

Popularity leads organizers to add second day



Market now open
Friday and Sunday

Farmers Market
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WATSONVILLE — The Watsonville Farmers Market is now open Sundays as well as Fridays, an expansion that was celebrated Sunday with mariachi music and a small ceremony.

Market manager Nancy Gammons of Aromas, who started the market in 2000, said it was slow going at first, but that it was gratifying to see it grow so much that they could add another day.

"Twelve years and it has finally taken off," she said. "This is such a great environment. I love Watsonville and I think this community needs a Sunday market. Some people work six days a week."

Many families milled around the market on the warm Sunday afternoon, buying produce and prepared food and then sitting down in the

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The Watsonville Farmers Market is now officially open on Sundays as well as Fridays.

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shade of City Plaza.

Gammons said the market broke tradition when it allowed several food stands to join in, but that it works in Watsonville.

"I was thinking along the lines of a *mercado*," she said. "We needed the variation. People love the atmosphere and love being able to sit and eat outside."

Vendors on Sunday were selling flowers, fruits and vegetables, nuts and a wide variety of prepared Mexican food, including some lesser-known foods from different parts of Mexico, such as pambasos, huarache, chicharrones and tlacoyos.

Andrea Ratto and Joe Ward of Corralitos came to pick up some fruits and vegetables.



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Mariachi Jalicience plays for the Sunday farmers market crowd in Watsonville.

"The produce has been excellent," Ratto said. "It's great — it's all local people and so nice to be outside. It's peaceful and family-oriented."

Gammons, the market manager, said her husband is

a farmer, and she started the market to see what it would be like to manage one from a farmer's perspective.

She said she was sensitive to the plight of new farmers who had trouble getting into markets, and that it has been

a challenge to balance those farmers while maintaining a good mix.

Another challenge was attracting organic farmers and established farmers who already have markets for their crops, Gammons said.

They have both now, though the market is not yet as large on Sunday as it is on Friday.

But that may change.

Alejandra Nunez was selling vegetables Sunday for Universal Organic of Watsonville.

"It's a good market," she said. "Business is good."

Market hours are 3 to 7 p.m. Fridays and 1 to 6 p.m. Sundays, on the south side of City Plaza on Trafton Street between Main and Union streets. The market began opening on Sundays on May 13.

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