

## Appendix C: Protecting Your Cash at Market

Thousands of dollars have been stolen from vendors at farmers markets. Many of these losses could have been prevented, and no one wants potential thieves to view farmers markets as easy targets.

### Easy Ways to Avoid Theft

#### Have enough help and keep them when needed.

Have enough people working your booth to monitor activities from open to close. Cash and products are most vulnerable when the person behind the counter cannot keep up with the number of customers approaching the booth. Thefts also tend to occur at the end of the day when the till is full and people are tired. Any time the person behind the counter must turn away, theft is a real possibility.

#### Lock Up!

Much of the cash taken from farmers markets disappears from unwatched cash boxes and unlocked vehicles.

Keep all your vehicle's doors securely locked.

A cash box is not protected because it is behind your table. Bolt the box to the table and shelter it from above and on the three sides facing away from you. Otherwise, it is easy for someone to reach across a table and grab a handful of bills.

#### Hide the bulk of your cash as it comes in.

Any money that you do not need for change should be taken out of circulation (out of your apron, cash box, money bowl) and locked in your vehicle. A small safe with a "cash drop" also can be used to secure your money during the day. A cash drop is a small slot — too small for hands — through which you place extra cash while the safe remains locked.

#### Be aware.

Stay alert and watch people. Sometimes eye contact alone will deter someone from trying to steal from you. If eye contact does not work, a watchful stare or a comment like "Can I help you?" may be enough. Remain observant of the surroundings and talk to your neighbors at the market.

*Provided by Mark Wall, formerly with Southland Farmers Market Association.*