

CHARACTERISTICS AND COMPOSITION
OF A FARMERS' MARKET

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ABSTRACT

The Macomb (Illinois) Farmers' Market is one of many such markets in the United States at which the producers sell directly to the consumers. The primary objective of the study is to learn the composition, function, and characteristic features of the market in its local setting and to analyze it in its spatial dimensions. The basic structural elements of the farmers' market have been emphasized. There is an attempt to categorize the Macomb Farmers' Market in relation to other farmers' markets in the United States. Information on the historical, operational, and management aspects of the Macomb Farmers' Market have been collected through personal interviews with members of the sponsoring organization. Three questionnaires were used for the purpose of studying the farmers' market during twelve weeks of fieldwork: one for the vendors, one for the buyers, and another for the shopkeepers around the Macomb square. The characteristic features, and functional and management aspects of some of the contemporary farmers' markets in the United States were available from pamphlets or newsletters published occasionally by the sponsoring agencies. The Macomb Farmers' Market has continued to attract new vendors as well as consumers substantially from the same area. Except for the farmers and the dealers, the great majority of the vendors were from McDonough county where the market is centrally located. The retailing functions of the Macomb Farmers' Market

categorize it as a Farmers' Retail Market, although farmers were not the only occupational group who sold in the market. There was also much resemblance to the characteristics of a Farm Women's Market, although the Macomb Farmers' Market is not restricted only to women sellers. Because of its location, the Macomb Farmers' Market is also an example of a Courthouse Square Market. A better categorization for the Macomb Farmers' Market might be simply a Producers Retail Market, though some purchased items were sold.