Message From The President

On behalf of myself and the Board of Directors, Greetings!

As I write this message I am hoping that everyone is having a great spring and your markets are humming with spring and early summer activities. We have many challenges ahead of us, such things as FSMA, cold chain, along with new local and state regulations. In this regard, I encourage our membership to stay engaged and keep our lines of communication open; this is what really adds value to being a member of NAPMM.

A huge thank you goes out to our annual conference committee. The conference in Columbia, Maryland, will go down as certainly one of the best. Although everyone should be named and thanked, I must thank Rose Harrell with a sincere and exceptional thank you, her efforts were extraordinary.

Being named Market Manager of the Year this year was certainly a surprise and very humbling for me, thank you everyone. Special thanks were also given to Dr. Donald Darnall, receiving the William Mulligan Sr. award for his years of service and support for NAPMM. Last, but not least, a special Award of Appreciation was awarded to Gwen Tillisch for her years of dedicated service to the organization. Gwen will be leaving our organization shortly, so thank you Gwen, for all you do.

As always, our Board of Directors will continue to work hard in moving our association forward. Everyone please remember our memberships are now due and please give a call to another member, or non-member, and remind them how important our organization is and the value of being a member.

As always, thank you for your continued support!

Ben Vitale, President

About NAPMM

Founded in 1947, NAPMM strives to help market managers improve facilities and increase services while encouraging cooperation and exchange of ideas between members and partners.

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Produce Market Managers Push FDA Official for Answers on FSMA Compliance

By Joan Murphy—March 25, 2013

COLUMBIA, MD -- Produce market managers looked for answers as to whether they will be on the hook for the new Food Safety Modernization Act but left with few answers from the March 23 meeting of the National Association of Produce Market Managers.

More than 75 NAPMM members attended the four-day meeting, here, which featured high-level officials from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Food & Drug Administration, as well as tours of Lexington and Broadway Markets in Baltimore, the Eastern and Union Markets in Washington, DC, and the Maryland Wholesale Produce and Seafood Markets.

On the last day, produce managers peppered FDA Senior Food Adviser Jenny Scott with questions about FSMA’s reach beyond the tenants that sell fresh produce to the companies that manage the properties.

“Do we as landlords need to comply?” asked Mike Janis, manager of the San Francisco Wholesale Produce Market.

Other market managers explained that tenants own the food and will have to comply with new FSMA requirements, but managers are concerned the common dock area where food passes through on the way to the tenants may be subject to new FSMA safety controls.

It’s hard to obtain a HACCP-approved certification from a third party because the general public has access to these facilities, a manager explained.

“These are some of the questions you ought to submit” to FDA during the comment period on the produce and preventive controls rules, which ends May 16, Ms. Scott said.

Certainly, current Good Manufacturing Practices apply to these facilities, but it will turn on whether businesses need to register with FDA because they hold, process, manufacture or pack foods as to whether FSMA’s new requirements apply, she added. (cont’d next page)
PRODUCE MARKET MANAGERS PUSH FDA OFFICIAL FOR ANSWERS ON FSMA COMPLIANCE (cont’d)

“I don’t know about the rest of you, but I’m here on Saturday morning because I expected this presentation to address the facilities we all deal with in our careers,” said J. Gary Lee, managing member of the Towson, MD-based Lee Real Estate Advisors LLC.

Mr. Janis suggested the group pull back, “think strategically” about the issue and team up with other organizations to flesh out comments on the proposed rules. “We completely understood some of this is gray,” he added.

“There are no definitive answers at this time,” said Robert Guenther, senior vice president of public policy at the United Fresh Produce Association, who followed Ms. Scott on the panel “What Do New Food Regulations Mean to Market Owners and Merchants and Tenants.”

“The question you have to ask yourself is, do you want FDA to define the questions you have or do you want to help define them?” Mr. Guenther asked.

“I would say the biggest question is what the word ‘hold’ means as it moves from your facility from the dock to the wholesaler,” he said. For tenants, the rule will dramatically affect suppliers and result in cost increases. The produce industry is perhaps one of the industries most directly affected under the new food-safety law, and consumer groups and others will be prodding FDA to add finished product testing and other costly safeguards to the final rule, Mr. Guenther told the group.

United Fresh is coordinating with internal industry work groups to draft comments that are due May 16. Mr. Guenther said that his group relies on companies to inform United Fresh on how these rules will work in the real world.

The relationship between tenants and market managers, and the definition of facility is another issue the industry will need to think about, Mr. Guenther added.

FOOD HUB BENCHMARKING STUDY

The National Good Food Network (NGFN) Food Hub Collaboration, in concert with Farm Credit Council, Farm Credit East, and Morse Marketing Connections is conducting the first ever food hub benchmarking study to understand how food hub operations compare across the country.

If you are interested in taking part in the study, email contact@foodhub.info. Chad Gerencer, consultant to the NGFN, will be collecting data from at least 20 different food hubs to analyze information such as sales dollars, expenses, and product volume for analysis and to create industry benchmarks.

CONGRATULATIONS TO FRED COLE

Fred Cole from the Capital District Farmers Market in Menands, New York has been chosen as the new manager of the Charlotte Regional Market in Charlotte, North Carolina. Join me in wishing Fred and Susan the best in their new endeavor.

ST. LOUIS PRODUCE MARKET TURNS 60 YEARS OLD IN 2013

By Lora Abcarian—March 21, 2013

The St. Louis Produce Market, known lovingly as Produce Row, is gearing up for quite a celebration. “We are very excited about celebrating our 60th anniversary on Produce Row, Market Manager Pat Kelley told The Produce News on March 15. “We are proud to serve our customers and community the freshest produce in St. Louis.”

