

FMM Pro: Farmers Market Managers Professional Certification Program

Module 1: Nuts and Bolts of Managing Markets

- Unit 1.1 Defining a Market Manager's Role
- Unit 1.2 Fair and Enforceable Rules
- Unit 1.3 Setting Up Operational Systems
- Unit 1.4 Understanding Insurance
- Unit 1.5 Market Organizational Structures
- Unit 1.6 Farmer/Vendor Recruitment
- Unit 1.7 Conflict Management

Module 2: Reaching Out to the Market Community

- Unit 2.1 Programs and Services for Successful Markets
- Unit 2.2 Nutrition Programs to Grow Your Market
- Unit 2.3 Events Management
- Unit 2.4 Branding & Creating Marketing Materials
- Unit 2.5 Fundraising
- Unit 2.6 Writing a Winning Proposal
- Unit 2.7 How Best to Communicate With Your Customers

Module 3: Building Market Systems

- Unit 3.1 Building Community Around Your Market
- Unit 3.2 Expansion to Year Round Markets
- Unit 3.3 Crisis Management
- Unit 3.4 Food Safety for Farmers Markets
- Unit 3.5 Friends of the Market & Volunteer Management
- Unit 3.6 Strategic Planning for Farmers Markets
- Unit 3.7 Farm Inspection Programs
- Unit 3.8 Documenting Market Success

Appendix

- Unit 1.1 Sample Market Manager Job Description
- Unit 1.2 Sample Rules for Farmers Markets
- Unit 1.3 Required Vendor Licenses, Permits and Certificates
- Unit 1.4 Incident Report Form
Risk Management Checklist
- Unit 1.5 Bylaws Template

Unit 1.6	Support Organizations 2016
Unit 2.2	FMNP Consumer Currency Brochure General Guidelines for Food Demonstrations General Guidelines for Food Sampling WICVF vs FMNP Comparison Chart
Unit 2.3	Farmers Market Special Events – Ideas Special Event Checklist
Unit 2.5	Westside Farmers Market Sample Sponsorship Letter
Unit 2.6	Sample Action Plan (Logic Model Approach)
Unit 3.2	Sample Winter Market Agreement
Unit 3.4	Farmers Market Recommendations for Farmers Markets
Unit 3.5	Volunteer Interest Form
Unit 3.7	Draft Crop Inspection Checklist Sample Farm Inspection Report
Unit 3.8	Designing Evaluation Questions



Farmers Market Managers Professional Certification Program

Module 1: Nuts & Bolts of Market Management

Unit 1.1 Defining a Market Manager's Role

UNIT OVERVIEW

This unit will highlight the basic duties of a farmers market manager, including in-season, off-season work, as well as qualifications of an effective farmers market manager. The unit will also emphasize the reasoning behind creating an up-to-date, and thorough, job description. Vendors, boards of directors and sponsors often do not understand the many duties a good market manager takes on before, during and after market days and market seasons are done. After reading through this section a market manager will possess the skills and tools necessary to craft a job description which will be easily understood by vendors, their board of director and/or market sponsor to showcase the diversity of duties and skills that a market manager possesses.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

CONCEPTS

1. What duties does a market manager have on a day to day and season by season basis

SKILLS

- How to write a job description



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Module 1: Nuts & Bolts of Market Management

Unit 1.2 Fair & Enforceable Rules

UNIT OVERVIEW

This unit will emphasize the concepts associated with the creation and enforcement of fair and enforceable rules for your farmers market. Fair and enforceable rules are the first step in ensuring that your vendors understand how and why the market operates as it does, and allows the vendors to see that enforcement is non-biased when policies and/or rules have been violated. After reading through this section, a market manager will possess the skills and tools necessary to craft rules for the market which are easily understood and without bias, and can be enforced to the satisfaction of all those involved (managers, vendors, customers, sponsors, etc.).

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

CONCEPTS

- Why have fair & enforceable rules?
- How do I create the rules for my market?
- What is a grievance procedure and why do I need one?

SKILLS

- How to set fair and enforceable rules
- How to set market operations
- How to set guidelines for vendors & sales
- How to create a fair compliance & grievance procedure



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Unit 1.2 Fair & Enforceable Rules

The popularity of farmers markets has increased in recent years due to the increased desire among consumers to purchase foods locally, where they can support their local economy, get to know the producers of their food, and feel a connection to the land. Farmers markets are popping up in communities all across the state to support consumer desire for local foods and local agriculture. Farmers participating in farmers markets find an opportunity to earn retail-level profit margins and to deal directly with the consumer, where they can learn about the consumer's needs and wants and fine-tune their marketing skills.

The atmosphere of a farmers market provides a fun, upbeat experience. To the general public it seems that a farmers market just “happens.” A group of farmers appears together weekly and sets up to sell their farm products. It seems spontaneous, with little or no management intervention to keep the market running smoothly for both farmers and their consumers.

Those involved in farmers markets know, however, that this “natural” occurrence requires good management and an effective set of rules governing the market to prevent the market from deteriorating into chaos and conflict. The market doesn't just “happen” – it requires careful planning and management by a dedicated manager or team and a set of rules

that everyone in the market must abide by. The rules lay out the rights and responsibilities of all market participants and keep the market running smoothly and efficiently. By reading and understanding the rules, each vendor is aware of what is expected of them: standards of conduct, what can be sold, and how to handle grievances with other vendors or grievances with the operation of the market.

When market rules are clear, concise, and easy to understand, they also help to minimize conflicts between all of the participants in the marketplace. Each market participant operates under the same rules, with the same requirements. No one is singled out for special treatment or burdened with additional requirements they have to meet. When the rules are applied uniformly to all market participants, vendors feel they are being treated fairly and are more cooperative with market management and staff.

However, even with fair and enforceable rules in place, conflicts can and will happen in a farmers market setting. Having rules and enforcement provisions in place before this conflict arises, though, is key to dealing with conflicts effectively. When conflicts *do* arise, the rules should include effective means for dealing with those conflicts, whether they are between vendors or within the market management.



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Tips for Creating Effective Market Rules

There are several things to consider when establishing rules for farmers markets.

First, the rules define the market. They should complement the mission, or goal, of the market. The market mission can include such aims as meeting social and economic goals for the community, revitalizing a local economy, creating vibrant public spaces, providing food access to otherwise food-insecure neighborhoods, reclaiming and revitalizing public space, and/or creating opportunities for local agriculture. Any number of other goals could define the market and how it should establish its rules. You'll want to know what your market or market organization's goal(s) are before trying to define your market rules and rule enforcement provisions.

For example, if the driving force of the market is to provide a venue for local farmers, then the rules should reflect that by limiting the vendors to farmers only. Likewise, limiting the geographic region where participating farmers reside supports a local theme. If your mission is to provide local residents with access to fresh foods, then your rules may be broader in regard to who may sell in the market, including a broader product mix. The point is that every rule should help to support the mission of the market.

Market rules should be both equitable, and enforceable. It is important that both within the rules and in practice, each vendor must be treated equally, with no one receiving special benefits or treatment.

Each rule needs to be enforceable. Think about enforcement as you write each rule. Any rule

that you find cannot be enforced as it is written should either be eliminated or rewritten. For example, rules that require that up to 75% of the product for sale to be grown by the vendor are notoriously very difficult to enforce. Is it 75% by weight, by dollar value, by count? Is the percentage based on what is in the truck that day, on the table at any given time of the day, or as an average over the market season? Rules that are vague leave doubt and will ultimately create a conflict that will require the market governing body to resolve. Eliminate the potential headache for yourself down the road by thinking through any potential issues or questions that might arise surrounding a particular rule and its enforcement.

All market rules should be implemented and enforced. That means that each rule must be

Example from the Adirondack Farmers Market

Each vendor is required to bring to market and have a display volume consisting of not less than 70% items produced directly by the vendor, the vendor's family, the vendor's employees or other AFMC vendors as long as the product is produced by that vendor. Exceptions to this rule, in the event of extenuating circumstances, must be approved by the Board of Directors.

complied with at all times, by all vendors. This also means that you should not create any rules which you are not willing to oversee and enforce. When any rule violation is ignored by the market management, a precedent is set against the enforcement of that rule that cannot be easily broken. That means no other vendor in the market can be made to comply, since that would entail an unfair advantage to the vendor who was allowed to violate it without a consequence or management



response. It will also make it hard to enforce any other rule, since a precedence has been set that the market rules sometimes will be ignored by market management.

Rules must attempt to cover the full range of issues that could arise in a market. Some issues are universal across markets and can be planned. But it is important to consider the market's own unique mission, environment, and past experiences as well when developing market rules. A template or pre-formulated list obtained from another market will not suffice. With a carefully designed set of rules and fair and consistent implementation, the market manager can maintain an effective and conducive environment for both sellers and consumers.

Rules are also not something you devise and then set aside, never to revisit. They should be reviewed and revised by the market management on a regular basis. Situations change and new issues arise. A review of the rules by the market's governing body will assure that the rules reflect the current state of the market and best meet the current needs of vendors and consumers.

Having clearly spelled out rules that are fair, equitable, and uniformly implemented has another benefit as well. This will give the market a legal defense if it happens that a lawsuit is brought against the market by an aggrieved vendor. If the market rules are specific to a behavior, with defined consequences, the rules will allow a judge or arbitrator to reinforce the market's actions, when necessary. With clear rules in place, they will likely find that the market was not discriminating against this vendor or acting unfairly – it was simply following through on

predefined rules and enforcement provisions. Remember, your vendors have signed an agreement that spells out the rules and acknowledges their agreement to abide by those rules.

Basic Elements of Effective Market Rules

The rules are an important market document that requires careful consideration, input from the vendors, and review by a legal expert. This is where having a lawyer sit on your board, being one of your market volunteers, or knowing someone in the community willing to do some pro bono work will be helpful.

Westmoreland Farmers Market

By signing here, I confirm that I have read and agree to comply with the "Rules for Vendors of the Westmoreland Summer Farmer's Market". I further understand that any applicant who makes false statements or representation of certification in the application shall be subject to revocation of their permit.

DATE _____ SIGNATURE _____

The rules represent an agreement between the vendor and the market and establish each participant's rights and responsibilities within the market. The application process for entering a farmers market should include receiving a copy of the rules as well as a statement on the application itself that the applicant has been given a copy of the rules and will agree to abide by them. The applicant's signature on the application then becomes a legally binding contract to comply with the market rules. Make sure to complete this step or your market's rules may not be legally enforceable or taken seriously – get your vendors' signatures in addition to telling them about the rules



verbally. Simply handing them a piece of paper with the words “Market Rules” at the top may result in them being filed in the “look at later” or “junk mail” pile and not being looked at again.

Definitions

Throughout the rules, certain terms continue to be used. To make the rules easier to understand by all readers and vendors, clarify the terms being used in the rules document, for example, how is local being defined? How do you define producer for the purposes of your rules?

Market governance

The rules should identify the governance of the market. Identify who operates the market, who sets the policies and procedures of the market and who applies those policies and procedures.

Many markets operate under the sponsorship of another organization. This may be a financial arrangement, where the sponsor provides a degree of funding for the market. It could be that the sponsor has taken the market under its umbrella to lend its non-profit status to the market. Or, it could be that the market is a project of the sponsoring agency, complete with authority to develop the policies of the market and provide management to the market.

Whatever the arrangement is with a sponsor, it should be spelled out in the rules so that all vendors understand the sponsor’s role in the market and who is responsible for developing and enforcing the rules.

The market’s mission should also be spelled out in this section. Since the rules are meant to

support the mission of the market, it is important that everyone understand the mission. This will allow vendors to understand the rationale for the rules and promote greater cooperation.

Vendors in the market should also know who specifically will have the authority to implement the rules of the market on a daily basis. If this is the market manager, that should be spelled out in the rules so there is no question. Does anyone else have the authority to enforce the rules? If the manager is absent or temporarily replaced, then what happens? Make sure to spell these situations out within your market rules. Vendors need to know who has the authority and they will be more likely to respect that authority when it is clearly stated within the rules.

Westside Farmers Market Governing Body

The Westside Farmers Market (hereby to be known in this and other documents as the WFM) is to be directed by the WFM Advisory Committee under the guidance of the Southwest Common Council and the fiduciary oversight of the South Wedge Planning Committee

Day-to-day responsibilities for WFM operations and functions will be carried out by Market Manager and a volunteer-based Leadership Team

General operations

This section of the rules will outline when the market operates and where. Let your vendors know the season of operation and the days and hours of the market so they can be prepared.

This section will also give the vendors the



information they need about set-up times and when they are allowed to leave. Some markets require vendors to stay until the market officially closes. If this is the case, it needs to be clearly stated in the rules. In some markets, vendors have a limited time to vacate the property. All details of operations should be clearly defined in the rules so there is no ambiguity and all market participants know what is expected of them at all times throughout the market day.

Who may sell in the market?

This section is critical to market operations and to fulfilling the market’s mission. In this section, the rules will define exactly who is eligible for vending in the market. The definition of who can sell needs to be written in a way that can be verified and enforced. For example, many markets require that products being sold must be 100% grown by bona fide agricultural producers. To verify that the products are 100% self-grown, a farm inspection may be necessary. The authority to conduct such inspections should be a part of the rules.

Likewise, there are markets that do allow for some level of reselling. Whenever this is

allowed, it is important to define where the products for resale may come from, procedures for allowing for resale products, and what amount of reselling is allowed. Once the definitions for reselling are determined, be sure they can be verified and enforced. If not, the rule is ineffective and meaningless. Clear definitions will make the rules easy for everyone to understand and follow.

Also in this section is a definition of the products that can be sold at the market. While some markets may choose to define each individual product, other markets simply identify by category. For example, only farm products grown and sold by the producer of the products can be sold at the market.

Some products require additional explanation. For example, if crafts are allowed in the market, what are the factors that will constitute an acceptable craft? Will they need to be juried? Can kits be used? Must all components of the craft be from a local source?

The same applies to baked goods. Are “bake off” products allowed, those that are purchased in a ready-to-bake state and then sold as homemade? Or must the product be made from “scratch.” What about the ingredients? Must they be local or a preponderance of local ingredients? The rules should be very clear in defining what is acceptable as a product for sale in the market. Try to anticipate potential questions or issues before they arise.

In addition to what products can be sold in the market, the rules should make clear that each market participant must comply with all local, state, and federal laws and regulations dealing with the products they are selling. It is important that all food safety regulations are

Example Definition of Membership
<i>“To become a member you must be an authentic producer, at least 18 years old, residing and producing your product within Saratoga, Washington, Schenectady, or Rensselaer Counties in New York State. SFMA membership provides the privilege to attend and vote at membership meetings, run for office, and apply for a stall at a SFMA Market. Membership does not guarantee you a place at any market.”</i>



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adhered to for the safety of the consumers and to protect the market from liability. It is also important that every vendor selling a product that requires some form of licensing or permit keep these current and on file with market management. Again, this will help to absolve the market management of liability, as well as help facilitate the job of various inspectors that may show up in the market. If they can review who is licensed, whose license may have expired, etc., their time in the market is reduced with less impact on vendors and consumers. Other areas of your market may be less likely to be scrutinized when it is shown that you keep clear and accurate records.

This is especially important as it applies to sampling of products being sold at the market. Vendors are keenly aware that customers are more likely to purchase a new type of produce, baked good, or dairy product if they are able to taste it first. However, good food safety guidelines must be adhered to in order to keep everyone safe. Principally, all samples must be prepared ahead of time (preferably in a 20c kitchen, but if not, a home kitchen is allowed with a 20c exemption from the Department of Agriculture); all samples must be given out by someone wearing plastic gloves or be able to be picked up individually without touching the other samples (using toothpicks, etc.); and finally, all samples must be covered and refrigerated if necessary. These guidelines cover state-level requirements only so market managers should check with their local county health department to ensure all local guidelines are being followed as well.

Make sure to include this or something similar in your rules so the market may be absolved of liability in the event someone breaks this rule and a lawsuit results.

Guidelines for selling

This section will outline the rules of conduct for participating in the farmers market. When everyone participating in the market adheres to the same guidelines for selling in the market, then all vendors are given an equal opportunity to present their products for sale. Customers will be treated fairly and courteously.

Adherence to the guidelines for selling helps to ensure a harmonious environment for farmers and sellers to conduct business.

Some examples of rules that would fall under this category include:

- **Signage:** Many markets require that vendors post signage that identifies who they are and where they are from. This is helpful in introducing customers to the vendors and identifying from whom they are buying. Additionally, many markets require that vendors post price signs. Many customers will not ask for a price if it is not posted. This makes them feel committed to the sale before they are ready for such a commitment. Therefore, they pass by the vendor and a sale is lost. To limit consumer frustrations and ensure fair treatment for all customers, markets may require vendors to post their prices.
- **Risk management:** Rules regarding risk management deal with the cleanliness of the selling space, the safety of display and display materials, and requirements for liability insurance.

With the increased concern over food safety and the new Food Safety Modernization Act coming into play, the rules should also include any food safety issues that apply to markets



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such as hand washing regulations, preventing product from being placed directly on the ground at any point from truck to sale, and requiring tents or canopies covering the product in order to eliminate the possibility of airborne contamination.

This set of rules ensures a safe environment for consumers and vendors, as well as minimizes the risk of lawsuits for both the vendor and the market. These kinds of regulations are typical of markets and should not require any unnecessary burden on the farmers since they likely follow these procedures at other markets.

- Quality control: Products offered for sale to consumers at farmers markets should be of the highest quality. This set of rules will detail how various quality levels can be dealt with; i.e., lesser-quality products must be marked as inferior and on a less prominent display. These rules will also discuss the ramifications of offering poor-quality products.

- Other rules will govern how vendors must conduct themselves to ensure that the market is a comfortable environment for consumers

alcoholic beverages at the market.

Dogs are a controversial issue for farmers markets. Many markets will ban dogs from a market based on health and sanitation issues. While other markets will allow dogs that are leashed and under control, believing that denying dogs access to the market will deny a significant consumer base to the market, depending on the population that your market draws from. Whatever you decide, make an informed decision, include it in your rules, and make sure to enforce it.



Example from the Schenectady Greenmarket

“Goods offered for sale are expected to be of the highest quality. If a vendor offers inferior quality products, the vendor may then be asked to withdraw the item(s) at the discretion of the market manager and/or board.”

and a fair place for all vendors to participate. For example, the rules may call for “no hawking, proselytizing, or loud music.”

Other rules may call for no smoking or no

Stall fees and assignment

This section will deal with the fees involved in participating in a market, the size and location of selling space, and the rights of vendors in stall selection and retention. While most rules do not spell out the dollar amount of stall fees, they do indicate who makes the decisions on fees and when payments must be made.

The rules will also spell out how stalls can be rented—seasonally, daily, or, in some cases, shared. For those renting on a seasonal basis, they are usually given privileges such as a



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reduced annual fee or the right to a permanent location that will be extended until such time as the vendor relinquishes the space or become delinquent in their rental payments.

Assignment of space is also defined in this section. Who will make the decision on space allotment and how? Most often the market manager will assign spaces to new vendors. This may be on a first-come, first-serve basis or on a lottery basis. Assignment of space for daily vendors is usually on a space-availability basis, with no guarantees of space or reserved space.

Compliance

How does market management handle complaints, rules violations, and grievances? This is all detailed in the compliance section of the rules. This section will provide all participants a full understanding of what to expect when issues arise.

Most markets will require that any complaints be delivered, in writing, to the market manager first. This will give the market manager the opportunity to resolve an issue before it becomes necessary to involve the full market governing body. However, should the manager not be able to resolve the complaint, there should be provisions for bringing the matter to the full governing body for resolution or to involve a neutral third party. Leaving everything in the hands of the market manager without a grievance or complaint procedure will leave your market open to unnecessary conflicts.

Some market managers have found their vendors to be a fairly contentious group, registering complaints against one another frequently. To limit the number of frivolous complaints, a “good faith” amount of cash is

paid to the market at the time of registering a complaint. The market manager will then conduct an investigation or farm inspection to verify the validity of the complaint. Should the complaint be legitimate, the “good faith” cash is returned to the complainant, and the market manager will then take appropriate actions.

However, should the complaint be unfounded, then the “good faith” cash is forfeited, deposited in the market’s general funds, and a report is given to the complainant outlining the findings of the investigation. You may find it necessary to implement this procedure, depending on the level of complaints your market receives and the amount of time your manager has available to investigate complaints.

The compliance section must also outline the ramifications of violating the market rules. This typically includes a series of verbal and written warnings, suspensions, and then expulsion from the market. The intent is to make it clear to vendors that the rules will be enforced and there is a consequence to non-compliance. This is usually sufficient to ensure compliance; however, there are times when infractions will need to result in action by the market management. Having the infraction procedure in writing, in the rules that all vendors have agreed to follow, will provide a basis for the resulting action and a defense should there be legal action against the market for the management’s actions.

Finally, the rules need to provide a means for grievance. The rules should set a procedure for any vendor who, having had action taken against them, or in disagreement over any rules, can take the issue to the full governing body for resolution. In this case, both the



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market manager and the vendor should have equal opportunity to present their case, including any evidence each side may have to justify their actions. The market's governing body must listen with an open mind and make a fair ruling to resolve the dispute. This procedure should not be used often, but should exist as a last resort to resolve complaints that cannot be handled by the manager alone.

Additional Considerations

Each market must determine situations that are unique to their market or market organization and develop rules that support those situations.

For example, farmers markets that have a waiting list for vendor space must develop a policy for determining how space that becomes available will be allocated. The Rochester Public Market gives local farmers first consideration for space. The Ithaca Farmers Market has developed an Easy Entry Program, which provides a way for new vendors to gain access to the market. Whatever the process is, it must be defined in the rules so that all vendors understand.

Many farmers markets participate in nutrition programs, such as the Farmers Market Nutrition Program, both WIC and Senior, as well as SNAP (food stamp) programs and SNAP incentive coupons.

Participation in these programs provides access to fresh local foods to low-income consumers and provides vendors with an additional customer base. To ensure a high level of vendor participation in the nutrition programs and to ensure sufficient choices for consumers, some markets have chosen to require, within their rules, that all eligible vendors must participate

in the programs that the market has chosen, as a whole, to participate in. By putting this requirement in writing within the framework of the market rules, all the vendors are aware of their responsibility upfront and there are no surprises on market day.

Some farmers markets are managed by a membership organization that requires each vendor to join the organization and pay a membership fee, pledge labor, or a combination of both. The market rules should be clear to all participants just what is expected of them to be a member in good standing with the market. It is also important that the market define the benefits of market membership to all participants. For example, the Saratoga Farmers Market defines membership and its benefits in their rules:

From the Saratoga Farmers Market

*“Market stalls are awarded by the board of directors using criteria such as but not limited to:
Availability of space at the market
Seniority within the organization
The market’s need (or oversupply) of a particular product
Members past performance and involvement in SFMA*

Potential vendors should be aware some markets might be full to capacity or have excess of a particular product. It is not unusual for potential vendors to be put on a waiting list until a market space becomes available.”

It is important that each market governing body identify the issues and situations that are pertinent to their market and develop a set of



rules that will govern the handling of each of the issues identified. There also should be a means to handle new situations that may arise.

This could be as simple as providing a means for grievances of actions by the market manager for review by the market's governing body and/or providing a means for making suggestions for new rules or rule changes that can then be voted on and accepted or rejected by the governing body.

Conclusion

The goal of a farmers market is to provide a public meeting space that allows farmers and vendors to sell their products directly to consumers, to provide a friendly environment with a diversity of product for consumers, and to be a good influence in the community. A clear, well-written set of rules helps the farmers market to ensure that each market participant

is doing their part to fulfill the market goals. Each participant knows what is expected of them, as well as what their rights are within the market.

The rules also provide a basis to resolve disputes and a defense against suits brought against markets for issues that arise in rules violations and their consequences.

If the rules are understandable, fair, uniformly enforced, and provide a means to cover the potential issues that may arise in a farmers market, they will help to keep the market intact, support its mission, and make it possible for the market to be run in an efficient, effective manner. The Farmers Market Federation of NY are not lawyers and these recommendations are for information is only and all proposed market rules should be reviewed by a lawyer prior to giving to your vendors.

References:

This material is based on a presentation, ""Fair and Enforceable Rules", by Jo Ellen Saumier, Adirondack Farmers Market Cooperative, at the Farmers Market Federation of NY's Annual Farmers Market Managers Training Conference, Nov 2015.

"Developing and Enforcing Effective Rules and Regulations," by Trina Pilonero, Sullivan County Area Farmers Markets Board Member, Farmers Market Federation of NY Farmers Market Managers workshop, Jan 18, 2007.

Appendix

Sample Farmers Market Rules



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Unit 1.1: Defining a Market Manager's Role

The three most important factors for retail success are location, location, and location. But this is only partly true for farmers markets. While a visible, easily accessible location is helpful, most market organizers and farmers will say that the single most important tool for market success is its manager. We have found that new market start-ups have about a 50% failure rate within the first five years. But even those that survive the early years face a 20% failure rate once the original market manager or management team leaves the market. This indicates that a market manager is a key ingredient in the success of a farmers market, working with all three sides of the farmers market paradigm— farmers, consumers, and communities. The manager must keep all in balance to keep the market functioning and prospering.

A market manager must possess a skill set that will drive them to work long and hard to ensure the market is a vital selling space; building sales and profits for its farmers and vendors, creating a dynamic environment rich in fresh foods, consumer choices, and a friendly atmosphere that draws customers to the market; and building relationships within the community to enhance the lives of the people in the community and to create a support system for the market within the community structure. But what are these skills that make a good farmers market manager and what roles does the

manager play in creating and nurturing market success?

Qualifications

The qualifications of a farmers market manager include both the personal skills and the job skills that are needed to guide a market to success for its farmers, consumers, and its community partners.

Personal Skills

The most important personal qualification is passion. Farmers market managers are typically underpaid, if paid at all. They are asked to perform a variety of tasks both on site each market day and off-site, throughout the year. Rarely does the compensation cover the actual hours that a market manager puts in to ensure that the market is successful for all market participants: farmers and vendors, consumers, and the host community. Beyond being passionate enough to put in the many hours required to run the market, it helps if the manager is passionate about causes. Agriculture, the local community, health and nutrition, and the environment are a few of the causes that may motivate the market manager.

Next, a successful candidate for a farmers market manager's position would be an effective problem-solver. Many crises arise in a market, such as conflicts between farmers, between consumers and farmers, between



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farmers and market management, and between the market and community members. A manager must be able to listen carefully to both sides of the conflict, find a common ground that will be acceptable to both parties, and have everyone exit the conflict with a positive attitude.

Creative thinking is a clear asset for market managers. Most farmers markets operate on shoe-string budgets, leaving few resources for a market manager to rely on to get the job done. Creativity is a must for finding ways to advertise and promote the farmers market with little or no advertising budget. The manager must also be able to create the special events that draw customers to the market and create the family-friendly atmosphere that keeps customers coming back, week after week.

For example, events like rutabaga bowling and borscht night not only keep the focus on the food, but they create fun activities that build atmosphere. Other areas of market management may also take some creative thinking to overcome the lack of adequate resources, such as raising funds to cover market expenses and building community relationships to assist in promoting the market.



Westside Farmers Market Manager and her team's creative side

Self motivation is another personal asset that a market manager should possess. Although many market managers have a board of directors or a market advisory committee to back them up, they are typically given the job, and then left to make sure that it all comes together. A farmers market manager without self-motivation would flounder with little day-to-day supervision.

Job Skills

Many market managers are given the job with little or no instruction. Most training is on the job, learn as you go. There is no school where you can go to prepare you for the role of farmers market manager. So market managers need to possess skills that will help them to learn the role while they are performing the job.

Organizational Skills

Organizational skills are a must. The role of market manager is one of multitasking: keeping records for the market, conducting promotional activity, organizing special events, managing the finances of the market, and a wide assortment of other tasks. Juggling the many duties of a market manager requires an organized individual.

Communication Skills

Communicating effectively is a key skill for farmers market managers. They have the unique task of having to communicate to a wide range of audiences. Market managers must effectively communicate to the farmers all of the market rules and policies. This must be done in a diplomatic way that will ensure understanding and compliance. Farmers must understand that the manager and the governing body are not laying down rules and regulations just for the sake of power, but for the safety of



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both consumers and vendors, and to ensure the sales and profits of the vendors in the market. The rules and policies, in turn, ensure that the market follows standard risk management practices, is consumer friendly, and is fair and equitable to all its farmers and vendors.

Market managers must also be able to communicate well with the consumers in the marketplace. Answering questions, handling complaints and disputes, and promoting the market, its vendors, and its programs all require excellent communication skills to deliver the message in easily understandable terms, without misunderstandings and with tact and diplomacy.

Finally, market managers must also be adept at communicating the market's needs and community benefits to community leaders, funders and market sponsors (or potential sponsors). It is important that community leaders understand the importance of a farmers market to their community. The market needs their support for space allocation, funding, promotion, permitting, etc. When local leaders understand that the market is a key institution in the community, bringing access to local foods, supporting low-income consumers, revitalizing a downtown location, supporting local agriculture, and bringing in tourism dollars, their support is much more certain.

Marketing Skills

Market managers must be creative in their efforts to promote the farmers market. They often have very tight budgets for promotions, but must advertise to build customer awareness of the market, drive customer traffic to the market, and build sales and profits for their farmers. In addition to promoting to customers, market managers must also promote to

farmers, building the vendor base and increasing the diversity of product in the marketplace.

Financial Skills

Budgeting and financial recordkeeping, as well as fundraising, are important financial skills for market managers. Revenue streams for markets must be maximized, whether from farmer stall rents, sponsorships, or grant funds. Expenses must be identified, budgeted for, and then covered with the existing revenue stream.

Duties of the Market Manager

The duties of a market manager make up an extremely varied job description. Market managers wear a number of different hats, and the hats change with the seasons. While farmers markets tend to be seasonal, there is plenty of work to be done by farmers market managers throughout the year. The following is a summary of all the tasks that farmers market managers need to perform.

Pre-Season

- Develop advertising and promotions calendar
 - Media campaign
 - Social media
 - Promotional materials— signs, banners, brochures
 - Website maintenance
 - Special events: i.e., entertainment, community events
- Work with market board/committee on market systems (review, update, and create) to promote sustainability for the market
 - Rules and regulations
 - Strategic planning for the market



- Board/committee development
- Marketing and promotions plan—long term
- Emergency preparedness plan
- Develop market operations for upcoming year
 - Opening and closing dates for upcoming year
 - Secure permits
 - Secure market liability insurance
 - Review market site for improvements to layout and design—increase efficient flow of customer traffic, create a safer environment, increase visibility of market
- Recruit farmers/vendors
 - Assess market needs for missing or inadequate supply of product
 - Develop recruitment strategy and materials
 - Execute recruitment strategy
 - Hold pre-season vendor meetings to communicate all of the above
- Establish budget and secure funding sources; includes setting stall fees
 - Fundraising events
 - Donations
 - sponsorships
- Develop community relationships
 - Get involved with community organizations on the market's behalf
 - Give speeches/presentations that promote the market
- Certify market for the FMNP program

In Season – On-going

- Enroll farmers and vendors in the market through vendor agreements/leases/ market applications; ensure that all necessary insurance certificates and licenses are current and on file.
 - Maintain database of all vendors, contact information, and all other pertinent information
- Coordinate staff and volunteers
 - Scheduling
 - Training
- Resolve any disputes that arise
 - Between vendors and consumers
 - Between vendors
 - Between vendors and management
 - Between market and community —local government, local business community
- Maintain market grounds in a safe manner for consumers and vendors
- Enroll farmers in the FMNP program
- Act as liaison between vendors and market board/committee for free flow of information in both directions to create transparency
- Conduct farm inspections as needed under rules and regulation of the market or as needed to comply with FMNP
- Bookkeeping
- On-site marketing communications
 - Social media updates and responses
 - Email inquiries
 - Phone calls



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In-Season – Pre-market Day

- Market set up
 - Set out street closure barriers, pedestrian/truck traffic barricades
 - Place all market signage
 - Place trash receptacles, recycling bins



- Prepare the Manager's booth
 - Stock nutrition education materials
 - Prepare for SNAP transactions
 - Charge SNAP equipment
 - Count out enough tokens (SNAP, debit/credit) for the market day
 - Erect SNAP banners
- Coordinate community tables
- Prepare for the day's special event/music
 - Set up event tent and equipment
 - Coordinate volunteers
 - Put out signage
- Vendor coordination

- Assign vendor stalls
- Line up daily vendors
- Contact any on-call vendors

In-Season – During the Market Day

- Operate manager's booth for consumer questions, nutrition education materials, POS materials; operate EBT terminal for food stamp sales
- Ensure all market rules are adhered to
- Ensure all state and county regulations are adhered to
- Conduct periodic customers counts and vendor sales information

In-Season – End of the Market Day

- Ensure market grounds are clean after all vendors leave for the day
- Redeem farmers' SNAP and debit/credit tokens
 - Issue reimbursement checks to farmers
 - Update transaction logs
 - Take down and store market tent, tables, materials

Post-Season

- Evaluate the market season—what went right, what could be improved upon
 - Advertising campaign
 - Event evaluation —what added to sales, what took away, what drew more customers
- Hold post-season vendor meetings
 - Farmer/vendor time to offer ideas, vent issues, come together to socialize and celebrate the end of the season
- Pursue professional development for market managers



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- Attend conferences, workshops to further your management skills and improve market for farmers, customers, and community
- Attend FMM Pro Market Managers Certification Program to become a certified Farmers Market Manager
 - Take annual recertification classes through annual conference and winter webinars
- Do maintenance and repairs on market grounds, equipment, supplies



Market Managers Job Description

Possessing an up to date job description is extremely important for a variety of reasons. It sets the expectations for your duties on a daily, weekly, seasonal and yearly basis. It can function almost as a work plan to guide you day to day and market season to market downtime (if you don't operate year-round). It helps to set

boundaries with your board of directors as well as better understand potential volunteer opportunities integral to the market but that you cannot take on. Often those sitting on the board of directors, or steering committee for a market, do not have a good sense of all that it takes to manage a market; that it isn't just showing up on market day and "hanging out" with the vendors. A thorough and up to date job description can illustrate the many faceted duties of a manager, as well as demonstrate what a manager would do, and what a volunteer would perhaps to be better suited to carry out. An example of this might be expecting the market manager to operate the SNAP terminal themselves. Operating the SNAP terminal requires someone to be with the terminal throughout the market day. With all the tasks a manager must perform throughout the market day, it is difficult for them to be the person assigned to the SNAP terminal. This is more appropriate for a volunteer to perform, rather than the manager. It also should help identify professional development opportunities to help grow as a market manager, whether that is in volunteer management, marketing/social media, basic bookkeeping, etc...

There are three sections to a job description:

1. The overall description of the market and the role/duties of the market manager. This should include all relevant information about market logistics – season length, days/times of operation, market location, etc... This should also include who the manager reports to and a description of the market (including types of products sold, community partners, customers served, etc...). The roles and duties should also include hours required, who the manager reports to and who they



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- represent at the market.
2. Job duties – This should cover duties prior to the season starting, such as vendor recruitment, community partner relationship building, fundraising and site prep; and during the season, such as day to day market operations and market logistics, volunteer management, bookkeeping, conflict management/resolution, and acting as a liaison to the many nutrition programs the market participates in.
 3. Qualifications – This section should cover all the qualifications a good market manager would possess, including needing low supervision, good communication and organizational

skills, ability to resolve conflicts, ability to communicate with diverse audiences, and being self-motivated. This section can be helpful in determining a professional development plan for areas which may be lacking as a market manager.

A job description should be reviewed on a yearly, or bi-annual basis to ensure that duties have not changed as a result of growth of the market. Especially if you are a paid manager, being able to demonstrate how well you have satisfied the duties in your job description can be helpful during review as well as when asking for additional compensation.

Reference:

This material is based on a presentation, “Defining a Market Manager’s Role”, by Monica Kurzejeski, Manager of the Troy Waterfront Farmers Market, at the Farmers Market Federation of NY’s Annual Farmers Market Managers Training Conference, Nov 2015.

“Duties of Farmers Market Managers,” by James Farr, Deputy Director of the Dept. of Parks and Recreation, Rochester, NY, Director of the Rochester Public Market, President of the Farmers Market Federation of NY. Presented at the Farmers Market Federation of NY Farmers Market Managers Training Program, Jan. 18, 2007.

Appendix:

Sample Market Managers Job Description



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Farmers Market Managers Professional Certification Program

Module 1: Nuts & Bolts of Market Management

Unit 1.2 Fair & Enforceable Rules

UNIT OVERVIEW

This unit will emphasize the concepts associated with the creation and enforcement of fair and enforceable rules for your farmers market. Fair and enforceable rules are the first step in ensuring that your vendors understand how and why the market operates as it does, and allows the vendors to see that enforcement is non-biased when policies and/or rules have been violated. After reading through this section, a market manager will possess the skills and tools necessary to craft rules for the market which are easily understood and without bias, and can be enforced to the satisfaction of all those involved (managers, vendors, customers, sponsors, etc.).

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

CONCEPTS

- Why have fair & enforceable rules?
- How do I create the rules for my market?
- What is a grievance procedure and why do I need one?

SKILLS

- How to set fair and enforceable rules
- How to set market operations
- How to set guidelines for vendors & sales
- How to create a fair compliance & grievance procedure



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Unit 1.2 Fair & Enforceable Rules

The popularity of farmers markets has increased in recent years due to the increased desire among consumers to purchase foods locally, where they can support their local economy, get to know the producers of their food, and feel a connection to the land. Farmers markets are popping up in communities all across the state to support consumer desire for local foods and local agriculture. Farmers participating in farmers markets find an opportunity to earn retail-level profit margins and to deal directly with the consumer, where they can learn about the consumer's needs and wants and fine-tune their marketing skills.

The atmosphere of a farmers market provides a fun, upbeat experience. To the general public it seems that a farmers market just “happens.” A group of farmers appears together weekly and sets up to sell their farm products. It seems spontaneous, with little or no management intervention to keep the market running smoothly for both farmers and their consumers.

Those involved in farmers markets know, however, that this “natural” occurrence requires good management and an effective set of rules governing the market to prevent the market from deteriorating into chaos and conflict. The market doesn't just “happen” – it requires careful planning and management by a dedicated manager or team and a set of rules

that everyone in the market must abide by. The rules lay out the rights and responsibilities of all market participants and keep the market running smoothly and efficiently. By reading and understanding the rules, each vendor is aware of what is expected of them: standards of conduct, what can be sold, and how to handle grievances with other vendors or grievances with the operation of the market.

When market rules are clear, concise, and easy to understand, they also help to minimize conflicts between all of the participants in the marketplace. Each market participant operates under the same rules, with the same requirements. No one is singled out for special treatment or burdened with additional requirements they have to meet. When the rules are applied uniformly to all market participants, vendors feel they are being treated fairly and are more cooperative with market management and staff.

However, even with fair and enforceable rules in place, conflicts can and will happen in a farmers market setting. Having rules and enforcement provisions in place before this conflict arises, though, is key to dealing with conflicts effectively. When conflicts *do* arise, the rules should include effective means for dealing with those conflicts, whether they are between vendors or within the market management.



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Tips for Creating Effective Market Rules

There are several things to consider when establishing rules for farmers markets.

First, the rules define the market. They should complement the mission, or goal, of the market. The market mission can include such aims as meeting social and economic goals for the community, revitalizing a local economy, creating vibrant public spaces, providing food access to otherwise food-insecure neighborhoods, reclaiming and revitalizing public space, and/or creating opportunities for local agriculture. Any number of other goals could define the market and how it should establish its rules. You'll want to know what your market or market organization's goal(s) are before trying to define your market rules and rule enforcement provisions.

For example, if the driving force of the market is to provide a venue for local farmers, then the rules should reflect that by limiting the vendors to farmers only. Likewise, limiting the geographic region where participating farmers reside supports a local theme. If your mission is to provide local residents with access to fresh foods, then your rules may be broader in regard to who may sell in the market, including a broader product mix. The point is that every rule should help to support the mission of the market.

Market rules should be both equitable, and enforceable. It is important that both within the rules and in practice, each vendor must be treated equally, with no one receiving special benefits or treatment.

Each rule needs to be enforceable. Think about enforcement as you write each rule. Any rule

that you find cannot be enforced as it is written should either be eliminated or rewritten. For example, rules that require that up to 75% of the product for sale to be grown by the vendor are notoriously very difficult to enforce. Is it 75% by weight, by dollar value, by count? Is the percentage based on what is in the truck that day, on the table at any given time of the day, or as an average over the market season? Rules that are vague leave doubt and will ultimately create a conflict that will require the market governing body to resolve. Eliminate the potential headache for yourself down the road by thinking through any potential issues or questions that might arise surrounding a particular rule and its enforcement.

All market rules should be implemented and enforced. That means that each rule must be

Example from the Adirondack Farmers Market

Each vendor is required to bring to market and have a display volume consisting of not less than 70% items produced directly by the vendor, the vendor's family, the vendor's employees or other AFMC vendors as long as the product is produced by that vendor. Exceptions to this rule, in the event of extenuating circumstances, must be approved by the Board of Directors.

complied with at all times, by all vendors. This also means that you should not create any rules which you are not willing to oversee and enforce. When any rule violation is ignored by the market management, a precedent is set against the enforcement of that rule that cannot be easily broken. That means no other vendor in the market can be made to comply, since that would entail an unfair advantage to the vendor who was allowed to violate it without a consequence or management



response. It will also make it hard to enforce any other rule, since a precedence has been set that the market rules sometimes will be ignored by market management.

Rules must attempt to cover the full range of issues that could arise in a market. Some issues are universal across markets and can be planned. But it is important to consider the market's own unique mission, environment, and past experiences as well when developing market rules. A template or pre-formulated list obtained from another market will not suffice. With a carefully designed set of rules and fair and consistent implementation, the market manager can maintain an effective and conducive environment for both sellers and consumers.

Rules are also not something you devise and then set aside, never to revisit. They should be reviewed and revised by the market management on a regular basis. Situations change and new issues arise. A review of the rules by the market's governing body will assure that the rules reflect the current state of the market and best meet the current needs of vendors and consumers.

Having clearly spelled out rules that are fair, equitable, and uniformly implemented has another benefit as well. This will give the market a legal defense if it happens that a lawsuit is brought against the market by an aggrieved vendor. If the market rules are specific to a behavior, with defined consequences, the rules will allow a judge or arbitrator to reinforce the market's actions, when necessary. With clear rules in place, they will likely find that the market was not discriminating against this vendor or acting unfairly – it was simply following through on

predefined rules and enforcement provisions. Remember, your vendors have signed an agreement that spells out the rules and acknowledges their agreement to abide by those rules.

Basic Elements of Effective Market Rules

The rules are an important market document that requires careful consideration, input from the vendors, and review by a legal expert. This is where having a lawyer sit on your board, being one of your market volunteers, or knowing someone in the community willing to do some pro bono work will be helpful.

Westmoreland Farmers Market

By signing here, I confirm that I have read and agree to comply with the "Rules for Vendors of the Westmoreland Summer Farmer's Market". I further understand that any applicant who makes false statements or representation of certification in the application shall be subject to revocation of their permit.

DATE _____ SIGNATURE _____

The rules represent an agreement between the vendor and the market and establish each participant's rights and responsibilities within the market. The application process for entering a farmers market should include receiving a copy of the rules as well as a statement on the application itself that the applicant has been given a copy of the rules and will agree to abide by them. The applicant's signature on the application then becomes a legally binding contract to comply with the market rules. Make sure to complete this step or your market's rules may not be legally enforceable or taken seriously – get your vendors' signatures in addition to telling them about the rules



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verbally. Simply handing them a piece of paper with the words “Market Rules” at the top may result in them being filed in the “look at later” or “junk mail” pile and not being looked at again.

Definitions

Throughout the rules, certain terms continue to be used. To make the rules easier to understand by all readers and vendors, clarify the terms being used in the rules document, for example, how is local being defined? How do you define producer for the purposes of your rules?

Market governance

The rules should identify the governance of the market. Identify who operates the market, who sets the policies and procedures of the market and who applies those policies and procedures.

Many markets operate under the sponsorship of another organization. This may be a financial arrangement, where the sponsor provides a degree of funding for the market. It could be that the sponsor has taken the market under its umbrella to lend its non-profit status to the market. Or, it could be that the market is a project of the sponsoring agency, complete with authority to develop the policies of the market and provide management to the market.

Whatever the arrangement is with a sponsor, it should be spelled out in the rules so that all vendors understand the sponsor’s role in the market and who is responsible for developing and enforcing the rules.

The market’s mission should also be spelled out in this section. Since the rules are meant to

support the mission of the market, it is important that everyone understand the mission. This will allow vendors to understand the rationale for the rules and promote greater cooperation.

Vendors in the market should also know who specifically will have the authority to implement the rules of the market on a daily basis. If this is the market manager, that should be spelled out in the rules so there is no question. Does anyone else have the authority to enforce the rules? If the manager is absent or temporarily replaced, then what happens? Make sure to spell these situations out within your market rules. Vendors need to know who has the authority and they will be more likely to respect that authority when it is clearly stated within the rules.

Westside Farmers Market Governing Body

The Westside Farmers Market (hereby to be known in this and other documents as the WFM) is to be directed by the WFM Advisory Committee under the guidance of the Southwest Common Council and the fiduciary oversight of the South Wedge Planning Committee

Day-to-day responsibilities for WFM operations and functions will be carried out by Market Manager and a volunteer-based Leadership Team

General operations

This section of the rules will outline when the market operates and where. Let your vendors know the season of operation and the days and hours of the market so they can be prepared.

This section will also give the vendors the



information they need about set-up times and when they are allowed to leave. Some markets require vendors to stay until the market officially closes. If this is the case, it needs to be clearly stated in the rules. In some markets, vendors have a limited time to vacate the property. All details of operations should be clearly defined in the rules so there is no ambiguity and all market participants know what is expected of them at all times throughout the market day.

Who may sell in the market?

This section is critical to market operations and to fulfilling the market’s mission. In this section, the rules will define exactly who is eligible for vending in the market. The definition of who can sell needs to be written in a way that can be verified and enforced. For example, many markets require that products being sold must be 100% grown by bona fide agricultural producers. To verify that the products are 100% self-grown, a farm inspection may be necessary. The authority to conduct such inspections should be a part of the rules.

Likewise, there are markets that do allow for some level of reselling. Whenever this is

allowed, it is important to define where the products for resale may come from, procedures for allowing for resale products, and what amount of reselling is allowed. Once the definitions for reselling are determined, be sure they can be verified and enforced. If not, the rule is ineffective and meaningless. Clear definitions will make the rules easy for everyone to understand and follow.

Also in this section is a definition of the products that can be sold at the market. While some markets may choose to define each individual product, other markets simply identify by category. For example, only farm products grown and sold by the producer of the products can be sold at the market.

Some products require additional explanation. For example, if crafts are allowed in the market, what are the factors that will constitute an acceptable craft? Will they need to be juried? Can kits be used? Must all components of the craft be from a local source?

The same applies to baked goods. Are “bake off” products allowed, those that are purchased in a ready-to-bake state and then sold as homemade? Or must the product be made from “scratch.” What about the ingredients? Must they be local or a preponderance of local ingredients? The rules should be very clear in defining what is acceptable as a product for sale in the market. Try to anticipate potential questions or issues before they arise.

In addition to what products can be sold in the market, the rules should make clear that each market participant must comply with all local, state, and federal laws and regulations dealing with the products they are selling. It is important that all food safety regulations are

Example Definition of Membership
<i>“To become a member you must be an authentic producer, at least 18 years old, residing and producing your product within Saratoga, Washington, Schenectady, or Rensselaer Counties in New York State. SFMA membership provides the privilege to attend and vote at membership meetings, run for office, and apply for a stall at a SFMA Market. Membership does not guarantee you a place at any market.”</i>



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adhered to for the safety of the consumers and to protect the market from liability. It is also important that every vendor selling a product that requires some form of licensing or permit keep these current and on file with market management. Again, this will help to absolve the market management of liability, as well as help facilitate the job of various inspectors that may show up in the market. If they can review who is licensed, whose license may have expired, etc., their time in the market is reduced with less impact on vendors and consumers. Other areas of your market may be less likely to be scrutinized when it is shown that you keep clear and accurate records.

This is especially important as it applies to sampling of products being sold at the market. Vendors are keenly aware that customers are more likely to purchase a new type of produce, baked good, or dairy product if they are able to taste it first. However, good food safety guidelines must be adhered to in order to keep everyone safe. Principally, all samples must be prepared ahead of time (preferably in a 20c kitchen, but if not, a home kitchen is allowed with a 20c exemption from the Department of Agriculture); all samples must be given out by someone wearing plastic gloves or be able to be picked up individually without touching the other samples (using toothpicks, etc.); and finally, all samples must be covered and refrigerated if necessary. These guidelines cover state-level requirements only so market managers should check with their local county health department to ensure all local guidelines are being followed as well.

Make sure to include this or something similar in your rules so the market may be absolved of liability in the event someone breaks this rule and a lawsuit results.

Guidelines for selling

This section will outline the rules of conduct for participating in the farmers market. When everyone participating in the market adheres to the same guidelines for selling in the market, then all vendors are given an equal opportunity to present their products for sale. Customers will be treated fairly and courteously.

Adherence to the guidelines for selling helps to ensure a harmonious environment for farmers and sellers to conduct business.

Some examples of rules that would fall under this category include:

- **Signage:** Many markets require that vendors post signage that identifies who they are and where they are from. This is helpful in introducing customers to the vendors and identifying from whom they are buying. Additionally, many markets require that vendors post price signs. Many customers will not ask for a price if it is not posted. This makes them feel committed to the sale before they are ready for such a commitment. Therefore, they pass by the vendor and a sale is lost. To limit consumer frustrations and ensure fair treatment for all customers, markets may require vendors to post their prices.
- **Risk management:** Rules regarding risk management deal with the cleanliness of the selling space, the safety of display and display materials, and requirements for liability insurance.

With the increased concern over food safety and the new Food Safety Modernization Act coming into play, the rules should also include any food safety issues that apply to markets



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such as hand washing regulations, preventing product from being placed directly on the ground at any point from truck to sale, and requiring tents or canopies covering the product in order to eliminate the possibility of airborne contamination.

This set of rules ensures a safe environment for consumers and vendors, as well as minimizes the risk of lawsuits for both the vendor and the market. These kinds of regulations are typical of markets and should not require any unnecessary burden on the farmers since they likely follow these procedures at other markets.

- Quality control: Products offered for sale to consumers at farmers markets should be of the highest quality. This set of rules will detail how various quality levels can be dealt with; i.e., lesser-quality products must be marked as inferior and on a less prominent display. These rules will also discuss the ramifications of offering poor-quality products.

- Other rules will govern how vendors must conduct themselves to ensure that the market is a comfortable environment for consumers

alcoholic beverages at the market.

Dogs are a controversial issue for farmers markets. Many markets will ban dogs from a market based on health and sanitation issues. While other markets will allow dogs that are leashed and under control, believing that denying dogs access to the market will deny a significant consumer base to the market, depending on the population that your market draws from. Whatever you decide, make an informed decision, include it in your rules, and make sure to enforce it.



Example from the Schenectady Greenmarket

“Goods offered for sale are expected to be of the highest quality. If a vendor offers inferior quality products, the vendor may then be asked to withdraw the item(s) at the discretion of the market manager and/or board.”

and a fair place for all vendors to participate. For example, the rules may call for “no hawking, proselytizing, or loud music.”

Other rules may call for no smoking or no

Stall fees and assignment

This section will deal with the fees involved in participating in a market, the size and location of selling space, and the rights of vendors in stall selection and retention. While most rules do not spell out the dollar amount of stall fees, they do indicate who makes the decisions on fees and when payments must be made.

The rules will also spell out how stalls can be rented—seasonally, daily, or, in some cases, shared. For those renting on a seasonal basis, they are usually given privileges such as a



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reduced annual fee or the right to a permanent location that will be extended until such time as the vendor relinquishes the space or become delinquent in their rental payments.

Assignment of space is also defined in this section. Who will make the decision on space allotment and how? Most often the market manager will assign spaces to new vendors. This may be on a first-come, first-serve basis or on a lottery basis. Assignment of space for daily vendors is usually on a space-availability basis, with no guarantees of space or reserved space.

Compliance

How does market management handle complaints, rules violations, and grievances? This is all detailed in the compliance section of the rules. This section will provide all participants a full understanding of what to expect when issues arise.

Most markets will require that any complaints be delivered, in writing, to the market manager first. This will give the market manager the opportunity to resolve an issue before it becomes necessary to involve the full market governing body. However, should the manager not be able to resolve the complaint, there should be provisions for bringing the matter to the full governing body for resolution or to involve a neutral third party. Leaving everything in the hands of the market manager without a grievance or complaint procedure will leave your market open to unnecessary conflicts.

Some market managers have found their vendors to be a fairly contentious group, registering complaints against one another frequently. To limit the number of frivolous complaints, a “good faith” amount of cash is

paid to the market at the time of registering a complaint. The market manager will then conduct an investigation or farm inspection to verify the validity of the complaint. Should the complaint be legitimate, the “good faith” cash is returned to the complainant, and the market manager will then take appropriate actions.

However, should the complaint be unfounded, then the “good faith” cash is forfeited, deposited in the market’s general funds, and a report is given to the complainant outlining the findings of the investigation. You may find it necessary to implement this procedure, depending on the level of complaints your market receives and the amount of time your manager has available to investigate complaints.

The compliance section must also outline the ramifications of violating the market rules. This typically includes a series of verbal and written warnings, suspensions, and then expulsion from the market. The intent is to make it clear to vendors that the rules will be enforced and there is a consequence to non-compliance. This is usually sufficient to ensure compliance; however, there are times when infractions will need to result in action by the market management. Having the infraction procedure in writing, in the rules that all vendors have agreed to follow, will provide a basis for the resulting action and a defense should there be legal action against the market for the management’s actions.

Finally, the rules need to provide a means for grievance. The rules should set a procedure for any vendor who, having had action taken against them, or in disagreement over any rules, can take the issue to the full governing body for resolution. In this case, both the



market manager and the vendor should have equal opportunity to present their case, including any evidence each side may have to justify their actions. The market's governing body must listen with an open mind and make a fair ruling to resolve the dispute. This procedure should not be used often, but should exist as a last resort to resolve complaints that cannot be handled by the manager alone.

Additional Considerations

Each market must determine situations that are unique to their market or market organization and develop rules that support those situations.

For example, farmers markets that have a waiting list for vendor space must develop a policy for determining how space that becomes available will be allocated. The Rochester Public Market gives local farmers first consideration for space. The Ithaca Farmers Market has developed an Easy Entry Program, which provides a way for new vendors to gain access to the market. Whatever the process is, it must be defined in the rules so that all vendors understand.

Many farmers markets participate in nutrition programs, such as the Farmers Market Nutrition Program, both WIC and Senior, as well as SNAP (food stamp) programs and SNAP incentive coupons.

Participation in these programs provides access to fresh local foods to low-income consumers and provides vendors with an additional customer base. To ensure a high level of vendor participation in the nutrition programs and to ensure sufficient choices for consumers, some markets have chosen to require, within their rules, that all eligible vendors must participate

in the programs that the market has chosen, as a whole, to participate in. By putting this requirement in writing within the framework of the market rules, all the vendors are aware of their responsibility upfront and there are no surprises on market day.

Some farmers markets are managed by a membership organization that requires each vendor to join the organization and pay a membership fee, pledge labor, or a combination of both. The market rules should be clear to all participants just what is expected of them to be a member in good standing with the market. It is also important that the market define the benefits of market membership to all participants. For example, the Saratoga Farmers Market defines membership and its benefits in their rules:

From the Saratoga Farmers Market

*“Market stalls are awarded by the board of directors using criteria such as but not limited to:
Availability of space at the market
Seniority within the organization
The market's need (or oversupply) of a particular product
Members past performance and involvement in SFMA*

Potential vendors should be aware some markets might be full to capacity or have excess of a particular product. It is not unusual for potential vendors to be put on a waiting list until a market space becomes available.”

It is important that each market governing body identify the issues and situations that are pertinent to their market and develop a set of



rules that will govern the handling of each of the issues identified. There also should be a means to handle new situations that may arise.

This could be as simple as providing a means for grievances of actions by the market manager for review by the market's governing body and/or providing a means for making suggestions for new rules or rule changes that can then be voted on and accepted or rejected by the governing body.

Conclusion

The goal of a farmers market is to provide a public meeting space that allows farmers and vendors to sell their products directly to consumers, to provide a friendly environment with a diversity of product for consumers, and to be a good influence in the community. A clear, well-written set of rules helps the farmers market to ensure that each market participant

is doing their part to fulfill the market goals. Each participant knows what is expected of them, as well as what their rights are within the market.

The rules also provide a basis to resolve disputes and a defense against suits brought against markets for issues that arise in rules violations and their consequences.

If the rules are understandable, fair, uniformly enforced, and provide a means to cover the potential issues that may arise in a farmers market, they will help to keep the market intact, support its mission, and make it possible for the market to be run in an efficient, effective manner. The Farmers Market Federation of NY are not lawyers and these recommendations are for information is only and all proposed market rules should be reviewed by a lawyer prior to giving to your vendors.

References:

This material is based on a presentation, ""Fair and Enforceable Rules", by Jo Ellen Saumier, Adirondack Farmers Market Cooperative, at the Farmers Market Federation of NY's Annual Farmers Market Managers Training Conference, Nov 2015.

"Developing and Enforcing Effective Rules and Regulations," by Trina Pilonero, Sullivan County Area Farmers Markets Board Member, Farmers Market Federation of NY Farmers Market Managers workshop, Jan 18, 2007.

Appendix

Sample Farmers Market Rules



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Farmers Market Managers Professional Certification Program

Module 1: Nuts & Bolts of Market Management

Unit 1.3 Setting Up Recordkeeping Systems for Success

UNIT OVERVIEW

This unit will discuss best practices in setting up operational systems to track data that your market needs to collect and retain: records for vendor participation in nutrition programs, vendor attendance records, and any other information that will be helpful in ensuring long-term success of your farmers market.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

CONCEPTS

- Why is it important to track vendor participation in nutrition programs?
- Why is it important to set up systems to track data at my market?
- Understanding how good operational systems can inform budgeting decisions at your market

SKILLS

- How to create spreadsheets to track vendor attendance, participation in programs, etc.
- How to create a system for reimbursement for farmers and proper recordkeeping for your market



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Unit 1.3: Setting Up Recordkeeping Systems for Success

There are many reasons for a manager to set up good recordkeeping systems:

- Records will help maintain compliance for participation in state and federal nutrition programs or grant programs
- They can determine the usefulness of the marketing and outreach your market is conducting
- They help you make informed budgeting decisions
- They can help identify trends so that the market and your vendors can proactively plan
- They can help you discover your market's strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats
- They will make accounting and tax preparation tasks much easier when the time comes

The information that you gather will largely depend on your market organizational structure (or sponsor requirements), but in general the following discussion will help you to understand the kinds of information that needs to be tracked, why it is important to track this information, as well as suggestions for creating efficient tracking systems.

Vendor Information

Creating a system for vendor information will help you gather and maintain critical information on each of your vendors and farmers. Let's take a look at the information you

should be tracking on your market's vendors and why.

1. Basic contact information. There are always times you need to contact your vendors. It's time to renew the market application for a new season, there are changes in the market schedule, there is an opportunity for farmers that you want to share, etc. If you have appropriate and updated contact information you can relay the information they need to know. A mailing address is important. But you also want to know what their preferred method of contact is so that you can be assured of a timely response when one is needed.
2. Market application. Track the information you need to ensure that the vendor is in good standing with the market – completed vendor application, payment(s) made on vendor fees and all other fees required. You'll know at a glance who is up to date and who you need to follow up with to ensure your vendors have completed the process. It can also help you to recognize when you need to reach out for new vendors if your existing vendors are lagging behind in returning the market application and fees on a timely basis. It could be a sign that they do not plan to return to the market, but are not telling



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you. Note your communication dates to the vendors and their response (or lack thereof).

3. Who will represent the farm at the market? It's always a good idea to know who will be at the market and what their relationship is to the farm. Does this match your rules? Some markets require the farmer to represent himself, at least for a percentage of the market weeks.
4. What vehicle will be used at the market? Some markets have rules on where vendor vehicles are allowed to be parked. The manager will use this information to follow up on their rules and determine that each farmer is complying with the parking rules.
5. Has the farm submitted their crop plan? If the farm participates in the Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) they are required to submit a crop plan to their participating markets. The markets should keep this plan on file in the event their needs to be a farm visit to verify compliance to the rules of the FMNP. Markets will also use this crop plan to verify the farm is complying with their producer rules. The manager can compare the crop plan to what is on the farmers table each week to show that the farmer is selling what they produce, or complying with whatever the market rules allow.
6. Products they are planning to resell (if permission is required) if your market allows any reselling, you will want to track what each vendor is reselling and whether they have approval or paid necessary fees to allow the products to

be resold.

