

# **FARMERS & PRODUCE MARKET SEMINAR – 26 MAY 2004 BARN & BUSHEL, THAINSTONE AGRICULTURAL CENTRE**

## **REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS**

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### **1 Background**

With increasing consumer interest and ongoing development of Farmer & Produce Markets in Aberdeenshire and North East Scotland, preliminary analysis of the market structure was undertaken by Economic Development, Aberdeenshire Council, resulting in a report to the Council's Rural Affairs Working Group (RAWG) in March 2004. RAWG endorsed proposals for the organisation of a seminar with the aims of exploring:

- Co-operation - consideration of the formation of a market association for markets in Aberdeenshire and surrounding areas.
- Affiliation - consideration of membership of the Scottish Association of Farmers Markets, with the aim of sharing best practice, achievement of quality assurance standards.
- Marketing - identification of joint marketing initiatives, eg: website enhancement and joint brochure for distribution throughout Aberdeenshire and the North East.
- Funding - information on potential funding sources for the future development of the markets.
- Environmental Issues - information on environmental health issues and quality assurance.

### **2 Rationale**

Looking at the farmers market movement at strategic level, it is evident that there is potential through the markets to promote local quality produce, enhance the income base of producer stallholders, contribute to market town activity and footfall and opportunity to link with other sectors, for example food and tourism industries.

Key developments in the farmers market movement in Scotland have resulted in:

- Rapid expansion - from the first markets held in Perth and Ayrshire in 1999, to the current situation of more than 50 markets, with a pool of approximately 500 farmers/producers.
- Co-operation - with guidance from the Scottish Agricultural Organisation Society (SAOS), the Scottish Association of Farmers Markets (SAFM) was established in 2001, providing business and technical support to stallholders and promoting and advertising markets.
- Aberdeenshire - Banff was the first market established, followed by Banchory, Peterhead and Inverurie. A street traders market also operates weekly in Ellon.
- Future – Exploration and market research for a market in Stonehaven and also possible interest for markets in Turriff and Huntly.

The rationale of the seminar was to highlight options for future development of markets in Aberdeenshire and North East Scotland, hearing from experts, outwith and within the area.

The event was co-financed by Aberdeenshire Council and Scottish Enterprise Grampian and chaired by Councillor Bill Howatson.

### **3 Speakers**

#### **Douglas Watson, SAOS Project Manager.**

- Long involvement and experience with local food and direct marketing projects.
- Through SAOS, has advised a number of farmers markets throughout Scotland.
- Organiser of local food seminars in Cairngorms National Park and Argyll & Islands.

Douglas' presentation centred on market growth and sustainability issues, the range of possible management structures, with the background theme of strength in numbers, also highlighting the value and benefit of the principles of co-operation.

#### **Tom Mitchell, Puddledub Pork and Fife-shire Bacon Company Ltd.**

- Runs a mixed farm at Auchtertool in Fife.
- Closely involved in setting up Kirkcaldy and Cupar Farmers Markets.
- Experience of farmers' markets as both a producer and market organiser.

Tom explained the growth of Fife markets, a success story demonstrating pro-active approach by market organisers, towns' business associations and public sector involvement, enabling the market circuit to develop. Potential for more diverse range of products, greater co-ordination and enhanced marketing.

#### **Howard Wilkinson, Chairman Ayrshire Food Network**

- Chartered Marketer, specialising in use of IT to enhance marketing, sales, and communications relating to food and tourism.
- In 1998, established a small food producing business, Petrie Fine Foods, specialising in vegetarian and vegan products, as well as hand crafted matured cakes and puddings.
- Director of the Scottish Association of Farmers' Markets.

Challenging presentation – covering the evolution of the market circuit in Ayrshire, noting management issues and practical solutions for success. Linking food to lifestyle, tourism, regional identity, and interface with customers etc, Howard challenged producers to adopt greater customer focus and consider opportunities for further development using ICT.

#### **Pat Mitchell, Mitchell's Dairies, Inverurie**

- Chairman of Inverurie Farmers Market.
- Strong supporter of farmers markets, believing markets create new interest and vitality in town centres.
- Inverurie Farmers Market operating directly outside Mitchell's has been a positive experience for Pat.

