

2015 ANNUAL REPORT





VFM 2015–16 STAFF

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Tara McDonald
OPERATIONS MANAGER	Roberta LaQuaglia
COMMUNICATIONS & DEVELOPMENT MANAGER	Jen Candela
DISTRICT MARKET MANAGERS	Randy Elliott Gabrielle Varachesse Laura Smit Laura Gibson Robyn Walters
OFFICE COORDINATOR	Christa Wood
BOOKKEEPER	Wendy Simpson

VFM MARKET MANAGERS & CREW

Beatrice Andres	Dominique Goulet	Jordan Mehl
Anna Bock	Ania Hajda	Sam Mussett
Ron Braunagel	Eloise Haliburton	Louisa Ng
Olivia Brooke	Eva Jordisodn	Daniel Oong
Tamara Brown	Benjamin Keane-O'Hara	Brooke Oxley
Chika Buston	Karolina Kluska	Caroline Pollock
Jayne Cline	Shauna Kunstatter	Roan Reimer
Jennifer Ewing	Beverly Anne Lehman	Britta Rustad
Lukas Georgia	Eric March	Samantha Sivert

VFM BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Carla Shore CHAIR	Andrew Arkestyn-Vogler (to 2015)	Lenore Newman (to 2016)
Meeru Dhalwala VICE CHAIR	Martha Burton	Eric Patel
David Le Page SECRETARY	Maria Dobrinskaya	Steve Snyder
Marta Becker TREASURER	Jeremy Douglas	
	Jesse Halperin	



REPORT FROM THE BOARD

The last year and a half not only saw Vancouver Farmers Markets grow and thrive, but were also key to establishing our reputation as an economic force to be reckoned with and as a leader in BC's food security movement.

In 2015, we celebrated our 20th anniversary, a huge milestone for us. We leveraged our celebrations to implement a new strategic communications plan that focused on raising VFM's profile in social, economic and political circles. It also gave us a roadmap to build our networks and relationships with governments and businesses. In 2016, we continue to build on those successes to improve our reputation and launch our plans for future growth and permanency.

Last year we had our first full season of hosting two winter markets, and we're proud that in addition to the very popular Nat Bailey market, we are now also holding a regular Sunday market at Hastings Park. In 2015, we had record-high annual vendor sales, topping \$8.5 million, and in 2016, we built on that success.

This year we're working on our third year of VFM's current Strategic Plan, with a focus on achieving permanency for our markets. We're working hard on initiatives to establish bricks and mortar locations to supplement our weekly pop up markets, including exploring a shared cold storage location and building a permanent pavilion at Riley Park, along with other discussions we are having to find us better infrastructure.

We're also working with our 'landlords' to streamline all the paperwork and technicalities of our weekly markets. We relocated the Downtown market to Queen Elizabeth Theatre, and while it's been challenging to build a new market after losing our space in Yaletown, we used the move to best advantage to increase our profile with businesses and media.

We've started reaching out to the social venture community and building a network with them, which will help us as we grow our new social venture, VFM Direct. It started as a pilot project with Farm Folk City Folk in 2015, but VFM Direct is now our growing food distribution service for commercial buyers showing tremendous potential.

I'm proud to serve with such a dynamic, experienced and committed board of directors. Every board member has put in their time and expertise to help VFM move forward on our strategic goals, from meeting with Parks or City officials, to vendor liaisons, to government relations and business networking, fundraising, and offering professional expertise and contacts. Staff have been tremendous this past year and a half in helping us use our time and experience to best advantage to serve the market community. I'm honoured to work with them all, and am excited about what the next year will bring.



Carla Shore

Chair, Board of Directors



REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2015–16 has brought with it some of the greatest successes to date for Your Local Farmers Market Society/Vancouver Farmers Markets (fondly known as VFM). Highlights included:

- 20th Anniversary celebrations throughout 2015
- A successful first year of VFM's 2nd winter market location at Hastings Park/PNE
- Record-high vendor sales revenues (topping \$8.5M in 2015, up from \$8.1M in 2014)
- 15,100 Fresh to Families Nutrition coupons redeemed (up from 7,800 in 2014)
- 190 low-income families accessing farmers markets all summer long with VFM's Fresh to Families coupon program (up from 110 in 2015)
- Donation Stations re-distributing farm-fresh food to Kidstart programs, the Dr. Peter Centre and Neighbourhood House community meal programs throughout Vancouver
- 2 outstanding RIPE annual dinner fundraisers, generously supported by top Vancouver chefs, generous small farmers, sponsors and volunteers

