

McGill Farmers' Market

Exit Report

2010 Market

Overview

With the completion of the third annual Farmers' Market at McGill, we would like to reflect on the successes and weaknesses of the planning and implementation of the Market so as to facilitate next year's coordinators' job. We have taken into consideration the recommendations of the 2009 Market team and as their recommendations guided the 2010 Market, we hope that these recommendations will be helpful to you, and that next year's market will be even bigger and better. Please add on, improve and alter this booklet for future teams. Good luck and have fun!

Please note that throughout this document you will come across underlined documents that you are directed to refer to (i.e. See Photos document). This refers to other documents that are also on the USB key that elaborate on the section in discussion.

Major successes

This year saw the first truly functional iteration of the McGill farmers' market. With five permanent vendors coming without fail, at least one artisan per market, and the presence of a number of different student groups, the 2010 McGill farmers' market proved its worth as an institution rather than an idea. The acquisition of market tents, banners, and volunteer t-shirts, also contributed to the appearance of permanence of the market while, an increased emphasis on promotional activity helped in giving the market more visibility.

Additionally, farmers that came regularly expressed having an overall positive experience with the market. Although many of them found that they were making less sales than in other markets, the friendliness of the students, helpfulness of volunteers, and constant presence of at least one coordinator contributed to their overall satisfaction

The 2010 market also saw the creation and strengthening of relationships with other groups on campus, including Gorilla Composting, Santropol, and The Flat. In the coming years, we would like to continue encouraging the idea that the Farmers' Market is more than just a place to buy local products; rather, through the increased involvement of McGill's green community, we would like to position the market as a space to cultivate community and exchange knowledge. Some of our ideas to achieve this goal include allowing student groups to set up tables for bake sales (much like is done in the lobby of Leacock), having student musicians use the market as an occasion to gain visibility, and pushing students to use the market space as a place to "hang out" (perhaps through the installation of benches).

Our many market improvements could not have been achieved without the \$3680.00 we received from the Sustainability Projects Fund. In addition to financing our operational costs (parking, and clean up fees), this funding allowed us to offer financial support for the

workshops that were held, create promotional material, and purchase equipment like tents and banners to be used in the long term.

At the recommendation of last years' market team, we changed the schedule for the market. Although this was not a major weakness for last year's market, the team felt that by operating on Wednesdays (when the majority of classes run for only one hour), as well as for longer hours, a larger customer base would be able to attend the market. Additionally, operating from 11 to 6 allowed vendors to comply with McGill's "car free campus" requirements. As well, the market has continued to commence only following the end of frosh as recommended by the 2009 farmers' market team.

In regards to marketing strategy, we created a successful logo and posters, which can be used in future years to create a recognizable brand for the Market. We also secured an article in the McGill Daily, a blurb in the Globe and Mail, made weekly Facebook events, created a website, and advertised at Frosh, in various McGill agendas and on the SSMU listserve.

Major weaknesses

Although in 2010 Farmers' Market established itself as a lasting McGill institution, many steps must still be taken to ensure its long-term success. The 2010 Market was unsuccessful in that many farmers did not achieve a sustainable level of sales. As a result, of the nine vendors who attended the first market, only five were present throughout the semester. Additionally, of these five vendors, only two (the produce vendors) were making consistently high levels of sales. (*See Sales information document*)

The moderate to poor level of sales may in part be attributed to a poor selection of vendors given the needs and financial capacity of students. This issue should be given greater consideration during next year's vendor selection process. Next year's team should undertake a study to get a better idea of what products students want at the market and how much they are willing to pay for them. This can be done with the help of one of the marketing groups from professor Colas' "Marketing and Society" class. This marketing group will also be helpful in assisting the promotions coordinator in designing a more effective promotional campaign. Indeed, although this year's marketing activities were an improvement over the preceding years, we still consider them to be a major weakness of the market. The Farmers' Market was unsuccessful in reaching the local community, the administration, and graduate students with its promotions. Improving the Market's marketing activities by targeting such groups is absolutely imperative. Furthermore, increased attention must be given to reaching students through interactive media. Although a website has been created, it needs to be more frequently updated with relevant information. Similarly, the Farmers' Market Facebook needs additional work, including regular content updates, and more friends. Finally, a listserve should be implemented in order to update interested Farmers' Market goers and volunteers on Market happenings. The Farmers' Market promotional campaign will no doubt represent a major portion of the Farmers' Market budget in 2011. *See promotions*

Increased promotional activity will also prove helpful in increasing workshop attendance. This year's Market was successful in offering a variety of interesting workshops to students, however, with the exception of the corn boil kick off event, attendance was very sparse. Therefore, in addition to advertising for these events, perhaps more research should be done into what students would like to be offered—clearly, offering free food is something that

interests students, but is there anything else? When organizing workshops, next year's team should take into consideration that workshops demanding time commitments saw especially poor attendance. Additionally, workshop organization should emphasize quality over quantity.