The downtown market sits on 38 acres and occupies a footprint of 250,000 square feet in two main buildings. Mr. Kelley said this is the original configuration of the market. “It was pretty novel back in 1953,” he commented. Each of these buildings is 1,235 feet long and 114 feet wide. Both are two stories high and contain 98 units with 2,000 square feet of floor space within each unit.

Today, 20 businesses are co-located at the roofed facility. “The United States Department of Agriculture maintains an office on the row for statistical data collection and inspection services for the incoming produce,” the market’s website states. “National produce brokerage companies, foodservice operators, produce wholesalers, specialty wholesale produce operators, food processors, produce packaging operations and cold storage operators are all present in the market.” (cont’d next page)
The market has evolved with the times … “In the past five years, several of our tenants have gone and created fresh-cut and prepackaging divisions.”

The St. Louis Produce Market services an area of 350 miles around St. Louis. Receivers include area residents, supermarkets, restaurants, hotels, schools, nursing homes, convenience stores, farmers markets and roadside stands. Mr. Kelly said 1,200 buyers come to the market each month.

“With the continued growth of our business, some of our tenants have expressed interest in the expansions of their current businesses,” he added.

The market has evolved with the times. “The dynamics have changed over the years due to refrigeration and the cold chain,” Mr. Kelley noted. “In the past five years, several of our tenants have gone and created fresh-cut and prepackaging divisions.”

Equally important are food-safety considerations, Mr. Kelley noted.

“Food safety, as we all know, has become a major item, and we have made great strides over the past few years by adding and enforcing the cold chain and fencing the property, and of course have an onsite USDA office,” Mr. Kelley said.

When the market first emerged, St. Louis was a regional railroad hub. The market itself is serviced by 14,000 tractor-trailers and rail cars 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Commodities arrive from 49 states and more than 76 foreign countries. Today, the lion’s share of the product moved from Produce Row is transported by truck.

Mr. Kelley calculated 18,000 trucks move through the market annually.

A Food Market for New York

By Mark Bittman, March 12, 2013

There is nothing like a grand urban food market, which can anchor a neighborhood and even a city. Think of the 120-year-old Reading Terminal Market in Philadelphia; the Ferry Building in San Francisco, which 10 years ago helped revitalize the Embarcadero; and the ever-popular Pike Place Market in Seattle. Even much-maligned Los Angeles has a permanent mid-city market, in business since 1934.

New York … well, the grandest market “we” have is 80 miles away, in Philadelphia.

New York City built a dozen or so indoor markets around 100 years ago, and a couple of smaller ones remain in operation. (1)

We’re enthusiastic about our existing big markets, represented by the ongoing success of the quite limited Chelsea Market and the excitement over the decidedly upscale Eataly.

But imagine the Union Square Greenmarket with a roof over its head, bigger and better: fishers and foragers, selling directly; purveyors of all types, gathering great food from everywhere; prepared foods that might make you drool.

Think of the first great indoor market you visited—huge in scope, democratic and central—and imagine it in Manhattan.

Such an opportunity exists at the site of the former Fulton Fish Market. The romance of this location at the foot of Fulton Street can hardly be overstated: it was a trading center before Europeans arrived; it was the site of the first Brooklyn-Manhattan ferry; and the fish market itself was here for nearly 200 years before moving to the Bronx (and, it seems to me, losing its soul) in 2005. (cont’d next page)
**A Food Market for New York (cont’d)**

The huge buildings have remained uninhabited since then, but their spirit has been kept alive through the efforts of Robert LaValva, a former city planner, and others. It was LaValva, inspired by the story of London’s Borough Market (a millennium-old site that was revived recently and permanently changed the south bank of the Thames), who started, soon after the fish market’s departure, what’s become the New Amsterdam Market. Since then, it’s become a weekly seasonal (April to December in 2012) fixture in front of the former fish market buildings, held Sundays from 11 to 4. Like all good food markets, it brings together shoppers with small and mostly local purveyors and producers, like those mentioned above, plus farmers, artisans, fishmongers, cheesemongers, butchers, bakers and more.

The fish market site — there are two buildings on it — would make an ideal permanent New Amsterdam market, something that could become our city’s version of the Borough Market, Pike Place, Reading or even Barcelona’s incredible La Boqueria. (I can dream, no?) It’s a vision that can happen — and LaValva and others are pushing for it — but it won’t come easily.

A hearing this Thursday (March 14) before the Zoning Sub-Committee of the Land Use Committee of the New York City Council will to a large extent determine whether that vision is feasible. The adjoining Pier 17 (often referred to as “South Street Seaport”) is about to undergo a massive redevelopment project, turning what amounts to a failed mall with a museum into what its developers (the Howard Hughes Corporation, or HHC), hope will be a successful mall with a museum.

The mall’s character is so far ill-defined, with the developers refusing to name retailers (they have promised not to rent to big-box stores) and touting its non-shopping-center, city-like aspects. (We actually have a city; do we need a malls that mimics it?) Perhaps it'll be different, but to me it sounds like a blend of Columbus Avenue, the Time Warner Center (or whatever they call it now) and the Javits Center. Exciting, huh?

But it doesn’t matter what I (or you) think about the Pier 17 development; it’s unlikely to change.

What might change, however, is the city’s plan for the area’s remaining public space, including the adjacent former fish market buildings. Changing that attitude is the goal of a petition to the mayor and city council sponsored by the Save Our Seaport (SOS) coalition.

As it stands, the rezoning needed to give HHC what it wants on Pier 17 will affect the whole waterfront in that area and may give the developer control of the former fish market site. (There is already a letter of intent from the city allowing HHC to propose redevelopment of the fish market buildings.)

