



Creating Accessible & Welcoming Events at BC Farmers' Markets

Case study: Mid-Autumn Harvest Festival

By: BC Association of Farmers' Markets & hua foundation
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FORWARD

The BC Association of Farmers' Markets (BCAFM) and hua foundation acknowledge that we work and live on the unceded traditional territory of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), sel'il'wítlh (Tsleil Waututh) and Skxwú7mesh (Squamish), and that our Mid-Autumn Harvest Festival took place on the lands of the k^wik^wəłəm (Kwkwetlem First Nation). As visitors we recognize that it is on their land that we work, live and play, and where the food that sustains us grows.

Farmers' markets are seen as community hubs and gathering spaces. They are places where relationships are built and where friends, families and neighbours connect. They are a celebration of local food and offer spaces where members of the public can interact with the people who grow their food. Farmers' markets are also places where everyone should feel welcome.

This case study describes an event, the Mid-Autumn Harvest Festival Cooking Demonstration, that was organized by the BC Association of Farmers' Markets (BCAFM) in partnership with the hua foundation and with participation from the Coquitlam Farmers Market. The document also outlines some steps that were taken to attempt to create a more inclusive and welcoming event. We hope this guide will spark some ideas and assist you in planning events at your farmers' market.

Addressing inclusivity is not straight forward and requires time, flexibility and commitment. There is no single way to address this broad topic. Running more inclusive and welcoming events, such as the one detailed below, is just one small piece within a much larger and complex journey towards inclusivity. We encourage you to explore other ways that farmers' markets can become more inclusive and welcoming to all people - where even more relationships can be built, and connections can be made. Let's continue to strengthen and nurture a more inclusive and thriving farmers' market sector in British Columbia!

We welcome your feedback on our event, and ideas about how to create more inclusive and welcoming events at farmers' markets.



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OVERVIEW and PARTNERS

The Mid-Autumn Harvest is a festival celebrated in several Asian countries and takes place during the full moon on the 15th day of the eighth month in the lunar calendar. To celebrate local food, farmers and culture, the BCAFM held a free Mid-Autumn Harvest Festival that included a cooking demonstration using seasonal and locally grown Asian greens, sampling, and a farmers' market tour to meet local growers.

BCAFM teamed up with several organizations to make this event happen. We partnered with the [hua foundation](#), a Vancouver based organization working to advance equity at the intersection of cultural identity, spaces, and community. Kevin Huang of the hua foundation previously spoke at the BCAFM's annual conference in a plenary session titled, "Connecting Your Market to the Growing Ethnic Community," and has experience working in the area of food security and access, specifically for East Asian communities.

We wanted to host the event at a BCAFM member farmers' market that had a strong customer base, and previous experience hosting events. We approached the [Coquitlam Farmers Market](#) because it hosts regular cooking demos and other workshops throughout the season.

Chef and farmer, Roger Woo of [Farmhouse Bard](#) was the perfect person to lead the farmers' market cooking demonstration. Roger grows Asian specific greens on his farm in Surrey, sells at farmers' markets, runs a CSA program, and has also worked as a chef in a Michelin Star restaurant in Hong Kong. Roger is one of BC's next generation of farmers, continuing the long history of growing Asian vegetables and greens in the Lower Mainland and is interested in reconnecting people to their culture through food.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Collaborating with community partners is one way to engage new audiences. For this project, BCAFM worked with the hua foundation to hold an event that was tailored to the Mid-Autumn Harvest Festival to showcase Chinese vegetables and ingredients through recipes and dishes. While hua foundation already works in the food sector and has a focus on engaging Chinese Canadian communities, partnerships with organizations that do not focus on food can materialize with proper relationship building and sharing of opportunities. Identifying shared intentions, goals and objectives, along with clear division of workload were essential in executing a successful partnership. Co-creating and co-executing a project together, as partners, will lead to higher likelihood of success

of building the event's audience base, rather than simply inviting other organizations to market an event to their audiences.

Another avenue for partnerships is with the vendors already at the farmers' market. A showcase of vendors' unique offerings as well as culturally specific products can help draw new audiences to the market. In our case, we showcased Asian cucumbers and Napa Cabbage, both of which can be grown locally and found at the market. The tactile engagement strategies, including the cooking demonstration, tasting, and recipe cards all provided opportunities for community partners to play key roles.