Despite having the cultivation of the McGill community as one of its major mandates, the McGill Farmers' Market has been unsuccessful in securing the presence of the Macdonald campus students. In the coming year, it is important that the Mac campus play some kind of role at the downtown market. This may be through the presence of the Horticultural center, or through the use of Mac farm ingredients in the products sold at the Farmers' Market stand.

Finally, one major weakness that will likely continue to be a weakness in the coming year is the Market's financial dependence on various McGill funds. Although initially it was our hope to gain financial independence by charging vendors fees for space rental, this would be an impossibility for the time being, given the level of sales reached by certain vendors. However, we have also discussed the possibility of selling goods at the market, of which, all profits would be used to cover the market's operating costs. Oliver de Volpi has also proposed the idea of selling meals prepared by food and dining, however, it is unclear how profits would be divided. It will be the 2011 coordinators' job to assess and implement such an endeavor. They may want to consider working with another group, such as Edible Campus, to put this plan into action. In the future, we believe that this activity, coupled with the use of a space rental fee will be sufficient to guarantee our financial independence.

Additional Opportunities and Threats

In order for the market to achieve the highest degree of success, in addition to remedying some of the weaknesses of the 2010 market, the 2011 Market coordinators should seek to improve the market by responding to certain threats and opportunities.

First and foremost the opportunity of a CSA drop off should be examined. The food system administrator has been approached by Equiterre about potentially starting a CSA drop-off point for McGill staff and administration during the summer and fall. By being involved in this program, we will be able to raise awareness about the McGill Farmers' Market brand and help promote the products of our current vendors on an annual basis. Although this is an exciting opportunity, certain issues, namely the role of Organic Campus, must be considered before implementing such a service. Furthermore, what role would other current farmers' market vendors have in the CSA program? If Equiterre does not have a plan for including them, should we be working to start our own CSA drop-off that includes our vendors' products? Next, what form will this program take—will customers be able to customize their orders, or will they be receiving a standardized box? These and many more questions must be addressed when discussing the possible implementation of CSA program.

An additional opportunity to increase farmers' market visibility during the year is by operating during the spring. Although the time frame for a spring market would be extremely limited given the McGill school schedule and the Quebec harvest season, our farmers' have expressed interest in participating in such an event. Additional research must be done to explore the feasibility of this opportunity.

Midnight Kitchen's service at the farmers' market has been extremely beneficial in attracting increased market traffic. Therefore, the farmer's market must make official MK's presence at the market. In order to do so, during the application process for the Three Bares Park space, the coordinators must emphasize that MK will be present serving food at the market.

Finally, as the farmers' market grows and becomes an established McGill institution, standards must be established to guide it in its operations. Particularly, the market must decide whether being organic or local are of greater importance, and what qualifications farmers' must meet to participate in the market. Although the market may not be ready to establish such standards in for the 2011 market, it should strive to do so in the coming years.

The farmers' market may also want to consider changing location. The current space's central location is very advantageous, however, Three Bares Park does present some obstacles. First, on rainy days, the location becomes muddy and unpleasant for customers and farmers alike. Second, the park is not utilized by students as a place to "hang out"—using a popular student "hang out" spot would probably encourage sales, especially if lunch and snack products were made available through a farmers' market stands and bake sale stands.

Co-Coordiators

Setting up the email account

The email username is: mcgillfarmersmarket@gmail.com

The present password is: farmersmarket

Updating the website

Go to <http://ssmu.mcgill.ca/farmersmarket/>

Click login (at the bottom right corner)

The username is: mcgillfarmersmarket

The present password is: farmersmarket

Finances

- Making a budget
 - Include:
 - Promotional costs (including printing, newspaper space and design costs)
 - Logistical costs (including parking, tables and chairs and mailing supplies)
 - Operational costs (including purchasing tents)
 - Outreach costs (including supplies for events and workshops)
 - Kickoff costs (to cover the corn roast).
- Bank account
 - This account was opened to deposit last year's money from the Mary Brown. Although this account may prove helpful from time to time as it has cheques that are helpful to reimburse costs, it is not as necessary for spending SPF money.
- Apply for funding
 - SSMU Green Fund (see [Green Fund Application](#) document)

- This was used to fund the stipends for the two coordinators and potentially all four coordinators.
- Sustainability Project Fund (see Sustainability Project Fund Application document)
 - This was our primary source of funding and should be used for all operating costs.