That would be a mistake. What’s needed, says SOS, is to protect all city-owned properties in the neighborhood from private redevelopment and devise an overall plan for them, one that could (and should) recognize the value of a rebuilt and permanent indoor market.

Thursday’s hearing is the public’s only opportunity for public comment on this issue, although there are other ways to voice opinions; see the NewAmsterdam Market’s home page.

I asked LaValva, who puts quotation marks around his title of New Amsterdam’s “president” but who is the right person to move the project forward, what he wanted to see happen. First, he said, there should be an impartial study of the best use of the area’s city-owned assets. Meanwhile, he wants a five-year license for New Amsterdam Market to operate in the parking lot in front of the Fulton Fish Market site.

“Within that five-year period,” he said, “we’ll prove our viability and develop a plan to rehabilitate the Fish Market site.” The alternative would be a grave error, he says, one that might result in the loss of “what is arguably one of New York’s most unique and irreplaceable public assets.”

It is an incredible asset, with wonderful potential that dwarfs even that of the High Line. In its prime, the Fulton Fish Market was a vibrant, economically important part of the city, surrounded by restaurants, retailers and processors. No one who visited it—especially on dark, frozen dawns, or in the summer when the sun rose early over the East River—will ever forget it. (2) Especially with the renovated Fulton Street Station building, the New Amsterdam Market would draw New Yorkers and visitors in droves, as Borough Market does in London and Pike Place in Seattle. (cont’d next page)
Because we can find groovy retail just about anywhere, but to find a really fantastic indoor food market, we have to go to Philly.

Sarah Perry courts prospective members at the White Rock Local Market.
Dues will help sponsor a nearby community garden.

In September 2009, two city employees visited the market and politely told Ferraro that while everything seemed very nice ... she was going to have to get a permit. "Just go down to City Hall and you can open right back up," they told her.
It didn't work that way.

A Food Market for New York (cont'd)

Which makes it in the interest of HHC to support this project, both verbally and financially. (The city might even make this part of the bargain, given the incredible deal the developers are getting.) Because we can find groovy retail just about anywhere, but to find a really fantastic indoor food market, we have to go to Philly.

(1) The Essex Street Market, where my grandmother and mother shopped—as I do occasionally—is among them.
(2) I was first there in the late '50s, on a school trip to the market and one of its famous restaurants, Sloppy Louie's. I never stopped going, or loving it.

How Dallas Killed Farmers Market

Dallas Leads the Nation in Over-Regulating Farmers Markets—which is Why We Have So Few of Them.

By Scott Reitz—Dallas Observer, April 25, 2013

On the surface, Sarah Perry seems like an unlikely advocate. She has a quiet, almost passive demeanor and no interest in whipping up conspiracy theories even though the city of Dallas has given her a good reason to have some. All she wants to do is run a simple farmers market, but City Hall has made that very hard. In fact, it was once illegal.

Perry was born in Dallas and spent 10 years in New York City before returning in 1998. During her time in Manhattan, shopping at the Saturday farmers market in her West Village neighborhood was just a matter of course. In the heart of one of the densest urban environments in the country, she could meet face to face with scores of farmers who traveled to Union Square to sell fresh produce and meats. "They had a program called Green Market," Perry said, "which nurtures and teaches small farmers to make it possible for them to succeed and come and sell at the market."

When she came back to Texas, the city-owned Farmers Market was less than ideal. It was too far away, for one. Why should she drive downtown from her home in East Dallas just to go to a farmers market? Where were the neighborhood markets? Besides, something wasn't quite right about the market downtown. Some vendors sold products whose quality was, to put it nicely, dubious. Cottonty tomatoes for sale in mid-March weren't exactly seasonal. And the market was dirty, filled with cars and pigeons, and difficult to navigate.

So she set out to create her own.

Perry scouted locations in East Dallas, eventually happening on the Green Spot, a health-focused convenience store on Buckner Boulevard that peddled organic frozen yogurt, direct trade coffee and fresh juice. A natural soda fountain replaced Super Big Gulps, and a small restaurant cooked up cage-free eggs and meats from animals raised humanely and not pumped full of antibiotics or growth hormones. Bruce Bagelman, who founded the Green Spot, was thrilled to host Perry's vision.

Perry contacted various vendors including Lisa Lucido, whose family made fresh pasta and sold it at the Dallas Farmers Market. She picked a date and went down to City Hall and got a special events permit. "It was pretty small the first time," Perry admitted, but she still considers her effort a huge success. "It was funny because everyone in the neighborhood had to have fresh pasta all of the sudden."

On the other side of Dallas, in the parking lot of Celebration Restaurant on Lovers Lane, Leah Ferraro was starting up her own market. Because Celebration was already licensed as a full-service restaurant, Ferraro went to the city's health department to see what she needed to conduct her outdoor market. She said she was told she didn't need a permit and would be fine as long as she offered hand-washing sinks and kept the grounds clean. The Celebration Market was a big success too. Residents who lived far from the city center were starved for a local, neighborhood market.

Then someone upset about a dog on the restaurant's patio called the health department, which prompted a rare weekend visit from an inspector who asked to see a permit for the event. Ferraro tried to explain that they'd run their plans by the health department and was told they were fine. The inspector disagreed. In September 2009, two city employees visited the market and politely told Ferraro that while everything seemed very nice, and they'd like to shop there too, she was going to have to get a permit. "Just go down to City Hall and you can open right back up," they told her. It didn't work that way. (cont'd next page)
City employees told Ferraro there was no such thing as farmers market permit, so if she wanted to hold a market she'd have to petition City Council to come up with one. She was also told she couldn't operate the market at all and was forced to close the remainder of the season. "And then of course the rumors started to fly," Ferraro said. Did you hear that the Celebration Restaurant was shut down by the health department?