- A very rapid, but smooth, transition of the downtown market to its new location at Queen Elizabeth plaza (2016)
- Continued growth of VFM's Wednesday market at Main St. Station and Sunday Market in Mt. Pleasant
- Fundraising targets met and exceeded, helping VFM support more low-income families, purchase market equipment and strengthen current markets
- Very successful launch of VFM Direct (spring, 2016), VFM's innovative new service helping small farmers increase their sales by aggregating and distributing their products directly to commercial and institutional buyers in Vancouver
- An emerging partnership with Vancouver Park Board to build a cost-shared pavilion for an extended season farmers market in the Riley Park neighbourhood

None of this is possible without the ongoing commitment and dedication of the VFM staff and market crews, board, vendors and volunteers who, week after week, season after season, deliver among Canada's busiest, most authentic and effective community-supported farmers markets. Nor would our award-winning markets be possible without VFM's continuously generous donors, members, sponsors and funders.

WHAT'S AHEAD FOR VFM?

Despite our success, Vancouver's regional food system has a long way to go to reach both viability and accessibility for small farmers and community members. All outdoor farmers markets remain temporary and seasonal without long-term permits and are subject to costly changes or moves at any time. Power and water, as well as parking, washrooms and site signage are nearly non-existent at most VFM market sites, and without shelter, rainy and snowy days can mean thousands of pounds of fresh food remains unsold, to be trucked back to the farm.

VFM invites everyone to be a part of our mission "to transform our global food system by creating and nurturing a local, sustainable and vibrant marketplace for our community, environment and economy". At VFM, we want to see access to our region's small farmers, food processors and artisans expanded to all members of our community: individuals and families at all income levels, businesses, community institutions and organizations.

2017–18 and beyond will see VFM stepping out even further as an innovative best practices-based social enterprise, aimed at meeting its mission in new,

sustainable and cutting-edge ways. You'll see a fuller shift from non-profit model to social enterprise model (using business methods to achieve social and environmental benefits), with an increasing focus on distributing more farm-fresh food to more community members and commercial buyers, greater permanency for our markets, an investment in infrastructure for our vendors and shoppers through initiatives such as VFM Direct, the Riley Park Pavilion and VFM's Fresh to Families Coupon Program and Donation Stations.

All Vancouverites are invited to become a VFM member, introduce friends and family to their weekly neighbourhood farmers market, and join thousands of community members, hundreds of small farmers and food processors, dozens of volunteers, and funders, sponsors, local businesses and municipal government who are, together, investing in, and building, a stronger, flourishing regional food system.



Tara McDonald

Executive Director

2015



Final Holiday Market

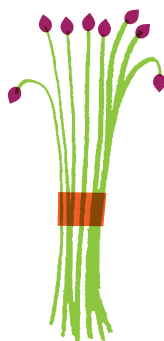
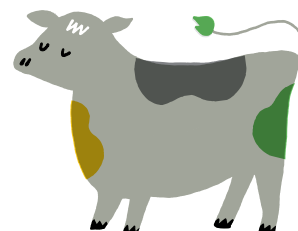
We retired the Holiday Market in 2015 after a great run of 20 markets.



Celebrating 20 years!



Windstorm forces closure of three Saturday markets at noon



Operated Coffee Service business at Mt Pleasant Market

(supported by Salt Spring Coffee)

2016



First full year of farm direct to food service deliveries



LION DANCERS AT THE WINTER MARKET

YALETOWN MARKET BECOMES DOWNTOWN MARKET IN JUNE, RELOCATED TO QE THEATRE



RAIN!





2015: 20th ANNIVERSARY FUNDRAISING

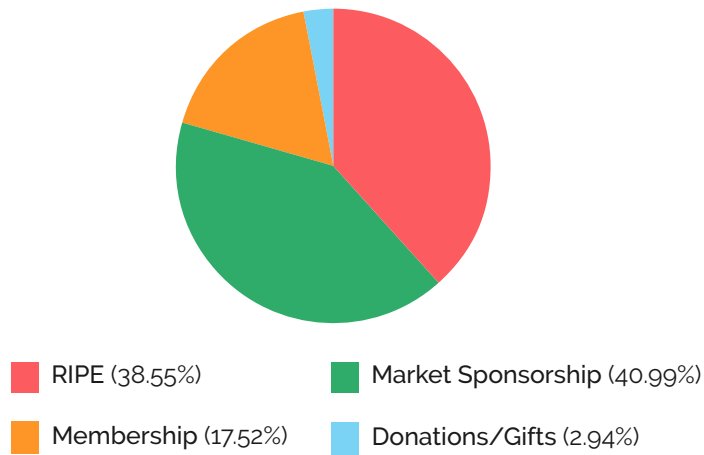
Vancouver Farmers Markets experienced great success with its Fundraising program in 2015, achieving 120% of its overall annual goal. The VFM 20th Anniversary was a major focus and included special initiatives such as a May–October Anniversary Membership Drive, and a 20th Anniversary-themed RIPE celebration and live donation drive.

