

Chewing on Sustainability

*A feasibility report on the implementation of a campus farmers' market at
University of Saskatchewan*

ENVS 401

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Abstract

According to Foster (2015), there is a growing concern that university students have limited access to local and healthy food options. To address this concern at the University of Saskatchewan, we looked at the feasibility of a farmers' market on campus. There are currently several healthy food initiatives on campus, but a lack of awareness amongst staff and students compromises their effectiveness. Among these initiatives is the small produce stand run by the USSU Food Centre that is held twice a week in Upper Place Riel. The selection is small to avoid waste while still attempting to meet demand, and the stand sells out often. To enhance this service, a farmers' market would provide a larger selection of healthy and unique options for the U of S campus community.

Our project goal to enhance food sustainability on campus would be met with the implementation of a farmers' market. The current food initiatives were designed to address student malnutrition and accessibility to healthy food options on campus. In some senses, the foundation for a campus farmers' market is already present. This is evident from the support of the Saskatoon Farmers' Market and from existing services such as the USSU Food Centre as well as proven demand from the campus community. The next step is making the connections between the key stakeholders, and this is where our project will focus. We helped make these connections by researching and networking with relevant stakeholders, as well as looking at case studies from other universities. We hope that our project will play a key role in the successful implementation and management of a campus farmers' market at the U of S in the future.

Where we are now...

An article was published earlier this year in the University of Saskatchewan news, addressing food security on our campus (See references – Foster, 2015). The article



Figure 1- Food Desert present around U of S campus

found that the neighbourhood surrounding the University of Saskatchewan represents a food desert, meaning that we lack close geographical access to a wide range of healthy foods (Foster, 2015). We did some further research on our own and created a map of the grocery stores present around

the campus area. This map is displayed in Figure 1. It is evident that a student living on or near campus has few close options for purchasing healthy food. A food desert around campus can present a large problem for a student with no car and a limited budget. These

students are most likely to go to the closest grocery store and buy mainly nonperishable food items to last them until their next trip (Foster, 2015). This creates a sense of food insecurity on campus that contributes to social issues, hampered study habits, and other health problems (Foster, 2015). Although the USSU Food Centre offers a small market on campus with a variety of fresh produce, the selection is limited and this service is not well promoted to students. The addition of a campus Farmers' Market has the capacity to greatly compliment this service.

Our three Subsystems

In order to get the farmers market up and running, we took a look at the various actors that would be involved in bringing it all together. Our key actors include vendors, the campus community, and the USSU/campus facilities. In order to get a meaningful response from each, we took the time to talk to a variety of people from each group of stakeholders. This gave us a better idea of the support behind the project and various brick walls that we may meet along the way. Below is a general summary of what we learned from each.

USSU/Campus Facilities

There are a variety of locations on campus that could potentially support a campus farmers market. However, as indicated by the previously mentioned College of Pharmacy and Nutrition survey, Upper Place Riel is the location on campus that holds the most potential for a farmers market.

Upper Place Riel is the prime location for establishing a farmers' market on campus. Since Upper Place Riel is managed by the USSU, developing any sort of initiative within Place Riel would require approval and support from the USSU. Fortunately, the USSU has already established a service to deal with food security issues on campus.

The USSU Food Centre was established in 2003 to address food security issues on campus. Initially, in partnering with the Saskatoon Food Bank, they hoped to reduce hunger concerns within the campus community. Since then the centre has progressively added services, which include a CHEP Good Food Box order service, and a fresh produce table set up twice a week in Upper Place Riel. The Food Centre is continually looking to further food sustainability on campus, and initiating a Farmers' Market may be the next step. The Food Centre coordinator is a two year student held position, currently held by Taletha Bennett. She explained that her responsibility as the coordinator in her first year was to run the Food Centre Services and become familiar with how the position works. Going into her second year, she will be expected to not only run the current services, but implement a service to enhance food sustainability on campus. The idea of a farmers' market is definitely being tossed around.

Place Riel is the central hub of the University. It is one of the busiest locations on campus, as it supports the majority of the available student services. These services include administration, health, transportation, and food. Throughout the year Upper Place Riel holds a variety of events including various sales and symposiums. The facility is an

ideal place for supporting a Farmers' Market. We spoke with Stefanie Ewen, the USSU Facilities Manager to see how the USSU and the Place Riel facility could support a Farmers' Market. We also brought attention to some of the concerns that the vendors had voiced.

There are front and side entrances to Place Riel that are easily accessible for the vendors to unload their vehicles. It would only be a matter of asking permission from the USSU for access to these entrances.