Contacting farmers

- See Contacting Farmers document
- See Job descriptions document
- See Letter to the farmers document

After phoning numerous farmers whose numbers were found either through the Internet (Marché de la Vallée) or at specific markets (Marché Duluth), we sent official e-mails to those who expressed interest. It's important to contact farmers as soon as you can, since many solidify their summer/fall market plans well in advance, and are restricted by what they plan to harvest (determined as early as Jan/Feb). We also sent the farmers' a follow up e-mail about a month before the market and a second follow up the day before just to give parking information and remind them that the market was coming up.

Start by inviting last year's participants, then go through the list in the Contacting farmers document to see which farmers would add to a diverse, non-competitive group. You'll notice that most of the farmers in Section C were fruit & vegetable farmers, and may not be worth contacting unless one of the other *marâcher* falls through (remember the rule of 3 for fruit & veggie farmers). Also consider expanding the scope of products to include cheese, meat and tofu. This year you should try to make an arrangement with Mac campus to see if they would like to be our third produce vendor (along with Machabée and Organic Campus).

Selling meat

Selling meat has proven to be problematic at the McGill Farmers' Market. Refer to the 2009 Exit Report for information on previous issues with meat. This year, we decided simply not to fight the administration about having a fresh meat vendor at the market. Rather, we invited a dried meats (charcuterie) vendor—however, they stopped attending after the second market because their sales were too poor. Therefore, we have concluded, that perhaps McGill students are not the right market for charcuterie (although this may not be 100% certain).

Selling alcohol

The 2009 coordinators were approached by a local wine producer (Alain Bellemare, 514-996-7945) who said he had all the necessary permits to produce and sell wine in Quebec, but by that time the market had already begun and they had not indicated to Teresa Standing that they would be selling alcohol. This year, we talked about the idea of selling wine with the administration, however, we decided in the end that it was not worth the trouble—if wine were to be sold, the location would have to be gated off (much like for OAP).

Location

We decided to hold the market in Three Bares Park each week. This was strong because it allowed the location to be consistent each week (rather than moving from the SSMU parking lot to Three Bares Park) and because it is a central and enclosed space on campus. Although using this location again would help to maintain a sense of consistency, the McTavish pedestrian street should also be investigated.

Booking space

Get at fill out the form in the planning office (James Building room 633) as soon as possible. You will be required to specify the details of the event. Make sure to check off that you will require electricity. Additionally indicate that there will be food sold on premise in order to make official Midnight Kitchen's presence.

Note: The person in charge is Theresa Standing who is in the James Building room 633 (Planning office) and Brian Kasarick is a contact who supports the market and works in the planning office as well.

Actualizing the market

- Holding meetings
 - Please see Contacts document
 - We can meet in the office of sustainability in the Ferrier building
 - *Booking the Sustainability Office for meetings:*
 - Eva Poon, Campus Planning Secretary, Extension 2268
 - Email her your student # and phone # to book the Sustainability Office, Ferrier room 216
 - Meetings once a month with the entire committee is ideal, perhaps with the same person taking minutes in an agreed-upon format. See the attached ALL – Minutes folder for some institutional memory from 2008 and 2009/2010.
 - A PowerPoint is a good way to structure the meetings
- Kick-off Event
 - Free Corn Boil
 - We gave away 500 cobs of corn.
 - Oliver de Volpi (514 398 5743) donated the corn from food and dining
 - He also lent us equipment for boiling the corn
 - If you get a bbq, you need to get approval for the barbeque from:
 - Teresa Standing from the Planning Office and Gabriela Pinto from University Services, who will require that you rent (1) a fire extinguisher

and (2) caution tape from Fire Prevention Services: 3610 McTavish - 3rd floor (just North of Docteur-Penfield), 398-3473.

