FARMERS MARKET COALITION
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2021 Board of Directors Election Candidates

Voting open to FMC members from January 29th - February 23rd, 2021

Ross Dakin (incumbent)

Ross Dakin is a technologist with a background in government, academia, private companies, and nonprofit board fundraising and governance. As a current member of the Farmers Market Coalition board, Ross has helped develop the current 5-year strategic plan, advance FMC's incorporation of technology into its operations and member resources, and navigate the various challenges presented by broader context of the past few years. In the winter of 2019, Ross helped facilitate the continuity of EBT payment acceptance at farmers markets, when vendor stability was uncertain. Beyond FMC, Ross has contributed to community nutrition by helping USDA develop the first digital free/reduced school meal application in 2016 and, more recently, by helping the state of New Jersey provide benefits to students who couldn't be in school to receive meals due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Ross is originally from California and currently enjoys frequenting his local New York City farmers markets, primarily in Tomkins Square (East Village) and Union Square. With the new presidential administration, the ongoing pandemic, and the ever-changing landscape of the industry, we have much work to do—Ross would be humbly enthusiastic to continue serving FMC and its members for another term on the Board of Directors.

What do you see as the top three obstacles to future growth of farmers markets nationwide?

(1) Increasing distributor centralization / price competition,
(2) increasing desire for mobile grocery delivery,
(3) increasing costs of labor, supplies, logistics.

What are your personal goals for serving as a member of FMC's Board of Directors? In other words, why are you applying?

My goals are to help FMC execute upon its 5-year strategic plan while navigating timely issues as they arise (e.g. COVID-19 implications and the long-overdue attention to BIPOC inclusion in the farmers market community).

Regan Emmons

Regan Emmons is the Farmers Market Promotion Program coordinator for Utah State University and is working to develop a generative network for farmers markets in Utah. Regan has lived in the west for 16 years in Hawaii, Arizona and Oregon before moving to rural Utah. She has worked in agriculture and community food system development for the last 12 years in myriad ways, including being an educator, CSA operator, researcher, and serving as the coordinator for the Rogue Valley Food System Network where food access programming was a major focus. Regan was a part of an advocacy effort that resulted in $1.5 million for Double Up Food Bucks.

Regan is interested in strengthening farmers markets in all communities, especially rural and underserved communities to increase healthy and locally produced food options while providing economic opportunities and broad community benefits. She enjoys working in collaboration with partners and uses systems thinking and collective impact as a guiding force behind her work. When not working or not hanging out at a farmers markets, she can be found gardening, hiking on public lands or floating on the Green River near her home in Northeastern UT.

What do you see as the top three obstacles to future growth of farmers markets nationwide?

1. The combined issues of the increasing average age of farmers, lack of farm succession, and lack of support for small farmers through subsidies leads to fewer smaller farms that would use farmers markets as a marketing outlet.

2. The lack of professionalization of market managers, which contributes to high turnover and a discontinuity of leadership makes it challenge for markets to grow stronger and become financially sustainable operations, as well as the concern mentioned below.

3. That some markets are solely focused operating their own markets and are not bringing their voices to the broader conversations that affect their market's ability to thrive, such as racial equity, systemic issues that negatively impact farmers and the agricultural sector as a whole.

What are your personal goals for serving as a member of FMC's Board of Directors? In other words, why are you applying?

I would be interested in serving as a board member because I would personally benefit from improving my knowledge of farmers markets, the systemic challenges they face, and the myriad of solutions that can improve them. I know that my increased knowledge would carry over to the farmers markets that I serve in Utah. I would like to be involved with FMC, because I ultimately benefit from their success, I believe in the mission, and I feel that I could contribute to its continued success. Lastly, I benefit from FMC's resources, leadership and advocacy, and sharing my skills through serving as a board member is a way of giving back.

Lori Gibson

Lori Gibson grew up on the Eastern side of Washington State. Her family is in the floral and nursery business in Washington. Lori is a fourth generation florist whose work has been primarily focused in the service industry as a manager.

