



**RUTGERS**

New Jersey Agricultural  
Experiment Station

# **Growing Opportunity Through Urban Farmers Markets**

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# Overview

- Why urban farmers markets?
  - New Brunswick as a case study
- **Preferences of urban customers**
  - **Fruits and vegetables**
  - **Cultural relevance**
- Want to try an urban market?
  - Find the right fit for your farm

# Why Urban Farmers Markets?

- Barriers to food access
  - Cost, Transportation, Knowledge
- Population
  - New Brunswick: 56,000 year round residents
  - Cultural and racial/ethnic diversity
- Diverse food preferences
  - A challenge, but also an **opportunity**



# New Brunswick Community Farmers Market

Increasing Availability and Affordability  
of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

- Three Convenient Locations
- Federal Food Assistance Benefits
- Market Bucks Incentive Program
- Nutrition Education Activities
- Children's Programming

**Over 10,000  
Customers  
Per Year**



# Opportunity for Local Farmers:

*What do people want to buy at the market?*

Demonstrated drivers of food choice

- Taste
- Cost
- Familiarity

**How do we know which foods are most important to customers?**

***We ask them!***



# Market Ambassadors: Project Design

## *Main Objectives*

1. Identify preferences for specific types of vegetables, fruits, and herbs among potential market customers in the diverse urban community of New Brunswick, NJ.
2. Collaborate with local farmers to sell the desired produce types at the New Brunswick Community Farmers Market
3. Increase customer participation and sales at the NBCFM through extensive promotion and outreach.

# Market Ambassadors: Project Design

## Phase I

Identify produce desired by the community



Analyze survey and interview data



Spring – Fall 2019

## Phase II

Outreach to farmers about desired produce varieties



Offer desired produce varieties for sale at the market

Fall/Winter 2019-2020

Beginning Summer 2020

## Phase III

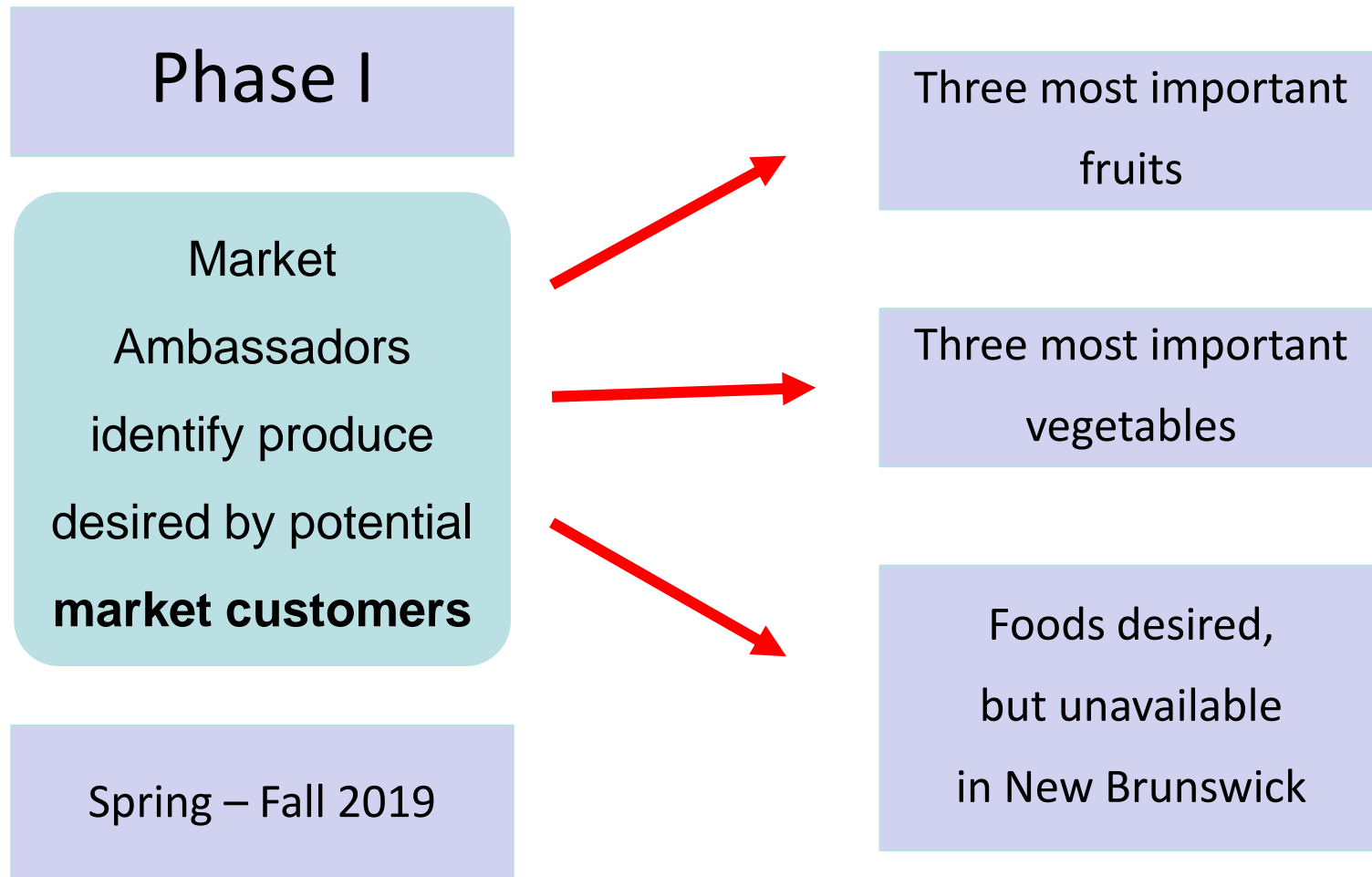
Promote availability of desired produce varieties to the community