CULTURAL COMMUNITIES

There is increasing interest in engaging ethnocultural communities at farmers' markets. With this in mind, planning for engagement across cultures needs to be in place from very beginning of the project ideation process, not an add-on after the project has already been designed. Being specific about which audiences you want to reach out to will also help define your target audience and identify language and other needs. This can be done in the scoping part of the project ideation.

To effectively reach cultural communities, various tactics need to be considered in addition to partnering with culturally based community organizations. One major consideration is language accessibility. Translations, both written and spoken, are important for creating the space for the initial steps for dialogue across cultures.

Through this case study, we learned that there can be several ways to provide language access. Translations of marketing materials can be effective, but only if the channels and mediums where it is being circulated is of that language group. For example, WeChat (a Chinese based social media platform), would be appropriate for sharing Chinese language marketing materials. While WeChat is overall not recommended unless there is a dedicated Chinese language communications strategy for your organization, there are a number of options through English based social media platforms. One example is Facebook, where in the 'promote post' function, you are able to designate to which language group of users your ads will appear. Similarly, ads in specific languages can be purchased or sponsored in newspapers, magazines, radio, and even for TV as there are numerous local publications and stations that service a wide array of language groups. We found it was important to denote in all these communications that there will be live-translations and translated materials available at the event.

Providing in-person, live, translations is key to creating an accessible and welcoming environment for people who are not fluent in English. In our experience, we recommend that translations be offered as default (especially if it was as advertised) instead of asking audience members to raise their hands if they need translations. This methodology allows people who might not be fluent in English, or prefer to listen in another language, the sense of privacy and dignity; individuals do not have to publicly identify themselves as not being fluent in English to access the event. Live translations take more time and can be accounted for in planning of the programming at the event. We do not recommend live translations for more than three languages, with two being ideal.

MARKETING and COMMUNICATIONS

With the goal of garnering new audiences to the farmers' market, a lot of emphasis was put into the marketing and communications of the event.

BCAFM sent out a press release to mainstream English media outlets while hua foundation circulated the press release to Chinese media outlets. This effort resulted in two earned media hits, including one from Singtao, one of the two large Chinese media outlets in Canada. It is important to distinguish between pre-event coverage, including event listings that raise awareness and increase the reach of the event, and post-event coverage, including write-ups sharing what happened and key messages. This project was successful in earning both types of media coverage. The same strategy can be applied to other cultural communities with groups who may have existing relationships with ethnocultural community media outlets. Overall, from hua foundation's experience, there is always expressed interest from these outlets in covering events that may be of relevance to their readership.

To further marketing efforts, we had event branded graphics suited for Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. BCAFM and hua foundation both boosted Facebook and Instagram posts for the event. While anecdotal, there were several people that told our team they came out to the event after seeing it on social media.

As a general suggested guideline for engaging 'new' audiences, we recommend that events be centered around anchor moments. In our case, Mid-Autumn marked both the change of seasons and change in types of fresh produce available at farmers' markets, and an important celebratory day (and holiday for some) in many Asian cultures. With anchors such as holidays and community celebrations, it is easier to tailor and

customize messaging in the marketing and communications materials as there is a natural moment that is already different from people's normal routines. The opening or last day of the market season can also serve as anchors. However, we advise that it cannot come from a place of opportunism, but rather a place of highlighting shared values. In our case, partnering with hua foundation to co-design this project and its multiple elements helped with cross-cultural bridging and sharing.

To further enhance this project's marketing and communications, several print material collateral pieces were created. The same event branding used for social media was used for two sandwich board inserts. The sandwich boards were placed at the market to direct audiences to the demonstration and capture audiences who might not have heard of the special event. The team also developed two recipe cards of the dishes that were prepared at the event. There was an emphasis placed on making these recipes culturally specific and also that the ingredients, aside from items such as sauces, were in season and locally available at the farmers' market.

Please see appendix for marketing material.

LOGISTICS

SOME KEY ELEMENTS

Master of Ceremonies: We were fortunate to have the Coquitlam Farmers Market executive director, Tabitha McLoughlin serve as the event master of ceremonies. It was excellent to have a recognizable person, who is very comfortable in the market environment facilitate the event, as she was able to drum up excitement amongst shoppers and draw a crowd to the cooking demonstration even on a cold and rainy September morning.

Chef: Another key individual at this event was the chef Roger Woo, who prepared and demonstrated the recipes. Roger was an excellent fit for this event, as he has a passion for cooking and growing fresh, local food, including Asian greens. He also has an outgoing personality and was able to project his voice in a busy market environment.

