and community connections:

**We are asking the City of Courtenay to provide support in the form of reducing rental fees, providing a Fee for Service Agreement or other arrangement related to reducing the fees the market pays for rental of the Native Sons Hall for its fall and winter markets**







**Thank  
you!**



We are grateful to City of Courtenay,  
Mayor and Council and staff for their  
continued support for the market





# Thank you

# Questions?



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