

Alberta

FARMERS' MARKET

Survey results

INTRODUCTION

In Alberta, the scope of both the problems and the potential contributions of small-scale food processors remains relatively unknown. To help fill the information void, the Canada West Foundation undertook a survey of farmers' market vendors. The survey looked at the characteristics of small-scale processors, the challenges they face and the resources at hand to help them grow.

METHODOLOGY

A survey of vendors at the following five farmers' markets was conducted by K. Polturak Management & Consulting Inc. in November and December 2016:

- Old Strathcona Farmers' Market (Edmonton)
- City Market Downtown (Edmonton)
- Crossroads Market (Calgary)
- Calgary Farmers' Market
- Symons Valley Ranch Farmers Market (Calgary)

Of the 100 business owners contacted, 26 completed the survey. Due to the low response rate, several processors from K. Polturak Management and Consulting Inc.'s database who sell at markets predominately in northeastern Alberta were added to the results. Personal contact was made at the markets, with email and telephone follow-ups. While some vendors completed the survey on site, the majority of respondents completed the survey away from the market, and faxed or emailed their response. Three completed surveys had two responses for numerous questions.

SURVEY RESULTS

November/December 2016
Calgary & Edmonton

WHAT PROCESSED FOOD PRODUCTS DO YOU MAKE FOR SALE?

Canned fruit/vegetables	0
Cereal	10
Beverages	4
Meat products	7
Dairy products	13
Dumplings	7
Honey	11
Sauces/seasonings	6
Snack food	4
Baked goods	12
Prepared meals	14
Chocolates	7
Pet Food	10

WHY DID YOU START YOUR BUSINESS?

Entrepreneur bug	15
Needed some extra cash	3
Laid off from my job	1
Love to cook	8
Other	13

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN PRODUCING PRODUCTS FOR SALE?

First year	5
1-2 years	4
More than 2 years	19

DO YOU CONSIDER THIS:

Sole occupation	21
Supplement to other work	3
Other work is a supplement	1
A hobby	2

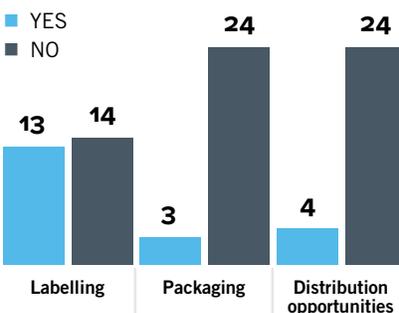
WHERE DO YOU DO YOUR PRODUCTION ACTIVITIES?

Home kitchen	4
Commercial kitchen at home	3
Shared commercial kitchen	5
Own out-of-home commercial kitchen	10
Other	6

HAVE YOU HAD ANY HELP FINANCING YOUR OPERATIONS?

Family	8
Friends	1
Credit card	18
Other	9

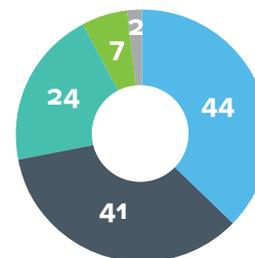
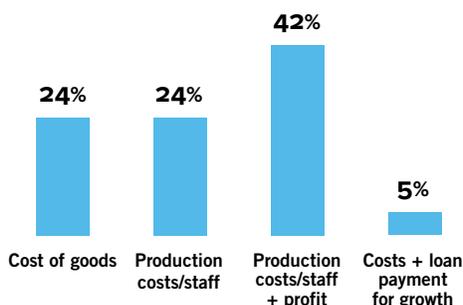
DID YOU HAVE HELP WITH...?



WHERE DO YOU SELL YOUR PRODUCTS?

This farmers' market only	13
Other farmers' markets as well	15
Local stores	16
Online	10
Restaurants	10
Other	7

COSTS COVERED BY REVENUE EARNED



DO YOU HAVE ANY HELP (NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES)?

■ Paid: Full Time ■ Unpaid: Full Time
■ Paid: Part Time ■ Unpaid: Part Time
■ Seasonal

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS FOR THIS BUSINESS?

