

Market Hours FORUM

In regards to changing the hours from 8am to noon to 9am – 1pm

The following is copied from an email sent January 26, 2015

- > Our own position is to have 9-1 vs now 8-12.
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 - > Reasons:
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 - > Personal:
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 - > The distance some of us have to travel. We currently have to leave
 - > home at 5:30 am to get there by 7:30 cutoff time. In fact we need to
 - > be there earlier because of congestion after 7 am with people with
 - > trailers and tent setting up making it hard to access our stall in
 - > time. And with loading up plants it makes for a very short sleep fri
 - > night/sat am.
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 - > Business:
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 - > What we noticed in terms of crowd count is similar as to what was in
 - > the BCAFM Market Benefits Final Report Bulkley Valley 2012 page 6.
 - > That is the 4th hour count is double the first hour count.
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 - > Our sales records show that 8-9 is very slow for us. We observed the
 - > crowd at that time was primarily for Megs Breads, and for produce
 - > vendors.
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 - > At the AGM it appeared that fresh produce vendors favoured keeping the
 - > current time. Those people that want fresh produce that come at 8am
 - > probably would come at a 9 am start anyways. Look at Hazelton
 - > Market-Sunday 10-2- (with a lot of the same vendors) the people would
 - > come when the market opens-whether 8,9, or 10 am.
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 - > I think the period 12-1pm would have more customers than the 8-9. I
 - > base that on the fact that while vendors are packing up there are
 - > still people coming, including those that are working and get off for
 - > lunch time. There are also probably more tourists that would stop at
 - > lunch time 12-1 then first thing in the morning 8-9 ."I'm just on my
 - > way and don't need to stop" vs " I've been driving for a while and
 - > lunchtime is convenient to stop, rest, and look"
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 - > Shopping downtown Smithers is generally not open before 9am and most
 - > people we knew would wait til all stores were open to make 1 trip to
 - > both FMarket and other stores. See also the BCAFM Market Benefits
 - > Final Report Bulkley Valley 2012 page 10- 88% of market customers
 - > saying they would do additional shopping at neighbouring businesses
 - > that day.
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>
> Just some thoughts.
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> Again, thumbs up to the work of the Board et al.
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> Jim Fowler
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The following is copied from an email sent March 19, 2015

Hello Everyone,
I am for the 9 to 1 time frame. The 8 - 9 hour is dead for most of us and while we are packing up at 12:00 we are still trying to do business.
Produce purchasers will come as soon as the market opens what ever time that is. Some produce vendors were concerned by the heat of the sun.
I sell freezies using a cooler and they are still frozen all morning. It is possible to keep the products cool, I use ice in the cooler. Suggest all produce vendors be placed along the side of the Museum in the shade.

Have a great day,
Betty Campbell
River Rock Treasures

The following is copied from an email sent March 19, 2015

8 am for me Jane

The following is copied from an email sent March 19, 2015

We've had random conversations with three people that work on Main Street lately (physiotherapist and two store owners) where it came up that they go to the market in the summer time (two were our customers I didn't ask the third). They stop by to pick up local groceries, goodies and visit with friends before they need to be at work. Since the stores open at 9 they need to be at work before that. If the market opens at 9 these customers will be lost to both the grocery vendors and the other vendors that they browse. This could also be another of the reasons why the winter market is slower.

Lorie Farrell
Whistler Road Cheese Co.

The following is copied from an email sent March 22, 2015

I am in favor of changing the hours to 9-1.

In the current first hour from 8-9 I see the same few people each week, and they beeline to their bread and vegetable vendors and leave. These are not the people who will browse the whole market. In comparison, the last hour of the current market from 11-12 is busy and people are socializing and snacking as they shop and listen to music. It feels counter-intuitive to me to close the market right at noon, and I am often packing up as people are trying to see what I have. I think the 12-1 time slot would be busy at the market, especially if there are lots of lunch-type foods to buy and great smells in the air.

I would like to see the market grow and draw in new people. If we change the hours to 9-1 and encourage lots

of food vendors to attend I think we could draw in two different crowds – a morning breakfast crowd, and a noon lunch crowd. We would appeal to a broader demographic. I think we would capture more tourist traffic as well.

Glad we are talking about this!

Cheers,

Wanda

Frosted Leaves

The following is copied from an email sent March 23, 2015

Regarding Market Hours

Firstly as an advocate for the market in general, I don't agree that this should be a general membership decision. What is in the best individual interest of a 50%+1 majority of the vendors is not necessarily in the best interest of the market as a whole. Especially with the wide range of motivations and level of commitment to the market of our varied membership - should the vote of a hobbyist who attends a handful of markets a year for social reasons (and who are more than welcome!) be allowed to affectively cancel out the vote of a farming family who depends on the market as their main livelihood? That is why the membership elects a board (at least the membership who are committed enough to attend the AGM), of members who have a deeper level of commitment and insight into the running of the market and who can put their individual vendor caps aside and make decisions solely on what is in the best interest of the market as a whole.

I had a general discussion on market operational decisions with a few very experienced market organizers at the BC Assoc. of Farmers' Markets conference last month (including a former BCAFM president) and the consensus is that the board makes the big decisions, not the membership. The membership elects the board. The board can then take their decisions to the membership for ratification, along with their justifications for the decision, which the membership can accept or reject. That did not happen with this question, there was no majority on the previous board that any major operational change should be made to the market, nor has this new board stated such a position.

Speaking as a vendor, the 8-9 hour is vitally important to my farm business. The typical 8-9 customer is one serious about buying local food, who is there to shop and stock up for the week. These are the customers that, as a farmers' market, we should be most trying to attract - not turn away. It is critical that I am able to serve these customers before the big rush, when I have a long line up for a single bunch of carrots, because it takes time to buy a week's worth of vegetables, and they deserve my full attention. As a market grower, we educate customers to come early for the freshest produce and best selection, and pushing the hours back an hour is a contradiction to that. Also, many customers have to work at 9 or 9:30, and I'll wager that for every potential customer that doesn't make it to the market because it is 'too early', there are more existing customers that like to come early, shop, then get on with their Saturday. The social scene later in the morning is great, vibrant, and very attractive for the market, but we should not try and extend that at the expense of the low-key, committed, early morning shoppers who may be the difference between a farm vendor surviving or not.

It happens that fresh produce, and to a slightly less extent fresh breads, are the most time-sensitive and environment-sensitive products sold at farmers' markets. That they look good and appealing makes the market look good and appealing. That they mostly sell before the end of the market is vital to the vendor's success. For the market to most appeal to the new customers we are trying to attract, it is important for the sake of the market that the produce and baked goods are at their freshest when they get there. Orientating the market

around the best conditions for the sale of fresh farm food and breads (and when most people are buying) is in the best interest of the market as a whole. – Jonathan Knight