

Standing Committee on Finance (FINA)

Pre-budget consultations 2012

Farmers' Markets Canada

Responses

1. Economic Recovery and Growth

Given the current climate of federal and global fiscal restraint, what specific federal measures do you feel are needed for a sustained economic recovery and enhanced economic growth in Canada?

In April 2006 thanks to \$35,000 in funding from Agricultural Adaptation Council, 40 farmers' market leaders from across Canada (every province was represented) met at Brampton, ON. They discussed the status of farmers' markets in their own province; the activities of a provincial association if one existed and the obvious and growing need for a National Farmers' Markets Association. Farmers' Markets Canada (FMC) was born and a founding Board of Directors & Chair were put in place. The FMC Board met at Moncton, NB in October 2006, thanks to \$15,000 in funding from the Canadian Farm Business Management Council and the Board with the help of a NB consultant crafted a 5 year Strategic Plan and developed FMC's Bylaws & Constitution. The Strategic Plan was built in the hopes that Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada would be able to assist us with critical steps moving forward. In 2008, Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada provided upwards of \$400,000 and we achieved the following: 1. Received the approval of our Strategic Plan & Bylaws & Constitution from all provinces 2. Hired consultants to do market research and an economic impact study 3. Incorporated our organization 4. Developed and launched our website 5. Created our bilingual logo 6. Engaged a temporary Executive Director to work with farmers' market leaders in every corner of Ontario...identifying key issues and solving problems Our economic impact study revealed that there are 550 farmers' markets across Canada with total annual sales of over \$1 billion and with a national economic impact of \$3.09 billion. At that point FMC contacted Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz for support to further our good works over the past 2 ½ years and we were advised to approach the CAAP Program for national funding. We submitted a comprehensive five year (2009-2014) program to CAAP and were eventually turned down. Several appeals directly to Minister Ritz have gotten us nowhere...we've been shut out! We are a national organization with a hardworking and committed volunteer Board of Directors but we don't have any money to further our work...to build on the ACAAF dollars we received in 2008. Our organization functions with Board teleconferences once or twice a year to keep each other up-to-date, however, no national program is possible. Farmers' Markets Canada is on the verge of collapse...our economic study; our incorporation; our logo; our website and our desire will soon vanish. Communities need us to assist with economic development; farmers need us to help market their products, shoppers need us to satisfy their appetite for fresh local food brought to them by real farmers...and we cannot deliver on any of their needs. We have received support from the NDP Agriculture Critic and although he has tried, Minister Ritz has ignored him and us. We expect soon to notify CRA of our corporate dissolution and we expect to cancel our website and we will notify the thousands of farmers' market leaders and vendors across Canada accordingly. Our farmers, the real heroes at our markets will be most disappointed. Respectfully & regretfully Robert Chorney Past Chair & current Chief Executive Officer (unpaid/volunteer)

2. Job Creation

As Canadian companies face pressures resulting from such factors as uncertainty about the U.S. economic recovery, a sovereign debt crisis in Europe, and competition from a number of developed and developing countries, what specific federal actions do you believe should be taken to promote job creation in Canada, including that which occurs as a result of enhanced internal and international trade?

3. Demographic Change

What specific federal measures do you think should be implemented to help the country address the consequences of, and challenges associated with, the aging of the Canadian population and of skills shortages?

4. Productivity

With labour market challenges arising in part as a result of the aging of Canada's population and an ongoing focus on the actions needed for competitiveness, what specific federal initiatives are needed in order to increase productivity in Canada?

5. Other Challenges

With some Canadian individuals, businesses and communities facing particular challenges at this time, in your view, who is facing the most challenges, what are the challenges that are being faced and what specific federal actions are needed to address these challenges?