Overall, Place Riel fits the requirements of a campus farmers' market, but any decisions within the building rest on the shoulders of the USSU.

Vendors

To get a better idea of vendor interest and concerns, we visited the Saskatoon Farmers' Market. We presented our ideas to Elaine Bay (Accounts and Administration Support) to ensure we were not seen as overstepping our boundaries. When approached, many of the vendors were enthusiastic about the idea of a farmers' market on campus. Many expressed interest, showing excitement at the idea of expanding into a new market. However, they had concerns about the logistics.

Many of the producers we approached that were selling meats and other products that needed refrigeration voiced worries about the availability of freezers and/or fridges. When we brought up this concern to USSU Facilities Manager (Stephanie Ewen), her response was that it was unlikely that bringing in freezers would work in Upper Place Riel due to facility infrastructure (e.g. electrical power outlets) and health safety. Upon further investigation, we learned that vendors selling meats and other goods that need to be kept cool could bring icepacks and coolers in place of a freezer. However, this could increase the potential for health and food safety problems.

Another concern from the vendors includes staffing. Many of the producers run their entire business by themselves or with the help of a spouse, family, and one or two hired hands. Adding another day where someone needs to sit at a booth could affect production. To mitigate this, we proposed the idea of allowing a student group to sell the goods on commission basis. The vendor response for this idea was positive. Since we have not spoken to any student groups other than the USSU, we could not guarantee this arrangement, and some further investigation would be required in order to look at the feasibility of this.

Additional concerns were accessibility and what day of the week the market would be held. Since this is a feasibility report, we did not have an answer for what day of the week it would be. However, upon further investigation, we discovered accessibility to the facilities would not be a problem, as discussed in the previous section.

Campus Community

We had strong positive feedback from the general student community throughout the span of this project. We conducted a simple survey to gain a better idea of how the students felt about current food options on campus and the implementation of a campus farmers market. This was given to 101 randomly selected students, staff, or faculty. We

took the time to walk around to the busy spots on campus (including Tim Hortons, Ag Café, Place Riel, Lower Place Riel, and the ground floor of Murray Library) to pass the survey out to people that had a minute to spare. The results were highly in favour of implementing a farmers market on campus. The detailed results can be found in Appendix 1.1-1.4.

To better illustrate some of the key questions for our survey results, we created pie charts. These are displayed in Figure 2 and 3. Additional pie charts can be found in Appendix 2.1.

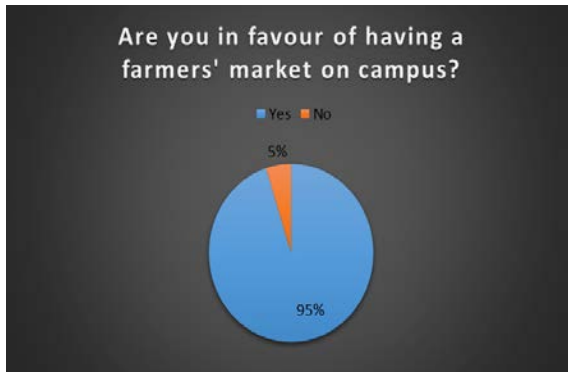


Figure 3- Survey Results - Favorability of Campus Farmers' Market

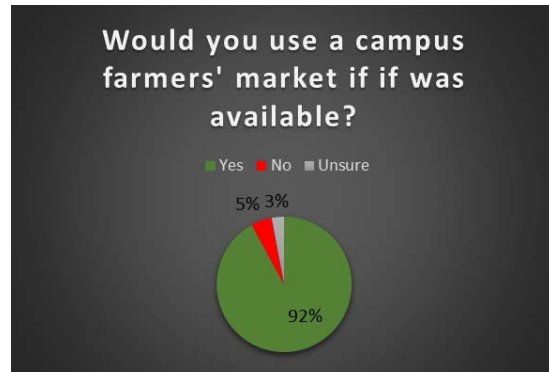


Figure 3 - Survey Results - Use of Farmers' Market

This positive feedback from our survey confirmed the results of an additional survey that had taken place last year. This survey was affiliated with the Office of Sustainability and College of Pharmacy and Nutrition. The results indicated that there is substantial demand for local foods on campus and that the success of a farmers' market on campus would depend on accessibility and affordability. The survey recommended that further research regarding a campus farmers' market should be focused on looking at the current food systems on our campus, looking at examples of food initiatives on other campuses, and educating the campus community about local food. The span of our project covers the first two recommendations, and the third would be implemented with the implementation of the campus farmers' market.