7. Insurance certificates. Most markets require their vendors to provide proof of insurance. Checking this off on the tracking sheet shows at a glance that the vendor has submitted their insurance certificate and it is on file with in the market office. Even better, rather than a check, indicate the expiration date. That way you will know at a glance when the certificate needs to be renewed. Set a date a month or so in advance of expiration to remind vendors that they need to renew and provide you with a new certificate.
8. Permits and licenses. There are a number of products sold at farmers markets that require special permits or licenses. For example, selling plants requires a greenhouse or nursery license from the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, as well as a sales tax permit; wines requires a farm winery permit from the NYS Liquor Authority, etc. Tracking the vendors' products and indicating whether they have all the required documents, with copies on file with the market is important. First, you are assured they all products being sold are being done so legally. Second, if an inspector comes to the market, you have all the necessary documentation to show inspectors. If you have this information on hand and already documented, it becomes easy for inspectors to know who they may need to visit in the market and they can then be shown that that vendor's permits and/or licenses are up to date. They will still need to visit the vendor, but the time they spend with each may be much less



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if they can get the basic information from the market itself. This is something that you can do as the manager to make the inspection much less intrusive for the vendor and much less disruptive of their market sales. See the appendices for a list of required licenses and permits for products sold at NYS farmers markets

Nutrition Program Participation

There are a number of nutrition programs operating in farmers markets. Each has their own funding source and administrator which spells out the requirements of the program. Tracking the farmers in your market on which programs they participate in or are eligible to participate in can help you direct customers to the appropriate vendors in the market. It will also give you the information you need to help promote nutrition program participation to

consumers. Let local agencies know what is operating in your market and when consumers can come to the market to use their benefits, whether SNAP benefits, WIC Vegetable and Fruit checks, Farmers Market Nutrition Coupons or Nutrition Incentive coupons.

Below is a chart that was designed by the Fredonia Farmers Market to track the various programs in their market, as well as who was actively participating in each. This chart is at the manager’s fingertips each market day so they can direct consumers to the appropriate farmers and vendors throughout the day. If a consumer comes to the market booth asking the manager where they can use their WIC checks, you can see clearly that it would be easy for the manager to refer them to farms rather than the consumer having to walk through the market and ask each farmer, getting a lot of no’s along the way and getting discouraged.

Nutrition Program Participation

VENDOR	EBT	FMNP	WIC	WIC Trained?	DUFB (nutrition incentives)
Farmer A	Y	N	N	N	N
Bakery B	Y	N	N	N	N
C Farm	Y	N	N	N	N
Maple Farm D	Y	N	N	N	N
Crafter E	N	N	N	N	N
F Farms	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

As you can see from this chart, it is simple for a manager to quickly tell which of their vendors participates in which nutrition program, whether they are state, national or local in nature. This can be customized however will work best for your market, depending on what

programs and incentives your market participates in.



SNAP

The information you can get from tracking SNAP customer sales and farmer redemptions can be helpful in a number of ways.

Tracking EBT sales is helpful in showing the strength of your market's SNAP program. A strong program will show a significant number of weekly SNAP sales, with repeat SNAP customers. Farmers' redemptions will show the SNAP program is providing them with a healthy level of SNAP sales and income, making it easier to recruit new farmers the following year.

But if your market is not experiencing these

traits, then tracking your SNAP sales will show that you need to improve your program. It could mean better promotion and outreach, which is always important. It can also show whether you are getting repeat customers. If not, then you need to do some customer surveys and find out why they are not coming back and what you can do to adjust your system, promotions or market to account for the reasons your customers are not returning after the first market visit.

Below is a sample chart created and used by the Fredonia Farmers Market to track EBT sales at their market.

Customer Daily Record Sheet

Note: Use a new customer record sheet for each market day

Attach a copy of your daily EBT batch report to this sheet.

Record totals (shaded row at the bottom) in your Google reporting spreadsheet each week

Use pencil, permanent ink, or ball-point pen (no inks that will run if wet)

Turn all customer record sheets in at the end of the season

Customers:

Vendors:

Produce Vendors:

Other Food Vendors:

Weather / EBT Issues / observations:

Non-Food Vendors:

Special Events (if any):

Market Name:

Market Date:

Ask customer using these exact words:

"Is this your first time using your SNAP

card at THIS market?" Y/N

TOKEN COUNT at START:

Last 5 digits of EBT Card #	\$\$\$ SNAP (\$ from EBT Card)	# SNAP Incentive (# of tokens)	\$\$\$ SNAP Incentive (\$ value of tokens)	Customer's First - time?
1.	\$		\$	
2.	\$		\$	
3.	\$		\$	
4.	\$		\$	
5.	\$		\$	
6.	\$		\$	



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Tracking vendor reimbursements of SNAP tokens can also give you valuable information. You'll know how much is actually being spent. Not only does this help you to understand the impact the program has on your farmers, but also whether your SNAP customers are using all their tokens or if you have a high level of unredeemed tokens you need to maintain on your accounts payable. Understanding the impact of the program on your farmers is helpful when recruiting additional farmers for your market. Any information that shows a farmer that participating in your market will be financially rewarding will help you recruit additional farmers to your market.

Tracking farmer redemptions of SNAP tokens can also give you an indication of the kinds of foods that SNAP consumers are spending their benefits on. Note the product category of the vendors who redeem tokens. That gives you a broad stroke view of consumer spending: are they buying fruits, vegetables, meats, baked goods, etc.? This information can be helpful when putting together nutrition education programs. If your SNAP consumers are purchasing mostly vegetables, then your cooking demonstrations and education should focus on vegetables – easy to follow recipes, guidance on how to choose different vegetables, storage tips, etc.

All of this information can help you secure sponsorships, grants and donations to help you administer and promote the SNAP program in your market. When you can show the impact on farmers, the numbers of SNAP consumers and the level of repeat SNAP purchases, along with general knowledge of how SNAP dollars are being used in your market, a sponsor is more apt to invest in you, whether to help them achieve their mission or to be a responsible civic partner. Without this data, you'll have a much harder time asking for and receiving new funding because potential funders and sponsors want to know how much impact their money is going to have in your market.

Here is a sample form that can be used to track SNAP/EBT reimbursements to vendors. Note all the information to be written down, including how many tokens are turned in, the amount farmers are reimbursed and the check number written. You can add additional sets of columns (Date redeemed through Date paid) and add a formula to the total to date column to track the ongoing sum total for each farmer. (Also be sure you are providing a receipt to farmers for the tokens you have accepted, but not yet paid on.) Fill this out each time you accept tokens and write checks so you don't get behind or confused.

Token Redemption Records

Farmer	Product Line	Date Redeemed	\$ Value of Redemption	Check #	Date Paid	Total to Date
Farmer A	Vegetables	6/1	40	3215	6/8	40
Farmer B	Maple	5/25	5	3106	6/1	5



Incentive Coupons

Many markets across New York State that operate SNAP also participate in various types of nutrition incentive coupons. These coupons are used by low income consumers to add purchasing power for their visits to farmers markets. The goal is to encourage them to shop at farmers markets to overcome obstacles of farmers market shopping, for example – dispelling the notion that markets are too expensive for and out of the reach of low income consumers.

Each funder of these incentive coupon programs requires some level of tracking. The funders typically use the information and data gained in tracking to justify funding the program so it is very important to get them the data they need – that’s what keeps these programs going! They will likely want to know the redemption rates for each of the markets participating in the incentive. If they are distributing coupons within the community surrounding a market and driving consumers to the market to use the coupons, they will probably want to track the

redemption rates for each distribution point. Overall, they want to see redemption rates of the coupons they fund to show their money was well spent, achieved the goal they set, and that consumers and farmers are experiencing a real and lasting benefit from the program.

Below is a sample Incentive coupon tracking form used by the Food Bank of Central New York for their CNY Health Bucks. This will give you the general idea that you can adapt to whatever program is running in your market. This form is completed for each and every SNAP purchase. In this case, they need to record the serial number of the coupons issued so they can track how markets are distributing the coupon. They also want to know the total EBT or SNAP purchase to verify the market is distributing incentive coupons according to their rules (in this case, coupons are distributed one coupon for every \$5 in SNAP tokens issued). Having a tracking system such as this keeps your staff accountable to run the program per the program administrator’s guidelines as well as prevents potential mistakes.

CNY Health Bucks Distribution

Date of Issuance	CNY Health Bucks Serial numbers issued to customer	Total EBT purchase	Customer Comments (if any)
5/15	CNY354716 – 718	\$10	This will help me feed the kids this week. Thank you.

Tracking Vendor Sales

This can sometimes be a difficult conversation with vendors as many will not want to report how much they are making at your market. They may be afraid that competitors will find

out their income or that the market manager will decide to raise fees when they see how much the farmers are making. You can design a scale of income using income brackets to help make them more comfortable. Have them



report their sales each week using these ranges. Knowing the sales per vendor is valuable. This information can be used to determine if your vendors are making more or less than the income benchmarks which have been identified by the Farmers Market Federation of NY and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Broome County. If they are underperforming according to the benchmarks, you can offer assistance to help them get the most out of their market experience. Can you help them set up more enticing displays, give them training in customer service, help them do a better job making their product more customer friendly; e.g. washing the produce for more eye-appeal; packaging meat in more appropriate size cuts, etc.?

This will also help you to determine when or if you need to bring in another farmer/vendor with similar products. For example, if the maple producer is making so-so sales, you would not want to bring in another maple producer that would take needed sales away from a struggling maple producer already loyal to your market. However, if the fruit farmer is making greater than average sales and you notice he is selling out early every week, then you know your market can support another fruit farmer.

Some markets will use an anonymous reporting system when farmers don't want to reveal their individual data – farmers simply drop their sales figures into a sealed box without the farmer's names on them. This will give you a broad sense of the sales going through your market, but not the success of each vendor. Knowing the broad impact for the market as a whole can still be very useful. This is important information to possess when completing grant applications or seeking sponsors for the market. You can provide them with the economic impact on the farmers and vendors, showing that your market is valuable to farmers and an economic driver in the area.

General Information

There are a number of factors that could potentially impact your market's success on any given day - things such as community events, weather issues, etc. Tracking this type of information will help you prepare for next year. What can you do to minimize the impact of these happenings on your market?

1. Weather. Weather is always a factor on open-air markets. Rain reduces customer traffic. Even the threat of bad weather can impact customer traffic. Only the most die-hard shoppers come out in the rain to shop for fresh, local food. Tracking weather events can help you define the impact that they have on the market and help you to brainstorm ideas that may lessen the impact. For example, can you do weather-specials on those days or give coupons to rainy day customers that can be used the following week. This could encourage more shoppers to show up in the rain!
2. Customer counts. Each week you should be looking at the customer traffic in the market. Are the numbers growing, or are they declining? These numbers, when compared to your other records about the market day will help you decide whether you are reaching your market's full potential customer base or if you need to do more outreach. Also, count customers throughout the day. Watching customer traffic can help you as a manager better understand if the hours of your market are well suited to customer needs. For example, if your market takes place from 9am-1pm on a Saturday, but the bulk of the customers come from 9am-10:30am, perhaps you would want to consider starting the market earlier or shortening the market so that vendors



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aren't sitting around and not making sales.

- a) As you are counting, pay attention to who is coming and how they are coming to the market. Are they taking a bus, walking, riding their bike, or driving a car? The method of transportation they use to get to the market will predict (to some degree) how much, and what type(s) of items, they can purchase. Finally, it is important to see what kinds of customers are typically shopping at your market. Is this a vacation area centered market? Or maybe most of your customers are retired? Maybe it's a lot of young families? All this information can help you better understand your customers, conduct the right kinds of outreach and publicity in the community, and better connect with community partners.
- b) You may also want to track customer purchases to help you better understand the types of farmers market products they are looking for and/or are willing to purchase. This can be done through anecdotal observation, or by partnering with the Farmers Market Federation of NY to conduct a *Rapid Market Assessment (RMA)*. Through the RMA a farmers market will better understand some key information about their customers, including reasons for visiting their farmers market, the types of products they are purchasing, and even how much on average they are spending. Remember that this isn't a double-blind scientific study by any means, but very meaningful information can be gleaned from

these informal surveys.

3. Community events. Many communities host community-wide events, such as concerts, cultural events, etc. the events are typically held on the weekends and can significantly impact the market by pulling customers away. Mark down the event happening that day. Comparing that to customer counts, farmer sales, SNAP sales, etc. you will see how the event has impacted the market. This allows you to prepare for the event the following year to reduce the market's impact. Can you become a part of the event, incorporating a visit to the market for the event attendees? For example, one community held a marathon during the Saturday market's hours. To minimize the impact, the manager had the market incorporated into the race. The Market became a checkpoint in the race, bringing runners through the market, which in turn brought the spectators to the market.
4. Market special events. Many markets host special events, music, craft demonstrations, cooking contests, etc. Note each event you hold and then compare this to your other records. Did the event boost customer traffic? Did it boost farmer sales? Sometimes events bring people to the market, but does not necessarily add to farmer sales and sometimes detracts from sales as people pay more attention to the event happenings vs. actually shopping at the market. Note the impact of your event and plan adjustments for the following year to assure you are bringing in more customers, introducing potential new customers to the market and increasing



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sales for the market vendors. Make sure the event budget is justified by an increase in sales.

5. Vendor attendance and vendor mix. Tracking vendor attendance and vendor mix (the numbers of each type of vendor - fruits, veggies, meat, dairy, wines, honey and maple syrup, baked goods etc.) will help you determine if all your vendors are only seasonal or might have product year-round. This would be important if you are considering adding a winter market. Tracking vendor mix is tied to customer purchasing habits as well as vendor sales. If a particular type of product is always selling out, or customers are asking for it – then this is an indicator to start looking for a vendor to help fill this need.

Market Budget

All good planning starts with an annual budget. Being able to make informed decisions about your market based on real numbers is the only

way to determine how marketing programs, vendor fee structure, or other income streams are impacting the financial health of your farmers market. You can easily create a balance sheet based on your season or fiscal year (whatever your organizational structure or sponsor requires) using all categories of income and expenses and then seeing what the bottom line looks like. Likely categories of income would be: vendor fees, vendor membership dues, donations/sponsorships, special events, reimbursement of EBT processing fees, grants, etc... Likely categories of expenses would be: market liability insurance, rental for facility, permits/licenses to operate the market, marketing expenses, EBT processing fees, postage, professional development for manager, manager salary, port-a-john (if no bathroom on-site), utilities, equipment, Farmers Market Federation of NY membership dues, payments to musicians and other vendors, special events expenses, etc... Below is a sample budget from the Fredonia Farmers Market. Use this as a guide to create your own market budget.



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**Fredonia Farmers Market
Fiscal Year 2015**

	Summer Market	Winter Market	Admin / General	Marketing / Fundraising	Total	% of total
INCOME					-	
Table / Space Fees	6,250	3,240			9,490	85%
Membership Dues	770	100			870	8%
Fundraising		500			500	4%
Grants					-	0%
Donations		250			250	2%
Sponsorship	50				50	0%
Total Revenue	7,070	4,090	-	-	11,160	100%
EXPENSES						
Facility Rental Fees		2,700			2,700	26.7%
Market Manager	1,728	1,944			3,672	36.4%
Advertising	860	640			1,500	14.9%
Education/Entertainment/Events	200	100			300	3.0%
Licenses/Professional Fees			350		350	3.5%
Liability Insurance			275		275	2.7%
Office Supplies			270		270	2.7%
Dues & Subscriptions			225		225	2.2%
Equip Repair & Replacement	410				410	4.1%
Banking			45		45	0.4%
Fundraising		350			350	3.5%
Total Expenses	3,198	5,734	1,165	-	10,097	100.0 %
NET INCOME (LOSS)	3,872	(1,644)	(1,165)	-	1,063	
Profit (Loss) Margin					10%	



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This type of a budget can be simply done in excel and then manipulated depending on if you want to add or delete certain income or expense categories. You can also use it to create pie charts which are visually a little easier to read and also make understanding the budget easier for your board and other stakeholders. A simple tally will indicate the financial health of the market and can help you as a manager make a decision about where to allocate funds in the following year, or if income categories need to be increased (for example – raising vendor fees or securing more sponsorships), or even if additional vendors could be added. You should remember that some expenses you cannot control, such as market liability insurance, licenses, etc. But other categories you can control somewhat, and by looking at your budget and reevaluating what is important, you can begin to modify your budget to better reflect the needs of your market and help it become stronger each year.

A budget can tell you other things, as well. It can show if one of your seasons is carrying another season financially. For example, is your summer season making money, and your winter season is losing money, but the summer is making enough to make up the difference so you end up in the black? If so this should tell a story of where you may need to put some additional income/energy. Perhaps you need to focus more resources on advertising during the winter months? Or perhaps not have as many market days? As you can see in Fredonia’s example budget, the winter season is in the red

because they have to rent a facility in the winter whereas they do not pay rent in the summer. In that case, you’d want to continue looking for a donated space or see if you can find an alternate location with lower fees. Your budget can also tell you if a larger percentage of your income is concentrated in a certain category. For instance, if vendor fees come in at 85% of the market’s income; and the expenses are heavily loaded in the market manager salary and facility rental fee category at 63.1%, a next step might be to look at renegotiating the rental rate the market pays for the facility during the season, or increasing the amount of sponsorship to offset the cost of advertising.

As we have shown throughout this section, good recordkeeping is a key element to farmers market success. Keeping basic records allows you to contact your vendors with crucial information and updates. Keeping good records when it comes to nutrition and incentive programs allows you to provide important data to community partners and compliance inspectors and make sure your market keeps operating smoothly. Careful examination of your budget records will allow you to manage your market in the best way possible, making crucial decisions for the benefit of your customers and vendors overall. It may not seem like there is time to keep good records in the heat of the moment when you are multitasking, but it is critical to make the time and keep your records up to date - for all of the reasons mentioned above!

Reference:

Based on presentation given by Margaret Bruegel, President of the Fredonia Farmers Market, at the Farmers Market Federation of NY’s Annual Farmers Market Managers Training Conference, Nov 2015.

Appendix:

Required Vendor Licenses, permits and certificates





Farmers Market Managers Professional Certification Program

Module 1: Nuts & Bolts of Market Management

Unit 1.4 Understanding Liability Insurance

UNIT OVERVIEW

This unit will emphasize the risk management concepts associated with managing a farmers market. These range from tent set up to food safety to disaster preparedness. After completion of this section, a farmers market manager will be able to identify the risks in the market, complete a risk management checklist and understand how to mitigate existing and possible risks to minimize issues which may arise during the normal course of operations.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

CONCEPTS

- Why a farmers market and its vendors should carry insurance
- What is a risk management assessment of my farmers market

SKILLS

- How to identify the risks within your farmers market
- How to structure a risk management policy for your farmers market
- How to conduct a risk management assessment for your farmers market



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Unit 1.4: Understanding Liability Insurance

Liability insurance is a matter worthy of serious consideration by all farmers markets. Whether you have it, or you are thinking of getting it, it is important to understand liability insurance and the ways that it protects you and your market. This article will attempt to answer common questions concerning liability insurance as well as provide examples of common situations where liability insurance provides farmers market protection.

Liability insurance extends coverage to a person, business, or other entity to cover bodily injury or property damage. The term *bodily injury* includes the cost of care following an accident, the loss of service one might endure as a result of that accident, and the cost of restitution should the accident take a life or permanently injure someone. The term *property damage* includes both the loss of property and the loss of use of a property.

For example, Joe Smith, a customer at the farmers market, slips and falls in front of an apple vendor's booth. He breaks his leg as well as his iPhone, which is in his pocket.

He then sues for the cost of the hospital bills as well as the lost wages incurred from being unable to walk, let alone do his job as an independent roofing contractor. In this part of his claim, Joe is suing for the cost of care associated with his fall and the loss of service, which is covered under bodily injury.

Furthermore, Joe also sues for the cost of replacing his broken iPhone and the lost business incurred due to losing all of his customer data that was stored on his iPhone. In this part of his claim, Joe is suing for property damage and the loss of property use. If Joe were to win this suit, the farmers market liability insurance would cover these damages.

The next step in Joe's claim will be to decide who to sue. Is it the market itself, the apple vendor whose booth he was standing in front of, or the municipality who owns the lot that the farmers market operates in? In all likelihood, Joe will sue everyone that he can to test where the liability falls and have a greater chance of winning restitution from that party (or multiple parties). We see this pattern often with farmers market lawsuits. The lawyer representing Joe will want the greatest likelihood of winning which means suing all parties involved.

For this reason, many farmers markets are insured as a market and also require that their vendors be insured to protect themselves and the market from a lawsuit in the event of an accident where both parties are sued. Liability insurance not only covers the damages outlined above, it covers the cost of investigating claims that may turn into a lawsuit and the attorney fees associated with protecting the person, business, or entity being sued. These expenses encompass the bulk of the money that actually



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gets paid out on claims as most of these kinds of cases are settled out of court.

Another level of protection for the market is an insurance concept called “additional insured.” Additional insured simply means other parties that are covered under your policy in the event of a covered incident. What that means for markets is that markets can require their vendors to have policies listing the market and/or the market location and/or the market manager as an additional insured on their policy. This additional level of protection does not mean that the market doesn’t need its own liability insurance for cases where vendors are not also named, but rather, it provides an additional level of protection for the market in the case that someone were to list both the vendor and the market in a single suit. Most markets do require their vendors have insurance which lists the market as additional insured.



In Joe’s suit in our example, the next step will involve a claims investigator who will try to determine what happened during the incident at the market. They might interview witnesses, talk to the market manager, and/or visit the site of the fall to try to reconstruct the scene. They would be trying to determine fault in Joe’s fall.

Perhaps there was a pothole in front of that vendor’s booth. Perhaps a witness noticed that there were many boxes of apples sticking out into the walkway at the time of Joe’s fall. The circumstances surrounding the fall may help to determine who is really liable – i.e. if there was a pothole, the fault may belong with the municipality but if there were boxes of product sticking out into the walkway, the fault may very well lie with that specific vendor. The cost of this investigation would be covered by the liability insurance. Once the investigation is completed, the defendant will need an attorney to either work out a settlement or defend them in court. Liability insurance also covers these attorney fees, which can be quite pricey.

Now that we understand the need for farmers market liability insurance, let’s talk about the costs involved for both market and vendor policies. A typical market policy can run anywhere from \$250 to \$1000 or more for one year/season. Some markets are lucky in that the insurance their sponsor or agency or location has already covers the operations of the market – be sure to check whether this is the case before purchasing your policy. Make sure the insurance covers the activities of the market and not just the location itself. When it comes to vendor liability insurance, the premium will cost between \$400 and \$500 each year and will cover the vendor for the entire 12 months at any markets they attend. Some policies have additional costs for extra paperwork to add additional insureds or a “per market” fee and some don’t, so we recommend shopping around for the best pricing for your unique situation. Some vendors are able to add a rider to their home insurance or farm insurance policy to cover their farmers market vending liability. Check with your providers and see if that is something they offer because bundling may help reduce the cost. In some cases



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though, it may in fact be more expensive than a standalone policy. Despite the fact that many vendors only sell a few months out of the year, they are still covered for 12 months due to the way that the insurance system is set up and there is generally no way to get a discount for operating a small portion of the year, even when cancelling the policy early. In our example, Tom Jones is the apple vendor at the market Joe attends and he is a small local grower. While \$400 each year often seems like a strain on his budget, after Joe's fall, Tom was glad that the market required he take the precaution. Had he been uninsured, he might have lost his entire orchard and his very livelihood as a result of Joe's lawsuit.

Often when you call to purchase insurance, the company will ask how much insurance you want to buy. What level of coverage do you need? Everyone needs a different level of insurance coverage based on their exposure and their net worth, but it is common in the insurance industry to default to \$1 million in coverage. The *Commercial General Liability (CGL) Policy* is the most common policy used for insuring farmers markets and it normally covers up to \$1 million for each claim, with a maximum payment of \$2 million per policy period. Many markets also require their vendors to have a \$1 million insurance policy although some require more or less depending on the needs of the market.

Let's look at another example. Tom has three employees, 100 apple trees, and one tractor. He has a farm stand and apple picking on his property in addition to selling at the farmers market. While Tom's net worth is not very high, he considers his exposure high since his customers often come onto his property to pick apples. Tom has a CGL policy.

Tom is considering offering pony rides for children on his property in addition to his existing offerings. He knows that this is risky and is afraid that children might get hurt. He is not sure that his current policy will be enough to cover this additional risk. If Tom gets the ponies, he thinks he will need a \$2 million umbrella.

An umbrella is an extension of coverage. While Tom's CGL still applies, if he were to get the \$2 million umbrella, he could go over his policy up to \$2 million. For example, if Joe's lawsuit ended up costing him \$1.5 million to settle, Tom would be able to take the additional half a million from his umbrella coverage. Then, if he had to deal with a second claim in that policy period, he would still have \$1 million from his CGL for a second claim as well as another \$1.5 million remaining in umbrella coverage.

Since many farmers markets require that their vendors be insured, it is important for managers to stay updated on the insurance status of the vendors in their market. For this reason, 60 days before a policy expires, a notice is sent to all parties listed as additional insured. If the policy is being canceled due to non-payment, notice is sent 30 days prior to cancellation. If liability insurance is a requirement at the market, it is the manager's responsibility to be sure that only insured vendors participate in the market and vendors who are at risk of being removed from the market due to nonpayment are promptly notified. If a vendor's insurance has lapsed and the market manager did not take action, the market or the manager could be held liable in the event of a loss.

Risk Management

It is important for market managers to perform risk management assessment and risk management techniques at their market in



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order to reduce negligence and loss. Every precaution must be taken to ensure the safety of everyone involved in the farmers market. Addressing risk management not only prevents accidents, it protects the market from being sued in the event of an accident. It removes the burden of fault from the market's shoulders. A market manager can use signage to their advantage. Cones and rope help to keep patrons going in the right direction and out of restricted areas where they might get hurt. If there is a problem or safety hazard in the facility, it should be addressed immediately, and a written copy of the report should be kept, showing that every preventive measure was taken.



*Is this safe for your customer walk-way into the market?
Who will be responsible for repairs? Who will be
responsible should some be hurt?*

Going back to our first example, let's consider a different scenario. A few weeks before Joe fell at the farmers market, the market manager, Mike, decided to perform risk management at his market. He took a checklist and he walked through the market with an eye out for potential hazards. He noticed that the aisles were congested, causing patrons to push their way through crowds. Mike also noticed that truck beds were left open and unattended. He

realized that there was no emergency plan posted; if there were a fire, people would not know the fastest way to get out.

Mike decided to ease the flow of traffic by making aisles one directional. He posted large orange arrows showing the way. He used cones and rope to keep patrons in safe areas and aisles. Mike made sure that all truck beds were away from the flow of traffic. He also advised the vendors to close the doors to their trailers when they leave the truck to deter pedestrians from trying to climb in. Finally, Mike made a comprehensive evacuation plan in case of an emergency. He posted it at every entrance and gave a copy to every vendor and employee.

When incidents do occur, it is wise to report them as soon as possible in order to report all of the details as accurately as possible. Even if it seems like a small incident that will not turn into a lawsuit, at the very least an incident report should be written and kept on file. The sooner details are recorded, the less likely they are to be forgotten.

In the accident mentioned earlier, Joe fell in front of Tom's booth because he was trying to push against the flow of human traffic while boxes were sticking out into the aisle. After risk management was performed though, there were cones and rope keeping people in the aisles as well as orange arrows pointing patrons in the same direction through the market. When Joe fell, the market manager was called over; he filled out an incident report and took pictures of the area surrounding the fall. Joe was hurt, angry, and was threatening to sue. The manager spoke with him calmly and told him about the market's emergency management plan. After the ambulance took Joe away, the market manager called his insurance company to report the incident and advised Tom to do the same. The market's



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liability may have been reduced and they may be more likely to win their case because of the mitigating factors of the arrows and the cones as well as the manager's prompt response to the situation.

We hope these examples have been helpful in illustrating some common situations involving liability and insurance at farmers markets. Please keep in mind, though, that there are a great number of things that go into liability insurance. This was only an overview. If you have further questions, you should call your insurance agent for a more detailed explanation or contact an agent in your area.

Common Insurance Definitions:

Additional Insured: An individual or entity that is not automatically included as insured under another's policy, but may be named providing that entity a certain degree of protection.

Certificate of Insurance: A document that indicates your coverage amounts, carriers, and policy effective dates.

Insured: The party to whom the insurance company agrees to cover losses, provides benefits, or renders services.

Liability Insurance: Insurance that pays on behalf of an insured for loss due to negligence that is deemed the responsibility of the insured.

Market Insurance: Coverage for the market premises, market organization, and its employees. Policy offers basic "slip and fall" coverage as well as product liability.

Coverage extends to multiple locations under one market umbrella, but each location shares the limits of coverage.

Negligence: Failure to use that degree of care that an ordinary person of reasonable prudence would exercise in like circumstances.

Umbrella Liability Policy: A liability policy designed to provide liability protection above and beyond that provided by standard liability contracts.

Vendor Insurance: Provides general liability or "slip and fall" coverage to the individual vendor within the market. Policy coverage is extended to all named markets vendor participates in.

References:

Based on presentation given by Dick Miller, Farm Family Insurance, at the Farmers Market Federation of NY's Annual Farmers Market Managers Training Conference, Nov 2015.

Appendix:

Risk Management Checklist
Incident Report Template



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Farmers Market Managers Professional Certification Program

Module 1: Nuts and Bolts of Managing Markets

Unit 1.5 Organizational Models for Farmers Markets

UNIT OVERVIEW

This unit will build understanding of the benefits of creating legal structures to farmers markets, along with a discussion of the many forms of organizational structures used by farmers markets. After reading this document you will be better able to create the organizational structure that is appropriate for your market, and properly reflects your mission and values.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

CONCEPTS

- Understand the pros and cons of various types of organizational structures for farmers markets
- Understand the benefits of an organizational structure for a farmers market in terms of sustainability

SKILLS

- Ability to determine the most appropriate organizational structure for the farmers market
- Ability to create the documents and policies for setting up a legal incorporation for a farmers market



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Unit 1.5: Organizational Models for Farmers Markets

Farmers markets are all unique. They have their own missions and goals that drive their rules and operations. They are responsive to their own community's needs, whether that involves providing access to healthy food for an underserved community, providing marketing opportunities for local agriculture, or bringing the community together and driving the local economy, each market serves its own unique purpose.

So too, each market structures itself in their own unique way to provide a framework for their market operations and ensure the success and sustainability of the market. However, there are many commonalities in farmers market organizational structures as well. We will attempt to look at the various forms of organizational structures that people in New York State use to set up farmers markets and allow you to choose which works best for your own community market, or combine multiple structures to create a new structure that best fits your own unique market.

Why Organize?

First, let's talk about why to create a structure at all. Some people starting a market may be tempted to cut corners and just create an ad hoc system without defining any kind of market structure at all. This would not be recommended. Creating a defined

organizational structure creates a unified, organized framework for market operations that sets your market up for success in a number of ways.

An organizational structure will force you to define your mission for the market, whatever that may be. Your mission statement is your guiding principle. It tells people who you are and what you plan to accomplish. The mission statement will guide the development of your policies and procedures in ways that help you to fulfill the mission.

Defined organizational structures also delineate the various roles in the market. We often see confusion between the role of the market manager and board members. But a defined structure will clearly delineate who plays each role in the market, eliminating confusion between the different players, as well as the farmers in your market. This is important in keeping order in the market. When everyone has a defined role, the farmers and participants in the market know where their directions are coming from and who to turn to when help is needed. They'll be less likely to go to the wrong person or follow the wrong procedure in case of an issue or grievance, making it a lot easier for you to manage any situation that may come up.

An organizational structure is also back up for the market manager, as well as the farmers.



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One of the organizational structure documents would be the market's rules. These outline the rights and responsibilities of the market's vendors, whether they are farmers, bakers, crafters or any other type of market participants. Roles for all market players are defined and everyone knows what is expected of themselves and others.

Having worked with hundreds of markets over the years, we often see markets that lack organizational structures at all (or lack well-defined structures) fail within the first 5 years. Often this is due to a change of leadership. When the original organizer/manager is ready to step down, no succession plan is in place to allow for this type of transition. Without leadership, the market will not flourish. But a well-run organization will include succession planning as part of their organizational system and will have plans in place for any eventuality such as the loss of important staff and partners.

We also see that markets without supportive structures flounder when conflicts within the market occur. Problems between farmers and managers arise and are not always dealt with expeditiously and appropriately. Maybe it's a personality issue, maybe it's a legitimate complaint about unfair treatment, maybe its unfounded belly aching. But without a structure in place to deal with these types of conflicts, the end result can be the destruction of the market. Remember, customers do not want to deal with internal strife in a market and they should never be witness to these kinds of discussions.

Finally, having a defined organizational structure adds professionalism to the market. This oft-forgotten concept is important when trying to garner support for the market. It's

easier to show a municipality that your market is a serious business and worth their support when it comes to space, garbage pickup, street closure, etc., when you can show that you are a well-organized entity. The same is true for any organization or potential funder that you might encounter. It adds to their confidence in you as a market and encourages their support. They can see that you aren't just a "fly-by-night idea" - that your market organizers are serious and that your market plans on being an important fixture in the community for many years to come.

Non Profit Models

Many farmers markets think of themselves as nonprofit organizations because their primary mission is not to make money but to serve the community. Some markets will go through the full legal route, establishing themselves as a full-fledged independent nonprofit organization. Others will use a sponsoring agency that is a legal nonprofit, and share their nonprofit status as an offshoot or sub-section of their organization.

Per Legalzoom.com:

A nonprofit corporation is a special type of corporation that has been organized to meet specific tax-exempt purposes. To qualify for nonprofit status, your corporation must be formed to benefit: 1) the public, 2) a specific group of individuals, or 3) the membership of a nonprofit.

There are several advantages to incorporating the market. First, to incorporate, the market must establish a set of bylaws. The bylaws are critical in terms of defining how the market



organization will be set up and how it will run. In essence, bylaws give the organization a transparent framework to their operations. The bylaws will set up a governing structure, so everyone involved knows how the organization will be governed and who is qualified to be part of that governing body. This is advantageous in that a governing body provides back up for the market manager. It is also a living entity that pulls the market through bad times – whether financial, operational (loss of a manager etc.), or other outside influences that may have an impact on the market.

A critical piece of the bylaws is the market’s mission statement. This is the statement that tells everyone who the market is and what their purpose is. Why does your market exist? This mission statement, featured prominently in the bylaws, is the driving force behind all market decisions. Every decision, every policy should advance the mission of the market. If the market is contemplating adding a program that organizes and performs farm tours for market consumers the first question should be: Does this advance your mission? It certainly would if your mission includes building greater understanding of local agriculture. But if your mission is solely to support the development of Main Street business, then maybe it does not. It is your mission that will help you make key market decisions.

Westside Farmers Market Mission

The Westside Farmers Market promotes the individual and social health of our community by creating access to fresh, local foods in a vibrant and information, weekly gathering in our urban neighborhood.

Another advantage to incorporation is that of liability. The corporation is an entity of itself, separate and distinct from its officers and employees. As its own entity a corporation shelters the personal assets of the people behind the corporation – board members, staff etc. The corporation becomes liable for its own debts, rather than the burden falling on the “owners.” This includes debts incurred when losing a lawsuit- the corporation is liable, not the individuals behind the corporation. Of course, there are cases where the veil of incorporation will not apply, but these are cases where the board, CEO, etc., has acted in a fraudulent or willfully wrongful manner. For example, if the board decides to limit participation in the market to board members only and removes all others from the market. One or more of the ousted vendors may sue the market for wrongful termination and loss of income. In this case, the individuals behind the corporation could be personally liable because they voted in a policy that was inappropriate, in though, where the market manager and board have done nothing wrong but someone sues the corporation for a loss – your board, manager, and employees will be protected by the veil of incorporation and you will not be held personally liable.

NonProfit Models: Vendor Driven

Bylaws will also define the makeup of your board of directors. Some markets believe the best board is a vendor-only board of directors. That way the board understands the issues that the farmers and vendors face in the market and can protect the interests of the farmers. The Saratoga Farmers Market is an example of a market that is a vendor-driven board. They have been in operation since 1978 and have



developed a highly successful market for their farmers and their community. They strongly believe in the vendor-driven model. But while their market has had success with this model, there are some significant concerns when it comes to a solely vendor-driven board.

- There is an inherent conflict of interest when vendor board members vote on issues before the board that will impact their business. For example, some boards vote on adding new vendors to the market. Some vendor board members may be impacted by adding a new vendor with a similar product. This creates a conflict of interest.
- An all vendor board of directors is contrary to nonprofit definitions in US Code - a majority of board members must be independent from the organization – free from family, business or financial ties. Vendors all have business ties to the organization.
- A board comprised strictly of market vendors may have a narrow view of the market, its policies and practices, thus limiting its potential as a community asset.
- Decisions are often slow in coming as farmers are not apt to convene a board meeting to address market issues during the busy farming months.

NonProfit Models: Community Driven

An alternative to a vendor-driven board is one that is community driven: one with community representation; maybe a market consumer, a local lawyer, a local health and nutrition advocate, a municipal representative, etc. The Westside Farmers Market in Rochester is an

excellent example of a community driven market. They use a committee rather than a board of directors, but the committee is inclusive of community organizers, consumers, and local business people. The goal is to use a diversity of people to govern the market, properly representing the diversity of the community, and to build a market and programs that reflect the community and address its needs.

- A community driven market will bring a much broader view of the market and its role within the community to the board and decisions can then be made based on diversified input from the board rather than from a single interest group or population segment.
- This type of board also eliminates potential conflicts of interest. When farmer/vendor members are on the board, they can recuse themselves from votes on matters that impact them personally.
- Having the community represented on the board provides greater opportunity for community support. For example, a municipal leader on the board will help the market navigate local regulations and find ways to help the market, financially, with support services or with zoning or licensing issues. Getting the community at large involved gives them a stake in the market's viability and success.

NonProfit Models: Independently Owned

Some incorporated, nonprofit markets are independently owned, often by the vendors of the market. The Ithaca Farmers Market and the



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Adirondack Farmers Market Cooperative are examples of independently owned markets. Each market has set up a unique governing body and structure that reflects the purpose of their markets.

There are certain advantages to this set-up:

- The organization defines the roles of the market board, as well as the manager through their bylaws. It eliminates any confusion over the roles of each party.
- The board and the organizational documents provide guidance and support for the market and its management team.
- One way it supports management is to provide a grievance process for farmers – to be heard by the board and given due process when issues arise.
- The organizational documents should provide plans for the continuity of management: a succession plan of some sort to avoid chaos in the event of a sudden loss of manager or board president.
- The organizational documents spell out the policies and procedures of the market to ensure success and a long life to the market.

There are challenges to this type of structure, as well.

- As discussed earlier, board members who are also vendors in the market are often asked to vote on issues that constitute a conflict of interest.
- It is not unusual for a board, under this type of structure, to micromanage the

market rather than sticking to policy issues and supporting the manager in their day to day operation of the market.

- Board balance means a broad representation on the board that includes members of the community, as well as vendors.

NonProfit Models: Sponsored Markets

Some incorporated, nonprofit markets operate under the umbrella of another nonprofit, such as a Chamber of Commerce or Community Action Program or maybe even a government agency. For example, The Rochester Public Market is operated by the City of Rochester and the Oneida County Public Market is operated by the Oneida County legislature. Both markets are very successful and operate with some degree of independence. However, they must still operate within the guidelines or framework given them by the agencies operating them.



Others use local nonprofits as their sponsor, with definite advantages.

- The market can take advantage of shared services with the parent organization – staff time, equipment,



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space/property, software, shared vendors etc.

- The market does not have to go through the complicated and expensive incorporation process that a standalone organization would.
- The parent organization already has clear policies and procedures and lends their expertise and experiences to the market.
- The market shares in the parent organization's tax status, meaning no expensive and lengthy incorporation and IRS filing. And if the parent is a charitable nonprofit or a 501(c)3, the market can apply for grants under the parent organization's lead.

There are also challenges, as well.

- As a program of a parent organization, the market may lack independence. Before a policy can be changed or a new program implemented, it may require approval by the parent.
- A parent organization has its own mission, which may be similar to the market, but not identical. Their actions may not always be in line with the market's mission. For example, a parent organization may assume the fees paid by farmers to participate in the market may be used for purposes other than the supporting the market. You may have to be an advocate to make sure the parent organization is supporting your market and not vice versa.



It is important to recognize the opportunities, as well as the challenges when approaching a nonprofit organization to sponsor a market. No two sponsorships are alike and all points are open to negotiation. The markets operating in Cortland County work closely with a sponsoring agency, Community Action Program of Cortland County (CAPCO). The markets have negotiated with CAPCO to sponsor the SNAP programs for their markets. Others may operate with a local nonprofit as their fiscal sponsor, such as the Westside Farmers Market in Rochester. Other markets, like the Downtown Syracuse Farmers Market wholly operate under the umbrella of a nonprofit organization. The Downtown Committee of Syracuse is a nonprofit that supports the downtown business district. Establishing a farmers market was part of their efforts to bring more people to the downtown area. The market, as a program of the Downtown Committee, benefits from their efforts, including the fact that they provide a paid manager. Understanding your market's needs and challenges will help you to negotiate a sponsorship that is beneficial to both the parent organization and the farmers market.

NonProfit Model: Unincorporated Markets



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Some markets choose not to incorporate. While this is technically not acceptable, it is often used by smaller markets that do not generate much income for the market organization itself. Often these markets operate without boards of directors and without organizational documents that help govern the market, such as bylaws.

Of course, there are advantages with this loose structure:

- It is the easiest and cheapest way to start a market. No costs are incurred for incorporating or filing with IRS and no time is spent drawing up bylaws and holding meetings for ratification of bylaws.
- The market is often led by the market organizer, who shows a high level of energy and enthusiasm since the market is their “baby” or pet project.
- These markets are also often vendor led markets, meaning the vendors together started the market and one of the vendors acts as the market manager. The rules, policies and procedures reflect the values and needs of the group of vendors involved.

But there are significant challenges to operating a farmers market without incorporating that should, in most cases, negate the use of this option:

- There are no liability protections for the market management and staff as there are under incorporation.
- When the market is operated by one person, and especially when the manager is also a vendor, there is no impartial person to arbitrate conflicts.

As a result, we often see the vendors split and create a new, competing market. As the markets compete for farmers and customers, no one wins. Ultimately one or both of the markets will fail.

- Finally, we know that enthusiasm and volunteerism fades. Often within 5 years, the market organizer is burnt out and will step down. With this type of structure there are often no or very little provisions for management succession. Nor has there been any training or mentoring of a potential successor. This is a common way we see markets fail.

NonProfit Model: Volunteer Markets

Many of the market managers across New York State are volunteers. They are not officially paid, although some may receive “payments” in-kind of produce from their vendors or reduced fees on their own market booths. Operating a market with a volunteer manager is fast and easy way to get a market started. Often there is little or no funding to pay a manager and using a volunteer lets a market begin operating until such time as it can afford a paid manager. But operating a market with a volunteer manager can be risky and comes with several disadvantages:

- Often the volunteer has no management back-up that they would get from a board of directors or a market sponsor. This means the market is subject to their rulings as a “one-man show” with no oversight or checks existing when conflicts or power struggles arise.



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- As we have mentioned earlier, volunteerism fades and the market will eventually be left looking for a new manager. If plans are not put in place to handle this eventuality, it leaves the market at risk for failure or collapse.
- Along with no support for the manager, this system often creates no plans, policies or procedures that provide for future growth of the market and no means to respond to issues that may threaten the market. The manager may be holding down multiple jobs and responsibilities outside his/her assignment at the market and as such, may do the bare minimum to keep the market running. This is not the ideal scenario to ensure a successful, growing market.
- Most volunteer markets do not have a board of directors or management committee of some kind. Decision making is done in one of two ways: either by consensus of the market vendors or by giving the manager unilateral authority. The vendor consensus method is often quite slow in that each vendor needs to be apprised of the situation and polled before a decision can be reached. Conversely, giving the manager the full authority to make decisions on their own can be equally dangerous as their decision may not be good for the whole. They may be influenced by individual vendors that may sway their decisions or they may be acting based on personal preferences or preconceptions, rather than on the good of the whole market.
- Perhaps most importantly, volunteer managers are, technically, not legal in New York State unless you are a charitable nonprofit organization or under the umbrella of one. Per NYS Labor Department, volunteer labor is only legal under a registered nonprofit. You can't legally volunteer for a for-profit business or other entity and no one can take away the workers' rights to be paid, not even the worker themselves. Payment must be, at a minimum, the equivalent of minimum wage. While the Department of Labor may not choose to sanction a volunteer market, just because they haven't in the past does not mean that they won't at some point in the future. It is important to understand the legalities and rights of all involved so you are not caught off-guard.

There are a lot of reasons a manager will agree to manage a market on a volunteer basis. Some are community organizers with a strong belief that what they are doing benefits their community. Some, such as the manager of the Vestal Farmers Market, is a vendor who also takes on the role of manager and manages the market to ensure its continuation, knowing that it can often be a thankless job, but one that is important for local farmers. Others feel a strong commitment to supporting local agriculture and choose to manage a market to give local farmers a venue to reach community residents. But it is important to understand that if a market starts with a volunteer manager, it is highly recommended that plans be in place to transition to a paid position as quickly as possible.





- The management company has a strong motivation for success. Their organizational structure and policies are clearly built to guarantee market success, growth and longevity.
- Staff members are paid. They are less likely to burn out than volunteers and provide continuity in management. Even when turnover occurs, the management company is able to step in to provide management until a new manager can be hired and trained.

As in all methods of organizational structure, being operated by a management company does have its challenges. The management company may put policies and procedures in place that may not always be consistent with farmer/vendors needs or wants. For example, farmers may sometimes feel that policies and decisions are made more for building profits for the management company than creating a good market experience and profitable sales venue for the farmers.

For Profit Models

While nonprofit models are most often used as an organization structure for a farmers market, there are successful examples of for-profit organizations operating farmers markets. In this case, the market is operated by a management company that earns their living through the vendor fees and other funding support given for operating markets.

Markets operated by a management company have many key benefits:

- The managers are trained and supported by professionals. Since the company has a vested interest in the success of the market, they are more likely to provide training and support for their market managers.

Down to Earth Markets is a farmers market management company in Westchester county. They are a for profit organization running 15 farmers markets in the lower Hudson Valley and New York City. The mission of Down to Earth is to connect shoppers with regional farms and food producers. Farmers markets support their mission. Their markets are successful because they benefit from the experience and careful attention that the management company provides to their markets.

Non-Traditional Models: YouthMarkets

Youthmarkets or Urban farm stands are popping up in densely populated, poor neighborhoods with little or no access to healthy foods. Some organizations will operate the farm stand as a means to fulfill their anti-



hunger or health mission, providing access to healthy, locally grown foods through their YouthMarkets. Others will use an urban farm stand as a way to teach youth about agriculture, food and entrepreneurship.

Typically the produce at these markets comes from multiple farmers, either dropped off by the farmer or picked up at central sites. It can either be an outright purchase for resale or sold on consignment.



No matter whether the sales staff are members of the organization or community youth, they need training in salesmanship, customer service and particularly training about the products so they can talk knowledgeably to their customers.

The YouthMarket model can be very effective in terms of training future farmers. Learning about the various fruits and vegetables can build enthusiasm and interest in farming. It is also a great way to build community, providing a valuable service by bringing healthy food into a neighborhood that is lacking good food. Bringing a diverse customer base to the market is also an effective means to build community.

Finally, you need to look at the legal issues of operating a YouthMarket. You will be working with minors, so there will be labor laws that govern what you do and when you do it. You will also need to look at liability issues – not just for the general liability issues of selling direct to consumers, but also the liability of having minors on the job. If you’re purchasing produce from farmers, at times you could be left holding product that you can’t sell and operating at a loss. These issues can be considered some of the disadvantages of operating as a youthmarket.

Non-Traditional Models: Mobile Markets

Mobile markets are increasingly popular as they bring the food to the people, rather than requiring consumers to travel to a traditional, stationary market. There are two main models of mobile markets: nonprofit operations and private ownership.

One example of a nonprofit mobile market, Foodlink in Rochester operates Curbside Markets, a mobile market whose mission is to make healthy food accessible to low income consumers in their region. To accomplish this, they purchase food from area farmers, load it into a truck outfitted to act as a mobile retail outlet, and run the truck through a route with designated stops and times. Consumers have the opportunity to purchase direct from the mobile market using cash or their SNAP benefits and they do not have to find transportation to other markets in the area for healthy, locally grown foods. The key benefit of this structure is that they operate under the legal structure of their parent organization and have access to grant funding.



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Many farmers are finding that mobile markets are a viable means to sell their own farm products. They operate similar to the nonprofit model, outfitting a truck as a mobile retail outlet. They may or may not offer products from other farmers to augment their own farm products. But because they are a private enterprise, these farm-specific mobile market operations do not have access to grant funding. They are funded using their own financial resources or through business loans or partnerships.

Non-Traditional Models: Online Farmers Markets

Online farmers markets are gaining traction as they reach consumers who may not otherwise shop at a traditional farmers market, but who still want to support local agriculture and a local

food economy. An online farmers market also offers more convenient hours than a traditional farmers market, as consumers can shop 24/7. Often these are sponsored by a larger organization. For example, Schoharie Fresh, an online farmers market in the Schoharie Valley, is sponsored by SUNY Cobleskill. This sponsorship gives them resources that help them build their market: their website, staff, farmer recruitment, customer base and order fulfillment processes. The goal is typically for the market to grow to the point where it can stand alone without financial support from the sponsor.

This kind of model does require more management than other alternate market models:

- The computer program must be attractive, strong and flawless to be the “storefront” of the market.
- You should have formal agreements on expectations, deadlines and payment structure with participating farmers.
- Prompt payment to farmers is imperative. Slow payment makes for nervous farmers and results in farmers dropping out.
- Higher staffing required to keep the website updated, promote the program to customers and farmers, work with farmers to collect product, aggregate orders, and manage customer pick up.



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Schoharie Fresh

Schoharie Fresh is an Online Farmers' Market in Cobleskill, New York. [Customers: Register Here](#) for easy access to fresh fruits, vegetables, and a variety of food products from Schoharie County.

But even with strong support from a parent organization, a great website and key staff members, there is still a high failure rate. Online markets without a strong recruitment and promotion plan are almost certainly destined to fail since this is one of the more challenging models to run successfully.

Summary

While it seems daunting to determine the appropriate farmers market organizational structure and set up all of the necessary documents, policies, boards, etc.; having a set structure provides the support and

sustainability that pulls your market from conception to realization to successful operations and growth. The structure guides the decision-making process and provides the support to the market manager that is needed to guide them to a point of successful, smooth operations. The structure should also carry a market through rough times – whether that involves the loss of a market manager, financial hardships, or internal strife within the market organization itself. Every market should carefully review their operations and chose a model that works best for them potentially even pulling elements from multiple models to develop a market organizational structure that is ideal for you and your unique market. Your organizational structure can be as unique as your market, but one thing we do know for sure is that you need one! Your organizational structure sets your market up for success so do not take this decision or the planning process lightly. Thoughtful and careful development and implementation of the appropriate market structure will ensure that your market starts from a place of success and continues to thrive many years into the future.

References:

This material is based on a presentation by Diane Eggert, Executive Director of the Farmers Market Federation of NY, at the Farmers Market Federation of NY's Annual Farmers Market Managers Training Conference, Nov 2015.

Appendix:

Bylaws template



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Farmers Market Managers Professional Certification Program

Module 1: Nuts & Bolts of Market Management

Unit 1.6 Farmer/Vendor Recruitment

UNIT OVERVIEW

This unit will discuss best practices in finding and recruiting new vendors for your market.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

CONCEPTS

- How do I determine what products are missing or in short supply in my market?
- Why do I need new/additional vendors for my market?
- Where do I find prospective vendors for my market?

SKILLS

- How to create an elevator speech for your farmers market
- How to create a marketing message for prospective vendors for your market
- How to connect with community partners to get your message out



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Unit 1.6: Farmer/Vendor Recruitment

Customers expect choices when they shop at farmers markets. They want a choice of farmers from whom they can purchase fresh farm products and they also want a choice of products to purchase. They want the widest array of farm products, from luscious red tomatoes and crisp, firm bell peppers to farm-raised beef, chicken, and pork, eggs; maple and honey products; to an assortment of locally produced cheeses; local wines and juices; and value-added products like jams and jellies, chili sauce, and salsa. But within the product offerings, consumers want a range of choices, as well. Not simply green bell peppers, but red, yellow, purple, and white bell peppers, as well as a selection of frying peppers and nine or ten choices of hot peppers. Customers expect to see abundance at a farmers market: an abundance of product, an abundance of farmers, and an abundance of choices. It is the market manager's job to do everything possible to encourage this diversity.

Finding farmers to offer customers the level of diversity they expect and desire is perhaps a market manager's biggest challenge. In many areas, farms have given way to shopping centers or housing developments. In other areas, competition for farmers is stiff, as farmers are already committed to other area markets. But for a market to be successful, it is important that there are sufficient numbers of farmers and choices to satisfy customer demand for options.

Identify Product Needs

In order to determine recruitment needs and opportunities, the manager must first identify product needs. Start by surveying the products already in the market. A simple list of all products in the market and the quantities available, along with the numbers of farmers carrying each product, will help you see what is missing and what may be in short supply. Keep in mind the adage that "one farmer carrying a product is a monopoly, two is collusion, and three is free enterprise."

Next, review the customer base of the market. Who is the typical customer? What is their ethnicity? What is their economic level, educational level, family size? While you want to be sure that your market carries all of the basic products, you'll need to understand who your customers are to understand what products are culturally appropriate. You'll also need to know the numbers of customers who shop at the market to know if you have sufficient quantities of product on hand to satisfy customer demand or if you need to seek additional farmers or producers

Sharing the results of any product/customer surveys with existing vendors should help them to better understand customer needs and wants. In a thriving market, economics and supply and demand will properly balance product availability with consumer demand.



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Product Inventory – September 3, 2007		
Product	Quantity Available	# of Producers
Tomatoes – round	10 bushels	4
Tomatoes – heirloom	2 varieties @ 2 pecks ea	1
Eggplant – black	2 bushels	1
Beef		1
Cheese – artisanal	3 varieties	1
Sweet Corn	5 bushels	2
Peppers 3 bushel 2	3 bushels	2
Apples - 4 varieties	8 bushels	3
Pumpkins	2 truckloads	4
Mums	60	2

This sample inventory clearly illustrates missing product. Produce inventory is heavy in tomatoes, apples, and pumpkins. There are also a sufficient number of producers offering these products to give customers a choice. But for other products, like eggplant, not only is there a limited number of producers and a limited supply, but there is a lack of range of product diversification. This situation often happens when there is no competition among producers of a product—there is no incentive to diversify and improve a product line. The meat line is also lacking in range and could be expanded to include a variety of other offerings, including items such as pork, poultry, and lamb. The quantities that could be supported by the market, however, would be determined by the numbers of consumers in the market, the income level, and the ethnic makeup of the consumer base.

What other products are missing from this inventory list? Fresh-cut and dried flowers are popular at farmers markets. Maple products and honey products should also be a part of the product mix. Farm wineries, farm breweries and distilleries, allowed to sell at New York State farmers markets by special provisions of the New York State Liquor Laws, are able to offer samples and sell alcohol by the bottle. Baked goods such as pies, cakes, cookies, and breads and even gluten free options are popular commodities at farmers markets, as well. These are just a few examples of the products that may be missing from your market’s inventory list.

Customers can also help you to identify missing or short supply products in the market. Market managers should interact with the customers throughout the day. Most customers will gladly give feedback on the market, including such



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considerations as product needs, customer service needs, helpful suggestions to improve the market, and constructive criticisms. Listening to the consumers is a critical aspect of the market manager's function. Set aside time to wander and listen.

Remember criticism can be constructive and help to identify opportunities for improvement and isn't necessarily a negative reflection on you. Every operation has room for improvement, no matter how smooth. Search for the nuggets in each comment and try not to take negative comments personally - they can help you to improve your market, benefiting both your farmers and your customers.

Finding Farmers for Your Market

Recruiting farmers to round out your market's product offerings can be a time-consuming task and one that will challenge even the most seasoned market manager.

Many managers simply visit other local farmers markets, talk to producers who are selling the products they need, and try to convince them to sell in their market as well. This form of cannibalism is not the favored route. It hurts the first market that has already recruited this farmer and is depending on his/her continued participation in their market. Furthermore, it does not solve the problem of too few farmers to satisfy customer demand in all the markets if managers simply steal farmers from one another rather than recruiting additional farmers to bolster market rosters.

There are other more constructive techniques to reach farmers that do not harm neighboring markets. Your county Cooperative Extension office works with local farmers on a daily basis. Seek their assistance in reaching out to the growers with the products you seek. While they

may not be able to give you contact information due to confidentiality agreements, they may make the initial contact for you, allow you to include an article in their next newsletter, or send an introduction letter to the farmers for you, providing you agree to pay the postage. Their introduction lends credibility to your letter, because they have the trust of the farmers you wish to speak with.

Another source for locating farmers is producer associations. (See listing of Producer Organizations in the Appendix.) There are producer associations for virtually every agricultural product, marketing venue, and production technique. By matching the product you are seeking with the appropriate association, you may find a laundry list of farmers that you can contact. A Google search will help you to locate the organizations in your state or region. (A list of organizations for New York State can be found in the appendix.) Contact information for the association, if not the list of membership, will be found on their website. A call to the Executive Director will help to narrow down a list of possible farmers in your market area. Remember, this is only an introduction to farmers; you will still need to do the necessary legwork to show farmers that your market is a viable outlet for their products and worth their effort to participate. Farmers market vendor recruitment is not an easy process, nor should it be – you want to make sure you get the right mix of vendors for your unique situation and customer base.

The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets maintains a database of farmers participating in the Farmers Market Nutrition Program, another potential source of vendors to consider recruiting for your market. This is a list of farmers who already actively participate in markets so you'll know that these farmers



already appreciate and use farmers markets as a venue. Half the battle is already won. You can request a list of farmers in a specific region and use this list to make contact with these specific farmers. The NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets suggests that you contact them in the late fall/early winter previous to the start of your market season to ensure enough time for farmers to plan for extra planting and harvesting if they do choose to join your market. Too often farmers are contacted too late in the season (one month prior to a market starting, or even after the market season has started) and this does not give them ample time to grow additional crops to sell at an additional market. In that case, they are left with no alternative but to say no to joining your market. Your market may be over before it is even started if you wait until too late in the season to plan.

The NY Farm Bureau may also help you to locate farmers in your area. They have membership lists that include farmers of all types of agricultural products. A call to the county officers or field advisor who works in a multi-county region to request assistance may get you a list of producers in your market's region. While they can supply you names of farmers, they may not be able to give you phone numbers and addresses. These can be easily searched using a phone directory or with an Internet search engine. The Farm Bureau may also be willing to put a request for farmers for your market in their newsletter.

The USDA Service Center is another agency that may help you to locate farmers. The Farm Service Agency administers the USDA's farm programs. This agency may be helpful in sourcing farmers for your market. In addition, the Soil and Water Conservation District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service

programs work with local farmers in various capacities and can help you to locate farmers raising the products that you need for your market.

Don't overlook non-traditional sources either. For example, urban gardening programs can add vendors to your market and a connection to the community. Gardeners may be interested in participating in the farmers market as an outlet for their excess produce or to gain more experience in agricultural marketing. Urban gardeners may find that farmers markets are a great venue to test their skills at production and marketing before they venture into agriculture as a vocation, whether full or part-time. Whatever their reason for participation, encouraging urban gardeners to participate in the market creates a tie to the community. Their participation in the market means more awareness of the market among community members. Providing opportunities for community residents also generates goodwill for the market which will translate into greater acceptance of the market by community residents as well as community leaders.

Another non-traditional source for finding farmers is the various beginning farmer programs. These range from farmer start-ups that help to secure farmland and train new entrants into the field of agriculture, to programs that help immigrants who were farmers in their home lands assimilate to farming techniques and practices in their adopted country. Cornell University's Small Farms Program hosts a Beginning Farmer program. You can learn more at www.nebeginningfarmers.org/. Other programs include Greenmarket's FARMroots Beginning Farmer Program, which identifies, educates, and supports immigrants who have agricultural experience by helping them become



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local farmers. The program focuses on training farmers to use farmers markets as a key component of their marketing plan. You can learn more about this program here: <http://www.grownyc.org/farmroots/nfd>. The Northeast Organic Farming Association of NY (NOFA-NY) also offers support to beginning farmers so if your market is lacking organic products they could offer a good opportunity to fulfill this niche.

What Do Farmers Need to Know?

Before farmers can decide to participate at your farmers market, they must evaluate whether it fits into both their schedule and their marketing and financial plan. You must be prepared to provide critical information to help farmers perform this evaluation.

1. Where is the market located?

Is the market located within easy driving distance? Is it in a downtown location, shopping center, or residential area? As a farmer, it's important to think about whether the product being sold fits the location. For example, if the product is bedding plants, a downtown location may not be conducive to customer sales. Trays of bedding plants are difficult to take back to the office after a lunchtime visit to the market and then haul to the car that may be parked several blocks away.