Farmers: Seeing as part of the goal of the event was to highlight local Asian greens, we wanted to highlight the farm vendors offering these products and gave them a special shout out during the cooking demonstration to encourage shoppers to visit their booth and see the variety of Asian greens available locally. This was a good point of

connection between the chef, farmer and shoppers, but is not necessary, depending on the specifics of your event.

Historical Perspective: It was key to have representatives from the hua foundation attend the event and speak about the long history of growing Asian vegetables and greens in the Lower Mainland, and reconnecting people to their culture through food. This added a level of depth to the event which would not have been possible without the knowledge and involvement of the hua foundation.

HEALTH GUIDELINES

Because the event involved both a cooking demonstration and food sampling, we had to consider the appropriate food safety requirements, while working in a farmers' market setting. There were two elements of food preparation to consider, each with their own set of food safety considerations. First, preparation of the food that would be sampled by the public; and second, the cooking demonstration that took place at the market. As always, we referred to the 'go-to' document regarding food safety at BC farmers' markets, the "[Guidelines for the Sale of Foods at Temporary Food Markets](#)," prepared by the BC Centre for Disease Control in collaboration with the BC Ministry of Health and the five regional Health Authorities, Vancouver Coastal, Fraser, Interior, Northern and Vancouver Island. Members of the organizing team had both MarketSafe and FOODSAFE certificates, which provided necessary background in food safety. Food samples for tasting at the market were prepared in advance in an inspected kitchen, stored and transported safely, and then individually portioned at the farmers' market using compostable paper cups and forks. Due to food safety requirements, the food prepared during the farmers' market cooking demonstration, **cannot be offered to the public as food samples, as it has not been prepared in a food safe environment.** Before planning an event involving food samples for tasting at the market or cooking demonstrations, be sure to contact your local Health Authority or Environmental Health Officer.

GREENING FARMERS' MARKETS

There has been a growing interest and desire in the BC farmers' market community to take action to reduce waste, and further reduce the ecological footprint of farmers' markets. This movement has grown from farmers' market shoppers looking for zero waste grocery options, as well as farmers' market organizers working towards strategies for more sustainable food systems. During this event we attempted to create as little

food and other waste as possible, which was made easier by the Coquitlam Farmers Market's waste management system, which included clearly marked containers for compostable, recyclable and any remaining trash items. Like Coquitlam, more and more farmers' markets across the province are developing policies and systems to address and encourage waste reduction at their markets.

For food sampling, we sourced from a Canadian company called Earthpak, and selected: small compostable and recyclable bowls made from 100% reclaimed sugarcane pulp fiber, and mini compostable wooden spoons and chopsticks.

EQUIPMENT LIST

Here are some of the items we found most essential during the event:

- Locally sourced food for the market cooking-demo
- Cooking equipment for the cooking-demo, including a hand-washing station, gloves and an apron for the chef
- Pre-prepared food to be sampled at the market (including proper storage and refrigeration)
- Sampling materials: a hot plate to heat up the samples, gloves for food handling, serving trays, napkins, small compostable bowls for individual samples, compostable forks and chopsticks, and napkins
- Marketing materials: event sandwich board to attract market shoppers, co-branded recipe cards, other promotional and contact materials for the event partners
- A PA system and headset microphone were used by all those who spoke during the event, and it proved very helpful in reaching customers across the market, and for those hard of hearing.
- Chairs and a tent were set up so market goers could sit and rest or be out of the rain as they watched the cooking demonstration and enjoyed their samples
- A camera, so we could capture the event!

SAMPLE BUDGET

BCAFM received funding for this event through the Metro Vancouver's Agriculture Awareness Grant. The grant supports community organizations in educating the public about local food and agricultural production. Below is a general breakdown of the event expenses, which have been adjusted to serve as a sample event budget for farmers' markets:

Marketing, Outreach and Promotions		
Sandwich board poster + recipe cards printing	\$350	
Facebook boost	\$125	
Instagram boost	\$50	
	\$525	Sub-total
Cooking Demo Materials		
Ingredients + veggies	\$60	
Equipment (stove, sample cups, utensils, etc.)	\$100	
Staff transportation	\$25	
	\$185	Sub-total
Honoraria		
Chef	\$300	
Host market coordination	\$500	
Translator	\$200	
Commercial kitchen use	\$100	
Community partner	\$500	
	\$1,600.00	Sub-total
	\$2310	Total

LESSONS LEARNED BY BCAFM

This is the first farmers' market cooking demonstration the BCAFM organized, and we wanted to have clear intentions to make it more inclusive and welcoming. Here are some key lessons learned:

- Partnering with relevant community groups is key to create more meaningful engagement and work.
- Each cultural community can be complex and may have “sub communities” within them. There is no “one size fits all” method of engagement.