Increased sales of locally grown produce for existing and new local farm vendors

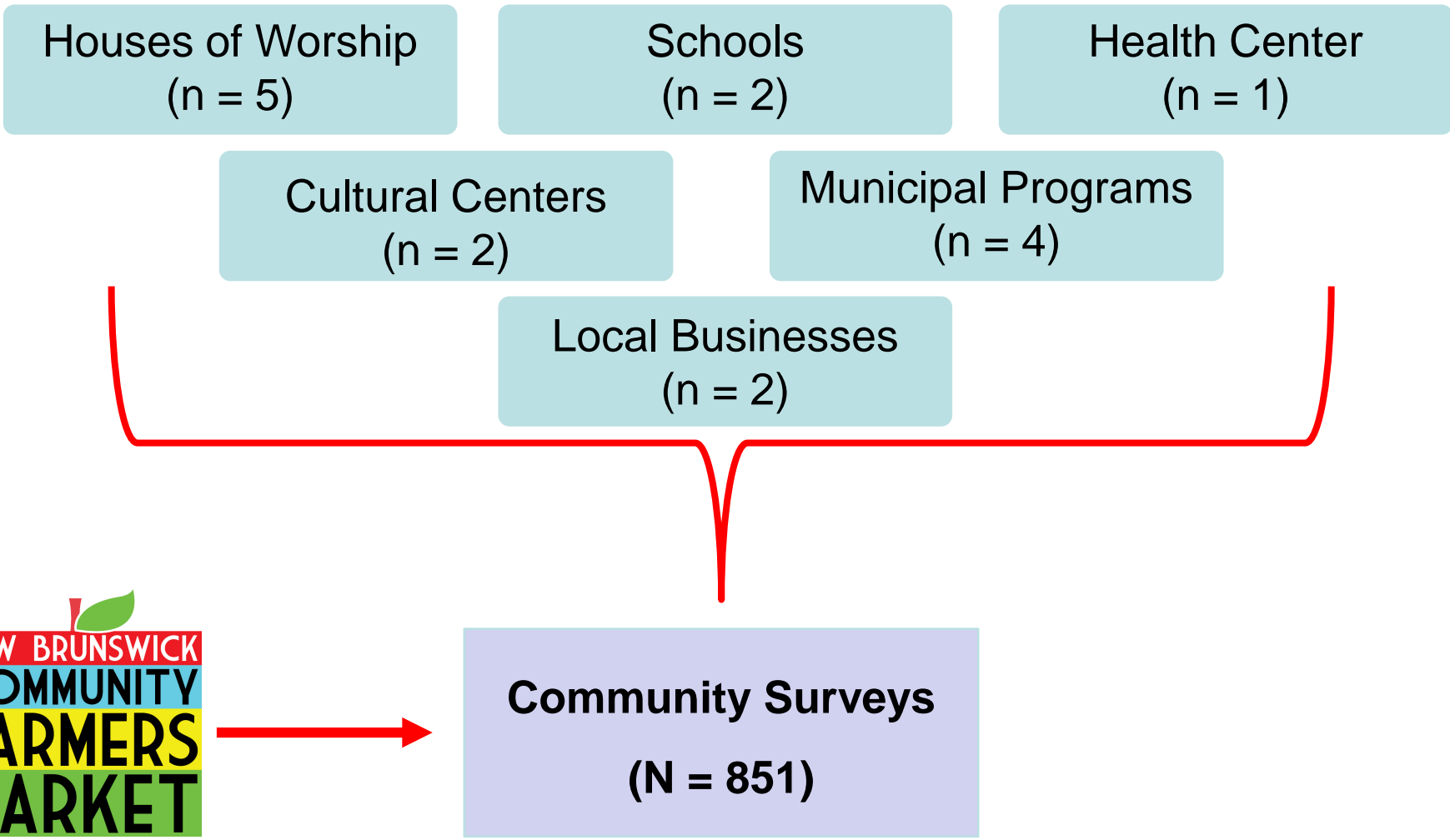
Early Summer 2020 – Fall 2021

# Market Ambassador Project Design: Phase I





# Market Ambassador Project Design: Phase I



# What We Learned

Current and Potential Customer Food Preferences:  
“Most Important” Produce

## FRUITS

1. Apples
2. Peaches
3. Strawberries
4. Bananas
5. Grapes
6. Watermelon
7. Mangoes
8. Oranges
9. Blueberries
10. Cherries



