

# Farmers markets — let's make them happen!

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🌀 Latest in a series of posts on the environment 🌀

*Luke Rider is a senior at Liberty High School. Luke presented this essay at the “Speak out!” Sustainability Forum, part of Touchstone Theatre’s **Festival UnBound 2020**, September 19. You can view Luke reading his work [here](#) at min. 46:20.*

## Farmers Market Issue

### Luke Rider

Bethlehem and all of the Lehigh Valley have been faced with an issue that many simply don't see. This city is in desperate need of more locally built, non-chain, and affordable farmers markets. While many people choose to turn their heads at the idea of farmers markets being an important issue in the Lehigh Valley, it must be tackled as soon as possible. The overall benefits of more farmers markets around the city of Bethlehem and the Lehigh Valley as a whole can economically and physically serve all surrounding communities in a very constructive way.



First of all, it would support local farmers without a doubt. Farmers markets give us the opportunity to preserve the local farmlands, stopping the erosion of green space and preserving greater CO2 sequestration and cultural heritage. These have been replaced more and more rapidly by large warehouses and McMansions.

The produce local farmers would provide would greatly help those in search of fresh, healthier produce, and the personal pride a farmers market would give to farmers and consumers would be rewarding us all.

We mustn't discount the power of simply feeling good about our food, especially the lower and middle class. They would benefit from the farmers market, helping to get us off sugary, fatty, processed foods. Sure to be the cause of heart disease, diabetes, and overall ill health. Providing local, cheap, and reliable sources of nutritious foods tackles the issue of obesity head on and helps us all.

While the public takeaway and reaction to the idea would be certainly positive, not everyone would be on board with farmers markets popping up around the Lehigh Valley. Chain store owners would fear losing business to the often more affordable farmers markets. Another group of people who would possibly oppose the idea is tax payers who might not believe in the importance of new farmers markets and supporting their creation through civic funds.

But both problems have quite obvious solutions. Not only will the construction of the new markets not affect taxpayers greatly, but they could be sources of income in the long run.

The construction of the farmers market themselves will bring the community together, which is so much needed. Especially if they include Latino-based foods as well as Anglo.

The markets will advertise themselves through social media and word by mouth. It will stir up excitement about these new markets throughout the Lehigh Valley.

Bringing in the Bethlehem Farmers Market group to aid in the sustainability of these markets will greatly aid to keep the problem solved for many years, and not just temporarily solved.

A new farmers market or a bevy of them will help our city without a doubt. Let's make it happen!