Overall, we feel that we have strong support from the campus community. This is a necessary aspect to ensure that a campus farmers' market would be sustainable and successful.

Looking at University of Alberta Farmers' Market...

In hopes of adding credibility and guidance to our project, we looked into other universities across Canada that have implemented campus farmers' markets. We chose the University of Alberta as a case study, as it seemed to have the most in common with the U of S. After speaking with a representative from the U of A, we gathered information about the implementation and success of their campus farmers' market. The U of A has only recently implemented a farmer's market. Students involved in a project-

based course initiated two pilot market events with support from the students' union and their Office of Sustainability. The two pilot markets took place during the U of A's Sustainability Awareness Week in 2011 and 2012. They served as trials for the vendors to come and gauge the campus market potential. The vendors were not charged to participate in the pilot markets in hopes of getting them to take a leap of faith and attend future markets. The purpose of the pilot markets was to give an overview of how the market might function. The pilot markets ended up being largely successful, with many vendors selling out before the day was through. Many vendors were enthusiastic about the market, and asked when they could come back. In 2013, with support and funding from the U of A's Office of Sustainability, the Student Sustainability Service took over and currently manages a permanent Farmers' Market. The market operates on a bi-weekly basis throughout the year. The market includes a variety of vendors who pay a table fee of \$25 to participate. The \$25 fee supports the Farmers' Market coordinator's salary, which is a 15 hour a week position.

The Student Sustainability Service still considers the market to be in the developmental stage. They are currently in the process of evaluating the market fees and schedule. With increasing vendor demand, the table fees will likely be increased and the schedule will likely be changed from bi-weekly to weekly. The U of A's campus farmers' market has turned into a stable and successful operation, which has added to their campus food sustainability.

Looking Forward...

To address the current issue of the food desert around campus, we have proven that a campus farmers' market would not only be feasible but welcomed at the University of Saskatchewan. We received interest from the campus community (students, staff, and faculty), vendors from the Saskatoon Farmers' Market, and the USSU Food Centre. There is also support from the Office of Sustainability.

Demand for a farmers' market was proven in two surveys- one performed by students in the College of Pharmacy and Nutrition, and one of our own design. The results were overwhelmingly in favor of having healthy food options on campus, especially fresh fruits and vegetables. There is also significant interest and support for the implementation of a farmers' market on campus.

Looking at the farmers' market held biweekly at the University of Alberta, it started out as a project for a course much like our class (ENVS 401- Sustainability in Action). Once the idea was proven feasible, the university's student union took the project over and has made it a success. This case study helps add merit to the idea of a campus farmers' market at the University of Saskatchewan.

Moving forward, we hope for collaboration and cooperation between our three actors (campus community, vendors, and the USSU/facilities) to successfully implement and manage a campus farmers' market. This will increase both affordability and the accessibility to healthy food options for students, staff, and faculty. This will also help

boost the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) STARS rating at our university.

This would be an awesome project for future ENVS 401 classes to continue. The Food Centre coordinator Taletha Bennett will be in her second year of the position and is looking for a project to implement. She is very enthusiastic about a farmers' market at the U of S, and could be a great partner in crime.

Appendix

1.1 Survey handed out to people on campus

Campus Farmers' Market

1. Are you in favor of having a farmers' market on campus?
Yes / No
2. Do you feel there is a lack of healthy food options currently on campus?
Yes / No
3. Would you use a campus farmers' market if it was available?
Yes / No
4. Do you currently get your recommended daily servings of fruits and vegetables?
Yes / No
5. If not, why? (circle any that apply)
 - a. Expense
 - b. Accessibility (lack of time, too far away, etc.)
 - c. Lack of cooking skills
 - d. Other _____
6. What would you like to see available at a farmers' market on campus?

1.2 Synthesized Survey Results

| | total | Question 1 | | | | Question 2 | | | Question 3 | | | Question 4 | | |
|-----------|-------|------------|-----|-----|------|------------|-----|------|------------|------|------|------------|-----|---|
| | | Y | N | * | 0 | Y | N | * | Y | N | * | Y | N | * |
| Students | 90 | 85 | 5 | 0 | 69 | 19 | 2 | 84 | 5 | 1 | 35 | 53 | 2 | |
| Staff | 11 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 1 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 2 | 6 | 5 | 0 | |
| % Student | | 94.4 | 5.6 | 0.0 | 76.7 | 21.1 | 2.2 | 93.3 | 5.6 | 1.1 | 38.9 | 58.9 | 2.2 | |
| % Staff | | 100.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 90.9 | 9.1 | 0.0 | 81.8 | 0.0 | 18.2 | 54.5 | 45.5 | 0.0 | |

