



Community Farmers Markets Strategic Plan

2019 - 2022

Our Vision

We envision an Atlanta that is home to a diverse, interconnected food system that promotes healthy food, sustainable ecosystems, and living wage working conditions. CFM is a leader in this system, leveraging the power of communities by providing resources, educational programs, and sustainable modes of food distribution for farmers, vendors, chefs, and eaters.

Our Mission

The mission of Community Farmers Markets is to develop a local food infrastructure that promotes long term sustainability and meaningful community impact. Our purpose is to root, grow, and preserve a diverse local food culture by maintaining an authentic space for all people to share community, fair food, and healthy lifestyles while providing a sustainable living for producers who steward the earth.

Our Values

CFM values diversity, fairness, equity and inclusion in our food systems. We seek to increase access to local, environmentally sustainable food while creating opportunities for producers to earn a living wage. We support sharing knowledge of - and spreading enthusiasm for - environmental stewardship, seasonal eating, and strong local food systems. We aim to create joyful, safe, communal spaces where connections can blossom. In serving our communities, we commit to upholding integrity, quality work, and leadership.

On our team, we value creativity, innovation and agility in working towards our mission. We value an environment of mutual respect, where we speak honestly, give feedback with care, and stay open to opportunities for growth. We value personal accountability within a supportive team environment.

2019 BY THE NUMBERS

Market attendees 190k visiting 5 farmers markets & 5 Fresh MARTA markets	Vendors 138 with \$1.8 million in sales	Chef demos completed 257 at market and in the community
Hours of educational outreach 259 reaching 5,981 participants	SNAP dollars spent at market \$52k through our Double SNAP program	Transactions at Fresh MARTA Markets 7200 reaching 1,000+ weekly customers



Organizational History

2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2019	2020
CFM Formed and EAVFM brought under umbrella. EAVFM Educational outreach program model created. Grant Park Market opened	Educational Outreach model expanded to Grant Park community.	Brought Decatur Farmers Markets under the CFM umbrella.	Expanded educational outreach to all communities served.	Fresh Marta Market pilot launched.	Crop Cycle Launched.	Oakhurst Farmers Market opens.

Community Farmers Markets, Inc. ("CFM") was founded in 2011 by leaders in the local food movement in Atlanta, GA. The idea was to expand efficiently-managed, community-based farmers markets to support growing interest in healthy, locally grown, sustainable food. Stakeholders included farmers and local leaders who desired a more vibrant local food system and who had interests, talents, or resources to achieve that end. The principal founders were Katie Hayes, Judith Winfrey, and Jonathan Tescher.

CFM is an umbrella organization that manages multiple outdoor farmers markets. The East Atlanta Village Farmers Market ("EAVFM"), founded in 2006 by Tescher and managed by Winfrey, was the precursor to CFM. EAVFM was the first farmers market in the State of Georgia to accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits ("SNAP"), also known as food stamps. The following year, EAVFM piloted the Double SNAP program, bringing the national organization Wholesome Wave to Georgia and providing twice the value to SNAP dollars spent at market. In 2019, the Georgia Fresh for Less program had expanded to 59 markets and farms across the state.

In 2011, CFM officially formed as an umbrella organization to support and promote sustainable expansion of farmers markets in Atlanta. With funding from the Georgia Department of Health, CFM developed an extensive educational outreach and community building model in East Atlanta. CFM chef and garden educators worked with schools and community organizations to

reach people where they live, work and play — bringing "the market to the people and the people to the market." This is the same approach CFM operates under today.

In May 2011, CFM used the successful EAVFM model to launch the Grant Park Farmers Market ("GPFM") in partnership with the Grant Park Conservancy. It continues to be CFM's largest market and is widely celebrated in the community. In 2012, with funding from the USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program, the educational outreach program expanded to the low-income and low-access communities surrounding Grant Park.

Since its inception, CFM continues to expand its presence in communities across Atlanta. In 2013, CFM welcomed under its umbrella the Decatur Farmers Markets ("DFM"), previously established in 2002, and expanded the educational outreach program to the Decatur Community. Within one year of CFM's management, DFM's sales and attendance doubled. In 2020, CFM will launch the Oakhurst Farmers Market to reach even more Decatur residents. CFM worked with Jamestown Properties in 2016 to launch the Ponce City Farmers Market on the Beltline ("PCFM"), pioneering a new partnership model to provide locally grown food to the patrons of Ponce City Market and the Atlanta Beltline.

