

CHAPTER 1

What is a Farmers Market?

The USDA defines a farmers market as “a multi-stall market at which farmer-producers sell agricultural products directly to the general public at a central or fixed location, particularly fresh fruits and vegetables (but also meat products, dairy products, and/or grains).” In addition, today’s farmers markets are often home to prepared food, arts and crafts, flowers, baked goods, and other locally produced, handcrafted items.



A RISE, A FALL, A RENAISSANCE

THE HISTORY OF FARMERS MARKETS

Humans have been selling and purchasing farm-fresh food (and more) at markets for thousands of years. From the Greeks agora and Romans' macellum to the bazaars of Persia, open-air, public markets were a part of daily life in ancient civilizations—and remained so through the middle ages and onward.

The first recorded farmers market in the United States opened in 1634 in Boston, Massachusetts. Others soon followed in the surrounding colonies. The Easton Farmer's Market in Easton, Pennsylvania has been in operation since 1752—claiming the title of "America's longest continuous running open-air market."



The McCargar family in Northeast Iowa values a local food economy. The family has a long tradition of growing their own food. In the 1980's, Steve started vending at the local market. Today, he serves as the market manager. His youngest daughter Elsa started as a market vendor at the same market in 2017. Her business, Wilder's Way, sells tea blends and nature-inspired jewelry.

ALSO KNOWN AS

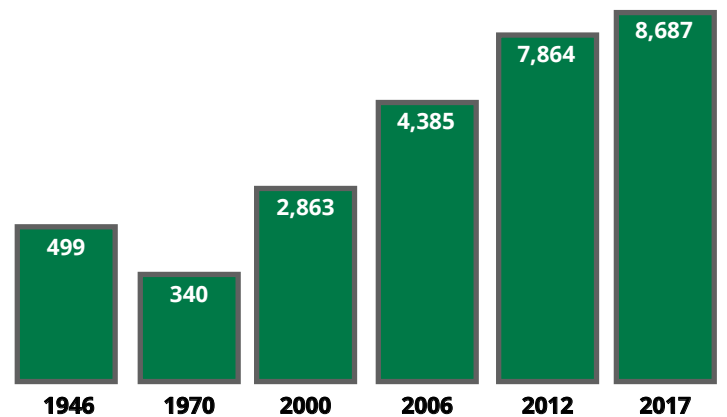
A 1948 effort to categorize markets identified many names for markets:

- PUBLIC MARKET || MUNICIPAL MARKET ||
- TERMINAL MARKET || FARM SHOP
- FARM STAND || CURB MARKET || FLEA MARKET ||
- FARMERS RETAIL MARKET || FESTIVAL MARKET
- || WET MARKET ||
- FARMERS WOMENS MARKET || TRADE DAY MARKET ||
- LIVESTOCK AUCTION || COURTHOUSE SQUARE MARKET
- || COURT DAY MARKET || FIRST MONDAY MARKET
- || FRESH FOOD MARKET || GOOD FOOD MARKETS ||
- FARMERS CITY WHOLESALE MARKETS ||

In 20th Century America, farmers markets saw dramatic growth during the Great Depression, but started to decline after World War II as grocery stores became more commonplace and convenient. In the 1980s, interest in farmers markets picked up again.

The rise and fall of farmers markets reflects changes in national policy. Today, there's growing concern for and interest in "local" —preserving local farmland, protecting the livelihood of local growers, and diversifying local economies—as well as farm workers' rights, food safety, and training the next generation of farmers. Farmers markets play a prominent role in new food landscape.

National Count of Farmers Market Directory Listings



FARMERS MARKETS THROUGHOUT HISTORY

Markets popped up early in American history. Only 27 years separate the founding of the first colony (Jamestown, Virginia in 1607) and the first formally recorded farmers market in the colonies (Boston, Massachusetts in 1634).

PRE 20TH CENTURY

1600s

1600s: “Street markets” are so commonplace that markets aren’t given specific names—nobody pays much attention to one being established.

1634: The first farmers market establishment formally recorded in the English colonies is in Boston in 1634 by an order of Governor John Winthrop.

1800s

1858: The first farmers market recorded in Iowa takes place in Dubuque at the city hall building (same location where it operates today).