What was bad for Celebration was good for Sarah Perry. Her market was growing quickly, and it took on some of the displaced farmers and vendors. Customers had come to depend on her Saturday market not just for local and naturally grown produce, but also as a place to congregate. Every other Saturday, her special event converted the Green Spot parking lot into a bustling town square. The permitting process had begun to grow tedious, though.

Special events permits were expensive and restrictive. They required police presence and trash services if events reached a certain size and required individual vendors to get additional permits if they wanted to sell grilled meats or other prepared dishes — what the city called potentially hazardous foods. That individual permit costs $250 and expires after 10 days, requiring farmers and vendors who wanted to participate in Perry's market to get a new permit every other week. Many vendors considered themselves lucky to take home $100 in sales from a single event. Even worse, the rules were applied inconsistently depending on which city employee was handling Perry's event. "The price would change every time I would make a phone call," she said.

Meanwhile the Dallas Farmers Market continued to get worse after decades of mismanagement, and poorly planned revitalization efforts only added to the problems. The city mandated improvements including trash service, security and other services that grew the infrastructure like a massive fruit tree as the money to water it was drying up. Revenues from a farmers market are seasonal, but the market had to be maintained year-round. The fee structure in place was inadequate, and the code that governed the market was out of date.

In 2006, voters approved $6 million in bond sales for repairs to the Dallas Farmers Market and then the city forgot to spend it. Paint peeled from the older sheds as customer spending declined. A newly built Shed 2 was partially filled with mismatched businesses and hardly finished storefronts, while ugly, exposed insulation hinted at the energy bills that sucked up the market's finances. The city was losing hundreds of thousands of dollars a year, enough to infuriate City Manager Mary Suhm. She pushed the city to wash its hands clean of the mess with a new privatization effort that was championed by neighborhood advocates. Even that effort turned into a multi-year ordeal that was mired by arguments.

It wasn't always like this. Historic accounts and news articles tell of a lavish public market of four large sheds filled with hundreds of local "dirt" farmers who grew what they sold. Many cars parked under the sheds that some people worried about carbon monoxide. The market was a city treasure. But now it was a social blight draining money.

What's worse is the city seemed determined to drag smaller, independent farmers markets down into failure with them. Just as these neighborhood markets started to sprout, the city choked them with an herbicide of onerous regulations that made running a market cost-prohibitive. When they finally finished a new ordinance governing neighborhood markets, they filled the document with unnecessary restrictions that illuminated how clueless City Hall was about how to manage farmers markets. Meanwhile, the downtown Dallas Farmers Market went from being the best in Texas to one of the worst in the country.

A Downtown Oasis Dries Up

Tony John was an accounting clerk when she first reported to work at the Dallas Farmers Market in 1981. Her duties included assigning vendors their stalls, helping enforce market rules and collecting and recording rental fees. At the end of the day she'd take stacks of cash, sometimes as much as $60,000, down to City Hall for deposit — a sizable sum considering the small fees the city charged farmers to participate in the market. But back then a farmer would show up early in the morning and sell out of produce in just a few hours, and some stalls turned two and three vendors each day.

John recalls sitting in her office, which had an open storm door, when a moving truck pulling into a stall caught her eye. The truck's wooden sideboards were red and it was filled so high with fresh green peppers she wondered how they kept from tumbling into the street. Above the truck the newly painted yellow shed roof captured the sun like a giant summer squash, and above that the cloudless sky was bright blue. "It was the most gorgeous rainbow," John said. (cont'd next page)
But according to the ordinance that governed the space, the Dallas Farmers Market was a municipal produce market, not a traditional farmers market—a distinction that allowed produce vendors to participate right alongside farmers.

Slowly the produce dealers gained more and more control, and what billed itself as a farmers market became something akin to an open-air grocery store—and not a particularly good one.

Energy, personnel and other operating costs skyrocketed while business fell. Many of the farmers left. It's easy to understand why.

How Dallas Killed Farmers Markets (cont’d)

As John learned the ropes, the city was just wrapping up construction of Shed 4 and held a big ceremony with a ribbon cutting. The newest shed was painted a bright, springtime green. Shed 2 was painted vibrant orange and Shed 3 was red. The colors mimicked the shades lapped on barns, John Deere tractors and other farm equipment.

The pavement just outside the stalls was painted in alternating red and white bands. Seen from above from a plane flying into Love Field, the colors, muddled with the footsteps of thousands of shoppers, looked like a freshly plowed field. The market was painted as if Edward Hopper held the brush. "And the aromas," John added. "There is nothing more wonderful to smell than a real farmers market."

But according to the ordinance that governed the space, the Dallas Farmers Market was a municipal produce market, not a traditional farmers market—a distinction that allowed produce vendors to participate right alongside farmers. These dealers, who might never have turned a spadeful of dirt, bought products from big wholesale vendors, which allowed the market to offer pineapples, avocados and other products that weren't in season or otherwise available. For the most part, at first, those vendors had the same pride in their goods as the farmers, and the quality of all the products was high. But a few bad pieces of fruit, as John put it, were slowly spoiling the barrel.

In the decades before John arrived, the market was fertile ground for entrepreneurs. It was one of the few places any person could set up a business for just a few hundred dollars. Former Councilman Al Lipscomb put his weight behind the market, which he saw as a means for people in his South Dallas district to pull themselves up out of poverty. It was a platform for his politicking.

As more produce vendors became a part of the market, quality declined. John remembers watching dealers peel the wilted leaves from older cabbages so they still looked fresh and then offering them at the same premium price. Dealers would claim to be farmers so they could get cheaper stall rentals. Some of the worst used shady tactics like false bottoms to make half-empty baskets of produce appear full.