Innovation and Agility at the Core

In 2015, CFM co-founded a new market model, the Fresh MARTA Market ("FMM"). Piloted at the West End Marta Station, the FMM is the first public transit-centered farmers market in the United States. Working with the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority and Georgia Food Oasis program at the Atlanta Community Food Bank, FMM aggregates produce from a variety of sources to expand access to healthy and affordable produce. As of 2019, the FMM expanded to supply produce in five public transit stations located in or near USDA low-income/low-access census tracts.

2019 also saw the launch of the Crop Cycle, a multi-functional bicycle cart that brings the spirit of traditional farmers markets to new locations. The Crop Cycle allows CFM to reach more neighborhoods, some not yet served by a farmers market, sparking conversations about the importance of fresh, local food and sustainable, healthy practices like biking.

CFM served over 130 vendors and 200,000 annual shoppers in 2019. Through partnerships

with city governments, local churches, and other civil society organizations, CFM's innovative market distribution systems are increasing access to fresh, local, healthy foods in urban areas. CFM leverages strong partnerships with mission-critical organizations to carry out its programs in an economically viable manner, for both CFM and the community at large.

Additional support is provided by agricultural organizations, community groups, and through earned-income projects including vendor fees, events, and sponsorships. Grants and donations come from national, state, and local sources including the USDA, Georgia Department of Public Health, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Arthur M. Blank Foundation, and the Community Foundation of Greater Atlanta.

As of 2020, CFM actively manages ten farmers market locations, five traditional outdoor markets and five Fresh MARTA Markets. The largest farmers market management organization in the Southeast, CFM is a leader and an innovator in building the alternative food system infrastructure for which so many producers and consumers hunger. We continue to grow

CFM Model

CFM has a unique approach to farmers market management grounded in a neighborhood-based, collaborative methodology. CFM's umbrella structure provides efficiencies in operations, while allowing market managers and staff to ensure that the markets meet the needs and desires of its vendors and the community at large. CFM's Board of Directors includes vendor representatives, community members, and professional experts. The growing staff consists of the founding Executive Director, five full-time staff members, and approximately 30 part-time staff and contractors, most of whom live in or near a neighborhood where CFM manages a market. As a result of this personal connection at every level, CFM markets embody the spirit of the neighborhoods in which they operate.

CFM Approach

CFM addresses food access & security through four programmatic methods:

1. Distribution of food through farmers markets, the Fresh MARTA Markets, and the Crop Cycle;
2. Education about food through educational programming and events;
3. Financial incentives to make local food more affordable;
4. Vendor support and professional development.

CFM Distribution: Multiple Market Models

To respond to the varied needs of Atlanta area neighborhoods, CFM leverages a variety of program models to connect farmers and vendors to community members and customers. This adaptability enables CFM to achieve its mission and maximize its impact. Over the last eight years, CFM has developed the following market models to expand the reach and impact of direct-to-consumer farmers markets.



Neighborhood

Geographically based with a focus on building relationships and access within local communities



Pop-up

Pop-up food markets in consumer-concentrated locations



Transit-oriented

CFM reaches new audiences in these hybrid model markets to provide nutritious food to people where they already are



Corporate

Focused in live-work-play venues, potentially underwritten by a corporate sponsor