Pat demonstrated first hand experience of a market operating within Inverurie, resulting in a win-win situation for stallholders, consumers and town centres. Although relatively young, the Inverurie market has developed well, with further scope for a wider range of producers and consideration of future ideas, eg: live music/entertainment on market days.

## **Andrew Booth**

- Farmer/producer/stallholder, highly customer focused.
- Direct marketing own farm-finished Angus beef, operating own farm shop - the Store at Foveran.
- Pro-active instigator and attendee of several farmers markets in Aberdeenshire.

Running his farm shop, attending several markets and maintaining interface with the customer has resulted in parallel growth and output of Andrew's direct marketing of his home-produced beef and ready meals. Budgeting, cost control and monitoring is essential. "Buzz" and "variety", not complacency, are required features when looking at future development of markets.

## **Alistair Massie**

- From farmer to processor, many years' experience in the food sector.
- Identified a niche market, in high value-added preserves, resulting in rapid growth of Isabella's Preserves.
- Proactive in relation to new product development, new markets/outlets.

A focused marketing and promotion strategy and knowing your target market is essential for success. Price competitiveness and branding are integral in retail development. How do you identify key consumers and customers? Get out there and meet them, as practised by Alastair and Isabella, who are regular attendees at around 50 food promotion events each year.

## **4 Delegates**

Approximately sixty delegates attended the seminar (ref. Appendix 1), with apologies from several others expressing interest in the development of farmer and produce markets in Aberdeenshire and the North East. Attendees included producers/stallholders, market organisers/managers, business and community support and advisory services.

At the end of the seminar approximately 30 feedback questionnaires were completed, analysis of which details specific comments from delegates (ref. Appendix 2) and demonstrates key signals for those with an interest in future development of the markets:

- 66% of respondents feel there is room for additional markets.
- 80% of respondents are of the opinion that promotion of markets could be improved, with a range of initiatives eg: individual marketing (30%), joint marketing (56%) and website marketing (36%).
- 60% of respondents thought the markets could operate co-operatively, with a total of 73% opting for forming a market association.
- 40% of respondents would prefer a wider range of food products and 23% would consider entertainment as a feature of markets.
- In relation to provision of advice and business support, 76% expressed the need for marketing advice, with business development advice second in priority at 43% and quality assurance advice at 30%.
- Individuality and independence must not be compromised, if markets were to opt for co-operative marketing and/or formation of an association/co-operative.

## **5 SAC Student Survey**

In tandem with the seminar, four Rural Business Management students from the Scottish Agricultural College (SAC) undertook a survey of farmers markets over a three-week period in May 2004. With time constraints for completing the study, the students were able to attend 3 markets – namely Peterhead, Inverurie and Banchory. A detailed report has been drafted detailing the results of their survey work (ref. Appendix 3 - SAC Report Conclusions). Key outcomes are detailed as follows:

- Stallholders, customers and shopkeepers within the market towns were interviewed.
- Analysis of the stallholder's questionnaire illustrated the need for farmers markets to equally increase their overall sales and to promote the fresh local produce.
- Results suggest there is a gap in the marketplace for more markets to operate.
- There is need for better advertising to increase the number of customers attending the markets.
- A large proportion of the customers agree the markets were of very high standard.
- The majority thought markets provide good quality produce, though there is the need for more extensive advertising to be carried out.
- The opinions of the shopkeepers in each town were varied.
- Feedback from interviews suggests that farmers markets are well thought of and are beneficial to the stallholders, customers and shopkeepers.

## **6 Open forum Q&A**

Following the student presentation, an open Q&A session, facilitated by SAC Food Marketing Team, raised many topical issues relating to market management and development. Items discussed included positive and negative aspects:

- Think clearly about product opportunity presented at markets.
- Use of seasons/seasonality to develop a unique selling point.
- Clarify the market's objectives.
- Further business development training, to grow business opportunities.
- Food/tourism – explore opportunities to develop links.
- Market the concept of markets ie: raise awareness with primary producers.
- Build infrastructure to support markets – make use of diversification support schemes.
- Individual markets – co-operative together and strengthen links – learn from each other.
- Lack of awareness of local profile of the market.
- Promotion of the markets – little involvement from stallholders.
- The range of produce and number of stallholders could be increased.
- No current network of producers (as with the Ayrshire network).
- Current low level of involvement (two-way) with local tourist boards.
- Abattoir and processing infrastructure not suited to individual producers for markets.
- Capital investment for processing by individuals not cost effective.
- Issues of non-complementary produce at food markets.