1.3 Detailed Survey Results (yellow highlight indicates staff or faculty, star indicates no response)

| Survey # | Questions | | | | Question 5 | Question 6 |
|----------|-----------|---|---|---|----------------|------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | a, b, c, other | Comments |
| 1 | y | Y | Y | * | A | |
| 2 | Y | Y | Y | N | A,B, | |
| 3 | N | Y | N | N | C | |
| 4 | Y | Y | Y | Y | * | |

| | | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|-------|------------------------------------|
| 5 | Y | Y | Y | N | B | |
| 6 | Y | Y | Y | N | B | |
| 7 | Y | N | Y | N | D | D(LAZINESS) |
| 8 | Y | Y | Y | Y | * | |
| 9 | Y | Y | Y | N | B | |
| 10 | Y | Y | Y | N | B | |
| 11 | Y | Y | Y | N | A, B | |
| 12 | Y | Y | Y | Y | * | |
| 13 | Y | Y | Y | N | B | |
| 14 | Y | Y | Y | N | B | |
| 15 | Y | Y | Y | N | B | |
| 16 | Y | Y | N | Y | * | |
| 17 | Y | Y | Y | * | b,c | |
| 18 | Y | y | y | n | b | |
| 19 | Y | N | Y | N | C | |
| 20 | Y | Y | Y | N | A,B, | |
| 21 | Y | Y | Y | N | b,c | |
| 22 | Y | Y | Y | N | A,B | |
| 23 | Y | Y | Y | Y | * | |
| 24 | Y | Y | Y | N | A.B | |
| 25 | Y | Y | Y | N | D | d(DON'T LIKE THEM) |
| 26 | N | N | Y | Y | * | |
| 27 | Y | Y | Y | N | B | |
| 28 | Y | Y | Y | N | B | |
| 29 | Y | Y | Y | Y | * | |
| 30 | Y | N | Y | Y | * | |
| 31 | Y | Y | Y | Y | * | |
| 32 | Y | Y | Y | N | B,C | |
| 33 | Y | N | Y | N | A,B | |
| 34 | Y | Y | Y | Y | * | |
| 35 | Y | N | Y | Y | * | |
| 36 | Y | Y | Y | N | A,B,C | |
| 37 | Y | Y | Y | Y | * | |
| 38 | Y | Y | Y | N | B | |
| 39 | Y | Y | Y | N | * | |
| 40 | Y | Y | Y | N | B | |
| 41 | Y | Y | Y | N | D | D(POOR MEAL PLANNING/ORGANIZATION) |
| 42 | Y | Y | Y | N | A,B,C | |
| 43 | N | N | N | Y | * | |
| 44 | N | Y | N | N | A | |
| 45 | Y | Y | Y | N | B | |
| 46 | Y | * | Y | Y | * | |
| 47 | Y | N | Y | N | B | |

| | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|-------|
| 48 | Y | Y | Y | Y | * |
| 49 | Y | Y | Y | Y | * |
| 50 | Y | Y | Y | N | c |
| 51 | Y | N | Y | Y | * |
| 52 | Y | Y | Y | N | B |
| 53 | N | Y | N | Y | A |
| 54 | Y | Y | Y | Y | * |
| 55 | Y | Y | Y | Y | * |
| 56 | Y | Y | Y | Y | * |
| 57 | Y | Y | Y | N | A,B,C |
| 58 | Y | N | Y | N | B |
| 59 | Y | Y | Y | Y | * |
| 60 | Y | Y | Y | Y | * |
| 61 | Y | Y | Y | N | C |
| 62 | Y | * | Y | Y | * |
| 63 | Y | Y | Y | N | B |
| 64 | Y | Y | Y | Y | * |
| 65 | Y | N | Y | N | B,C |
| 66 | Y | Y | Y | N | b,c |
| 67 | Y | Y | Y | Y | * |
| 68 | Y | Y | Y | N | B,C |
| 69 | Y | Y | Y | Y | * |
| 70 | Y | N | Y | Y | * |
| 71 | Y | N | Y | Y | B |
| 72 | Y | N | Y | N | B |
| 73 | Y | Y | Y | N | A,B |
| 74 | Y | Y | Y | N | B |
| 75 | Y | Y | Y | N | C |
| 76 | Y | Y | Y | N | A,B,C |
| 77 | Y | Y | Y | N | B |
| 78 | Y | Y | Y | Y | * |
| 79 | Y | Y | Y | N | * |
| 80 | Y | Y | Y | N | B |
| 81 | Y | Y | Y | Y | * |
| 82 | Y | Y | Y | N | C |
| 83 | Y | N | * | N | D |
| 84 | Y | Y | Y | N | B |
| 85 | Y | Y | Y | Y | * |
| 86 | Y | N | Y | Y | * |
| 87 | Y | N | Y | N | D |
| 88 | Y | N | Y | N | B |
| 89 | Y | Y | Y | Y | * |
| 90 | Y | N | Y | Y | * |