RESOURCES and FURTHER READINGS

There are a great number of ways to make events more accessible, inclusive, and welcoming to all. Below are a few helpful resources.

- Diversity Through Inclusive Practice: An Evolving Toolkit for Creating Inclusive Processes, Spaces & Events (by FemNorthNet & DAWN Canada) - a very practical document about planning and hosting events for people of various ages, abilities, sexual orientations, religions, cultures, and more.
- Intercultural Competency Training (by MOSAIC) - a structured approach course to building awareness and understanding of different cultural behaviours. It helps your business or organization create an environment where people of diverse cultures work together more easily and effectively.
- 20 ways majority white nonprofits can build authentic partnerships with organizations led by communities of colour (by Nonprofit AF) - written by the Executive Director of Rainier Valley Corps, a nonprofit in Seattle that promotes social justice by developing leaders of color, strengthening organizations led by communities of color, and fostering collaboration between diverse communities.
- Connecting Your Market to the Growing Ethnic Community (Vancouver Farmers Markets, hua foundation, Farmer Koo) - a plenary session at the 2017 BC Farmers' Markets conference workshop.

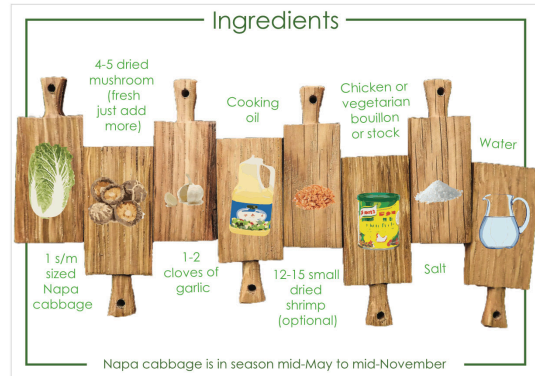
THANK YOU

Thank you to the following who supported the Mid-Autumn Harvest Festival: **Metro Vancouver** for the grant support; farmer and chef **Roger Woo** for bringing his expertise to the table; **Coquitlam Farmers Market** (Tabitha McLoughlin, Sarah Kinsman, Julia Zado) our host market; **Winnie Wing Yang Kwan** for providing Mandarin and Cantonese translation and speaking about the history of Chinese farmers in the Lower Mainland; **Carmen Lee** for designing the beautiful graphics and recipe cards; **Rhinofish** restaurant for providing the inspected kitchen space to prepare food samples.

APPENDIX



Mid-Autumn Harvest Festival Postcard



Braised Napa with Dried Shrimp and Mushrooms

開陽白菜

Method

- Rehydrate dried mushrooms by soaking in water for 45 minutes
- Rehydrate dried shrimp by soaking in a separate bowl for 45 minutes
- Slice Napa leaves into bite-sized pieces
- Peel and slice garlic
- Drain and slice mushrooms. Drain shrimp
- Fry together garlic, shrimp, and mushrooms until fragrant
- Add Napa and stir fry until heated through
- Add stock or water to cover bottom of the pan to about half an inch
- Once stock is hot and bubbling, reduce heat to a simmer
- Continue cooking until Napa is tender
- Add salt, chicken bouillon powder to taste



Pickled Cucumbers

涼拌小黃瓜

Method

- Peel cucumber, and remove seeds if large
- Cut into short pieces, about two inches long
- In a mixing bowl, toss with a bit of salt and let sit for 20 minutes
- Peel and mince garlic
- Slice red chilies in small pieces
- Drain cucumbers and lightly squeeze cucumbers to remove excess moisture
- In a clean bowl, add garlic, chilies, and drained cucumbers
- Toss in a light dressing of white wine vinegar and a dash of sesame oil
- Add Salt and sugar to taste
- Serve immediately or cover and put into fridge for up to two days.



Recipe Card 2

Recipe Card 1

EVENT PHOTOS



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