2. What is the day, time, and season of the market?

Does this fit the farmer's schedules? Are they available during the time the market operates? Does the day and time conflict with another nearby market? Is the length of the market day feasible for their work load at their farm?

The information from the first two questions should be included in the information listed in the Federation's Farmers Market Decision Tool

(<http://www.nyfarmersmarket.com/farmers-market-decision-tool/>). This new resource offered by the Federation functions as the first step in farmers gathering information about potential markets in the state they might be interested in learning more about. Potential vendors can visit this portion of the website and search for markets which satisfy a variety of criteria, including method of production, types of items a farmer would like to sell at market and where a farmers market might be located. As a market manager this is an especially important vendor recruitment tool and you should plan on updating this electronic listing each winter for the following season.

3. Who are the market's customers?

What is the makeup of the customer: economic level, family size, age, ethnic makeup? Also let the farmers know what your average weekly customer counts are. Show them that you have adequate customer traffic to make the market a viable outlet for them. Don't make them guess about key components needed for them to make an informed decision about whether or not to attend your market.

4. What are the sales volumes?

Based on data you have collected, what sales volumes are being generated at your market, collectively by all farmers in the market weekly and by farmers selling similar products. (Be sure to give this information carefully so as to not disclose directly or by implication any individual farmer's sales figures.) Also include the average sale per transaction.

This is perhaps the first question that you will receive from a potential vendor after "what is my competition at the market?" Information derived from a *Farmers Market Benchmarks* project completed by the Federation and CCE Broome County revealed the following



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information which can be helpful to current and potential vendors. Please remember that these are statewide averages and should not be taken at full face value, but rather as a point to work from.

Average Daily Sales per Commodity at New York Farmers Markets

Commodity	Average Daily Sales at Farmers Markets
Fresh Cut and Dried Flowers	\$225
Meat: Poultry	\$308
Meat Exotics	\$350
Honey Products	\$350
Wine/Beer	\$425
Meat: beef and pork	\$438
Meat: Lamb and Goat	\$490
Eggs	\$510
Maple Products	\$550
Dairy Products	\$805
Bedding Plants	\$831
Vegetables	\$905
Fruit	\$1,113
Baked Goods	\$1,467

5. *What are the market rules and regulations?* Give farmers a copy of the market rules so they can determine if their product line fits in your market, if their set-up complies with your rules, and if they feel comfortable abiding by your rules. It is important to avoid any potential issues by being upfront about your market’s rules and participation policies. There is no point in doing all the legwork required to recruit and onboard a new vendor only to find out that in the end they choose not to participate

because one of your rules is objectionable to them or contrary to how they run their business.

6. *What are the fees for participating in your market?*

Are they straight fees or a percentage of sales? Farmers will want to know their costs up front, so they can combine these with other costs of participating in the market, such as travel expenses, extra labor, packaging, and display materials; and then compare these to sales potential. Be upfront and explicit about your fees and present your fee structure in an easy-to-understand way early in the recruitment process.

A 2014 survey of NYS farmers market vendors found that the average fee is only 2.3% of daily income, or \$23.20/market day (assuming a 26 week market season). This compares with over 6% as an average in many other states. A potential vendor can use this average along with their other known costs and make a more informed decision about participating in your market.

7. *Who is already in the market? What is their level of competition?*

They will want to know how much competition there is for their product: how many other producers are selling their products, what quantities of the products are currently in the market, and what is the range of the product line? Is there an opening where demand exceeds supply that this particular farmer can fill with their current product offerings or that this farmer can create a new offering to fill? This will help farmers to decide if they should increase their production, expand their line, or if there is sufficient opportunity with current production levels. They may also discover that it would not be profitable for them to join your



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market, but it is better to discover this early rather than having them sign on only to drop out a few weeks into the season.

8. What is the turnover rate in the market?

Are farmers staying for long periods of time, dropping out only to retire, or are farmers leaving after only a year or two? If the turnover is high, this tells farmers that the market may not be experiencing a steady customer base or there may be a management problem that prevents the market from becoming an established institution in the community. A market's record of success and longevity helps open spaces to sell themselves.

9. How is the market promoted?

A clear marketing plan will demonstrate to potential vendors that the market is committed to attracting new customers as well as to maintaining the existing customer base. Markets with no promotion or marketing plan will certainly be less desirable to farmers, both beginning and established.

10. What is required to be a vendor at the market?

For example, will farmers be required to carry any special liability insurance, and if so, how much? What permits will be required to sell at the farmers market? Are there any permits needed beyond those required for specific products that farmers already likely possess; e.g., peddler permits for city markets. You don't want to find out at the last minute that a vendor is backing out because they didn't realize there were extra fees for necessary permits and insurance.

11. What programs does the market participate in that farmers can take advantage of?

For example, if the market participates in the Farmers Market Nutrition Program, other

coupon incentive programs, or accepts debit & credit and/or SNAP/EBT funds, tell farmers about these opportunities and how they can participate. Share information on potential sales volumes for each program so they can assess the additional level of revenue that their business could potentially receive in addition to cash sales.

Outreach to Farmers

Once you have a list of potential farmers to contact and you have all the information that farmers will need to know about your market, how do you effectively reach farmers? There are several strategies that can be employed.

Many market managers start their contact with an introductory letter. The letter will give the farmer basic information about the market and the opportunities it offers and invite the farmer to take advantage of the opportunities at the market or reach out with any questions. Be sure to include contact information for the market manager. However, the letter is only the first step and will rarely result in a new vendor for the market by itself. Follow-up steps are critical to complete the recruitment process.

Farm visits can be effective. Call the farmer and make an appointment to stop out to visit. Bring the materials that you have to showcase your market. Pictures, information, rules and regulations . . . all the information the farmer will need to make an informed decision to participate in your market. While at the farm, let the farmer show you their operation. Farmers are proud of their farms and all they produce. Let them give you a tour and a talk about what they do, how they do it, and why. You'll learn a lot about a potential new vendor and the farmer will see that you are a caring individual, someone interested in what they do and in their well-being. When you talk about



the market, be honest. Give all the details, both good and bad. But be sure that you talk about your plans to rectify the bad points! Answer any questions as honestly as you can. Also, look for signs that it is time to wrap up the visit. A farmer is busy and is giving you valuable time—be careful that you do not waste it. When the meeting is over, if you do not have a commitment for their participation in your market, leave a vendor agreement with them.

Be sure to follow up on your visit in a timely fashion. The more in-depth recruitment activities you engage in and the more follow-ups, the more successful your recruitment efforts will be.

While you're visiting with farmers, you may want to ask for recommendations of other farmers that they think you should talk to. Especially if they are interested in participating, they may want to include their friends and acquaintances. A recommendation from another farmer may often spur another farmer to give your market a try. Farmers take recommendations from other farmers more seriously!

Winter workshops are a great means to reach out to farmers as well. Many are busy with existing operations during the spring and summer months, but are more than happy to talk about expanding during the winter when they have some time to breathe. You can set up an exhibit in a resource fair or trade show of existing farmer workshops and conferences to showcase the opportunities at your market. Be sure your display is as colorful, attractive, informative, and inviting as your market is, so that you give the farmers the true flavor of your market. You don't want this information to look hastily prepared or you are essentially wasting your own time in attending.

You may also consider hosting a workshop of your own to inform farmers about your market. This can be a one-day or half-day event that centers on a topic that is of interest to the farmers in your area. Sessions could cover successful strategies for selling at farmers markets, season extension strategies, food safety regulations, and post-harvest handling, or any number of other topics that would be attractive to farmers. But you will want to be sure your workshop has two features: (1) a keynote speaker that will draw attention to your workshop and ensure attendance, and (2) a strategically placed session that focuses on your market: how to participate, why farmers should participate, and what your market is all about. You'll want to make sure the workshop is interesting enough to stand alone from your recruitment efforts though, or many farmers will simply say "just send me the information and I'll look it over." When it comes to talking about your market, arm workshop attendants with all the information they will need to decide that participating in your market is the right decision for their farm and encourage them to complete the vendor applications onsite. You may even allow a discount on the seasonal fees for anyone who signs an agreement and pays their fee before they leave. This is a surefire way to attract new farmers to your market.

A final follow-up to your other attempts to reach out to farmers—letters, phone calls, farm visits, workshops—is to host a pre-season vendor meeting. At this meeting the farmers and vendors at the market will learn all the details about the upcoming year, including the promotions and events schedule, any new rules and regulations, new programs and services, changes or additions to the market, fees, etc. Invite all potential new farmers to this meeting along with those who have already signed on: this includes any farmers that you have made



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contact with, or attempted to contact, any farmers who are contemplating participating in the market, those who may be on the fence, even those who have said no but seem like they could benefit from participating.

Give each of the farmers you have contacted another opportunity to learn about your

market, talk with the other farmers already involved in your market, and to make the right decision – to join your market and help your market thrive. Armed with these tips and techniques, you should now be prepared to recruit a purposeful and healthy mix of vendors to your market to ensure success both this season and well into the future.



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Become a Vendor at Applegate Greenmarket

Outdoor Market (5 Applegate Rd): Applications accepted January & February

Indoor Market (10 Church St): Applications accepted June & July

Sundays 10:00 - 2:00 Apply: applegategreenmarket@gmail.com

Vendor Selection Criteria

Applegate Greenmarket is a place to buy and sell fresh local produce and artisan goods in a festive community atmosphere. We are building a future in which Applegate Greenmarket is an integral part of downtown's cultural landscape, connecting farm and city to create a responsible, sustainable food system. We are committed to creating a diverse marketplace with the highest quality products produced locally. The board considers many factors when evaluating vendor applications and reserves discretion to accept or refuse anyone as a vendor. We restrict our market to members who are bona-fide growers, craftspersons and producers of homemade products otherwise known as a "producer-only" vending. The following is a list of products that may be sold at the market.

Items You May Sell

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fresh Fruits & Vegetables | <input type="checkbox"/> Baked Goods and Confections |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Meat Products, Poultry, & Fish | <input type="checkbox"/> Field and greenhouse grown plants & flowers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Milk, Cheese & Egg Products | <input type="checkbox"/> Cut Flowers & Herbs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Honey & bee products | <input type="checkbox"/> Crafts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jams & Preserves | <input type="checkbox"/> Ready to eat prepared foods |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grain products | <input type="checkbox"/> Other items with permission from the board of directors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Maple syrup products | |

Why Sell at Applegate?

-  Low vendor fees
-  10,500 customers each market day
-  \$150,000 in SNAP dollars spent annually
-  Market promotions including radio ads, transit cards, cooking demonstrations and family friendly events

Rules & Regulations

To view our full selection criteria, please visit: <http://www.applegategreenmarket.org/selection-criteria/>. All vendors must abide by our rules and regulations located here: <http://www.applegategreenmarket.org/vendors/rules-and-regulations/>.

Vendors must also obtain all permits/certificates as required by law before vending and provide the market with an updated copy of their farmers market vendor insurance. To find out more about the permits, licenses and certificates you may need, visit the Farmers Market Federation at: <http://www.nyfarmersmarket.com/permits>.



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References:

Based on presentation given by Laura Biasillo, Agricultural Economic Development Specialist (CCE Broome County), at the Farmers Market Federation of NY's Annual Farmers Market Managers Training Conference, Nov 2015.

Appendix:

Support Organizations 2016



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Farmers Market Managers Professional Certification Program

Module 1: Nuts & Bolts of Market Management

Unit 1.7 Conflict Management for Farmers Market Managers

UNIT OVERVIEW

This unit will give an overview of effective conflict management principles and they can be applied in a farmers market scenario. Completion of this unit will give a market manager skills to address any conflict which arises during the course of a market day.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

CONCEPTS

- Effective conflict management principles

SKILLS

- How to use conflict management principles to diffuse a situation and come up with a solution



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Unit 1.7: Conflict Management

People visit farmers markets with a variety of expectations: good and wholesome food, friendly local producers, value-added products, and perhaps some crafts and music. It is a community-centered outing and should be cohesive, fun, and rewarding. Market managers and vendors work together (usually) to make the experience live up to or surpass the public's expectations. But it isn't as easy or smooth as it might appear to the casual visitor.

Market managers are expected to handle logistic problems, clear up misunderstandings, resolve differences of opinions, and to stay calm and grounded even when others are demonstrating poor social skills. Part of your role and responsibility, as the market manager, is to handle complaints and resolve disagreements. Conflict management appears prominently in your job descriptions and is key to maintaining a friendly, peaceful atmosphere in the market. No problem! You just need to be nimble, resourceful, patient, and confident to maintain your sense of humor, and be relentlessly optimistic to handle conflict effectively.

As a market manager at some point during a season you likely will encounter conflicts between yourself and a vendor, two (or more) vendors, between two (or more) customers, between yourself and a customer, between a vendor and a customer, or between a board member/market sponsor and yourself – just to

name a few. It is important to determine with your board of directors/market sponsor how much latitude you have in resolving conflicts, and to ensure that they will back your decisions – to ensure that you can remain being seen as the leader of the market.

Although market managers across the state are dedicated, passionate, and skilled, many of you have not had formal conflict management training. What makes things harder is that while managers have the responsibility to manage conflict, you often don't have the authority or recognition you need to resolve disputes or enforce rules or policies. And you may have a stake in how things are resolved, so you may not always be neutral. If you feel you cannot be neutral in a conflict situation it is a good idea to have someone who isn't part of the conflict, but who is neutral and has some respect among the two parties to help resolve the conflict. In some situations a Cornell Cooperative Extension educator or NY FarmNet consultant may be a good option.

Most likely you do have the basic skills, and you probably use those skills unconsciously. The following discussion will explain what you are doing well, make you more mindful of your expertise, and give you a few more tools for your toolbox.

Use Reflective Listening

Most conflict managers will tell you that



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listening in a way that makes people feel they have been understood will move most people from a sense of agitation and confrontation to a willingness to reflect upon the situation and listen to potential solutions. The trick is to practice deep or reflective listening skills. There are two steps to doing that. First, clear your mind and concentrate only on what the other person is saying. Don't prepare your response while they are speaking. Then make sure you got it correctly by summarizing and checking in with the speaker. Try to express both the ideas and the feelings; keep it simple and don't try to analyze the speaker or solve their problem. Remember that just because you understand, you aren't committed to agreeing.

Let's illustrate with this example:

Your market rules state that a vendor cannot leave the market early without permission. One vendor requests permission to leave 30 minutes early for a family wedding. It is not extraordinarily early, but it is important to the farmer to be able to attend. You deny her request and inform her that if she does leave early, you will throw her out of the market. Other farmers encourage her to leave anyway and she does. As she is packing up to leave, you start screaming at her from across the market, stating that she is not allowed to leave and you will throw her out if she does. She feels humiliated, as the shouting was done in front of vendors and customers. How should this have been handled better?

As a market manager you will want to try and listen to the reasons behind the vendor's request to leave a little bit early. If s/he has does not request this on a regular basis, and it is for a family event you should look to treat the

vendor how you would want to be treated in a similar circumstance. Likely the vendor is not looking to disrupt market operations, or lose any more potential income for the market day than possible so they will leave only when they need to. Ask the vendor if they understand the rules and reasoning behind not allowing early departures. Work to listen as the vendor explains their request to leave early and try to weigh this against the reality that this vendor has a life and family outside of the market.

Even if you cannot accept their request to leave early, you have listened to their reasons with an open mind and allowed them to express themselves in a calm fashion. You should also be able to give a valid reason why you cannot honor their request and not just deny without any reason. This will help them view you as a fair manager and not someone who makes arbitrary rules depending on whether you have had your caffeine that day.

It is so rewarding to get it right! Try it, and watch for a positive physical reaction: people begin to breathe more deeply and slowly, to straighten up, stop jiggling, and get color back in their cheeks or mouths. When people feel heard and understood, they can let go of their fear and positional thinking, and sometimes they can even listen to others.

Setting the Stage

After you've mastered reflective (or active) listening, now it's time to think about logistics to engage everyone constructively. These simple, yet effective, steps will show those involved that you respect both their viewpoints and time to find a solution acceptable to everyone.



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Write out an agenda and set ground rules for how everyone will engage with each other. This will help give a process to the discussion among those engaged in the conflict. During conflicts sometimes discussions may become heated and having an agenda and ground rules will help keep the discussion focused on the conflict in as non-personal way as possible.

For Example:

Farmer A sells only what they grow. However, the market does allow for some reselling, but only under a special permit and an increased fee. He complains constantly that Farmer B is buying in some product, even though he does not have the special permit. He complains to the manager, other farmers and even customers, making it harder for Farmer B to sell his products. Farmer B insists that everything he sells he produces himself. The manager is brought into the conflict.

As the market manager you would want to speak with the two vendors after a market day once all customers have left the market. You should propose a meeting where it will just be the three of you in an off-site location, such as the local Cooperative Extension, where everyone involved can engage in a discussion. You will set a time that is convenient for the two farmers. You should plan to bring with you the following:

- A copy of each farm's crop plan and your farm visit/inspection notes
- A copy of the market's rules/regulations
- An agenda to give each farmer ample time to express themselves
- Set some rules for discussion: including everyone's points are valid, no one will interrupt everyone else, and everyone will have just 5 minutes to speak before another can speak.

Having all these pieces in place for the meeting will allow the farmers to feel as though they can speak to the manager and each other without fear of reprisal and also offer the opportunity to introduce factual information into the meeting to help both farms understand whether the complaint is factual in nature or not.

Move to the Future

Don't make the mistake of rushing this stage; people need some time to believe that someone is actually listening with respect. Sometimes they will repeat themselves, maybe to make sure they are heard, or maybe because they are working out what they really think. But don't become a hostage to the past or to pointless arguments about what really happened, or whose intentions were the most pure. The problems lie mostly in the past, while solutions are mostly in the future. Try to engage the speaker in identifying the underlying needs and interests, and in generating some options for resolution. This can be more challenging that you might think. Sometimes it is helpful to ask, "So I understand what you don't like, tell me what you do want for the future." There might be a dead silence. That is a great silence to cultivate; don't rush to fill it. It means someone is surprised and has begun to think in a new way.

Generate Options

This stage is like creative brainstorming. Be playful if you can, use humor, and try not to critique ideas. Just let the weeds grow freely. Instead of attacking ideas for possible solutions, try to work together on some objective criteria to measure whether a proposal is fair, effective, and workable. Look at all sides. Gather more information or expert advice if needed. Try not to get attached to one solution and advocate too strenuously.



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Summarize Solutions and Agreements

Make sure everyone is indeed on the same page, check assumptions, run through a list of what ifs, attack the agreement together to test it and make it stronger, and get down to details. Generate some plan B's: figure out what to do next if it does work, or if it doesn't work. Reduce it all to writing if that seems appropriate.

Another Example:

In a market where farmers must offload their products and park elsewhere, two vendors are constantly butting heads over curb space at closing time to pick up their products and leave. The market operates on a system that after a specified hour, vendors can block off a parking space as it becomes available, pull their truck in and reload their products to leave for the day. However, one person feels that she should get preferential treatment, rather than following the first come, first serve manner that has always taken place. She frequently rips into the other farmer, has her husband threaten the farmer and bad mouths the farmer to other vendors and customers. How can this situation be brought under control?

As a manager you would want to think about how to engage these two vendors in a process to look forward. Ask them to come to a meeting outside of market hours at a neutral location and create an agenda that will acknowledge the past but help brainstorm potential solutions for

the future. There is potential that these two vendors had a disagreement in the past that one has never let go of. This is an opportunity to help them see that their attitude at market is spilling over into other vendors and customers and creating an atmosphere where both vendors and customers are uncomfortable. Ask if they see how their disagreement is impacting their fellow vendors. They may not have noticed. Maybe an additional offloading spot could be created? As a drastic measure one vendor may not be allowed to come back to market if they "cannot play nice in the sandbox".

Consider Using a Neutral Third Party

If, despite your best efforts, things are escalating, or if you have a stake in the outcome, or if you are perceived as taking sides, you may need to consider asking for some help. We often resist involving outsiders, choose the wrong people to be involved, or we are tempted to give up on working it out for ourselves. Using the right experts or neutrals can be very helpful.

Of course, conflict management is rarely as organized or easy as these steps makes it sound. You need to be able to tolerate messiness and disorder in order to resolve conflict well. Conflict happens when people care enough to put energy into something. It can seem crazy, silly, or uncomfortable, but usually it gets us thinking about something important to us. Well-managed conflict can produce a bumper crop of creative ideas, insights, increased trust, and better working relationships. Be fearless. Give these ideas a try.



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References:

This material is based on a presentation by Dan Welch & Erica Leubner from NYFarmNet, at the Farmers Market Federation of NY's Annual Farmers Market Managers Training Conference, Nov 2015.

Charlotte Carter, the Statewide Program Director of the NYS Agricultural Mediation Program, which provides convenient, free, and confidential mediation services to farmers and other in agriculture in every county in New York. www.nysamp.com charlotte@nysdra.org



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Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
Broome County





Farmers Market Managers Professional Certification Program

Module 2: Reaching out to the Market Community

Unit 2.1 Implementing Programs & Services at Your Market

UNIT OVERVIEW

Ongoing programs and services such as children’s programming or food donation programs, are a great way to engage your community and vendors at the market. They are also a mechanism to show your community the value of the market beyond just the market itself. These types of programs are also a way to engage on an on-going basis with community organizations to help connect to consumers you might not otherwise be able to access.

This unit will build a greater understanding of what goes into planning and implementing successful programs and services with large scale community participation at farmers markets. It will also provide managers with guidance in creating a checklist to better understand all the different aspects on how to put on a successful program at your farmers market.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

CONCEPTS

- Understanding the reasons for bringing programs and/or services to your market
- What aspects comprise a successful program or service to be offered at farmers markets?

SKILLS

- Ability to create an action plan to implement a program or service at your market



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Unit 2.1: Implementing Programs & Services at your market

Any farmers market manager knows that having a successful market means more than just a good variety of vendors and products for sale each week. It's about more than just selling fruits and vegetables. It is about adding value to the customer's experience with programs and/or services which help build credibility in the community and helping your customers build a stronger emotional connection with their market. Programs such as the Kids P.O.P. (Power of Produce) Club, Food Donation programs, story time with a local library, walk with a doc, etc., create an opportunity to engage at a personal level with customers at your market and showcase your investment in the community. These build your credibility within the community as a place not just for a weekly shopping experience, but as an experience for all their senses. They are also a way to partner with other community organizations and strengthen relationships which can help strengthen your market in multiple ways.

In this unit, we will walk through two different types of programs and/or services which you could run at your farmers market and the steps you should think through prior to implementation so you can see an example of this from start to finish.

The *Kids P.O.P. (Power of Produce) Club* is a national program which is created by the

Farmers Market Coalition and “provides a fun opportunity for children to engage in the local food system through conversations directly with farmers, educational games and demonstrations, and exposure to new fruits and vegetables. In addition to participating in educational activities, POP Club kids receive vouchers to spend at the market, allowing them to make their own shopping decisions at the market.” Several markets in NYS run this program, but those who are most successful do it in partnership with a coalition in their community.



A coalition provides an opportunity for businesses and organizations in the community to rally behind a common cause (in this case kids and healthy eating) as well as providing additional resources the market likely could not provide on their own to ensure the success of the program. These could include financial, staffing and/or marketing/publicity. This provides them the opportunity to build credibility, but also have



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other organizations help shoulder the burden of implementing a successful program for their market customers.

Another popular type of program you will see at farmers market are *Food Donation Programs*. These types of programs can be extremely popular, both from a vendor and market image perspective. Farmers are happy not to take produce back home with them (if they don't have another market in the near future to sell it), as well as happy to have someone receive it who may not always have access to fresh produce. (Additionally, they may receive a tax write off if they document the pounds of produce that they donate over the course of a season. Your farmers are not liable for food safety of donated product due to the Good Samaritan Law). Through the good will of these programs and the press these programs can garner, the market will gain an image as an entity that gives back to those most vulnerable in their community. And local food pantries will be able to offer their constituents something fresh to bring home, which they normally cannot afford to do. One thing to be aware of with food donation programs is that once words gets out that your market helps facilitate donations of fresh produce, it may open up the flood gates for groups coming to ask for donations. As an example, the Broome County Regional Farmers Market started working with the local Community Hunger Outreach Warehouse (CHOW) to come and glean produce at the end of their Saturday market. Then another individual operating his own enterprise came to the market and started asking vendors individually if they would donate their produce to his cause instead. It created an atmosphere of confusion and also unprofessionalism. A deal was struck that each of these groups would come on a bi-weekly basis

so that everyone would still get some produce. The important thing is to make sure the food donation program is viewed as a benefit to the community even though you may not be able to donate to every organization that asks. Schenectady Greenmarket is a great example of a successful food donation program, having run such a program since 2008, with a greater emphasis and partnerships starting in 2014. They have seen donations doubled between 2014 and 2015 with 3700 pounds of donated produce to the Food Bank of Capital District over that timeframe. This translates into 3100 meals for those in need! It also translates into new customers shopping the market as they want to support the market and farmers who so generously support their community. Food donation programs enable farmers to get rid of excess produce which can be unwanted while also showing the community that the market gives back to those who support it. It is a win/win situation for all!

Schenectady Greenmarket Food Donation Program

June – September 2015

3700 pounds of food donated by the market vendors

Equates to:

3100 meals for the local food pantries

I have an idea for a market program, what do I do now? Is my idea even workable?



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Do you have an idea for a program or service that you could bring to your market? It often seems overwhelming to decide whether or not you should pursue this idea or toss it aside. Here are eight easy steps that will help you as a manager decide if the idea for a program fits with your market goals and can be accomplished given your current staffing and budget.

1. *Get out your pencil and paper*

Do you have a program idea? Often as managers we hear of other markets implementing a program and think, “I could do that at my market!” or perhaps a community partner approaches you with an idea, such as a children’s reading program or food gleaning program. So the first step is to get out a piece of paper and write down exactly what the program idea is and try to be as specific as possible.

2. *How will you pay for it?*

Will you need money to implement this idea? Sometimes the best programs may be built on community partnerships, but there is always a need for money. Whether it’s for marketing, permits, printing, incentives, etc. you will want to think about all the different aspects of the idea you have in your mind and what pieces of it may have a dollar value attached to them. Then you will want to think about where this money could come from. Do you have money in your market budget that could support this? Will you need to go out and solicit sponsorships or fundraise? This is where the chapter on “Fundraising and Sponsorship” will come in handy! Or maybe there are community partners who would be happy to get involved with in-kind donations of time, people or materials/supplies so you could make it happen without needing to raise additional funds.



Look within your community for potential sponsors sharing a similar mission or goal.

3. *Create an action plan*

What are the steps that must be completed for this program to be implemented? This is everything from planning to implementation to evaluation. Planning should include what partners will help implement the idea, a timeline for the program, and whether there is a need for special permits or other permissions from the municipality. The implementation phase will include everything needed to be implemented from the end of planning to the end of the day of the program. After the implementation stage comes evaluation. Evaluation is extremely important as you want to look back after the program has concluded to see what the impact was on your vendors, your market as a whole and the community. This will help you decide whether to do it again, how you can improve on your program and also help you to be able to sell the value to future sponsors of the program (if necessary).

4. *How will you staff it?*



What are your staffing needs for this program? They say if you want something done, give it to a busy person, but to run a successful program at your market you will need partners. So who are the partners you will need? If it's a health related program, maybe the local hospital, health insurance company or wellness store would be good partners to help make your program successful. Try to think about those in your community who already work in the area your program addresses and then approach them. It will be most helpful to get their buy in if you already have ideas for how they can be involved. Maybe it's with a donation of volunteers. Or maybe it's with someone to help with marketing. If they can't help personally, can someone else in their organization help? Are there other organizations they can think of to suggest? This is where the previous steps will come in handy if you have done the planning work.

5. *Do you have the time to run this program?*

Time? How much time will this program take to run? Is this a one-time or on-going event? Understanding your time needs will also help inform what your staffing needs are as well as how much money you will need to implement this program. Don't overlook the need for time because even with a great budget and helpful partners, your program will go nowhere if you don't have the time to implement it.

6. *How will you get the word out?*

Promotional needs – how will you market this program? Many markets are moving towards social media approaches to communicate with their customers and do outreach. This is definitely more cost effective than traditional media, but some number of fliers and/or posters

may still be necessary, depending on where your customers are located. Do you have a marketing budget as part of your market's budget? If so, some of this cost may be able to be taken from that sum. If not, how will you fund promotions? One no-cost way for the market to get promotion accomplished for market events would be to have vendors help in outreach. You won't have as much control over the flow of information, but it may have more credibility coming from them. And they do stand to benefit so they have a stake in the success of the event.



Additionally, you could create a flier and then ask community partners to help in the outreach.



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Often local media must give airtime to community events as well. If you plan it right, you can get into different “community calendars” and perhaps even get on the nightly news and radio to talk about your program. Press releases, written with the news in mind, and accompanied by a photo, are often picked up by the media and will help you get the word out to the community about your new program. You won’t know how successful a potential promotion opportunity can be unless you try and multiple methods are better than just one, so get creative when it comes to promoting your market events and programs.

7. Create a To-Do calendar

Now that you have walked through the different decisions you’ll need to make, you will need to create a calendar of tasks. Who will need to do what by when to make this program successful? It could be helpful to create a table to better understand the different tasks and timeframes. See an example below:

Name	Task	Timeframe	Completed by Date
Market Manager	Create flier	April 2016	April 2016
Market Manager	Meet with		

As you can see by this timeline, it is easy to tell what tasks must be accomplished for this program to be successful and by assigning the tasks no one person gets stuck running the entire program. Each person knows what they are responsible for and what the deadline(s) are for those tasks so no one can claim ignorance if their own tasks aren’t completed on time. Also make sure if you have multiple people on your timeline that one person is responsible for following up with the others to make sure they are

completing each task as required. That way the group as a whole isn’t moving ahead with less urgent tasks without even realizing that another team member has dropped the ball.

8. Be sure the program fits your market and your mission

The last decision to make, and the most important, is to ask: “Does this program or idea fit within your market’s mission?” Too often the tail can wag the dog, meaning that a farmers market will accept money to do a program even though it may have nothing to do with their market’s mission. When this happens, it lowers the credibility of the market and all those attached with the program. If the event doesn’t fit squarely within your mission, can you tweak it or add additional components? If not, you should consider scrapping the event unless the potential funding would allow you to fulfill your mission in other ways and you can justify the event that way. As a manager you should think long and hard about whether the program you are proposing fits within your market’s mission, and if not how the benefits outweigh the potential blowback. Don’t run a program just because you can – make sure it has a purpose and a benefit to your market.

Importance of Community Partners

Most effective programs at a farmers market require community partners to be successful. Community partners are invaluable to you: in bringing additional customers to your program and market, by helping in marketing using resources you likely do not have at your disposal, and by bringing credibility to your market by adding their name to your programming and by enriching your customers’ market experience. One important thing to remember is that once



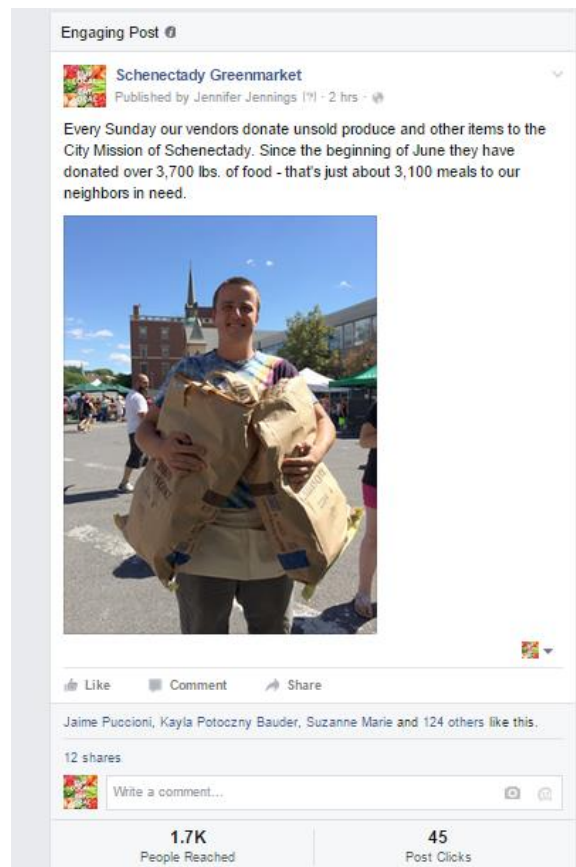
the program is done you must thank your partners for all they have done to help ensure their participation in any future programs you may decide to implement at your market. Do not skip this step or potential partners will not feel good about the work they've done to help you and will not return the following year for additional programs.

How do you tell your story?

You could have the greatest program ever at your market, but if you do not tell your story well – no one will ever know. Pictures can be extremely helpful in telling your market's story. If you aren't comfortable using a camera, you can often work with local high schools or community colleges for students that may need an internship or extra credit. Another option is quotes. Talk to those who participated in the program to find out what they thought, what it meant to them, and how it impacted their day. It doesn't have to be well thought out or scripted – sometimes the off-the-cuff responses can exemplify a market experience much better than a formal response. These stories, along with pictures, will tell a better story than you ever could.

Once you have a piece put together consider a variety of methods to get it out for attention. Social media is free (or low cost) and can be extremely efficient in helping to tell your story. Another option would be to invite local media to be a part of your program. Then they can report back on their experiences to their viewers. Sending your picture(s) and quotes to the local newspaper may also generate a story following the program. The results of getting your market's story out there will include greater attention on your market and more customers coming to check you out. It will also enhance your

credibility as a vibrant community place for building relationships and friendships.



How do you measure the impact to your market?

The ability to measure the impact of programs that you do at your market is one of the most difficult, yet most important activities you will do. These can be as simple as a modification of the *Rapid Market Assessments*, http://smallfarms.oregonstate.edu/sites/default/files/small-farms-tech-report/eesc_1088-e.pdf, focusing on number of customers who come to market on that day versus a similar day at the market (whether that is the same day a year ago, or just an average market day), how sales are impacted on that day, whether



customers who come that day plan on coming back again, etc. This basic information, coupled with telling your story through pictures and quotes will be sufficient in showing the impact and value of the program.

For additional information on measuring the impact of your program, see the chapter on “Documenting Your Market’s Success”.

Keys to successful programs and/or services:

Programs and/or services that are most successful at your farmers market will be: low maintenance, self-activated, low or no cost and most importantly: FUN! The KISS (Keep it Simple Stupid) principle applies. Remember that you are looking to enhance the experience that your customers have at your market and strengthen their connection to the market and the farmers. The minute that each day is no longer fun at the market will be the day that customers stop coming to your market. The more you can engage partners and free marketing avenues,

the more funding you can save to have more fun programs and services to enhance your market! Make sure the amount of time and money you are spending is proportional to the added value your customers receive from the program and, in turn, the added revenue your farmers will receive.

Keys to a Successful Program
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Planning2. Knowledge of your audience3. Knowing what you are capable of: financially, operationally and time-wise

References:

This material is based on a presentation by Jennifer Jennings, Market Manager, Schenectady Greenmarket & Beth Irons, Market Manager, Oneida County Public Market, at the Farmers Market Federation of NY’s Annual Farmers Market Managers Training Conference, Nov 2015.





Farmers Market Managers Professional Certification Program

Module 2: Reaching Out to the Market Community

Unit 2.2 Nutrition Programs to Grow Your Market

UNIT OVERVIEW

This unit will give an overview of the three major nutrition programs operating in farmers markets, including how and why to participate. Completion of this unit will give a market manager both knowledge of the programs and ideas on how to adequately promote the programs within the market

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

CONCEPTS

- Understanding the Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP), WIC Vegetable and Fruit Check Program (WIC V&F), and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

SKILLS

- Understanding the programs and how they benefit your market and consumers will help you to adequately educate and promote the programs in your market to build consumer awareness



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Unit 2.2 Nutrition Programs to Grow Your Market

There are a number of purposes behind nutrition assistance programs. Some are meant to help feed people who cannot otherwise afford enough food for themselves and their families. Others are meant to supplement their diets with healthy food to ensure a healthier start in life for children. There are also a number of funders behind nutrition assistance programs – from the Federal government to state and city level governments, as well as local nonprofit community organizations. Their goals may differ as far as why they are funding these programs, but they all have a commonality which is to reduce hunger and increase nutrition by providing healthy food options.

When it comes to farmers markets, there are affordability issues that prevent many consumers from participating and shopping for fresh, healthy and locally grown foods. If a consumer has a limited budget, they can often find other foods that are considered more affordable and filling than farmers markets foods, even if what they purchase is not healthy. For example, ramen noodles can be purchased much cheaper than fresh broccoli at the farmers market. For the cost of one side dish of fresh broccoli, they may be able to purchase enough prepackaged noodle soups for several meals. Many consumers do not know how to use fresh, raw foods. How to prepare these foods or even just properly storing them until they are consumed is knowledge that many people do not possess. They may have never been taught and it just isn't on their radar or they may want

to learn but they aren't sure how. They may even be of the perception that all fruits or all vegetables are just not that tasty because they have never tasted fresh produce that has been properly stored and prepared. This makes purchasing foods at farmers markets intimidating. While these are very real issues, some are a matter of perception. Many people believe farmers markets are expensive and out of reach for low income consumers. While studies repeatedly show this is not usually true, it is, nevertheless, a perception held by many people with limited means.

Fortunately, there are a number of nutrition assistance programs that are available to farmers markets to help them reach the low income consumers in their community and bring them into the fold. Once consumers participate in one or more of these nutrition programs, they are more likely to come back and spend their own money at the market – even in the absence of these promotional dollars – because their perception has changed and they now realize that markets *do* provide affordable healthy options. By participating in these programs, the market furthers its ability to achieve its triple bottom line mission to support farmers, consumers and their community. Nutrition programs operating in farmers markets:

- Bring more people to the market by making the market accessible to consumers of all economic levels
- Add sales and revenue to farmers through sales to a new consumer base



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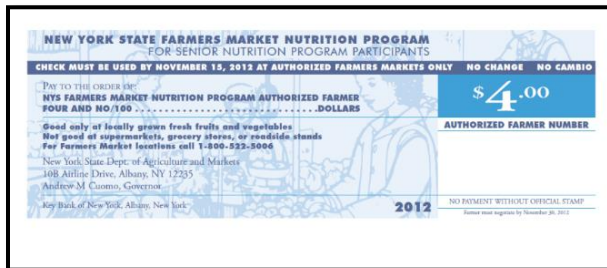


- Help consumers to eat healthier and learn how to use and prepare healthy foods
- Help support farmers markets in low income neighborhoods by making them profitable enough for farmers to participate

Farmers Market Nutrition Program

The Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) provides a booklet of \$4 checks to WIC families and low income seniors. The checks are given out once per season and are valid at farmers markets and farm stands to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables direct from the grower. The program is administered by the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets. (For details and applications, visit:

<http://www.agriculture.ny.gov/AP/agservices/fmnp-forms-documents.html>.)



To be eligible to participate in the FMNP program, a market must:

- Operate in an approved location
- Provide a list of rules and regulations for the market, with language regarding the FMNP
- Provide a list of bona fide farmers and the items they grow and sell at the market, indicating those accepting FMNP
- Provide space for nutrition education

- Provide a sufficient variety and amount of locally grown produce

The market applies to the program by completing an application to the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, along with providing a list of their farmers and products and their market rules and regulations. Once approved by the Department, the market receives an authorization packet with an agreement letter that must be signed and returned to the Department.

A farmer is eligible to accept FMNP checks if he/she:

- Is a bona fide farmer
- Sells fruits and vegetables at an FMNP-approved farmers market
- Produces 50% or more (by volume) of fruits and vegetables offered for sale at the market (unless the market has more stringent rules for re-selling, in which case the market rule prevails)

To apply, the farmer will complete a FMNP Farmer Participation Agreement and a crop plan and submit them to the market manager. The market manager signs the application, attesting to the applicant being a bona fide grower of fruits and/or vegetables. The manager will then forward the signed application to the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets and keep the crop plan. This will be used in the case of any investigation initiated by NYSDAM to verify their status as a grower of the products being sold. Upon acceptance by the Department of Agriculture, the farmer will receive a laminated sign to put on their market table to let consumers know they accept FMNP, an FMNP Identity card and a stamp with their FMNP number to endorse their received FMNP checks before taking them to the bank.

Coupons are distributed to WIC families through



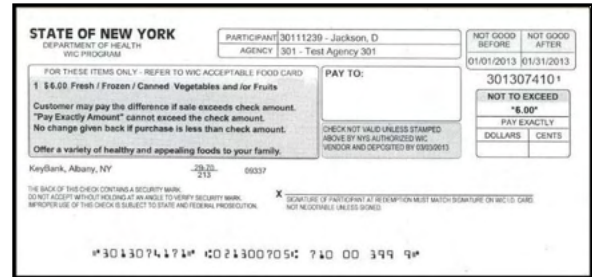
WIC clinics during their summer quarterly visits. Low income senior coupons are distributed through Senior Centers, County Senior Agencies or Senior Congregate Meal Sites. Between June 1 and November 30, FMNP checks can be used at farmers markets to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables direct from growers. FMNP consumers coming into the market should look for those market tables displaying signs “We Gladly Accept NYS Farmers Market Checks.” The \$4 checks can be used singly or in multiples. A farmer cannot give change back on any sale that is not an even \$4 sale. In this case, the farmer will typically add more produce to bring the sale up to the \$4 amount. But sales exceeding \$4 can be paid for with multiple FMNP checks, additional cash or with any other nutrition program instrument, such as SNAP tokens or WIC Vegetable and Fruit Checks.

To redeem the FMNP checks, farmers must stamp them with their assigned FMNP numbered stamp and cash them in at any Key Bank in New York State. Key Bank is under contract with NYSDAM to cash or deposit FMNP checks at no charge to the farmer. They will, however, require the farmer to show his or her FMNP Identity card. Checks must be negotiated no later than December 15th. Farmers can also deposit the FMNP checks into their own non-Key Bank personal bank account. However, bank fees may apply.

WIC Vegetable and Fruit Check Program

The WIC Vegetable and Fruit Check Program is a part of the traditional WIC (Women, Infants & Children) program, but is administered by the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets rather than the Department of Health. The program operates year round, providing monthly checks to pregnant and postpartum women, infants and children up to age 5. The checks are valid for purchasing vegetables and fruits. At grocery stores and other bricks and

mortar WIC retailers, these checks can be used to purchase fresh, frozen or canned fruits and vegetables. However, at a farmers market the checks are only valid on fresh fruits and vegetables.



To be eligible for the WIC Vegetable and Fruit Check Program (WIV V&F), farmers must:

- Be a part of the FMNP program
- Participate in an annual training
- Sign a WIC VF Farmer Agreement
- Submit a voided check, tying your redemptions to your checking account

Consumers with WIC V&F Checks can purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at the market. This can include bagged salad mixes or bagged vegetables. It does not allow purchasing herbs, nor food sold at salad bars, party trays, fruit baskets, or any kinds of decorative vegetables and.

To purchase the eligible products, consumers must find farmers in the market who accept WIC V&F Checks, by finding the booths displaying a WIC sign. When the sale is complete, the farmer will accept the WIC V&F Check, have the consumer sign the check and then verify the signature with the consumer’s WIC ID card. Then they will fill in the amount of the sale, not exceeding the full value of the check. In addition, the farmer must pay close attention to the dates on the checks. These checks have a 30 day window in which they can be accepted. Only one



WIC V&F check can be used in a single purchase. However, the customer can use cash, SNAP tokens, FMNP checks or any other type of currency to complete the sale. If the sale does not add up to the maximum value of the check, the farmer cannot give change to the customer. Instead, they write the actual value of the sale on the check and will be reimbursed for the sale value only.

To redeem the checks, the farmer stamps the check with their assigned FMNP stamp. The checks are then deposited into the farmer's authorized checking account. The checks must be deposited within 60 days of the "not good before" date on the check or 30 days from the end date of the check. If the farmer fails to comply with the dates, clearly stamping the check with their FMNP stamp and completing the sales value on the check, the bank will not honor the check. In this case, the farmer will not be paid the value of the check and will likely incur bounced check fees from the bank as well. So it is critical that farmers understand the steps for accepting and redeeming WIC V&F Checks and be very vigilant in reviewing each check before depositing to avoid any losses.

WIC Vegetable and Fruit Checks are more cumbersome for farmers to accept and to redeem than FMNP checks. In addition, the competition with traditional food retailers makes this program less attractive to farmers. However, the amount of funds available through the WIC program far exceeds the FMNP program and as such, provides a much bigger pot of money for farmers to access, should they choose to participate.

For more detailed information, go to <http://www.agriculture.ny.gov/AP/agsservices/fmnp-wic-vf.html>

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, commonly referred to as SNAP, is by far the biggest pool of money when it comes to farmers market nutrition programs. The program is administered on the national level by the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service. On the state level, the program is administered by the NYS Office for Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA). In New York State, a program was created by OTDA, NYSDAM and the Farmers Market Federation of NY to assist farmers markets and farmers to participate in the SNAP program. The goal was to bring more markets and farmers into SNAP to provide access to healthy foods for SNAP consumers. It also brings more revenue to farmers and helps to support farmers markets in low income neighborhoods by adding enough revenue to the markets to make them feasible for continued farmer participation.



In New York State, SNAP distributes over \$5 billion to SNAP recipients annually. That is certainly not a small number! While farmers markets have been participating in SNAP since 2005, the level of SNAP dollars used at these markets is less than 1% of the annual total SNAP dollars distributed. This means there is tremendous room for growth and a huge opportunity for farmers to increase their customer base and their sales by participating in the SNAP program.

To participate in SNAP, both farmers and markets must become an authorized SNAP retailer. The application process is done through



an online portal and can take up to 45 days for authorization. Once the market or farmer is certified as a SNAP retailer by USDA, applications must be completed for equipment and service. USDA has made funding available to assist markets and direct marketing farmers to obtain SNAP equipment: an iPhone, card reader and blue-tooth connected printer for NY SNAP participants. To be eligible for free equipment through USDA, the participant must be either a multi-vendor farmers market or a direct marketing farmer participating in at least one farmers market. All others must provide their own device and data plan, while the NYS Program will still provide them with a card reader and blue-tooth connected printer as well as signage and fee support.



New York State, with funding provided by NYSDAM and OTDA, has contracted with the Farmers Market Federation of NY to provide support to farmers and farmers markets to help them participate in the SNAP program. Eligibility for NYS assistance is offered to any kind of farmers market, including mobile markets and youth markets, and any direct marketing farmer whether or not they participate in a farmers market. The support includes:

- Assistance with the application process
- Training on operating SNAP in a farmers market
- Tokens for central terminal systems in

farmers markets

- Outreach to farmers and markets to encourage participation in SNAP
- Consumer outreach to build awareness for SNAP at farmers markets, farm stands, CSAs, etc.
- Fee reimbursements for SNAP transaction fees and processing fees
- Marketing materials to assist participants in promoting their SNAP programs

Besides being a much greater pool of money, the SNAP program also offers a wider range of products that can be bought with SNAP benefits as compared with the other nutrition programs.

The list includes:

- All fruits and vegetables
- Meats, fish and poultry
- Cheese and all dairy products
- Eggs
- Baked goods
- Processed foods
- Maple/honey/cider/juices
- Herbs –plants, bunched or dried
- Any plants and seeds that bear food

There are some products available from a farm or farmers market that are not eligible for purchase with SNAP benefits. These include:

- Any non-food products, such as cut flowers, nursery stock, and crafts
- Any wine or alcohol or products made with alcohol
- Hot foods
- Any prepared foods or foods meant to be eaten on site (prepared salads, hot soups, hot coffee etc.)

The key to determining whether a food is eligible or not is on intent. If the intent is that a customer will consume the product on site, then the product is not eligible. If the intent is that it



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would be consumed at home, then it would be eligible. For example, if a baker is selling cookies in the market, if the customer buys a package of 6 or 12 cookies, the intent is that they would be taken home for consumption. However, if the cookies are sold wrapped individually, the intent is that they would be consumed immediately as a snack while you shop the market. In that case, the product would not be eligible. If a large family buys a 6 pack of cookies with SNAP funds and then immediately opens and consumes them, that's okay because the intent was that they be taken home.

To make a SNAP purchase, consumers will swipe their benefit cards on a SNAP capable device, such as an iPhone equipped to accept SNAP. The amount of the sale is removed from the customer's benefit account and transferred to the retailer's bank account. The sale will show up in the retailer's account within 48 hours. If the retailer is the farmer, this is a direct transaction between the consumer and the farmer. However, many markets operate a central terminal system. This means the market has the SNAP certification to accept SNAP benefits on behalf of the farmers and vendors in their market. The benefit card is swiped on the market's equipment. While the benefits are transferred to the market's checking account, the customer is given market-specific SNAP tokens to use for purchasing product from the farmers at that specific market. The market farmers accept the tokens as payment for SNAP eligible products and then redeem them with the market manager for reimbursement from the market account that the SNAP fund went into. This system allows a greater number of options for consumers than would be the case with a few individual farmers in the market accepting SNAP benefits themselves. Although, many more farmers are now becoming equipped to accept SNAP as individual farms and soon we may see the pendulum swing in the other direction as

more and farmers sign on to the program.



Once you've completed all your applications and received your equipment, you can now begin accepting SNAP. But what about outreach and promotion? In order to develop a large base of SNAP customers that will grow over time, you'll need to promote the fact that your market or farm can now accept SNAP benefits. The Farmers Market Federation of NY maintains a full menu of information to assist farmers markets and farmers with their SNAP programs and outreach. Videos educate farmers and markets about the program and how to operate a Central Terminal system. Tracking sales and redemptions of tokens is maintained using the spreadsheets provided by the Federation. Also there is a full catalog of marketing materials to help with promoting the SNAP program at your farmers market. To access these materials, visit <http://www.nyfarmersmarket.com/ebt-and-creditdebit-machines/>.

SNAP Incentive Programs

In addition to nutrition programs at farmers markets, SNAP incentive programs are becoming a very popular way to encourage low income consumers to shop at your market. These incentive programs provide a coupon toward additional purchases of food based on a customer's use of SNAP benefits at the market. The idea is to encourage SNAP customers to shop at a farmers market, to help dispel myths such as farmers markets are expensive, and to

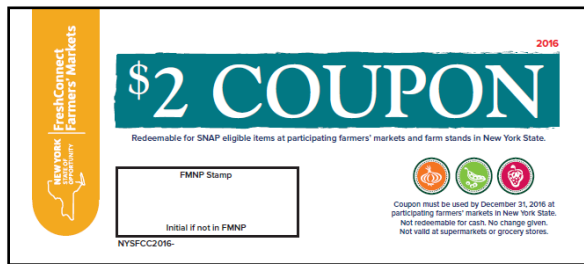


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show that a farmers market is affordable, family-friendly and an opportunity to interact with farmers that grow the foods being sold. Once shoppers experience shopping at a farmers market, taste the foods purchased locally and direct from farmers, they will continue to use their SNAP benefits at a farmers market. There are two major incentive programs currently operating in New York State, along with several smaller, regional programs.

Farmers Market Health Bucks is a SNAP incentive funded and administered by the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. The program operates at all SNAP capable markets within New York City. For a minimum purchase of \$5 in SNAP tokens, consumers receive a \$2 Health Buck, or a 40% increase in buying power. The Health Bucks are valid on any fresh fruits and vegetables purchased from an FMNP farmer at participating markets. Farmers participating in the FMNP program can accept the Health Bucks as payment for their own fruits and vegetables and redeem them for reimbursement at face value directly through the Farmers Market Federation of NY.



Fresh Connect Checks is a Governor Cuomo sponsored program and is administered by the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets. The program is statewide and targets all SNAP capable markets that are not operating other SNAP incentive programs. The program operates year round, helping to boost sales for winter markets, as well as those operating seasonally.

Fresh Connect checks are \$2 coupons that can be used to purchase any SNAP eligible food from any farmer or vendor in participating farmers markets. The customer swipes their benefit card and receives a \$2 Fresh Connect check with any \$5 purchase of SNAP tokens up to a maximum of \$20, again providing a 40% increase in the consumer's buying power. Farmers accept the Fresh Connect checks as payment for their SNAP eligible foods and redeem the checks by mailing them directly to the Farmers Market Federation for a full face value reimbursement.

Outreach to the Low Income Community

Outreach to the community is critical to gaining success at the market with any of the three major nutrition programs. When determining who to reach out to, ask yourself these two questions:

1. Who could benefit from education on using the nutrition programs at farmers markets? For example:
 - WIC clinics
 - Food pantries
 - Offices of the Aging
 - Public Health Clinics
 - Nonprofit agencies or other state/local agencies working on hunger issues
2. What places might benefit from promotion regarding nutrition programs at farmers markets? For example:
 - Same list as above
 - Community events
 - Schools
 - Farmers markets

There are a number of ways to do your outreach. Direct contact is probably the best method. Call on the agencies and organizations you have identified from answering these questions. Bring them information on each of the programs you



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offer at your market. Flyers for the SNAP program are available for download at <http://www.nyfarmersmarket.com/wp-content/uploads/EBT-Consumer-Brochure-Revised.pdf>.

You may be able to get flyers for the FMNP or WIC V&F programs from Cornell Cooperative Extension's Eat Smart NY Program team. Make sure you leave handouts about your market – location, hours, days and season, special events schedule and a promotional blurb about why shopping at your market is fun, affordable and beneficial to the consumer.

Some markets visit consumer groups and give presentations about their market, the nutrition programs in their markets and encourage visits to the market. Providing the audience with incentives to attend the market will increase the likelihood of their coming to the market. Farmers market bingo is a great way to build interest in the market, educate consumers about fresh fruits and vegetables and provide an incentive to those who win each game. Incentives can be coupons, tokens or anything that requires them to shop at the market to redeem the incentive.

Nutrition education can also build consumer interest and knowledge of using local food. Many consumers do not know fresh produce – is it a cabbage or a head of lettuce? Nor do consumers necessarily know how to prepare fresh foods. Educational programs help to answer these questions for consumers. Cooking demonstrations are a great way to encourage consumers to purchase and eat fresh vegetables. Show them the product, explain the storage and preparation process and then by preparing a simple recipe. As you offer sample tastes of the recipe, distribute a paper copy of the recipe that participants can bring with them. Farmers will see an increase in sales of the product that was prepared and consumers will learn how to eat

and prepare healthy, fresh and locally grown foods.

Of course, you need to be sure you are doing your cooking demonstrations safely and legally. Check with your county Department of Health to learn their requirements for cooking and sampling at the market. Each county will have their own regulations.



You should also look at the Cornell Cooperative Extension office in your country for assistance. There may be nutrition educators that can help you reach your target audience, spread the word about the nutrition programs in your market, and they may even have outreach materials that you could use. Some Extension offices have funding to perform periodic cooking demonstrations and nutrition education at farmers markets in their region so definitely seek their advice and assistance.



References:

This material is based on a presentation by Linda Ameroso, Cornell Cooperative Extension, NYC, at the Farmers Market Manager annual conference, Nov 2015.

Appedices:

FMNP Consumer Currency Brochure

WIC V&F vs. FMNP Comparison Chart

General Guidelines for Food Demonstrations at Direct Marketing Venues

General Guidelines for Food Sampling at Direct Marketing Venues



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Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
Broome County





Farmers Market Managers Professional Certification Program

Module 2: Reaching out to the Market Community

Unit 2.3 Events Management Best Practices

UNIT OVERVIEW

Farmers markets have become a desired space for special events, such as weddings, craft brewery festivals, and concerts. Smaller markets often host health fairs, “walk with a doc,” or even cooking demonstrations. But planning a special event at your market can often feel overwhelming. Things like permits, licenses, marketing, staffing (or volunteer management), and other concerns can make planning a successful event at your farmers market seem overwhelming. But once you are armed with a little knowledge, proper planning becomes much easier.

This unit will build a greater understanding of what goes into planning and implementing a successful special event at your market. Best practices on what to consider, and how to decide whether hosting a special event will benefit your market will be addressed.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

CONCEPTS

- Understanding the steps to creating a special event
- Understanding the role of various committees which will be necessary to implementing a successful special event
- What aspects comprise a successful special event to be offered at your farmers market
- How to decide whether a special event would be appropriate and beneficial for your market

SKILLS

- Ability to create a checklist and timeline for implementing special events at your farmers market



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Unit 2.3: Special Events

As they waited their turn in line, the children eyed the mound of sweet corn in front of them and flexed their muscles – ready to start shucking the corn. It was the annual corn shucking contest at the farmers market. Families began signing up their youngsters a month ago for the event during their weekly trips to the market. Many of the kids participated last year and have been anxiously awaiting this day.

While mom and dad shop for their weekly fruits and vegetables, pasture-raised meats, and maple syrup for Sunday morning brunch, their children practice peeling the corn and wait for the contest to begin. When the contest begins, the market is crowded with families all hoping their child will bring home the top prize.



Events are a fun addition to any market. Whether they are focused on entertainment, education, or food and whether geared toward children or adults, they bring people into the

market with the anticipation of a family-friendly experience. Some of these people may be regular customers but some may be new to the market and attending specifically because of the event. Events can create new customers who want to come back to the market again and again because of the fun experience they had, and then can also cause existing customers to spend more time, money, and become more loyal to the market. Events can also function as “bonding” or “bridging” experiences for the diverse community that your market serves. Farmers markets can reap many benefits by hosting events at their markets. These events can be small, such as the *Rutabaga Curl* at the Ithaca Farmers Market, *Walk with a Doc* at the Westside Farmers Market, or as large as the *Flower City Days* at the Rochester Public Market. But are they worth all the work, expense and complication added to the regular day-to-day market bustle?

Events entertain market shoppers, adding to the excitement of the farmers market experience. While customers are enjoying the entertainment, they are apt to stay longer at the market and thus spend more money with the farmers in the market. Events are a great way to showcase your market facility (or location) and programs!

Events promote sales of featured products. For example, an October Apple Fest featuring all



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things apple, could educate shoppers about the apple industry, teach apple recipes, offer apple-related foods, and thereby increase sales of apples for farmers in the marketplace. Events draw a crowd. Everyone loves a special event, whether large or small.

Although many in the crowd may be regular market shoppers, special events, if properly promoted, can also draw new people to the market. This is a great opportunity to introduce them to the abundance of fresh foods available and to build your market's loyal customer base. Getting new customers who associate your market with having a fun time is never a bad thing!

Events can increase the days or time of day that your market is open and open up participation to a potentially new audience that would come later or earlier than the regular farmers market crowd. This gives your vendors additional opportunity to increase their sales.

Events often create media attention for the market. Local media love positive stories and nothing beats a feel-good story on the local farmers market. Markets have the local angle: local people, fresh healthy food, plenty of excitement, colorful photo opportunities, and a story with a positive spin. Don't waste the opportunity to build a good relationship with the media representatives that cover your event which could lead to even more media coverage on non-event days.

Building relationships with your local media will pay dividends in the future. Everyone likes to deal with someone they are familiar with, and this applies to the media as well. One way to approach this is to introduce yourself to the local media and offer your willingness to be

interviewed whenever they have a question that may be related to farmers markets, local food or farms. This will help them always have someone to speak with while also allowing you to do publicity for your own market! Another option might be to offer to go on tv (or radio) on a regular basis to talk about what is happening with your farmers or at your market. Become a guest expert.

Special events help build community and can become a great venue for community education on such topics as health and nutrition, the environment, agriculture and gardening, or other issues that are important to your customers. Don't be afraid to partner with other community organizations whose mission aligns with that of your market. For example, several markets hold *Walk with the Doc* events where local doctors walk the neighborhood with market shoppers and discuss health issues and the impact of diet and nutrition on health. Try something innovative that people will want to talk about and share.

This can also be a great opportunity to support and showcase your community's art and culture, local artisans, and performers. Arts organizations are always looking for venues to showcase their members. They are often willing to take on the liability as well as help in the marketing. Having a partner that is willing to split the marketing duties will help you reach multiple audiences and attract more new people to your events.

Events can even spawn new business opportunities for the neighborhood your market is located in. By hosting events such as weddings, evening music festivals or food truck rodeos, the businesses located in the vicinity of the market will start to see the benefits of staying open later



(or opening earlier), or new businesses may open to support the new customers coming to events at the market. As the community sees that supporting the market leads to a better economy for other local businesses, more partnerships and cooperative events will begin to form and the market will continue to thrive and grow.



Events can bring a great deal of benefits to the market, from increased sales to enhancing the market’s place within its community. But well-planned special events are also a lot of work and need to be coordinated and well thought out to be successful.