D(LAZINESS)

D(DON'T EAT MUCH FOOD)

| | | | | | |
|-----|---|---|---|---|-----|
| 91 | Y | Y | Y | N | B |
| 92 | Y | Y | Y | Y | * |
| 93 | Y | Y | Y | Y | * |
| 94 | Y | Y | Y | Y | * |
| 95 | Y | Y | Y | N | B,D |
| 96 | Y | N | Y | Y | * |
| 97 | Y | Y | Y | Y | * |
| 98 | Y | Y | * | N | B |
| 99 | Y | Y | Y | N | B |
| 100 | Y | Y | * | N | A |
| 101 | Y | Y | Y | Y | * |

1.4 Survey Results for Question 6 (note – numbers do not add up to our total survey amount of 101 because some people listed more than 1)

| HEALTHY FOODS | LOCAL FOODS | FRESH FRUITS AND VEGGIES | BREAD | EGGS, MEATS & DAIRY | PREMADE/PRESERVED | OTHER | ALL | NOT SURE |
|---------------|-------------|--------------------------|-------|---------------------|-------------------|-------|-----|----------|
| 10 | 14 | 57 | 5 | 6 | 13 | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| 0 | 2 | 7 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 2 |

OTHERS:

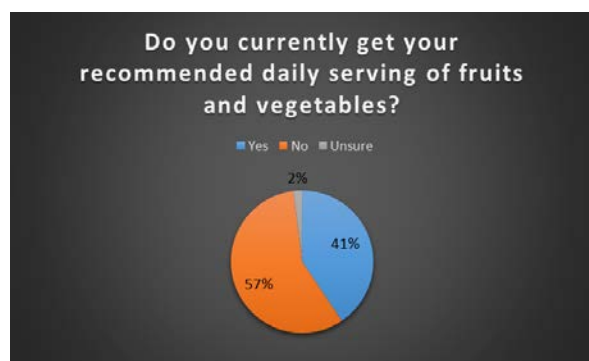
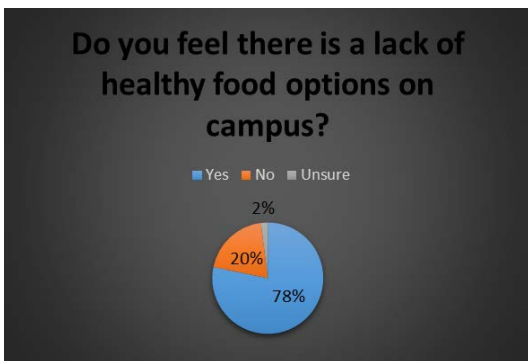
FRESH JUICE

STUDENT MADE

FACULTY MADE

PLANTS TO GROW

2.1 Additional Pie Charts



References and Acknowledgments

Farmers' Market Vendors (support, concerns, input) – Golden Prairie Wild Boar, Grandora Gardens, Wingeier's Simmental Farm, New Life Organic Foods, Maduro Coffee Company, T&H Apiaries, Floating Gardens, Good Spirit Bakery, Living Sky Winery

Foster, K. (February 9, 2015). *Food Security for Students*. University of Saskatchewan News. Accessed March 2015, from: <http://words.usask.ca/news/2015/02/09/food-security-for-students/>

Halvorson, A., and Dunn, L. (September 2013-April 2014). *Summary of a Survey on Student Attitudes Towards Local Food on Campus*. Affiliated with the Office of Sustainability and the Nutrition Division of the College of Pharmacy and Nutrition.

Office of Sustainability – Margret Asmuss and Erin Akins

Randomly selected students, staff, and faculty of University of Saskatchewan (survey)

Saskatoon Farmer's Market – (Manager of Operations – Debby Claude), (Accounts/Admin Support – Elaine Bay) (regarding food safe measures and support)

University of Alberta - (regarding Farmers' Market at U of A – case study)

USSU – Taletha Bennett (food center coordinator – regarding feasibility and working with USSU), Stefanie Ewen (regarding building space and management), Adam Noble (regarding table prices for vendors)