



# Getting to Greener

How Markets Can Get to Plastic Free

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# Clean Fairfax

- ▶ The mission of Clean Fairfax is to encourage environmental stewardship and sustainability in Fairfax County and across Virginia.
- ▶ We work to reduce littering and encourage recycling, reusing, and reducing consumption through education, programming and community involvement.
- ▶ Celebrating 35 years of pursuing a greener future!





# Plastic Bags at a Market



# Leave a Bag, Take a Bag

**Take-A-Bag**

**Leave-A-Bag**

Help Reston Farmers Market  
Tote-ally Sustainable

### How it Works

- Need a bag?
- Borrow a bag
- Reuse or return bag

Have extra bags at home?  
Bring them to the market  
Add them to the community collection



fairfax.org  
market.com

# 2019 Clean Fairfax Farmers Market Study

- ▶ This was a multi-part study working with market managers, vendors, and customers
- ▶ The goal is to reduce the prevalence of single use plastic items- the most obvious being plastic bags
- ▶ Through this program we supplied 1 market with 1600 produce bags and another with 400.
- ▶ The bags were given directly to market customers and directly to market vendors.
- ▶ In June we spent 1 hour counting every bag that was pulled from a dispenser and counted 244 plastic bags

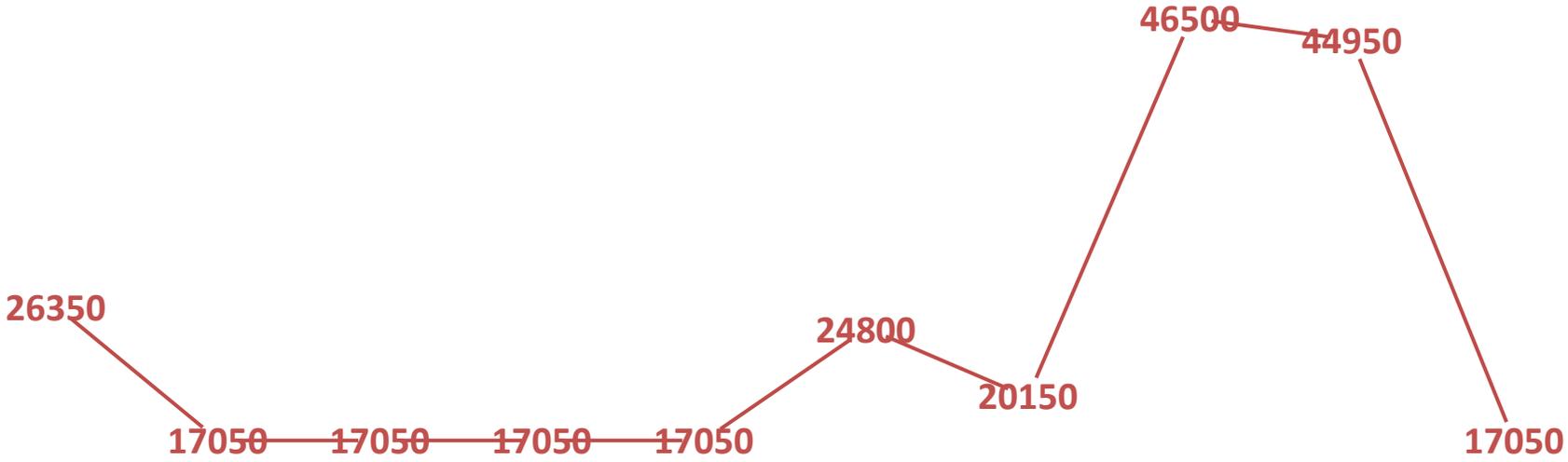


# Farmers Market Study continued

- ▶ After 6 months we recreated our study to determine the impact we were having at the markets.
- ▶ Spent 1 hour counting every bag we saw get pulled from a dispenser in the market, totaling 256 single use plastic bags, and 14 reusable produce bags
- ▶ Spent 1 hour watching 1 vendor with 76 single use plastic bags being used and only 6 reusable produce bags. That would be 10,000 single use plastic bags used by 1 vendor over the course of the farmers market season.
- ▶ If every vendor at Fairfax county farmers market used 50 plastic bags every week it would result in 248,000 single use plastic bags, at 100 per vendor that number jumps to 496,000



PROJECTED SINGLE USE PLASTIC BAGS AT FAIRFAX COUNTY FARMERS MARKETS  
IF EACH VENDOR USES 50 BAGS EVERY WEEK



17 — 11 — 11 — 11 — 11 — 16 — 13 — 30 — 29 — 11  
Mt. Vernon Oak Marr Wakefield Annandale Herndon Mclean Kingstowne Reston Burke Lorton