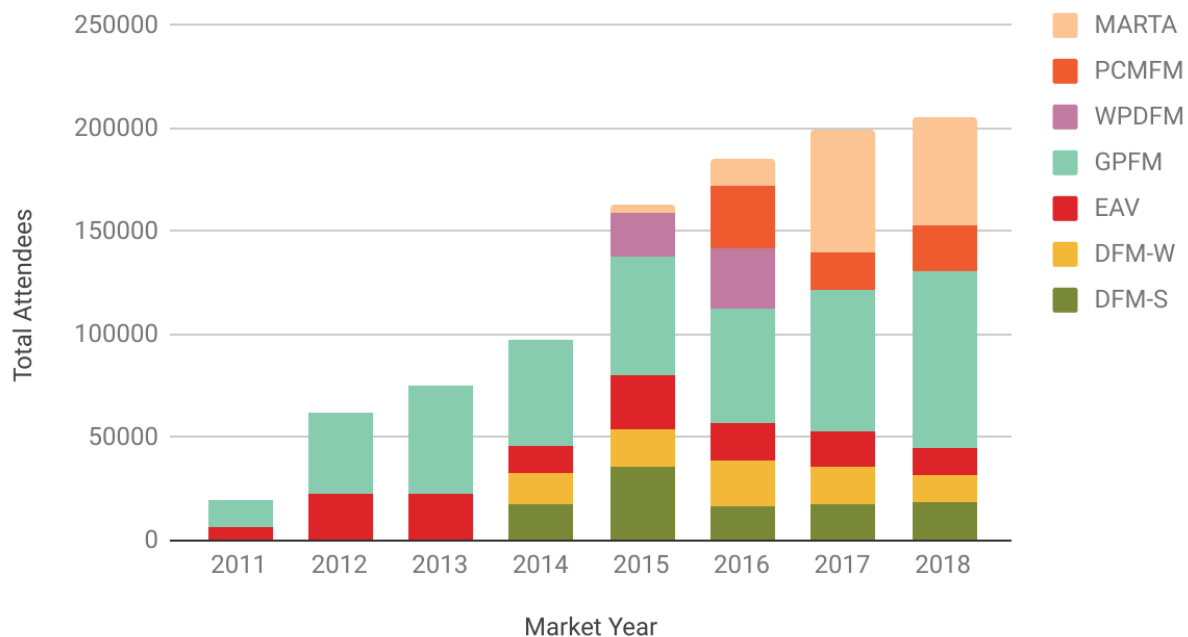


Partner

CFM supports community-based organizations operate these markets in an advisory/consultant capacity

These models go beyond a one-size-fits-all farmers market. For us, this is critical. As our diverse food infrastructure grows, both farmers and eaters have varied needs. Our models allow them, and us, to experiment and iterate on the most successful and adaptable models.

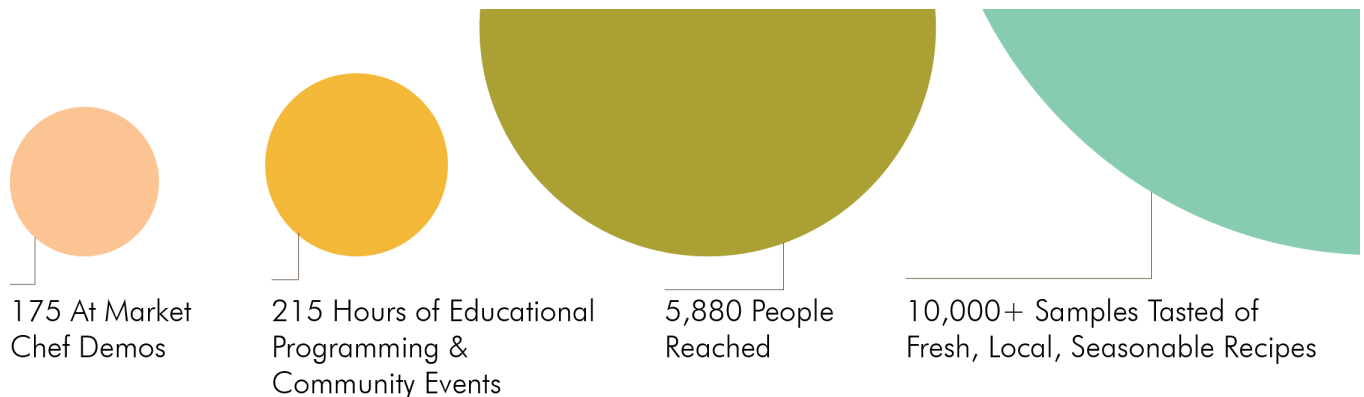
CFM Annual Market Attendance



Education and Outreach

CFM's holistic approach to achieving its mission goes beyond just making healthy local food available at markets. Many consumers lack access to healthy, convenient local food, as well as the knowledge, tools and time to cook for themselves. Health problems such as obesity and chronic illness may result from poor diets imposed by these time and financial constraints. To address this, CFM operates education and outreach programs throughout the year at schools, neighborhood groups, assisted living centers and other. Additionally, at each market, CFM hosts chef demonstrations providing examples of how to use local products in simple, delicious recipes. Through education, CFM advances the ability of producers to provide and consumers to choose healthy, locally-produced foods that support the environment and local community development.

In 2018, more than 6,000 community members attended CFM special events, educational outreach activities and community engagements outside of the markets. Market locations, like the East Atlanta Village Market, are "pocket parks" that serve community needs beyond the market. In addition to the markets and educational outreach programs, CFM hosts signature events such as the annual Tour de Farm bicycle tour spotlighting urban farms, Lady Locavores showcasing female-identifying chefs, bartenders and food advocates, and the Red Clay Soiree gala celebrating farm fresh cuisine.



