

2018 FARMERS MARKET IMPACT STUDY: FOND DU LAC

Market profile

The Saturday Farmers Market attracted an average of 1,718 visitors each weekend to downtown, with 23% traveling more than 10 miles to visit the market. Average market spending by these visitors decreased slightly to \$16.50 per visitor. Of these visitors, just under half (45%) took the time to shop at downtown businesses during their trip to the market. Those visitors new to the market or who visit less again spent more at downtown businesses than regular market customers, regardless of their home address, while the 25 percent of weekly visitors spend more at the market on each visit. Overall, the market generated \$1.5 million in economic activity and 12 jobs in the Fond du Lac Metropolitan area. Of that, \$600,000 in additional economic activity and 2 jobs were specifically within downtown.

The first Fond du Lac farmers market was run by the Association of Commerce and held on Wednesday, September 15, 1971 on Main Street from 9 a.m. till 5 p.m. running all the way from Merrill Avenue to Fifth Street. It continued as an annual event, with the addition of a second market date in 1973. Based on current information, the market shifted to a full season in 1975 in a parking lot near what is now 30 S. Main St. As downtown grew and changed over the years, the market shifted locations with it. It moved to the parking lot near Sebastian's for a year or two before settling in the library parking lot at the Fond du Lac Public Library where it stayed for nearly 25 years, before it shifted to the City/County Parking Lot at the intersection of Western and Linden in 2003. During those years, the market held three to four Main Street market days when the market moved from the lot onto Main Street. In 2015, the Saturday market officially moved to Main Street for the full season. Wednesday markets have also taken place for many years changing locations, times and dates for many years until finally settling on 11-3 on Main Street Plaza in 2015.

The Downtown Fond du Lac Partnership took on the administration of the market in 2000, but the Association of Commerce and the Central Business Council had been involved with the market on and off and in different ways since its inception.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Vendors and customers attracted to downtown for the farmers market contribute significant energy and economic vitality to both the downtown and the region. Including retail sales at the market and adjacent businesses, employment earnings and taxes, plus relevant multipliers, the economic impact of the event in 2018 is estimated to represent:

- \$600,000 in additional economic activity and 2 jobs in downtown.
- \$1.5 million in additional economic activity and 12 jobs in the Fond du Lac Metropolitan area.

The market also contributes to the community in non-monetary ways, including the 3,554 pounds of donated food and nearly \$4,000 worth of volunteer time contributed by the market over the course of the season.

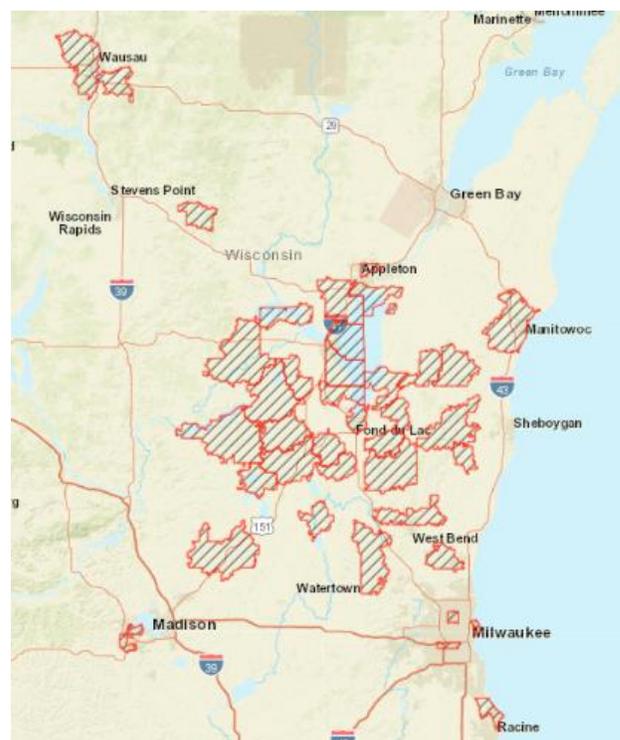
VISITOR & VENDOR PROFILE

Economic impact and success of market depend on the makeup of vendors and visitors that attend the market. This section explores the characteristics of vendors and visitors present at the Fond du Lac market.