## 7 Conclusions

In conclusion, it is evident there is a high level of producer, consumer, business and community interest in the development and sustainability of farmers and produce markets in Aberdeenshire and the North East.

Acknowledging the growth of markets in Aberdeenshire has been rapid, market co-ordination, local management issues, continuity of supply of produce and levelling out of number of producers are all issues that could affect markets in the longer term.

While there is consensus for a need to further promote the markets, through brochures, websites or other activities, the individuality of each market must not be compromised through a co-operative approach to marketing.

Similarly, if markets were to consider the formation of an “umbrella” association, its primary aim should relate to marketing, rather than local market management and should be producer led.

There are clear signals that more use should and could be made of business development advice, plus marketing support and training; and also, if the markets in Aberdeenshire establish a co-operative or association, for which there is strong support, that advice and guidance be provided through relevant organisations, ie: SAOS and business support services.

Looking beyond the farmers markets, there appears to be a need to strengthen links with other sectors including tourism and food industries, for example: food/farm shop trails, promotion of quality local produce in hotels and tourist accommodation.

Vicky Thomson  
Rural Development Officer  
Aberdeenshire Council

17 June 2004

## Appendix 1

### FARMERS MARKET SEMINAR - BARN & BUSHEL - WEDNESDAY 26 MAY 2004

Robert	Armstrong	Aberdeenshire Council
Ruth	Atkinson	Aberdeenshire Council
Judith	Aylett	Marr Area Partnership
Linda	Bolger	The Gift Company
Dawn	Brodie	Buchan Development Partnership
Sandy	Buchan	Banff Farmers Market
Councillor Alan	Cameron	Aberdeenshire Council
Andrew	Cameron	Scottish Food and Drink
Margaret Jane	Cardno	Fraserburgh Futures Partnership
Jacqui	Christie	Enterprise North East Trust
Martin	Gardener	Stonehaven
Maureen	Brown	Stonehaven
Cathy	Gledhill	Stonehaven
Linda	Clark	Banchory Farmers Market
Karen	Clark	Enterprise North East Trust
Douglas	Cookson	Crannoch Bakery and Coffee Shop
Suzanne	Cookson	Crannoch Bakery and Coffee Shop
Pat	Coutts	Allathan Dairy
George	Davidson	Cairnhill Fruit and Vegetables
Dorothy	Davidson	Cairnhill Fruit and Vegetables
Hilary	Dow	Community Economic Development
Barrie	Farmer	Huntly Community Council
Chris	Fenn	Chris Fenn Associates
Councillor Tom	Fleming	Aberdeenshire Council
Jenny	Foreman	Wark Farm
James	Fraser	Speyside Organics
Eddie	Gillanders	Agricultural Communications Ltd
Gary	Glasgow	Aberdeenshire Council
Susan	Grant	VisitScotland
Steve	Gray	Aberdeenshire Council
Martin	Green	Easterton Farmed Vension
Robert	Gunn	Aberdeenshire Council
Rod	Gunson	Community Economic Development
Morvern	Harper	Farm Business Development Scheme
Nora	Harper	Mains of Collieston
Julie	Hermitage	Business Gateway Perth
Jan	Hobbs	Touched by Scotland
Jane	Hodgson	Veg-in-a-box
Ken	Howie	Cairnton Angus Beef
Reid	Hutchison	Aberdeenshire Council
Sandy	Ingram	East Pitscaff Dried Cured Pork
Diane	Ingram	Farmhouse Oatcakes
James	Knowles	Aberdeenshire Council
Craig	Lafferty	Angus Council
David	Lamb	Scottish Agricultural College