Lori returned to school full time to complete a bachelor's degree in Leadership and Organizational Studies at the University of Southern Maine. As of September of 2020, she started taking classes toward a master's degree and will be graduating in June of 2021 with a bachelor's in LOS and a year of courses toward a Master's in Leadership Studies. Lori moved to Maine six years ago and has been managing the local farmers market for four years.

What do you see as the top three obstacles to future growth of farmers markets nationwide?

- Home delivery of local produce,
- home delivery of pre-packaged meals,
- fear of public places due to COVID-19.

What are your personal goals for serving as a member of FMC's Board of Directors? In other words, why are you applying?

My personal goals for serving as a member of FMC's Board of Directors are to continue strengthening community, growing local food markets, and increasing the opportunities for small farmers to grow and produce. It would be a great opportunity to bring the education in leadership and organizational studies to further the work of building local food systems as a member of the organization. It is an opportunity to stretch my understanding and to learn and grow as an individual.

Erica Hall

Erica Hall has an extensive background as a community organizer, advocate, non-profit executive and Board member, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) consultant and Senior Legal Professional. She has worked in urban agriculture, community development, urban planning, environmental justice, public health, neighborhood preservation, food policy and advocacy and on all aspects of non-profit management, corporate, and commercial real estate transactions. She has also worked with the US Green Building Council (USGBC), the American Planning Association, the Congress for New Urbanism (CNU) and other environmental, neighborhood revitalization groups throughout the DC area focusing on youth development, urban agriculture, food insecurity, workforce training, affordable housing, historic and neighborhood preservation. Additionally, Erica has collaborated and partnered on developing Food Policy Councils in NY, DC, VA, and MD while remaining active in the green building and environmental justice community, using her platform to combine leadership, advocacy and activism.

Since 2011, Erica has been a Grant Reviewer for the USDA National Institute of Food & Agriculture's Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program which funds projects designed to meet the needs of low-income individuals and increase community self-reliance concerning food and nutrition. She is currently a Grant Reviewer for the USDA's Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP) and the Local Food Promotion Program (LMPP). Erica previously chaired Healthy Solutions a DC non-profit and served on the Board of Directors of Groundwork Anacostia River DC, a local non-profit that utilizes environmental restoration goals as a vehicle for community development. In 2015, while a member of the DC chapter of the US Green Building Council, she was selected as co-chair of the Host Committee for Greenbuild, the world's largest conference and expo dedicated to Green Building. As co-chair, Erica worked to connect and introduce the U.S. Green Building Council and Greenbuild to International Real Estate Management (IREM) and other real estate groups. The 2015 Greenbuild Host Committee, on which she served, earned the President's Volunteer Service Award in 2016.

What do you see as the top three obstacles to future growth of farmers markets nationwide?

- Racism,
- DEI,
- and training members to be engaged in DEI and social and racial injustice.

What are your personal goals for serving as a member of FMC's Board of Directors? In other words, why are you applying?

To bring DEI to the Board and recruit diverse members; collaborate and build partnerships

Reana Kovalcik

Reana Kovalcik is a seasoned communications, development, and policy professional who has previously worked alongside FMC as a staff member of the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC) and has also worked directly with FMC as a contractor supporting communications and development. Reana describes herself as a natural editor and creative cross-pollinator – someone who loves to tinker, brainstorm, connect people, and push creative boundaries. She would be an adept advisor on issues relating to media (new/social and traditional), branding, storytelling, use of creative imagery, and fundraising. Reana also has degrees in public policy analysis and worked on agricultural policy issues for several years during her time with NSAC. She is interested in this opportunity because she believes her particular skill set will help FMC move into a phase of new growth – but more than anything else, because she loves good food, sustainable agriculture, and wants to be part of helping a good, clean, and fair food and farm system thrive.

What do you see as the top three obstacles to future growth of farmers markets nationwide?