- Getting tables and chairs
 - This can be done either through SSMU for free:
 - SSMU VP Internal, 398-6799 or internal@ssmu.mcgill.ca
 - Go to the SSMU front desk, ask for the Porters, meet them in the Shatner sub-basement (S-2), exit through the basement door (by Gerts).
 - Or this can be done through building services for a small fee
 - The fee is approximately 7\$ per table, but they bring it to the space and pick it up
 - If you would like this contact Shannon in Building Services at 514 838-7805 (you also contact him for electricity)
- Reserving parking spots for farmers
 - Jo-Ann Sciampacone, Parking Coordinator, 398-8437, 3465 Durocher (below Milton)
 - Jo-Ann quoted us at \$1280 for 10 spots on 8 market days
- Other things to consider:
 - Approach Midnight Kitchen to serve at lunches. You technically need to fill out the 'catering' form (<http://themidnightkitchen.blogspot.com/2006/02/catering.html>) but we found that the best way to ensure their presence was to go by the kitchen (Shatner 302) to ask them to come down to Three Bares on nice Market days
 - Get canvas tote bags donated by the library (contact Bruna Chicalonie or ask Sabrina Franklin, 398-5465 to get them delivered to the Food Services office on University like she did last year)
 - Update the google map of farm locations and print it out to bring to the market
 - Track the time that you spend working on the market
 - Tracking traffic/sales
- Lastly: be diligent in updating the website with (semi) weekly updates and photos during the Fall market season. During the summer, add more background/"about us" information about the market, and use the website to advertise for next year's coordinating positions in December.

Choosing the next coordinating team

- See [Job descriptions](#) document

Volunteer coordination tasks

See Volunteer exit document

- Recruit volunteers
 - Activities night with free apples
 - Frosh activities, SSMU street fest (contact SSMU VP Internal)
 - McGill listservs
 - Table & tent set up each week
- Develop clear tasks
 - Set up, clean up, calling farmers etc.
- Provide incentives
 - Tee-shirts for the team / certificates?
 - Tent space

Outreach Coordinator

- See Outreach Exit document
- See Call for artists document
- See Artist scheduling and contact information document
- See Artist participation application document
- Arts and Crafts Vendors
 - There were approximately 2 tables per week with both McGill students and community
- To do:
 - Create a guideline of what types of arts/crafts will be accepted
 - Create and send out a call out for artist participants with form for them to fill out with available dates
 - McGill listserves (all), McGill fine arts club, craigslist, kiji, Concordia fine arts
 - Organize submitted forms and create schedule (approx. 3 artists per market)
 - Inform artists of when they are attending, set up chairs and tents, meet artists

- Contact McGill arts/painting clubs in order to have more students present
- Workshops
 - We partnered with Santropol, Action Communterre and the Permaculture guild to have a seed saving workshop, make a fall garden workshop and have food sustainability discussions
 - Workshops should work well around 1:00 p.m. to get the post-Midnight Kitchen rush
 - This will be better with a tent, as they were often cancelled due to rain
- Potential organizations to contact for workshops
 - Santropol Roulant
 - Greening McGill for car free day
 - McGill Food Systems
 - McGill School of Nutrition (email listserve)
 - Gorilla Composting
 - Action Communterre (contact Kelly at info@actioncommunterre.qc.ca)
 - The McGill Bike Collective (theflat.bikecollective@gmail.com)
 - MUCS (info@mucs.ca)
 - The Montreal Permaculture guild (they do lots of workshops!)
 - Milton Parc Community
 - The Urban Ecology Centre
 - The McGill Social Equity and Diversity Office (contact Veronica Amberg)
 - The McGill Faculty Club business manager
 - Yellow Door
 - Campus Crops (behind MSE)
 - Edible Campus (School of Architecture)

Promotions & Marketing Coordinator

- See logo document
- See poster document
- See photos document, and see photos in e-mail account from Nate Mosseau

- See mission statement document
- Marketing successes this year
 - Facebook group and event
 - Over 400 confirmed attendants
 - Website
 - <http://mcgillfarmersmarket.blogspot.com/>
 - Logo
 - Posters (note that you should update the various logos at the bottom of the poster this year)
 - In First Year Packages, in 3 different McGill planners
 - Interviewed on CBC Radio
 - Articles in The McGill Daily and the McGill Reporter
- Marketing ideas that we did not get to do/ do enough of
 - Put ads in newspapers
 - Incorporated as a class project?
 - Bookmarks
 - Pins/buttons - SSMU external has a button maker
 - Business-to-business along Sherbrooke
 - Newspaper and internet ads
 - Newspaper and radio interviews
 - Free bags of apples to faculty departments
 - Lecture announcements
 - More list serves (both faculty and student)
- Contacts
 - McGill's Media Relations Office:
 - Contact Doug Sweet to get listing on the McGill Event Page/story in the Reporter
 - McGill web presence:
 - Contact VP Clubs and Services for front-page calendar listing on both the SSMU site (and possible the McGill homepage)
 - Dennis Fortune to link to poster from Sustainability office site (mcgill.ca/sustainability)
 - Mathieu Laperle to link poster on Food and hospitality website