

# impact

University of Idaho Extension programs that are making a difference in Idaho.

## Tuesday Market expands impact with USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program grant

### AT A GLANCE

Mid-week farmers market incubates small business and supports economic and community development.

### The Situation

Since 2018, the Tuesday Market has been held annually at the Latah County Fairgrounds from June to October (there was no market in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic). The market environment and experiences were rated positively by customers and vendors, but income for vendors was lower than desired. The market has been identified by stakeholders as a community resource, an important economic asset, a food access point as well as a small business incubator, and a hands-on learning opportunity for small farmers and other vendors.

### Our Response

With support from vendors, UI Extension was awarded a \$250,000 Farmers Market Promotion Program grant from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS).

With the USDA-AMS funding, UI Extension was able to purchase new signs and advertise in various local and regional publications, as well as online.

By attracting new customers, the market expanded in 2023 in terms of customers, dollars spent and number



Mid-week farmers market helps build social capital, business experience and economic capital for new farmers.

of vendors compared with previous years. Income for vendors overall increased by 279% from 2022 to 2023.

Year	Number of Markets	Dollars Spent at the Market	Staff, Intern and Volunteers Hours	Average Number of Customers per market
2018	5	\$2,741	140	No data
2019	17	\$7,509	273	75
2021	16	\$14,398	194	70
2022	16	\$16,936	192	58
2023	18	\$47,258	1300	222

There were many more staff and volunteer hours in 2023 compared with past years. Staff hours were spent in expanding promotion efforts for the market. An example of increased effort is a new cooking demonstration and free recipe sampling for customers made from market produce.

UI Extension Educator Iris Mayes created a “Neighborhood Produce Sale” to help bring more produce to the market. Gardeners could bring their extra produce to sell. Each gardener was paid for whatever was sold and some extra produce was donated to Backyard Harvest and local food banks.

The market has also regularly hosted a market activity for kids with the help of AmeriCorps service members, interns and master gardener volunteers. This year youth were offered a \$2 “kids cash” at the activity table that they could redeem for fresh produce.

Two beginning farmer grants from USDA helped fund educational opportunities associated with the market in 2018 and 2021 such as market management education and booth layout instruction. Intern funding from UI Extension provided a student manager in 2019 and 2022.

### Program Outcomes

The Tuesday Market overall has helped develop a sector of the community. It has served as a business incubator and learning opportunity for new vendors and interns. It has provided a social space for customers and an outlet for fresh produce, locally produced meat and wool products, as well as other handmade goods.

Vendors have represented a cross section of the community including U.S. Military veterans as well as youth and others working to establish produce, food and craft businesses.

The picnic area has served as a social networking opportunity with regular attendance by various groups including:

- Latah County Commissioners; Latah County Fair Board; Idaho Master Gardeners; Palouse Patchers

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Iris Mayes, Extension Educator • University of Idaho Extension, Latah County • 208-883-2267 • imayes@uidaho.edu

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(a quilting group); WSU and U of I faculty and students in social groups; and various other neighborhood citizens.

Social networking at the market serves to improve and increase social ties, strengthening social capital and thereby increasing community resiliency. A survey was distributed in 2021, 2022 and 2023. Customers listed many benefits including enjoyment of music, positive social interaction, consistent fun for kids, meeting farmers and meeting other vendors.

Produce purchases were tracked separately from other market sales to help measure consumption of fruits and vegetables. Produce vendors including the “Neighborhood Produce Sale” sold \$4,760 over the season and kids purchased \$182 with “kids cash,” equating to 91 produce transactions by youth.

Over 200 pounds of fresh produce was donated to local food pantries and food banks including some to the Vandal Pantry on U of I campus. Approximately \$630 in EBT/SNAP benefit transactions were processed by Backyard Harvest with a matching \$1 for \$1 incentive for fresh produce partially sponsored by the Idaho Farmers Market Association for a total of \$1,260 in food access for EBT/SNAP customers.

Various non-profit groups have hosted informational tables or sold items to raise funds such as the Boy Scouts of America selling popcorn.

Dollars spent at the market have helped improve the local economy by being spent with these small local businesses. One vendor from 2018 and 2019 was able to grow their business to sell at the larger Saturday Moscow Farmers Market. Another craft vendor from 2019 was able to open a profitable storefront business in downtown Moscow.

### The Future

UI Extension Educator Iris Mayes will continue to apply for intern and grant funding. The market will continue to be held at the Latah County Fairgrounds in 2024 and into the foreseeable future.