— # of Vendors — projected bag use

248,000 single use plastic bags is a low estimate





Plastic Bags on Every Post

# Plastic Free Farmers Markets are a Reality



Shorewood farms in Wisconsin



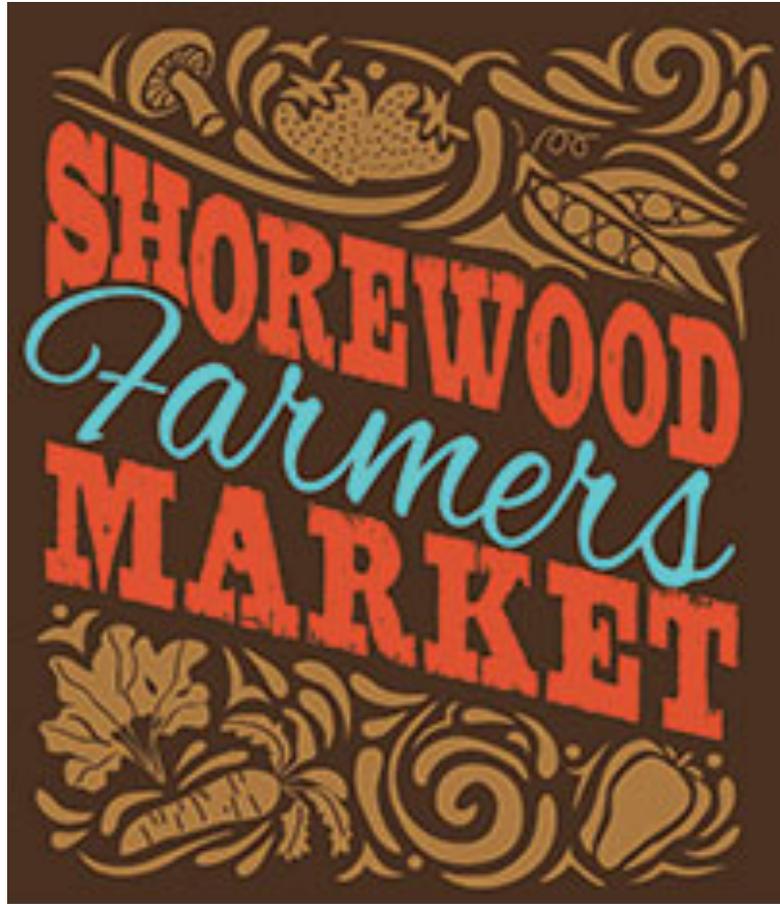
Mill City Farmers Market in Minnesota



Rehoboth Beach Farmers Market



38 markets in San Diego banned polystyrene



## Shorewood Farms- Wisconsin

- ▶ All products sold using paper or biodegradable alternatives
- ▶ No single use plastic bags, plastic water bottles, cutlery, or polystyrene can be used for selling or serving at the market



# Rehoboth Beach Farmers Market

- ▶ Rehoboth Beach Farmers Market in Delaware is plastic bag free.
- ▶ The market provided vendors with paper bags for the first year, but vendors will be responsible in coming years.
- ▶ The bags were purchased with the help from area restaurants.
- ▶ This action by the market has encouraged vendors to take steps on their own by removing polystyrene food containers and replacing plastic spoons to provide samples with biodegradable paper spoons and cups.

# Mill City farmers market- Minnesota

- ▶ In 2009, it became the first zero waste market in Minnesota
- ▶ All waste at the market can be recycled or composted.
- ▶ All compost is brought to an industrial composting facility and turned into high quality soil.
- ▶ This strategy has given the market a 98% landfill diversion rate. Utilizing Zero Waste Stations instead of trash cans where customers can compost plates, cups, and food scraps.



# Composting in Virginia

- ▶ Where to Compost in Virginia

- ▶ A list of composting companies throughout Virginia

- ▶ Black Bear Composting

- ▶ Helps local businesses and organizations in central Virginia reduce their waste stream by recycling their organic materials- food scraps, yard trimmings, and clean waste wood- into products for healthy soil



# Going Green is Good for Business



Over 70% of consumers are actively trying to purchase more environmentally conscious products



80% of consumers expect companies to use products that are designed to be reused or recycled. People don't want to go to farmers markets and be confronted with single use plastics, we grab bags like a zombie because it's something we've always done



Plastic bags were not the norm until 1982- we survived before them and we will continue to thrive after them.

# Strategies

- ▶ Buy paper or biodegradable bags as a group to get bulk pricing.
- ▶ Keep all bags behind your table.
- ▶ Find local businesses and get them to participate in your sustainability efforts. Insurance companies, banks, restaurants - these are businesses that want to build good graces in their communities and being able to say they helped their local farmers market go plastic free is an excellent marketing tool for them.
- ▶ Do your best to figure out exactly how many single use plastic bags were used at your booth last year- this will help your bottom line by not ordering extra bags.



# Strategies

- ▶ Sell produce in a reusable produce bag for an additional \$1, provide a \$0.10 discount when someone brings their own container- after ten trips to your market they have paid off the bag and are now saving money every time they shop with you.
- ▶ Have pre-weighed baskets for your customers to use as they shop. Weigh the produce in the basket and transfer the produce to the customer's bag.
- ▶ Don't be afraid to tell your customers why there aren't limitless plastic bags for them use.
- ▶ Include the community in your efforts!





# Circular Economy

# Machine washable produce bags



# Compostable Products



# Compostable Products



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