# impact

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# A Tuesday market improves community while increasing sales for vendors

## AT A GLANCE

**University of Idaho Extension provides a mid-week farmers market that incubates small business and supports economic and community development in Latah County.**

## The Situation

In 2018, community stakeholders requested University of Idaho Extension, Latah County to host the Tuesday Market. Subsequently, the market has been held annually at the Latah County Fairgrounds from June to mid-October from 2018 to 2026 (there was no market in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic). The market is important to stakeholders as a community resource, an important economic asset, a food access point as well as a small business incubator, and a hands-on learning opportunity for small farmers and other vendors.

## Our Response

With support from stakeholders, UI Extension, Latah County was awarded a $250,000 Farmers Market Promotion Program grant from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) in 2022. With the USDA-AMS funding, University of Idaho Extension was able to purchase new signs and advertise in various local and regional publications, as well as online.



Tuesday Market partnered with the Appaloosa Museum to co-host on June 23, 2026, with a significant increase in customers.

## Program Outcomes

By attracting new customers, the market expanded beginning in 2023 in terms of customers, dollars spent and number of vendors compared with previous years. Annual income for vendors overall increased from $2,741 in 2018 to $45,191 in 2026 (1549%).

There were many more staff and volunteer hours between 2023 to 2026 compared with previous years. Staff hours were spent coordinating more vendors and in expanding promotion efforts for the market. Examples of increased efforts are market coordination, cooking demonstration and free recipe sampling for customers made from market produce that took place from 2023 to 2025.

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Beginning in 2023, UI Extension Educator Iris Mayes created a "Neighborhood Produce Sale" to help bring more produce to the market. Gardeners could bring their extra produce to sell. Each gardener was paid for whatever was sold and some extra produce was donated to Backyard Harvest and local food banks. Produce purchases were tracked separately from other market sales to help measure consumption of fruits and vegetables. Produce sales from 2023 through 2026 totaled over $45,000 with an average of $11,300 per year. Over 200 pounds of fresh produce was donated to local food pantries and food banks in 2023 including some to the Vandal Pantry on U of I campus. In 2026 UI Extension, Latah County received a $3,000 grant to purchase produce at the end of the market to donate to area food pantries with an estimated 75-100 families being positively impacted.

The market has also regularly hosted a market activity for kids with the help of AmeriCorps service members, interns and master gardener volunteers. Since 2023 youth were offered a $2 "kids cash" at the activity table that they could redeem for fresh produce.

Table 1. Sales data noted for the Tuesday Market.

| Year | Number of markets | Dollars spent at the market | Staff, intern and volunteer hours |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2018 | 5 | $2,741 | 140 |
| 2019 | 17 | $7,509 | 273 |
| 2021 | 16 | $14,398 | 194 |
| 2022 | 16 | $16,936 | 192 |
| 2023 | 18 | $47,258 | 1,300 |
| 2024 | 18 | $30,457 | 1,200 |
| 2025 | 19 | $48,851 | 1,550 |
| 2026 | 20* | $45,191 | 1,520 |

* December 2026 Tuesday Market sales not included in table.

Two beginning farmer grants from USDA helped fund educational opportunities associated with the market from 2018 to 2021 such as market management education and booth layout instruction and ideas for vendors. Intern funding from UI Extension provided a student manager in 2019, 2022 and 2026.

Tuesday Market has served as a business incubator and learning opportunity for new vendors and interns. It has provided a social space for customers and an outlet for fresh produce, locally produced meat and wool products, as well as other handmade goods.

Vendors have represented a cross section of the community including U.S. Military veterans as well as youth and others working to establish produce, food and craft businesses.

The picnic area has served as a social networking opportunity with regular attendance by various groups including Latah County Commissioners; Latah County Fair Board; Idaho Master Gardeners; Palouse Patchers (a quilting group); Washington State University and University of Idaho faculty and students in social groups; and various other neighborhood citizens.

Social networking at the market serves to improve and increase social ties, strengthening social capital and thereby increasing community resiliency. A survey was distributed in 2021, 2022 and 2023. Customers listed many benefits including enjoyment of music, positive social interaction, consistent fun for kids, meeting farmers, meeting other vendors, as well as access to fresh produce.

Various non-profit groups have hosted informational tables or sold items to raise funds such as the Boy Scouts of America selling popcorn.

Dollars spent at the market have helped improve the local economy by being spent with these small local businesses. Several vendors have grown their businesses to sell at the larger Saturday Moscow Farmers Market. A Veteran vendor family subsequently helped run two other farmers markets in the county.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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