- Federal support or lack thereof (both financial and regulatory)
- Connecting to communities of color and low income communities
- Investing in sustainable growth (growing, but not in a way that loses the point of a local market or disenfranchises vendors or the community)

What are your personal goals for serving as a member of FMC's Board of Directors? In other words, why are you applying?

I believe in FMC's mission and I want to be a part of helping the organization grow and thrive. I'd specifically like to help FMC expand their reach through social and traditional media channels, tell more stories more effectively, and grow their work with corporate partners.

Frank Martinez Nocitio

Frank Martinez Nocito is an innovative Public Health Nutrition professional with over two decades of diverse state, national and international experience in program development, management and outcome evaluation, policy initiatives, and public-private collaborations. After earning a Master of Science degree from the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University, he worked at the Food and Agriculture Organization in Rome, Italy where he focused on human nutrient requirements and public-private partnerships. For most of the past decade his work has focused on improving government benefit programs, health equity, and access to healthy food for marginalized populations. Prior to his current position with the Maine Health Access Foundation, Frank worked for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as the Project Director of the Healthy Incentives Program (HIP), pioneering the implementation of three first-in-the-nation, healthy food access pilot programs for low-income families, all of which involved farmers and farmers markets, and for which he received both statewide and national accolades. Since April 2017, HIP significantly improved SNAP recipients' health (reaching 80,000+ families), increased farmer incomes ($20M+), and decreased food insecurity in Massachusetts. Frank and his family relocated from W. Massachusetts to Maine at the end of 2018.

What do you see as the top three obstacles to future growth of farmers markets nationwide?

- Sustainability of small and mid-sized farms;
- Ability of markets to diversify customer base;
- and Establishing farmers markets as a core and consistent retailer for the average consumer.

What are your personal goals for serving as a member of FMC's Board of Directors? In other words, why are you applying?

Farmers markets play a critical role in building and strengthening a local and sustainable food system. Serving as an FMC Board member would enable me to amplify my contribution on a larger scale, than if I were to be involved with the MFFM only.

Qiana Mickie

Qiana Mickie, Founding Principal of QJM Multiprise, is a food systems and equity consultant that uses food as a driver of enterprise, innovation, and equity. She also consults with business and community-based leadership on social impact, urban design, and grassroots policy projects. For the past 10 years, she has worked on fostering a food based solidarity economy in the New York region that increases farm viability, healthy food access, and leadership opportunities for small- mid scale regional farmers, youth, Black, Brown, mixed income, and other communities of color. Qiana is the former Executive Director of Just Food.

Qiana serves on the International Council of Urgenci, Coordination Committee of the Civil Society Mechanism (CSM) for the United Nations, as well as the boards of the South Bronx Farmers Market, The Point CDC, and recently joined the Improving Schools board. Qiana has a B.S. in Marketing from Hampton University and received her Food Hub Management Certification from the University of Vermont. She speaks on issues of racial equity, food justice, and solidarity economy locally and internationally.

What do you see as the top three obstacles to future growth of farmers markets nationwide?

- Inequitable policy and dissemination of resources to support the full breadth of farmers market nationwide- in particular in communities of need, continued struggles nationwide with SNAP and inconsistent roll out of SNAP administration (i.e. double up incentives automatically added to card like MA HIP program, easier TA for farmers to become SNAP eligible,
- EBT tech and getting more support for smaller groups, etc),
- the inequitable burden of fighting for local/ regional food policy and incentive program on the federal level.

What are your personal goals for serving as a member of FMC's Board of Directors? In other words, why are you applying?

I think FMC has grown in its impact, dissemination of resources, and commitment to increasing equity within the farmers market community. I am always in awe of how the organization leverages its policy acumen and actively stays on the forefront on improving federal policy.

I think there is always improvement and look forward to working with the staff and leadership more concretely in the organization. I see the potential of increasing membership within the BIPOC community intentionally, and made much needed strides in community run farmers markets and policy in New York state in particular and the national in general. It has been a long time goal to engage on policy efforts with FMC in earnest.