John remembers a crop check she conducted on a farmer selling fresh corn. She drove all the way out to Forney to the address listed in the farmer's application only to find his mother's house. There was a small plot of ground where they casually grew a few plants. According to the city's rules at that time, that garden qualified the produce dealer as a farmer.

When the market administrator and other employees tried to rein in the worst abusers, dealers howled and headed to City Hall to lobby council members. Farmers, meanwhile, were too busy working their farms and didn't have time to play the politics that gradually began to shape the rules of the market. Slowly the produce dealers gained more and more control, and what billed itself as a farmers market became something akin to an open-air grocery store—and not a particularly good one.

At the same time, the market administration was having an increasingly difficult time working with the city. In the early '80s, the market's management was moved from weights and measures under consumer affairs to convention and event services. Consumer affairs was a public service entity funded by the city budget. Convention and event services was intended to be self-sufficient and profitable. That change altered the tenor of the interactions between the farmers market and the city completely.

Now the market was to be a city attraction and requirements for special security and trash services were laddered on. Under the old regime, dealers and farmers were expected to vacate their stalls when they'd concluded business and take their trucks and their trash with them. The farmers took their unsold produce back to the farm to feed to livestock or compost. The dealers had to deal with their refuse on their own. But now the city required trash compactors to be installed, and the costs were levied on the market. Dealers began leaving their trucks in the lots overnight, making the streets harder to clean.

When Shed 3 was demolished a new shed was built to house the displaced farmers. The city thought the new Shed 2 should anchor their new vision of the market, and it was built right on top of the previously striped pavement that used to call to the sky above. It had to be enclosed so the space could attract restaurants, and it had to be heated and cooled too. More employees were hired to help with upkeep. Energy, personnel and other operating costs skyrocketed while business fell. Many of the farmers left. It's easy to understand why. (cont’d next page)
Imagine being a small, family farmer who works for months to grow tomatoes by the bushel, and then as you set up your display, a produce dealer with none of your operating costs and 10 times the product competes with you in a neighboring stall. Then imagine a drought wiping out your crop. Weather, of course, doesn't affect the produce dealers who can buy "fresh" product all the way from Chile if they need to. The dealers are capable of setting up massive tables of produce stacked high — an image that resonates with shoppers who are used to buying their food at grocery stores. But if the quality from the produce dealers is no better than that at the grocery store, the reputation of the farmer selling alongside the dealer still suffers, even though the farmer's tomatoes might be great.

The pressure was enough to convert some farmers to produce dealers. Sherry Thompson and her family have been selling at the Dallas Farmers Market for more than 50 years. When they lost an entire peach crop, they were forced to resell produce to supplement their income. When Thompson's parents died, she took over the farm with her husband. But then he passed away too, and Thompson doesn't have the resources to farm on her own any longer. "I go outside, sit on the tractor and fire it up now and then, just to keep it running," Thompson said. "I just don't have the heart for it anymore."

### Governing by Numbers

While the Dallas Farmers Market added more produce dealers and the farmers began to decline, the term "farmers market" was gaining a very special meaning in other parts of the country. Farming and nutrition advocates were fed up with an increasingly homogenized food system that placed emphasis on availability and abundance at the expense of seasonality and quality. As large-scale operations grew and cold storage methods and globalization made a Noah's ark worth of produce available year-round, the personality of each vegetable and fruit faded.

Food fanatics joined the movement. These new consumers didn't want a tomato 365 days a year; they wanted a good one. They wanted to meet and interact with the farmer who was growing their food and watch the seasons shift on their tables.

When new, enlightened shoppers like Sarah Perry moved to Dallas, they expected something different when they came to visit a "farmers market." Sellers offering bananas from the lush tropical forests of Texas were a turn-off, and many shoppers longed for something smaller and more intimate in their own neighborhood. At the same time, neighborhood markets were sprouting all over the country. In 2009, more than 5,000 farmers markets were listed in the USDA's market directory listing, up from 2,500 in the previous decade.

Perry began pressuring the city to address her permitting problems. "We wrote a list of recommendations, and we sent it to a number of council members," Perry said. "They directed the city manager's office to look into it."

Suhm assigned Jack Ireland to lead the project. Ireland worked with various departments within the city that had interests in the neighborhood markets. "We had someone from code inspection because they handle food services, someone from special events through the convention center and someone from planning and zoning," he said. He also talked to different cities that had different types of markets to see how they managed them and tried to draft a code. "There wasn't really an example out there of an ordinance that we could tailor ours after," he said.

In some ways Dallas bureaucrats looked like a progressive bunch as they labored to create an ordinance governing farmers markets long before other cities ever thought of such a thing, but the reality was far from that. "They thought we were a bunch of illegal hooligans that wanted to hang out in people's parking lots and have a flea market," Perry said. Suhm suggested in an interview with the Observer in 2009 that residents would not be pleased to end up with markets selling "half a dozen tomatoes, a bunch of pit bulls and bicycle parts" in their neighborhoods.

In three transportation and environment committee meetings, various council members cautioned that moving forward with neighborhood farmers markets would take away business from the Dallas Farmers Market. Others doubted the city would be able to recover the cost of management through permitting fees and said they wouldn't approve the proposed ordinance unless the process was self-sufficient. That threatened only to raise fees.

Vonciel Jones Hill, who represents District 5, said she would not support the proposal because the concept detracts from her vision for downtown while highlighting the fact that her district still could not attract a grocery store. Elsewhere in the country, though, neighborhood farmers markets have pushed into areas known as food deserts, those neighborhoods with few alternatives to convenience stores selling junk food. (cont'd next page)
Perry is trying to facilitate a system of local markets that focus on access to fresh food while stimulating the local economy.