## Appendix 1

Elaine	Lindsay	Something Corny
James	Littlejohn	Farestory.co.uk
Louise	Mackie	Aberdeenshire Council
Siobhan	Macdonald	Cairngorms National Park Authority
Michael	MacLeod	Scottish Agricultural College
Liz	Marchant	The Craigmyle Cheese Company
Aaron	McCauley	Enterprise North East Trust
Claire	McGee	Scottish Agricultural College
Herb	McLeod	Business Gateway Arbroath
John	Miskelly	NFU Scotland
Murray	Mitchell	Firm of Murray Mitchell
Councillor Alisan	Norrie	Aberdeenshire Council/A G Norrie & Sons
George	Patullo	Brae of Coull Beef and Lamb
Anne	Rae	SEERAD
Ron	Reid	ENET/Inverurie Farmers Market
Graeme	Rigg	Aberdeenshire Council
Ceri	Ritchie	Scottish Agricultural College
George	Robertson	Scottish Agricultural College
Pam	Rodway	
Daisy	Roger	The Millers
Barbara	Setterfield	
Alison	Simpson	Banffshire Partnership
Mike	Stephen	Turriff and District Ltd
Vicky	Thomson	Aberdeenshire Council
Wilma	Urquhart	Aberdeenshire Council
Roger	Ward	Towie Farm
Keith	Watson	Woodside Farm Shop
Evelyn	Watt	Enterprise North East Trust
Nigel	Widdowson	Aberdeenshire Council
Michael	Williamson	Milton of Lesmore Aberdeen Angus
Isabella	Williamson	Milton of Lesmore Aberdeen Angus
Fiona	Wilson	Huntly Herbs
Anna	Wilson	Huntly Herbs
Karen	Woodhouse	Veg-in-a-box

### SPEAKERS

Andrew	Booth	The Store
Alexandra	Hall	SAC RBM Student
Councillor Bill	Howatson	Aberdeenshire Council
Christine	Jackson	SAC RBM Student
Lisa	Johnston	SAC RBM Student
Alistair	Massie	Isabella's Preserves
Tom	Mitchell	Fife Farmers Market
Pat	Mitchell	Markets in Towns
Lindsay	Riddoch	SAC RBM Student
Douglas	Watson	SAOS
Howard	Wilkinson	Ayrshire Farmers Market

## FARMERS MARKET SEMINAR - BARN &amp; BUSHEL - WEDNESDAY 26 MAY 2004

## Analysis of Feedback Questionnaire - Based on receipt of 30 Questionnaires

	Number	Percentage	Additional Comments
<b>Q 1 Please state your interest or representation at today's seminar:</b>			
Producer/stallholder	10	33.3	
Potential Producer/stallholder	3	10.0	
Market Management/support	2	6.7	
Business Support	8	26.7	4 responses (13%) involved in business & community
Community Support	8	26.7	
Other	3	10.0	Environmental Health & Academic
<b>Q 2 From Discussion regarding markets in NE Scotland, do you think there are:</b>			
Enough markets	5	16.7	1 response (3%) also interested in on off events
Room for more markets	20	66.7	4 responses (13%) also interested in one off events
No more required	1	3.3	
Demand for one off markets/events	7	23.3	
			3 responses (10%) unsure of demand Other Locations - Turriff, Huntly, Tarland, Alford
<b>Q 3 Do you think the promotion of farmer &amp; produce markets in NE Scotland is:</b>			
Sufficient	2	6.7	
Insufficient	24	80.0	
Requires more/less individual mkt'ing	9	30.0	Need more leaflets & website
More/less joint marketing	17	56.7	Joint leaflet with dates for all markets
More/less website marketing	11	36.7	
			Don't lose individuality of markets Only 4-6% of population attend markets
<b>Q 4 Do you think farmer &amp; produce markets in NE Scotland should:</b>			
Operate independently	6	20.0	
Operate co-operatively	18	60.0	7 responses (23%) opt also to form association/co-op
Form a market association/co-op.	15	50.0	Form co-operative without loss of individuality
Other	1	3.3	SAOS should be involved in assoc/co-op development Co-operation on marketing issues - not organisation Market under "umbrella" - retain independence
<b>Q 5 Do you think the range of products/service at markets in NE Scotland is:</b>			
Sufficient	4	13.3	
Insufficient	16	53.3	
Requires more/less food products eg:	12	40.0	Smoked produce
More/less non-food products eg:	3	10.0	1 response less non-food, 2 responses more non-food
Would benefit from entertainment	7	23.3	
			Gaps vary from market to market More good quality crafts - wide range of products Expand range of stallholders - as Continental markets
<b>Q 6 What type of advice would be useful in promoting direct marketing:</b>			
Funding	17	56.7	
Marketing	23	76.7	Markets could advertise together
Quality Assurance/legislation	9	30.0	
Business development	13	43.3	
Other	0	0.0	Refer to surveys eg: SAC student survey