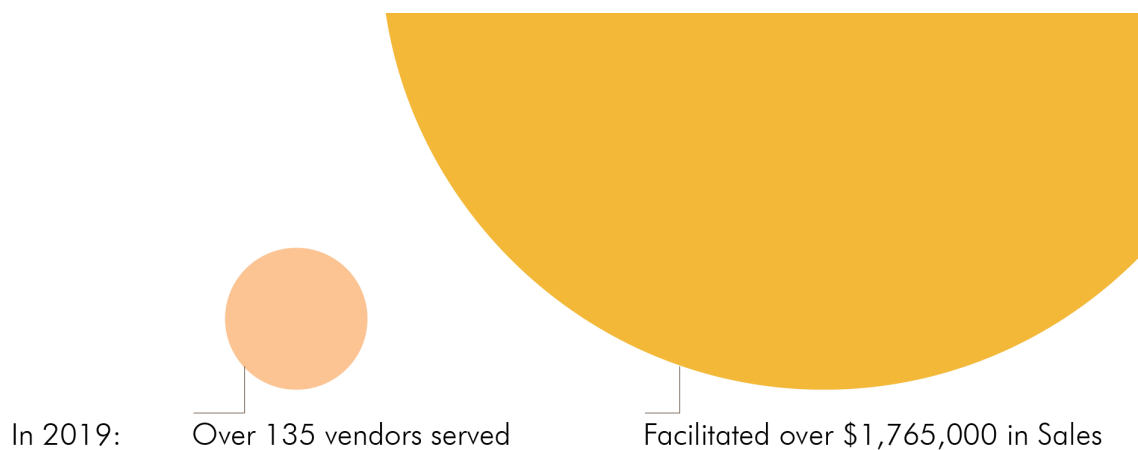
Financial Incentives

CFM has been integral in advancing programs to increase the affordability of farmers market products in the state of Georgia. The East Atlanta Village Farmers Market was the first market in Georgia to accept SNAP (supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, aka "Food Stamps") and then a first pilot market to match SNAP. Working with Wholesome Wave Georgia, CFM doubles the value of SNAP dollars through the Georgia Fresh for Less program, and its markets serve as redemption locations for the Georgia Fresh for Health program, which provides patients with diet-related chronic diseases "prescriptions" for complimentary fruits and vegetables. CFM regularly participates in the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program, helping low-income seniors access fresh food from local vendors. Since its inception, CFM has facilitated more than \$570,000 in matching SNAP benefits.

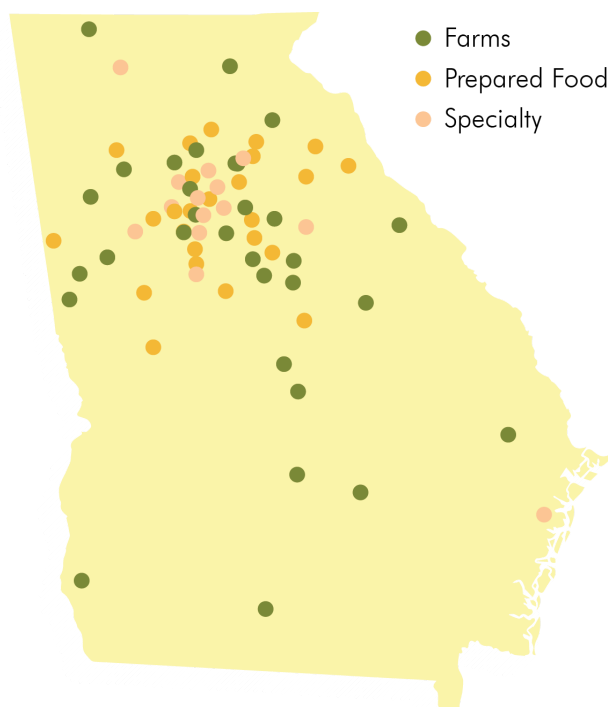
In addition to its partnerships, CFM has developed internal incentive programs like market loyalty cards, the Market Champions program which rewards market goers with a complimentary spotlighted product, and \$5 free produce vouchers for all outreach program attendees. Through these programs, CFM makes fresh, local food more accessible to members of its communities.

Vendor Support

CFM's Vendor Support Program helps vendors with business development activities by connecting people, ideas, leadership and capital to build a viable local food system. CFM assists vendors in 1) business planning and development; 2) expansion and continuing education; 3) mentorship; and 4) community building. Through workshops, digital resources, and mini-grants for specialized training or design, the CFM Vendor Support Program furthers the organization's mission to develop a strong local food infrastructure by supporting the producers who create it.