The City of Rochester’s Department of Parks and Recreation hosts many citywide events, including farmers market events. According to Jim Farr, the Department’s Assistant Director and the Manager of the Rochester Public Market, who organizes and manages these events, event planning includes the following tasks:

- Budgeting
- Publicity
- Establishing dates and alternate dates
- Selecting and reserving the event site(s)
- Acquiring permits
- Coordinating transportation, security, and parking

Event planning may also include some or all of the following, depending on the event:

- Developing a theme for the event
- Arranging for speakers/performers
- Coordinating location support (such as electricity and other utilities)
- Arranging décor, tables, and chairs
- Event support and security—catering, police, fire, portable toilets, parking, and signage
- Emergency plans
- Health care professionals
- Arranging for trash removal/cleanup

What follows is a prescription for planning events for your market. We have taken a view of a large-scale event to illustrate all that applies to creating a well-run, successful event. Most farmers markets may not often run events of this scale, but rather several much smaller scale events throughout the market year. However, the steps for planning and implementing an event are the same regardless of size, so simply use this as a guide and scale down each step as needed to accommodate the size of your market’s events.



Artist Row at the Rochester Public Market



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Pre-planning Considerations

To begin the planning process to create an event that appeals to your customers and supports your market, you want to be sure that the event will enhance your market, support your mission, and not disrupt commerce. You will want to consider the time commitment involved in planning and implementing this event and how much space it will take up in your market. As the market manager, are you the only person who oversees market operations or do you have an assistant or volunteers that you can call on? If volunteers may be required, this will create an additional layer of oversight and will also need to be worked into your project timeline for recruitment and management. (Please see our chapter on Volunteer Management for more information on how to work effectively with volunteers). Do you have room to expand your market within the existing space? If not, you will need to check with your market sponsor to see if expansion is a possibility and what that would entail. How much will this event potentially cost and how much will it bring in? Having a break-even event is okay if the market will receive other benefits, such as media attention or introducing new customers to the market. As an example, if a market were to explore hosting a health fair mid-way through their season, and it would need additional help beside a market manager to implement, and not make a lot of money – the deciding factor would likely be whether it aligned with the mission of the market. In other words, keep the event focused on your market, your customers and farmers, and what is in their best interests. Don't hold an event just to hold an event – make sure there is a defined purpose and intent behind it.

Firstly, you must know your market. Look first at your customer profile. Who are they? What would appeal to them and what would not? Are there types of events which are popular or many organizations are already hosting? Also, knowing your customer profile will help you strategize the best marketing methods to use to reach them with publicity about your event.



Secondly, look at the larger community. There are key partners that you can tap to help. Some partners may become sponsors and offer financial support for the event in exchange for consideration, such as signage, table space, mentions in event advertising, etc. Sponsorship money can help defray the expenses of the event: paying musicians, chefs, or entertainers; hiring security or maintenance people; and renting event tents, portable toilets, etc. Other community partners may assist with the planning of the event by participating on committees and serving an important function during the event. Some partners may simply want to use your event as a way to publicize their own services and to build relationships in the community. This not only adds an extra dimension to the event, it also adds another marketing channel as these groups promote their presence at the event to their own



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constituencies. That alone is a valuable reason to use community partners.

The Planning Process

Many hands make light work. This is true with events planning. The first task in the planning process is to recruit volunteers to be on the events committee. Each committee member needs to be hard-working, open-minded, committed to the market as well as the event, and a genuine people-person. It is helpful to recruit committee members with key skills, such as media people, lawyers, insurance agents, electricians, plumbers, and emergency personnel such as medical, fire, or police, etc. Don't just recruit one type of volunteer to help promote and run your event. Try to get volunteers with a diversity in skills and abilities.

An events committee may not always be an option for smaller size markets who may have a volunteer or part-time manager. But a successful event is incumbent on all the following pieces being discussed and addressed (if necessary). This can be done just by the manager, or perhaps by recruiting someone from the community to help.

Together, the committee will brainstorm ideas for special events at the market. The process is much like the visioning session of strategic planning. All ideas are welcome and all committee members should be encouraged to participate. No idea is a bad idea at this point – the purpose is simply to come up with a large list to choose from. From the list of ideas, the committee can pinpoint those that are the most doable based on the market mission, the market's consumer base, the farmer base, the market budget, and the market's key community partnerships and those likely to be developed. A

calendar of events should be developed for the market season to encompass as many different events as is possible and practical given time and resource constraints.

Each event needs a "to-do list and a timeline." This list spells out each task which must be accomplished as well as assigns responsibility, tracks the progress, and develops a critical path that includes deadlines and benchmarks. Consider the following task categories:

- Publicity
- Fundraising, including sponsorships and donations
- Activities, such as entertainment, demonstrations, and competitions
- On-site management, such as grounds, maintenance, portable toilets, etc.
- Traffic and safety
- Administration, including staffing, budgeting, permits, and insurance

Publicity

Key tasks for publicity involve getting the word out about the event and inviting local dignitaries, if appropriate. Publicity does not need to involve expensive ads in local papers and on radio and television. Local media loves a good story, and you can deliver a media release about your event that will give local reporters a story they will want to cover for free. Give them the details in a concise release that tells "who, what, when, where and why." The "why" will tell why this is a newsworthy event for them to cover. What makes it important and special? Don't forget to include a special photo opportunity—a designated time and feature that will entice cameras to turn out. Media releases should be sent at least two weeks before an event, with follow-up phone calls placed one week



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beforehand. You may also want to consider hosting a press conference prior to the event to increase interest by the general public.

All media is required to reserve airtime for community events, so make sure to work this timing into your calendar of publicity so that you are able to take advantage of this opportunity. Don't think of this as "bothering" the local media, but rather as giving them a chance to meet this requirement to their community.

Signage is also a critical task under the publicity heading. Signage throughout the market will inform your market's consumers of an upcoming event. It should be placed throughout the market several weeks ahead of the event. It gives customers plenty of time to plan their visit and encourage their families to attend with them. Make things easy on yourself and let others promote your event for you! It also helps to keep farmers and other vendors informed about upcoming events. Not only does this help them plan for the increased traffic when it comes to what to bring to market, they also have networks of friends and families who are potential attendees.

Additional signs, posters, and flyers can be placed throughout the community to promote your event. Many local businesses will be happy to post your event flyers in their store windows, community bulletin boards, or wherever their public gathers.

Another source of free publicity that has proven effective is the Internet. Social networking sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and even SnapChat, are frequented by consumers of all ages and all backgrounds. It is important to put together a timeline for posting regularly on the social networking sites with both text and

images. Just as important is your market website and/or email list in communicating about special events. If you currently do not possess a website for your farmers market, the Farmers Market Federation of NY (www.nyfarmersmarket.com) has video tutorials you can watch to create and maintain your own website. If you do not currently possess an up to date mailing list (either snail mail or email) for your customers it is a good idea to have a sign up at your manager table. Another option might be to have a raffle basket with donations from your vendors to gather customer emails. You can then either use a system such as Constant Contact or MailChimp to communicate with your customers on a regular basis about what is happening at the market. These steps may seem time consuming but the benefit you will see in increased traffic is worth it – and you may find they are easier than you might think.



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Quite often there are local photographers who are willing to take pictures at events for low or no cost (especially if they are looking to build their portfolio). You will want to maintain the rights to the pictures so you can use them in future marketing/publicity materials. You could also connect with local community colleges or high schools who have photography programs to access photographers. One creative way to get lots of photos of events at your market would be to hold a contest where photographers would take pictures and then they would get uploaded to your market website or Facebook page and then customers would vote on which one(s) they liked the best. This would help build a catalog of pictures but also get more engagement from customers and those in the community.

Fundraising

Every event needs an infusion of cash, from a small event such as the *Rutabaga Curl* that simply needs to purchase prizes, to a full-scale festival with bands, tents, portable toilets, and security. The fundraising committee is charged with identifying the funds necessary to cover the event budget.

Corporate sponsorships can be an important source of funds. Often sponsors will provide needed funds in exchange for special consideration. This could be a combination of any of the following:

- Space in the market to promote their business/organization
- Signage acknowledging their company's sponsorship of the event
- Inclusion in any promotional pieces including ads, flyers, and posters, as a sponsor of the event

- Their company's name on the entertainment venue, refreshments tent, or on the event itself



The corporate sponsorship is often a negotiation between the events committee and the potential sponsor. Finding the right level of sponsorship is key to satisfying the sponsor while providing the funds needed for the event and maintaining the integrity of the market and the event mission. For more information on how to approach this, check out the unit on *Fundraising and Sponsorships* which offers tips and suggestions as far as how to structure a sponsorship request.

The fundraising committee may also look at selling promotional items if the event is large enough to justify the initial financial outlay. This involves purchasing market and event souvenirs that can be sold to raise money to cover the expense of the event and perhaps help with general funds for the market as well. Souvenirs can include things like T-shirts, tote bags, aprons, and other market-related items. Be careful about dating promotional items. A T-shirt with "2009 Market Festival" will have no sales value in 2010. But if it is simply "Market Festival," or the name of your Farmers Market extras can be sold the following year. Also make sure your



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promotional items are things that will appeal to a wide variety of customers and will not conflict with anything your vendors are selling. A seed packet will only appeal to customers who have land to plant on (and may conflict with vendor sales) whereas a tote bag can be used by anyone and will help promote additional sales.

Activities

What activities will be featured at the event? Will there be music, games, local chef demonstrations, or scavenger hunts for children? Whatever activity or series of activities are planned, the activities committee is charged with organizing them: finding the entertainment and booking them, securing prizes for the games or competitions, recruiting competitors for games, signing up chefs, etc. One of the first things to do might be to create a calendar of the activities and/or events that you would like to host during the market season. This is a good way to visually see what time commitment is being required as a whole and make sure you are not doing too much or too little. This may be the easy part of the task.



Beyond securing the people necessary for the activities, this committee must also secure all

equipment, supplies, and materials needed to carry out each activity. This could include stages, electric and water supplies, tables, chairs, washing stations, grills and cooking facilities. Don't forget the little things, too, such as napkins, pans, and utensils for cooking demonstrations; or game cards for scavenger hunts. These little things are easy to overlook, but can make or break your activity's success. It is critical that the activities committee communicates frequently with the fundraising group to ensure that monies will be available to "pay the bills" when the time comes. The little things can add up so make sure to leave some room in your budget for these and any other unexpected expenses.

Finally, the activities committee is charged with organizing, conducting, and facilitating the activities on event day. It may be necessary to bring on additional people to cover all the activities planned for the event. The additional staff should be trained by the committee and be overseen by a committee chair.

On-site management:

This is a series of tasks both before the event and all through the day of the event. Most critical is the initial layout. Where will each activity take place to enhance the market, encourage participation in the event, and promote sales with the market's farmers? It is important that this is carefully planned so that the event enhances the market rather than interferes with farmer sales, because crowds gathered for activities make it difficult for shoppers to access farmers' tables. It is also important to consider risk management. Making sure that cords are taped down, cones are covering any trip hazards (such as tent stakes), etc. will go a long way to ensuring everyone's safety during the event.



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This committee must also maintain the market site. Markets should be kept as clean as possible. If the market does not have adequate staff and receptacles to handle the extra trash and clean-up, it is the committee's responsibility to develop a plan to make sure this is taken care of. This includes staffing, additional waste receptacles, and a plan for removal of waste after the event is over. And don't forget recycling containers. Quite often your local waste management agency can provide these free of charge and then take back when you do not need them anymore. This is a great opportunity to educate consumers about the importance of recycling and also promotes your market as an environmentally friendly operation. Some markets, such as the Ithaca Farmers Market, have gone the route of requiring all their food vendors to use all biodegradable utensils – but this may not be financially feasible depending on the scale of your event.



Does the market have adequate bathroom facilities? Will they be able to handle additional crowds brought to the market through a special event? If not, this committee must determine the additional need and rent portable toilet and handwashing facilities to accommodate the expected crowds. It would be better to over-prepare rather than underprepare.

Emergency preparedness and security are also a function of this committee. Working closely with police, fire, and ambulance personnel will help you to plan for emergencies and ensure that the event has adequate protection should an emergency arise.

Finally, what is your alternate weather plan? If your market is not located inside a permanent structure, how will your event be impacted if it rains, snows, or is extremely windy outside? This may mean the management committee should consider either an alternate date or have tent rental on standby. Remember that weather events play a role in a customer's decision whether to visit a farmers market, special event or not.

Traffic and safety

Crowd control is the task of this committee. Will additional parking need to be secured? Contracting for additional parking lots may be necessary for large events. Look at local businesses that may give access to their lots and consider nearby fields or open space that can be mowed and used as alternate parking. You may need to provide the property owners with insurance certificates to place the liability on your carrier. You may also need to do some work on fields that will be used, such as mowing, filling in ruts and holes, preparing driving lanes and parking spaces, and enhancing the field's ingress and egress. Make sure to plan properly for adequate parking because it would be a shame to spend so much time and money publicizing your event, only to have most of the people who planned to attend drive on by for lack of parking.

You then need to think: how will people be moved from parking to the event? You may need to secure transportation from remote parking to



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the market. Local schools or housing authorities may allow their buses to be utilized. A fun approach, if the parking is not too remote, is to contract with farmers to use tractors and enclosed wagons to bring people in. Be sure to have city permits and insurance coverage before using this option.

Within the market, this committee will work with the on-site management committee to help with the event layout to ensure safe movement of crowds within the market. That means keeping pedestrians and vehicle traffic segregated. Using cones, roping, and traffic barriers will help with this. Check with municipal officials to secure the equipment you will need. It is also important to ensure that areas where the event will take place are large enough to handle the anticipated crowds and that exits are well marked and adequate to evacuate the event in the case of an emergency. Please check the unit on *Crisis Management* to learn more about how to plan for potential emergencies.

Will there be alcohol at your event? If so you will need to consider both alcohol permitting (both from your municipality as well as the NYS Liquor Authority), as well as on-site security. Alcohol permits can take a few weeks up to a few months, so you will want to plan ahead. Often wineries and breweries will carry their own “special event permits” which *may* be acceptable to your municipality/sponsor. You will want to check on this to determine what permit(s) you may need to secure if you would like to have alcohol at your event. This will also be an additional expense the fundraising committee will need to cover. Security will be charged with checking IDs of those entering the event as well as overseeing crowd control. Consider the different crowd this may bring and

the potential positive and negative effects when thinking about whether to offer alcohol samples or sell by the glass at your market events.



Administrative

Administrative tasks include budgeting, staffing, securing permits and insurance coverage, and overall management of the event. The administrative committee works closely with all other committees to develop an event budget to cover the needs of each committee. Staffing is also required, whether paid or volunteer, for managing the event and covering the needs of each committee. The admin committee is responsible for determining these staffing needs. The administrative committee will need to recruit people to cover all the jobs that will need to be done pre-event, as well as during the big day. Each of the additional staff needs to understand their duties and expectations and whom they will receive directions from. A pre-event session with staff will help with this training.

Events often require special permits. Early on in the planning process, involve your municipality with your ideas. They will let you know the various permits and licenses you may need to



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conduct your special events. Here are a few examples that you may encounter:

- County Health Department permits are needed to cover on-site food preparation, demonstrations, and sampling
- Special permits for various activities such as musical events and craft shows.
- Street closure permits
- Liquor permit for wineries and/or breweries to sample and/or sell

You don't want to skip this step because your market could be fined or your event shut down if you didn't secure the proper permits. Ignorance is not an excuse. The larger crowds that an event will attract to the market, the extra activities, and the added volunteers/workers necessary may add to the market's insurance liability. Because of this, it is important that the administrative committee inform the insurance carrier of event plans. The insurance company may have advice to help reduce your exposure. In some cases, where the event is especially large and significantly increases the risk, the insurance carrier may require additional coverage. While this may add to the expense of the event, it is better to know this up front than to find out afterward and have a claim denied because the event exceeded your policy coverage.

Additional Ideas for Event Success

Start your events simple. It is easy to overreach when sitting in a committee meeting and dreaming up ideas for a fun event for your market. However, it is much better to begin with a simple idea and do it well. Each year you can build on the event in a way that is consistent with the resources available to the market —both human and financial resources.

Involve and inform your market farmers when it comes to your event plans. They may have ideas and opinions that are relevant to your planning or think of a potential problem that you missed. Remember, you need their cooperation and participation for your event to be successful, so asking them their opinions early on in the process will give them some skin in the game.

Designate one person to be spokesperson for the event. That ensures that all information released to the media is unified.

Keep an event notebook. A three-ring binder with dividers works well for this. Enter all pertinent information into the notebook to track the event and help with planning for future events. The notebook should include your checklist, the purpose of the event, who is involved, all equipment, all observations, committee work, notes, copies of ads, posters, flyers, photos of the event, financials, and evaluation. You can then refer to this notebook the following year when thinking about whether to repeat the event. This will also help immensely if there is turnover in your market staff and you have a new manager the following year who is trying to repeat an event they did not participate in.

Does all this sound like more than you, or your market, can handle? Another option may be to open up the market to non-profits who would host smaller scale special events for you and take much of the planning burden off of you as a manager.



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Events Hosted by Outside Groups

Many markets are able to host events that are managed by outside groups. In this type of event, the outside group does all the planning and managing of the event. The market may be involved peripherally since the market is providing the event site, but the market's responsibility is limited. This is an excellent opportunity to experience the benefits of market events, but requires little or no responsibility from the market, including labor or financial outlay.

Some examples of events hosted by an outside group are:

- The library comes in to promote reading and/or library card sign-ups
- The local Cornell Cooperative Extension comes to do nutrition/cooking demonstrations and education, composting education, gardening, etc.
- The local nature center, zoo, or animal rescue center comes to offer exhibits/displays and hands-on

opportunities and promote membership or pet adoption

- Local chefs come to offer cooking demonstrations or compete in cooking competitions
- The local fire department promotes fire safety and prevention
- Local health organizations hold health screenings and pass out disease prevention information
- Musicians/bands play at the market to promote themselves
- Local drama groups promote upcoming performances
- Civic organizations performing voter registration



Hosting weddings at the Rochester Public Market

Evaluation

Post-event evaluations should be conducted with all committee members and key partners to discuss all aspects of the event. This will help you with future planning, building on successes and correcting any missteps. Each committee should give a report. The evaluation should focus on the following:

- Did we achieve our goals?
- Did we reach our target audience?



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- What were the strong points or successes of the event?
- What were the weak points or failings, if any?
- Is this type of event something which is one-time or should be a regular occurrence?
- Do a cost-benefit analysis after considering all the logistics (staffing, finances, security, etc.) to determine if the event was profitable overall, or if there were gains that weren't financial (increased customer traffic, exposure, publicity for the market). If the event was not financially profitable, but brought additional customers to the market, you may still want to consider doing again, especially if things you had to purchase can be re-used so your costs the next time will be less or if you learned things in doing the event that would make it more profitable next time.
- Record what made the event effective or ineffective; i.e., thorough advertising, weather conditions, lack of participation, or lack of interest.
- Propose changes to make the event more effective if you plan to do it again. If you don't plan to run this same event again, what did you learn in doing this event that would help inform your decisions on other kinds of events that may work better?
- What was the weather and its effect on the event's success? Always include the weather conditions in your evaluation

report. The success or failure of a special event may be directly related to the day's weather rather than the event itself. You don't want to discard an otherwise great event idea because one year's attendance was down due to conditions beyond your control.

Finally, Give Thanks!

After the event is over, be sure you thank all those involved in making your event a success. Send a press release with an event photo to your local media. Include recognition of all the vendors, organizations, and businesses who were contributors to the event.

You should also send personal thank-you notes to each of the vendors, organizations, and businesses that were contributors to your event. Thank them for their contribution and ask them for their feedback. It shows that you value them and will encourage them to continue to support your market. They will be much more likely to want to help out with future events if they know their efforts were appreciated and recognized.

Be sure to thank all your volunteer staffers. Without them, you would not have been able to manage your event. Let them know how valuable they are!

Then put together a short questionnaire for your farmers and your shoppers. Ask for their input on your event. Giving them an opportunity to air their opinions helps to ensure their continued support for future events as well. They may have valuable insights that will help you in future event planning.



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References:

“Events Planning and Management,” by James Farr, Deputy Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation, Rochester, NY, Director of the Rochester Public Market, President of the Farmers Market Federation of NY; and Joan Hildebrand, Public Relations, Rochester Public Market. Presented at the Farmers Market Federation of NY Farmers Market Managers Training Program, March 8, 2009.

So You Want to Hold a Festival? The A-Z of Festival & Special Event Organization, by Patricia Mestern. OATI. 2002

Appendix:

Special Events Checklist

Farmers Market Special Event Ideas



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Farmers Market Managers Professional Certification Program

Module 2: Reaching out to the Market Community

Unit 2.4 Branding Your Market

UNIT OVERVIEW

As a market manager, you spend much of your energy ensuring that the day to day operations of the market run smoothly and that you have a good selection of vendors and products that appeal to a variety of ethnic and economic populations. Creating a brand for your market is likely the last thing on your mind. But without taking the time to set yourself apart from the other markets in your area and developing a strong brand identity, your market will be selling itself short in distinguishing itself from not only other markets, but also farm stands and grocery stores selling local products. Branding and marketing go hand in hand because without a strong brand, it will be hard to do a good job marketing and a brand without marketing won't attract many customers to your market either!

This unit will build a greater understanding of how to create and assess a brand for your market and the various methods (free, low cost, and no cost) for getting the word out about your market to customers.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

CONCEPTS

- Understanding the importance of branding
- Understanding the elements of creating a unique brand for your farmers market
- Understanding the opportunities that various marketing programs and methods offer to your market

SKILLS

- Ability to create and launch a brand for your farmers market
- Ability to create and launch a marketing campaign for your farmers market



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Unit 2.4: Branding & Marketing

As a farmers market manager, creating a brand for your farmers market and launching a marketing campaign are likely to be the last things on your mind when you first get started. Ensuring the day to day logistics of your market run smoothly, creating a welcoming atmosphere for your customers and keeping your vendors happy is a full time job in itself. Not to mention the fact that many managers wear several hats, perhaps also participating in the market or holding another job as well. But creating a brand for your market and marketing your market are essential tasks – and they need not be daunting. While many companies spend multi-millions of dollars on creating and maintaining a brand (think John Deere or Coca-Cola), this is something that you can do by yourself on a much smaller scale by working through just a few simple steps. Then once done, your brand will be used throughout your marketing pieces and promotions to build your identity and increase the awareness of your market to the public.

Existing Brand Assessment

Some markets already have a developed brand identity, whether through their own invention or through their market's sponsor. Before moving forward to create a brand for your market, check with your market sponsor (if you have one) to determine if a brand exists. This could include their logo and/or tagline in addition to any

reusable marketing materials such as signage, t-shirts or tote bags containing the logo, and social media memes etc. If a brand does exist, know what your sponsor may already be doing to build and promote the existing brand, if anything. Check in with them to be certain you are not duplicating efforts or that you aren't both advertising in the same venues, creating a conflicting marketing message. If you are given the go-ahead to build your own brand, keep them informed as you go through the process. It fosters a better relationship with your sponsor and ensures that nothing each of you are doing will clash or create tension in the organization. You want to make sure they are happy with the branding and marketing you are doing because it also reflects upon their organization. If the market already has an existing brand that was done poorly or does not reflect the current market, you may need to inform them diplomatically and redo (with their approval), but finding out what is existing will be the first step.

So you have found that your market brand exists, even though you were not the one to create it. Now you need to evaluate the brand to determine if it is appropriate and worth keeping. Using a few key questions will give you your answers.



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1) Does it fit with your mission? A good brand will support your mission. Your logo would certainly be about food, agriculture, and community, if your mission was to support a local food economy. Likewise, you wouldn't use unhealthy or non-local foods in your logo when supporting locally grown and produced foods.

2) Is it a market leader? This means, is it recognizable and understood in the community? Your logo should be recognized by the community as identifying your market. You can find this out by showing customers and asking them if they are aware of it and what it means to them. This is a great way to get feedback that will help you evaluate your brand's effectiveness.

3) Can it be scaled up? Is this existing brand something which can be scaled up to use on social media, printed materials, signage, etc..

If the answers to these questions are yes, then you should keep the brand. If not, then consider revisions to the brand that will positively answer these questions.

But, for the purpose of this chapter, let's assume that you do not already have a market brand. No logo, no identity other than that you exist in your community. Let's begin the journey to crafting a market brand that will build your market's visibility and credibility

Why Should I Build a Brand?

Having a brand for your market can pay dividends in many ways. First, it creates your identity and through that identity consumers recognize you and become more aware of the market. That means when they are looking for local food, healthy food or an opportunity to support local agriculture, they turn to your market, rather than the local Wegmans which

carries local food along with all of their other offerings. So through brand recognition, you begin to build up your customer base.

Another reason to create a brand is that you will build customer loyalty. As consumers become more aware of your market and begin to think of your market as THE place for local food, they become dedicated supporters of your market. You become their one stop for local food and farmers and your brand sticks out in their mind as soon as they begin to think about food shopping. In other words, they develop a strong loyalty to the market and its farmers.

With a firm brand identity, customers will find themselves identifying with you and supporting the market through conversations with friends, families, coworkers and recommendations to visit the market as well. These people they come into contact with will hear from them that your market is the best place to shop. The local food, the farmers, the atmosphere are all something they respect and they pass that on to their network. We have heard over and over that word of mouth advertising is the most powerful marketing strategy. People trust recommendations from their family and friends a lot more than they trust a paid advertisement. But we have all pondered over how to get that free word of mouth advertisement started. Well, developing your brand alone will help get your customers talking about your market and get them to start helping you to spread the word.

Finally, a brand will help you to differentiate yourself from your competition. Who is our competition? It is not just other local markets, but anywhere that your community can purchase local food – the supermarket who is now featuring local farmers, food co-ops that focus on local, CSAs, farm stands, etc. But your



brand clearly shows customers your values – fresh from farmers, all local, superior quality, greater diversity of product, no middleman so money spent goes right to farm families etc. As you build your brand, you will begin to create a sense of who you are and why you are the premier place for consumers to go for local food. The more this recognition builds, the more loyal your existing customers will be, and the more they will recommend you to their contacts who will then begin to recommend you to their contacts and so on.

Definition

“Features that identify one seller’s goods or services as distinct from those of other sellers.”

(from the American Marketing Association)

What does a good brand include?

Now that we know why a brand is so important, let’s get the process started! First, we need to understand just what a brand is and what kinds of things it includes. According to Lindsay Wilcox of CenterMost Marketing, a brand is comprised of *“Features that identify one seller’s goods or services as distinct from those of other sellers.”* A strong brand empowers your business to always be on the top of the consumer’s mind. To accomplish this, a brand encompasses the following components:

Your official name

If your market does not have one you will want to think of something which will help customers understand unique attributes of your market or where you are located. Many markets use their location, whether referring to the community or

a specific street, to identify themselves. For example, *the 125th Street FreshConnect Market*. Others will use their sponsor as part of their name, such as *the Oneida County Public Market* which is sponsored by the Oneida County Legislature. Whatever you choose, you’ll want it to be memorable and recognizable so think for a minute about what would be the easiest for you to promote and easiest for customers to remember. If you have an existing name, that name is part of your brand identity already so it would probably be best not to change it unless there is something confusing/conflicting about it. A name that is too similar to nearby markets might be an example of this.

Logo

Does your market have a logo? If not, you will want to think about a visual symbol which best illustrates your market, both the overall feel and in terms of product selection. You can incorporate your market name into the image and may be able to create your logo by yourself using simple online design tools if you aren’t comfortable using graphic design software. You can design a logo for free here: <http://www.zilliondesigns.com/free-logo-maker>, or cheaply here: <http://www.designmantic.com/>. These sites will provide you with a PNG file you can use now as well as an EPS file that you can give to a graphic designer later as your market grows. This will be helpful if you want to keep the existing logo but change shapes/colors or font sizes in a rebranding. You may also want to consider contacting the local college to see if a graphic design class needs projects as a way of getting a free logo designed as well. Here are a couple different examples of market logos. Notice the use of the market’s name, a selection of product



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found in the market and the overall “farm” feel of the designs.



Tagline

What do you promise your customers? What does your market offer? This should be a short descriptive statement. The Oneida Public Market’s tagline is: *“The Mohawk Valley’s home for great flavors, inspired artisans and family fun.”* It should be short, simple, evoke the most important aspect(s) of your market and above all – memorable.

Typography

This is the fonts that you use. You want to remember that the font you use should be easily readable from both far away and close up. Different fonts convey different perceptions of your market, such as Times New Roman is seen as more traditional, while sans serif fonts, such as Calibri, convey a more modern or contemporary

feeling, and script fonts can have a more personalized or casual feel. Experts often suggest you use Sans Serif fonts. But it is important that you choose the font that best suits your business. Stay away from fonts that are generally disliked or overused such as Comic Sans or Brush Script and anything that is hard to read from a distance.

Color(s)

You will want to choose just one or two colors to define your brand. Fewer colors makes it easier for customers to remember and recognize as your market. Everyone knows when they see a green and yellow tractor that it is a John Deere or red on a soda can that it’s Coca-Cola.. Choose your logo colors carefully because these colors will be used everywhere on your other marketing materials and your website as well. Keeping your branding consistent will help you begin to build that recognizable brand identity we keep mentioning.

Attitude

This is the feeling you get from your overall brand. In the logo examples above, the attitude they give is that of the country. The Broome County Regional Farmers Market uses a barn cupola with a rooster weathervane. This certainly makes me feel like I am looking at a farm. The Adirondack Farmers Market Cooperative gives a very strong farm image. I will know when I visit these markets that there will be a strong connection with farmers because of the “attitude” or feeling their logos give off. Your logo may be seen as whimsical, serious, rustic etc. In developing your brand, you want to give that same feeling on your website and other marketing materials.



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How do I know my brand is right for my market?

Once you have created your brand, you need to step back and evaluate whether you have created a brand that will accurately describe your market to your potential customers and provide you with the benefits of a strong brand. This is especially important if you've scrapped the old brand in order to create a new one that better reflects your market. You've done the evaluation once and found that your brand was not up to par – now you need to make sure the new brand is better. Even if this is your first attempt at creating a brand, don't just create something and put it out there. Take the time to review it and make sure it really says what you want it to say about your market. There is a three step test to evaluating your market's brand.

1. Is it unique?

You want to ensure that no one else has created a similar brand for trademark reasons as well as to avoid consumer confusion. If another market or business has a very similar name you will spend more time and energy reminding customers who you are as opposed to marketing the market. Do a google image search to determine if there are similar images with your brand. If not, you are fine. If yes you will want to reconsider your design since there could be copyright infringement laws. Remember, you do NOT want to use stock images in your logo. The best way to get around this is to either use images taken from your market or farmers, or work with a graphic designer. Alternatively if you find an image that you like, you can pay for its use. It likely will run less than \$50. This should be your last resort, but if you find an image that you really

believe embodies your market you can go this route.

Consumer confusion should be avoided at all costs. Look at two brands – Starbucks and the Pride of NY. They are very similar in appearance even though the products are very different. But when a customer sees one logo, is it clear to them who they are seeing – Starbucks or Pride of NY? If there is a question in the minds of consumers, you need to alter your brand to make it unique and eliminate any similarities that will confuse the public. You might be able to change one aspect of your branding if this happens – for example, not using the same color or keeping the color but changing the concentric circles to another shape – or you may find that it would be best to redo the logo so it is even more unique. It may be frustrating to have to start over, but even worse would be spending all this time on branding only to end up with an ineffective logo.



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You should also create a website URL for your market that is consistent with the name on your brand/logo. Be sure to purchase all the different versions (i.e. .com, .net, etc.) to ensure that no one else can purchase them and further confuse your customers if they look for you on the internet. You can use one domain as your main site and set the other domains to automatically redirect back to that site if anyone types in an incorrect domain. This is especially important if you are using anything other than a .com because many customers will type that in by default since it is so ubiquitous.

2. Is it memorable?

You want your brand to be something that customers recognize almost immediately and will remember. When you see a “swoosh”, you recognize that as Nike. Or when you see a light green apple, you think of the NYC Greenmarkets.



3. Is it consistent?

Do you use your brand throughout your marketing materials? Not just the logo, but the colors, font, tagline and attitude. This is especially important since you want all your materials to look the same to not confuse customers, vendors, and sponsors, as well as to make them recognizable as belonging to your

market. For example, when you see a leaping deer, you immediately think John Deere. You want your brand to evoke that same sense of recognition.

Then do a broad test of your brand. Show your brand images and marketing materials to some of your customers and ask them if they find your brand memorable and if they believe it represents your market well. Then do the same thing with a group of your vendors and board or management team. If their feedback is positive, then you know you are on the right track. If not, then you know you have some work to do in modifying the brand to fit the criteria of it being unique, memorable and consistent. Remember, every customer interaction with your brand will either raise or lower their perception of your market. You want to make sure that with all the time and effort you are putting into your brand, that the perception will be positive. If the brand looks shoddily put together customers may not have as high of a perception of the market since it does not look professionally done. Conversely, when a customer sees a logo which is very well put together with a tagline that gives the right feeling, they will have a higher perception of the experience they will have at your farmers market. Marketing gives you the opportunity to get your brand out in front of potential customers and raise that perception.

If this all seems overwhelming there are places you can go for help. Local colleges, both four year and community, usually have degree programs which focus on communications, advertising, marketing, art and/or design. It is worth approaching them to discuss a partnership and the opportunity for their students to get some real world experience in working with a



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local group to design a brand. Another option would be to visit www.adhub.com and find a local ad agency who is willing to donate some time, or charge a low cost per hour to work with you.

Creating your brand and the evaluation process must have an adequate amount of time dedicated to making it successful. Set aside adequate time to spend on working through the steps to design and evaluate the brand prior to launching it in a marketing campaign. Without proper time spent on the front end, the end results during marketing will not have as much impact and, in fact, may cause more harm than good. A brand that misrepresents your market and your mission can turn customers away rather than draw them in to your market. Take creating a good brand seriously, whether hiring it out, finding a volunteer, or doing it yourself, and your market will reap the rewards.

I have a brand, now what?

Now that you have created your brand, evaluated and tested it, it is time to bring it out into the world by creating marketing materials that sport your brand. This is how you tell your customers how great your market is and this can only be done by actively using your brand. So use your brand on everything you do – from posters and flyers to advertisements and your market signage to the clothes you wear!

You will want to use a three layered approach when putting together a marketing campaign for your farmers market. Using more than one type of marketing method will ensure you will reach a variety of customers who may respond differently to different marketing methods. These marketing methods are: On-Site

marketing, On-Line marketing; and On-Mind marketing.

On-site Marketing

On-site marketing is everything you do to promote your market and farmers at your farmers market's physical location, and/or the permanent site where your market operates. These include signage, displays, apparel, etc. The idea is that since the market is both the area surrounding the market and the inside of the market itself you will want to consider "How will I draw the customer in?"



Signage

Signage is critical as a silent salesperson. It dispenses information to your customers on your behalf. To make your signage more effective, ask yourself these simple questions:



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- Does it stick out? No, not is it a trip hazard, but is it visible and easily seen from a distance. For example, at market, a sign that is perpendicular to the market table can be read from farther away, as a customer approaches the table, rather than a sign that is parallel to the market table. This has more limited visibility. A sign with small and fancy script font might look great from closer up but if it can't be read from more than 20 feet away, it isn't doing you any good.
- Does it stand up? Having signage which is not permanent is often quite attractive for farmers markets since they can move it after market is done each day. Many markets utilize the "a-frame" type signage since it is durable, is fairly large in size and can stand up by itself. Moveable signs are more versatile to meet the changing needs of your market – as long as they can be seen based on the rules above.
- Is it branded? There are many options for pre-branded signage, including EBT and Food Safety (from the Farmers Market Federation of NY), buy local (NYSDAM), etc. These are very helpful because they show the customer that you care enough to provide signage with important information. Customers care that you care about them!
 - If the signage is not pre-branded then you will want to ensure that it follows all the other rules of being memorable, consistent and unique.



Is it big enough? Any signage which you have at market should have minimal text so that the text can be as large as possible. You will want customers to be able to read it from far away. It should have simple messaging to direct customers, such as “wash fruits and vegetable prior to consumption” or “EBT accepted here” etc. Remember your signage should always encompass your brand – that means using your brand color, font, logo, name, attitude and tag line.

Additional signage considerations:

- Avoid cardboard or other temporary signage. Think about what a haphazard, thrown-together cardboard sign says about your market. It is saying you are unprofessional. It might signal to customers that the market does not care about its appearance and that will reflect on your vendors, as well. A vendor that doesn't care about their customers will not provide fresh, wholesome, safe to eat foods – or so that is what the perception will be. Even if that's

not the reality (you do, after all, care about your market), that's what the customer's perception will be and perception is everything.

- Use descriptive language. "Food safety is everyone's concern – here's how you can do your part." "Delicious recipes using locally grown and wholesome produce." These signs will draw customers' attention and encourage them to pick up the food safety tips or recipes you offer because your signage described it in a way that was inviting and appealing. The power of suggestion is very powerful, indeed.

Displays

Market displays should also be branded, along with being attractive, neat and clean. Even the tablecloths on the table should incorporate your brand colors. It's all in the details. Always be thinking: what else can I do to promote my brand?

Apparel

A market manager can set him/herself apart from customers by wearing clothing that sports the market brand and colors. Not only do customers know that you are the person that can answer their market questions or help them find their favorite farmer, but wearing the brand also helps to build customer recognition and customer loyalty. Wearing your market apparel out in public is also great marketing tool for days your market is not in operation. You will be helping to build the market brand recognition throughout your community one person at a time and it will result in more customers come market day.



On-line Marketing

On-line marketing is your web presence - a market website, blog and social media. On-line marketing is usually perceived as the most time intensive and dreaded of tasks since once the season gets busy the manager is busy interacting with customers, planning events and working with vendors. However, this doesn't need to be the case. As a manager, you can create content ahead of the market season and create posts for social media and/or your blog and schedule them to post later in the year when you'll be tied up with other tasks. This will help free up time during the season. You will still want to post during the season as well to keep the information fresh, but with preplanning, you can minimize time spent on the web during your busiest time.

You will want to make a conscious choice upfront about the amount of time you can commit to on-line marketing, as well as where you believe you will get the most impact with customers. There are four large social media options (Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Instagram). Pick at least two and then focus your energies there. There are also ways that you can link posting information on social media through platforms such as HootSuite, BufferApp, Meet Edgar or



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apps like and IFTT (If This Then That) and Zapier, so that when you post to one it posts to all your social media channels. Some of these options have fees associated with the service, but keep in mind that your time is valuable as well. In this way you can minimize the time commitment while maximizing your customer outreach. Make sure to choose something you can stick with to keep that commitment to consistently posting. Rarely or only sporadically updating doesn't do much to help your marketing - or your brand image, for that matter.

On-mind Marketing

On-mind marketing consists of mailers, advertising and public relations. This can be the most expensive marketing method, as these are always pay-to-play options. If you want to go this route, consider where your current customers are living and where you are looking to gain customers. What zip codes? What demographics? In other words, if you're going to be spending money on On-mind marketing, make sure you are spending it wisely. You can easily send out press releases for free and arrange to be on local television or radio to talk about your market. But other options require a cash outlay. Sometimes that money can be well spent though if you have done your research and strategized appropriately.

Consider the type of information you are looking to get out and determine how best to get that message out. For example, if you want to let customers know about your opening day for the upcoming season, or have a special event you are hosting, a mailer can be effective. You will want to have customer mailing information, otherwise you can work with the USPS to get information for a broadcast mailing (sending to every household in a zip code). But it can get

expensive depending on how wide you want to "cast the net," so know your budget and plan your approach accordingly. Another option could be to work with a local non-profit who shares a similar mission or works with the group of potential customers you are looking to reach. Ask about including your information when they are sending their next mailer. You may need to cover a portion of the mailing cost, but it will certainly be less than you would have paid on your own and those being reached will likely be the ones you are looking to target. You may need to think outside the box to reach a large number of people on a small budget, but it can be done.



Remember, your goal with marketing is that you want to create a long-term relationship with customers using your brand. You don't want to be the desperate, manipulative serial dater, where your potential customers hear from you only once or twice in a spam kind of way before you move on. You want to invite, excite, reward and inspire your customers. Keep talking in ways they can listen since each interaction they have with your brand helps them remember you. Here are eight ways that you can do that!

8 Marketing Tactics for Customer Attraction and Retention

1) **Loss Leader:** A loss leader is a product offered at an exceptional price, knowing



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you'll take a loss. So why would you do this? The idea is to bring the customers "into" your market for the loss leader, then they will see everything else at the market and it will encourage them to purchase other products at full price. Grocery stores use this tactic all the time. An example of this might be: A beautiful bin of apples, with an attractive sign that says "25 cents per apple Saturday Only! Limit 4." (You will want to limit quantities so you won't get taken advantage of.) Also make sure to have enough where customers don't feel they've been victims of false advertising or "bait and switch" techniques too though. You want them to come away feeling happy that they've gotten a good deal/had a good experience.



2) Freebies: They say that nothing in this world is free, so be the one who gives something for "nothing." Why would a market want to do this? Giving something for free with STRATEGY means you WILL get something in return. Customers will remember this experience and not only tell their

friends but also bring them back again. An example of this might be *Free cookie with \$5 Purchase; Free to All: Recipes; or Free to All: Sampling.* The recipes and sampling will encourage customers to try items they might not normally because they are being given information on an unfamiliar product and the opportunity to "try it before they buy it." This can either occur at the market manager's table or at individual vendor tables. This again creates a happy feeling and the remembrance of getting a good deal or feeling well taken care of. Please remember your health and food safety protocols. Sampling coordinated with your local Cooperative Extension office or a local chef will endure all food safety protocols and health regulations are adhered to. You can find more information on these protocols in our Nutrition Education at Farmers Markets module. The money spent on printing recipes or offering treats and tastings will come back tenfold with customer's goodwill and increased sales. Many farmers remark that having sampling will positively impact their sales of that particular product, especially if it is an unfamiliar type of produce. In the same way, offering a free item at one stand in the market will increase the sales at other vendors as the customer's happiness is elevated and they're in consumption mode having broken the ice with that first item.

3) Enter to Win: These are typically a giveaway such as a basket of vendor items. You will want to ask vendors to donate an item for the basket valued at \$5-\$10. If you plan on doing this several times throughout the season make sure to stagger which vendors you ask so that the same vendors are not donating multiple times throughout the season. This is a great way to collect email and/or mailing addresses for customers and visitors at the market, by



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requesting this information on the entry forms for the drawing. You can then use these to send newsletters or other market information. People love a freebie or giveaway and they're more likely to provide their information if you are giving them something in return.



Enter to Win a Harvest Basket!

Your Name _____

Your Email _____

Your Address _____

Yes! I'd like to receive emails/mail with special offers, recipes and more from Pinecone Lane Farm

Similar to the loss leader this will draw people to try vendor products too. There are a few rules when you do a giveaway. It MUST be “no purchase necessary” to avoid NYS laws regarding lotteries. You also must ALWAYS give an opt-out option so a customer can decide to no longer receive your communications. Another option might be to utilize and leverage your social media presence and ask customers to share specific posts for an entry into the giveaway. They would then need to come to the market to pick up their prize, which would satisfy two objectives. It would bring them to the market and it would also help in advertising your market through the networks of all your loyal customers. If you remember we stated earlier that word of mouth is the most powerful advertising and having a friend share a post on social media will make it more likely to be seen by those who share the same values and perhaps bring additional/new customers to your market. Customers of customers is a great audience to try to attract and will likely have a much higher

success rate than a random mailing of nearby zip codes.

4) “Bring Back” Bucks: This is a mechanism to create a branded way to bring customers back to your market after they make a purchase. This operates in a similar vein as the “SNAP Incentive” programs work. You would print a simple branded “dollar” that you give customers after a purchase. An example could be *Spend \$25, get 2 “bring back” bucks* OR you could try a promotion like *Visit a certain amount of vendors and get a stamp or hole punch and you get 2 “bring back” bucks*. So why would a market want to put the resources into printing these “bucks”? This will encourage customers to make your market a regular part of their routine. It is also rewarding the customer for their loyalty. Retail stores use this method very effectively (Who hasn’t heard of Kohl’s Cash or gotten the grocery store register receipt coupons to come back and purchase something again?) and it can be effective in a farmers market environment as well.

5) Partner for Profit: If your market operates in an urban core and there is a locally owned store that focuses on selling local products this could be a great opportunity to not compete but access the same customer base you are looking to attract to the market. The partnership will allow your market to be in two places at once – giving you more branding exposure and more chances to sell product. One way to do this might be to offer free signage to the store at market if they are willing to have market signage at their store. Working together provides a win/win situation for both organizations in terms of promotion and shows your customers that you truly do care about the “buy local” movement, further strengthening your brand.



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6) Get Social: You want to claim your free space on at least 2 of these social media sites - Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest. Make sure to do this as soon as you solidify your brand even if you don't plan to use it right away before someone else snaps up that name and you don't have the chance. Using social media connections can be a great way to leverage your customer's networks to engage with them as well as all their friends to grow your customer base. Nearly three quarters of the US population has at least one social media profile, so by regularly participating in social media you have the ability to influence a very large number of potential customers for your market. Interactions Marketing's latest "Retail Perceptions" report, "Social Media: Invest to Impress" had some very relevant data to support a farmers market being active on social media:

Shoppers were surveyed about their social media use and purchase behavior, and the results clearly show that retailers' social media efforts can have a significant influence on where shoppers spend their money.

According to the report, more than 75 percent of shoppers who use social media agree that retailers should no longer look at a social media presence as just a nice thing to have — it's expected. Shoppers are particularly interested in connecting with grocery retailers, even more so than others, with 50 percent of social media users saying they follow their favorite grocery stores online, versus only 40 percent for department stores and 33 percent for specialty retailers.

While this survey was specific to grocery stores, the data talks about food shopping habits so it can be related directly back to farmers markets. Images are very important in marketing and farmers markets offer the potential for some wonderful images – from food items to plants to colorful displays and shots of families walking through the market. This research illustrates the point that shoppers are making decisions based on social media presence and that not only it is expected, but it is also a very powerful and free marketing channel to take advantage of.



While “if you build it they will come” is a great line from a movie, it’s a terrible marketing plan. To succeed on the Internet today, you have to create content that ignites and engages an audience. Remember that social media is a communication tool, not an advertising media. Consumers will respond best when you educate and inform them about your market, your farmers, agriculture and food. Talk to them and not “at” them. They will be turned off by straight advertising and will not respond to your posts or respond



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negatively. Take pictures at market and then pair it with a quote or short story about a vendor or what happened at the market that day. Share a post from someone else and add your thoughts and feelings. Humanizing your posts will help customers relate and encourage them to come to the market to experience those experiences. They want to see real people and hear real stories – not canned promo pieces.



Another tip for using Facebook is to include a photo with every post. Posts with photos reach a greater number of newsfeeds than plain text and will be more interesting to consumers and have a much higher probability of being shared. Videos are even better. These photos or videos can be your own or they can sometimes be content others have posted that you find and share.

Once you have created content, you will want to regularly analyze which content gets the most interactions from your followers. This can be tracked by looking at “likes”, “shares” and interactions such as comments. Once you see the types of posts that your customers most interact with you can capitalize on that and utilize that to your advantage to continue to grow your followers on social media. If a particular type of post often gets little or no response, stop doing that and focus on the posts types and times that are successful.

Finally, consider using a platform such as HootSuite to link your social media posts so you only need to do it once.

7) Direct Mail/Email: This includes snail mail and email. You want to remember that using this method you are being invited into their home. How will you stand out among all the noise of junk mail and emails? People are constantly seeing ads and hearing marketing messages so you’ll want to do something to make yourself stand out and be noticed. We recommend using the NEON content method to structure any marketing interactions you have with customers. NEON stands for: News, Events, Offers and Need to Know. If your mailing doesn’t include any of those items, is it really worth reading? Following this will ensure that you are not just sending something for the sake of sending it, but that you have some real information to offer, whether it is a new product debuting at the market or a special sale a vendor is planning to offer. Also remember the following when you are considering sending an email to your customers:

DO:

- DO think what makes YOU open an email?
- DO remember your #1 goal: OPEN!
- DO use timely words “alert, new, just announced”
- DO be personal... “You’re invited, Your exclusive offer”



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DON'T

- DON'T be gimmicky.
- DON'T call it a "newsletter"
- DON'T overuse "free" and never say "cheap" (but DO use "sale" or discount if it's good)
- DON'T forget that it's a privilege to be invited into their inbox!

8) PR: Free publicity on local media outlets. Remember that the news media is "hungry" to feature authentic voices and experts in agriculture. As a market manager you are considered an expert on what's happening in agriculture in your region due to your close relationships with farmers. When something happens, such as a drought, flood, late cold weather, late blight, even a food safety scare half way across the county, this is your opportunity to not only educate on the role local agriculture plays in your community but also how your local farmers are impacted and reacting to whatever is happening. And of course, in introducing you and your title, your market will likely get a mention as well. Being available whenever reporters call for interviews will help ensure media will keep coming back to you and your market name gets out there more and more frequently. This opportunity to both humanize and elevate the conversation about agriculture

will raise the bar on information being disseminated in your local community about agriculture - and will ensure more customers will visit your market because they see your market as a trusted food source.

So how will my market benefit from creating a brand and launching a marketing campaign?

Going through the effort to create a brand and marketing campaign for your farmers market may seem time and resource intensive. There is so much competition in the marketplace for the dollars of customers looking to purchase local that markets must now raise the bar on not only how they communicate with customers but when and where. You can't just set up a market and hope that customers will somehow know to come to you. Taking the time to create your market's identity through a brand will help you hone your mission and vision for your market to ensure it is easily identifiable, memorable and fits with your day to day activities. Community partnerships will help you access customers with a similar values system. Leveraging social media networks will enhance the value of your message. Done conscientiously with a bit of elbow grease and a good deal of creative ingenuity, branding and marketing will help your market continue to gain new customers and grow your long-term relationships with customers as well.

References:

"Branding & Marketing Your Farmers Market" by Lindsay Ott-Wilcox, Presented at the Farmers Market Federation of NY's Annual Farmers Market Managers Training Conference, Nov 2015.



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Farmers Market Managers Professional Certification Program

Module 2: Reaching out to the Market Community

Unit 2.5 Fundraising

UNIT OVERVIEW

This unit will explain the importance of fundraising for market sustainability, and how fundraising can help with outreach in your community. Completion of this unit will give market managers concepts to apply towards creating fundraising opportunities for your market and information on how to approach potential market sponsors.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

CONCEPTS

- Fundraising principles
- Matching your market's mission with the businesses in the community

SKILLS

- How to use fundraising principles to design a sponsorship packet for your market
- Tips on how to “make the ask” for sponsorship dollars and donations



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Unit 2.5: Fundraising for Farmers Markets

A farmers market is a model of free enterprise, where dedicated farmers provide quality products and services to appreciative consumers and they reap income from the sale of their farm products. On the surface, this seems like a straightforward, mutually beneficial business arrangement. However, as those who have participated in a market at any level know, it's not always quite as simple as that. A successful farmers market is one that consistently focuses on the "Triple Bottom Line," striving always to be:

1. Good for farmers - keeps their farms viable and their farm families successful.
2. Good for consumers - provides access to healthy and fresh produce, as well as other locally produced foods, especially in underserved neighborhoods.
3. Good for the community - fosters social interaction, offering an opportunity for customers to interact with vendors and each other making connections with their neighbors and local businesses. The market adds value to the community by bringing economic and quality of life benefits to the town/region.

If a market can consistently meet each of these tenets of the triple bottom line, it will continue to be relevant and beneficial. It is important to recognize that the unique grower-to-consumer relationship of farmers markets sets it apart

from traditional food retailers. The casual observer may not realize that achieving and maintaining this grass-roots relationship requires a lot of behind-the-scenes management, time, work, and, of course, money. Providing the funding needed to keep a farmers market going week after week, year after year, can be as complex and labor-intensive as running the physical market itself.

Authenticity and Your Customers

The essence of a farmers market is simplicity—from seed to end product. A grower sells the fruits of their labor directly to the consumer. The consumer takes the fresh produce home, cooks it, serves it to family and friends, then comes back the next week and relates to the farmer, "Here's how I prepared the butternut squash you sold me." That kind of authenticity you can't replicate—and it really is one of the most unique and marketable aspects of farmers markets. As a result, businesses and organizations are going to want to associate with you because you have something that they may not have and, perhaps wistfully and viscerally, long to connect with. This sense of authenticity can also help you leverage resources to operate and sustain the market.

Another asset that potential funders are interested in is your customer base. The people you are able to draw to your market on a weekly basis are really what you're managing. A



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farmers market creates a very unusual collaboration of consumers, producers, and local foods enthusiasts from the surrounding neighborhoods. Many businesses and non-profit organizations want access to the group that you assemble. For example, a restaurant or kitchen-supply business may be interested in setting up a booth at your market because they want to promote whatever product or specialty they feature. Some businesses may want to buy your mailing list and send a flyer out because they feel members of your group may be a good match for their product or service.



Both options can provide welcome income to your market. But both can potentially present some controversial issues for you as well. For instance, which companies or organizations are appropriate and which ones are not appropriate for your market? Who decides? Database selling can also pose several complications. You want your shoppers to always know that you value your relationship with them. And while many would be happy to have you connect them with businesses they may find useful, others could feel that you've violated their trust in giving out their information.

So it's wise not to provide information to just any organization that approaches you. An easy solution may be to simply offer an "opt out"

choice on any form you take in that requests a customer or vendor's personal data. If you will be sharing their information, be sure you alert your customers who you plan to share their information and under what circumstances. Some markets even have a formal privacy policy. These are certainly topics you'll want to discuss with your board or management team.

Streams of Income

There are several funding mechanisms available that can generate income for your market's treasury. The more funding streams your market has, the more diversified your income will be which allows for long-term fiscal solvency. Each of these funding streams breaks down into two key categories: Earned Income and Contributory Income. Earned income is the income derived from services performed directly by the market. Your market's main earned income would most likely be farmer stall fees. The second category, contributory income, are those funds derived from outside sources that help support your budget, but are not a direct result of services provided by the market. Keep in mind that the type of organization you are— the mission of your market—affects how and where you will seek funding.

Following are some solid, time-tested funding sources to consider. They are listed, loosely, from easiest to execute to the most sophisticated:

Stall Fees:

These are perhaps the most obvious and logical earned-income stream. Stall fees can vary considerably. There is no universal price breakdown recommendation. Some markets may charge a flat rate; others may set their fee based on a percentage of sales. Since a farmers market cannot exist without farmers, flexibility



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is essential. If you are just starting out or having difficulty recruiting farmers to your market, you may want to set a fairly low threshold for your initial rent structure, increasing fees as you become established and develop trust. If your stall fees are out of line with what other markets in the area are charging or what farmers expect to pay, your market may not last long - but, on the other hand, if your stall fees are not enough to cover the basic operations expenses of the market, you may be in trouble as well. So be sure to consider your stall fees carefully: What is the correct amount to charge that can sustain the market but will still allow the vendors a healthy profit margin? Will you allow weekly or daily rental rates in addition to seasonal fees? Why or why not?

Merchandise:

Selling items that promote your market—tote bags, T-shirts, aprons, mugs, market cookbooks, etc.—is an income-generating practice that is gaining in popularity. Shoppers who frequent farmers markets like to show that they support their community market and are usually happy to wear a T-shirt with their market's logo on it. And nowadays more and more people are concerned about recycling and the environment in general, so many are eagerly purchasing reusable shopping bags and totes.



Some markets offer farmers logo-embazoned, multi-pocketed aprons to their vendors. This serves two purposes. The farmers like them because they're very handy when selling at the booth and, when customers see them, they become interested in purchasing one themselves. Thus, the vendors become great promoters for selling merchandise items.

There are, however, some downsides to the merchandise option. Let's use T-shirts as an example. First, there's the cost of producing the item. You either have to find money in your budget somewhere to order the item with the hopes that sales will exceed that amount, or you may find a way to underwrite the project with someone who shares the market's values. This method does involve planning and more staff time. The underwriter will expect to have their organization name somewhere on the T-shirt, so alignment with organizations that the shoppers feel good about is critical or they will not want to purchase the shirts at all. Also, how prominent will this name be on the shirt?

Another merchandising pitfall is that selling textiles may lead to deeper, philosophical, socio-political issues if customers start to question the origin of the merchandise (which they are used to doing – after all, these are farmers market shoppers!). Where was this T-shirt manufactured? Is this USA-grown cotton? Is this a fair-trade product? This just may not be something your market wants to deal with. Or you may attempt to source a fair-trade organic shirt and find out that the price you'd have to charge on a small run would be more than what most consumers are willing to pay, defeating the purpose altogether. When looking at merchandise, you want to find something that would appeal to *most* consumers in your market and not just a small segment of them.



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Finally, once the shoppers have the item, you may find that the opportunity has passed. There may be a big flurry of activity at first, but then your T-shirt sales begin to dwindle because the bulk of market traffic tends to be repeat customers. What are you going to do if you are left with 300 shirts? Or maybe you've sold out of the L and XL sizes and are left with only small and medium. Do you then order more of the larger sizes or should you try to sell the remaining shirts, potentially alienating some customers when you no longer carry their size?

In general, merchandise is not the panacea for funding farmers markets. It is, however, a great branding strategy and can create good PR. It sends out a signal to and from the people who buy the items that they have a sense of community ownership of the market. In that sense, it can fit in as a good part of an overall strategy to bolster the market. But don't fall under the illusion that you will be able to run a market on merchandise sales alone.

Contributory Income:

Sponsorships:

Sponsors are cash or in-kind donors that help to defray the expenses of the market or a particular project or event of the market organization. A market's customer base is desirable to many businesses, with its broad reach and strong community ties. Any business that allies itself with the market will be painted with the same brush that consumers use when they picture the market. By choosing to become a market sponsor, the company or organization will have a link to the market's customer base and a bit of goodwill in the minds of many of the market's customers.

Setting up a sponsorship involves negotiation between the market and the sponsor, until

there is a consensus of mutual benefit. The sponsorship can be cash or in-kind, meaning they may offer money to defray expenses borne by the market or they may provide materials, promotions, or opportunities that will reduce the expenses of the market. Examples of this could include space to hold the market or hold a market event, coupon/flyer/signage printing, or staff time dedicated to the market. When considering a company for a sponsorship opportunity with the market, you must consider a number of issues:

- What is the market's mission? Does the company you are considering for sponsorship fit this mission? If there is not a mesh of missions, it may send a confusing message to your customers about who the market is, what you are trying to accomplish as a market, and thus result in bad publicity or resentment from your consumers. They may wonder why you would allow an organization with a mission that is antithetical to the market's mission to be involved at all.



- What are your customers' expectations of the market? For example, most customers expect that the market will be at the forefront of the support for a local economy movement. So where is your sponsor coming from? Is it a local business or a national business with a local



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presence? Will the company be seen by your customers as supporting your local economy or taking advantage of their support in the market to siphon dollars to a remote location? What is the common perception of this company – good or bad?

- What are the company’s expectations as a sponsor? Are they in sync with the market and with what you are trying to accomplish through your market’s mission and activities?

As an example of a successful sponsorship, the Rhinebeck Farmers Market has four different sponsorship levels which give benefits such as listing on their website, listing on sandwich boards at the market, listing on the entrance to the market and logo on their market t-shirts or bags for a one year period. They have been able to garner support from individuals and businesses which reflect their community. The sponsorship benefits satisfy marketing needs for the businesses and give them visibility to market customers on a regular basis, making this a win/win arrangement. A nice part of this revenue stream is that the effort that a market manager will need to spend on this on an on-going basis is minimal, unless new sponsors are added during the market season.

Donations:

People and companies who donate money to markets appreciate and enjoy having the farmers market in their community. There are thousands of people in your market’s surrounding neighborhoods who feel a sense of ownership of the market. Thus, they feel an intrinsic responsibility for it. This presents another fundraising opportunity for you. You can develop a Friends of the Market database, with which you can briefly explain what you’re doing and what’s coming up. Include opportunities for them to provide direct

support in the form of donations. This is a relatively simple way to increase market income with little added expense. In return for their donation you can offer these community-minded local donors a gift—perhaps one of the merchandise items mentioned earlier, or maybe a punch card worth five free cups of coffee from one of your promoters. Make these requests specific so people can really see how they are helping – i.e. “Donate \$50 and help us buy a new table for the market stand” with a picture of the old table’s rusted legs.



The Friends-of-the-Market income stream may not be huge, but it does identify a core group that you can mobilize for support with future events. Also, it gives a name to that sense of belonging that many have. Being a Friend of the Market is one more way that they support their community. (See Unit 3.5: Building Market Systems: Friends of the Market and Volunteer Management for more details on developing a Friends organization and the many benefits of a Friends group). People take pride in helping their community so don’t neglect to consider this potential revenue stream.

Fundraising Events:

Events such as restaurant cooking demonstrations, book signings, etc. elicit great popular and financial response. However, they



require a tremendous amount of work that can last several weeks or more (mailings, forming a dedicated event committee, coordinating guests, arranging event sites, selling tickets, etc.). The model is to bring in some high-profile, well-connected person to chair the event and utilize their network of connections and resources. So maybe holding it in a local lodge or church hall would work best for you. And choose a day that will be good for attendees, but won't compete with your own market.