Late 1800s: Pattern of declining importance of city produce markets as transportation improves, cities grow, and agriculture becomes specialized.

1900s

1900 - 1930s: Most cities with 30,000+ residents sponsor municipal markets.

1913: USDA Office of Public Markets is established.

1914: USDA Cooperative Extension Service is established.

1910s

1916: The first self-service grocery store opens in Memphis, Tennessee. This is the first time customers are allowed to select items directly off the shelf instead of asking the store clerk for items behind the counter.

1930s

1930 - 1946: Rise in markets across the country as families seek extra income and self-sufficiency.

1934: Pike's Place Market opens in Seattle, Washington.

1943: The San Francisco Farmers Market opens in California.

1940s

1946: Four economists with the USDA identify 499 farmers markets in the United States.

1948: Farmers markets of all classes account for sales of less than 10% of the total fruit and vegetable production in the United States. Markets are formally defined as “Places where farmers congregate to sell their own products.”

1950s

1950s: Better roads, western irrigation infrastructure, and refrigeration usher in supermarkets and wholesalers, leaving many small farms and markets out of the food system.

1970: Estimates at the national level log only about 340 farmers markets across the country, many populated by resellers—not farmers—and many on the verge of collapse.

1970s

1971: State of Wisconsin records 17 markets of all classes (down from 28 in 1946).

1975: U.S. House Resolution 2458: Defines a Farmers Market as “Any marketplace where at least ten farmers congregate for the purpose of selling their agricultural commodities directly to consumers in a manner designed to lower the cost of food for the consumers while providing an increased income to the farmers.”

1990s

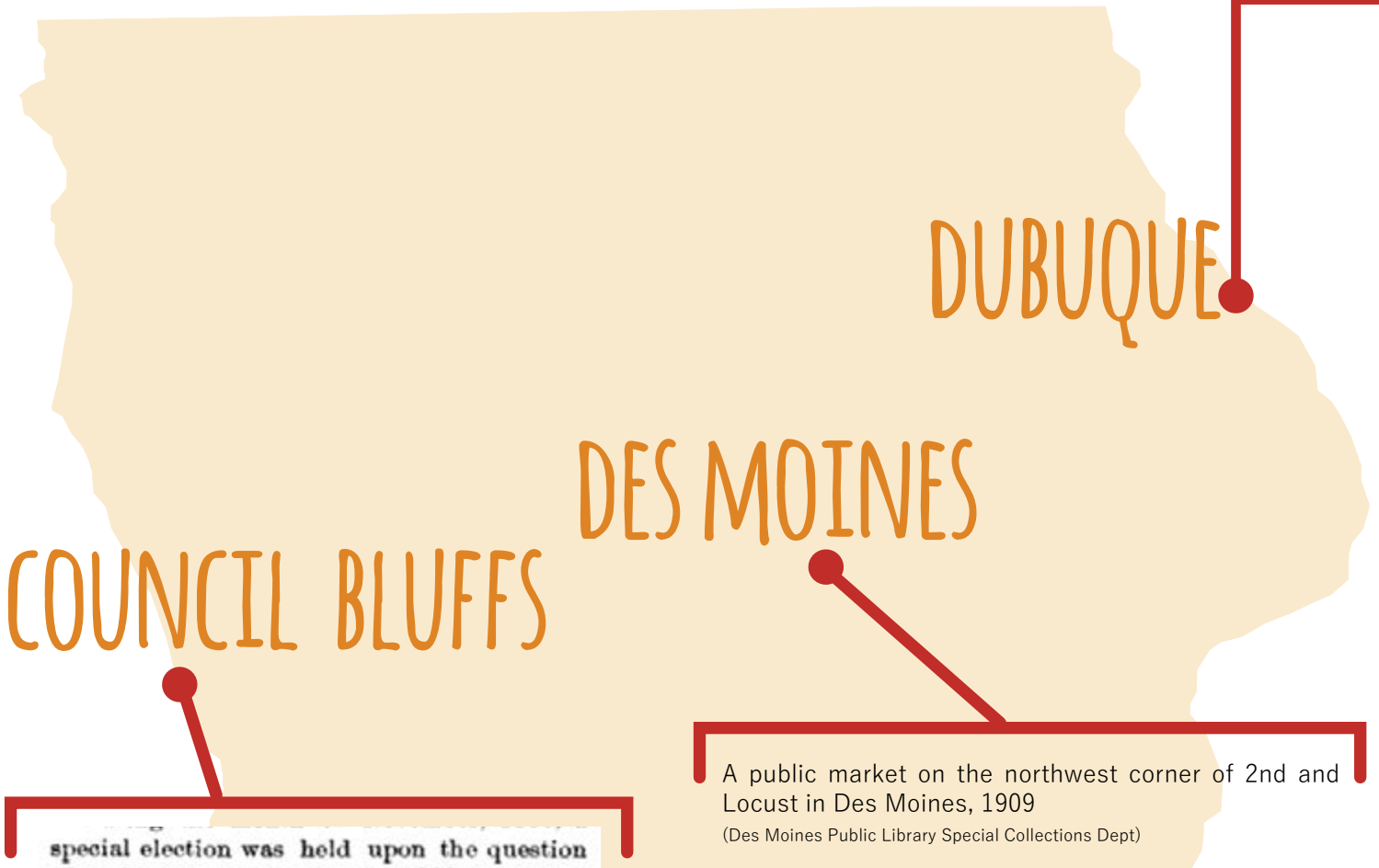
1996: USDA defines a farmers market as “a common facility or area where several farmers/growers gather on a regular, recurring basis to sell a variety of fresh fruit and vegetables and other farm products directly to consumers.”