Who and Where We Serve

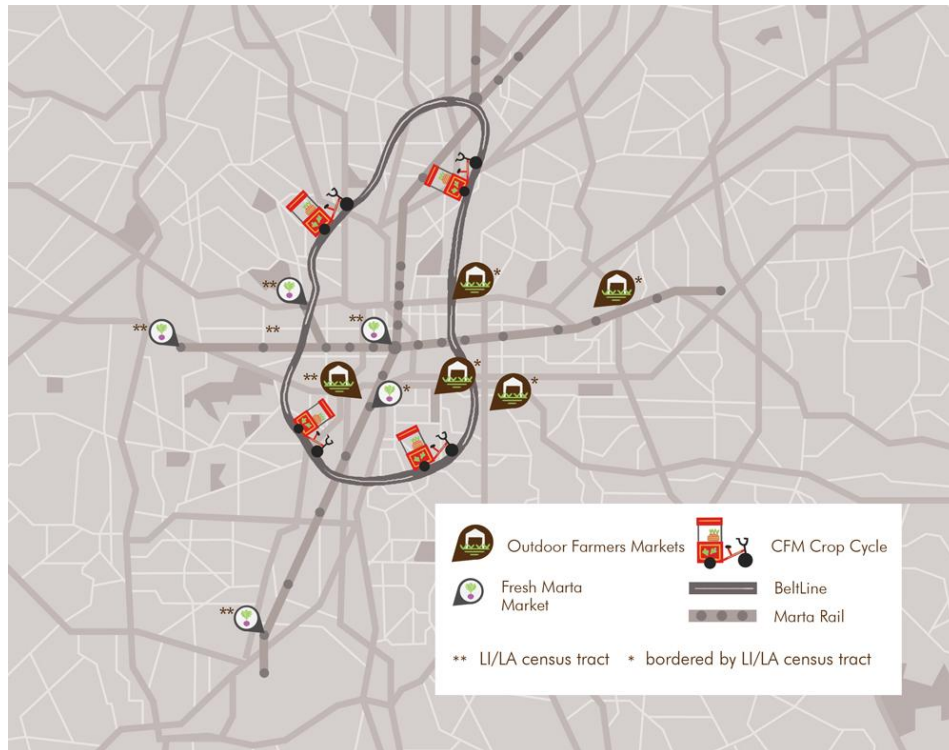


CFM connects producers and eaters. As such, we serve both groups. CFM vendors are local, sustainable farmers and value-added, artisan food-makers. CFM defines local as within 200

miles of Atlanta. We engage a diversity of rural and urban farmers and food-makers to capture the diversity of agricultural production in Georgia. We strive for at least 25% farmers at our markets. Products like coffee that are grown outside of the region must be sourced and processed by a local entrepreneur in order to qualify to be offered at our markets. We provide market opportunities that contribute to food producers ability to support their livelihoods.

Additionally, we serve the people who live and work in the neighborhoods surrounding our markets, and in the larger Metro Atlanta area. Through our market outlets, our educational programming, and our financial incentives, we seek to expand the consumption of locally and sustainably produced foods that strengthen our local economies and improve food access. Through our four pillars (varied distribution models, education, financial incentives, and vendor support), we specifically seek to serve those with low access to local and sustainably produced food.

2019 CFM Operated Markets



TUESDAYS 4 - 8PM On the BeltLine @ Ponce City Market
Apr. 9th - Oct. 29th 2019

WEDNESDAYS 4 - 7PM
308 Clairemont Ave.
Apr. 10th - Nov. 20th (Closed Jul. 3rd)

THURSDAYS 4 - 8PM
572 Stokeswood Ave.
Apr. 11th - Nov. 21st (Closed Jul. 4th)

SATURDAYS 9AM - 1PM
308 Clairemont Ave.
Apr. 13th - Dec. 14th 2019

SUNDAYS 9AM - 1PM
600 Cherokee Ave.
Apr. 7th - Dec. 15th (Closed Aug. 25th)

WEST END - TUESDAYS
April 23 - December 3 • 3:00-7:00 p.m.

H.E. HOLMES - WEDNESDAYS
May 1 - December 4 • 3:00-7:00 p.m.
(Closed Nov. 27)

BANKHEAD - WEDNESDAYS
May 8 - December 4 • 3:00-7:00 p.m.
(Closed Nov. 27)

COLLEGE PARK - THURSDAYS
May 2 - December 5 • 3:00-7:00 p.m.
(Closed July 4 and Nov. 28)

FIVE POINTS - FRIDAYS
April 26 - December 6 • 3:00-7:00 p.m.
(Closed Nov. 29)