A good example of this is a local food dinner that the Westside Farmers Market held in the Spring of 2015. Vendors and sponsors donated items for the dinner and then it was held in an intimate setting (the manager's house) by invitation only for donors, the market committee and vendors. It was advertised as a season kick-off event and their new market

video was premiered at this local food dinner. They used this opportunity to talk about their budget for the season, show the gaps and ask for funding to bridge the gap. They were very upfront that this was a fundraiser, but it was done in a way that was not intimidating and fit with the mission and feel of their farmers market.

It is important to remember that even if someone doesn't donate at the time of event, they are now aware of you, your market and the needs of your market and down the road they will be more likely to remember your cause when they have funding available. They may also be great advocates for a fundraising committee for the market since they likely will have connections in the community and because word of mouth is so powerful, having them on your side will go a long way. Think of this not as a missed opportunity but rather, as the start of a relationship with a new donor. Not everyone buys the first time they look at an item online, but this does not mean that they aren't eventually going to!

Events, much like merchandise, are also extremely valuable from a public relations standpoint. People begin to see that a farmers market is more than just farmers selling produce; they see that there's so much more involved behind the scenes that keeps it viable. It goes back to that Triple Bottom Line—farmers, consumers, community. Fundraising events give you a platform to highlight some of these things. You may find that after an event, a banker or some other local businessperson with an idea will approach you and say, "I had no idea you did this. Have you thought about this such-and- such project that we do?" So it can open up some new doors for your market's future that can expand your reach and generate even more income. Any time you can get your



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market's name out there in new places in the community, that's an opportunity to garner funding.

Grants:

Funding from government or charitable organizations requiring no repayment is another option. Your grant application will expound on all the wonderful, worthwhile things your market does to benefit your local community and its economy and outline how you can more readily achieve these worthy objectives with their support. Particularly desirable are operations grants. Funders, however, don't always find the operations side of business so appealing and tend to support innovation and creativity. They usually want to attach their name to something groundbreaking. You can address this by building the operations facet into your appeal. You assure them that you are proposing some cutting-edge ideas but that it will realistically require administrative funding to execute your projects.

Potential Grant Sources

- USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program
- Local Community Foundation
- NE SARE
- NY Farm Viability Institute
- USDA SNAP Support Grants
- Local Arts and Music Foundations
- First Pioneer Ag Enhancement Program
- Local banks and credit unions
- Local hospitals and health insurance companies
- Local Business Associations

Grants are one of your best earned-income streams and can be a source of significant amounts of revenue. As such, these opportunities should always be considered. Grant writing, however, can be excruciatingly laborious, though well worth the time and effort. When an application has passion and speaks with the intimate knowledge of someone who actually runs the market, it seems to make a difference in the success of the proposal.

While grants are appealing as a source of revenue, there are many things to consider before beginning the process:

- Grants are highly competitive. The larger the foundation or government agency offering the opportunity and the larger the pot of money available, the greater the number of applicants you will need to compete with. You cannot expect every grant opportunity you apply for to be funded; however, rejection can be a great learning experience. The rejection letter is typically a form letter, but the potential funder may be willing to give you more information on why your application was not selected. This information can help you to fine-tune your project for another opportunity or improve your overall grant writing skills. Even a chance at receiving a large sum of money for your market will most likely be well worth the effort put in.
- Most funders do require a significant level of accountability, not just financially, but written reports of work done, evaluation techniques, measured results and accomplishments, lessons learned, etc. While evaluation of each project is always beneficial, the reporting process required by some grant makers can be onerous. You will need to know whether your market has the capacity to fulfill these requirements before



applying for and accepting grants.

- Most grant makers require applicants to be classified as an IRS 501(c)(3), non-profit organization before applications will be accepted. This status allows the grant, if awarded, to be tax deductible by the grantor. If the market does not have this non-profit status, it can often partner with an organization that will “lend” its non-profit status. In other words, the non-profit organization applies for the grant on behalf of the market, becoming the fiscal and reporting agent for the market with the grantor. It is important that the market live up to the terms of the grant on a timely basis, allowing the partnering non-profit organization to complete its financial and written reports as required. There may be some limited opportunities for organizations who are not 501(c)(3) nonprofits if their project provides a benefit to the economic development of the community at large.

- When considering all the potential grant funders available to you, do not overlook the smaller foundations, such as local churches or the Kiwanis Club. Again, your chances with these groups are greatly improved if you’ve already cultivated a good relationship with them. Smaller grantmaking organizations may have less funding to give, but the funding might be easier to get if you fill a specific category they are looking to fund or if you can strike up a local partnership. You may even get a local organization to develop a fundraising program specifically for you, such as 5% of sales on a particular day goes towards your market, or 1 collection is taken that is specific to the market.

- Finally, you want to be sure that you are applying for the right reasons and not just following the money. In other words, does the grant and the project it will fund fit the market’s

mission? Grants can be alluring because they offer opportunities for large sums of money with no repayment required. However, being led off your mission by a grant that doesn’t fit will distract you from the important work of your market: serving your triple bottom line of farmers, consumers, and your market community. Make sure the funding opportunities you seek meet your overall goals and mission. If you are trying to fit a square peg into a round hole, the funders will see it and your application or request for partnership will be denied.

Endowment:

To some, this is the “Holy Grail” of all funding sources. An endowment is essentially a trust fund set up at a bank for your organization. This is the hardest money to raise, especially for farmers markets. Banks and corporations tend to be more comfortable with bricks-and-mortar organizations, so appealing for an endowment can be a hard sell. However, the great benefit of an endowment is that the funder essentially gives up control over what is done with the money. You are the one who manages the funds and decides how best to use the money. In order for an organization to give up that control, it really has to believe in what you’re doing and it has to trust that you’re a reliable, stable organization.

One thing we know about farmers markets is that they are not stable; like crops and the weather, they are organic and thus changeable and can be chaotic. But farmers markets also have such unique stories to tell. As social enterprises in communities, markets are very different from typical social service agencies and economic development agencies because they do it all at once. Farmers markets are amazing community builders. This is very different from the other applicants who appeal



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to organizations for endowments. And once you demonstrate, for example by working with a smaller charitable partner and set aside a percentage of your earned funds year after year, you send a signal to the funding community that you're a stable organization with plans for future growth.

Funders take you more seriously when you can demonstrate your commitment in this way and will give more serious consideration to your funding request. Ironically, funders don't always donate to great projects. They tend to extend their funding to organizations they like and trust. So it pays to make those community connections, build relationships, start small with your requests, and always maintain integrity.

Money Saved Is Money Earned

In addition to those sources where actual cash streams in to fill your coffers, there are also ways to benefit your market by keeping money from streaming out. The following resources are more easily obtained and readily at hand than those requiring lengthy applications, manufacturing contracts, or donor databases, and their value to your farmers market cannot be underestimated.

Space:

When looking for a safe, reliable, and readily accessible site in your community to locate your market, try to secure the space from someone willing to donate it, such as a store owner or the landlord of an office complex. The less rent you pay, the more money available for your market projects. Also, you may find it's better to work with private companies than to hold your market on public property. Just keep in mind when writing your budget that the funding to rent space should be kept on hand so your

farmers aren't left without a space in the event that this partner can no longer donate for one reason or another.

Volunteers:

Farmers markets could not really function without volunteers. The incredible, dedicated members of the volunteer staff are the ones who get up on cold mornings to serve coffee, help set up tables, transport supplies, etc. The only possible downside is that it takes a lot of time to manage volunteers. Since they are not employees, it is somewhat harder to control their workload or to "fire" them. Volunteers are looking for different things, too. Some want a sense of belonging, some want meaningful work, some want the personal interaction that working with such a community-oriented organization offers. But they participate of their own free will, so they will also need some special attention.



Feeding volunteers while training and brainstorming shows your appreciation.

You've got to be sure that they feel valued and this requires a staff or board member to look after the volunteers: meet regularly with them, keep track of their hours, note when they are supposed to get their free volunteer T-shirt or



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whatever perk you offer. (See Unit 3.5: Building Market Systems: Friends of the Market and Volunteer Management for tips on successfully managing a volunteer program).

Tips on Asking for the Sponsorship or Donation

When looking to ask for a sponsorship or donation for your market, the first thing you should do is create a budget of all your market's expenses and income. This will be the first step in demonstrating that your market a) has a need and b) that you understand your market costs well enough to be financially sustainable.



Encouraging donations at the Westside Farmers Market

Once you have this you want to think about the types of information you would want to share with a potential funder that illustrates what your market is all about – the role it plays in the community, vendor profiles, pictures of the

market in action, what your mission and goals are, your future plans for the market, etc. You will also want to include links to your market website, Facebook page, Twitter and/or Instagram feeds, or any other marketing/outreach that you are currently using to interact with the community on a regular basis.

Local/small businesses may be your best bet for sponsorships, along with health related organizations. That being said, only solicit sponsorships or donations from businesses and/or organizations that you visit on a regular basis. They are not likely to give to someone they don't know. When you visit, always ask to speak with the owner since they will have the ultimate say in whether money is spent for donations or sponsorship. No matter how much time you spend schmoozing the manager or assistant manager, it will not do you any good if they are not authorized to give donations. If you do send a letter, follow up with a phone call or in-person visit within a week. If you still don't hear back – follow up again. Be polite but persistent. If you act like this isn't a priority to you, why should it be to them?

You should also be confident in what you are asking for. Know the value of what you are offering in exchange for their sponsorship and/or donation. Have multiple levels of giving with associated benefits. Be sure you know the value of the benefits and that they are less than the sponsorship. For example, at the SouthWedge farmers market they wanted to purchase some new banners that would cost approximately \$150 each. They were made part of the \$500 sponsorship level to ensure that the market would not only get their banners but also make some additional money. Always start at your highest level of giving and then don't be afraid to mention a lower level if they can't



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afford the highest.

If you aren't comfortable making the "ask", find a friend or another market manager to come with you. Dress in your market t-shirts, or wear a veggie costume. If a business sees someone walk in wearing a carrot, it will not only get their attention, but it will help set the mood as well and make everyone feel more comfortable and at ease.

Always make sure to thank your sponsors, both during and after the season has concluded. Many sponsors have not continued with a farmers market after one season due to not receiving a thank you. This is especially important since the next year you should plan on asking for more money and if you never thanked them the previous year it is unlikely they will look favorably upon your request.



To thank all the sponsors of the Westside Farmers Market, they created a sponsor banner with the names and logos of all their sponsors. The banner was prominently displayed at the market every week for the entire season. This kind of acknowledgement of your sponsors helps keep them giving year after year. Personal and public thank you's as well as sponsor

recognition events can go a long way towards keeping your sponsors happy – and keeping them giving in future market seasons.

Summing Up

Tapping into these various funding sources - and employing the money-saving practices noted - is vital to ensuring the success and sustainability of your farmers market.

Of course, the prerequisite to all this is having the management capacity inherent in your organization. That means being very clear about what some call the "Four M's":

- Mission (your reason for existing)
- Management (organized, productive systems in place)
- Market (promoting yourself so others are aware of you and your purpose)
- Measure (illustrating how you meet your goals)

All these factors interplay and when they're all working together smoothly, you're better poised to make the pitch that you're worth investing in. Farmers markets are an integral part of their community and are respected as such. As a manager you can use this to your advantage in garnering support for your market, whether it is through sponsorship, donations or applying for grants to local foundations, partnerships, service groups, or local/national businesses.

The time and effort you put in up front and in following through along the process will most assuredly prove worthwhile as you see your budget become less strained and more



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workable. You will soon see that taking the time to seek and acquire funding is time well spent when your market continues to thrive and

expand each year, enabling you to create a farmers market that matches or exceeds your visions.

Reference:

Jackie Farrell, Westside Farmer Market manager, presented at the Farmers Market Federation of NY's Annual Farmers Market Managers Training Conference, Nov 2015.

Appendix:

Westside Farmers Market sample sponsorship letter



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Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
Broome County





Farmers Market Managers Professional Certification Program

Module 2: Reaching Out to the Market Community

Unit 2.6 Writing a Winning Proposal

UNIT OVERVIEW

Grantwriting is a skill, but one you can acquire. Contrary to popular belief, you don't need a fundraising degree to be a successful grant writer. This unit will give you the skills to write a grant proposal that will capture a funder's attention and increase your chances of success. However, be sure a grant is what you want. Grants are not meant to fill a budget shortfall, but rather to help you advance a new program, system or market. They are projects that can help you grow your market or enhance your market programs.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

CONCEPTS

1. Understand the key elements of grant applications
2. Hints and tips to create a well-thought out grant application that is more likely to be funded

SKILLS

- How to write a winning grant application



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Unit 2.6: Writing a Winning Proposal

Grants can be an important source of funding to develop your farmers market. Whether to build sheds to house the market, add programs to grow the customer base or conduct training sessions to help farmers become savvy marketers and increase their farm profits, grants offer opportunities to fund important market projects.

There are several current USDA grant programs that are applicable to farmers and farmers markets. These annual grant programs all have their own specific goals and application processes.

1. Farmers Market Promotion Program: supports the development, improvement and expansion of farmers markets, roadside stands, CSA programs, agri-tourism and other direct to consumer opportunities.
2. SNAP Support Grants: to support the ability of farmers markets to accept SNAP benefits as a form of payment.
3. Federal State Marketing Improvement Program: matching funds to state agriculture departments, state agencies, and colleges to explore new market opportunities for US food and ag products. While markets are not directly eligible, markets could partner with the State Ag Department or a college such as Cornell University or SUNY Cobleskill to access this grant.

4. NE SARE farmer grants: open to producers with an innovative idea they want to test with a field trial/on-farm demonstration or marketing initiative.
5. Value Added Producer Grants: to help ag producers or producer groups enter into value-added activities related to the processing and/or marketing of value-added products.

This is just a basic list to get you started - there are also a myriad of state, local and private foundation grants that can be helpful to farmers markets looking to build their market, support their farmers and build access to new customer bases. These can be farmers-market specific or they may be centered around other goals such as economic development, community building, helping inner city or rural neighborhoods, eliminating food deserts and fair food access issues. Community Foundations have been known to help create new farmers markets in areas of high need. Arts Councils have provided grants to markets to support a music program that gives local artists a venue to showcase their talents. These are just a few examples of some of the opportunities available through grants.

While grants can be an amazing opportunity to grow your market, be advised that obtaining and administering the grant is not always easy. Before undertaking a grant project, keep in mind the immense amount of work required. First the application process can be daunting in terms of



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both time and energy. Once you have submitted the application, it takes a significant amount of time to learn whether you have been funded. So you need to time your project accordingly and exercise patience while you are waiting. Then, reporting requirements can often be cumbersome with budget reports that require documentation of every expenditure, narratives of work done, accomplishments and lessons learned. Evaluation of the project is a big piece of every grant program and can be time consuming and difficult to collect, especially if you are trying to get income information from your farmers. Many are reluctant to provide that kind of information. Take these considerations into account when deciding how much money to ask for and how to evaluate the success of your project.

You should also realize that a grant is not going to be the sole answer to your budget shortfall. A grant is a one-time infusion of money that is directly tied to a project. The funds can only be used to cover the work and budget outlined in the grant application and contract. If the reason you are applying for grants is to cover a budget shortfall, then a better option might be fundraising, whether sponsorships, donations or special fundraising events. Make sure if you do apply for grants that you are applying for the right reason. Also have contingency plans in place for how you are going to run the program or what programs are going to be cut (or set aside for later) if your grant does not get funded.

Keep in Mind

A grant is not going to be the sole answer to your budget shortfall. A grant is a one-time infusion of money that is directly tied to a project.

Tips for Preparing the Grant Application

If you have read all of the above disclaimers and still feel you have an innovative project that is a great match for an available grant, and you are truly prepared to put the time into the project - now we need to find and apply for funding. How do we go about preparing the grant application?

1. Make 100% sure you are eligible. Each funder determines who they will accept applications from and what type of programs and projects they will fund. Most private Foundations require the applicant to be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. If you are not and cannot partner with a charitable nonprofit to apply on your behalf, then this is not a funder for you. But if the funder allows applicants that are farmers markets or farmer associations, then you've hit on an appropriate funder. If your organization is a match, make sure the same is true of the project you need funded. Often funders will have a list of exclusions such as "We do not fund religious programs, or any work completed overseas, nor do we provide funding for travel, tuition or scholarships etc." If what you want to do falls under this exclusions section, it will be of no benefit for you to apply for that particular grant. Take the time to look carefully at both the organization and the project eligibility because no matter how much time you spend carefully preparing an application, your project will be thrown into the "reject" pile as soon as you are deemed ineligible. If you have any question about this, make sure to contact the funder and determine eligibility before proceeding. With the amount of time that goes into a proposal, you don't want to risk applying for a grant for which you are ineligible.



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2. Next, understand the funder. You need to know what the funder's priorities are. Does your project easily fit their goals for the grant program? What is their mission? Will your project help them to fulfill their mission and support the goals of their grant program? For example, if you are planning to build a market shed to house a winter market, you need to know the funder supports farmers markets and that they fund infrastructure projects. Maybe they support farmers markets, but will not fund land purchases. Does this fit your project? Do you already have the land or do you have a lease? If you need to acquire land for the market shed, then this is probably not the grant program for you. Think through each aspect of the funder's mission or goal with this grant project and check off whether or not your grant meets those goals. Don't try to fit it into the goal in a round-about way. If your project doesn't clearly address what is being asked in the RFP and logically follow the funder's mission, there is no point in applying because it will not be funded. Make sure you are not trying to fit a square peg into a round hole.

3. When sitting down to begin preparation of the grant application, read the RFP (Request for Proposal or the grant application instructions) very carefully. You must follow it exactly. Often a funder will use little things, like not following the template they provide, using the wrong font size, or exceeding the page or word length to weed out applications. They receive so many applications for the level of funding available that these little things can be used to eliminate applications before they even begin to read them. They want to see who

carefully read and followed the RFP so be sure you follow the instructions to the letter. In fact, a good tip is to have a highlighter in hand and mark all the necessary instructions as you read. That way you can easily refer back to the RFP to ensure yourself that you are following it exactly. When you are done writing, go back again and read the RFP to make sure you did indeed follow all of the instructions. You don't want your application to be thrown out on a technicality.

4. RFPs will come with a deadline. This is not a soft deadline. They are firm and if you miss the target, your application does not get read and you will not be considered for funding. No exceptions and no excuses. Highlight the grant deadline boldly and plan to submit the grant well in advance of that date to account for any last-minute problems. You don't want all your hard work to go to waste!



5. Do your research. Has your project been done before? Are there similar projects that might show an underlying need for your project? What about studies or surveys that can support or dispute the need for your project. It's important that you know background information about what you



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want to do so you can make an informed decision to move forward with the application and so you can show the funder that the project is innovative and needed within the community. This includes your project budget. Have an idea of what each component of the project will cost and if each of the expenses is necessary to the project. Going through this exercise may give you a better idea of project process, as well as illustrate where partners and collaborators can bring expertise and financial support to the project.

6. Your writing needs to be clear and concise. Know what you want to say, how it will advance the application and make the reviewer better understand your project. Most RFPs will limit the number of words per section making you choose your words and phrasing very carefully. In this case, every sentence, every word is important. Write each piece of the application, review it against what they ask you to include in your writing and then tweak it. Be sure every word is working for you, making your project understood. Eliminate any extra words and phrases to make sure you are making the best use of the available space to sell your project.

7. The project must solve the problem you set out to solve. Identify the problem and show the need that this is based on. For example, your project might be to create a winter farmers market to give your farmers a year-round venue and to respond to customer demand for year-round access to local food. Do you know that there is farmer support for a winter market? Survey your farmers to determine their interest and

potential participation in the market. If they are not prepared to participate in a winter market this year, do they plan to gear up for an extended season to participate next year? Do they need training in winter production techniques or better facilities for storage of winter crops such as potatoes, onions, cabbage and squash? Surveying your potential target will help you to assess the need, understand what the target audience needs to achieve the goal you are setting.

Sample Problem Statement

Cornell University has developed a Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) program, developed safe food handling practices for production of foods, along with post-harvest handling. However, it does not take into account direct marketing activities that create unique hazards for potential contamination.

This information will help you to create an action plan for your project. It will also show the funder that you have a defined need that is supported by the project beneficiaries. If you can say to a funder that 86% of farmers in your market are currently ready for winter production and 92% of the current market customers stated they would shop at a winter market, you'll have a much stronger case. Make sure your project is directly related to the project and not too far removed. For example, if your problem is that your area is a food desert without good access to local food but your project is asking for funding for additional port-a-johns at an existing market so consumers don't have to



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walk to a nearby restroom, you may not be funded. The project isn't increasing the availability of local foods directly but rather, adding to existing services. If on the other hand, your market will be shut down without the port-a-johns, you'll need to make that clear in your proposal and make a compelling case for how the project is connected to the problem and how the project meets the need defined in the RFP.

8. The impact of your project should be clearly measurable. Funders want to know, not just who your project will benefit, but also how they will be impacted by the project. Is it increased sales and profits for their farm? Will they adopt a new production technique that will save them time and money? Will your target audience participate in a new marketing strategy? Let your funder know how your project will impact your target audience (beneficiaries) and exactly how they will be impacted. Include numbers – how many beneficiaries will be impacted, how much time or money will be saved or how much added revenue will be realized by your beneficiaries as a result of the project? Be specific. It can be hard to estimate but do your best to be realistic. A project will be much more likely to be funded if it has realistic measurable goals and outcomes.

Keep in Mind

Reviewers look for results! Be sure your project evaluation will provide solid proof that your project goals were achieved and their impact on your project beneficiaries.

9. Make sure your project is innovative, impactful, replicable, and sustainable. Funders want to know that they are funding projects that are new and exciting ideas, can be replicated based on the outcome of your project and will have a mechanism for allowing the project to have a life beyond the grant period. For example, when you are providing training programs that help farmers understand and implement basic marketing techniques – these can exist in an online learning platform after the grant expires, allowing additional farmers to continue to learn from the training sessions. Think about how you can publish your results or make the same techniques available to other markets. The larger the potential impact of your program, the more likely it is to be funded. Funders want to see their money make a difference so they seek out those programs which give them the most “bang for their buck.”

Tips for writing the application

While these are basic tips to get you prepared for writing the grant application and help you understand the process overall, here are more tips to help you when you actually sit down to write your application:

1. Always be prepared for the writing to take more time than you think it should. You are telling a compelling story that needs to convince a funder that you are presenting an innovative project that has been thoroughly thought out. It needs to convince a funder that you are the person or organization best able to perform the work, get the promised results and evaluate the project. If a funder receives 100 applications and can only fund 10, your proposal needs to convince them that without a doubt, your project is one of



those worthy 10. During this process you will likely write, rewrite, scratch out, edit, write, share, revise, and edit again. You'll want multiple people involved so fresh eyes can check for mistakes, things you forget etc. so keep in mind that the whole process takes coordination and time. Rushing will only lead to a sloppy finished product that is unlikely to be funded.

2. Skip acronyms. Our everyday language is full of acronyms and shortcuts especially when it comes to food and farmers markets. But reviewers don't live in your world. Spell out acronyms and any other concept that would not be likely to be understood by a person with a little knowledge of your project or field of study to be sure you are fully understood. If a grant reviewer is confused or doesn't understand your jargon, he/she may just set your application to the side or reject it altogether.

Keep in Mind

Not everyone understands the acronyms that you use every day. If a reviewer can't understand what you are saying, then they cannot approve your grant!

3. Skip fluffy adjectives that are only meant to embellish. Stick to the facts and use adjectives that have meaning. Remember, your writing needs to be concise. Most often a funder will limit the number of words you can use, so leave out those adjectives that have no real meaning. Reviewers will be able to tell the worth of your project from the data and compelling evidence that you use. They will not be fooled into funding a project

just because you describe it as "amazing" "desperately needed" or "a wonderful opportunity". Avoid sounding desperate or full of air and make sure your writing has real substance.

4. Be very clear with what you are trying to convey to reviewers. The only information they have is what you tell them. So be sure you are very clear about your project. If one section of your proposal conflicts with another section, if your budget doesn't account for everything you mentioned in the narrative, or if you clearly forgot to talk about one aspect of your project, the reviewers will think you didn't care enough to be accurate. And if you don't care about your proposal, why should they? Also, don't over promise. Reviewers can tell if you are proposing a project that can't be done, either within the time frame of the grant, the budget proposed or with the staff level being included in the grant application. Better to under-promise and over-deliver and you will be certain to get the next grant. If your proposal sounds too good to be true, it likely is!

5. Other things to avoid in your writing: generalizations and absolutes. Generalizations have no meaning and have no place in your application. Using generalizations will show the reviewers that you have not done your research and have not thought out your project. Absolutes are equally as bad. When you say 100% of the farmers reached will learn and act on season extension to participate in a year-round market, for example, this is an absolute that any reviewer will discount. It is unrealistic to expect 100%. Similarly, if you say that the



problem you identify to solve is that none of the farmers in your region understand basic marketing concepts. That is certainly doubtful. Most market farmers have some level of marketing savvy. Reviewers will not agree with these kinds of statements and then they will be likely to discredit other aspects of your proposal as well. If you end up with a 100% statistic after doing your initial survey, delve deeper into the topic and ask additional questions. For example, what percentage of farmers have the current capacity to expand to a winter season vs. the percentage who are planning to develop the capacity in the next year vs. the percentage who are planning to develop the capacity in the next five years if they see the other farmers being successful.

6. Reiterate key points of your project. Often the questions you are asked to answer will seem redundant. That's okay, it never hurts to repeat key points throughout the application. Don't assume that because something has already been stated in another section that the reviewer will remember it! It is even possible that different reviewers might be reading different sections. Always answer every question as fully and completely as you can within the space limitations. Imagine you are speaking to someone who has never heard of your project or any specialized terms/concepts you have previously discussed.

7. Plan to complete your application well in advance of the deadline. This gives you time for review. Have someone that is brutally honest, detail-oriented and constructively critical to proofread your application. This

cannot be someone who is afraid of hurting your feelings or who usually gives concise and general feedback such as "this is great!" Let your editor(s) show you where you haven't fully explained yourself, where your wording could be more effective, or points you should be making but left out. Where are they confused or uncertain? It's even better if this is someone who isn't closely connected to the project or may be unfamiliar with how farmers markets operate in general. If you can, have more than one person review your application because different people may catch different things. In addition, completing the application well in advance gives you the opportunity to pick it back up after a few days and review your own writing with fresh eyes. You'll find many of your own mistakes and areas that need better explanation. If you have time to do this several times before submission, all the better! Do not keep editing your proposal when you have been staring at it for hours – you won't be able to see past your recent work and catch mistakes and inaccuracies.

Deadlines are Absolute!

Missing the deadline will disqualify your application. Get it done in advance and have time to review it one more time before submission.

Creating the Action Plan

When preparing your grant application, the action plan can help you organize your plans to achieve your goal and resolve the problem your project hopes to achieve. The action plan outlines the steps to achieve your goals, with



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each step being incremental toward the end goal.

Each of these steps should incorporate basic information. First, each step will identify the outcome or milestone to be achieved in order to move forward toward your goal. This is an action taken by your target audience toward the final performance goal. Each of the goals, or objectives should be SMART – specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time bound. Take the time to think this through.

Second, the activities to achieve the milestone will be identified. So in this case, it might be that food safety protocols will be developed for keeping foods safe at retail operations. The step will define who will perform the work needed to achieve each milestone and the resources required to accomplish this. An example might be that a project team is used to create the season extension training agenda, then trainers would conduct the workshops and webinars. Resources would include a means of communications for the project team, a webinar account to conduct webinar training, workshop space and travel for the trainers to reach the workshop locations.

Each step in the action plan will want to be evaluated. Did you reach your target numbers? How will you know that? How will you know that the target audience understood the material and will implement the information they received? Know how you plan to evaluate each step of your action plan and make it a part of the plan.

Finally, identify when the step should be complete and how you will know it is done.

Putting the action plan together helps you to identify all the team members you will rely on to help you achieve your goals. It will also help you

to enumerate all the resources you will need and organize your final budget. But mostly, I find that the action plan helps me to organize my thoughts on the project, as well as showing the gaps in the process that I have not completely thought out or am missing altogether. Once you have a solid action plan, then you will feel confident that you can create a solid grant application for a well-thought out and funding-worthy project.

Common Proposal Elements

Most applications will have common sections of the narrative they will require you to complete. The names or headings and the order they want them in may be different, but the information required is the same. Remember to follow the requirements of the specific proposal you are applying for exactly, but use the section guides below as an example.

Keep in Mind

Every funder has their own proposal elements that you must comply with. Read and understand the request for proposal carefully to be sure you understand what is expected.

Executive Summary

The Executive Summary is a brief statement describing the project – what is the project, who will be conducting the work, who will benefit from the project, the time frame of the project, the project’s outcome and your eligibility to apply. That’s a lot of information to convey in a brief statement. Often this must be done in only 3 – 4 sentences, so it is very important to be concise and make every word count. The



Executive Summary should also be the last thing you write, even though it is often the first piece of your narrative. Only when you have written all the other pieces will you be able to create this concise statement that is reflective of all of the important aspects of your entire proposal.

Project Goal

The project goal is a 1 or 2 sentence statement that defines the goal of the project. It is the impact your actions will have on the target audience, not the actions you will take to get to your goal.

USDA grants use the term performance target. This is a statement of who your project will impact, what the impact will be and how you will achieve that impact. This is a very tight statement, but it must be clear and concise, as you

beneficiaries, as well as the SNAP customers you would be bringing to the market. The farmers would realize an increase in their customer base, as well as increased sales and revenues. The SNAP customers could be beneficiaries by gaining access to affordable, healthy and locally grown food. They might also benefit from learning about food choices, nutrition and a healthier diet, depending on the focus of your grant project.

As part of your discussion on beneficiaries, show how you have engaged them. Initial engagement should show that your beneficiaries are in agreement with your project – the problem exists, your project will help to solve the problem and they are likely to participate in your project. Funders also like to see beneficiary involvement in planning the project, as well as throughout the

50 Cornell Cooperative Extension Educators, trained in food safety policies and procedures, food safety crisis management for farm direct marketing activity will work directly with farm direct marketers resulting in 150 farm direct marketers implementing food safety practices at their retail operations.

will typically be very limited in the number of words you can use. This impact defined in the target must be measurable and must solve the problem your project is designed to solve. Use numbers in your statement – how many will be impacted by your project? Here’s an example:

Beneficiaries

Beneficiaries are those who will benefit from your project. For example, a grant to increase SNAP usage at farmers markets might include the farmers accepting SNAP tokens as

project. Your initial outreach could be a survey to potential beneficiaries describing the project and asking their input. For example, with farmer training for season extension as part of the winter market project, what areas do they feel are most needed and what format would they prefer the training to be done? Is it something they would participate in? Why or why not?

Narrative

The narrative is the meat of the proposal. For some funders, the narrative is inclusive of all the



sections of the proposal except the budget. Others will include narrative as a separate section and use the sections of a narrative as separate headings. But the narrative is going to include several pieces of information:

- Project justification. This is where you state the problem that you are trying to solve, how you know it is a problem and your proof of the problem. Using the example of creating a winter market, your justification might be a survey of the summer market consumers that showed that an interest in purchasing local foods direct from farmers is a high priority for 75% of those surveyed. You could also list a survey of farmers participating in the summer market showing that 50% of the farmers have food year-round, but no venue to reach consumers for direct sales during the winter months, while another 35% would be interested in year-round production if there was a market for them to reach consumers for direct sales. You can then point out how far the nearest winter market is from your community, limiting its access to your farmers and consumers. Then you would want to cite some statistics on the value of winter markets to farmers and consumers from other communities that host a winter market. Do not skip or skim on the project justification section as the appeal you make here is a very big part of getting your project funded. Taking surveys or finding existing data that you can use may be time consuming but it is also critical to writing a good proposal.
- Project description. This will be a detailed description of what the project will do to achieve the project goals. It will talk about the different actions to be taken and how each will advance the project toward the goal. It will discuss how the beneficiaries will be engaged and how they will be impacted. It will also talk a bit about evaluation of the various steps of the project. Make sure to be as detailed as possible in your project description and think each step through. You do not want it to seem as you are putting this together on the fly – the entire project and each of the steps should be something that a reader can tell you have put some real time and consideration into.
- Action Plan. Some applications will ask to have the action plan developed and included in the narrative section. If you've already created one to inform your writing of the other steps you can revise and include that here. If not, you'll need to create one.
- Research. This section will show that you have done your research – you know what has been done already toward the problem you have identified. Follow up the research with details on how your project will differ from or add to what has already been done. Make sure it is clear in your application that you have done your research. If another similar project was funded recently by the funder locally but you don't mention it, this will be a red flag.



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- Deliverables and outcomes. Identify what the impacts will be for your project. This includes the benefits that your beneficiaries will realize, whether greater income, cost savings, new production techniques, etc. If your project will create something tangible, like training videos, a manual or book, etc., this is the section where you talk in detail about those deliverables. Make sure to think through all of the outcomes in detail. The most obvious outcome might not be the only one worth mentioning! For example, if you want to start a SNAP program in your market to allow people to use their SNAP funding on fresh healthy local fruits and veggies at the market – what does that do? It allows greater fruit and veggie consumption among low-income consumers. What does that do? It allows for healthier eating in that population. What does that do? It reduces incidences of obesity, diabetes, heart disease etc. What does that do? It allows for a longer lifespan and better quality of life, improves outcomes for their children and so on. While things like training programs are tangible deliverables, other outcomes may need to be measured through surveys or other methods.
- Partnerships. Funders love to see collaborations. Can you bring in partners that will help to advance the project by bringing expertise lacking in your own organization? Show who you will be collaborating with and what they bring to the project. If you can show support for your project among other local

organizations, that will go a long way to establish credibility and need for the program as well.

Evaluation

As mentioned before, all the steps in the process of achieving your project goals (milestones in your work plan) must be measurable. For example, if you are doing training for farmers for the season extension, know how you will measure the success of the training by maintaining attendance records. But also measure how well the training was understood and put into action by the audience. Surveys, for example, are valid means of evaluating training sessions:

- Did the speaker put forth the lessons in a clear manner that was easily understood by the audience?
- How will the audience members use the lessons taught in their own farm business?

Measuring each step of the action plan tells you if you are achieving each milestone before you get to the end of the project. Measurement will tell you if you are falling short and allows you to make necessary adjustments to keep you on track for achieving your final goal.

Funders will also want to see a final evaluation of the project – did you achieve the numbers, increased income, etc, that you said you would achieve in your performance goal? How did you measure that success – what method and what were the results? For example, if you said farmers participating in the project would realize an additional \$2500 in farmers market sales per year, how will you measure that? You will need baseline data, as well as final data from each of the participating farmers to compare pre and post project farmers market sales for each of the



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farmer participants. Make sure you have some kind of baseline data or a way to obtain that or your final statistic will be meaningless.

It is helpful to create the evaluation tools now as you are putting the grant application together. That way you know your action plan and evaluation mesh and when they don't mesh well or you can't get at the information you want or need through your evaluation tools, you can adjust the work plan accordingly. Make sure to consider evaluation throughout the entire process of designing your project and not just throw it in at the end as a last-minute consideration. Funders want to know that you will be sincere in determining whether or not your project has made a difference. There may be times when you implemented the project as promised and, through no fault of your own or through unforeseen circumstances, you did not meet your goals. Maybe you had an impact but not as much as you thought you would. Or maybe your project didn't work at all. Funders want to know that too! Every project is an experiment to see what works and what doesn't so be sincere in your evaluation methods and be prepared to be honest about what worked and what didn't should your project be funded.

Key Individuals

These are the people who will be spearheading the project, as well as contractors you will be using. Identify their position within the project. Include a brief bio of the individual and show their importance to and qualifications for the project. This includes the project leader(s), advisory committee members, consultants. This does not need to include staff who will be helping on the project but whose roles aren't pivotal – people like receptionists and admin staff, accountants, support staff, interns etc.

Budget

Every grant opportunity requires a budget. As you prepared your work plan you should have identified all the resources; personnel, travel, office supplies, communications, etc., that are needed to complete each step of the process. In the budget section you will be putting numbers to each of those resources. Funders often have their own budget categories that want you to use, so you will need to follow the format they provide and make your budget items fit into their categories.

Once you have pulled your numbers together, you will be required to provide justification for those budget items and the dollars requested. For example, for personnel you will identify the number of hours and the salary rate per hour for each of the project's necessary staff. Travel will include the mileage and mileage rate, along with tolls, overnight accommodations, etc. For each budget item, identify how you arrived at that dollar figure. You want the justification to be clear so it doesn't seem like you've just pulled a number from mid-air.

Keep in Mind

Numbers are important, but it's more important to show how you arrived at your numbers and how they relate or impact your project.

Every grant opportunity sets maximum (and sometimes minimum) grant awards. Be sure your budget stays within the grant guidelines. If your budget exceeds the maximum grant level, then can you pare down the request? But when paring down your budget, be sure the project is still do-able with the dollars you will ultimately ask for. Can you pare down the work plan or



deliverables to stay within the guidelines? Make sure if you pare down your budget to also pare down the deliverables so you don't end up with an unachievable project.

Each grant RFP will outline expenses that are allowable under the grant. You must be sure you do not ask for anything that is not allowed. For example, some grant applications will not allow you to buy equipment that will have a life beyond the grant; i.e. a computer. So if your project requires a computer to conduct the work and achieve the project goals, be sure that you either already have one or have an alternative source for obtaining one. Maybe a local technology store will "loan" a computer for the project and the value of the loan can be used for matching dollars. If a grant does not allow for travel or supplies, for example, make sure you have an alternate source or you can eliminate these items from your budget.

Some grants have a requirement that the applicant provides matching funds. An example of this would be a grant that requires a 20% match. What they are essentially saying is that if you raise 20% of the money needed to do this project, then we will consider providing the other 80%. In essence, it is a way to make sure you are serious about your project to it and truly committed before they get involved. If you don't have funding to start with – don't worry. There are many grants that do not require this – or that allow the matching funds to be "in-kind" – i.e. they can be paid with staff time, equipment, or resources, something that you likely do have to offer. Be sure you understand whether you must find matching dollars for any grant you want to apply to and that you know the correct formula for determining how much the match must be. Your budget must show that you have the matching dollars, whether from your own

organization, or from outside sources who have agreed to fund the project with you or to provide an in-kind match of their staff time or resources. If a grant opportunity does require matching funds, you will need to identify where each matching dollar is coming from and how it applies to your budget. If the match is in-kind an explanation on how the value was determined will need to be added as well. Make sure you do not make a mistake on this section because applications that do not meet the matching requirement will likely be denied.

Letters of Support

Letters of support should be collected from project partners, subcontractors and a sampling of beneficiaries. The letters will show they have agreed to participate in the project, what each person/organization will provide to the project, as well as their support that the project will address the identified need and will offer a resolution to the problem. You might also seek letters of support from people who can attest to your organization's expertise in the field or having worked with you before on similar projects and your overall ability to successfully complete the project in general.

Keep in Mind

Letters of support for your project can boost your chances, but... check the RFP, do they allow letters of support, who should they be addressed to? Be sure you are in full compliance or they will count against you.

Before requesting letters of support, check the RFP. Some funders want the letters addressed to the applicant, others to the funder. Be sure you and your letter writers properly address each letter. Failure to address the letter to the



appropriate person can result in the grant application being rejected.

Also check to see if the funder will allow you to provide letters. Many funders want to see proof that your partners and subcontractors are actually on board with the project. Others will assume you have an agreement with everyone and not allow letters of support to be submitted, or they may specify exactly who they will allow letters from. Again, be sure you follow the RFP exactly. If letters of support or partnership are allowed, make sure to collect them from as many people with ties to the project or your market/organization as possible. If the funder sees that so many people are on board with your project, they may be more likely to fund it than a similar project who did not submit any letters of support.

Scoring the Application

Many grant RFP's will outline how applications will be scored. When you know what will count heavily toward acceptance, you can put extra consideration into that section. In fact, they may provide hints on what should be included in your explanations for each section of the application that are not defined in the section description. Be sure you understand what they will be looking for in each section and make sure to include that in your application. Make use of any hints and tips that are provided.

Keep in Mind

Knowing the weight that the funder puts on each element of the proposal allows you to focus your energy on those areas of greatest importance. But remember ...

It's all important!

There are some elements that are common in scoring. From most important to least important (although they are all important to some degree) are:

1. Your approach to the project. The Application needs to be well-written and realistic. Show that your project is in line with your competencies and expertise and that your approach is the most effective and efficient way to address the problem you are working to resolve. Be sure all the components of your application are tied together. Hint: as you make adjustments to any section of your application as you write it, go through each section of the application and make adjustments accordingly. Your one adjustment may have an effect on many other sections, as well. Overall the project should make sense and clearly address the need you defined.
2. The impact your project will have on beneficiaries. The impact should be clearly described as to what the impact will be and how it will be measured. Are the impacts a good return on investment for the funder? Be specific when defining what your impacts will be – how many farmers will benefit and exactly how will they benefit. For example, “Vendor GAP training will increase use of GAPs by 30% at the Schoharie Fresh Farmers Market which, in turn, will increase overall market revenues by 25% within 3 years.” If the impact sounds too small (or conversely, too large and unrealistic), your project may not be funded.
3. Purpose. Is the problem you are addressing a priority of the funder? Is the project worthwhile to the funder? In



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other words, will the funder be interested in resolving the problem you are addressing and will they find your approach worthwhile? If the funder does not care about the need you are addressing, you can be sure that your proposal will not even be considered.

4. Project budget. Be sure all elements of the budget are allowable by the funder. Then be sure your budget is the right amount to accomplish the project proposed. Is it too much? Too little? Are there unnecessary items thrown in, or does each element of the budget relate directly to accomplishment of the project?

Where is help?

Grant writing is a time consuming process and a daunting one, as well. But there is assistance available. Many funders will include contact information in their RFP where you can go with questions. Often you can go to the funder's website to find past grant awards. Researching

this will be time well spent and will help you understand what kinds of projects have interested them in the past. You might also be able to look at pieces of the winning grant application. If so, this can show you the kinds of information that the funder is looking for in a winning application. Or they may have a sample application online or detailed descriptions of former projects. They may even have news articles linked about some of the past projects. Another source of assistance is your county Cooperative Extension office. While they won't write the grant application for you, they may be able to provide valuable assistance – help you find statistics, connect you with farmers, guide you through the RFP to be sure you understand what is being asked of you, and maybe, they will also sign on as a partner in your project! Help is out there, you just need to reach out to find it. You won't receive a "yes" if you don't ask so make sure to seek help when needed and engage as many people as you can to create a successful funded grant application. If you follow these tips, you'll be well on your way!

Resource:

This material is based on a presentation by Jason Evans, Associate Professor, SUNY Cobleskill at the Farmers Market Federation of NY's Annual Farmers Market Managers Training Conference, Nov 2015.

Appendix

Sample Action Plan (Logic Model Approach)





Farmers Market Managers Professional Certification Program

Module 2: Reaching out to the Market Community

Unit 2.7 Communicating with your Customers

UNIT OVERVIEW

This unit will build a greater understanding of how your market is unique, how to create relationships with your customers and how to communicate with them effectively. Communicating with your customers will help them form an emotional connection through shared experiences, stories and information. Creating a solid communications plan for your farmers market will help you add value to the farmers market experience and convert occasional consumers to dedicated shoppers who help you promote your market.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

CONCEPTS

- Understanding the importance of communication
- Understanding the elements of a solid communications plan for your farmers market
- Understanding the opportunities that a communications plan offers in terms of growing your market traffic

SKILLS

- Ability to create and launch a successful communications plan for your farmers market



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Unit 2.7: Communicating with Your Customers

Communicating with your customers is more than putting up a post on Facebook or a picture on Instagram every now and then. It is about creating a value proposition for consumers so they seek out your market each week to deepen their relationship with your market and its vendors. A “value proposition” is an innovation, service, or feature intended to make a company or product attractive to customers. It is about understanding that your market is unique and will not appeal to everyone, but once you decide who your target audience is, creating a communications plan will help you increase your traffic and vendor sales.

What are you trying to sell your customers?

One of the first things to consider about communicating with your customers is deciding what message(s) you are looking to convey. What are the reasons that customers would come to your farmers market? Are they coming for the food? Because it is a tradition? Is it a community gathering place? Are they making connections with their local farms that they can't get at grocery stores or other food venues? Often vendors and managers watch families growing up at their market. Any way you look at it, your customers are looking for an experience and relationships which your market can satisfy. It's not just about the food! Every little way that you can add value to your customer's experience

with your market will encourage them to communicate with everyone they know about the opportunities available at your market.

To do this correctly, you'll want to consider: What makes you so special? Why would a customer want to visit your farmers market over another local foods venue? What is different about the offerings, the experience, or the value that they'll receive? Take a few minutes to write down some ideas – this will come in handy later during this discussion. You also want to give special consideration to the value that “local” has on a customer's perceptions and decisions when shopping. Customers want to have that experience similar to “Cheers” where “everyone knows your name” and your family and what your kids are up to. You can leverage this “Cheers effect” to create a stronger story for your farmers market using technology and modern means of communicating and disseminating information. Done right, a good communications strategy takes the best of the old (those old-fashioned farm market values and ideals about food) and the new (web-based marketing strategies) and combines them for a best-of-both-worlds approach.

Communications Considerations (Audience, Frequency, Budget)

When we think about how we communicate with our farmers market customers, the top



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three considerations are: audience (who are we talking to?), frequency (how often do we want to communicate with them?), and budget (how much time and money do we have to spend on communication?). Each farmers market will have a different typical customer who visits their market on a regular basis. You will want to consider who this is and then how they get their information. Do they only listen to radio? Watch television? Perhaps they read the newspaper or look at fliers at the local community center?



And then there are the millennials who religiously follow Twitter, Pinterest, Facebook and SnapChat but rarely consume more traditional forms of media such as newspapers and magazines. The habits of your typical market consumer (or the consumer population you are trying to reach) will need to be considered as you decide the method(s) and frequency of communication, as well as how much time and money you'll have to spend. A Facebook post will likely last one day on someone's feed, a Twitter post will only last about an hour. Consider this when you decide on the frequency of your

posting on various social media channels. Many farmers markets do not have a set marketing budget, but as it has been discussed in previous modules, having a marketing budget is absolutely necessary to the success of your market. This isn't a budget line you can simply skip or skimp out on. Your budget may not need to be all cash though – some or all of this can be in-kind with local media or other non-profits, as well as partnerships with local colleges for interns who are much better versed in social media as well as have new ideas about how to creatively communicate your message.

One other thing to consider is the "signal to noise" concept. This speaks to the idea that there is so much information floating around related to farmers markets and buying local that it can often be difficult for the consumer to filter out the good information from the bad. Social media has leveled the playing field so that everyone has the ability to have a voice and opinion on everything. This creates a scenario where consumers are forced to sift out the more grounded information from the "fluff." You can set yourself apart from competition by providing engaging social media content (addressed in the Branding & Marketing module) and taking the time to address the three considerations we discussed earlier: who is your customer, how and how often do you want to communicate with them, and how much money and/or time do you have to dedicate to communication? You want to make sure your content speaks specifically to your target audience and is something shareworthy rather than something that will just fall into the rest of the noise that gets ignored on their social media timelines. One way that consumers are able to filter the "signal" from the "noise" is to pay more attention to what their friends listen to, watch, read, like, engage with,



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etc. If something is shared by a friend rather than a business, people are apt to pay more attention to it. Leveraging word of mouth will pay dividends in increasing the amount of attention that consumers pay to your communications, but remember that people will only share information that they feel elevates the conversation and creates a dialogue, not something which fails to add anything – think “awesome” not “meh” according to Ryan Miller, director of the thINCubator in Utica, NY.

So now you have an idea of who your customers are, the types of marketing that will influence their habits the most, and how much time and/or money you have to spend. Remember that good marketing campaigns take time. Some research suggests that someone must do something 21 times (others suggest up to 66 times) before a habit is formed. This means that converting someone to a dedicated farmers market shopper for the long term will take time too - Ryan Miller with the thINCubator suggests up to 18 months. Don't expect to share one post and generate repeat customers overnight or even over the course of a month or you will be disappointed. Your communications with customers must occur at a high frequency and over a long period of time to ensure that they form the habit of making your farmers market their preferred local foods venue.

How many of you use Facebook for your farmers market? Have you ever wondered why so few of your followers may see your posts? There is a common misconception that social media means that it is a free method of communication. This is not correct. The algorithms built into websites such as Facebook require a “pay to play” scenario, more so than they have in the past, in order for your posts to reach as many of your

followers, or their friends, as possible. There are many different options, ranging from “boosting a post” to targeted Facebook ads, and all should be considered as an option to augment your communication strategy since if you aren't reaching all your customers you can't let them know what is happening at the market. Simply posting it to your wall does not mean they will see it unfortunately. Dollar for dollar, Facebook boosted posts or ads can compete very well with paid traditional media because you can target your audience all the way down to age, demographics, location, and even interests. You can use your ad results to further refine your communications based on how the targeted audience engages with your information and stories.

Top Ten Tips

Let's explore some tips for ensuring your communication strategy will be successful.

1) Who are you talking to?

Who are your customers at your farmers market? Who would you like to see that aren't currently regular customers? You will want to talk to your regular customers to find out how and where they get their information, as well as what they consider the most credible source. You can also ask them the reason(s) that they shop at the farmers market. This will help you better understand what communication channels to use and also the types of information that will best speak to similar types of shoppers to encourage them to visit your farmers market.

Something else to consider is that you will need to use different messages for different types of customers. Think about how to talk with customers about a bumper crop of tomatoes your vendors will have at market the next week.



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The older generation of customers may respond well to messaging related to preserving family heritage and recipes, while those in their 30s and 40s may respond better to messaging about creating salsas for summertime parties, and the younger vegan subset may relate more to info about making your own sundried tomatoes. Remember that pictures will help tell your story just as well as words so always include a good picture or even a related video.



3) Be authentic.

Know yourself, your market and what you represent. Remember that someone who tries to please everyone, will end up pleasing no one. Use your market’s mission and vision to guide how you communicate with your customers. Play up your vendor’s authenticity and knowledge but not to the point of posing as someone that they are not. Customers will be able to recognize when you are trying to attach yourself to a fad, as opposed to being true to your market feel and ambiance. One example of this could be the following: There has been a huge increase in the level of interest in the “know your farmer/know your food” culture. Customers are coming to your market expecting that they will be interacting with farmers, not resellers of produce or other items (such as pre-baked cookies, pies, etc.). You will want to

ensure that your vendors are true farmers by requiring that they adhere to your selling guidelines. Accepting all new vendors to grow your product diversity to make it look like your market has more consumer choice would backfire in this instance, because your market is not staying true to its ideals. When customers realize that some of your vendors aren’t “authentic” it will be very difficult to regain their trust.

4) ABC: Always Be Content-ing

Anyone with a smartphone has a supercomputer and an internet connection with them at all times. Use this to your advantage! Before market starts create a quick selfie video showcasing the variety available for shoppers. Always be taking pictures at your farmers market or on farm visits which capture the essence of your market. Write down interactions that you hear between customers and vendors. Interview your farmers. Showcase community engagement. This can be simple but it can be a great way to engage customers and break away from your regular day to day operations. One suggestion might be to try and create one piece of content each day. It doesn’t have to be a perfect, edited clip or look like it was taken by a professional photographer. Customers appreciate things that are real and off-the-cuff too. You don’t have to always post them, but just practicing this will help you get better at creating content. You will start to get into the mindset of creating and connecting. You can also use this to test the waters of what consumers respond to and then refine it as your season progresses.

5) Email is not dead

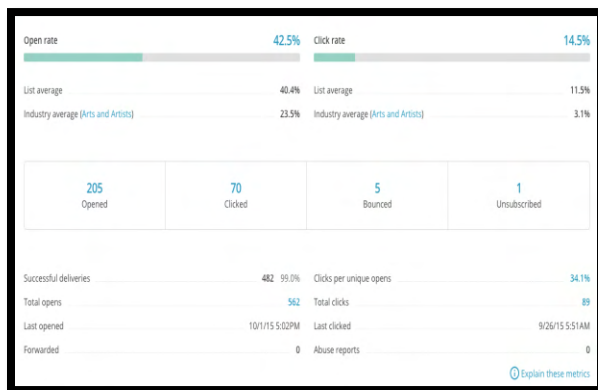
Email is still one of the most preferred methods of communication between individuals and how



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they receive information from businesses. Don't be afraid to ask for email addresses, but make sure you explain why you want them. What is your value proposition? Will you send recipes? Stories from farms? Special events schedule? Consider these different "touch points" where you can engage with customers. A "touch point" is a point of contact between a buyer (in this case a customer at your market) and a seller (in this case your market). These can include any of the above mentioned as well as pictures, videos, blog posts, etc. If you can have 7-10 of these each month to share with customers then they are more likely to share their email address with you. You can even ask for their email in conjunction with a raffle or giveaway. Whatever you do, make sure you are providing them with some kind of value in exchange for their contact info. Remember, according to the CAN-SPAM act you must offer an "opt out" or unsubscribe option in all of your emails. Most email marketing services (such as MailChimp, who has a free option for up to 2000 subscribers) have this built in.



Another benefit to using an email marketing platform (other popular choices are MailerLite, Constant Contact, GetResponse etc.) is that they

offer analytics such as open rates, click percentages for links, email or social share rates, etc. Many offer A/B split testing where you can send half your list an email with one subject line or at one time of day and the other half with a different subject or different timing. This allows you to test campaign effectiveness and craft more compelling and more-timely information. Make sure you give readers a place to go for more information, whether that is your website, Facebook page, etc. if they like what they see in your email and want to know more. Over time, these stats and tests can help you refine which information your customers are most interested in and allow you to provide more of the kinds of information that most of them will want to really engage with.

6) Drop Some Knowledge

Customers likely visit your farmers market for the knowledge and expert opinions that they receive from your farmers, or from your cooking demonstrations and other community partners who table at your farmers market. You should leverage this and include in your communications, whether that is tips and tricks on how to store and/or prepare items found at your market or information on how recent weather is impacting crops growing in the fields. Especially as we experience more drastic weather events, such as severe droughts or floods, consumers must be reminded that the product selection in the grocery store is a result of customer demand for year-round access, but that is not indicative of the growing climate and season that your farmers operate within. Customers will appreciate the knowledge and education and will continue to support the market, even if some vendors do not have their regular selection from time to time. Keep them



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as informed as possible so they feel more involved and like they have a stake in the success of the market.

7) Think Mobile First

More and more consumers are using their smart phones as their traveling computers. They are searching recipes on Pinterest while shopping at the farmers market, checking into your farmers market on Facebook, or checking reviews of a farm on Google. If you have a website, be sure it is mobile friendly. If you have a Facebook page, keep it up to date. For some markets this may mean a weekly post, for others it may mean bi-weekly, or even monthly (depending on your season). Monitor your reviews online by checking Google on a regular basis. The important thing to remember is that consumers are using the internet more and more to make decisions about where to shop and how they interact with their friends. You should be a part of this and keep your online presence up to date. If they can't find you online, they will likely go somewhere else!

8) Reward the Talkers

Your customers are your best word of mouth advertising with other similar consumers. So, empower them to be your farmers market ambassadors. You are enhancing their experience at the farmers market and their relationship with the farmers market. Encourage your customers to take pictures of themselves at the market, or preparing products they have purchased at the market and then utilize their pictures in your communications. This is a great way to have communications coming from a word of mouth perspective of customers as opposed to you "selling" the farmers market yourself. Customers are more likely to follow

recommendations of their neighbors, friends, and those they perceive sharing their same values set as opposed being "told" what to do by someone. You can take this one step further by having a contest to see who can submit the best photo on a particular theme each week or month. Or create a hashtag for market photos so others can contribute and enjoy.

9) Tell us a story

People want to hear stories to help them better understand local agriculture and where their food comes from. They want to know how animals are raised, how produce grows, and how to prepare what they bring home. You can use pictures to tell a story of something happening at the market. Perhaps it's apple season. Consider creating a post on how to make apple butter with the bumper crop of apples now at the market. Showcase the fact that anyone can do it with minimal kitchen equipment, even if they have never canned before. Or perhaps come up with some new and creative uses for zucchini to highlight the overabundance that happens this time of year in an amusing way. By telling a story you are helping customers reminisce about experiences they may also have had and then you begin to create a community around a particular theme, such as food preservation.



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10) Things will go wrong

At some point a post for your Facebook or Twitter account may occur which you never intended. The nature of social media is that content is produced and revolves quickly so sooner or later this is bound to happen. Make sure that as soon as you realize a mistake has been made that you start damage control, but in a positive manner. Take ownership of the situation and don't try to pretend it didn't happen. Your customers understand that mistakes do happen, and by behaving in this manner you can show them that a) you are only human; and b) that you can react in a way to turn the situation around. Perhaps there is a way that you can create a partnership with a local non-profit to help raise funds or host an event to switch the conversation to own terms and something future-focused as opposed to dwelling on the issue that happened in the past.

As an example, some organizations will allow younger volunteers to run their social media campaigns because those individuals have the interest and skills, but they often do not have the ability to give a large amount of oversight. Back in 2011, the Red Cross had a tweet released which alluded to them getting drunk with DogFish beer. Instead of pretending that it didn't happen, thereby looking even worse, the Red Cross acknowledged it had happened and made light of the situation by saying someone's keys had been confiscated. By this time however, those who were watching the hashtag Dogfish saw how the whole thing unfolded and Dogfish then decided to take advantage for the free publicity and ask all their followers to donate to the Red Cross, raising thousands of dollars. In the end everyone had forgotten about what originally happened and what could have been a

media disaster became a positive by taking advantage of the momentum and conversations that ensued.

For more information on how to combine these tips with a successful branding and marketing campaign, read our "Branding & Marketing" module.



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11) What makes you special and remember what you are selling

Remember what you are selling to customers. They are buying because of who you are, not what you have. People buy people, not products. They buy stories, not salsa. You are working to form an emotional connection with your customers through experiences, stories and content that motivate them to want to support you and your market vendors – not just today, but every market day into the future.

Keeping these core tenants by keeping it real and building relationships, you will be guaranteed success in building loyal customers who will not only patronize your market, but who will rant and rave and help share your market communications with others. There will be no end to your potential success when these customers then share with others who share with others... and so on.

Let's Recap!

1. Who are you talking to?
2. Keep calm & keep it real
3. Always be content-ing
4. Email is not dead
5. Drop some knowledge
6. Think mobile first
7. Reward the talkers
8. Tell us a story
9. Things will go wrong
10. What makes you special and remember what you are selling

References:

“Communicating with Customers” by Ryan Miller Director of thINCubator (Utica, NY), Presented at the Farmers Market Federation of NY’s Annual Farmers Market Managers Training Conference, Nov 2015.





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Module 3: Building Market Systems

Unit 3.1 Build Community Around Your Market

UNIT OVERVIEW

This unit will discuss the concept of creating partners to advance the market as a community asset. The unit will also give hints and tips on how to create partnerships, understand the expectations of partners, as well as expectations the market from their partners and provide an understanding of the benefits the market reaps when community partners are cultivated and nurtured.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

CONCEPTS

1. What makes a good community partner
2. How partnerships are mutually beneficial
3. Where to find community partners

SKILLS

1. How to set up a successful partnership program for your market



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Unit 3.1: Build Community Around Your Market

For a market to achieve success, it must strive to be a responsible community citizen, developing relationships and partnerships with municipal governments, local businesses, and neighborhood organizations. If a market is functioning well, the market's mission and those of its community partners should mutually support and enhance the missions of the market and its partners.

What Can Community Partnerships Mean to the Market?

A farmers market cannot stand on its own. It needs support beyond its farmers and consumers to succeed. Partnerships within its community help to ensure a market's success.

Financial: Many farmers markets operate on a shoestring budget. Whether looking for financial assistance to shore up a budget or assistance with funding for special projects, events, or outreach, key partnerships with community organizations, businesses, and the municipality may provide the funding needed. This can help your market stretch beyond what it is able to do on its own and provide valuable additional services and programming to members of the community. It's a win/win!

Outreach: Governmental agencies, non-profit organizations, and business associations can be key partners and help to introduce your market to their clientele. Inviting them to be a part of your market, whether by allowing them to set up an information table, sponsoring an event, or be

part of your management team, can be an effective way to build both entities' constituencies. Again, both organizations win when these connections are made.

Program planning and/or administration:

Adding a new program to the market, such as EBT, takes additional personnel to plan and administer the program. A market manager may be responsible for the program, but he or she likely requires assistance to carry it out. Reaching out to community partners can be the answer to operating a successful program. Look for an organization with a mission compatible with the market and the program you are trying to implement. Assistance can range from simply supplying a volunteer to assist with manning the terminal on market day to actually taking on administrative responsibility, relieving the market of the work, the financial risk, and the reporting requirements.

Special events: When hosting a special event, involving community partners will reap numerous benefits for your market. Any organization, business, or governmental agency that participates in your event will promote the event to their clientele, bringing additional customers to the market. It increases goodwill with the organizations, businesses, and agencies that participate, improving the market's stature in their eyes and opening doors to other ways to partner, such as volunteerism or providing funding through sponsorships, donations, or grants. The more support you have for your



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market organization and market events the better!