A print by Flemish artist Peter van der Borcht (ca. 1575-1608) depicts a vegetable and meat market in the late 16th or early 17th century.

EARLY RECORDS OF MARKETS IN IOWA

THE HISTORY OF FARMERS MARKETS



COUNCIL BLUFFS

DES MOINES

DUBUQUE

special election was held upon the question of authorizing a city loan of \$60,000, to establish a market house, improve the streets and provide a fire department. Under the market-house provision, the city bought of Judge Riddle the brick building now known as the city building, at the southeast corner of Glen avenue and Broadway, it having been used as Green, Weare & Benton's banking-house up to 1857, and the consideration being \$7,000.

November 1866: Pottawattamie County voted for a market house provision.

(History of Pottawattamie County, Iowa by John H. Keatley, OL Baskin, & Co.)

A public market on the northwest corner of 2nd and Locust in Des Moines, 1909

(Des Moines Public Library Special Collections Dept)



New bridges were built on Bluff, Main, Iowa, Clay, Locust and White streets and Lorimier Hollow. In June, 1843, citizens petitioned for the erection of a market house. The city had great

June 1843: Citizens of Dubuque petitioned for a market house. (History of Dubuque County Iowa by Franklin T. Oldt and P.J. Quigley)

The question of a market house was again considered in February, 1845. Levi and Simplot agreed to donate to the city ten feet fronting on their lots on Fifth street between Main and Iowa, providing the same should be used for a market-house. Steps to raise the means to erect the building were taken in February, 1845. James Wilson and E. Dwelle leased the city mines on Third street.

February 1845: The question of a market house in Dubuque was considered once again.

(History of Dubuque County Iowa by Franklin T. Oldt and P.J. Quigley)

thews and Lewis L. Wood, aldermen. W. B. Smith was rechosen clerk. Mr. Trower was the first market master—chosen in April, 1846. John T. Cook was paid \$10 for his plan for the market house, the same having been accepted. In April, 1846, the citizens petitioned to have the public square ornamented. A council room was prepared in the new market house in 1847. The rent of inside stalls in the market house was fixed at \$15 per annum; choice stalls were offered publicly to the highest bidder. In May, 1846, C. J. Leist succeeded Mr. Trower as market master. All articles of produce or meat were required to be sold in the market house. A cannon was ordered for \$25 for city use. Market hours were from 3 a. m. to 10 a. m. each day except Sunday—from May to October. Mr. Fulweiler's slaughter house was ordered removed from its then location, it having become a declared nuisance. The same of Mr. Straper's butchering establishment. Billiard license

April 1846: Mr. Trower was chosen as the first market master. Stall rental was set at \$15 per year—with the best stalls being offered publicly to the highest bidder. Market hours were 3 am to 10 am. Monday through Saturday, May to October. (History of Dubuque County Iowa by Franklin T. Oldt and P.J. Quigley)

NOTHING LIKE KICKING OFF THE MARKET WITH A CANNON BOOM!