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CFM
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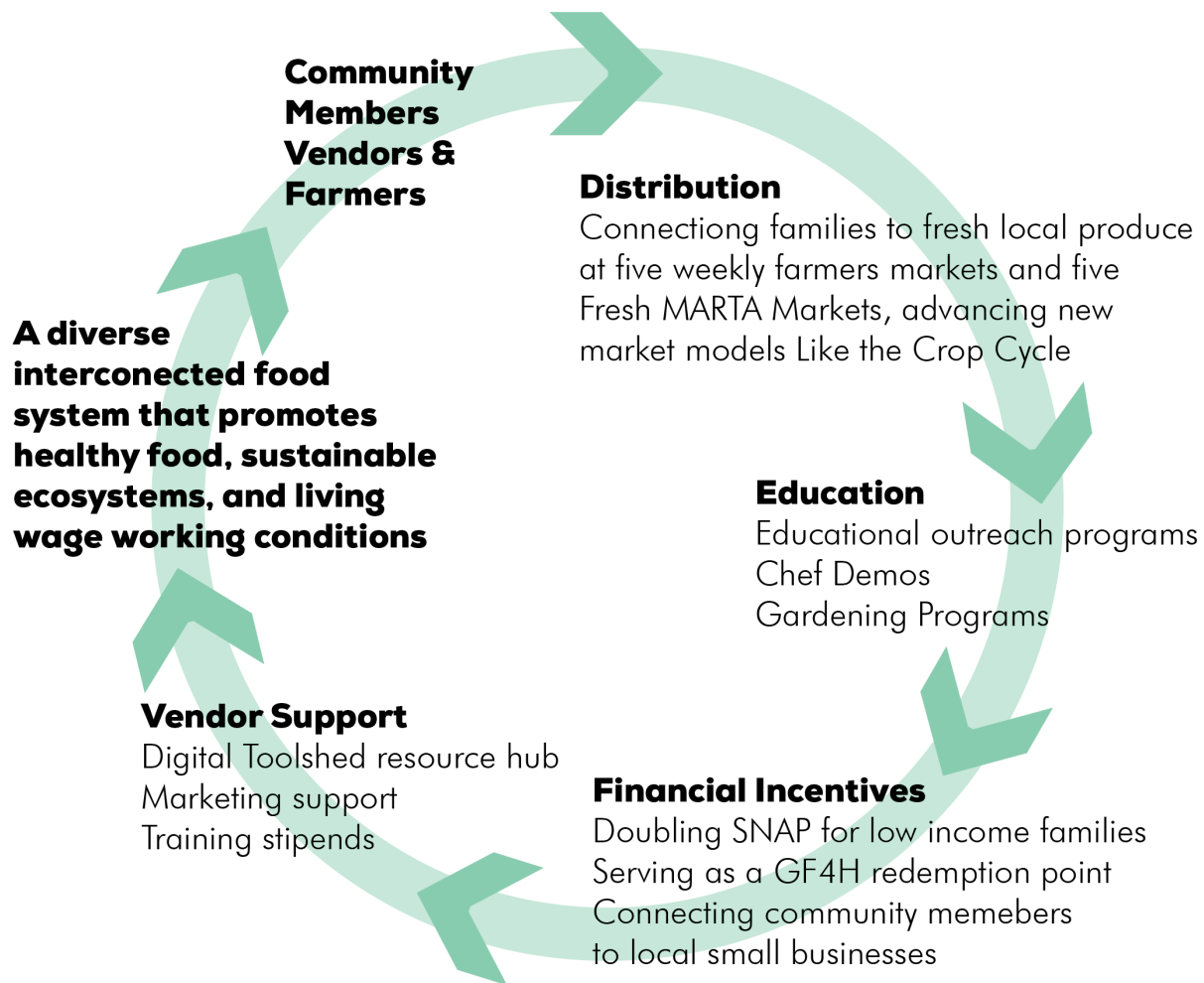
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CFM Theory of Change

Industrial food systems fail to support many environmental, social and economic ends. Though the expansion of industrial agriculture has increased the amount of food produced, it has resulted in many negative effects. These crises include declining soil fertility 1) loss of biodiversity, 2) pollution of natural resources, 3) contributions to climate change, 4) corporate concentration of food production, 5) and rising farmer debt and displacement (6 & 7). At the same time, many consumers lack access to healthy, sustainably-produced local food. Among the many issues tied to these changes are poor economic opportunity, food insecurity, individual and population health problems, and a lack of community and connection to people and place.

CFM seeks to address these problems by creating a diverse local food infrastructure by supporting farmers and foodmakers as well as the eaters who consume their products. To address the interconnected problems inherent in growing food access, CFM utilize the aforementioned four-pronged approach focusing on distribution, education, financial incentives, and vendor support.