General support: There are many small and large ways that the community partnerships can support the market. Municipalities can provide no-cost infrastructure needs for the market, such as a market site, bathroom facilities, staging for music events, trash receptacles and pickup, park benches, street closures and barriers, police presence, and insurance coverage. Neighborhood organizations, such as community centers, could promote the market to their members, but also arrange for transportation to the market or arrange for the market manager to come to meetings to discuss the benefits of the market, the available nutrition programs, and pre-sell EBT tokens. Local businesses can provide storage space for the market tent, tables, and supplies; open their restrooms for the market farmers and shoppers; and host special sales and events on market day to make market days a comprehensive community-wide event.

What Does a Community Partner Look for?

There are key elements that a community partner, such as a non-profit organization, a local business or business association, or a government agency, will look for when developing a partnership or relationship with a farmers market.

Mission: Your market should have a mission and your work should be mission-driven. A

community partner will look for a market with a similar or compatible mission. They will want to see a market that has a strong commitment to their mission. Phrase your mission in a way that will make sense to them – for example “making the most money possible” may not sound like a worthy cause but “supporting small-scale local farmers and increasing family farm profits” may. Try to find the best match and you may find a willing partner.

Unified: The market’s management team, its farmers, and consumers are in agreement on the mission and the underlying tenets. A community organization does not want to partner with a market that is in turmoil. Make sure your messaging is clear and your staff united around a common goal. If you are confused about your plans or unsure about your market’s messaging, people will be less likely to want to work with you.

Goals: A market should have goals and know what it hopes to accomplish in the short term and long term. How do you plan to achieve those goals? Are they realistic? Do you have a record for achieving goals? A commitment to serving your community? A community partner will look for your answers to these questions.

What you bring to the table: A partnership is a two-way street. You need to bring something to the partnership as well. While the community organization may bring volunteers, funding, or infrastructure needs, what will the market bring?

- **Tabling opportunities.** Partners can be invited to participate in the market by tabling. They can showcase their organization’s good work, distribute information and perform services for consumers, such as blood pressure screenings, assist with consumer’s SNAP applications, etc.



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- Cross promotion. The market relies on their partners to help build consumer awareness of the market. But the reverse is also true. When you cross promote your partners, everyone wins. Your customer base becomes more aware of your partner, as their client/customer base learns more about the market. Build up your market by building up other worthy organizations in the community. Don't think of this as "giving away" table space. Everyone benefits from these kinds of arrangements. The good will created may very well create some reciprocity in the form of donations or other collaborations with these organizations when they get to the market and see the great work you are doing in the community.
- Provide opportunities for partners to support the market, while supporting their employees or clients. For example, offer your partners an opportunity to purchase gift cards or gift tokens to distribute as client gifts or employee perks. These gift cards give the clients or employees the gift of fresh, healthy locally grown foods and an introduction to the market, while your farmers get additional sales.

Developing Partnerships

Developing relationships and partnerships within the community is not as difficult as it may at first seem.

First, start with your market mission. Know what your mission is and create policy that ties market partnerships to that mission. You want to select and nurture partnerships that further your mission and fit in with the goals and policies of your market. For example, would you, your farmers or your customers be comfortable if the

market was partnering with Monsanto? Okay, maybe that's a bit extreme, but these are the kinds of things you need to think about. Remember, your market brings a large customer base, community respectability and value to anyone partnering with you. You need to be sure that partner is a good fit. If there is any chance that a certain partner would offend or confuse your market patrons, that partner is probably not a good option to consider.

Next, start with who you already know.

- Look at who is shopping at your market. Many organizational leaders, municipal leaders, and business owners already shop at your market. They may be thrilled to become more involved but haven't simply because they haven't been asked.
- Look at any current partners you may have. They often have contacts with others who may have similar missions, similar interests, and similar needs.
- Hit the streets! Phone calls, letters of invitation to participate, and meeting and greeting people at community events are great ways to get to know the people in your community. Don't just stay within your own small sphere – get out there and get talking! If you feel shy or don't like putting yourself out there, bring a gregarious friend with you to help break the ice.



The market team making preparations for partnership development.



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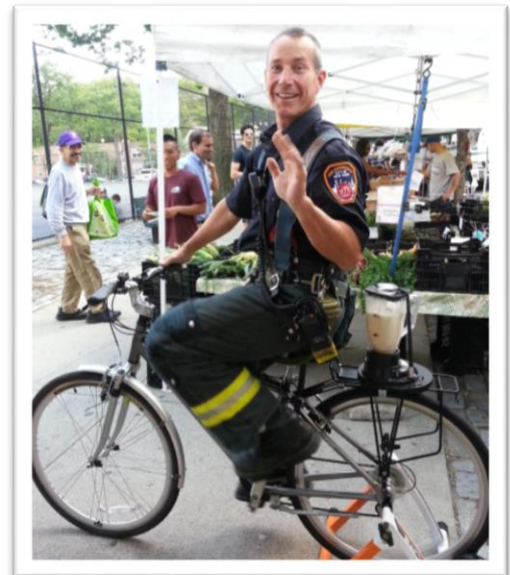
Once you've begun the conversation, invite community organizations, local businesses, and municipal agencies to become involved in your market. Here are some ways to begin:

- Develop committees where they may begin to get involved. These committees can advise on management issues, special events, specific programs, advertising and promotions, or fundraising, wherever each particular organization best fits. Giving people a specific responsibility will give them more "skin in the game" and therefore more likely to want to do a good job and help as much as possible.
- Bring them in as volunteers. Some organizations may want to get involved right away. Put them to work as volunteers, running a program such as the EBT program, a Veggie Valet, market tours, etc. Don't forget, training for volunteers should always take place before they get started. Onboarding volunteers should be as thorough as onboarding employees.
- Host an event. Some organizations may want to host an event at the market. This gives the market the exposure of an event, but puts the financial and human resource burden on the organization rather than the market.
- Table at community events. Take advantage of events being held within the community to table, presenting your market information, programs and offerings to community members. Not only will you reach more consumers, but you will also reach potential partners within the community. Time spent introducing your market to a new audience is always time well spent.

Who Are Potential Community Partners?

The list of potential community partners is endless. Here's a partial list of partners that some markets have identified; along with potential expectations from the partnership:

- *Government Agencies:* Assistance with space permits, street closing permits, trash pickup, parking issues, health permits for cooking demos, etc.
- *Police and Fire Departments:* Police presence in the market, dealing with illegally parked cars, emergency preparedness.



- *Business Improvement Districts and Merchants Associations:* Providing market amenities to help bring and keep people downtown, assistance with market management, outreach and promotion.
- *Neighborhood Community Groups and Organizations:* Participation in community decisions that may impact the market, tabling at community events, cross promotion.
- *Neighboring Businesses:* Bathrooms for your farmers, helping you to understand



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the concerns of your neighbors so that you can address them before they become overwhelming, co-promotion.

- *Corporate Landlords to the market:* for example, shopping centers: Be sure the expectations are clearly understood and written into an agreement of some sort; co-promotion, inclusion in corporate newsletters, email blasts, etc.
- *Shoppers and volunteers:* Shoppers are the market's boots on the ground, reading the pulse of the community; alerts to happenings impacting the market, allowing the market to respond and follow up. For example, DPW just brought in a backhoe and has begun to dig ditches where the market will set up in two days making the space unusable for the market, shoppers alert the market that there is construction at the market site so they can communicate with DPW to determine if they can go on as planned or need to make alternate arrangements.
- *Health Centers and Hospitals:* Allow you to speak to their clients, employees on issues important to the market; partners for health and nutrition education, health screenings such as blood pressure clinics.



- *WIC & EBT Offices:* Able to give presentations about the SNAP and nutrition programs in your market;

promote the market to their clients by passing out your literature/flyers and encouraging their clients to visit the market, you can also table at their events to promote your market's nutrition programs and push people to the market.

- *Senior Centers:* Finding ways to bring seniors to the market, visit the centers for talks, presentations and Farmers Market Bingo games ultimately encouraging seniors to shop at your market.
- *Restaurants:* Encourage chefs to shop with your farmers, guest chef demonstrations at the market – be sure the chefs use products that are currently in season and abundant, simple to prepare and do not use expensive ingredients.
- *Schools:* Provide tours of the market to school children, provide back pack flyers for students to bring home to encourage families to attend the community farmers market. This has a two-fold benefit because the kids will encourage their parents to bring them to the markets but they will likely also become market customers themselves as they grow and form their own families.
- *Universities:* Partner with local university nutrition departments for cooking demonstrations, nutrition education; maybe even provide an opportunity for students to use the market for their community work credits.
- *Religious Organizations:* Give presentations about agriculture, fresh, healthy foods and the market; outreach through their weekly bulletins. It is important to remain non-denominational and reach out to all religious organizations in your



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community, but don't skip this important potential community partner. Many church organizations have food pantries as part of their missions as well so there could be a shared interest to explore.

- **Politicians:** May be able to provide funding or access to funding for the market; their presence in the market may bring people in to see and hear them; have politicians provide a bi-partisan service to the community through the market, such as hosting an event that is important to their political platform or their personal ideals. Get creative!
- **Co-ops, Grocery Stores and CSAs:** These are more difficult as they are also competition; but establish guidelines for partnering; for example Greenmarket allows CSAs to offer the market as a pick up location for their CSA provided the distribution ONLY includes products that they are allowed to sell at the market; wholesale buying opportunities for the market's farmers, cross promotion etc. Don't discount a potential partner just because they are a competitor – there may be ways for you to work together that are beneficial to both organizations.
- **Food Pantries:** Partner with pantries for farmer donations at the end of the market day; providing wholesale opportunities for the market's farmers.



- **Libraries and Book Stores:** Children's story time in the market; book sharing programs in the market, cross promotion.
- **Newspapers, neighborhood press, blogs:** Provide weekly content about your market such as what's happening in the market events, what's new in the market, and who is new to the market.

Whomever the market chooses to partner with, building community relationships will help ingrain the market into community life, foster community ownership of the market, and build awareness and support for the market. You want people to think of your market as not just a store or a place to buy produce but an essential part of the community and a place for gathering together.

Once you have identified who to reach out to within your community, it is important to manage the relationship with these parties. Create a toolkit that can be used to help the partner understand their role, the expectations of them as a market partner, as well as what the market will provide to the partner. The toolkit can include items such as:

- Market flyers and posters to be distributed
- Press releases for the partner to use in promoting the market
- Sponsorship opportunities available with the market
- Requirements for tabling at the market (for example - all materials to be distributed must be pre-approved by the market management; no selling of products in competition with the market's vendors; no raffles and insurance is required).
- Guidelines for use of the market logo
- Cooking demonstration opportunities and guidelines



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- Sample posts for partners to include in their social media
- Co-promotion ideas; coupons, gift tokens

Once you have created your partnership toolkit, you can tailor it to each of the community

partners you seek. This will make it easy for new partners to hop on board and begin to promote your market. The easier you can make it for them – the easier they will make it for you in taking over some of the promotion and outreach activities and allowing you to focus on building your market – and finding new market partners!

References:

This material is based on a presentation, “Build Community Around Your Market”, by Jessica Douglas, Operations Manager, Greenmarket and Liz Carollo, Publicity Manager, Greenmarket, at the Farmers Market Federation of NY’s Annual Farmers Market Managers Training Conference, Nov 2015.



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Module 3: Building Market Systems

Unit 3.2 Expansion to Year Round Markets

UNIT OVERVIEW

Winter farmers markets are gaining traction all across the country. In New York State, winter farmers markets represent about 1/3 of the total number of farmers markets. But there's a lot of extra work and costs that are associated with running farmers markets through the winter. This chapter will focus on the why and the how of winter markets.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

CONCEPTS

- Understanding the benefits of a winter farmers market for both farmers and consumers
- Understanding the challenges involved in building and operating a successful winter farmers market
- Putting all the required components of a winter market together to build a winter market that is an asset to the community and not just an ill-considered add-on to the summer market

SKILLS

- Ability to create an indoor winter farmers market – from concept to reality



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Unit 3.2: Expansion to Year Round Markets

Winter farmers markets are gaining traction all across the country. In New York, winter farmers markets represent about 1/3 of the total farmers markets in the state! But winter markets do involve many extra costs and extra work needs to be put into running farmers markets through the winter. Let's talk about how winter markets operate and why they could be a good option for your community, even if you haven't considered one before.

Why have a winter market?

There are a lot of compelling reasons to host a winter farmers market. The Brighton Winter Farmers Market says that a winter market helps to fulfill their mission to support local farmers, build a stronger local food system, to provide fresh, local food and to build their community. Breaking that down into simpler terms: winter markets maintain a connection to farmers and markets all year long. It's the same mission they have for their summer markets – just extended to cover the entire calendar year. Perhaps it was best said by Denis Lepel from Lakestone Family Farm:

“The winter farmers market helps our farm to achieve three goals. The first is an opportunity to sell storage crops like, squash, potatoes, onions, garlic and chicken, as well as seasonally extended crops like spinach, lettuce, bok choy and

eggs in both fall and spring. Next, the winter market keeps our farm in front of our customers year round. Our dedicated customers who shop the market through the winter have a tendency to buy more in the busy summer months, and our attendance prevents them from forgetting we exist. The last thing that the winter market does for our farm is to provide income. While our sales are lower, we earn enough to cover our monthly bills, which as anyone can understand, lifts a burden from our spending our savings.”

So winter farmers markets:

- Provide farmers income;
- Provide an outlet for season-extended farm products;
- Maintain a consumer connection all year long keeping the market fresh in customer's minds;
- Provide an opportunity for consumers to access locally grown food they want all year long.

But how do we know if a winter market is feasible in our area?

According to Miriam Haas, Founder of Down to Earth Markets, it is really all about the numbers:



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“I look at the numbers of consumers and vendors in my summer markets asking for a winter market. Is there an ample number of consumers who want to make that winter connection or is it just a handful of consumers? You’ll need to determine what that magic number is for your community. I look at the number of farmers that are interested in participating. Will there be enough diversity of product? We want to have a number of food vendors to make the market diverse enough to attract consumers. But I also look at the vegetable growers – will they be there? Vegetables are the calling card for consumers to attend a market. So without enough produce, a winter market will not work.”

It’s also important to go into a winter market with your eyes open, acknowledging the challenges. Remember in New York State, we certainly do have winters! In some areas of the state that means a great deal of cold and snow. In some areas, it can really vary from year to year so you have to prepare for a “bad” year and hope for a good one. Most winter markets in NYS must find an indoor location. Unless you’re already operating indoors, that means moving the market from a summer location outside to a different location indoors for the winter. (More on location later.)



Snow is another challenge. Not just in making it to the market but in preparing the grounds for customers. At the winter market location, snow must be plowed for driveways and parking. Sidewalks, steps, etc. must be shoveled to allow access to the market. Who is responsible for this – the property owner or the market and what is the cost to the market to have it done? Is it a fixed cost or does it depend on the (yet unknown) amount of snowfall?

Determining whether to cancel a market day because of bad weather is another challenge. Some days are just too cold and too snowy to venture outside. So do you cancel the market and, if so, how do you get the word out to your farmers and consumers? When do you decide? The last thing you want is disappointed customers showing up to a closed market. According to Sue Gardner Smith of the Brighton Winter Farmers Market:

“Closing a market is really not an option. We understand that not every farmer will make it to market on those days. Some need to stay home and ensure the safety of their animals in bad weather, others stay home to tend fires in their greenhouses and high tunnels. Others won’t venture out on roads that are unsafe. So it is their choice on those bad-weather days to come or not. But it is impossible to get the word out to every possible consumer. I think it is very important that we maintain consistency, and that customers know they can count on us, so our market policy is to be open unless it is an absolute necessity.”

If your winter market takes place in a location sponsored by a municipality, your policy may be to close only during a state of emergency. Or, you may choose to adopt a more conservative



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policy and announce closings for safety's sake though your Facebook and email networks. Find what works for your market, but make sure whatever you choose that customers are aware of the policy and the reasons behind it. Don't have them showing up at the market just to find no one there or frantically trying to reach you to find out whether or not the market is open.

Another challenge is visibility. When markets are set up outside during the summer, the flow of tents is attractive and draws consumers into the market from quite a ways away. They may not have been planning to stop at the market at all, but saw the bright colored tents and signage while running other errands and decided to stop in and shop the market. Most winter markets are set up indoors without a lot of signage or displays so they lose that visibility. You will need to be aware that promotion will be a greater need and a bigger expense for a winter market than for a summer market. You don't have that built in curiosity factor working in your favor and in cold weather, more people are staying home unless they absolutely have to be out.

Considerations for building a winter market

Location

Recognizing that winter markets do not attract the numbers of customers that summer markets do, we need to be especially cognizant of other local markets to prevent cannibalizing each other's customer base, as well as farmer base. The last thing you want to do is build your own market while causing another local market to fail. So before choosing a location, or even a community, look at where other winter markets are and build your winter market far enough away from them so everyone has the ability to be successful. Or, you may decide to partner

with other summer markets to create one successful winter markets for all your farmers. This was accomplished in the Rochester area with the Long Season Farmers Market. The Long Season Market was a collaboration of multiple summer markets who came together and agreed to host one winter market, jointly, for the mutual benefit of their communities.



Keep in mind that an indoor location will likely be much smaller than outdoor locations. How can you make a space work within those limitations? Smaller vendor spaces will likely be the case, and you can encourage your farmers to create vertical displays to make better use of the space that you have. But you still need to make sure that your layout gives all farmers adequate frontage to display their products, as well as adequate room to store their extra product. Typically storage space will be behind them since they can't work off a truck in an indoor location. They are agreeing to spend their time building up this market so you want to make it as convenient and profitable for the farmers as you can, or your market may not turn into a long-term success.

Layout is also important. You must be able to lay out the design of your market to accommodate



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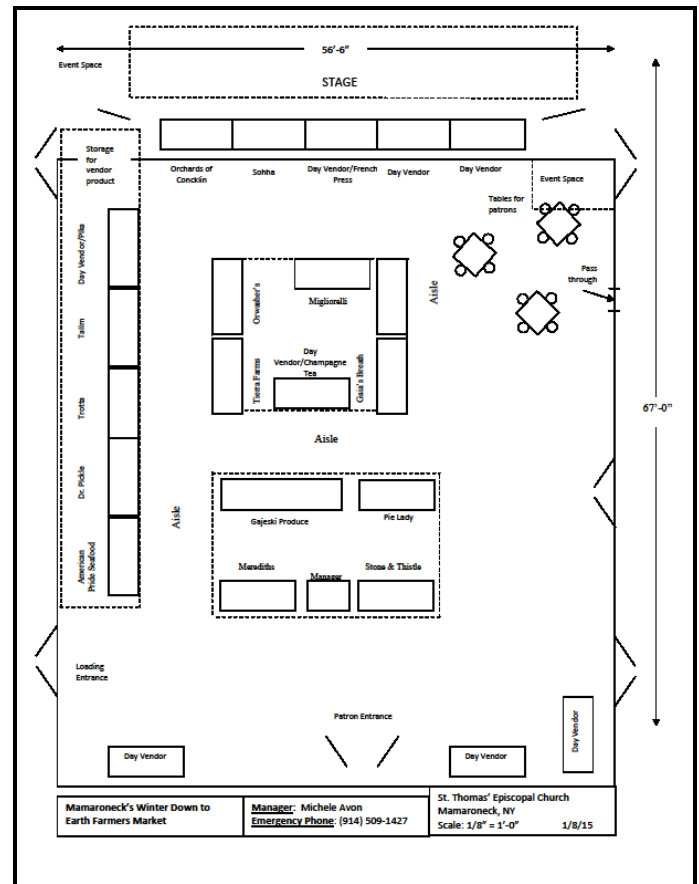


customer traffic. Is there enough aisle space for people to walk through while others are stopped to shop at farmers tables? What about space for wheelchairs and strollers? Also, the layout needs to place farmer's tables so that they have fair and equal access to customer traffic. That means placing anchor farmers at opposite ends to draw customers through the market. It may also mean creating an even number of aisles. That odd aisle is often overlooked by customers – an even number puts them back at the entrance when they are done and eliminates back tracking. The same is true for dead-end aisles. The nature of people is to not backtrack. While this seems silly, it is a known fact in retail design and should be considered in a farmers market as well.

Some crowding in the market is good. If a customer sees a crowd formed around a vendor, they will want to know why – what is so good at that table that people are crowding around it? So they join the crowd. The same concept is true for the market. When customers are a bit crowded, they will view the market as successful, interesting and worth their while to shop there. Market space that is drawn out, sparse, with few attendees just doesn't have the same level of attraction as a crowded market. On the other hand, if the market is so packed that people can't get through the crowd to get to where they are going you've got too much crowding so watch your market and make adjustments as needed.

Sample Winter Market Layout: Down to Earth Markets

When choosing your location, whether a church hall, a school gymnasium or cafeteria or a community center, there are a number of issues to consider:



- Bathrooms. Be sure bathroom facilities are open for the vendors and consumers to use during the market. You don't want to find out that the bathrooms are locked at the last minute!
- Check the ingress to the market room. Are there stairs to navigate? This will make it more difficult for farmers to bring in product if they have to go up and down stairs with heavy product boxes and hand trucks. Also, stairs will make it difficult on customers with walking disabilities or young children. You want a space that is easy access for everyone.



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- Parking. Is there adequate space for parking for both vendor trucks and consumer vehicles? This is especially important in bad weather when people will need extra space for navigating around snow and exiting cars safely.
- Can you fit all the farmers in the same room? An original iteration of the Brighton Farmers Market had the farmers separated into two different rooms inside the Church building. However, the second room was only visited by a small percentage of the consumers. This setup may not work well and could lead to resentment from farmers with the less desirable location.



- Signage. Will the location allow you to erect a banner or signage that will remain in place all season long? This is especially helpful to get consumers used to seeing your sign so they know a market is going on in the space each week. Remember, those stick-in-the-ground electioneering style signs don't work in the winter. Frozen ground makes it hard to impossible to get the signs up. If signs will be outside, keep in mind the potential effect of snow and ice

on the material of the sign and the potential need for heavy snow to be removed or the sign rehung periodically. In especially bad snow or ice storms, you may need to remove the sign to protect it from being damaged.

Landlords and Legalities

Of course it would be ideal if you could find a space the market could use rent free. This could be a local business who only needs the space over the summer and could use the tax write-off (if you are a nonprofit or have a nonprofit sponsor), or it could be extra space in a municipal building. It could be a commercial landlord too – you never know unless you ask! Keep in mind if you do find a free space for your winter market that you need to still include space in your budget. You never know when you could lose that space and you wouldn't want your market to dissolve because of it.

Not every landlord is altruistic and will give you space for free so most markets will need to pay for space. See if you can get a reduction in price based on the good your market does for the community or in exchange for advertising the name of the business who owns the space as your market sponsor. Most landlords of indoor space do charge a rental fee and it is often higher than rents paid on outdoor summer market space due to increased expenses. Indoor spaces have expenses such as heating, trash and snow removal, and basic janitorial services. and those expenses need to be covered somehow.

Whether the space is purchased or donated, it might also include some not so pleasant “extras” in the form of the demands of the landlord. For example, some schools that allow markets to be set up in their gyms require markets to use floor



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protection. They do not want their gym floors scratched, stained or left wet. In that case, you will need to provide adequate floor covering to protect the floors. Mats work well. Others have asked their farmers to add tennis balls to the feet of their tables to prevent scratching the floor. They may require you to wheel product in on dollies or hand trucks rather than dragging coolers and baskets across the floor. Even though they may seem excessive, make sure you honor these requests diligently or you may not be asked back the following year and the work you did to build up your customer base will be wasted. Even if you can find an alternate location to host the market, it will take customers some time to find you there.

Landlords will also want their space left clean. That means cleaning after the market closes. One manager swept and mopped the floors after every market. Another had to have carpets cleaned at the end of the season, even after vacuuming every week. (She notes that it is best to avoid a carpeted room for a market because all the product debris, mud and snow tracked in from customers leaves carpets hopelessly filthy.) Make sure you do your duty to keep your landlord happy and communicate clearly or once again – you may not be asked back.

Markets generate garbage, too. Things like sample cups, plastic utensils, customer refuse, product packaging that were consumed while walking around the market. How does the landlord want garbage handled? Must you take all garbage with you? Does a janitor haul trash to the garbage bin or is that your responsibility? If the janitor does this, then is there a cleaning charge on top of the rent? You'll need to find this out so you make sure to plan to do your part. How will you let customers and vendors know

what to do with their trash and make sure they are handling it appropriately?

Another maintenance concern for markets are sidewalks and walkways. Sidewalks need shoveling and salting on snowy or icy days. The driveways and parking lots need to be plowed and salted to prevent accidents and stuck vehicles and stairs and entrances need to be cleared. Whose responsibility is this and is there an extra charge if the landlord does it? How often is it done and will everything be cleared in time for not only the market but for vendors to arrive and set up?

Some landlords are finicky about how farmers are bringing in product. It is not always a straight path from the door to the market space. In this case, map the route ahead of time and let your farmers know the load-in rules and that there will be no exceptions. Having a staff person on hand to direct and guide the farmers, especially for the first couple of weeks while they get used to the set up can pay dividends for the future of the market.

It is important that all of these extras and any other landlord conditions be spelled out, along with the rent, for any space you contract and use as your winter market space. The contract should also include insurance requirements for the market and its vendors. Then follow up with a written agreement with the winter market vendors. It's always better when rights and responsibilities for all parties are spelled out in writing. Then no one is surprised, nor unaware of the requirements for using the space. Forgetting to talk about one or more of these issues with your landlord before the start of market season is almost a sure recipe for trouble so do not skip this important step. If you aren't sure – ask for clarification!



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Budget

Winter market managers agree that operating a winter market is more expensive than a summer market. As we noted earlier, rent is typically greater for indoor space. While rents will vary from community to community, some markets are paying as much as \$200 per market day for space. Also there is a greater need for advertising and promotions for winter markets since they lack the street visibility without the rows of tents. It is non-traditional market season as well, so customers need to be made aware of

the opportunities to shop with your local farmers and your winter location. They may not be expecting a farmers market to be open in the winter so education is key and that may need a budget as well. Consider advertising and promotions, including radio/TV ads, brochures, flyers, signage and events that help draw customers to the market. Remember your standard market expenses too – manager salary and payroll taxes. Then the extras that come with the clean-up of the space. The expense side of your budget might look something like this:

Winter Market Expenses			
Expense Detail	# Days	\$ per day	Total
Site Use Fee	18	\$ 200.00	\$ 3,600.00
Gross Manager Wages	18	\$ 126.00	\$ 2,268.00
Payroll Taxes	18	\$ 15.00	\$ 272.00
Supplies, cleaning, etc	1	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00
Advertising & Promotion *			\$ 2,000.00
Total Expenses			\$ 8,640.00
* Includes advertising	print ads, flyers		
Banners and signs	directional signs, banners and A frames		
Promotional events	music, cooking demos		
promotional materials	tote bags for sale and give-aways		

Now you will need to determine the fees you must charge your vendors given the total expenditures. Do not start with the amount you'd like to charge your vendors and then try to figure out what expenses you can afford as cutting corners on expenses may lead to an unsuccessful market. Once you break down your expenses to a per-vendor amount (leaving some room for contingencies), you'll need to determine if they can carry the burden of the full budget or if this amount is too high. If it seems

too high, you will you need to find sponsors and donors to bridge the gap. Yes, farmers may be willing to pay more for the indoor space for a winter market. But how much more will they be willing to pay? And what happens when they pay a weekly fee, but do not come every week? How will that impact your budget? And don't forget to include a measure to cover the overhead of your market organization. This is important too, so that you and your organization can continue to bring farmers markets to your community. You



don't want to be operating at a loss to where you are essentially financing the farmers market for the community without a plan to bring your market into the black.

Now let's look at your market's potential income.

Income Forecast					
Vendor Line	QTY	Linear Feet	# Days	Rate	Total Rent
Meat	1	8	18	84	\$ 1,512.00
Specialty Foods	6	8	18	84	\$ 9,072.00
Baked Goods	2	8	18	84	\$ 3,024.00
Produce	2	16	18	168	\$ 6,048.00
Certified Organic Produce	1	8	18	84	\$ 1,512.00
Pickles	1	8	18	84	\$ 1,512.00
Poultry and Eggs	1	8	18	84	\$ 1,512.00
Gross Revenue Forecast					\$ 24,192.00
Discount	Cancelled markets		1 day		\$ 1,176.00
Discount	vendor cancellations		3%		\$ 726.00
Discount	unbooked space		3%		\$ 726.00
Projected Revenue, discounted					\$ 21,564.00

(Note in this example, the market has broken out the numbers of each type of vendor. This was done to ensure an adequate diversity of product for each week, rather than the impact on the budget of each type of vendor. You'll also notice that the market has allowed for weeks where a vendor can be a no-show without financial penalty. This would cover bad weather days, as well as family issues that might arise. But because this impacts the budget, the market has adjusted their projected income to cover these contingencies.)

Product diversity

As we mentioned earlier, you want enough diversity of product to attract consumers every week. This especially includes vegetables. "Produce is the calling card of farmers markets,"

as Miriam Haas of Down to Earth Market tells us. If you can't get a couple of good produce farmers, then wait another year before you begin your winter market. Promote the idea of your market to other vendors with winter



produce available or promote the idea of winter production to the existing vendors. Have them gear up for year round production with more storage crops and season extension production techniques. Consider a good mix of other products too. There are opportunities to gain vendors who may not have an outlet for their products during the winter months since their farmers market doesn't operate during that time. (You will want to be careful to not cannibalize an existing market in your community, but this can be an opportunity for several farmers markets who may be on the smaller size that could not afford to do a winter market on their own to come together and do one together). There are also some types of vendors best suited to winter markets who specialize in produce such as root vegetables, high tunnel greens, value-added produce or honey and maple syrup products. Meat vendors can do exceptionally well in the winter and carry that customer base over into the summer too. Bakery products are always wanted by customers, but you need to be sure that you are not overly saturated with baked goods. Consumers want choice of vendors, but not so many of any one type that they perceive the market to be one large bakery! One great thing about a winter market, according to Sue Gardner Smith of the Brighton Winter Farmers Market was that it allows farmers to expand their product line and their production schedules to accommodate a winter market. Every year she sees more farmers finding ways to keep product coming in all year long. It helps the farm, but it also helps consumers to support local all 12 months of the year. They're looking for an outlet to do this as the buy local movement grows, so we can accommodate that by providing the community with a winter farmers market.

Marketing

This can't be stressed enough. Marketing is a big concern for winter markets. People don't see the market as they are driving by. The tents aren't outside in a parking lot, along the street or in the park. Instead the vendors are all tucked inside where they can't be seen. How do you overcome the visibility issue of a winter farmers market?



Down to Earth Markets begins promoting their winter market before the summer ends. Consumers are given flyers by the market manager at each of their locations, promoting their winter markets. In addition, farmers are strongly encouraged to promote their winter market participation to their own customer bases. In addition, signage, flyers and banners are all used to announce and promote the winter location. Typically the advertising works very



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well getting customers into the winter market, especially through the holidays. Then customer traffic will wane a bit. But while a winter market may not have the numbers of customers that a summer market has, it can be very important to both the farmers and the consumers. Sue Gardner Smith notes that winter farmers markets are not the community gathering place that a summer market is. Rather, it is about the sales and the support of the local farmers. So numbers of consumers may be less, but many farms report their sales, or at least the size of their average sale is greater at winter markets. These are the truly loyal customers and their support does matter to the farmers.

The Brighton Winter Farmers Market also uses local schools to help promote their winter market. Backpack announcements are sent home with school children encouraging parents to shop for healthy food choices at the weekly winter market. Other local organizations are also a part of the marketing plan, adding flyers, blogs and announcements to the organization’s take-home materials for their customers, clients and employees. Each of these methods is another chance to reach a new customer base, grow the winter market’s attendance, and increase the possibility of profits and success.

Beyond the invisibility issue is one of awareness. Because the winter is a non-traditional time for farmers markets, shopping a farmers market in the winter is simply not on the minds of consumers. They need constant reminders that a winter market takes place in their community and that it has enough product mix to make the trip to the market worthwhile. Emphasize this point. Show pictures of the bounty. Miriam Haas talks about how customers are thrilled when the market opens back up outside in the spring. They

remark on missing the market over the winter and missing all the good food. But when they are reminded that there was a market indoors all winter long, many customers are surprised! It was not on their radar as a winter event and they just plain missed it. Your marketing efforts are meant to combat this issue.

SEEKING PUBLIC INPUT
Public Information Open House
for the Proposed
WINTER FARMERS' MARKET

A Town of Brighton proposal to create a permanent home for the winter market, East of the Community Garden at Buckland Park!

When: Wednesday, July 22, 2015
4:00 P.M. to 7:00 P.M.

Where: Lodge @ Buckland Park
1341 Westfall Road
Rochester, NY 14618

Topics:
 Existing Conditions
 Site Analysis
 Visual Preferences Study
 Site Tour
 Preliminary Programming
 Concept Diagrams

For more information please visit the Town Website @ www.townofbrighton.org or call the Recreation Department at 585-784-5260

BRIGHTON FARMERS MARKET
 TOWN OF BRIGHTON
 WINDHAM COUNTY, NEW YORK

The consulting Architects and Landscape Architects will be present. In-Site Architecture and Barton & Logsdon

The Brighton Winter Farmers Market does extensive marketing just before the winter market opens. The goal is to let all the summer customers know they still have the opportunity to buy direct from the farmers all winter long. Once the market opens, the advertising and promotions is a bit less than before, but is still consistent, week after week, reminding



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customers that the market is open all winter long with their favorite farmers and the wide selection of local foods.

Scheduling

Scheduling a winter market can be a bit more challenging than a summer market. You have to schedule your market around the use of the indoor space you've been allotted. For example, if it's a school, you might have to work around school hours, after-school activities and sporting events. That might leave you with very limited choices when it comes to finding a time that will be convenient for both farmers and consumers. The same is true if you use a church hall. The church will be unavailable on Sundays, and the hall may be contracted on other days for other weekly events the church may support. So although your summer market may be on a Thursday evening, for example, your winter market might be on a Sunday afternoon. Don't forget to consider other events in your community too to lessen competition: i.e. if everyone in town is at a local sporting event Wednesday afternoons, you wouldn't want to select that as the time for your market even if your venue was available.

You may also have to change the hours that you are open to accommodate the activities already scheduled for your venue. A school may be used on Saturday mornings for a weekly youth program. Your hours will be limited around that. So your winter market may be, not only on a different day, but also different hours of the day.

All of this adds to your marketing and promotions efforts. Customers are used to your summer market – its location, day of the week and hours. Now that all of that is changing, your

marketing needs to constantly remind customers of the differences.

Extras

Most summer markets include events that entertain and educate their consumers. They are a draw to bring people into the market. But space in a winter market is much more limited. That means any entertainment must be carefully thought out and planned with an eye on impact and customer traffic. Instead of a band, it might be a single entertainer. Instead of an entire health fair, it might be a blood pressure screening needing only one table and three chairs. Even these smaller events, though, can be a big draw and an incentive for customers to come to the market in the middle of winter when other activities and events are limited.



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Community groups that will come to a summer farmers market to promote their organizations or missions, will likely still want to participate in a winter market, given the opportunity. You will need to understand their need for space and find a way to match that with the limited space you have. It can be done, but pre-planning and negotiation with the group will ensure a successful event for both the community group and the winter farmers market.

Last minute thoughts from winter farmers market managers

It is okay to make adjustments as you go along. Sometimes the customer base is just not enough for the farmers to come to a winter market every week. In this case a monthly market might work well. In fact, winter markets in Madison County, NY operate on a monthly or bi-monthly basis. But they have coordinated their schedules so that no two markets operate on the same Saturday of the month. That gives consumers the opportunity to visit a farmers market every week, without overly burdening farmers with multiple markets.

Sometimes indoor locations just don't work out. Miriam Haas has lost market space because of local zoning laws being interpreted differently by changing administrations. She notes that

sometimes it is okay to remain outside. But it is a challenge! Outdoor vendors at the Rochester Public Market erect plastic rooms with salamander heaters to keep themselves and their customers warm while they shop. It is a challenge but it can be done!

With planning and preparation, a winter farmers market can be a real community asset. It provides consumers access to locally grown and produced foods that allows them to continue to eat local and support local agriculture all throughout the year. They don't have to support the farmers in summer and then go back to grocery store shopping throughout the winter and then try to find the market again in spring. There is no disconnect. Farmers benefit from a year round income that helps to sustain their farms even in the "off" season. In addition, they have the opportunity to expand their product mix and increase their production to year round through storage crops, season extension strategies and value-added production, diversifying their product mix and adding an extra layer of safety and security. It's a win-win for the community. Consider the benefits of adding a winter market to your community for the betterment of consumers, farmers, and the market as a whole.

References:

This material is based on a presentation by Sue Gardner Smith, Market Manager, Brighton Winter Farmers Market & Miriam Haas, Founder of Down to Earth Markets, at the Farmers Market Federation of NY's Annual Farmers Market Managers Training Conference, Nov 2015.

Appendix:

Sample Winter Market Agreement





Farmers Market Managers Professional Certification Program

Module 3: Building Market Systems

Unit 3.3 Crisis Management

UNIT OVERVIEW

A crisis management plan will help you handle any emergency situation in a calm and professional manner that safeguards your market consumers, vendors and personnel, as well as the market's reputation. This unit will explain the process of creating an effective crisis management plan for your market, as well as an understanding of why it is so critical.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

CONCEPTS

1. Understanding the important elements of a crisis management plan

SKILLS

- How to create and implement an effective crisis management plan for your market



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Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
Broome County





Unit 3.3 Crisis Management

While many of the larger public markets in the country have developed crisis management plans, very few community markets have opted to create such plans. But size of the facility, number of vendors, and customer counts have little bearing on the need for a crisis management plan. Disaster can happen anywhere in the state and to any size market so we should all be prepared to handle any emergency that may arise.

When an emergency strikes, whether it is a motor vehicle accident, a medical emergency, or a fire, you can keep your customers and farmers safe and keep a bad situation from becoming worse by being prepared. This means considering all possible emergencies that might crop up and defining the appropriate response to any emergency situation well in advance of a situation actually occurring or becoming imminent. That way when an emergency occurs, you and your staff and/or volunteers can take immediate action, direct customers to safely evacuate the market and lead your farmers to an area of safety. Everyone remains calm and the market can be cleared to allow emergency responders to attend appropriately to the crisis.

The result of handling the crisis with calm preparedness, and keeping everyone safe throughout the emergency, is that you gain respect and trust for the market. Customers will feel confident that they were well cared for during the event and will trust that you have their health and safety in mind, not just during

the crisis, but throughout the time they spend at the market. You also gain the respect of the community. You responded quickly and appropriately to the crisis. Rather than a media frenzy bent on placing blame on the market for the emergency that occurred, they will concentrate more on how well the market handled the event. You have turned what could have been a negative event that reflected poorly on your market and tarnished your positive reputation into a positive for the market.

Keep in Mind

Preparing for a crisis is like buying insurance. You hope you never need it, but when and if you do, it could very well save your hide.

Markets by their very nature are crowded sites and often have vehicles and pedestrians vying for space. They are also places where customers may be distracted and not focusing on their surroundings. Whether your market is located in a parking lot or park, or in a permanent site with structures and infrastructure, having a site-specific, emergency/crisis management plan is critical. In developing a crisis management plan,



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there are four key steps: Anticipate, prepare, communicate and evaluate.

Anticipate

Don't get caught in the thinking that it cannot happen to you. A disaster can occur anywhere. No one expects it. And no market is too small or too well-managed to experience a disaster. It is the market's responsibility to safeguard your customers, farmers, as well as market employees and volunteers. It's our job to anticipate and prepare for potential problems before they happen. Be proactive rather than reactive!

Think about all the possibilities for disaster so that you can plan for each eventuality. Think about some of the issues markets have faced over the last few years:

- An elderly gentleman drove his car through the markets in Santa Monica and Rochester, causing fatalities, injuries and damages.
- Hurricane Katrina began its Gulf Coast assault while the markets were in operation in New Orleans, requiring mandatory evacuations of the market's customers and farmers.
- A terrorist attack at the World Trade Center occurred with a farmers market in operation at the base of the towers. Farmers were forced to immediately leave everything behind and walk to safety.
- Strawberries contaminated with E. coli were sold at farmers markets in Oregon and Washington, leading to a public health situation.
- Youth fights led to a stabbing adjacent to the Union Square Greenmarket.

Now think about your market specifically. What are the issues that could arise at your market? Look around your market: what is around you that could have an impact on the market? Here are only some of the many possibilities:

- Fire
- Food borne illness
- Medical emergencies
- Loss of power for extended time
- Severe weather such as a wind storm or hurricane
- Chemical spill on site or nearby
- Train derailment nearby
- Serious accident on premises
- Criminal acts such as stealing, assaults, arson, bomb threats or other forms of terrorism etc.

Anything that puts your farmers and customers at risk, should be considered an emergency situation. It's how you respond to these emergencies that determines the final outcome of your market.

Keep in Mind

You must act in a way that inspires confidence and trust and draws people back to the market once the crisis is over. No one should think that you didn't have a plan in place or weren't prepared in advance to deal with the situation, no matter how unexpected it may feel.

Prepare

The second step after you Anticipate potential problems is to Prepare. An effective response plan should outline the basic preparedness steps needed to handle many kinds of potential emergencies at your site. Recognize that the plan cannot possibly be all inclusive, but should



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provide adequate guidance for handling a variety of types of emergencies.

So to begin your plan, know your own market or farm's unique characteristics – both the layout and how you will get emergency vehicles in and consumers and farm vehicles out. Recognize the potential vulnerabilities in your market situation and address them in your plan. This is not the time to minimize potential problems or issues hoping they will go away.

Do you have a security team and what roles can they play? Involve professionals in the development of your plan. Put a team together that can look at emergency preparedness from multiple perspectives. Include fire and police personnel, EMS representatives, your insurance agent, key staff and board members. You may also want to include a professional public relations person to help you craft your communications pieces or to be the spokesperson on your behalf in a time of crisis.

Put your completed plan in writing - don't leave it to memory. The written plan needs to be located at the market in a well-known place where any staff member or volunteer can easily find it. Make sure key staff members have read the plan and understand it before an emergency occurs – there won't be time to go leafing through a long document and read the relevant sections in the heat of the moment. (You can refer back to it in an emergency but you should already be familiar with the contents in advance). Also keep a copy of the plan with emergency services – local police, ambulance services and fire department. That way they will know how to best support you in any given situation.

Now that your plan is complete, practice it. Involve the market staff and volunteers, the

farmers and vendors and all emergency response teams. While the plan may never be run perfectly when it's real and not a practice, the more often it is practiced and the more everyone has internalized the process, the more smoothly it will run when it's no longer a drill. You don't want the first time you are practicing the emergency response plan to be a real emergency! Drills allow you and your staff to familiarize yourself with the plan and make adjustments as you discover deficiencies.

There are key elements of a successful crisis management plan.

1. The first step is to create a team who will identify the purpose of the plan, the nature of what will constitute an emergency or crisis, and will formulate the plan itself. This should include not only key market staff and volunteers, but also emergency responders and others with a vested interest in the market.
2. Identify all key personnel. The next step in crafting your plan is to identify the key people that will execute the plan. Know what the specific job is that each will perform and create a checklist for each that outlines their specific responsibilities and the action steps to be taken. Eliminate the guesswork when it comes to who is supposed to respond and how precisely they will respond at each step of the process.
3. Create a comprehensive contact list. This should include all key market personnel and volunteers, vendors, emergency services, contractors such as plumbers, electrician and any others that provide services to the market. It is better to have more information on this than needed rather than make it too brief and be missing



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a key contact who you need to reach out to in the event of an emergency.

4. Prepare an evacuation plan. Knowing how you will evacuate the crowds at your market will help to reduce the chaos and keep everyone safe in an emergency. While developing your plan, use a detailed map of your market, showing where ingress and egress can be made, where the crowds will most likely be, and plan to move the crowds to those exits in an orderly fashion that does not stress the exits, and provides safety zones where people can congregate as they wait for further instruction. This will be different for every market since they are all setup differently. Part of this plan should include notifying emergency responders which entrances they should use and which will be reserved for outgoing market traffic who are evacuating.

Keep in Mind

Evacuations are called for when any incident has occurred or is about to occur, that places lives, property or the environment at risk.

Once an emergency has been declared, assess the nature and scope of the emergency to determine whether an evacuation is called for. Then call 911 for assistance with the emergency. Let them know what the emergency is, where their help is needed on the market, and if possible, how they should enter the market to avoid traffic congestion and most easily

reach the emergency. Keep calm and speak clearly and precisely.

Personnel should assist the public in an orderly evacuation. This is not the time for staff members to leave or panic! Post staff or volunteers at critical points to help direct people to the nearest exit or to a safe zone where they can congregate while waiting for further instructions. Give staff members bullhorns to help them project their voices while instructing the evacuation. If no one can hear or understand staff members, their instructions will do no good. Also include signage in the market that helps direct people to the nearest exits. Exits may not be as easily defined in an outdoor setting. But you need to direct your customers on how you want them to exit the market to maintain order and avoid chaos and panic. An Evacuation Script can be useful to be sure your message is getting out to the public in a calm manner.

The Rochester Public Market has created a script that is recorded and plays on a Public Address system, leaving the staff to be out in the market directing the public to the exits. This message is replayed throughout the evacuation process. If you do not have a PA system, have bullhorns on hand so that you can state the message through the bullhorns as you go through the market.

Once emergency responders have arrived, transfer management of the evacuation over to them, offering whatever assistance they may need, such as directing ambulances or fire trucks to the appropriate location. Provide the responders with as much detail of the incident as you have.



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ATTENTION! THIS IS AN EMERGENCY

ALL SHOPPERS MUST IMMEDIATELY LEAVE THE PUBLIC MARKET THROUGH THE NEAREST EXIT GATEWAY.

PLEASE REMAIN CALM.

YOU SHOULD NOT TRY TO RETURN TO YOUR VEHICLE UNTIL DIRECTED BY OFFICIALS ON SITE.

VENDORS AND PUBLIC MARKET PERSONNEL WILL HELP TO DIRECT YOU TO THE NEAREST EXIT GATEWAY.

5. Documentation. After the action of the emergency has passed, be sure that everything is well documented. What happened, why it happened, where it happened, what was the market's response and who performed the steps for the response. Maintain all documentation, including press pieces and any other media response. This documentation may become important should there be any lawsuits or subsequent investigations.

- a. Get the facts and write them down. Do not include anything that is speculative or a guess. Only record exactly what you know to be true.
- b. Who was at the site - not just those directly involved, but also any witnesses?
- c. Was the ambulance/EMT personnel promptly called?
- d. Is there any facility damage?
- e. Where did it happen?

- f. How did it happen? Again, don't speculate as to why it happened or embellish on the facts.
- g. What were others observations?

Communication

The third step in a crisis management plan after *Anticipate* and *Prepare* is Communication. You want to always be the first one to get the story out to the public. If you are first, you set the tone of the story. You spin it in as positive a light as possible. Let the public know that you are on top of the situation, concerned for the public's well-being and taking steps to minimize the damage and prevent future occurrences. If someone else is the first one to release the story, you don't know how it will be framed. The press could make the market out to be the bad guy, misrepresent the facts, or misrepresent how you handled the situation.

One of the most important things to do in controlling communications surrounding a crisis at your market is to have only ONE person as the designated communications person. All messages come from that one person, keeping the message uniform. All media inquiries should be directed to that one communications person, despite often repeated tries from the media to hear from others within the organization. The designated person will be the person who is the most briefed on the market's disaster response and communications plan and who knows the importance of a carefully curated message. This way your market's reputation is not damaged by someone thinking off the cuff and stating something that may be damaging to a media person. In addition to designating the specified communications person, you want to make it more than abundantly clear to anyone who isn't the specified communications person that they are not to speak to the media at all – either on or



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off the record. If you haven't made that clear, all your work in forming a communications plan and designating one individual media representative will be wasted so make sure to stress this point with all of your market staff AND volunteers on an ongoing basis. Make it a part of your regular onboarding and training process.

Your crisis management plan will define the communications person, and should include key points for the communications piece:

- Brief statement of what the market is about – mission, vision
- Primary message

Effective communication can minimize the negative impact to your market. Select a person to act as spokesperson for the market, who can clearly articulate with the media and/or public. You don't want someone who reacts poorly to stress or who is often frazzled and disorganized.

To be proactive, you will be out front with the information – keeping your public informed on the situation at hand – what is happening, what has happened and what will happen in the future. You show them that you are in control of the situation. By being proactive, you control the message, putting your own spin on the story. By keeping your public informed and showing that you are being responsible, you will gain consumer trust that will help you to rebuild after the crisis is over.

Keep in mind that to have a positive impact, your message must be 100% accurate. If you don't have the answer to a question, it is okay to say, I don't know, but I'll get that information for you. Then be sure to follow up with the correct answer. NEVER give information that you are not in full possession of. Do not respond if you are unsure.

Your Media Statement Should Include:

- A statement of the problem, including the date and time
- Concern over the incident
- Magnitude of the problem
- Response to the problem (this may be ongoing and evolving with future statements)
- Involvement of regulatory agencies if appropriate
- Explanation of how the market will make restitution, if applicable
- Actions taken to contain the problem
- Actions underway to prevent recurrence

The last one is an important one because you want to show the public that you care about what happens at the market and are taking steps to keep the community safe. You will also need to be reactive as well. Social media has made it easier for consumers to communicate and has become a powerful consumer arsenal, often getting the story out before mainstream media. It is important that you monitor what is being said about you – you can set the record straight, dispel myths and steer the conversations toward a positive path. Find out what people are saying and make sure it is accurate or set them straight before the rumors grow and get out of hand.

Setting up a google alert will help you find out whenever your market or name is mentioned. Follow those leads and join the conversations that are taking place about your market.

Tips for responding to social media comments about your market:



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- Ignore overly hostile comments altogether
- Respond to all concerns and questions
- Do not respond to hypotheticals
- Do not point fingers at others culpability
- Do not get into lengthy back and forth conversations. Instead try to take those conversations off-line. You want to gently control the nature of the conversation while keeping overtly negative comments in private.

Evaluate

Once the crisis is over, it is important to assess the market’s handling of the crisis. Hold a debriefing meeting with your staff and volunteers. It is easy to handle a crisis in practice, but how well was the real life crisis handled? Evaluate how well the plan was executed. It is easy to handle a crisis in practice, but how well was the real life crisis handled? What steps were

Keep in Mind
Your crisis management plan should not sit idle on a shelf! Practice, evaluate and adjust as needed.

handled smoothly, what needs to be reassessed? Was anything unexpected? How well did the staff and volunteers handle their roles, should there be changes made? Was anything left out of the plan that needs to be added?

Try to identify areas where the plan can be improved. When a real crisis happens it provides the best information towards allowing you to edit your plan. Make the necessary adjustments and make sure all staff, volunteers and emergency personnel are aware of the changes.

Then redistribute copies of the plan to your market staff, volunteers, board members, and emergency personnel. Make sure to refresh the market’s posted copies as well and remove any outdated copies so the correct version is used for the next emergency.

Now that your plan is updated, continue to practice the new, updated plan.

How should the plan work? Can you give me an example?

On August 24, 2006, a tragic accident at the Rochester Public Market illustrated just how important a planned, rehearsed approach to crisis management is. One of their worst fears became an actuality when an 89-year-old patron mistook the gas pedal for the brake and drove his car through two vending stalls and into the crowd under the selling shed. At the same time, over 300 schoolchildren happened to be on a tour of the market site. Numerous people were injured and several vehicles were damaged as well. To further complicate the situation, the two people most familiar with handling crisis situations at the site were either not on site or unable to respond. Luckily, there was an emergency plan in place and it was immediately implemented. This is an important element of your plan as well. Who is the first responder? Who is the second in command if that person is unavailable? Who is the third/fourth etc.?

In the case of the emergency in Rochester, the communications person immediately began broadcasting the pre-prepared announcements to evacuate, the manager contacted emergency services for assistance, and staff members within the market helped direct consumers to safe locations off site. Everyone had their role and everyone fulfilled that role in a clear and orderly manner. The evacuation route left the market



driveways available to allow the ambulances to easily access those who were hurt and they were quickly loaded into the ambulances and transported to the hospital for treatment.

Because there was a clear delineation of duties and the plan had been practiced as it was written, the crisis was handled smoothly and the

damage to the vendors and the market was kept to a minimum. This happened even though more than one staff person was unavailable to assist. Overall, the market was publicly praised by both emergency responders and the market's consumers for its efficient handling of the event and the market is going even stronger than before the accident.

References:

This material is based on a presentation by Jim Farr, Rochester Public Market, at the Farmers Market Federation of NY's Annual Farmers Market Managers Training Conference, Nov 20.



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Farmers Market Managers Professional Certification Program

Module 3: Building Market Systems

Unit 3.4 Food Safety for Farmers Markets

UNIT OVERVIEW

Food safety is a critical issue in today's world. With an ever increasing number of food borne illness outbreaks, the production of our nation's food supply is under greater scrutiny than ever before. It behooves farmers market managers to take an active role in promoting food safety for the health of their customers and for the protection of our farmers and vendors.

This unit will build a greater understanding of food safety guidelines that farmers can follow to safeguard the foods they produce and bring to the market. It will also provide managers with guidance in creating a marketplace that stresses food safety, both from their farmers and vendors, as well as through their own actions.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

CONCEPTS

- Understand basic food safety concepts
- Learn the protocols needed to maintain an environment that maximizes the safety of food sold at farmers markets

SKILLS

- Ability to create a food safety policy for a farmers market



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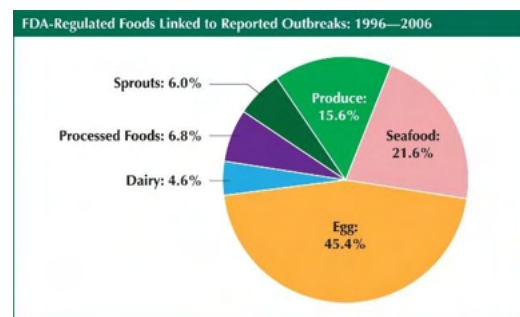
Unit 3.4: Food Safety for Farmers Markets

Farmers markets are the “face of agriculture.” This is where consumers meet the growers of their food, learn about local food and agriculture and develop relationships with local farmers. Consumers, purchasing their food at farmers markets, appreciate the effort that farmers put into producing the foods they are buying. Customers will also comment that they feel the foods they buy direct from the growers are generally safer than those purchased in big box stores.

But is that the reality? Contamination of foods can occur anywhere along the supply chain and no grower is immune to potential contamination of the foods they produce. It is imperative that farmers market managers ensure that the customer’s perception of the food sold by their market growers is, in fact, true – that these foods are safe for them to feed their families.

Why has food safety become such a hot topic issue in recent years? One reason is that pathogens constantly evolve. *E coli O157:H7* scares did not exist a few years ago but lately food contaminated with this bacteria has caused multiple illnesses and deaths. Listeria is another pathogen that is of concern. Unlike most other bacteria, listeria multiplies in refrigeration, allowing it to take hold where other bacteria cannot. As bacteria and pathogens evolve over time, the risk to human health grows.

What is a food borne illness outbreak? An outbreak is defined by as few as two people being sickened by contaminated food. When we look at the types of foods involved in food borne illness outbreaks, we find that produce generates the greatest level of these outbreaks, 15.6% of the outbreaks and 37.3% of food borne illnesses have been attributed to produce. Remember the spinach scare in 2006 that sickened over 200 people across the nation, hospitalized over 100 of those sickened and resulted in the deaths of 4 people? The culprit: *E coli O157:H7*. A separate outbreak, occurring on the Jensen Farm in 2011, was caused by cantaloupe contaminated with listeria. When all was said and done, 40 people were dead, Jensen Farms was bankrupt and the farm owners were criminally prosecuted. Farmers and market managers certainly need to be cognizant of this potential danger since many/most of the foods sold are farmers markets are produce and carry these potential risks.



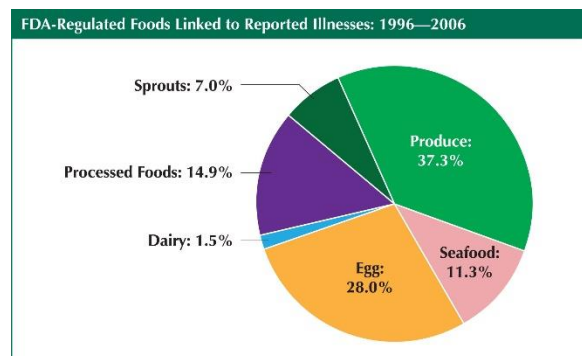
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Other factors also contribute to a growing number of food borne illness outbreaks, along with evolving pathogens:

- Our culture values and encourages the consumption of fresh foods. While nutrition values are typically higher in fresh foods, cooking or processing foods destroys many pathogens and bacteria. Because fresh foods have not been subjected to any of these treatments, they carry a higher risk of contamination.
- The US population is aging. As baby boomers age, they become more immunocompromised and, therefore, more susceptible to illnesses caused by food-borne pathogens.
- Advances in distribution have made it possible to eat fresh foods year round, regardless of local climate. These distribution systems are more complex and bring food farther away from where it was grown. This means more hands that touch your food and more containers it is held in and each of these increase the chances of contamination.
- Government programs encourage greater consumption of fresh foods. As noted earlier, fresh foods, lacking a “kill step” such as heating or processing carry a greater risk of causing food borne illnesses.
- Many consumers believe that farmers market produce is “ready to eat” and does not need to be washed or sanitized. They may wrongly think that all farmers market produce is organic or has already been washed. Most consumers don’t think about the potential germs and

hazards both while produce is on the farm and being transported to the market by the farmer, and then while it is transported through the market and back home by the consumer themselves. This creates a false sense of security where consumers feel because foods are grown more locally by a farmer they know and trust that foodborne illness cannot happen to them but the truth is that food contamination and foodborne illness can happen to anyone!



What is being done to prevent these outbreaks?

There has been a great deal of work to identify the potential sources of contamination and create processes to minimize those risks. USDA has funded the creation of GAPs, Good Agricultural Practices, which identify the risks for food contamination on farms, and define steps that need to be adhered to so as to prevent, or at least minimize those risks. GAPs is a voluntary program, meaning farmers opt to participate, create their own farm’s food safety plan and then pay for an audit to assure their farm plan correctly addresses all potential risks. Because it is a voluntary program and requires a cash and time outlay by farmers, it is not as widely accepted as it could or should be. Instead, it is a buyer-driven program. Many large wholesale



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buyers require their farms to be GAPs certified and go through annual farm audits to ensure good food growing and handling practices to know that they are buying only safe foods for their consumers. If farms aren't seeing a direct benefit to their revenue or aren't required to be certified by a vendor or wholesaler, many are opting not to participate and that is certainly a weakness of the current program.

The FDA(Food and Drug Administration) has also entered the picture and has developed federal regulations under the Food Safety Modernization Act, to cover fresh produce sold at all venues in the United States, in its attempt to stave off food borne illness outbreaks. The regulation will be mandatory once fully implemented. At this point, it is believed that small direct marketing farms will be exempt from Federal regulation, but they will still need to take steps to ensure their foods are safe from potential contamination. Any outbreak attributed to an exempt farm will lose their exemption and be required to comply fully with all Produce Safety Regulations on the Food Safety Modernization Act in the future. This exemption was put into place to make sure that the expense of complying with the new regulations does not put small farms out of business, but that the regulations do provide an extra level of protection for consumers and help hold those who are involved with food safety violations and foodborne illness outbreaks responsible.



What can market managers do to keep foods safe for their consumers?

Market managers need to understand food safety issues and concerns. Learn how you can protect your customers, as well as helping farmers to protect their own farms by following food safety practices. Know what the potential sources of contamination are and ask the right questions of your farmers. Create your own food safety plan for your market. Incentivize farmers to follow food safety protocols. Lead by example by maintaining proper conditions in the market to ensure a safe food environment and speak up when you see anything happening that isn't safe. While many managers go into market management thinking their job is all about managing the logistics and money for the market, there are so many more important parts of their jobs – and one of those is the responsibility for food safety.

Learn the potential sources of contamination on the farm. Know what they are and what types of questions you should be asking of your farmers so that you can assess their commitment to keeping the foods they produce and sell at your market safe from contamination.

1. Humans. The more hands that touch food, the greater the chances of contamination. Are your farmers encouraging proper hygiene with their workers, as well as themselves? Handwashing is a critical component of food safety. Does the farm provide proper handwashing stations with warm water, soap and disposable towels? Does the farm train their employees in proper sanitation? What is their policy on having someone who is

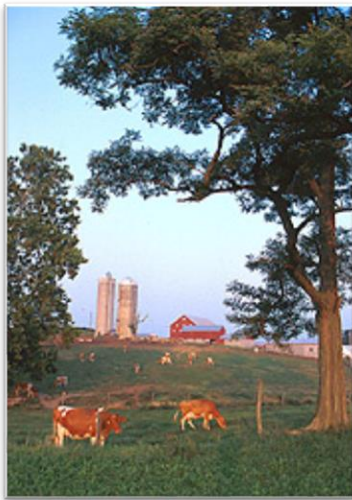


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sick or potentially sick working at the farm? How are these policies promoted and/or enforced?