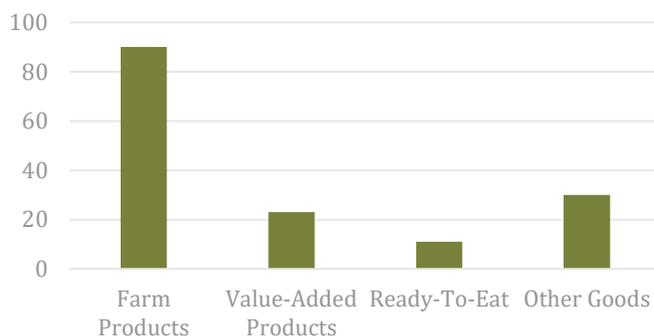
Vendor profile

In 2018, Fond du Lac’s Saturday market included goods and produce from 118 total vendors. Because of the seasonality of produce and products, the market featured an average of 48 vendors per week, a 17% increase from 2017. Weekly attendance ranged from a low of 30 vendors at the final market to a high of 64 vendors in early August. Each vendor appeared at the market an average of 10 times, 43 percent attended at least three-quarters of market dates, and forty-nine attended five or fewer markets. Vendors at the Fond du Lac market come from a broad geographic area, as shown on the map at right.

Vendor Location of Origin



Goods Offered by # of Vendors



Of course, the amount of vendors offering various types of goods for sale influences overall sale patterns, which vary by week. The chart on the previous page illustrates the seasonal breakdown of Saturday vendors by the type of products sold. Vendors offering more than one type of product (i.e. farm goods plus value-added products) are included in both categories, so totals will add up to more than the 118 total vendors. In this study, farm products include fresh foods planted, grown and harvested with no or minimal processing. Value-added projects are those that are made from raw ingredients that they produce and process through baking, cooking, canning or other preserving or processing. Prepared or Ready-To-Eat food includes products that are made from goods primarily purchased and intended for immediate consumption. The other category includes artisan crafts or other handmade goods, typically non-food related. There was no pattern in the type of vendors which appeared multiple times versus those appearing sporadically, with a similar mix of goods available at most markets. Similarly, new vendors in 2018 included multiple new offerings in each product type.

Visitor profile

Visitor counts and surveys were only conducted once during the 2018 market, in mid and late-season. Surveys were conducted by interviewing every 24th visitor entering the market with a goal of achieving a pre-determined and standardized minimum threshold of surveys based on market size.

Over the season, the Saturday market attracted approximately 57,000 visitors to downtown. Attendance fluctuated based on the weather and time of year, with the average Saturday market in Fond du Lac attracting approximately 1,720 visitors, with steady traffic after 9. As with vendors, visitors to the market traveled from a large geographic area although 77 percent are from the City of Fond du Lac or immediately adjacent towns.

Approximately 10 percent of visitors to the market were first-time visitors, while 45 percent attend the market weekly, and the remainder attend periodically over the course of the season. Although visitors were not asked specifically if the market was the main purpose of their visit, the fact that 55 percent of visitors did not anticipate any additional spending outside the market indicates that this is likely the case. Overall, 9 percent of visitors reported walking or biking to the market, while the remaining 91 percent drove alone.

CUSTOMER SPENDING

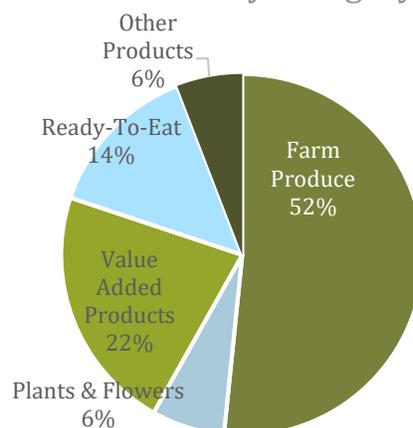
Customers at the market spend dollars both at the market and at other downtown establishments as part of their trip. Both types of spending are important factors when evaluating the success of the market from a downtown development perspective.

Market Spending

Over the course of the season, the market generated \$350,000 in total estimated sales, a 9 percent increase over 2017, for a continued positive trend.

Over the entire season, the most consumer dollars were spent on farm products, followed by value added and

Total Sales by Category



prepared food vendors, as shown in the chart on the previous page. Examining individual vendor sales records, individual vendors earned an average of \$353 per week (slightly higher than 2017), although revenues ranged from an average low of \$61 to an average high of \$817. Vendors selling non-farm and non-food items (other) represented the lowest-grossing vendors. Farm product and ready-to-eat vendors represented the highest grossing vendors.

Downtown Spending

In addition to dollars spent at the market, many visitors also visited merchants elsewhere in downtown, whether for dining, shopping or services. Just less than one-half (45%) of visitors surveyed reported spending additional dollars downtown as part of their visit to the farmers market. Of those spending additional money downtown, the average per person expenditure outside the market was \$15.58, or \$7.05 per visitor including those who made no additional purchases. First time and infrequent visitors to the market typically spent more on ancillary purchases than weekly market. In total, Saturday market visitor spending generated an additional \$151,000 in downtown retail sales over the season.