FRESHFARM Markets are used to educate the public about food and environmental issues and provide economic opportunities for local farmers. ...which would have been impossible if she had to operate under Dallas’ ordinance.

If Dallas City Hall wanted to stifle neighborhood markets, it did a good job.

**How Dallas Killed Farmers Markets (cont’d)**

Back at Perry’s White Rock Local Market, pit bull puppies have yet to make an appearance, but she’s not trying to build a run-down flea market in her quiet East Dallas neighborhood. Perry is trying to facilitate a system of local markets that focus on access to fresh food while stimulating the local economy. She’s set up an organization with a mission similar to other nonprofits looking to overhaul the food system. "I’d like to see markets happen in South Dallas and far East Dallas or Northwest Dallas," Perry said. "There is nothing wrong with that. There are only good things to come from that."

Dallas finally approved an amendment to the city code adding "neighborhood farmers markets." It runs to nearly 19 pages of restrictions. While some of the ordinance deals with necessary guidelines to protect public health and safety, other sections are more restrictive than any farmers market ordinance in the country. Markets are limited to no more than 50 vendors and 1,000 attendees, numbers that stifle growth and pale in comparison with more successful markets. The downtown market in Austin sees an average of 3,000 visitors every weekend. Applicants for a permit in Dallas are allowed to sponsor only a single farmers market location, and they're limited to 28 events a year. The area surrounding the downtown farmers market is off limits, and applications are reviewed and approved by the Dallas Farmers Market Administration. (The privatization effort will move this administrative function elsewhere in the convention center.)

If Ireland’s committee worked with other cities to determine the best way to govern farmers markets, he didn’t do a very good job. Ann Yonkers is the co-executive director for FRESHFARM Markets, a nonprofit organization responsible for 10 markets in D.C., Maryland and Virginia. She was invited to Dallas in 2007 as a keynote speaker for a convention organized to help revitalize the Dallas Farmers Market.

FRESHFARM Markets are used to educate the public about food and environmental issues and provide economic opportunities for local farmers. The organization has become a national leader in the local food movement, which would have been impossible if she had to operate under Dallas’ ordinance.

Tyler Horne, who has operated markets in Houston for the past 10 years, describes a city that is wholly supportive. "They’re not worried about how we operate; they’re worried about public heath," he said. "As long as we’re following the health code, that’s pretty much the extent of the involvement that the city has."

Suzanne Santos is the farmers market director of the Sustainable Food Center in Austin. Her organization sponsors four different markets in the city, and other organizations sponsor several more. There are even farmers market stands, which cater to one or two farmers who come into Austin to sell meat and produce during the week when the larger markets are closed.

In Austin, a Sustainability Food Policy Board, set up by the city and consisting of relevant nonprofit organizations and food and farming businesses, has been instrumental in changing codes to let farmers sample their products and allow food vendors to participate too. They’re now looking at a comprehensive farmers market ordinance that fosters the growth of markets instead of stifling them.

Closer to Dallas, Coppell built a small, low-cost pavilion to support a privately managed, city-supported market overseen by a committee of residents, city staff and vendor representatives. There are no restrictions or detailed legislation. The committee is simply trusted to properly manage the market on its own. The experiment was so successful since opening in 2003 that the city plans to capitalize on the momentum by building mixed-use development around it, creating a new and permanent town center. Amanda Vanhoozier, a city employee who oversees the market, says part of their success can be attributed to how they handle farmers. "A lot of people say that we really appreciate the vendors and the farmers," she said. "Our mission is to develop a relationship."

Each of these cities has one thing in common: Governments foster and support private farmers markets, often financially, while maintaining a simple and nonrestrictive focus on public safety.

**The Effects of an Unsupportive City**

If Dallas City Hall wanted to stifle neighborhood markets, it did a good job. When the farmers market ordinance won approval in 2010, five neighborhood markets were listed in Jack Ireland’s presentation to council’s transportation and environment committee. Now there are three. (cont’d next page)
Meanwhile, neighborhood farmers markets across the rest of the country are shooting up like asparagus stalks in spring. The USDA recorded more than 5,000 markets when Dallas’ ordinance took effect. Three years later there are nearly 8,000. The entire nation is participating in a food revolution while Dallas is being left behind.

Dallasites are being robbed of an opportunity to congregate in new, local town centers and connect with local business owners and farmers. They’re also missing out on some of the really tasty food that pops up on restaurant menus when farmers and good chefs get together. Katherine Clapner got her start at a neighborhood farmers market selling locally produced confections. Now she's behind Dude, Sweet Chocolate, the best-known chocolate shop in Dallas.

Chad Houser, a Dallas chef who served as a board member for the Dallas Farmers Market Friends, says the lack of access to seasonable produce contributes to keeping Dallas diners in a culinary dark age. The former chef at Parigi, who has since moved on to work with at-risk youths at his Café Momentum project, describes diners at his former restaurant who had no clue what was in season. Customers complained when a popular okra special wasn't available in the fall and demanded tomatoes on their salads in January. Perhaps Dallas diners don't understand farm-to-table because they never got to know the farmers.

This isn't just about hippies buying farm-fresh kale and foodies fetishizing free-range pork raised on acorns and farmer's hugs. The city's chokehold hurts everyone with little access to fresh, healthy food. While the effects of farmers markets pushing into food deserts around the country may be small, a growing number of low-income people receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits — what food stamps are called now — are shopping at farmers markets. Between October 2010 and September 2011 nearly $12 million in SNAP benefits were redeemed at farmers markets, which may not sound like a lot, but it's up nearly $4 million from the previous year. The program is putting fresh produce directly into the hands of the people who need it most while also subsidizing local farms.