2. Animals. Many small farms have a mix of animals and produce. Are the animals always kept separate from the produce and other foods produced on the farm? Are the workers who handle animals also handling the other foods and if so, are they required to wash, change clothes and shoes before working with other foods? Are pets, such as cats and dogs, kept out of the fields, out of the packing house and wash rooms/shed where produce is being handled? How are these policies monitored and enforced?



3. Soil. Production practices of produce should be done in a manner that eliminates potential contamination. For example, if using compost and manure to build soil fertility, how is this being done? Are the materials

thoroughly composted to destroy pathogens, is it being applied early enough before harvest so as to eliminate any potential for contamination? Is compost and/or manure applied in a manner that allows it to make contact with the edible portions of the food?

4. Water. There are three sources of water on farms that are used in the production and post-harvest handling for produce. Surface water; streams, ponds, etc.; represent the highest risk of contamination. There is no method to control what enters the water, from animals defecating in the water upstream to pollutants being dumped by fellow humans. Well water is another source and represents a mid-level risk of contamination. Finally, municipal water, which carries a very low level of risk. To help monitor risk of surface and well water, tests can be conducted to check the level of pathogens present. These tests should be done on a regular basis and would be required under the FDA's Food Safety Modernization Act on eligible farms. Another concern with water is with washing produce. Dump tanks are often used to wash produce. These tanks should be food grade, have the ability to be sanitized, and have sanitizers in the water to prevent the cross contamination of pathogens from one piece of produce to all the others sharing the same wash water. How often are the



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tanks sanitized and how are records kept to make sure that there is no confusion at the changing of shifts? Who makes sure the level of sanitizer is correct? In fact, without sanitizers, the pathogens in the dump tank can be as low as 4%, but rise to as much as 96% by the time the produce is done and the wash water changed.



5. Produce. Produce is a ready-to-eat food and is often consumed raw, preventing the destruction of pathogens through the cooking process. Also, once pathogens have entered the produce, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to remove them. For example, some produce, such as tomatoes and cantaloupe can actually pull wash water in through their stem ends. If the wash water is colder than the fruit, the water is sucked into the fruit, so that any contamination that may have been in the water is now deep inside the fruit as well. Another example would be the knife used to prepare

samples. The knife must be sanitized and stored in a sanitizing solution between uses. This ensures that the knife is not transferring contaminants from one piece of produce to another. Every step along the way from field to table must be done in such a way as to maximize food safety.

Beyond just knowing these food safety facts and protocols, make food safety a part of the market. Create your own market's food safety policy. Look at the market as a whole and what can be done to improve food safety within the market. Does the market have port-a-johns or bathroom facilities? These should be outfitted with appropriate handwashing facilities and signage that promotes handwashing by all vendors, as well as customers. Customers often touch produce without buying, so they have a role to play as well. Is your sink water potable? If not, do you post a sign near the water source so that customers will know not to drink or wash food in the non-potable water? Your plan should start with a review of the risks and then address each with a plan to minimize or eliminate that risk.

What will you require from growers to participate in the market? While requiring farmers to be GAPs certified to participate in the market may be overly ambitious and drive many farmers away from the market, you can require them to allow you to visit their farms to view post-harvest handling practices. Just keep in mind that you must be capable of administering and enforcing these policies. At the very least, you should be requiring all vendors to post signage at their tables with their farm name and address. This is critical for traceability. Should a customer be sickened by their products, they



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need to know who the product was purchased from and where to find them. Conversely, if the customer is so pleased with their purchases that they want more, they should know who the farmer was and how to find them again. So requiring a name and address helps with both food safety and good marketing – and farmers will be more apt to cooperate if they understand the reasoning behind the rule.

One option that markets and growers can consider to prevent contamination is to package produce, especially fruits, in a closed container, e.g. clamshells. The closed container discourages consumers from handling the product directly, plus it keeps the foods safer from airborne contamination. Farmers do need to weigh this option against their consumer’s wishes though. Many consumers may feel a clamshell is too “commercial” and does not fit in with their ideal of farmers market produce. In addition, many consumers do want the experience of touch that they get at a farmers market which may be missing from other venues. Yet others may appreciate the farmer’s concern for their health in protecting their fruits from potential contamination so farmers need to weigh the risks and benefits.



Another requirement for your farmers and vendors is to be sure that all are selling products with the proper licensing. There are many products being sold in markets that require a special license, whether from the county board of health, or the State Liquor Authority or the NYS Department of Agriculture. Requiring all vendors to have current licenses, permits, or certificates required to sell the products they are vending is something that should be part of every market’s rules and regulations and copies should be maintained in your market files. These requirements are an important first step in food safety. See the appendix for a complete list of licenses required for farmers market sales.

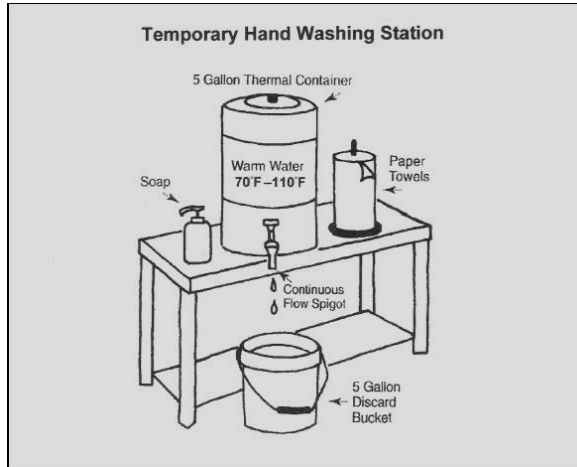
To encourage handwashing, the market should provide a handwashing station. This will not only encourage consumers to wash their hands, but the farmers as well. Often, consumers will eat as they shop the market or stop to pet dogs. These actions cause “dirty” hands that should be washed before they touch the foods on the farmers’ tables. In the absence of a clearly visible handwashing station, though, most will forgo heading to the restrooms to wash their hands and will continue to peruse the market and touch the produce. In some cases they will purchase the produce themselves but in many other cases, they will move on – potentially contaminating produce that another unwitting consumer will buy. There are many commercially available handwashing stations that can be purchased and used at the market. Adding a couple extra dollars to stall rents will provide the income the market needs to purchase one. But the market can also set up a makeshift handwashing station. A container of warm water with a hands-free tap will provide the water, then provide soap and single-use towels. Finally, add a basin to catch the waste water and you



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have a handmade handwashing station. This can be done fairly cheaply so do not let the potential cost discourage you from this important safety measure.



Another important job of a market manager is to look around the market and watch your farmers as they are selling. You can tell which farmers are concerned about food safety and those that are not taking it seriously. What are they doing to prevent contamination when it comes to overhead protection, for example are they using tents to prevent airborne contamination? Are they eating and/or smoking as they are selling? They should be washing hands after eating or smoking and before they handle food. Are they ill, yet still working their tables? Any illness that can be passed on through touching, sneezing, coughing should be avoided and they should send a replacement for that market day. Similarly, any cuts or open wounds should be covered. Are their clothes, body, and hair clean? Personal hygiene plays a role in food safety when it comes to the person who is handling your food. Are all of their foods displayed up and off the ground to prevent soil and other contaminants from infiltrating foods? This needs to be done no matter what surface the market is

held on: a park, parking lot, market shed. Any floor surface has potential contaminants from insects, dirty shoes, soil, etc. This includes not just the product being displayed, but also any extra product waiting to be displayed. There should be a barrier between the product and the ground. As you are witnessing any issues that arise that may compromise food safety? The manager needs to address any of these issues listed above or any other they see with the farmers and consider adding them to the market's food safety policy if they are not listed there already

For more detailed information on food safety protocols for a farmers market, you can visit "Food Safety Recommendations for Farmers Markets," a series of food safety recommendations to keep your market's foods safe for your customers. The set of recommendations was created by the Farmers Market Federation of NY and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Jefferson County and funded by a grant from the USDA's Federal/State Marketing Improvement Program.

You may want your food safety policy to extend to the farmers as well. Should you require a specified level of food safety practices of your farmers? Some markets are looking at creating modified GAPs practices that will help ensure the foods brought to market are wholesome and free from pathogens and contaminants. You might consider using an incentive to encourage farmers to take steps toward more conscious efforts at food safety practices on the farm. Maybe add a discounted fee for compliance with GAPs or a modified version that you have established for your market. Or add them to signage or a banner to show the food safety compliant farms in the market. Try to make it



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inexpensive and easy for the farms in your market to participate.

Another important step that can make a big difference alone is showing your farmers and consumers that you, as the market management, take food safety seriously. Conduct your market operations under appropriate procedures. Cooking demonstrations must follow strict guidelines, both from a regulatory standpoint as well as a food safety standpoint. Be an example for your vendors. Be sure all foods being cooked are handled under safe practices and are free from contamination. Set up the cooking demonstration properly – have a handwashing station in place, maintain utensils and cleaning cloth in sanitizer between uses. Keep food preparation in clean conditions – wear plastic gloves while handling the raw ingredients, maintain sneeze guards or other means to eliminate potential consumer contamination. And of course, have the proper licensing from the County Board of Health or whatever the regulatory agency is in the market’s county in order to allow consumer tastings.



If consumer sampling is to be allowed, whether it is done by the market or the farmers, be sure this is also done under proper procedures to minimize any risk of contamination. Samples should be packaged in single serve containers. Farmers and vendors should bring samples to market already packaged. Hand out your samples with gloved hands. Hand washing stations should be available. This will also be regulated by the County Board of Health, so their rules will prevail. But remember, a sample is defined by a bite sized amount and free of charge. Otherwise, it would be considered prepared food and would require a whole other set of rules, regulations and licensing.

For more information on guidelines for sampling and cooking demonstrations, see “General Guidelines for Food Sampling at Direct Marketing Venues” and “General Guidelines for Food Demonstrations at Direct Market Venues” in the appendices. These guidelines were prepared by the Farmers Market Federation of NY and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Jefferson County and funded by a grant from the USDA’s Federal/State Marketing Improvement Program.

The final important piece is that as the market manager, you should also be promoting food safety to your market’s consumers. Signage throughout the market should let people know that they should wash hands whenever they are soiled and before touching the foods out for sale. They should also be encouraged to wash all produce before consuming the produce purchased at the market. You can provide food safety information at the manager’s booth so that consumers understand their part in keeping foods safe from the point of purchase to the family’s dinner table.



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Signage throughout the Rochester Public Market

For a consumer handout on food safety tips, visit: <http://nylocalfood.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Food-Safety-Tips-for-Healthy-Consumers.pdf>

Why do we stress food safety?

Many farmers feel that food safety does not apply to them. Their farms are small and any impact of a food borne illness would be limited. Also, they feed the food they produce to their families and would never feed their own children contaminated food. Beyond that, the response is often that they are farmers and producers, not microbiologists. Time is limited and therefore, their time will be best spent farming.

While it is true that food borne illness outbreaks that are traced to a small farm would generally be limited due to a limited marketing base, it is still, nonetheless, an outbreak that has sickened people. The farm is still liable. The people are still

sick, even if it was a smaller amount. The results could potentially be the loss of millions in damages paid to the people who became sick or maybe even died. There could be fines levied against your farm that may result in the financial ruin of the farm and farmer. And in worst case scenarios, the farmer could face criminal prosecution. All of this applies to any farm that produces food that could potentially be involved in a food borne illness outbreak, no matter the size of the farm. Following food safety protocols is not only important to protect consumers and the general public, but in fact it is an important step to minimize your own liability that may very well save the family farm.

As a market manager, it is your job to protect your customers and your farmers. When you promote food safety practices to your consumers and require safe food handling practices by your vendors without exception, you are fulfilling that part of your job. While you may have many hats to wear and many balls to juggle, following through on your responsibility to keep customers who shop at your market safe is one task you cannot skip. Your customers will view your market as a place for meeting local farmers, as well as a place that cares for their health and safety by seeing to that all foods purchased at the market are free from pathogens and contamination. A customer that feels protected, respected and safe is a loyal customer – something we all strive for, for our farms and in our markets.



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References:

This material is based on a presentation by Erik Schellenberg, Food Safety Coordinator, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Orange County, at the Farmers Market Manager annual conference, Nov 2015.

Appendix:

Food Safety Recommendations for Farmers Markets

General Guidelines for Food Demonstrations at Direct Market Venues

General Guidelines for Food Sampling at Direct Market Venues

Permits/Licenses/Certificates Required for Farmers Market Sellers



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Farmers Market Managers Professional Certification Program

Module 3: Building Market Systems

Unit 3.5 Friends of the Market and Volunteer Management

UNIT OVERVIEW

This unit will give an overview of the process of developing and managing volunteers for a farmers market, including formalizing the volunteers into a Friends of the Market organization.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

CONCEPTS

- Understanding how to develop a volunteer program
- Volunteer management

SKILLS

- Developing and managing a volunteer program for a farmers market
- Formalize the volunteer program into a Friends of the Market organization



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Unit 3.5: Friends of the Market and Volunteer Management

Volunteer Management: The ISOTURE Model

One of the most identified problems that farmers market managers face is the lack of adequate staff and lack of staff time. There might be programs that a manager could institute to benefit the market if they had the time or staff to undertake the project but since they are dealing with a limited amount of volunteer hours they are unable to do so. For example, they might be able to operate or grow a market's SNAP program if human resources were available. But a manager's time is severely limited, especially those that are not full time market managers. This can also be compounded by the fact that many managers are also vendors themselves and busy with other things other than the operations of the market. Their attention is divided.

One way to get around the staffing issue is to develop a volunteer program. The right volunteers can be used to assist in many ways and provide the human capital required to continue to grow a farmers market. But before taking on a volunteer program, it's important to understand what a volunteer can bring to your market, why they can be assets and what are the challenges when it comes to utilizing volunteers in a farmers market setting.

Volunteers bring value to the market, helping them to achieve their mission and goals. They can:

- Extend staff/market resources by contributing their time, talents and resources. They may have unique skills to bring to the table that your other staff doesn't have: IT skills, art skills, organization, contractor connections etc.
- Contribute diverse perspectives, helping to ensure the market's relevance to the community as a whole.
- Increase community awareness of the market by going out into the community as ambassadors of the market. If they have a personal stake in the success of the market, they will be more likely to help promote it!

Understanding the different roles that volunteers can play in the market will help you decide what kind of volunteers your market needs most:

- Core – these roles are vital to the market, such as market staff, Board of Directors, Market Advisory Group, financial management etc.



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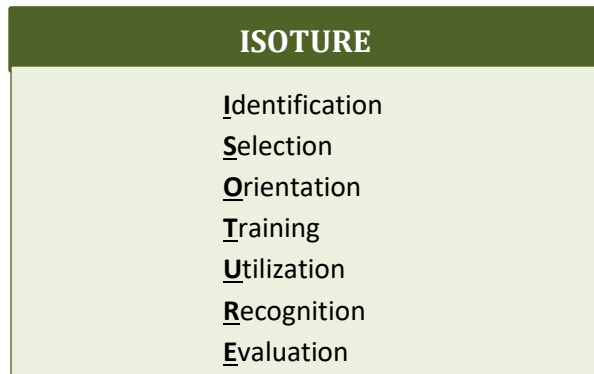
- Complimentary – these roles are task-specific, such as manning specific market programs, fundraising, SNAP terminal administration etc.
- Partnership – these roles enhance the market, for example supporting annual events, providing cooking demonstrations and nutrition education

Having volunteers in the market is not as simple as giving a person a job to do and then going on about your own job. While volunteers can help alleviate some of the stress and tasks from paid or regular staff, there is a lot of legwork involved in setting up the volunteer relationship. The key to success, for both the market and the volunteer, is proper management. This includes:

- Identify the market’s current strengths and weaknesses so you know exactly what the market’s volunteer needs are.
- Identify potential roles for volunteers, which address needs and complement existing market structure and strengths. Create job descriptions so everyone knows exactly what their expectations are. Just because volunteers aren’t being paid does not mean you should put any less thought into the job description and choosing the right candidate(s).
- Determine your capacity for managing volunteers. This will require time, skill and much effort. You must be committed to the management process for a fruitful volunteer management program. Do not overlook this critical step.

- Involve key stakeholders to explore volunteer options and help with developing action plans for your volunteer program. It does not have to all come from you. Enlisting help gets everyone on board with the program and more input makes for a well-thought out and successful program.

Milton Boyce, former National Program Leader with USDA developed a system for volunteer development and management, ISOTURE, which has proven very effective. The model has been adopted by Cooperative Extension as a means of managing the many volunteers utilized in the Extension Service. The model, ISOTURE, is a seven step process to recruit, manage, engage and evaluate volunteers.



You can find the document at <http://od.tamu.edu/files/2010/06/Isoture-model-for-volunteer-management-E-457.pdf>, but we will attempt to summarize here and provide farmers market specific examples.



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Identification

The first step in ISOTURE is to identify the right people for the positions that need to be filled. Before you can identify the right person, you need to understand exactly what the needs of the program are and what the volunteer will do to fulfill those needs. In other words, you need to create a document that can be shared with prospective volunteers that identifies who you are, what your market goals are, what programs you operate and how volunteers will fit into the overall operation. Your volunteers need to know not just what they will be doing but how and why – this will help keep them motivated and effective. Once you know who you are and what you are looking for, then develop a job description that outlines the duties and responsibilities for each volunteer position to help you achieve your goals. This should also include the time commitment you are asking for from a volunteer. Try to estimate this fairly so expectations are set in advance. This process is helpful to better understand if your tasks are something reasonable to expect from a volunteer or perhaps you would need an additional employee or a college intern or someone else instead. Knowing what you need to accomplish will help you identify what the “right” person will look like.

For example, if you are looking for a volunteer to staff a booth at the market to interact with market consumers then you know you are looking for a cheerful, enthusiastic, people-person. Greeting customers, answering market questions and handing out information does not need a high degree of skill, but it is important

that the person handling this important job, give consumers a good first impression of the market.



A Volunteer Interest Form can be used to understand each volunteer’s interests, skills and availability. Comparing the answers on this form to your volunteer job descriptions can help you match the right person to the right job. You can find an example of the Volunteer Interest Form in the Appendices.

Part of the identification step is also marketing your needs. You’ll need to find your volunteers through recruitment efforts. If you have positions that require specific talents for example, if you are looking for a graphic artist to create some marketing pieces for your market - then you will need to target audiences that possess the skills you are seeking. In this example, is there a sales and marketing association in your community that you can reach out to? Give them your market document



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that you created in this step. Other professional associations may also provide you with access to the skill sets you are seeking. Getting volunteers who are not qualified or skilled to do what you need accomplished will not help your market so make sure you are looking in the right places to find the people you need.

On the other hand, if you are looking for general volunteers that will do tasks that do not require a specific skillset, and/or you will be providing training to help the volunteer learn to do what is needed, then you can do more general outreach. Build a recruitment message that will let people know what kind of person you are seeking, what kinds of things they will be doing, how this work will benefit the market and market community, and how it will benefit the volunteer. This message can be distributed through traditional marketing channels, to community organizations that may help you find volunteers or in networking at other community events. Local colleges, universities and high schools also are always looking for opportunities for their students so make sure to connect with them far ahead of when you might anticipate the task accomplished. Don't forget to use your market's own audience. Recruit for volunteers at your market booth and on your market's social media networks, such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. People who are subscribed to those channels already have some interest in your market and may be able to help since they are already invested in the success of the market in one way or another.

Selection

Once you have identified your volunteer needs and have made some contacts, you will need to select your volunteers. Again, the Volunteer Interest Form is very helpful, but you should conduct interviews with your volunteer applicants. These interviews will help you to articulate the needs of the program, understand the needs and interests of your volunteers, discuss the duties and responsibilities of the position and make the appropriate choices of volunteer.

The interview should be a two-way conversation.

Helpful Hint

Use a volunteer interest form to help you match the skills and interests of potential volunteers with the jobs you need completed.

You need to communicate your market's operations, mission and goals, programs and services and community ties. The more a volunteer knows and understands about your market, the more effective they can be in representing your market, completing their tasks and maintaining motivation to continue with you by feeling they are a vital part of the whole operation. In addition, you must be very clear on what the volunteer position will be. Give the position a title, focusing on what the accomplishment will be rather than on the pay scale. In other words, the position would be the EBT Coordinator, if operating the EBT terminal in the market, not the EBT Volunteer. A title injects respect to the position. Also be clear about how this position impacts the overall program or operation of the market. This also gives the



volunteer a sense of being an important part of the whole. Finally, be sure to discuss the skills or qualifications required, the time commitment required and any training that would be provided.

Once you have covered these pieces, let your volunteer applicant talk. You want to know more about the person, what is important to them, why they want to volunteer with you and what their past experiences have been. If you can understand their motivations, you will better understand what positions are appropriate, how much supervision they will need and what they hope to get out of their volunteer experience. Although this is an unpaid position, both parties should make an informed choice about whether working together would be mutually beneficial. There is no point to spending your own valuable resources and staff time training and onboarding a volunteer who isn't right for the position or isn't around for the long-term so take the time to undergo this important step and select your volunteers carefully and judiciously.

Orientation

Once you have hired your volunteers and given them the positions that match their talents, interests and time commitment, you need to familiarize them with your market operations and their job duties. The orientation should include market operations, the people involved in the market, such as the manager, other staff members and volunteers. Be sure the volunteers understand the mission or goal of the market and how their job will further the mission.

Next you will provide the volunteer with a written description of the job they will be doing. The description should be very clearly written to eliminate any ambiguities. Also, let your volunteers know who their supervisor will be and where they can go for answers to their questions. Finally, let them know what kind of training they will receive or what resources are available to help them complete their tasks.

Don't forget the little things too. Make sure your volunteers know where the bathrooms are, where they can park their car or where they can take a break. Remember, they are your staff members and they need the same information your paid staff members need.



Orientation does not need to be a formal process, but it is important as this gives the volunteer the information they need to do the jobs they are being assigned and, once again, helps them to feel a vital part of the market operation. This is a key motivation for volunteers



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and helps to ensure their continued participation in your market. Don't leave your volunteers questioning and wondering what to do, who to go to for answers or help when necessary, or what their role is. If your volunteers are left to deal with a lot of ambiguity, they may not get that warm and fuzzy feeling of satisfaction from helping which is the reason they agreed to volunteer in the first place. The relationship may not last long and you will be left wondering where you went wrong.

Training

Most volunteers do not come into your market operation already understanding the roles that farmers markets play for farmers, consumers and communities. They also do not come into the operation knowing how to perform the tasks they are being asked to do. Your responsibility is to provide the training necessary to allow your volunteers to develop the skills they will need to successfully perform the job they are doing for your market. Training can take a variety of forms, including one-on-one or small group discussions, providing written materials, or having a new volunteer "shadow" an experienced person.

Training should help the volunteer to learn the job they will be doing. Do not just throw them into the mix and expect them to pick things up as they go! The training you provide should also help the volunteer to develop skills that will translate to other aspects of their lives, enriching the breadth of their work experience (as well as boosting their resume!). This might involve gaining a better understanding of what farmers go through to provide the foods that we

sometimes take for granted. It might be learning people management skills that will help them be a more skilled salesperson or even a savvy shopper.

If you, as a manager, do not feel well equipped to train volunteers, connect with your local Cooperative Extension. They run many volunteer programs, including 4-H and Master Gardeners, and are well versed in volunteer outreach, recruitment and training. They will likely be happy to educate you on their lessons learned and the resources they have found most helpful. This can also be an additional outlet to recruit volunteers.

Helpful Hint

Training can take a variety of forms, including one-on-one or small group discussions, providing written materials, or having a new volunteer "shadow" an experienced person.

In addition to training, provide the volunteer with the resources they will need to accomplish their job or better understand the market and their role in making the market a success. Having your volunteers participate in statewide EBT training or downloading market resource materials from the Farmers Market Federation of NY website, www.nyfarmersmarket.com or from the Farmers Market Coalition Resource Library at www.farmersmarketcoalition.org, will help them get a better understanding of their job duties, market operations and agriculture. You would not overlook employee training and continuing education, so don't overlook volunteer training/continuing education as well!



Utilization

Now that you have trained your new volunteers, it's time to put them to work, utilizing their skills, talents and enthusiasm in ways that will benefit your farmers market. While they are performing their duties, you, or a designated supervisor, will be on hand to provide guidance and supervision. You will want to provide them with whatever is necessary to ensure a positive outcome, whether it is to provide additional training or resources or to delegate additional responsibilities and duties as the volunteer advances their skill and interest level. Keep in mind that their success is dependent on you and their continuation as a volunteer with your market is largely dependent on their success. Make sure to keep checking in and keep reevaluating as you go. The job of managing volunteers is not just about set up and onboarding – it will certainly be easier to manage volunteers as their length of tenure grows but they will, indeed, still need to be managed.

Recognition

Everyone needs validation, whether for the job they do, the things they accomplish or the values they hold dear. Recognition is the step that provides that validation for both your paid employees, and, especially, for your volunteers. It is both acknowledgement and reward.

Acknowledgement is the recognition that they are doing a valued job, they are doing a good job and that you appreciate their work and the time they are providing your market. This acknowledgement is an ongoing recognition. Don't wait until the market season is over and

then say thanks. Let your volunteers know that you are thankful all market season long. It is a kind word; it is a cup of coffee brought to your volunteer sitting at the EBT booth on a cold market morning. It is the pleasant conversation you initiate each market day or the simple thank-you, or follow up email or phone call that you offer throughout the market season. This is the payment that keeps your volunteers going.



Rewarding your volunteers can further validate their contributions to your market. Honor them at your season-end market dinner with your vendors. Let everyone show their appreciation. For some, being rewarded with a plaque or certificate that is a lasting recognition for their work and dedication to your market is appreciated. For others, a simple thank-you and a pat on the back is sufficient. During the season you can mention your volunteers in your press releases and news articles about your market. Always be looking for opportunities to recognize and reward your volunteers.



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Evaluation

As you would do with any employee, you will want to evaluate your volunteers. The evaluation helps you to assess the outcome and quality of the work performed, determine whether the volunteer is assigned to the appropriate task(s) and to provide feedback to your volunteer. It is also an opportunity to get feedback from your volunteers on your efforts to provide a valuable experience for the volunteers. What can you do better for them?

And with an employee, sometimes a volunteer is not a good match for a position, or is unable to carry out their task adequately. In that case, an evaluation plan can provide the information needed for decision making, whether that means providing additional training for that volunteer, identification of a different volunteer position that might be more suitable, or even termination of the volunteer relationship.

According to the ISOTURE method, the evaluation must consist of five steps to be effective in reviewing job performance:

1. Know what you are trying to evaluate. Be prepared with questions that will get at the kinds of information you are trying to measure.
 - a. Process evaluation: evaluate the volunteer's experience
 - b. Outcome evaluation: measuring the changes that have taken

place as a result of the volunteer's work

- c. Economic impact: measuring the monetary value of the volunteers work. This can be especially important if you are using a volunteer's time as a match for grant funds.
2. Plan the evaluation method. Know ahead how you plan to approach the evaluation and be prepared before you begin.
 3. Meet with the volunteers to discuss their progress.
 4. Prepare an evaluation report that documents their progress and results.
 5. Share the evaluation report.¹

The ISOTURE method provides clear instruction for managing your volunteers. But what it all boils down to is clear communications – know what you need, articulate it well and follow up with well-defined job descriptions that outline job duties and responsibilities, training and supervision accompanied with clearly communicated feedback. This may seem a bit daunting, especially to market managers who may be volunteers themselves, but it is important to ensure that the volunteer experience will be a positive one – for you, for your volunteer and especially for your market. Although your evaluation will be formal and detailed, don't make the process too daunting for your volunteers. Some people may not like to

¹ Dodd, Courtney, Extension Program Specialist, Volunteerism, and Boleman, Chris, Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist, "Volunteer Administration in the 21st."

Century: *ISOTURE: A Model for Volunteer Management*". AgriLife Communications, The Texas A&M System.



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be evaluated. The review can be as simple as sitting down with a cup of coffee and going over that volunteer's progress. If you offer any constructive criticisms or negative points, make sure to temper those with successes and praise before and afterwards so the volunteer does not feel like they are being shot down for helping in a less than perfect way. Phrase criticisms gently as "opportunities for improvement" or ideas on how to take your volunteerism to the next level.

Retaining your Volunteers

So now that you have volunteers on hand who are actively doing the various jobs you have assigned to them, you need to understand what it will take to ensure they continue with your market. Your market depends on a volunteer workforce and you appreciate your volunteers and you want to keep the same people coming back, reducing some of the training and orientation you need to do each season.

Understand that there will always be some level of turnover. People move away, their job and family commitments change, and their interests may change. There may be less motivation to come back because they aren't being paid and we all have to make a living. We have to accept these facts. But we can work toward maintaining the volunteer relationships with the remainder.

First and foremost, you must meet the needs of your volunteers. Each has volunteered for a different reason and if you can meet these needs and expectations, you will have greater success retaining your volunteers from year to year. Try to find out what motivates each specific

volunteer and use that information to keep him or her happy.



Here are a few more tips on retaining your market volunteers depending on their individual types of motivation:

1. Some volunteers want to make a difference. They want to know that what they are putting their time and efforts into makes a difference. You will need to communicate the value of their contribution. If your volunteer is staffing your EBT terminal and helping to facilitate food stamp (SNAP) sales for your market customers, let them know how many customers they reach each week, month and season. Tell them how these numbers compare across time. Has the number of SNAP consumers increased from last year, by what percent; or increased from the beginning of the season, again, by what percent. How many people are they serving?



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2. Some volunteers use their volunteer work to build relationships, to feel a part of a bigger whole. To maximize their experience, have these volunteers work in groups or work collaboratively with other organizations to benefit your market.
3. Other volunteers will use their volunteer experiences to build their skills, and knowledge base. They may want to be able to bring these new skills and relationships to their paid job or to find a better job. They may be hoping to volunteer until a paid position opens up or to gain experience needed to secure a similar paid position in a different organization. Provide new tasks and challenges, along with continued training to help these volunteers reach their individual goals. You may feel that training these kinds of volunteers more will result in you losing them in the end, but if you do not provide them with the experience they are looking for, you will only lose them sooner rather than later.
4. Many volunteers just want to belong. They have long envied the market you have created. The vendors are happy, the consumers look forward to each market day, and the community respects the contribution the market makes to the lives of their residents. A volunteer may just want to be a part of

such a great organization and community event. Be sure that you are welcoming to your volunteers, treat them as a vital part of the market organization and include them in discussions, meetings, and the general camaraderie of the market.

5. Volunteers should be respected. Listen to their comments, their ideas and discuss them. They bring a new perspective to the market and to the task they are performing. They are not simple task monkeys, there to do a job and nothing else. Treat them as valued staff and friends. Their ideas should be given respect and consideration.
6. Involve volunteers in decision making processes, especially in the decision on what jobs and tasks they will perform. Make them feel an important part of the team.
7. Be clear in your communications with your volunteers. You cannot expect them to perform to yours or their satisfaction if they are not clear on what the expectations are.²

Prevent Volunteer Burnout

We always hope to retain our volunteers. We've come to depend on the work they do for us and we've built relationships with them. While we can't help to lose a few who will move on to other opportunities, we also need to be careful

² "Hands for Nature: A Volunteer Management Handbook". The Ontario Trillium Foundation and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. 2003.



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that we do not overuse or “burnout” our volunteers. When this occurs, volunteers will lose their enthusiasm and drive. How do we prevent burnout?

1. When setting a goal for your volunteers, be certain that it is realistic and achievable. If you are using volunteers to do community outreach with the goal to increase customer traffic in your market, be sure that you do not set a goal so high that they struggle to reach it. You want to set them up for success.
2. Keep the workload manageable. Be cognizant of the time constraints of volunteers and do not give them more work to do than can be achieved in the time they have. When we overload our volunteers we risk volunteer burnout. If the work load is that significant, assign it to a group of volunteers who can work together and share the load or have paid staff members ready to pick up the slack when the volunteer has done all he/she can do on a given task.
3. Give your volunteers a break. While that may mean to give them a coffee break during the market day, it may also mean to give them a break from the job they are doing. Have them set it aside for a while and work on something else. The change can re-energize your volunteer and can help them focus again when they return to the original task.

4. There are times when you may need to suggest that someone take a vacation. Volunteers are no different than paid employees, they need to take vacations to recharge themselves. Make sure you have enough coverage so that if any one person needs to be gone for a week or two, you’ve got a backup plan in place to continue fulfilling that person’s duties.
5. Don’t waste your volunteer’s time. Be prepared for them so that they can do their job without expending time and energy unnecessarily. Have all the tools, resources and clear instructions available and be on hand for questions.
6. Praise your volunteers. Everyone needs to know that what they are doing is important and valued. Be sure your volunteers know that they are valued. Don’t forget to say “Thank you”.³



Snack time for SouthWedge Farmers Market friends and volunteers

³ “Hands for Nature: A Volunteer Management Handbook”. The Ontario Trillium Foundation and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. 2003.



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Formalizing Volunteer Organizations

A Friends of the Market organization is an organized group of volunteers whose purpose is to support the mission and goals of the farmers market. These volunteers can be shoppers, community members, even vendors of the market. Based on the needs of the market, they can be informal groups that perform designated tasks or formalized into a legal corporation, often filing for charitable nonprofit status, 501(c)(3), status with IRS.

The Friends of the Market organization can provide structure to the market's volunteer program. There are some key benefits to organizing a Friends of the Market organization.

- It clarifies and formalizes the work of the volunteers on behalf of the market.
- It provides leadership and direction from within the group. This shifts the leadership from the market itself to the Friends organization itself. The market no longer has that responsibility for managing the volunteers. This takes a large burden from the market that frees up staff time for operations and other important duties.
- Provides a focus for the role of the volunteers.
- An organization supports the sustainability of the market's volunteer program, with continuous recruitment of additional volunteers and training.
- Friends organizations can be beneficial for fundraising if they are an established 501(c)(3).

- Friends organizations are beneficial for developing and/or expanding programs or services. They can allow you to increase capacity of your operations or add new programs without putting a burden on existing staff/resources.

Formalizing the Friends Organization

Formalizing the structure of the Friends organization involves careful planning and legal work. It is a good idea to get assistance from an attorney to help you through the process and prepare the documents to be filed with the state and the IRS. Often a pro bono attorney can be found to assist with little or no cost to the organization. Here are the steps you will need to follow. It is important to follow all of these steps and in the correct order to make sure your organization is legal.

Step 1. The first step is to develop the Friends organization's bylaws. These identify the purpose of the organization, who is eligible to be a member of the organization and defines how the organization will operate. If the Friends is a membership organization, the bylaws must be ratified by the membership.

Step 2. File Articles of Incorporation with the NYS Department of State. The Department of State maintains templates on their website so you can file on your own. However, if you have an attorney working with you, seek his/her advice.



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Step 3. File with the NYS Charities Bureau with the Attorney General's Office as a non-profit organization.

Step 4. File an application with the Internal Revenue Service for tax status. Most Friends organizations apply as a charitable nonprofit 501(c)(3). This gives them the greatest flexibility in assisting the market, as they are able to apply for grants and receive donations on behalf of the market. To file for tax status requires a great deal of paperwork as well as knowing the ins and outs of IRS tax law. Using an experience attorney will give you a leg up on a successful application.

Step 5. Enter into a Memorandum of Agreement with the market that the Friends Organization is supporting. The MOU identifies the relationship

between the organization and the market, as well as defines the roles and expectations of each party.

Once you have prepared your documents, submitted your applications and gotten them approved, the hard work is done. You only need to file your annual reports with the IRS and NYS Charities Bureau. Now you can concentrate on building and managing your volunteers, supporting the farmers market and bringing added value to the market and the market community. It may take a bit of legwork to develop a volunteer program or a Friends of the Market organization for your market, but you'll soon find that the rewards are more than worth the time you put in.

References:

This material is based on a presentation by Margaret O'Neill, Friends of the Rochester Public Market, at the Farmers Market Federation of NY's Annual Farmers Market Managers Training Conference, Nov 2015.

Resources:

Volunteer Interest Form

Bylaws Template





Farmers Market Managers Professional Certification Program

Module 3: Building Market Systems

Unit 3.6 Strategic Planning for Farmers Markets

UNIT OVERVIEW

This unit will provide an overview of the strategic planning process that can help farmers markets analyze their own market plan and create a road map for growth based on that analysis.

Completion of this unit will give a market manager the skills needed to develop a strategic planning process and a plan to develop their own market systems and market organization.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

CONCEPTS

- Strategic planning process
- Developing the strategic plan

SKILLS

- How to develop a strategic plan for the market and implement the plan to grow the success of their market



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Unit 3.6: Strategic Planning for Farmers Markets

When most people think about strategic planning, the image of large corporations or non-profit organizations with influential boards of directors comes to mind. It's seldom thought about in terms of farmers markets. So why consider strategic planning for your market? What is the benefit that long-range planning can bring to the market, its organization, and its beneficiaries?

A strategic plan is a roadmap for an organization, in this case, for a market and its management team. Using the market's mission and vision, the strategic plan will tell who you are, where you want to go, how you are going to get there, and how you will know when you have arrived. Typically this is done for a pre-determined length of time, three to five years, keeping the plan current with the market environment and situational changes. The plan looks at a number of aspects for the market: program development, services, internal organizational structure, community partnerships, etc.

Farmers markets that take the time and energy to create a strategic plan set themselves up for future growth and success. The roadmap they create keeps them relevant to their farmers and consumers needs and sets a professional tone for the market.

There are many benefits to operating with a strategic plan:

- Since the planning process is inclusive of the market's manager, management team (i.e., board of directors), farmers, and consumers, it creates a sense of ownership among stakeholders. Everyone has the opportunity

to give input, and there is a general consensus on each step of the process before moving on to the next step.

- Having a strategic plan in place helps the market's manager and management team make critical decisions about the market's future. The strategic plan, the research involved in developing the plan, and the mission and vision that steer the organization and its strategic plan will guide the manager and management team to make decisions that are in keeping with the goals of the market and its stakeholders.
- A strategic plan helps the manager and management team focus on resources and prioritize goals based on the needs of its community, as well as on its own resources.
- Having a clear set of goals and objectives makes it clear to potential funders that the market has done its due diligence in understanding the market's environment and its potential impact on its community, farmers, and consumers. With a clearly articulated strategic plan, it becomes easier to request funding and easier for funders to grant such requests.

Overall, your strategic plan will drive your market's growth in the direction that is determined by your strategic planning process, whether it is growing your customer base, growing your vendor base, building programming to be a more vital community partner, or any combination of these and other factors of growth.



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The Strategic Planning Process

Strategic planning begins with a visioning session. This is an open, brainstorming-style session where everyone involved has an opportunity to participate. Everyone is on an equal footing and all input is invited and encouraged. To this end, it is important that the visioning session be all-inclusive. Participants should include the market manager; the management team, whether it is a board of directors, a committee, or a loose group of individuals that support the market’s manager; the market’s sponsoring agency; participating farmers; interested consumers; and interested community members. This ensures that the plan looks at the market’s community from many perspectives and includes a broad range of knowledge and opinions, as well as allows the participants to develop greater ownership in the plan and the market itself.

To ensure success of the visioning process, it is recommended that an outside facilitator moderate the session(s). This objective person will be helpful in keeping the meeting focused without squashing any relevant comments. It also frees market managers and the management team from responsibilities during the process so that they can be full and equal participants in the visioning session.

During the visioning process it is important to keep some simple rules in mind:

- All comments are welcome and none are to be ridiculed.
- Keep an open mind to all comments and suggestions.
- Everyone needs to participate.
- Be creative and unique – there is no idea that is unworthy of at least a cursory consideration.
- Focus—keep your mind on the job at hand and not on whatever is going on outside of the room or your electronic devices.

This creative process will generate a lot of ideas. However, not all of these ideas belong in your strategic plan. Some may be off-mission, some were

catalysts for better ideas, and some won’t make sense for the purpose of growing your market for one reason or another. Keep the ideas and concepts that affirm your mission and vision and support the goals of the strategic plan and discard the ideas that turned out not to be helpful upon further consideration. The purpose of this session is not to think of as many ideas as possible and implement all of them, but rather to brainstorm many ideas so you can choose to implement those which best match your market’s needs and goals.

<p>Strengths: <i>Everyday elements which reflect what is most viable and important to your market</i></p>	<p>Weaknesses <i>What is mostly missing, but should be present consistently</i></p>
<p>Opportunities <i>Elements which could be developed as part of your strategic vision and plan</i></p>	<p>Threats <i>Anything which may reasonably threaten your business, your strategy and/or your vision</i></p>

SWOT Analysis: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

The visioning session typically begins with an environmental scan, known as a SWOT analysis. This analysis looks at internal and external forces (the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) that impact your market so that you can be better prepared to make critical decisions.

An internal review will help identify your market’s strengths and weaknesses. This will include the market itself and its management. Organizational



capacity is often the focus of the internal review and concentrates on financial and human resources, perceptions of the market, the market's organizational structure, facilities, programs/services offered, and partnerships. Be honest and objective when identifying your strengths and weaknesses. The purpose of this analysis isn't to give you a grade or determine anyone's job performance – it's to make your market stronger. Try to look at things in a new way. It could be that what you think is a strength, may, in reality be a weakness. For example, many markets consider an all-vendor board as a strength. In some cases, this may very well be true. But - it can also be viewed as a weakness: with an all vendor board, no decisions can be made between April and October, the market board is often not representative of the community as a whole and may have a limited perspective in how the market and the community can and should relate. As in the external review, having a clear understanding of your strengths will help you to plan to overcome your weaknesses as well as to address your needs in achieving the goals you will identify later in the planning process.

Now that we've talked about the "S" and "W" in the SWOT analysis, what about the "O" and the "T"? Opportunities and threats are reviews of the external environment that impacts the market. A look at the surrounding community and the broader environment will help you to understand what issues the market faces, both now and into the future. Look at things such as the community demographics and any trends within those demographics, political trends, core community values, economic trends, potential community partners, competitors, support and opposition for the market, changing laws and regulations, and changes in local agriculture. Identify those elements that are potential opportunities and consider ways to help you overcome the potential threats you face as a market. This will help you achieve the goals that you will develop later in the planning process.

Using your SWOT analysis – your market's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats - identify the key issues that your market should address and prioritize them. Follow up with an analysis of what the benefits to the market would be if they were each addressed and the potential consequences if they were not. Here's an example:

- Issue: The market's consumer base is 80% elderly.
 - Benefit if addressed: a new consumer base is identified, targeted for marketing, and the market experiences a younger consumer base including not only single people and couples but also families.
 - Consequences if not addressed: the consumer base begins to diminish as the aging population dies, moves into nursing homes or assisted living, or becomes dependent on outside sources for their meals.

Defining the Market's Mission and Vision

Having an understanding of who the market is and where it sees itself in the community will help the strategic planning committee to develop a set of goals and plans for achieving them. Begin this process by outlining why the market exists: What broad-reaching goal does it hope to achieve? Who does it serve, and how does it serve them? This information will translate into your mission statement.

For Example:

The mission of the farmers market federation of NY is to *"support and promote the viability of farmers markets through innovative services, programs, and partnerships that maximize the benefits of markets to sellers, buyers, and communities."*

In reading this short and concise statement, it is clear both what the Federation's goal is, who our audience



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is, and how we will serve this audience to accomplish our goals.

If your market already has a mission statement, this is a good time to review it against your SWOT analysis. Does it hold up against your environmental scan? Does it answer the questions of what your goals are, who you will serve, and how? If not, the visioning session is an opportunity for input and brainstorming on a meaningful, well-crafted mission statement. Before anything else, your mission statement is your marching orders and the road map for your market organization so you want to be sure to have this right before continuing with the rest of your strategic plan.

A vision statement is also helpful in developing the market's strategic plan. The vision statement is a more abstract goal of what the market hopes the future will be because of the market's existence. This could be a reflection of the market itself or the broader community. The vision of the Farmers Market Federation of NY is *"An alliance of farmers, markets, and market advocates creating a network of sustainable markets that offer viable outlets to local farmers, offers a diversity of fresh local foods to consumers, and provides economic and social benefits to their communities."* This vision is used to help the Federation and its board members to craft programs and services that accomplish its mission to support the viability of farmers markets, but also to bring the markets together as the Federation works to advance the industry. Put another way, your vision statement is the end goal or benefit you hope your market gives to the community while your mission statement is the specific way or ways you plan on meeting that goal.

Building Your Strategic Plan

Using the results of the SWOT analysis, the next step in completing your strategic plan is to develop strategies, goals and tactics for achieving your market goals. Let's start with defining these terms.



Strategy is an umbrella that contains all related goals and tactics. For example, the Federation strategic plan has a strategy to “help markets to be more successful.” This is a broad and overarching statement that can encompass a number of supporting goals and tactics.

Goals or objectives: Goals or objectives tell us what we want to get done and reinforce the mission of the market. Using the Federation example for strategies, one of the goals under this strategy is to “help markets to increase their customer base.” so we will help markets be more successful.

Goals are not always measurable, but likely are aspirational in nature.

Tactics tell us how we are going to achieve our goals more specifically. What exactly are we going to do to get there? Carrying through on the Federation example, one tactic we will use to meet the goal to help markets increase their customer base is that we “will create a toolkit that helps farmers markets develop programs and services that will reach new consumer”. So this is how we will accomplish our goal and help succeed in our overall strategy increase the success of our member markets.

Tactics are always measurable to determine the success of the tactic towards meeting your overall goal within that strategy.

Now that you understand these terms, you need to organize *your* SWOT analysis findings into strategies, with goals that identify what you can do to achieve those goals, then following these by the specific tactics you will do to accomplish your goals. Once you have completed your SWOT analysis, start by organizing the ideas and concepts you came up with into strategies – basic categories of what you need to accomplish for your market during the strategic planning period (the next 3 – 5 years). Once



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you have organized your strategies, create those goals that will tell you what you need to do to accomplish the strategies. These are broad.

Then, for each goal that you defined, a tactic must be developed that will help the market to achieve the goal. The tactics will build on the strengths identified in the SWOT analysis, resolve weaknesses, take advantage of opportunities, and avoid or resolve threats. They may be unique to the goal or objective, but they may also be a tactic under additional goals, giving you more of an impact when the single tactic is completed.

The tactics will be measurable; defining the resource needs, both financial and human resources; and evaluation plans. When developing tactics for prioritized goals, consider the following:

- Will the tactic contribute to achieving the goal?
- Is the tactic consistent with the mission and vision of the market?
- Is the tactic practical in terms of the financial and staffing resources of the market?
- Are all stakeholders, market manager, staff, board or management team, market sponsor, farmers, and consumers, accepting of the tactic? Can they support it?
- Does the tactic address the issues identified in the SWOT analysis?

When you have organized your data into strategies, goals and tactics, the next step is to prioritize them. What is clearly the most crucial should be given priority over goals and tactics that are beneficial, but lack an immediacy. Remember the strategic plan is a long term plan, and while the tendency is to want to get it all done as quickly as possible, the plan needs to be realistic. Organize your timeline based on its immediate need, the resources and staff time required and whether you need to find outside funding to accomplish the goal or tactic. Also keep in mind that a strategic plan is fluid and priorities may change during the tenure of your plan. What is not a

priority today may be next time you revisit your plan and changes can be made.

With each goal and tactic you will want to define:

- The task to be performed.
- Who will perform the task?
- What is the outcome of each task?
- What are the financial needs for each task?
- When is the expected date of completion for each task?

Helpful Hint

Create an action plan that will answer these questions and give you a roadmap to accomplishing your goals.

Put It in Writing

Once the strategic plan is complete, it is important to put it in writing. This allows the plan to be shared with management, staff, stakeholders, and, at times, funders. It makes it easier for the market's management to follow its progress, as well as for those who are tasked with implementation, to stay on target with their performance timelines.

When putting the plan in writing, the following elements should be included:

- **Executive Summary:** A brief synopsis of the plan, whereby if an outsider read only the Executive Summary, they would have a general understanding of the market's mission, goals, and strategies held within the strategic plan.
- **Organizational Description:** A section on the market, when it began, how it is organized and managed, what programs and services it currently offers.
- **Mission and vision of the market.**
- **SWOT Analysis.**
- **Strategies, goals and objectives.**
- **Timeline for implementation.**



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Finally, Use the Plan

Remember, the strategic plan is a living document. It is not carved in stone and, therefore, can be changed. It is fluid and is meant to be amended as the needs of the market change and as the environment surrounding the market changes. The market's board of directors or management team should review the plan annually, at a minimum. Identify what has been accomplished, determine whether goals and strategies are still relevant based on current internal

and external factors, verify that timelines within the action plan are still viable, and identify any new goals that should be added to the plan due to needs and issues that may have arisen over the last year.

Remember, strategic plans are roadmaps to help a market define who it wants to be and how it will get there. But these plans cannot work unless the plan is implemented.

References:

This material is based on a presentation by Robert Buccieri, former President of the Farmers Market Federation of NY, at the Farmers Market Federation of NY's Annual Farmers Market Managers Training Conference, Nov 2015.

"Strategic Planning for Markets," by Paul Mastrodonato, President, Non-profit Works, Saratoga Springs, NY. Presented at the Farmers Market Federation of NY Farmers Market Managers Training Program, March 5, 2009



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Farmers Market Managers Professional Certification Program

Module 3: Building Market Systems

Unit 3.7 Farm Inspections

UNIT OVERVIEW

This unit will help you build a farm inspection program for your market to maintain market integrity, enforce compliance with the market rules and build customer trust in your market and farmers. The unit will discuss preparations for a farm inspection and the process of conducting the inspection. After reading through this section, a market manager will be able to create and conduct a farm inspection program.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

CONCEPTS

1. Understanding the reasons why markets should conduct farm inspections
2. Understanding the role of a farm inspector
3. Understanding the necessary elements of a farm inspection

SKILLS

- How to develop a farm inspection program for your farmers market
- How to conduct a farm inspection



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Unit 3.7: Developing a Farm Inspection Program

In general, farmers markets are mission-driven organizations. Markets are often established to give farmers direct-marketing opportunities, to enhance customers' access to fresh local produce, to create a marketplace that encourages the exchange of information, and to build relationships between growers, consumers, and the larger community.

As a market operator, you will need to create rules for your market. Rules should establish the basic admission criteria, eligible producers, eligible products, eligible production methods, and regulations at the marketplace. The rules that you create should use as their foundation the mission of what you are trying to accomplish.

It should be clear to all that inspections are not created out of a sense of authority or to “police” the market but rather to support and enhance the market’s rules and mission for the benefit of all participants. By verifying the claims of market participants, inspections help to uphold the promise and identity of your market. Inspections should also be used as a deterrent to those who would violate the market contract, to protect the consumer, and the integrity of your market. While most market vendors are honest and do their best to abide by the rules, there are a few who would attempt to skirt around them in any means possible. To keep things fair for those who follow the rules, your market needs a means of detection for the rule breakers and a means of enforcement to make sure rules are being followed.

We’ve also found that markets who hold true to their mission and uphold their rules find it easier to develop community partners. Those partners, whether for programming or event development and

administration, promotional assistance, or funding, look for markets that evoke a strong sense of identity. Markets who are clear about their role within the community and upholding their rules will be more likely to evoke that sense of identity and be able to use it to obtain strong partners.

An inspection program will also enhance your staff’s understanding of the producers, their products, and production methods and will become a strong foundation for publicity. Interfacing on a deeper level with farmers and with customers and partners will help keep your market strongly rooted.

Rules for Participation in the Market

Farm inspections begin with your market rules. The rules are there to protect the farmer, the consumer, and you, as you are ultimately accountable for what takes place at your market. Rules should be clear and consistent across product categories. Rules should make clear who is eligible to participate, what may be sold, how products can be produced, and what is expected from participants while they are at market. They should also make it clear what occurs at each instance when the market rules are broken and whether or not repeated violations can lead to expulsion from the market.

Market Application and Agreement

Producers should apply to participate in your market. Developing an application packet for participants is the first step in knowing who your producers are and what they will be doing. By requiring that producers submit detailed information about their operations, you can set yourself up with good information and begin to set the terms of the marketplace from the beginning. This should be a formal process rather than informal to ensure that everyone follows the



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same procedures and has the same opportunities and to ensure that there can never be an accusation of bias.

Make it a requirement that producers submit thorough information about their operation.

This should include:

- contact information – multiple methods not just phone or email
- production facilities being used
- relevant licenses and permits
- key staff members
- detailed crop plans and/or product lists

Crop plans:

- list of all products raised that will be sold in the market including amounts: the number of trees, number of animals, row feet or acres of each product to be sold, etc.
- planting/harvesting dates
- anticipated yields
- whether or not the product will be held in storage
- if allowed by market rules, list of all products to be bought by the farmer and resold at the market

Vegetable and Herb Crop Plan

Item	Variety	# Acres/ Row Ft	Planting Dates	Availability	Yield	Storage Y/N
Cucumbers	All Cucumbers	40 ft.	1-Jul	1-Sep	100 lbs	Yes
Mint		50 ft	Mature	5/1-10/20	200 bunches	
Tomatoes	All Tomatoes	1000 plants	1- June	8/4 – 10/20	5000 lbs	Yes
Tomatoes	Brandywine					
Tomatoes	Cherokee Purple					

Fruit Crop Plan

Item	Variety	# Acres/ Row Ft	Planting Dates	Availability	Yield	Storage Y/N
Apples	All trellised	500 trees	Mature	8/20-10/10	5000 lbs	Yes
Apples	Cortland					
Apples	Empires					
Apples	All Other	30 trees	2002	911-9/30	300 lbs	Yes
Apples	Honey Crisp					
Apples	Macintosh					
Blueberries		300 ft	Mature	8/8-9/8	20 lbs	Yes

Farm map: A farm map with each field outlined with crop plantings should be submitted by all producers. Fields that are owned or rented should both be

included. You may request proof of a lease agreement, or contact information for the land owner if there is no “official” lease. Many farmers do



“handshake” deals and may not have proper paperwork. If for some reason, you need to verify a rental agreement, ask for contact information. Public records on land holdings may be available for free through the county’s USDA Farm Service Agency.

Production facilities: All facilities that are used in the production of goods for the market should be listed with addresses and contact information. These include cider presses, cheese-making facilities, bakeries, kitchens, slaughterhouses, smoking facilities, and any off-site storage facilities such as controlled-atmosphere or cold storage.

Licenses and permits: All relevant licenses and permits to cover the products they bring to market should be submitted. These may include cider, meats, bedding plants, cheese, and HACCP plans (Hazardous Analysis, Critical Control Points). You should have copies of each license or permit on file with your market and make sure the dates are current. Gather copies of these for your pre-inspection review to help you understand everything you need to look for when visiting the farm.

Agreement: Finally, be sure that your market application contains an agreement between your farmers and the market that allows for farm inspections. It should allow for respectful visits by market personnel—respectful of the farmer’s time, season, and fields. This doesn’t mean that the manager can pop in any time unannounced and bother the farmer while they are getting ready for market. It should also contain guarantees of confidentiality, where the market assures each inspectee that nothing learned on the farm including production practices, potential rules violations, or farm and family secrets will be revealed to anyone other than market management. These caveats will help farmers feel more comfortable with the idea of intermittent inspections. In return, the farmer agrees to open the farm and their farm records to the market to show compliance to the market’s rules and overall mission. Everyone wins when all farmers are following the same fair and enforceable rules.

At the Market

At-market inventories: It is recommended that market staff conduct regular inventories of products that are being sold by producers. This not only helps market staff become more familiar with the products that are available at market, but also acts as a first level of deterrence. Producers are less likely to “game the system” if they know management is paying attention to what they are selling. It also allows producers to become familiar with an inventory process.

Farm Visits – Conducting the Inspection

Before embarking on a farm inspection, the inspector should either visit the farmer in the marketplace or be given inventories of the farmer’s market products as taken by market staff. This should happen as close to the inspection date as possible.

Taking inventories: Record what is on the farmer’s table and in the truck. What is the farmer selling and how much of each product is being brought in for sale? What other markets does the farmer participate in each week? This will give you an idea of the quantity of each product that is being sold for comparison against what is actually grown and harvested on the farm. Take careful notes of what you see, varieties of product being sold, quantities of each product brought to market, estimates of what is being sold, and record what is left unsold at the end of the day and able to be held over for another market on another day. Keep in mind how long products typically last as well – i.e. fresh berries likely will not be able to be resold if they don’t sell at a weekly market. If, however, the next market day is only 2 days away, many products will still be good for resale.

Compare inventories with the farm’s crop plan. Are they in sync? When you visit the farm, verify the market inventory you have taken, as well as the crop plan. You may need to spend extra time on any discrepancies you may have found between these two documents. Make sure any mistakes/typos are corrected and initialed so that the error isn’t visible the next time you view the crop plan.



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Producer _____

Greenmarket Product Inventory

Manager _____

Date _____

Weather _____

Market _____

Number of Spaces _____

Completely fill out the blanks below with the amounts of each variety of produce brought to market.

Produce #	Unit	Units In	Units Left	Units Sold	Notes
Sample: Butternut Squash	25 lb crate	10 crates	8.5 crates	1.5 crates	

*specify crate, bushel, bunch, pound, pint, etc.

Specify each variety

Who Will Be Doing the Inspection?

As a market operator, you will need to determine who is going to be doing inspections for your organization. Some markets conduct inspections using staff members; others seek to contract inspections to others. If you choose to contract out the inspections, make sure to have a signed confidentiality agreement with the contractor. This will maintain the integrity of your farm inspection program. For contracting inspections, there are several options that you can consider:

- Some counties may allow Cooperative Extension educators to conduct farm inspections on a contract basis. Their expertise can be very helpful.
- Certifying agencies, such as NOFA, Demeter, and Certified Naturally Grown may be able to share information on farms they have certified.
- Farm inspector contractors. There are a few private contractors who will conduct farm inspections for a fee depending on your locality.

- Look to other markets that each farmer may participate in. If that market has conducted an inspection, it may be willing to share the inspection report with you.

Psychology of Inspections

Before you begin to conduct farm inspections, there is a psychology behind making the experience a positive one for both the farmer and the market. Inspections can be a touchy process because farmers generally own their own businesses and are used to being self-reliant and independent. They may not welcome inspections if they feel they are being unfairly policed. First, understand that often the knowledge that farms will be inspected is enough to keep most farmers honest. In other words, the idea that the farmer may be inspected is enough to keep him in compliance with the market rules. This is not unlike the phenomena we see on the roadways. People will at least slow down if they see a cop on the highway, even if the cop is already busy writing someone else a ticket! Simply knowing that someone is watching to make sure everyone follows the rules



is often enough to keep everyone in line. Yet, there are always a few rule breakers who will not only push past the speed limit a little – they will zoom past everyone going 100 miles per hour. These few blatant rule breakers are why we need monitoring and enforcement.

Secondly, you must understand the human capacity to rationalize. Familiarizing yourself with the following three concepts will help you as you are conducting your inspections.

1. Perfectly likeable people will lie to your face. Sometimes people can rationalize what they call “little white lies.” After all, who is being harmed by them? You can’t be fooled into thinking that so-and-so is a nice person or is respected in the community and therefore he/she must be telling the truth. At any point in time someone might make the decision to start lying – or, they may just be really good at it and haven’t yet gotten caught! An example of this could be someone who thinks it’s okay to steal because it’s only a \$1.00 item. In terms of farmers markets, a vendor who thinks it’s okay to buy in product because they were buying from a farmer down the road who needed the money.
2. You may be purposely distracted. When you begin to ask uncomfortable questions or you might be about to see something that the farmer doesn’t want you to see, they change the subject or distract your attention. Don’t be misled. Remember Columbo’s famous line, “just one more question.” Bring the conversation or the tour back to where you need it to be and keep asking the same question if it isn’t being answered or you are being distracted.
3. To be caught is usually embarrassing. So it is likely that a farmer will do things against

market rules to avoid being caught. Again, apply the Columbo tactic. Don’t give up until you get to the bottom of it and keep probing if you sense that something is amiss.

Thirdly, confrontation is difficult for everyone. Sometimes asking a direct question can cause an emotional response. Stick to the facts and do not make the inspection personal. The inspection is about maintaining the integrity of the market and ensuring customer expectations are met. It’s not about embarrassing, harassing or judging the farmers you are there to inspect. If they are doing everything right, you are on their side. If they aren’t, you aren’t there to ruin them – just to bring them up to compliance. Some farmers may need to be reminded of that.

Conflict of interest

For the sake of the market, you must be aware of and avoid any situations that may present a conflict of interest, whether it concerns you, a paid or unpaid staff person, or a contracted inspector. For example, do not have a person inspect a farm who may be in real or implied competition with that farmer. A grower in the same market should NEVER inspect another farm. A grower of the same or similar product line, who may be in proximity, should not be inspecting, nor should a person with an interest in selling products, equipment, or supplies to a farm operation. Putting an inspector on a farm where there is a potential conflict of interest can open you and your market to a claim of foul play and a potential lawsuit, so make sure you avoid these kinds of conflicts of interests at all costs.



