

Farmers Market Bids Farewell Until 2015



Customers shop for fruits and vegetables at the farmer's market in downtown Fairfield, Thursday. Yesterday was the last farmer's market of the season. (Aaron Rosenblatt/Daily Republic)

By [Ryan McCarthy](#)
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FAIRFIELD — The Fairfield Main Street Association went to the dogs Thursday for the final farmers market of the year – behind the vendor area, outside the market perimeter, as required by state law.

That's the site for the new pet costume and parade, an addition that's an example of what the market plans next year, said Margaret Manzo, association executive director.

“We're trying to do more activities that attract more families,” she said of the farmers market.

About 1,500 people, Manzo said, now attend the event that begins the first week in May at Jefferson and Texas streets next to historic county courthouse. More marketing and promotion helped the event continue to grow this year, she said.

Benicia resident Giselle Seiler is among the farmers market's fans.

“I love their fresh, wonderful tomatoes,” Seiler said. “They're red and very sweet.”

Alan Bernikoff, an accountant for Riverbank-based Cobblestone Bakery who helps with the bakery's booth in Fairfield, is a big believer in the event.

"This is the most incredible farmers market of all," he said. "I just have a ball."

The last market of year is a bittersweet moment for Manzo, who said she loves helping to make fresh, healthy produce available to people. But, she added, "it is a lot of work" and the break is welcome.

Most of the effort goes into the market's start in May and includes the permits and vendors.

"Once you have opening day," Manzo said, "it pretty much unfolds."

"It's a well-oiled machine by Week One," she said.

Fairfield resident Venita Pernell, 56, likes the market for its prices – "much cheaper than grocery stores," she said of produce that includes grapes for \$1.50 a pound.

Vinnie Vedella of Famous Vinnie's Hot Dogs called the Thursday end-of-season event "the last hurrah" and gave a to-the-point review of five months of markets.

"It was good," he said.

Max Williams, helping to operate the Kettle Corn booth of the Fairfield Main Street Association, found a trend in corn sales. They drop when school starts.

"A lot of adults buy it for the kids," Williams said.

Jurgen Dalluge sells salami as well as honey at the farmers market, whose success he links with satisfying a fundamental need. People communicate – face to face – at the event, he said. Texts and cellphones leave people hungry for interaction without technology, he said.

"They talk," Dalluge said. "They laugh together."

Dalluge, who writes novels and operates Ornatus Publishing in Napa, likes the weekly event.

"I just love farmers markets," he said.

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