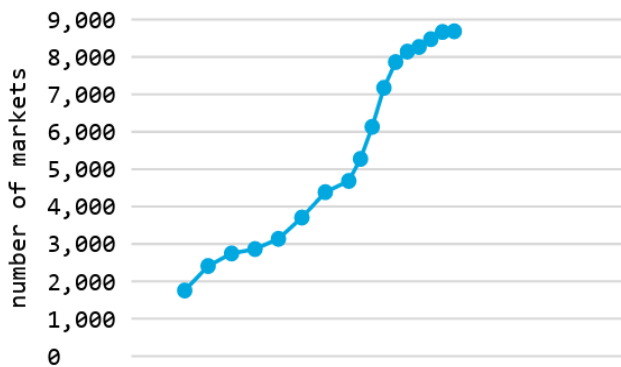


OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

Farmers Markets

Growth plateau

According to the USDA farmers market registry, the opening of new markets has begun to plateau: 2.3% growth from 2015-2017, and only 0.2% from 2016-2017. This comes after sustained higher-paced growth since the 1990s.



While a 2014 USDA market research study indicated increased attendance and sales among markets, more recent regionally-focused studies, such as the Farmers Market Federation of New York, suggest this may no longer be the case. The preface to their 2018 consumer survey expresses nation-wide decreases in participation, sales, and income. While attendance has increased at each of CFMs markets since 2014, occasional annual dips in attendance exhibit that there are opportunities to strengthen attendance and consistent growth at CFM markets.

Innovation

In recent years, there has been a movement among farmers markets and CSAs to innovate.

This has happened in several key ways: (1) consolidation of expenses through shared software subscriptions, personnel, and coordinated marketing campaigns; (2) enhanced farmer support, education, and peer-learning opportunities; (3) expanded product and vendor types; (4) increased program offerings to include community education, farm tours, composting, waste reduction, and other mission-adjacent services; and (5) enhanced farmer opportunities through initiatives that connect farmers to wholesalers and/or consumers in new and convenient ways.

With fewer people spending less time at markets and farmers having financial and scheduling limitations, leveraging opportunities to connect fresh local foods to those in need is paramount. Through new distribution models, like the Fresh MARTA Market and the Crop Cycle, CFM is addressing this challenge.



Farmers

Organic and sustainable farming is a quickly evolving industry due to demographic changes, advancing technology, and a near-constant need to test adaptive strategies to attain a livable wage. Each of these shifting arenas affect how farms operate and ultimately inform how CFM supports its producers. CFM will need to engage with other partners to support farmers to address these issues ensure growth and success for farmers.

Organics Rising

US-based organic agriculture has consistently increased by approximately 10% annually over the last 15 years. Southern states have seen the most rapid growth. Organic certified farms in Georgia grew from 35 in 2011 to 117 in 2014. Most of that growth was driven by smaller farms. Farms making less than \$50,000 annually expanded from 17 to 75 farms. These same farms represent an increasing share of total revenues. Among CFM's vegetable producers, all vendors meet or exceed the minimum organic standards.

sales volume	2011		2014	
	farms	sales	farms	sales
<\$50K	49%	3%	64%	7%
\$50K -99K	17%	3%	16%	11%
\$100K -199K	23%	19%	15%	29%
\$500K+	11%	75%	4%	54%
Total	35	\$12.6M	117	\$12.5M

As market demand rises, so does the portion of Georgia farmland dedicated to organic production, big and small. Georgia Organics, with the Georgia Department of Agriculture, is working toward over 200 organic farms by 2020 by eliminating barriers and providing support for small and mid-sized farms.

Aging Ag

As of the last Ag Census in 2012, the average age of farm operators is 60+ in 87 of Georgia's 159 counties. Despite a recent upward trend in new young growers, 75% of whom are first-generation farmers, the pipeline is not enough to backfill those who are retiring.

A 2017 study by the National Young Farmers Coalition found that the top barriers to career sustainability among those under 35 are access to land, student loan debt, skilled labor shortage, and affordable health insurance. NYFM's recommendations include the development of *micro* versions of common USDA programs to support sustainable start-ups. Moreover, the disconnect between critical skills training and an inexperienced workforce is leading to high farmer burnout and low sustainability. Volatile public policies—like the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA)—that are prone to change and add costs can worsen matters.

Toward a Sustainable Income

CFM, and organizations around the country, continue to ask what can be done to support local agriculture becoming a sustainable career. Cooperative models are a growing trend among small and beginner farms to share experience and resources. Models like consumer co-ops where CSA members share ownership build community buy-in, engagement, and ultimately, more sustainable farms. For most young growers, direct to consumer sales are already the most common revenue source. Making farmers markets convenient for farmers and as well as customers is key to minimizing stress and maximizing sales.