Dubuque's Famous Market, 7 AM Ready for Business, 1912 (Encyclopedia Dubuque, Courtesy of Randy Lyon)



Dubuque's Famous Market, A Typical Stand, 1912 (Encyclopedia Dubuque, Courtesy of Randy Lyon)

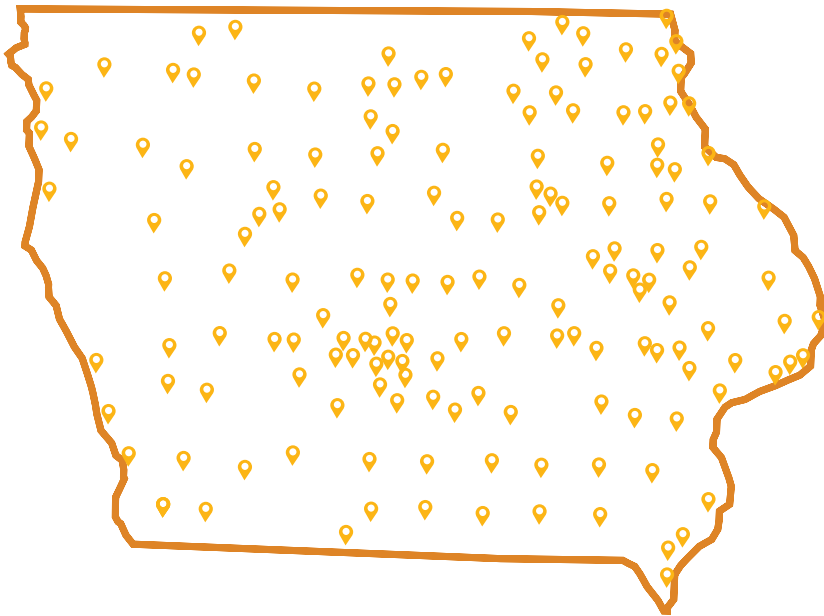


Dubuque's Famous Market, 1912 (Encyclopedia Dubuque, Courtesy of Randy Lyon)

FARMERS MARKETS IN IOWA TODAY

ROOM TO GROW

With Iowa's rich agricultural resources, farmers markets have grown and multiplied across the state—in cities and small towns—in recent decades.



IOWA'S REGISTERED FARMERS MARKETS

Being a "Registered Market" in Iowa means registering with the Iowa Department of Agriculture & Land Stewardship (IDALS). Registered farmers markets are authorized by IDALS to accept FMNP (Farmers Market Nutrition Program) coupons for WIC and Senior FMNP.

LEARN MORE ABOUT BECOMING A REGISTERED MARKET
CHECK OUT OUR "FOOD NUTRITION PROGRAM"
SECTION IN CHAPTER 4 ON PAGES 61 - 69.

MARKET TRENDS AT A GLANCE

40% JUMP IN WEEKLY
ATTENDANCE AT IOWA
FARMERS MARKETS
BETWEEN 2004 & 2009

2009 Iowa Farmers Market Economic Impact Study by Iowa Department of Agriculture & Land Stewardship and Iowa Farmers Market Association

AS OF 2018
182 MARKETS
WERE REGISTERED WITH IDALS
Iowa Department of Agriculture & Land Stewardship

70% INCREASE IN THE
NUMBER OF FARMERS
MARKETS IN IOWA
BETWEEN 1994 & 2009

2009 Iowa Farmers Market Economic Impact Study by Iowa Department of Agriculture & Land Stewardship and Iowa Farmers Market Association

IOWA RANKS
13TH IN THE NATION IN
TOTAL NUMBER
OF FARMERS MARKETS
USDA National Farmers Market Directory

IOWA HAS ROUGHLY
**1 MARKET PER
13,800 PEOPLE**
USDA National Farmers Market Directory

FARMERS MARKETS
ARE NOW PRESENT IN
228 COMMUNITIES
ACROSS THE STATE
USDA National Farmers Market Directory

IOWA RANKS
5TH IN THE NATION IN
NUMBER OF FARMERS
MARKETS PER CAPITA
USDA National Farmers Market Directory