I'm done, selling off inventory	1
Survive this year and prepare for next year	4
Thrive	22
Produce and sell more of current products	19
Produce additional kinds of products	14
Sell at more farmers' markets/ small retail locations	17
Looking for grocery chain distribution	8

IN WHAT CITY, TOWN OR COUNTY IS THE BUSINESS LOCATED?

Edmonton	9
Calgary	8
Ponoka County	1
Sherwood Park	1
Strathmore	1
County of Smoky Lake	2
County of Thorhild but sales only in Westlock and Edmonton	1
Plamondon	1
County of Wetaskiwin	1
Lac La Biche County	2
Ardrossan	1

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE FOR YOU?

Happy now	6
Grow by 1-3 employees	12
Grow by 20 employees	6
Grow to 100+ employees	2

TO WHAT DEGREE ARE YOU HAVING CHALLENGES FINDING INFORMATION ON:

Scale (1 = easy, 7 = difficult)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N/A
Financing	6	3	2	3	4	2	2	4
Meeting safety regulations for production	13	4	3	1	0	3	0	3
Meeting safety regulations for products	13	6	3	0	0	1	0	3
Meeting labelling regulations	7	4	5	4	1	2	1	2
Meeting business regulations	7	6	6	2	1	2	0	3
Finding staff	4	5	2	4	3	4	1	4
Finding customers/distribution	2	3	3	4	9	3	0	3
Learning about operating a business	7	4	7	3	0	1	0	4

TO WHAT DEGREE ARE YOU FACING BARRIERS TO GROWTH DUE TO:

Scale (1 = not a barrier, 7 = major barrier)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N/A
Financing	7	3	1	2	3	5	2	3
Meeting safety regulations for production	13	1	4	0	2	3	1	2
Meeting safety regulations for products	14	2	5	0	1	2	0	2
Meeting labelling regulations	9	3	3	4	1	3	0	3
Meeting business regulations	7	6	6	1	0	2	0	4
Finding staff	6	4	3	3	3	3	1	3
Finding customers/distribution	4	3	1	2	11	3	1	1
Learning about operating a business	8	9	3	2	0	2	0	3

SUPPORT AVAILABLE FOR FOOD PROCESSORS	Aware of: Yes	Aware of: No	Used: Yes	Used: No	Useful: Yes	Useful: No
Alberta Ag – New Venture Coaches	7	17	2	17	5	5
Alberta Ag – other	13	9	8	11	7	4
Local public health office	19	3	18	5	14	4
Community Futures	8	18	3	16	4	6
Local economic development office	14	11	14	16	5	7
Leduc Food Processing Lab	15	9	2	17	6	5
AgFoodCouncil.com	9	14	0	20	2	5
Alberta Food Processors Association	14	13	3	19	4	7
Start-up incubators	7	18	2	16	2	7

VALUE OBTAINED FROM FARMERS' MARKET EXPERIENCE

Scale (1 = no value to me, 7 = extremely valuable)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N/A
Make money	2	0	3	2	4	6	11	1
Good source of information	2	2	0	4	7	5	8	0
Share my passion with customers	0	0	1	2	6	6	13	0
Receive feedback from customers	0	0	0	2	3	9	13	1
Network with other producers	2	0	2	3	2	10	9	0
Learning opportunity	3	0	1	3	6	6	9	0
Obtain leads for distributors	7	1	6	2	0	3	6	0

HOW MUCH SOLD THIS YEAR IN GROSS SALES?	Less than \$1,000	\$1,000-\$5,000	\$5,001-\$10,000	\$10,001-\$25,000	\$25,001-\$50,000	\$50,001-\$100,000	\$100,001-\$250,000	More than \$250,000	Not sure	N/A
	2	2	1	2	4	7	2	5	2	0



CANADA WEST FOUNDATION

The Canada West Foundation focuses on the policies that shape the West, and by extension, Canada. Through our evidence-based research and commentary, we provide practical solutions to tough public policy challenges facing the West, and Canada as a whole, at home and on the global stage.

The summary of the Foundation's Alberta farmers' market survey was prepared by Naomi Christensen and Carlo Dade and as such does not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Canada West Foundation's Board of Directors, advisers or funders.