Allen Moy (incumbent)

Allen J. Moy is Executive Director of the Pacific Coast Farmers' Market Association (PCFMA), a nonprofit organization which serves nearly 250 California farmers by operating and promoting more than 50 certified farmers' markets in the San Francisco Bay Area. Allen joined PCFMA in 2003, bringing over 15 years of experience in nonprofit organizations, and was promoted to Executive Director in 2015.

Allen is a Board member of Fresh Approach, a nonprofit organization founded by PCFMA in 2008 that connects California communities with healthy food from California farmers through innovative health, nutrition and food access programs such as its mobile farmers' market. Allen is the founder and Board member of California Food Education, a new nonprofit organization that seeks to increase knowledge of local and healthy foods in the Bay Area.

Allen is also a Board member of the Farmers Market Coalition, a national organization of farmers' market operators that advocates for farmers' markets at the federal level and connects market operators nationwide to build their skills and support their markets. Allen is a native of San Antonio, Texas. He holds a Master's in Urban Administration and a Bachelor's in Communications and Political Science, both from Trinity University in San Antonio.

What do you see as the top three obstacles to future growth of farmers markets nationwide?

1. Many farmers' markets are significantly under-resourced. This can result in repetitive staff turnover, the inability to invest in growth strategies, and the lack of resources to withstand economic disruptions such as pandemics or natural disasters.

2. Farmers' markets are at a significant information deficit when compared to large-scale brick and mortar food retailers. Those businesses have access to information on consumer trends that is inaccessible to farmers' markets and the large-scale retailer use that information to enhance their marketing in ways that farmers' markets cannot.

3. Growth in farmers' markets is most often counted in the number of markets operating nationwide but this statistic alone only tells part of the story. Other metrics such as the number of farmers served, the number of days of operation, the square footage of sales space occupied and the number of customer visits would provide a more complete picture of the growth of farmers' markets, but that data is not consistently available for farmers' markets nationwide.

What are your personal goals for serving as a member of FMC's Board of Directors? In other words, why are you applying?

I have enjoyed my first three years of service on the FMC Board of Directors. The engagement with farmers' market leaders from around the nation is inspiring and helps me to look beyond the day-to-day of my work and refocus on the long term strength and vitality of the farmers' market sector and the food system. I hope that I am able to give as much back to the organization as I take from it.

Cara Mae Wooledge

Although relatively new to the field of farmers market management, Cara Mae feels she has found the perfect home to be of maximum service to her community as the Napa Farmers Market Manager. After graduating from UCLA's Fielding School of Public Health with her Master in Community Health Science, Cara Mae moved to Napa, California. For eleven years she worked as a Health Education Specialist for Napa County Public Health focusing on health promotion, risk communication, public health disaster preparedness and response and health inequities. In 2017, Cara Mae changed career paths and accepted the position of Assistant Manager at the Napa Farmers Market. She was attracted by the opportunity to work directly with community members to diversify market customers by engaging Latino, Spanish speaking and immigrant residents. As Market Manager in 2020, Cara Mae's background in emergent infectious diseases and wildfire response were critical in ensuring the Napa Farmers Market remained open and safe during both the COVID-19 pandemic and Northern California wildfires. As a queer woman, she is in interested in creating diverse, equitable and inclusive spaces at farmers market that are welcoming to Black, Indigenous, People of Color, LGBTQ+, immigrant and minority communities.

What do you see as the top three obstacles to future growth of farmers markets nationwide?

1) Climate change and the lack of a safety net for small, family-owned farms
2) Scare resources (funding, space, staffing, time etc.)
3) Income inequity putting pressure on our customers to spend money elsewhere (i.e. rent, healthcare)

What are your personal goals for serving as a member of FMC's Board of Directors? In other words, why are you applying?

My personal goal for serving on the FMC board of directors is to take my enthusiasm for farmers markets from the local to the national level. I feel strongly that in order for farmers markets to make significant strides, we must advocate for our field collectively at the national level. I see the FMC as an opportunity to be of service and learn about policy and legislation that will impact farmers markets across the country.