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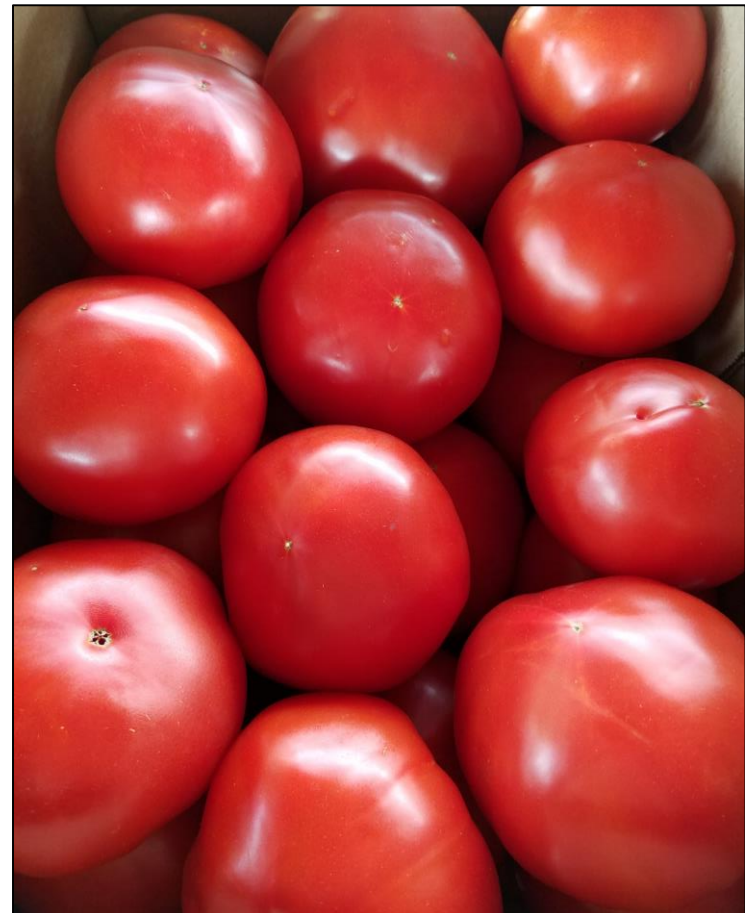


