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Despite all the recent accolades heaped on the Cambridge Farmers' Market, recommendations have been made to make the market experience even better.

## New buzz around market

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Published on Jun 05, 2008

There's definitely something fresh at the Cambridge Farmers' Market this summer.

As the vendors wipe away the last of the dust following construction of the new civic administration building next door, there is a whole new buzz around the market. The smiles are a little bigger and the future seems even brighter.

This comes on the heels of several recently published reports. Best Health magazine, a Reader's Digest publication, has just named the Cambridge Farmers' Market one of the top 10 markets in Canada. It was the only Ontario market to make the top 10.

The Toronto Star also recently recognized the Cambridge Farmers' Market in a travel section article which touted the benefits of buying local produce, good customer service and mentions the variety of indoor and outdoor booths offering meat, poultry, maple syrup, cheese and crafts.

"It's remarkable to have the market recognized in this way," said Coun. Ben Tucci at Monday's council meeting. "It speaks volumes about the farmers' market."

Meanwhile, Cambridge council this week received a marketing report designed to make the market even better.

The report, penned by consultants Allan Ramsay & Associates, advises the market to continue building on tradition and its many successes and makes 46 recommendations concerning the market's business plan, marketing, finances, as well as setting benchmarks and measuring performance.

Among the recommendations are :

- a call to develop a brand for the market to help it better compete and build market share;
- overhaul the interior of the market building to optimize the shopping experience and operational functionality of the heritage building;
- consider opening a food service that's open all week long to raise market visibility and maximize use of the building;
- develop a comprehensive marketing/communications strategy designed to keep existing shoppers and attract new shoppers and vendors to the market;
- develop clear and measurable benchmarks for success and manage future market growth;

The market's management committee is now about to prioritize those recommendations and will start their implementation.

Among the first of the recommendations to be addressed is the setting of new hours for the market. Starting June 18, the market will launch into its summer season by going to two days a week - Wednesdays and Saturdays.

While Wednesday markets are nothing new, this year the hours have changed in an effort to be more convenient and attract more customers. The Wednesday market will run 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. from June 18 through Sept. 17.

**CAMBRIDGE**TIMES  
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