Eaters

There are four identified key trends driving grocery retail consumers in their purchasing habits: shopping experience, grocery apps, and SNAP benefits.

Shoppers Seek Meaningful Experiences

In recent industry reports, it is evident that retail grocery consumers are looking for more meaningful experiences in shopping for food. This means increased expectations regarding transparency about (1) an item's ingredients; (2) where the ingredients are sourced; and (3) the item's healthiness and quality. While traditional grocery retailers try to find ways to meet these expectations, these experiential qualities are inherent to farmers markets, and at a more authentic level than traditional retailers can emulate.

Online on the Rise

Shoppers are increasingly expanding where they purchase food. While supermarkets remain the primary channel, individuals and families are open to finding better quality and more competitive prices in new places, including online. From 2015 to 2018, individuals who occasionally shopped for grocery items online increased from 15% to 28%. This is largely driven by Millennials (43%) and Gen-Xers (29%). Still, only 2% of online grocery shoppers are buying fresh produce online, instead opting for nonperishable "center aisle" goods. In response, traditional grocery retailers are shrinking their center aisles to devote more space to produce and fresh foods.

This indicates an opportunity for local farmers to partner with local and regional retailers to fill these growing spaces. Additionally, as individuals

are less reliant on traditional retailers and are increasingly open to new channels, farmers markets can target Millennials and Gen-Xers to offer a fresh, healthy, tasty option for fresh produce.

SNAP Benefits Dwindle

Doubling the value of SNAP benefits at farmers markets is a proven method to both connect people to fresh foods with otherwise limited access *and* attract new customers. While these benefits have done well to serve customers, external factors have led to decreases in SNAP benefits, subsequently affecting usage at CFM.

After the post-recession American Recovery and Reinvestment Act sunset in late 2014, the number of people receiving SNAP drastically declined. In the years since, SNAP beneficiaries have continued to decline, though at a slower pace. In 2016, Georgia tested new work requirements in ten Georgia counties (including DeKalb) which further decreased the number of beneficiaries among "able bodied adults with dependents." While further work requirements were eventually omitted from the 2018 US Farm Bill, Georgia still plans to expand its work requirements to all 159 counties in 2020.

Despite having the highest SNAP usage among Wholesome Wave's 59 Georgia markets and farm stands, CFM's SNAP redemption data reflects these external factors. Among markets that existed in 2014, SNAP benefits used per customer has declined at a faster rate than overall beneficiaries, though the continued addition of new markets has helped balance these declines.

Our Strategic Goals and Objectives

Given these shifts in the landscape of local food access, and the growth of the organization, CFM has identified five strategies to pursue that will ensure that we are able to meet emerging opportunities and challenges over the next few years.

Goals		Objectives
Goal 1: Create opportunities to access local, sustainable food and products	1	Formalize and execute the existing strategies around CFMs multiple models of market distribution by Q1 2020
	2	Create annual marketing plan that includes annual sector analysis and market research annually by Q3 2019 and annually by Q2 for 2020 and 2021
	3	Create annual community outreach plan by Q2 annually
Goal 2: Support farmers and vendors to be economically viable	4	Sustain and enhance existing Vendor Impacts Metric system by 12/31 of each year
	5	Improve and iterate on the Vendor Support Program plan by 6/30/19 and then annually by Q2 in 2020 and 2021
	6	Increase vendor recruitment and retention by 5% annually each year by Q2
Goal 3: Provide meaningful customer experiences	7	Create a Place-making plan that ensures CFM spaces are safe, welcoming, and reflect neighborhood demographics by 12/31/20
	8	Develop a Ladder of Engagement Strategy for different market stakeholder groups by Q4 2020
	9	Create an Operational Mission plan that connects CFM experiences to broader values and issues by 12/31/20

Goal 4: Connect stakeholders at various scales within and beyond the local food ecosystem	10	Implement a policy through which CFM uses organizational activities to source from and support vendors by Q2 2020
	11	To create an Organizational Engagement Ladder that identifies and outlines potential collaborations, particularly underrepresented groups, with stakeholders at neighborhood, city, state and national levels with whom CFM can collaborate and build partnerships by 12/31/2020
	12	Design and execute at least 4 events or opportunity each market season to engage stakeholders at these levels during each calendar year
Goal 5: Have a financially stable and agile organization	13	Develop a plan to diversify income and reduce costs by 12/31/2020
	14	Build an intentional staff culture with conditions and pathways for employees to thrive by 12/31/2020
	15	Strengthen the Board of Directors capacity by Q1 2020 and annually by Q1 thereafter
	16	Improve operational systems by implementing a CRM by Q2 2020 and updating annually thereafter