Dallas’ ordinance pushes farmers into suburban markets while suppressing the potential to create new farmers. Roy and Sofia Martinez worked for the Dallas school district till they both lost their jobs. Now they’re growing produce they sell at Perry’s White Rock Local Market. Chris Buckalew is a computer science professor who started Weather Top Farms in Forestburg. He sells young greens and vegetables at the Coppell Farmers Market. In Oak Cliff, Steve Smith used his veterans benefits to help start Eat the Yard Organics, a small urban farm. If there were more markets in Dallas creating more consumer demand, there would likely be more of these next-generation farmers.

Joel Salatin is an internationally recognized advocate for local, sustainable farming who may be best known for his appearance on Food Inc., a documentary that in part recounted the plight of the American family farmer. He tries to help more consumers connect with small local farms while teaching farmers how to work sustainably. "Everybody knows farmers have it rough as it is," he said when told about Dallas' ordinance at a recent event in Dallas. "There's a certain volume or scale that's necessary for a viable business." As for Dallas' restrictive regulations, Salatin cited a fundamental right for people to do business with each other. "What would it be like if you went to a shoe store and said you can only sell so many shoes a year?" City Hall's heavy hand isn't just robbing residents of a casual Saturday morning destination. It's stifling the local economy.

The Farm Road Ahead

The city washed its hands of decades of mismanagement by selling its downtown market to the Farmers Market Group this March, in a proposal that wasn't made public until the city accepted it. The collection of real estate developers, marketing experts and restaurant and other professionals plan to shrink the market while using the remaining land to build apartments, retail spaces and other mixed-use developments a bit like the Coppell project.

Unlike the smaller city to the north, the FMG inherits years of bad politics and restrictions. They have to convince local farmers that Dallas is ready to treat them with respect. They also have to address the delicate balance between produce dealers and farmers, all while executing a $64 million development effort.

Mixed-use developments have had mixed performance in Dallas. Victory Plaza is a perfect example of a planned urban environment that fails to draw real foot traffic. When a sporting event or concert fills the American Airlines Center, the streets are vibrant and alive. Other times Victory Plaza feels like a neon ghost town. The upcoming Sylvan | Thirty project in Oak Cliff promises a local, organic grocery market, restaurants and shopping, and more than 200 studios and lofts when it's completed later this year, and Trinity Groves is already drawing a handful of restaurants.
Meanwhile, the years-long construction phase and relocation of farmers and produce dealers will only further weigh on small businesses. The project has the potential to further alienate farmers who were, at least in bullet points, the cornerstone of the FMG’s proposal.

John was heartbroken as she talked to various employees she’d worked with for years who are suddenly uncertain about their futures. She tries to maintain hope Dallas Farmers Market can regain its former glory, but it’s obvious she’s straining. “I’ve seen and heard everything,” John said.

Thankfully, neighborhood farmers markets continue to chug along and offer alternatives despite Dallas’ burdensome ordinance and lack of support. The Celebration Market will be back this spring, and Saint Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church on Douglas Avenue has sponsored a similar neighborhood market in North Dallas. They currently max out all 28 events they can have per year, sharing many of the same farmers you can find at White Rock Local Market.

The presence of identical farmers at multiple markets challenges the city’s stance that neighborhood markets would somehow detract from the downtown farmers market — there are plenty of customers to go around. Farmers think simply in terms of foot traffic and travel distance when deciding which markets to sell their products. These neighborhood markets are keeping farmers as close to the city center as possible while the city continues to overhaul its mess downtown. A successful revitalization could bring the farmers back, but easing up on restrictions and actually supporting neighborhood farmers markets would only help.

The Lakeside Baptist Church has stepped forward to sponsor a second White Rock Local Market, which alternates weekends with the Green Spot and gives East Dallasites access to another 28 potential events.

On a recent Saturday morning the church parking lot was filled with vendors and farmers selling pristine baby bok choy, gorgeous Swiss chard, meat, eggs and other products, all of which are grown and crafted within a 150-mile radius of Dallas. A three-piece jazz band filled the market with energetic music and most attendees lingered while shopping the market, drinking coffee made from beans roasted just a few miles away in East Dallas.

The second market didn’t come without its own headaches and a significant battle with the city, which accused Perry of violating its ordinance. Still, she’d like to open more markets to give other neighborhoods access to fresh, locally grown food. It could happen. If the city can’t find other work for them before the end of a month, they’ll be unemployed.

_How Dallas Killed Farmers Markets (cont’d)_

Both could pull residents and shoppers to the other side of the Trinity River if they’re successful, creating more competition for the Dallas Farmers Market project.

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Tony John recently paid a visit to the Dallas Farmers Market as details of the privatization were slowly released. She walked on the damp pavement under Shed 1 that used to be filled with thousands of locally grown watermelons, tomatoes and peaches. She sat on the cold cement where that produce used to be displayed. Two gentlemen pulled up in a golf cart to say hi after a meeting with their city bosses. “We’ve been riefed,” they told her as she gave them a hug. That means they’re temporarily out of a job. If the city can’t find other work for them before the end of a month, they’ll be unemployed.

But to Chris Mailey … the cop shops represent short money. “Agriculture,” Mailey tells Danger Room, “is gonna be the big market.”

**Drone Boosters Say Farmers, Not Cops, Are the Biggest U.S. Robot Market**

By Spencer Ackerman—WIRED, February 5, 2013

When the flying robots that loiter in Afghanistan’s and Yemen’s airspace come home, they won’t just be headed for the local police station. They might prefer a pastoral existence of spraying crops, scanning soil patterns and other features of America’s farms.