Market Sponsorship was especially strong for the second year in a row, coming in at 42% over its 2015 target and almost doubling 2014 results. Strong ticket sales and sponsorship for our annual RIPE dinner fundraiser helped it overshoot its goal by 21%, which was also a 21% increase over its 2014 fundraising total.

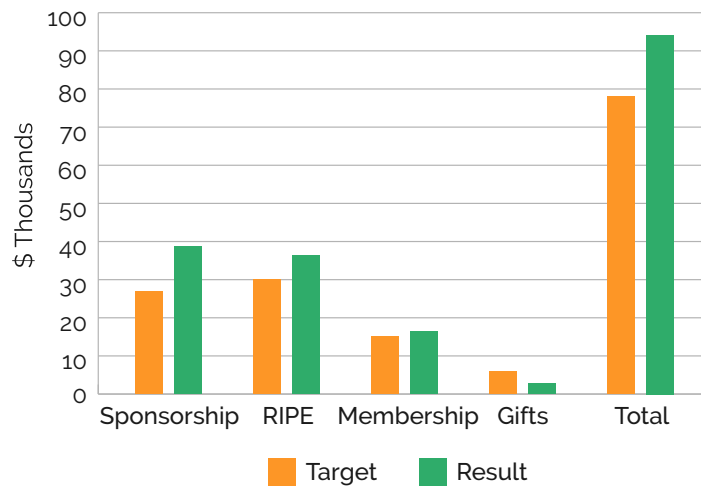
VFM's Membership Program met and surpassed its annual goal for the first time in the organization's history, coming in at a slight increase of 10% over 2015 targets.

The 2016 Fundraising year will include more attention and resources focused on Market Sponsorship and the Membership Program — initiatives that yield higher return for less organizational time and effort. The annual RIPE Dinner will continue as planned, but initiatives such as the Big Harvest Draw and Food Fundraisers will be taken out of the plan for 2016.

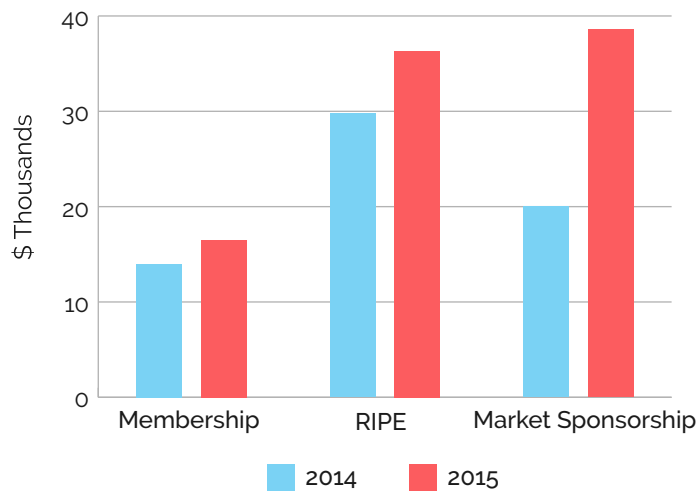
2015 Fundraising Revenue in Dollar Amounts



Results vs. Targets in Dollar Amounts



2-Year Comparison of Major Initiatives





VENDOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

The Vendor Advisory Committee (VAC) has had a busy year beginning with a very well-attended All Vendor Meeting at Hillcrest Community Centre which attracted new vendors to work with the committee. Over the remainder of the year, the VAC has been working with the vendor community to address and resolve concerns, as well as with staff to review and advise on policy and operational changes.

In the coming months, the committee will again review the Handbook and make recommendations for changes to both policy and operations, as well as working on some new projects in conjunction with staff.

While the membership of the VAC has expanded to include broader representation from the prepared foods, crafts and alcohol categories, additional farm vendors are always welcome and encouraged to participate.

All vendors are encouraged to communicate with their VAC representatives via the committee email: VAC@eatlocal.org.

Rebekah McGurran
VAC Chair

TREASURER'S REPORT 2015

VFM's financial performance strengthened in 2015, with total revenues approaching \$725,000 (up from \$625,000 in 2014), strong operating margins, and a positive net income contributing to a steadily growing members' equity position. In addition, VFM's balance sheet reports negligible debt, and healthy cash reserves.

VFM's solid financial performance has been fundamental to the reliability of market operations, which in 2015 supported a record level of \$8.5 million in vendor sales, up from \$8.1 million in 2014.

VFM Summary Financial Performance 2011–2015