## What We Learned

Current and Potential Customer Food Preferences:  
“Most Important” Produce

### VEGETABLES

1. Tomatoes
2. Corn
3. Broccoli
4. Peppers (All)
5. Carrots
6. Cucumbers
7. Lettuce
8. Onions
9. Potatoes
10. Spinach

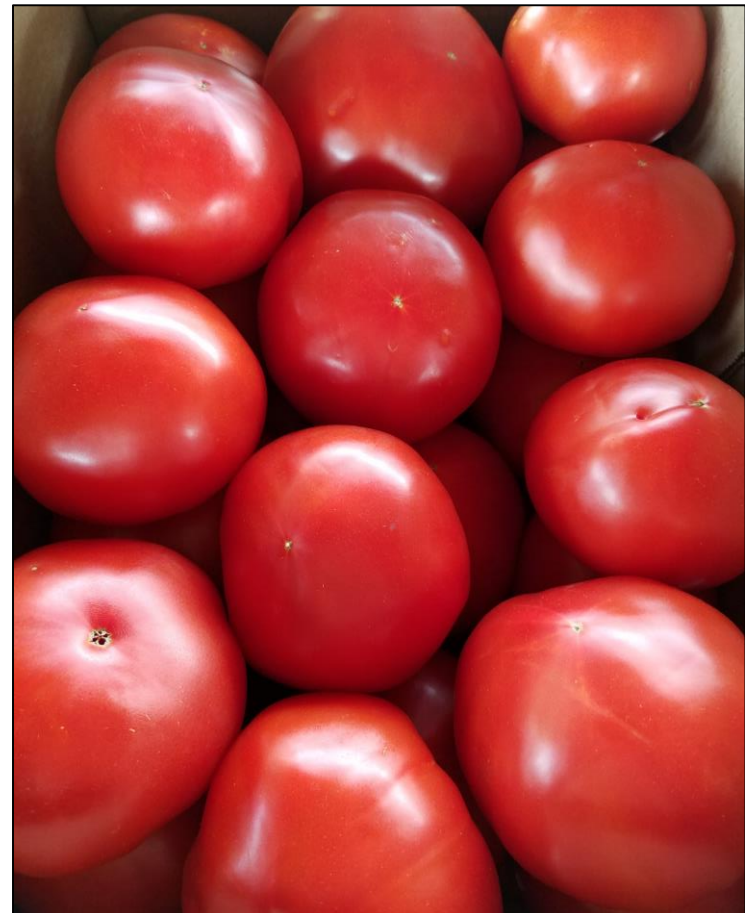


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# What We Learned

Current and Potential Customer Food Preferences:  
Culturally Relevant, Specialty Produce



**Greens**  
Dandelion  
Tatsoi  
Bok Choi  
Quintoniles



# What We Learned

Current and Potential

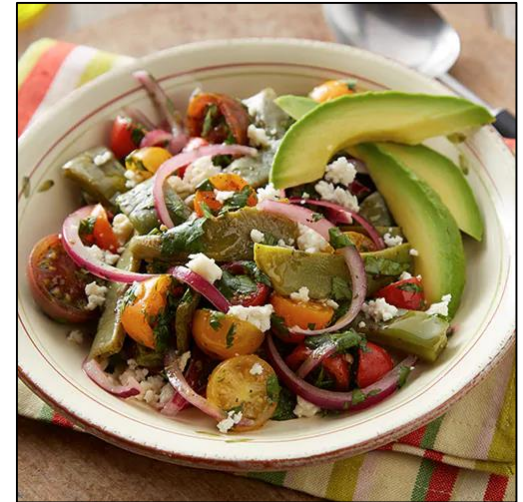
Customer Food Preferences:

Culturally Relevant, Specialty Produce

## Prickly Pear Cactus

*Nopales*

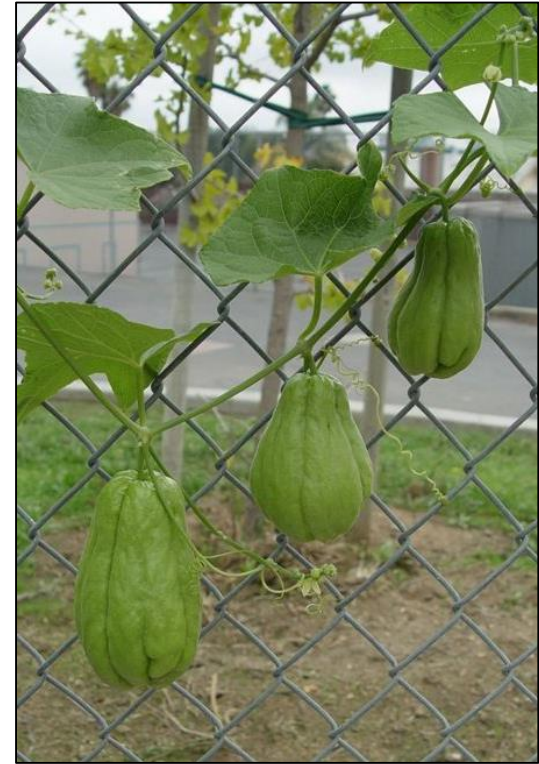
Cactus Pad and Fruit



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**Chayote**  
Summer Squash



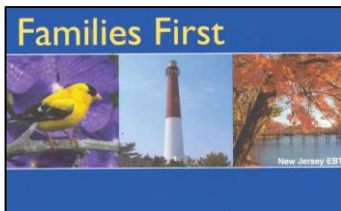


## Next Steps

Collaborations with local growers to bring foods to market

- Current New Brunswick Community Farmers Market growers/vendors
- New specialty crop growers

Promotion,  
promotion, promotion!  
*“You spoke, we listened!”*



# Joining an urban market?

Remember...

- Urban market customers have diverse food preferences
  - Traditional market crops (*apples, tomatoes, corn, peaches, etc.*)
  - Niche crops are of interest (*nopales, chayote, tatsoi, etc.*)
  - Know your audience as best you can!
- Barriers to fresh produce access often exist
  - Work with the market to overcome food access limitations as best you can
  - Communicate with the Market Manager about your needs, and theirs, to find your best opportunities



# Thank you!

## Market Ambassadors Team Leadership

- William K. Hallman, PhD
- Cara L. Cuite, PhD
- Jennifer Shukaitis, MPH

## Market Ambassadors

- Lenice Williams
- Isabel Rodriguez
- Maima Kemokai

**New Brunswick Community Farmers Market  
Executive Committee  
and Program Staff**

**Lauren Errickson**

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