No, Predators and Reapers aren’t going to scan large swaths of vegetation for suspected militants. And there’s tremendous interest from state and local law enforcement in drones as surveillance tools. But to Chris Mailey, a vice president with the drone promotion organization known as AUVSI, the cop shops represent short money. “Agriculture,” Mailey tells Danger Room, “is gonna be the big market.”

To Mailey, it’s a question of where the growth opportunities are. Military drone purchases are plateauing, even as the drones become increasingly central to U.S. counterterrorism. And there are limits, financial and otherwise, to the ability of police departments to purchase drones. Farming looks like a drone market with both fewer impediments and bigger incentives for early technological adoption. (cont’d next page)
“A manned crop sprayer is flying 10 feet above his crops—how accurate is it? Any crop you spray that isn’t on your farm you have to pay for, and a remote-controlled ‘copter can be very precise,” Mailey says. “Spraying, watering—there’s a whole market for precision agriculture, and when you put that cost-benefit together, farmers will buy [drones].”

AUVSI intends to publish a study in the next few weeks anticipating the scope of the domestic, non-military market for drones. But there’s already some data to support Mailey’s hypothesis. “Precision farmers” love using data tools to increase crop yields. In 2009, an Idaho farmer homebrewed his own drone, slapped a commercial digital camera on it, and began extracting data on soil patterns to help his business expand. Companies like CropCam build lightweight, modular, GPS-driven gliders to give farmers an aerial view of their fields without requiring pilot training or the expense of buying a small manned plane. Of course, this is all dependent on drone manufacturers pricing their robots inexpensively enough for farmers who also have to buy a lot of other expensive equipment to ply their trade.

Japan also provides some indication of the potential demand for drones by farmers. Yamaha introduced its RMAX unmanned helicopter for crop-spraying in 1990. By 2010, the drone ‘copter and its robotic competitors—some 2,300 of them—sprayed 30 percent of Japanese rice fields with pesticides, according to a recent Yamaha presentation. The Japanese farm hectares sprayed by manned helicopters dropped from 1,328 in 1995 to 57 in 2011, as unmanned helicopter spray rose to 1,000 hectares that year.

Closer to home, last year the Electronic Frontier Foundation, using the Freedom of Information Act, obtained data from the Federal Aviation Administration detailing who’s been cleared to operate drones in U.S. airspace. Local, state and federal police and homeland-security agencies had received 17 certificates of authorization for flying drones. Universities received 21 of them. “All those universities are focused on agriculture,” Mailey says.

Of course, your local police, if they can, are very likely to buy drones, ushering in a new era of tech-enabled aerial privacy erosions. Several already have—although a full list is unavailable—like the Miami-Dade Police Department, whose use of Honeywell’s T-Hawk spy drone I profiled in the December 2011 Playboy. (Link is SFW.) Mailey’s argument is that there’s a hard limit of 18,000 law enforcement agencies in the U.S., many of which may not be able to afford the expense of what could be argued is an optional piece of hardware that can run into the hundreds of thousands of dollars and requires cumbersome FAA licenses. (Which, in fairness, farmers will need as well.) Put a different way, Mailey and AUVSI forecast a steeper growth in the drone market for farms than it does in the drone market for law enforcement—but it sees both on the rise.

The biggest reversal? While the U.S. market for drones is “almost 100 percent military,” Mailey puts it, the drone industry doesn’t think it can rely on the Defense Department much longer. Last year, the Pentagon indicated in a congressional report that it was going to level off most of its drone purchases through 2017; it currently spends about $6.5 billion annually on unmanned robotic systems. Maintenance and replacement-level purchases, rather than inventory expansions, is likely to characterize drone purchases—at least until the Navy’s carrier-based drone joins the fleet at the end of the decade.

“there’s still a lot of money [in military drones], but it's more predictable,” Mailey says. “This wild wild west we’ve had is consolidating.” Sounds like time to farm.
Thank you to everyone involved with organizing the 67th Annual Conference held March 20-23 in Columbia, Maryland—especially to Rose Harrell and all her staff at the Maryland Food Center, Produce and Fish Markets. Over 50 attendees hailed from markets as far away as Australia and the networking opportunities, as usual, were a highlight of the conference.

The proximity to Baltimore and Washington allowed us to visit a number of retail markets as well as the Maryland Food Center’s wholesale produce and fish markets. The story of the resurrection of both the Central and Eastern Markets in Washington after fires were inspiring and we made new friends with the managers and staff of each. The venerable Lexington Market in Baltimore is an amazing market with a huge diversity of prepared foods and articles for sale as well as challenges as management prepares for a major renovation project. The City-owned system of public markets in Baltimore is the only municipal example of such a collaborative in the U.S. and it was fascinating to hear Executive Director Casper Genco describe the operations and management.

The location also allowed a number of USDA representatives to attend and interface with attendees including Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan who gave the keynote address. James Barham also gave an update on the food hub project and the impact of markets on local foods.

At the awards dinner, Maryland Food Center Authority, Executive Director, Don Darnall was recognized with the William Mulligan Sr. award for his countless contributions to NAPMM and Ben Vitale from the Central New York Regional Market Authority was honored as the Market Manager of the Year.

Next year’s conference will be held in New York City. Conference co-hosts Nick Rodelli from Hunts Point and George Maroulis from the New Fulton Fish Market have a tough act to follow. Once again, thanks to everyone. Please take the time to complete the conference evaluation which you will receive soon by e-mail.

See you next March in the Big Apple!!!

Jim Farr, Conference Chair

NAPMM 67th Annual Conference—A Great Success

Lexington Market

Northeast Market
Thank you MFCA for hosting a successful conference!

Dr. Don Darnall, Executive Director of Maryland Food Center Authority, presented with the William Mulligan, Sr. award.

Ben Vitale, Executive Director of Central New York Regional Market Authority, accepts Market Manager of the Year award.