



Keya Wakpala Farmers' Market 2019 Season Report

OVERVIEW

The Keya Wakpala Farmers' Market is a family-friendly space that provides local food producers the opportunity to sell their homemade goods to the community. This year the markets were located at four different locations. Our main farmers' markets were held in the parking lot of the Food Sovereignty Initiative office building on Tuesdays from 4:30 PM to 6:30 PM, starting in July and ending in October. The SNAP/EBT markets took place outside of the Turtle Creek Crossing Super Foods grocery store on the tenth of every month, which is when South Dakota residents receive SNAP/EBT funds. These markets were held from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM. This year we had the opportunity to broaden our service area by holding Keya Wakpala Mobile Markets in two smaller communities on the reservation: Parmelee and St. Francis. These were held in front of the community buildings and occurred on Wednesday afternoons during the months of August and September.

VENDORS

Much of our success is due to the vendors. This past summer we had seventeen different vendors, the highest number to date, who consistently participated in our farmers' markets. During the 2019 season, we had nine out of seventeen vendors attend at least four times, with our top five most consistent vendors attending 77% or more of the markets that were held. In 2019 we averaged eight vendors per week. The variety of goods sold has also increased this year with our vendors selling grass-fed beef, baked goods, wild harvested foods and medicine, hot foods, and arts and crafts. We were able to improve basic infrastructure with funds which allowed us to purchase additional tables, chairs, and canopies that we set up before each market. This had a positive impact on vendors attending our market, by providing simple amenities that most people could not otherwise bring to the market themselves.

PROGRAMMING

This market season, we added another component to our market experience: our weekly youth program called *Wakanyeja taku waste unspepi ksto/yelo*, which translates to “the children will learn good things.” The program was geared towards including more youth in the experience of going to a farmers’ market and supporting local food producers. Youth received a booklet they brought back with them every week the market was held. Each week we planned different activities. Using Lakota verbs, we would practice that word in a variety of activities: planting seeds, harvesting produce, etc. Each time the youth attended and completed the weekly activities they would receive a wooden token worth \$1 that they could spend at the FSI booth.

SALES

The FSI booth made \$2,289.95 in revenue over the course of the 2019 season, with an average market day revenue of \$176.15. This increased our total revenue by 27.9% from last years farmers’ market. Our mobile market allowed us to reach more community members, with total profits of \$380.87 for the mobile markets. This is an average of \$51.55 per market day and makes up 14% of our total market sales this season.

Record keeping consisted of writing down itemized receipts from each sale and keeping copies of receipts on file. Itemized receipts allow us to plan for future growing based on popular items sold at our booth. Of the fifty-three varieties of fresh vegetables offered this year, hot peppers, bell peppers, and pickling cucumbers were the most popular.

EFFICIENCY/SUSTAINABILITY

With the guidance of the Market Manager, the Food Sovereignty Initiative staff and interns ran an effective and smooth farmers’ market. Taking on the commitment of setting up and breaking down each farmers’ market, each member also had specific jobs that they upheld during each farmers’ market. These jobs included Point of Sales person: this person handled the money and card transactions including EBT/SNAP card swipes; Sales Receipt Writer: writing all produce onto the receipts for record keeping of produce sold and bagging and weighing each transaction for our records; Produce Runner: when certain produce was low at our booth this person would replace produce as needed; Youth Program Personnel: this person ran our youth program booth and helped guide each child to specific activities; Market Manager: managed the various jobs that ensured the market ran effectively, kept in contact with vendors and made sure they had everything they needed for that farmers’ market, bookkeeping after every market, and tending to the needs of staff, vendors and customers.

Through grant funding we were able to improve on the way we packaged produce grown in the garden. We purchased pint, quart and quart and a half compostable pulp berry containers. With this form of packaging we have been able to reduce our use of single-use plastics and lead the way away from single-use plastics use. Thanks to the craftsmanship of those who work at the Rosebud Sioux Tribe Forestry, we bought a fifteen foot picnic table and three six-foot picnic tables for an improved atmosphere at the farmers' market.