**SAC Student Report Extract****8.0 Recommendations & Benefits of a Farmers Market**

8.1 There are many benefits for having a farmers market within a town some these include:-

- They add to the local food economy
- Financial help for farmers
- Availability of local foods
- Improve community spirit
- Helps regenerate town centres
- Education of farming
- Knowledge of where food has originated from
- Good tourist attraction to towns

8.2 These are just some of the benefits of a farmers market; yes it may not be as convenient as going to a supermarket but you know what exactly the product is and where it is from, and for many it is an enjoyment factor. The public are starting to support the local industries and this is just one area where it shows dramatically.

**8.3 Benefits for the Producers**

There are many benefits for the producers which include: they can increase the financial returns through direct selling, as they cut out the middle man as it controls price and cash flow. It also provides the producer with direct customer feedback on products. It's easier for small producers to supply a smaller market, compared with large supermarkets where there is a large market to be supplied.

**8.4 Recommendations**

There is the demand for Aberdeenshire farmers market and they have proved to be a success within all three markets, with the most successful proving to be Banchory, with the highest amount of costumers, but never the less Peterhead and Inverurie farmers market are both successful with Inverurie having the most stalls and a wider choice of produce. Many of the consumers who we surveyed come to the markets regularly.

8.5 The markets at present are fairly small with limited choice of stalls, the food section is all catered for, at all three stall there are meat, vegetables, fish, bread and cake stalls, one recommendation which could be considered is not to have the market just purely food, locally made crafts could be introduced, locally artists could sell there work, farm shops could sell there chutneys etc. this could bring in more customers to the market.

8.6 The markets could create more of an atmosphere within the town centre hence could provoke more customers and keep consumers longer within the market; it will also prove to be a successful tourist attraction. Reasons for doing this would be to have locally played bands hiring from local schools to local music clubs to local choirs. Many of these bands would be pleased of the opportunity to perform for a couple of hours once a month in the town centre and this is also a good opportunity for them to collect donations for their club.

8.7 The farmers markets could also provide a one off, yearly occasions and have the whole market towns involved. This could range from a summer fair with outdoor activities involving a wide range of local products this could also be amended for different seasons, such as holding a Christmas fair with a theme and all stall holders taking part in dressing to the occasion. A successful theme for the market could be Dickensian, with many different activities available on that chosen day. This could also be beneficial for the whole town it will attract more customers, and if shops partake in the theme, they will also benefit as well as the stallholders.

8.8 The Aberdeenshire farmers markets are successful and are in demand, they have had good response from the consumers and the stallholders are finding them to be very beneficial to there farm income. With this being such a good success the findings from the questionnaire suggest more markets within the area could be opened, such as Turriff and Stonehaven. This will benefit producers within the area and hopefully bring the atmosphere back into the town centre.

## 9.0 **Conclusion**

9.1 This report was completed on behalf of Aberdeenshire council. Research was completed at three Aberdeenshire farmers markets Peterhead, Inverurie and Banchory. Three different areas concerning the farmers market were looked at these were stallholders, consumers and the effect on shops within the town centre.

9.2 The stallholders have found the market very useful to their businesses, bringing a good income in. We found Inverurie was the biggest market, then Peterhead and the smallest was Banchory.

9.3 From our findings the majority of customers were very happy with the markets in all three towns. They were impressed with the quality and choice, most of the consumers come back monthly to the market to buy produce. Overall the consumer feedback was very encouraging.

9.4 The retail outlets were not as helpful when questioned about the farmers market. Peterhead and Inverurie found that the farmers markets helpful to there trade with the exception of Inverurie bakery, who feel the market decreases there trade on market days. Banchory how ever had mixed feelings, with some business profiting from the market, such as the flower shop, but the bakery and the fish shop had problems with the market as it decreases there trade dramatically.

9.5 From the research that has been conducted we feel that there could be changes made and advertising of farmers markets could be better co-ordinated. There is a large demand for these markets and other towns within Aberdeenshire could profit from holding a market.

Christine Jackson  
Lisa Johnston  
Alexandra Hall  
Lindsay Riddoch  
SAC Rural Business Management Students