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As a Greenmarket Farm Inspector, I agree:

To inform the Greenmarket Director of any ties - past, present, or future – that I have, or plan to have with a producer, prior to conducting an inspection of his/her establishment. To present Inspection Reports to the Greenmarket Director and/or the Farm Inspections Coordinator for the purpose of enforcing Greenmarket's grow-your-own regulations. Not to divulge to anyone the nature and/or content of any documentation that has been provided to Greenmarket, or acquired as part of the inspection process, unless I am authorized to do so by the Greenmarket Director. Not to discuss producer affairs with anyone except the Greenmarket Director and/or The Farm Inspections Coordinator without prior approval from the Director.

Greenmarket Farm Inspector

Date

Preparing for and Conducting an Inspection

Rules: Inspectors should be well versed in the rules of your market, and should be inspecting to the standard of your market's rules. They aren't there for any other purpose and they aren't there to criticize or find things wrong with the way a farmer runs his or her business.

Producer files: Inspectors should receive or have access to a producer's file several days prior to a scheduled inspection so they can review all documents that have been described earlier: crop plans, farm map, facilities documentation, licenses, permits, and market inventories. Review files and make notes of any questions you may have. Make comparisons between the crop plans and market inventories. The producer files should also contain archives of past inspections: reports, photos, etc. These can be helpful to new inspectors to understand the history of the farm. Don't skip this step as preparing for the inspection properly is critical to both a thorough inspection and a good experience for the farmer. You don't want to waste the farmer's time asking questions that would have been obvious had you read through the paperwork and you also don't

want to miss any potential issues that warrant further investigation.

Make an appointment: Contact the farmer and arrange for a time to go out to the farm. Allot at least two to three hours for a full inspection, more if it is a large operation or has many components, such as a farm that has an orchard, vegetable fields, livestock, bakery, greenhouse, etc. While discussing arrangements with the farmer, request any additional information you may want for your review, such as seed receipts, processing invoices, and lease agreements. Try to avoid scheduling these during peak periods and keep things as convenient for the farmer as possible.

Attire: When arriving at the farm, be sure you are prepared. Come dressed appropriately to walk through fields, barns, greenhouses. Keep in mind that farmers are concerned with disease and you must ensure that you are not spreading disease from one farm to the next. Boots must be disinfected between each farm and clothes must be freshly laundered.

Be professional: Arrive at the farm at the appointed time. Respect the farmer's time and do not be late



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and do not arrive overly early. Arrive prepared. Have all relevant documents with you: maps, inventories, crop plans, etc. Bring a copy of the market rules for reference, a checklist appropriate for each farm, notepaper and pens, a camera for documenting what you are seeing, and a phone for any contingencies. Provide a signed confidentiality agreement to the farmer, stating that all information gathered through the inspection process will not be shared with anyone other than the market management. They should feel comfortable that the inspector who visits their farm is a professional who is doing his/her job.

On the farm: The farmer or a designated staff person should take you throughout the operation. Do not walk through the property by yourself. Verify field locations and what is being produced. Make note of

crop rows and density. Count livestock and verify all facilities necessary to support production including any and all processing and storage facilities. Walk through greenhouses, noting the size of each, crops grown in each, and anticipated yields of each crop. Does the farm or operation have other outlets besides your market? Ask what the percentage of their overall sales is from your market. Perform an audit on one or two products to make sure the volumes being produced and sold match. Dig deeper if things don't seem to add up.

Be observant of everything you see, ask questions, and listen carefully. Take plenty of notes and photographs to document your findings. Use the following checklist to help you as you tour the farm.

Basic Farm Inspection Checklist

- Meet and greet farmer or person designate to give the tour. Check each field, greenhouse, orchard, livestock area, processing facility that is used.
- Identify crops, acreage, assess yields and evidence of current and future yields
- Check harvest records
- Note equipment, including production equipment, irrigation, washing stations, etc.
- Note labor used for production and processing
- Check storage facilities, barns, storage units, washing and grading areas
- Review any processing facilities, kitchens, cider press, bottling plant, etc
- Review packing areas and packaging supplies
- Conduct and exit interview with the farmer and have him/her sign off on the inspection

Red flags

There are a number of things you might see that should raise a red flag with you. These will certainly warrant closer inspection:

- Pallet boxes being used that are in new condition. Often wholesale purchases of products come in new pallet boxes. Farmers often reuse the pallet boxes, but when they are new, it can be suspicious. It may turn out to be nothing but seeing new boxes should result in further investigation.
- Wholesale packaging. Are the tomato boxes brand new, is the corn in green sleeves? If the produce is in wholesale packages, then you need to understand why. Is it purchased from

another farmer? Is this farmer also wholesaling and the product brought to market was packed for wholesale, but not sold?

- No field residue remains. When you are looking for a crop in the field that you have seen on the farmer's table at market, but can't find it, the farmer is likely to tell you that he tilled it under before you arrived. If that really is the case, you should see freshly tilled soils. But you should also see residue of the crop remaining in the field. If the crop and all residue seems to have disappeared, this could be a red flag that the farmer is buying that item for resale rather than growing it.



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Categories of agricultural production

Additional checklists should be used for each category of farmer or vendor represented in your market (see appendix for sample checklists).

- Orchards and small fruits
- Vegetables
- Greenhouses and plants
- Dairy
- Livestock
- Fish/ aquaculture
- Processing: preserves, pickles, baking, prepared foods etc.
- Foraging, if allowed by local/state law
- Honey/maple syrup

The inspection is complete when all of your questions have been answered; you have verified the crop plan and the market inventories and are satisfied that you have seen everything you need to see to verify compliance with the market rules. You should conduct an exit interview with the farmer. Go over any areas of concern that you may have, such as crops in the market that are unaccounted for on the farm or unsubstantiated harvests, questions about land or product ownership, etc. Give the farmer ample opportunity to clear up any confusion. If you are satisfied with their responses, let them know; if not, let them know that you will have to include the areas of concern in your final inspection report to the market management. (When the inspection is being conducted by the manager, they should report the findings to an established farm inspection advisory committee so that the decisions are not made based on inspection findings are by a single person.) Have them sign off on your preliminary findings, showing that you have gone over your inspection findings. If your preliminary findings include a potential rules violation, be sure you indicate the rule and your findings to justify reporting a violation.

Questions to ask

To get a full picture of the farm's production, there are a number of key questions to ask:

- What is the farm's history? This is a great human interest piece that you can use in to promote the market. Farmers love to talk

about things like this so asking about this may be a great way to reduce the tension and show goodwill at the beginning of the inspection.

- How much land is being farmed, both owned and rented? This will give you a better idea of the operation. Renting more land means they may be considering expansion. Only renting land means there is also a risk that they may lose the land and not be able to continue production.
- What types of soils are there and what are the typical frost dates? This will give you a better idea of the capabilities of the land.
- What is the farm's marketing plan? How many farmers markets and what other avenues are they using to sell their farm products? When comparing their marketing channels to their production levels you have a better idea of the capacity of production compared to what you are seeing in your market.
- How many employees does the farm have outside of the farm family? This gives you an idea of whether they have the labor capacity to meet their marketing plan and provide the level of product you are seeing in the market. While production amounts can vary, there is a limit to the amount that a single person can plant and harvest.
- Look at the farm's infrastructure: greenhouses, storage facilities, washing stations, tractors, trucks, etc. This will tell you if the farm is able to meet their marketing plan. Are high tunnels in production bringing tomatoes to market in May? Does the farm have adequate storage facilities to bring potatoes, onions and cabbages to market through the winter? The production methods should match up with the amount and type of product that the vendor has for sale at any given time in the market season.
- What are the farm's production practices? Again this is a great piece of information for the market's own promotions. But it also gives you an idea of whether they can fulfill their marketing plan and bring the quantities



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of product to market that you are seeing on their table.

Reports and archives: Create a final report based on your inspection findings in as timely a manner as possible. Your report should include any documentation, notes, and photos of the inspection. If you need to, conduct further research into a topic or follow an issue of concern over a longer period. Conduct a follow-up inspection if necessary to substantiate any unresolved issues. A market archive should be created which contains files on its producers. Reports and documentation should be kept in the market's archives, to be accessible to market staff and future inspectors.

Potential violations: Farmers should always be considered innocent until proven guilty. Suspicions are just that and may end up being proven to be unfounded. Good documentation is essential when you take the step of accusing someone of foul play. As an inspector, you should never be the investigator, judge, and jury. Give your findings to the appropriate market personnel. (This procedure should be clear from the beginning.) The appropriate personnel or committee will review your findings and determine if any actions need be taken and will inform the farmer of a final disposition of the inspection.

Penalties for violations: Your market rules should include penalties for rules violations. These should be reasonable and fair, yet strong enough to act as a deterrent to breaking the rules. They should also remain consistent to ensure fairness (i.e. fruit vendors violating the rules should be subject to the same penalties as veggie vendors). If the Board of Directors or committee has determined a rules violation has occurred, the farmer must be formally notified of the infraction and the subsequent penalties. Do not assume that because an inspector notified that farmer of his/her findings that the farmer knows they were determined to have violated the rules. Having a paper trail protects both the market and the farmer. It is recommended that your system include an opportunity for the producer to come before the Board or committee to be heard on the issue. The farmer should be given the opportunity

to challenge the findings, providing an explanation or evidence that their farm is in compliance if such an explanation exists. This process will make for a stronger community as producers are held accountable to the market and to each other but in a fair way that allows them a chance to respond to allegations before they are sanctioned for breaking the rules.

Telling Your Market Story

Establishing a system for farm inspections goes far beyond "policing" the market for rules violations. Inspectors have access to a tremendous amount of valuable information as they are out on farms and witnessing conditions and methods of production. Inspectors often get to hear the stories from the people who grow our food, sometimes through generations and sometimes after forging a completely different career.

By asking good questions, an inspector can learn about a farmer's philosophy and practice, and how participating in your market impacts their farm. This information can serve a dual purpose as it creates a great foundation for promoting your farmers and their products at your market. It is also invaluable information in terms of advocacy and policy work on behalf of farms and markets.

As a market operator, you will have access to information from individual farms that can be aggregated such as: How many acres does your market help keep in active production? How many farms have been able to expand in acres, labor, and product line because of participation in your market? How many farms are in organic production or are in the process of converting to organics? How many new entrants to agriculture has your market helped to foster? What are the pressing issues for agriculture in your area? Are there barriers or frustrations that you hear about repeatedly?

By pulling this kind of information from your inspections and market files, you will have a powerful story to tell about your market. This is a story the media wants to print. Put it together in a press release; invite the media to your market to meet the



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farmers who can help tell your story. Tell officials and representatives about the issues you see and hear about. People care about local foods and the local economy so don't miss the chance to make use of the information gathered in farm inspections to help promote your market. You already have the information – why not use it?

Grant and funding opportunities: This information is also invaluable in reaching out to funders. Most funders want to know what your market's mission is and what you are accomplishing. Having a clear story that can be backed up with solid documentation from your inspections lets funders know that you are focused on your mission and your market is stable and worthy of their investment. Funders also want to know the impact their dollars make on a market. Your inspection reports give you baseline data that will

help you to track future growth and impact of any new programs implemented on your market and on your farmers.

What It's All About

An inspection program has multiple purposes.

1. It holds farmers accountable to the market's rules and verifies producer's claims.
2. Farmers who hold true to the market's rules help to build consumer trust in the marketplace.
3. Inspections help maintain the integrity of the market's mission and to build trust within the community it serves.
4. Gathering information from inspections helps the market to tell their producers' story through publicity and advocacy.

Inspector's Code of Conduct

- Support and encourage the development, implementation and advancement of the market's mission at all times
- Abide by confidentiality agreements
- Maintain the highest possible standards of integrity
- Foster goodwill and cooperation
- Report suspected fraud
- Avoid situations of conflict of interest

References:

This material is based on a presentation, "Farm Inspections", by John Ameroso, Retired Cornell Cooperative Extension and Inspector for Greenmarket, at the Farmers Market Federation of NY's Annual Farmers Market Managers Training Conference, Nov 2015.

"Farm Inspections—Maintaining Market Integrity," by Michael Hurwitz, June Russell, and Bernadette Martin, Greenmarket, a program of the Council of the Environment of NYC. Presented at the Farmers Market Federation of NY Farmers Market Managers Training Program, March 6, 2009.

"Farm Inspections on a Shoestring," by Bernadette Martin, Farm Inspector for Greenmarket and Manager of the Kennedy Plaza Farmers Market, Long Beach, NY. Presented as a webinar for the Farmers Market Federation of NY, June 29, 2009.



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Appendix Resources:
Draft Crop Inspection Checklist
Sample Farm Inspection Report



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Farmers Market Managers Professional Certification Program

Module 3: Building Market Systems

Unit 3.8 Documenting Market Success

UNIT OVERVIEW

Evaluating market programs, services and characteristics of the market can help you to make critical management decisions, affirm the value of your programs, and help you to identify areas in need of improvement. But evaluation can be a frightening proposition if you don't yet have the skills to design and conduct an evaluation. This session will help you understand the value of performing market evaluations and give you guidance in designing and implementing your evaluation, and using this information to build your market's success.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

CONCEPTS

- Understanding the importance of evaluating the various programs, services and characteristics of a farmers market
- Understanding the steps to follow to design and implement a successful evaluation
- Understanding how to utilize the results of the evaluation to improve your market

SKILLS

- The ability to design and implement a market evaluation program



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Unit 3.8 Documenting Your Market's Success

Evaluation is a critical piece of every program, project or any aspect of your market. But it's often something that is pushed aside as a "too scary to tackle" component of the project or maybe gets skipped because you don't understand how to perform evaluations or why they are important. This chapter will help clarify those issues and help you to create evaluation tools and techniques to increase the benefits of your market to your farmers and consumers.

What is evaluation?

Evaluation simply means the collection of information that will help you to improve or make management decisions about whatever it is you are evaluating. For example, if you are operating a new kids program in your market, your evaluation may tell you what the impact of the program has been and also suggest ways that you can improve the program in the future to increase those impacts. Your evaluation may tell you that there is a significant increase in the number of customers on days the kids program operates and that translates into increased dollars for your farmers. The evaluation may also tell you that you are not reaching as many of the kids in the community as you should. Maybe the evaluation will give you suggestions on additional or better ways to reach the families with young children in your community. Kids from one area of the community may be

attending in large numbers while kids on another side of the community are mostly absent. Wouldn't this be important information for you to know so that you can improve your program to reach greater heights of success?

Collecting all the information about your programs, services and market does take time but it has an important purpose. The information you derive from your evaluation efforts will help you to make critical management decisions about what you are evaluating. Using the example above, if you are operating a kids program, you may find that the program is bringing a significant number of new families to the market resulting in increased sales for your farmers. Although you had to spend a small amount on the program, the returns were much greater. Compare this with another market program you run that is quite costly and not having as much success with increasing traffic. Knowing what the true impacts of these programs are may help you decide to ramp up the kids program and increase the numbers of participants. Your decision might then be that you need to hire new staff members to accommodate an increased program or it might help you decide to build a new volunteer program to staff your increased kids program. But keep in mind that your evaluations are not a justification for decisions, they are just to give you critical information to help you make your



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decisions. Just because consumers asked the market to accommodate their pets by creating an area where they can “park” their dogs with a dog sitter, doesn’t mean this is something you need to do. Instead you will look at the resources you have and decide if this something you can accommodate given your space and manpower. Next, you will look at the implications of such a pet-sitting area. Will the dogs fight, creating a dangerous situation? Will there be extra liability on the market for providing such a service? So in this case, the market may choose to not follow the results of a survey, but instead look at the survey results to help them make their decision. Collecting the data is just the first step – you then need to analyze the results with a critical eye and use the information gleaned to make smart decisions for your market.

What is Program Evaluation?

The thoughtful, systematic collection of information, about activities, characteristics or outcomes of programs, to reduce uncertainties, improve effectiveness and make decisions

Michael Quinn Patton

Evaluations can also help you to understand where and how you can improve the program or service you are evaluating. Again using the example above, your evaluation may ask where the program participants live. Knowing the zip codes of those participating will show those areas of your community that are not being reached by your outreach and promotions work. Your evaluation might further ask what types of social media they use or what radio or TV stations they listen to. This may help you decide where to focus your outreach efforts. Think carefully about your evaluation questions to

make sure you will receive the information that will be most useful to you in making future decisions.

Finally, evaluation helps you to generate knowledge that supports the mission and goals of your market. The Pleasantville Farmers Market seeks to foster a sense of community as part of their market’s mission. But a few of the local store owners began to complain that the market was taking business away from them every market day. The market did a customer survey that asked where their customers were coming from, where else did they shop when they were in town to shop at the market and how much were they spending each market day. What they found was that the majority (2/3) of their shoppers came from outside the village and they stayed longer and spent more than the local shoppers. They were able to use the knowledge they gained from their survey results to show the store owners that the market was bringing more people into the village and generating additional sales for the stores, rather than taking away business. So, in fact, the market was helping to generate additional revenue for the village store owners. The store owners were pleased with the findings and the market was able to support their mission by, once again, fostering a sense of community, including the market, its vendors, the local business owners and shoppers. In this case, the evaluation was able to restore the peace. This is a great example to show that you should not assume what you think to be true, but rather conduct an evaluation! The results may surprise you. Once you are working with real data, you can begin to solve the problem (if one even exists) or to make improvements to your services.



Planning Your Evaluation

Evaluating a program, service or key characteristics of your market is a process. It must be carefully considered, planned and executed and not just haphazardly thrown together. The following is a guideline to help you organize your evaluation as carry it out.

1) *Be clear on your evaluation purpose.*

What is it that you want to know? You don't evaluate an entire program or your entire market. Rather you whittle down the information you want to collect by importance. What is important for you to know in order to be able to make decisions about the program or the market, or to improve the program or market? For example, if the market is operating a SNAP program using tokens, you may want to evaluate the program to see the impact it is having on your farmers and consumers. You may also want to know if your outreach and promotions program is effectively reaching the SNAP community. You would not need to know what color shoes was most popular among SNAP consumers because that won't help you to serve them better. You can't measure everything so make sure to choose which aspect of the program is the most important to evaluate and start with that.

It is worth noting that it may be important to evaluate each characteristic of the program. But you would want to do that through a series of evaluations. For example, this month evaluate the financial impact on your farmers, next month might be a consumer survey to see what the impact of the token program might have on the consumers – eating healthier, shopping the market more frequently, etc. Then you can follow up with another evaluation to determine

your reach. Look at your primary goal – whether that is deciding whether or not to expand a program, appearing in a media story to talk about the impact of a program etc. and that will help you determine where to start with your evaluations.

To understand what you will evaluate, ask yourself why you want to know the answers. If the reason is that it would be interesting to know, then that is not a valid reason. Evaluation takes a great deal of work preparing the evaluation, implementing it and then analyzing the results. Do not waste your time or that of the people you will be surveying by asking questions simply because it is interesting or because you felt you had to do an evaluation to check that off your to-do list.

Examples of Reasons to conduct an Evaluation

- a) It's a new initiative and you need to know it is working properly
- b) You have a desire to improve a program or initiative
- c) You want to know if you are achieving the desired impacts
- d) Stakeholders need information. This might be your funders or market sponsors looking for information on a program they have funded or seeking to provide you with funding.

Something you should consider would be to do regular evaluations of your programs, services and market. These evaluations can give you a history of your programs and provide you with critical information for future decision making. If evaluations are done on a regular basis they can



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also be compared. For example, you might be able to say that at the start of your market season, 55% of consumers felt the market was “very important” to the community whereas in the middle of market season, 75% of people felt that way. Seeing how you rate over time can be a helpful way to check in on how your market is doing.

2) *Identify what you want to know*

Now that you know what you want to evaluate, be clear about what you want to know. This will formulate your questions. Remember, you should only be asking what you really want to know for evaluation purposes and omit those questions that would just be interesting information. You want to stick to as few questions as possible to get the data you need.

So your evaluation question should be the broad question that you want answered. You should limit this to only one or two questions about your

For Example

Have the market vendors had an increase in customers and sales as a result of the SNAP token program? If so, how much? These questions will get at the heart of what we want to know about the SNAP token program and any survey or other methods we employ will be driven by the need to get the answers to these questions.

program. The questions should be:

- Focused and drive the evaluation
 - Carefully specified before designing the evaluation methods
 - Contain more than one possible answer.
- In other words, you should not already know the answer, nor box respondents

into a predetermined answer. If you’re leading respondents to choosing a particular answer by only making one available or in your wording of the question, your results won’t be valid.

3) *Determine where you can get the desired information*

There are a number of means to get the data you need to answer your questions. Carefully consider each option with an eye for your time and expertise, your resources and whether each method will give you the best data you are able to obtain. The methods boil down to four basic options:

- a) Records. There is a plethora of data out there that has already been collected and that you can simply use for your own purposes. Perhaps you don’t need to collect new data at all. This data could be found online, with a partner you work with who has already collected data, or it may even be in your own possession. For example, in New York State, farmers markets operating a token system are required to maintain transaction records. These records record the sale of SNAP tokens to consumers, as well as the redemption of tokens by farmers. The Rochester Public Market wanted to evaluate SNAP consumer buying habits and used these already existing records to determine that. They simply had to collate and analyze the data they already had! By categorizing the farmers by product line and comparing that to the amount of SNAP tokens redeemed, the market was able to determine that 71% of SNAP tokens were spent on fruits and vegetables; 16% were used to purchase fish and meat and another



5% of tokens were used to purchase dairy products.

b) People. You can also get information directly from people. Interviews, surveys, focus groups are good ways to collect information. Often, by talking with your customer and farmers you will get more information than you bargained for since many want to share their experiences, stories and opinions on the subject you are evaluating. While asking market vendors if the SNAP token program was bringing them more customers and increasing sales, they learned that the farmers had ideas for better signage to help customers understand the differences between SNAP and other nutrition programs, making it easier for them to assist their customers. Without the direct interaction with their vendors, the market would not have gotten such valuable information. These evaluations are more informal but they can be very helpful as well.

c) Research. It is likely that others have already done some work on the very topic you are trying to evaluate. It might be other farmers markets, competitors such as supermarkets and business alliances, or Universities. An internet search may turn up valuable information that may help you to formulate your own evaluation methods or maybe even give you the information that you need.

d) A new inquiry. If the data that you need isn't existing in your records, can't be gleaned by talking to people or researching online, you will have to do a new evaluation to obtain this data.

4) *Identify your evaluation methods*

Now that you know what you want to evaluate and have narrowed down your question, it is time to determine the method(s) you will use to get your information or data.

Think of evaluation as a means to solve a puzzle – answering your questions about the program. Each of the methods you employ are pieces of the puzzle that will ultimately create the data you need and the answers you seek. There are a number of techniques or methods you can use, including:

- Surveys, the most common method since it is less labor intensive and easiest to craft.
- Interviews
- Focus groups
- Direct observation
- Anecdotes
- Records review
- Portfolios, journals
- Testimonials
- Simulations
- Photos, videos
- Expert analysis

You might consider using a mix of methods to attain both quantitative and qualitative data. While these may seem like fancy words, the difference between them is easy to understand.

Quantitative data involves things like numbers and measures. Using our SNAP example, the data from the SNAP transaction records gave the market quantitative data – the numbers of tokens redeemed by farmer category and measured against the total token sales.

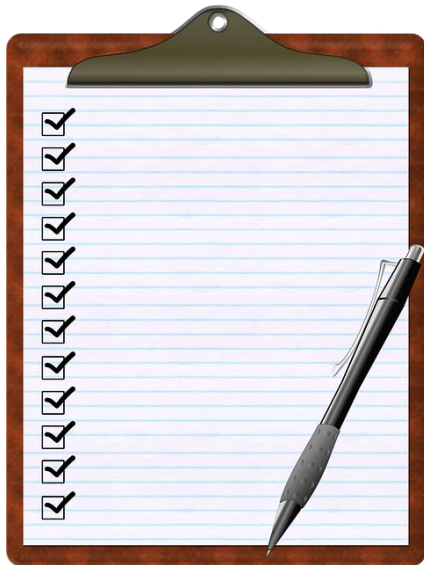
Qualitative data collection methods involve narratives, describing the depth and character of



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experience for individuals. For example, SNAP consumers were asked if they were eating a healthier diet because of the token program at the Rochester Public Market. Their answers were qualitative – not based on actual numbers, but based on their individual experiences with the program. Yes they were eating a much healthier diet or perhaps some were eating a somewhat healthier diet and still others weren't eating much healthier since they were buying what they normally bought at a grocery store, just getting it from a market instead. Their reasons for shopping at the market weren't to eat healthier but to support local farmers. Using a mix of methods, both quantitative and qualitative can provide you with a more complete picture than using one method alone. Being aware of the two options will help you to decide where your data could best be obtained and expressed using a number (70% of consumers report eating healthier) or as a quote ("One customer reported that she feels a lot better since increasing her vegetable intake and her doctor agreed – she was able to stop taking two blood pressure medications!")



Once you have your methods determined, you need to craft your questions. This can't be over-emphasized: focus your questions only on what you want to know. Surveyors are always careful to not over-ask to avoid survey fatigue. This is on two levels – you don't want them to quit your survey midway through because you have asked so many questions that they lose interest or don't understand the relevance of the questions. On another level, when consumers are bombarded with surveys that are lengthy and are not focused, you will find they will avoid surveys or just check off any answer to get them completed. Maybe you've noticed consumers trying very hard to get by your surveyors with heads turned and avoiding eye contact or flat-out refusing to take your survey. You'll need to overcome this survey burnout to get as many respondents as possible. You make that happen by always showing respect for your survey-takers – keep the survey short and focused.

Then keep the questions simple and in easy-to-understand terms. Remember who your target is and word the question in ways your target will understand. When you are targeting the general public, don't use a lot of scientific terms or acronyms that they are unlikely to understand. And don't make the questions so complicated that they confuse the consumer, who then cannot provide you with the answers you need.



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Helpful Hint

To avoid survey fatigue –
Focus your questions only on what you want to know and stay away from questions that are just of interest to you.

Remember that not everyone in your market speaks fluent English. Many markets cater to a variety of ethnic shoppers, all with their own language. While they may understand basic English, their command of English may be limited. You need to craft your questions using straight language, without jargon and regional sayings. Otherwise, your customers with limited English will find it very hard to understand the questions and will not be able to provide you with the information you are seeking or they will be left out of the survey, causing you to miss out on unique perspectives on the program or market characteristic you are trying to evaluate.

Once you have crafted your questions and are sure they are very targeted at getting the information you need to conduct your evaluation and just that information, then test the questions. They may seem very clear and concise to you, but to others they may be confusing. Enlist friends, family, co-workers, or anyone else you have available to read your questions and answer them for you. Do they understand the question? Did they give you the kinds of answers you need? If the answer to either of these questions is no, then go back and rewrite the question. If the respondent does not fully understand your question, you have very little chance of getting useful information. Make

sure to test the questions with a variety of people to ensure they are easily understood by all. If your question(s) are even a little bit confusing then all your hard work to conduct the evaluation could be wasted because the results may be skewed.

Putting your evaluations to work

Once you have collected your data and analyzed the data to answer your questions, what do you do with the information? How do you make the most out of your evaluation results?

First, this information will help you to affirm your program's purpose and objectives. Going back to our SNAP token program example, you created the program to make your market accessible to low income consumers and bring a new customer base to your farmers. If your evaluation showed that 58% of your farmers report seeing new customers in the market, and 66% of your farmers report an increase in their sales because of the token program, you know that your program has achieved your goals. This affirms your program, allowing your board to make the decision to continue supporting the program.

Second, the evaluation results can help you to decide the best use of your limited resources. So if you have such a strong response to your SNAP token program, you might want to allocate additional resources to promote the program more in the community and drive the customer counts and sales numbers up even further. Or maybe your Health and Wellness Fair was well-attended but customer surveys said the event did not meet their expectations of getting health advice and basic tests such as hearing tests or blood pressure checks. Instead the vendors focused mainly on brochure and information



distribution. Do you do the program again? Do you make changes to the program? Or do you allocate your resources to another event instead? Your survey results will help you to determine the best means to allocate your staff time, funding and other resources.



Next, your evaluation results will help you tell your story. When you can say that you were able to improve the health of low income consumers by increasing their consumption of fruits and vegetables and that you increased the viability of your farmers with increased sales for their farms, you have a remarkable story of your market's success. Blow your own horn! Create a results document or media piece that you can share: what is the program and how does it benefit your constituency? What were your results and what will you be doing next to build on those results. This is newsworthy. Let the press know so they can spread the word about your market and all the good things you are doing. Write press

releases, invite the press to the market and help them to help you.

Make sure to also tell your market funders and sponsors. They want to share in your success. They may have had a hand in your success and will happily share your story as part of their story. On one level, your success is their success. They may be a funder and your story will justify their faith in you by providing you with funds. Or they may see your success as something they want to be a part of and will fund you in the future. Everyone likes a success story and will want to be a part of that.

Finally, your success story can be used to help build community support for your market. As your success becomes known, community organizations will want to partner with you for additional programs or services. They see your success as a way to springboard their own success by being a part of yours. So maybe they will launch a new program as a joint effort between their organization and yours, or maybe you will get offers from community members asking to volunteer with your market. The market may fit their passion for agriculture, local foods or community building. Or maybe they see adding a volunteer position at your market as a critical piece for their resume, helping to launch their future career. Either way, your success is contagious. But no one will know unless it is shared!

So don't be afraid of evaluation. While it is a skill to properly evaluate a program or service, it is one that can easily be learned and is a very valuable skill to have. Others find the prospect of an evaluation to be personally terrifying. But an evaluation is not personal. It is not evaluating you as the one administering the program. Instead it is a means to help you improve and



grow the value of your program. Look at negative results not as failures but as opportunities to improve. And positive results are opportunities to showcase your successes to the community and grow even further.

Finally, as you begin to evaluate your programs and market characteristics you will find that you begin to accumulate a stockpile of information.

In no time you'll have multiple years of data that can then be analyzed to show the long term impact on your market, its consumers and farmers, identify downtrends that can help you prevent problems and build new programs or services that can improve your market based on the uptrends. With the data in hand and the tools to use it to effectively build your market, your market will undoubtedly be a 100% success.

Reference:

This material is based on a presentation, "Documenting Your Market's Success", by Margaret O'Neill, Program Director, Friends of the Rochester Public Market, at the Farmers Market Federation of NY's Annual Farmers Market Managers Training Conference, Nov 2015.

Appendix:

Designing Evaluation Question



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Farmers Market Manager Job Description

The (fill in the blank) farmers market is a community market, supported by the (fill in the blank office), community members, and a host of other local agencies. The market will provide access to locally grown fruits, vegetables, and other farm products, while creating a sense of community within the City and helping to revitalize the downtown district. This ambitious project will be undertaken as a project of the (xx agency) in cooperation with the State Dept. of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension, and local non-profits to support this venture.

Manager Position

The Market Manager is a part time position with primary responsibility being the day-to-day operation of the farmers market. This will include an on-site presence at the market during all market hours, as well as off-site work during non-market hours. The manager will report to (fill in the blank who they report to: market committee, board of directors, county, agency, etc...) who will set all market policy. In addition, the manager will represent the market to the market's vendors, the consumers, and to the community.

Duties—in season

- Enroll farmers/vendors in the market—either through seasonal vendor agreements or as daily vendors
 - Collect all stall fees owed, make accurate accounting, and deposit in market account
 - Arrive prior to market vendors arriving and remain throughout the market day to:
 - Properly place vendors in stalls, including assigning market stalls to daily vendors
 - Place market signs, parking signs
 - Ensure all rules and regulations are adhered to
 - Ensure all state and county regulations are adhered to
 - Answer questions for vendors and consumers
 - Resolve disputes that arise
 - Maintain market grounds in a safe manner
 - Operate market manager's booth
 - Have nutritional education materials to distribute
 - Have recipes for seasonal, local foods that are available in the market
 - Operate market's EBT program
 - Enroll market and market farmers in the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP)
 - Act as liaison to the market's governing body, providing accounting and performance reports
 - Communicate market policies, activities, and rules to farmers, keeping them informed throughout the season
- Bring suggestions from farmers back to the market board/committee
- Solicit entertainment for market days, as well as sponsors for the entertainment

- Conduct periodic customer counts each market day to assess the level of growth in market usage
- Assure the market site is clean once the market is closed and the vendors have left for the day
- Maintain database of farmers, vendors, their contact information, and any licenses or permits each vendor possesses based on the products they are selling
- Conduct farm inspections

Duties—off season

- Vendor recruitment
- Professional development for market managers
- Community relationship development
- Fundraising
- Advertising/ promotional program development, including special events planning
- Work with market board/committee to plan for market growth and development
- Preparations of site for next season, including securing location, site permits, market insurance, ensure that any maintenance or repairs needed to site are made, secure bathrooms, set market schedule, organize volunteers

Qualifications

- Ability to think creatively
- People person with skills in diplomacy
- Dispute resolution skills
- Good communication skills
- Organizational skills
- Marketing skills helpful
- Some financial knowledge helpful: i.e., budgeting
- Self-motivated
- Passionate about the community and local agriculture



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Basic Rules for Farmers Markets

The following is a compilation of rules for farmers markets collected from markets across New York State. This is not meant to be accepted in its entirety as rules for any market. Rather, each market must address each issue in terms of its own mission and set of circumstances. This means picking and choosing the appropriate rules or adjusting the rules included here, as well as determining any other issues that are pertinent to each individual market and then addressing them within the adopted rules.

Definitions

Bona fide –

- As in growers – the seller is the producer of the products being offered for sale, from lands he owns or rents, with control over the production, harvesting and marketing of the products, and a financial interest in the products.
- As in crafts person – all crafts offered for sale are original in nature and produced in whole by the seller. No crafts shall be permitted that are derived from kits.
- As in homemade products – all products are produced, baked or manufactured by the seller and are original in nature. No baked goods from mixes or purchased for finishing off will be permitted.

Daily vendor – any vendor who is permitted to sell on the market, who participates in the market less than the full season and chooses to pay on a daily basis for any space used.

Market governing body – the market’s board of directors or committee, ultimately responsible for setting the policies of the market

Market Manager – a person or persons empowered by the Governing Body to implement market policies and directives, and to oversee the operation of the Market.

Market sponsor – any governmental agency, non profit organization or association that lends its support to the market in any way.

Seasonal lease – when a vendor signs for space for the full season and makes payment in accordance with the established fee structure.

Vendor – any seller or exhibitor participating in the market.

Market Governance

1. The market will be sponsored by an independent non profit association (i.e. Chamber of Commerce, health related association, or other interested on profit association) and will operate with an independent market governing body.



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2. The mission of the farmers market will be to improve local food security, teach entrepreneurship skills, support local farmers and businesses, while enriching the cultural heritage of the community.

3. The market manager is responsible for the orderly and efficient conduct of the market and for implementing and enforcing the Rule and Regulations. The market manager will represent the market and its governing body during market days and in community activities. The market manager will assist the market's governing body with developing and implementing a market budget, establishing market policy, vendor recruitment, collecting fees, establishing the operational schedule, and advertising and promotion of the market.

General Operations

4. The market will be located at market location . The market will operate every enter day of week , enter market hours and will run from the enter opening and closing dates .

5. Vendors may arrive as one hour prior to opening for setup and must stay through the end of the market day to provide a full market to shoppers arriving throughout market hours.

6. Vendors may leave early only under extenuating circumstances and with the permission of the market manager.

7. Vendors must notify the market manager no later than 4 hours before market time if they will be absent for that market day.

8. No selling is permitted before the official opening time, as announced by the market manager.

Who may sell at the market:

9. The use of the market is restricted to those who are bona-fide growers, craftpersons, producers of homemade products or other vendors approved by the market manager or governing body. Vendors may, on a limited basis, supplement their product line with additional New York State only products, as long as that product is otherwise missing from the market and the market manager has given permission for the supplement. This permission is valid for one season only and must be re-applied for each new season.

10. All agricultural products may be sold at the market, including but not limited to locally grown fruits and vegetables, dairy products, meats, flowers, plants, honey products, maple products, NYS wines sold by a farm winery, beers by a farm brewery, eggs, herbs and related products.

11. Craft vendors may sell products that they have hand produced themselves.

12. Bakers who have baked the products themselves and who possess the proper licensing from either the NYS Dept. of Agriculture and Markets or their County Dept. of Health.

13. Prepared food vendors with a current mobile food service license.

14. Products not specifically identified must be pre-approved by the market management.



15. All applicable food safety regulations, both state and local, must be adhered to at all times.
16. All alcoholic beverages, including wine, beer and distilled products, must have approved NYS Farm Winery/Brewery license from the NYS Liquor Authority.
17. All applicable licenses and permits for products sold must be obtained and kept current. Copies of applicable permits and licenses will be kept on file with the market management.
18. To ensure compliance to market rules, the Governing Body reserves the right to direct the market manager or appoint a committee to inspect any vendor's farm or establishment with advance notice. Inspections will be made only with the farmer/owner or their representative present unless written permission is given. Vendors must provide any help necessary to thoroughly document products and conditions recorded at the inspection. The vendor will be notified in writing of the results of the inspection within seven days of the inspection.
19. All new vendors will be subject to a ninety (90) day at-will probationary period commencing on the first day of selling in the market.

Guidelines for Selling

20. All stall spaces must be swept clean and any refuse removed at the end of each market day.
21. All vendors must have a sign clearly showing their name and location.
22. Each vendor will be responsible for all equipment and supplies for the setup of a booth. Displays should be constructed in such a way that they do not block customer walkways nor pose any other hazard to customers.
23. Vendors who provide samples and/or products that will result in waste material, such as cups, rinds, and corn cobs, must provide containers for waste disposal.
24. Vendors are required to keep their market space neat and clear of obstacles, litter and debris.
25. All produce displayed for sale must be at least 12" off the ground with the exception of heavy or large items such as pumpkins.
26. Sellers must post prices. While it is expected that prices will be fair to consumers, the seller and fellow sellers, collusion among sellers to attempt to influence prices is strictly prohibited.
27. No smoking, alcoholic beverages or firearms are permitted at the market. Exception is approved farm wine and beer tasting.
28. No hawking, proselytizing or amplified music is permitted at the market.



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29. All products offered for sale must be of good quality and condition. The Market manager reserves the right to direct any inferior goods be removed from display. Failure to remove products deemed inferior will be reported to the market's governing body and may result in loss of market privileges.

30. Each vendor in the market must be directly involved with or knowledgeable about the production of the produce or products being sold at the market.

31. All vendors must provide proof of general liability coverage in the amount of \$1 million dollars and name the market, the property owner and the market sponsor as additional insured. A current certificate must remain on file with the market.

32. Vendors are responsible for the actions of their representatives, employees or agents.

Stall fees and assignment

33. Stalls will be assigned by the market manager on a first come first serve basis.

34. The stall fees and payment schedule will be assessed annually by the market's governing body. Stalls may be rented on a seasonal basis or on a daily basis. Daily fees will be due and payable to the market manager prior to setting up for the day.

35. Farmers with a seasonal lease will be assigned a permanent spot for the duration of the season. These spaces will be reserved each year for the seasonal vendor, provided that all stall fees are kept current.

36. Reserved market spaces must be occupied at least 30 minutes prior to opening of the market day. After that time, daily vendors will be permitted to set up in those spaces, as assigned by the market manager. Seasonal leaseholders, arriving after that time, will be re-assigned to another space for the day.

37. Daily vendors will be assigned space by the market manager on a first come first serve basis, as space is available. Space in the market is not guaranteed, nor is it guaranteed that daily vendors will be assigned the same space each week that they are in the market.

38. No subletting of a seasonal booth is permitted and rents are not reimbursable, either in whole or in part.

38. To ensure the safety of market patrons, any vendor arriving after market opening may be required to set up on the periphery of the market.

Compliance

40. All complaints must be addressed in writing to the Market Manager.

41. Complaints against another vendor, must be accompanied by a \$50 "good faith" check. The market manager will then conduct an investigation and/or farm inspection against the accused vendor. If the complaint is found to be valid, the \$50 "good faith" check will be returned. If the complaint is found to



be unfounded, the check will be forfeited and deposited in the market's general funds with a letter of explanation sent to the complainant.

42. All other complaints will be reviewed by the market manager in an attempt to resolve the issue. If the manager is unable to resolve the complaint, then a written follow up may be made to the market's governing body. The governing body will address the complaint at the next regularly scheduled meeting. If the complaint is of an immediate nature, the market manager may ask for a special convening of the market's governing body to address the complaint. The decisions of the governing body are final.

43. The submission of application for admission to the market serves as the vendor's agreement to abide by the rules of the market, as established by the market's governing body and enforced by the market manager. Violations of the rules of the market may be grounds for warnings, dismissal from the market, or both.

- The first violation of the rules will result in a verbal warning by the market manager. Documentation of the warning will be kept on file by the market manager.
- The second violation of the rules will result in a written warning, given by the market manager. A copy of the letter will be kept on file by the market manager, along with any documentation of the violation.
- The third violation of the rules will result in a one week suspension of selling privileges.
- The fourth violation of the rules will result in a two week suspension of selling privileges.
- The fifth violation of the rules will result in dismissal from the market.

44. At the discretion of the market manager, when a violation occurs that jeopardizes the health of a customer, another vendor, market management or the overall health of the market, the manager may convene the market's governing body to request a suspension of the compliance procedure and call for immediate dismissal from the market. The dismissal will require documented proof of an egregious violation. The vendor will be given an opportunity to review the documentation, prepare a defense and appear before the governing body.

45. If after receiving a warning or suspension, a vendor is in disagreement with the market manager over the infraction, the vendor may make written application to the market governing body to be heard on the issue. Both the vendor and the market manager will appear before the governing body and present their sides of the issue. The decision of the governing body is final.



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Market Managers' Checklist

Permits/Licenses/ Certificates Required for Farmers Market Sellers

The following is a checklist that will help you to understand the permits, licenses and certificates that are required of sellers of various products commonly found in farmers' markets. This checklist is not exhaustive, but is a general guideline. Please consult the inspection agencies listed at the end further assistance. All food items offered for sale (excluding whole fruits and vegetables) MUST be pre-packaged.

Fresh Produce

- No permits, licenses or certificates required, if raw, uncut, and unprocessed.

Plant Sales – only one nursery license is required and must be posted in public view at the time of sale.

- NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets Nursery Growers License, if engaged in the production of plant material intended for sale. A nursery grower is also permitted to purchase and resell plant material under this same license.
- NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets Nursery Dealers License, if purchasing and reselling plant material only and the vendor is not involved in any growing of potted plant material
- Valid NYS Sales Tax Certificate

Eggs

- No permits, licenses or certificates required, for cleaned shell eggs maintained at 45 degrees F or less. Eggs must be from farm owned hens (not purchased eggs).

Honey, Maple Syrup

- No permits, licenses or certificates required, if single ingredient products.
- Article 20C License from NYS Dept. of Agriculture & Markets, if additional ingredients are added to the products; i.e. maple mustard, maple cotton candy, etc.

Baked Goods

- 20C Exemption from NYS Dept of Agriculture & Markets if home baked, non-hazardous; ie. Bread (no breads containing fruits or vegetables), rolls, cookies, cakes, brownies, fudge & double crust fruit pies. (Quickbreads are considered potentially hazardous and cannot be done under 20C Exemptions.) No internet sales or advertising allowed.
- Article 20C License from NYS Dept. of Agriculture & Markets on all other baked products provided the business does 51% of its sales at wholesale. (Requires a separate, commercial kitchen.)
- All other baked goods must come from a licensed NYS Department of Health facility.

Cider/Fruit Juice

- Article 20C License from NYS Dept of Agriculture & Markets for manufacturers/bottlers.
- All cider and fruit juices must be pasteurized, UV treated, or high pressure treated.

Mushrooms

- ❑ Cultivated mushrooms, sold whole or otherwise processed, require no license.
- ❑ Cultivated mushrooms, sliced, chopped, washed and identified as ready to eat or any other processing requires an Article 20-C license.
- ❑ Mushroom species picked in the wild shall be obtained from sources where each mushroom is individually inspected and found to be safe by an approved mushroom identification expert prior to sale. At this time, there are no approved mushroom experts in New York State.

New York State Micro-breweries

Must obtain a no-fee permit from the NYS Liquor Authority:

<http://www.sla.ny.gov/system/files/BrewerOffPremisesPermit.pdf>

New York State Wines

- ❑ Farm Winery Permit, issued by the NYS Liquor Authority
- ❑ Valid NYS Sales Tax Certificate

Processed Foods

- ❑ Home Processors are eligible for an Article 20-C Exemption from NYS Dept. of Agriculture & Markets, for non-hazardous foods only, including traditional fruit jams, jellies and marmalades; candy (excluding chocolate); spices and herbs repackaging only); and snack items such as popcorn, caramel corn and peanut brittle. Information on registering as a Home Processor in New York can be found on the website, <http://www.agriculture.ny.gov/FS/consumer/processor.html>, or by calling one of the Regional Offices.
- ❑ Article 20C License from NYS Dept of Agriculture & Markets, prepackaged and labeled in accordance with NYS Food Labeling Law: Identity of food in package form; name of manufacturer, packer or distributor; place of business; ingredient declaration in descending order of predominance by weight; and net quantity of contents.
- ❑ County Board of Health Permit if processing is on-site; i.e. cutting of baked goods to be sold by the piece, slicing of cheese to be sold by the pound; cooking and selling ready-to-eat foods
- ❑ Home processing of canned fruits and vegetables is not permitted. All canned fruits and vegetables must be done under 20C License and registered with the Federal government as a food processor.
- ❑ Article 20C License from NYS Dept. of Agriculture & Markets is required for dehydrating herbs and spices or for the blending of any spices for repackaging.
- ❑ Food processing (portioning, packaging, etc.) is not allowed at the farmers market.

Meats – License is required if grinding or processing. License is not required for cutting.

Red Meat (Beef, lamb, goat)

- ❑ USDA slaughtered and/or processed must have USDA legend
- ❑ Article 28D License required if warehousing for wholesale
- ❑ Must be maintained at 0°F or below and sold frozen.

Chicken (Must be frozen)

- ❑ License not required to sell 250 turkeys or 1000 birds of other species.*
- ❑ No license required if USDA slaughtered.
- ❑ Article 28 License if warehousing for wholesale accounts.
- ❑ Article 5A license required if selling over 250 turkeys or 1000 birds of other species.*
* 250 turkeys or 1000 birds of other species processed annually.

Exotic Meat (Must be frozen)

- ❑ Must be slaughtered at an Article 5A licensed establishment.
- ❑ Must be labeled “Processed at an NYSDAM facility”.
- ❑ Article 28 License required if warehousing for wholesale accounts, if not licensed under Article 5A.

Processed Meats (Shelf stable processed meats (dry, fermented sausage) only)

- ❑ Article 20C license from the NYS Dept. of Agriculture & Markets

Fish (If processed (fileted, etc.) - Must be frozen)

- ❑ No permit, license or certificate is required if a freshwater fisherman is selling only whole, non-protected species.
- ❑ Article 20C License from NYS Dept of Agriculture & Market if fish is pan-ready.
- ❑ NYS DEC hatchery permit required if selling protected freshwater species.
- ❑ NYS DEC permit required if re-selling any protected freshwater species.
- ❑ NYS DEC Food Fish License to catch and sell marine fish.
- ❑ NYS DEC Food Fish and Crustacean Dealers & Shippers License to resell marine fish purchased from a licensed fisherman

Dairy**Cheese & Other Dairy Products (such as yogurt, butter, sour cream)**

- ❑ For producers, Part II Permit, issued by the NYS Dept. of Agriculture & Markets Division of Milk Control and Dairy Services.
- ❑ If cut and wrap cheese, need Part II Permit issued by Division of Milk Control and Dairy Services unless part of a food establishment regulated by Division of Food Safety, in which case just need Article 20C License.

Milk and Fluid Milk Products (such as 2%, 1% and non-fat milk)

- ❑ Milk must be pasteurized.
- ❑ Producer must have Part II Permit issued by Division of Milk Control and Dairy Services.
- ❑ Producer and any distributor must have a Milk Dealers license issued by Division of Milk Control and Dairy Services unless amount handled is less than 3000 pounds per month

Grains and Legumes (prepackaged – cannot be packed on site)

- ❑ No permits, licenses or certificates are required.

Fresh Cut/ Dried Flowers

- ❑ Valid NYS Sales Tax Permit

Crafts

- ❑ Valid NYS Sales Tax Permit

For additional information, call:

NYS Dept. of Agriculture & Markets, Division of Food Safety:

Albany Region: 518-457-5459

Syracuse Region: 315-487-0852

Rochester Region: 585-427-2273

Buffalo Region: 716-847-3185

New York City: 718-722-2876

NYS Dept. of Agriculture & Markets, Division of Milk Control & Dairy Services:

Albany: 518-457-1772

NYS Dept. of Agriculture & Markets, Division of Plant Industry:
Albany: 518-457-2087

NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation, Permitting Office: 631-444-0471

Compiled by the Farmers' Market Federation of New York, 2009, updated 2016



Incident Report Form

Date of Incident:	
Location of Incident:	Time of Incident:
Emergency Responders Contacted:	<input type="checkbox"/> 911 <input type="checkbox"/> Fire Dept <input type="checkbox"/> Police <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Contacts <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
Description of Incident:	
Market Personnel Involved:	4.
1.	5.
2.	6.
3.	
Action:	
(Briefly describe actions market personnel took)	
Incident Disposition	
Was victim transported by ambulance?	
2. If victim was not transported by ambulance, briefly describe what happened?	
Media	



What information was reported:	
Staff Person Contacted:	
Facility Damage	
Briefly describe any damage to the facility?	
Name of person completing report:	Date:

This information is based on the <http://www.emergencysafteyplan.com/products/Medical-Emergency-Response-Plan-Template.html>



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Risk Management Checklist

Market Name: _____

Market Location: _____

Date: _____ Evaluator: _____

	Yes	No	Needs Improvement	N/A
Market Area				
Market Entrances are clearly marked.				
Market limits are clearly defined and segregated from vehicle traffic.				
There are sufficiently wide, unobstructed aisles to accommodate customer traffic.				
Vegetation, including tree branches and shrubs are not blocking sidewalks, parking and common areas.				
Market areas, including all walkways are free from debris.				
Walkways and vendor areas are in good repair, level, free from potholes and cracks that would create trip hazards.				
Electrical outlets are equipped with ground fault circuit interrupters.				
Changes in elevation (i.e. curbing) and surface edges are clearly marked with warning markings or signage.				
Market area is easily accessible to handicapped customers.				
Security officers are on patrol throughout market hours.				
Wet, icy or snowy areas should be clearly marked and/or barricaded from customer traffic until rectified.				
Pets, if allowed in the market, are leashed and under control.				
Market area is adequately lit.				
Waste receptacles are available to reduce garbage and debris that may accumulate.				
Parking Areas and Roadways				
All parking areas and roadways are free of potholes and other obstructions.				
Speed bumps are clearly marked.				
Pedestrian areas are segregated from vehicular traffic with adequate barriers and adequately marked.				

All parking areas and roadways are adequately lit.				
Roadways are clearly marked with stop signs, speed limits and directional signage, if one way.				
Handicapped parking is available and clearly marked.				
Vendor Areas				
Tents and canopies are tied down or weighted.				
Tables and displays are sturdy and able to hold the weight of product on display without threat of collapse.				
Tables and displays are in good repair, with no sharp edges, rough spots, exposed nails, etc. that may cause injury.				
Extension cords are either overhead or taped down.				
Extension cords are in good repair and properly rated for outdoor use.				
	Yes	No	Needs Improvement	N/A
Signs are secured.				
Display and work areas are neat, clean and free of debris, eliminating trip hazards.				
Vendor vehicle wheels are chocked to prevent movement.				
Vehicles are not leaking gas or other fluids.				
Food handling is done in a safe and hygienic manner, in accordance with all state and local Health Regulations.				
All appropriate licenses are obtained and current for products being sold.				
All vendors have current liability insurance, with market and property owner listed as an additional insured.				
Fire extinguishers on hand and properly charged if using electricity or open flame.				
All propane, helium or other gas tanks, are chained down.				
Emergency Preparedness				
Multiple entries and exits to allow for easy access for emergency responders and possible evacuations.				
Fire extinguisher at the market manager's booth.				
Fully stocked first aid kit at the market manager's booth.				
Market manager is trained in first aid, including CPR.				
An emergency preparedness plan is in place, coordinated with local authorities, conspicuously posted, and all employees well versed in carrying out the plan.				
Emergency barricades and cones are on hand in case of emergency.				
Fire lane is maintained for emergency responders.				
Market manager is continually scanning the market for potential risks.				
Market manager makes a regular inspection of vendor displays to ensure compliance with food safety regulations.				
Vendors and customers are continually updated on safety hazards, precautions and regulations.				

Market owned equipped and facilities are routinely inspected and maintained in proper working order.				
Miscellaneous				
Any areas under construction are barricaded, with appropriate warning signs, restricting customers, vendors and employees access to these areas.				
Precautions are taken to prevent falling ice and snow from any roof structures from injuring vendors and customers.				

Resources:

“A Guide to Managing Risks and Liability at California Certified Farmers Markets” Desmond Jolly and Chris Lewis, Small Farm Center, University of California, Davis.

Dave Wyman, Wyman Associates, Farm Family Insurance, Fayetteville, NY





FMM Pro Bylaws Template

An association is governed by its set of bylaws. They identify who the organization is, how it will be structured and how it will operate. The bylaws should be tailored to the needs of each individual organization, but they all have common components. The following is a template of those characteristics.

ARTICLE I: NAME AND OFFICES

SECTION 1. NAME

Clearly identify the name of the association for whom the bylaws are being adopted. The name should match the Articles of Incorporation. If not, then an amendment to the Articles of Incorporation should be filed with the Department of State.

SECTION 2. OFFICES

Identify the location of the association's office.

ARTICLE II: POWERS AND PURPOSES

SECTION 1. POWERS

This is a legal statement to show the Corporation will be consistent with nonprofit law.

SECTION 2. PURPOSE

The mission of the organization should be listed here. The mission identifies the organization's reason for existence. It should be concise, no more than 25 words, and answer the following questions:

Who we are

Whom we serve

What we offer

Be careful when crafting the mission statement, to ensure that the mission adheres to purposes identified by IRS as consistent with any nonprofit status you may be seeking.

ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1. MEMBERSHIP

Clearly identify who the members of the organization will be. This section will specify:

What are the qualifications of membership?

What is the length of term for a membership?

What are the responsibilities of membership?

SECTION 2. VOTING RIGHTS

Clearly identify who has voting rights, and what those rights are. For example, if tiered membership, how does the tier impact voting rights?

SECTION 3. DUES

Identify what the dues will be for each type of membership, who sets the dues and when it can be amended. Does not have to be a dollar amount, can just be stated that dues will be charged for membership. You can also state no dues will be required of membership or eliminate this section.

SECTION 4. ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING.

Identify when the annual membership meeting will be held. This should be a general time frame, such as, during the first calendar quarter. Indicate the purpose of the meeting, who will call the meeting and the required notice of the meeting to the membership.

SECTION 5. SPECIAL MEETING

Members may want to call a special membership meeting, outside of the Annual Membership Meeting. This section should identify the requirements and process for calling such a meeting.

ARTICLE IV: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SECTION 1. GENERAL POWERS

This is a statement that the board will conduct business in accordance with the Bylaws.

SECTION 2. NUMBERS AND TENURE

The size of the board. Keep in mind the need to get the work of the board done effectively and efficiently when setting the number of board members. Too large a group may hinder efficient operation, while too small a number may make it difficult to get good group dialogue for dynamic visioning and problem solving. Generally an uneven number of board members is used to prevent a tied decision in a vote.

You will also add a paragraph in this section to identify who is eligible to be on the board of directors. Examples would be regional representation or membership category representation.

In addition, if the board will also include any non-voting members, such as advisors, this section would spell out who is eligible as an advisor, how many are allowed on the board at any one time, how they are appointed or elected, and the length of their term, along with term limits.

Indicate how long the term of each board member is to be, including any term limits.

SECTION 3. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTION

Identify the process for nominating and electing board members.

SECTION 4. RESIGNATION, VACANCY AND REMOVAL

Should a board member choose to resign from the board, this section will define the process for resignation. This section determines whether the position is filled prior to annual elections, and if so, how that is accomplished. Finally, if a board member must be removed from their position, define the conditions and process for removal and replacement. The process must include due process for the board member being removed.

SECTION 5. QUORUM

This defines the number of board members who must be present at any meeting for any actions taken during the meeting to be legally binding. You may also consider that a board member need only be present a portion of the meeting to be considered part of the quorum.

SECTION 6. ACTION OF THE BOARD.

This section is used to state that the vote of a majority of the Directors present at the time of the vote, if a quorum is present at such time, shall constitute an act of the Board. Once achieved, the vote shall constitute a binding act of the Board.

SECTION 7. REGULAR MEETINGS

This section identifies how often the board meets, what the requirements for board members are for attendance, and how the board may meet; ie. Face-to-face, phone, email, or combination of meeting venues. Indicate how it will be determined which method to use.

SECTION 8. SPECIAL MEETINGS

Can special meetings of the board of directors be called? If so, who can call these meetings and what are the procedures for doing so?

SECTION 9. COMMITTEES

Boards of directors are often organized into committees to assist in the efficient operation of the board. The committee meets outside of regular board meetings to conduct their assigned task and will report back their work/findings/recommendations to the full board for implementation or vote. Some states may require certain standing committees, such as a finance or audit committee and governance committee. Bylaws should define any standing committees, along with definitions of their roles, their powers and who will make up the committee. Bylaws should also contain provisions that allow the president to establish additional ad hoc committees as needed, for the duration of each need. Some committees may include members outside of the Board of Directors.

SECTION 10. COMPENSATION

Most boards will have volunteer members. If so, it should be stated here that board members will not be compensated for their time or service. However, if they will be compensated, it should be stated what services are eligible for compensation.

ARTICLE V: OFFICERS

SECTION 1. OFFICERS

Identify the officers of the board of directors. Typically this includes President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. Some will include multiple Vice Presidents to allow for a learning curve before moving into the Presidency. Others may use co-Presidents to split the workload among busy people.

SECTION 2. ELECTION AND TERMS OF OFFICE

Define when the elections for officers will take place. Outline the process for nominating and electing officers. Be sure the procedure includes the process for transfer of power with the change of officers. Finally, include the length of term for each office and how many terms they may be allowed to hold each office.

SECTION 3. VACANCIES

Should an officer resign or be removed, this section outlines the process for replacing the vacancy.

SECTION 4. PRESIDENT

Outline the duties of the President

SECTION 5. VICE PRESIDENT

Outline the duties of the Vice President

SECTION 6. TREASURER

Outline the duties of the Treasurer

SECTION 7. SECRETARY

Outline the duties of the Secretary

Add additional sections for any additional officer positions you may create.

SECTION 8. COMPENSATION OF OFFICERS

Most boards will have volunteer officers. If so, it should be stated here that board officers will not be compensated for their time or service. However, if they will be compensated, it should be stated what services are eligible for compensation.

ARTICLE VI: CONDUCT OF THE BUSINESS OF THE CORPORATION

SECTION 1. BUDGET

When is an annual budget to be prepared, by whom and approved by whom?

SECTION 2. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Directors and officers of the Corporation shall disclose to the President or chair of the relevant committee when they have a direct or indirect financial interest in a contract or transaction of the Corporation and shall not participate in a Board vote on any such contract or transaction. The Board may adopt a Conflicts of Interest Policy which sets forth additional procedures and obligations relating to actual or potential conflicts of interest involving the Directors and officers of the Corporation. The Board shall take reasonable steps to ensure that any Conflicts of Interest Policy adopted pursuant to this Section is substantially consistent with any conflict of interest policies adopted by the Federation Member.

Except as otherwise provided by Law, the Corporation shall not make any loans to its Directors or officers, or to any other corporation, firm, association or other entity in which one or more of its Directors or officers are directors or officers or hold a substantial financial interest.

No member or employee of the Corporation may participate in the evaluation or approval of any application for a loan or any other matter from which he or she or any family member would directly or indirectly personally benefit. If a person's participation is challenged, the decision of the Board shall be final in determining whether a member or employee shall be disqualified from participating.

This is a legal statement prepared by the lawyers of the Lawyers Alliance of NY to comply with the NYS Nonprofit Revitalization Act. This statement can be taken whole or reworded with your own legal advice.

SECTION 3. USAGE OF FUNDS

No part of the net earnings of the Corporation shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its Members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the Corporation shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in the purpose clause hereof. No substantial part of the activities of the organization shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the organization shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office. Notwithstanding any other provision of this document, the organization shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by an organization exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or (b) by an organization, contributions to which are deductible under section 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

This is a legal statement prepared by the lawyers of the Lawyers Alliance of NY to comply with IRS Nonprofit Law. This statement can be taken whole or reworded with your own legal advice.

SECTION 4. CONTRACTS

Determine who will be authorized to sign legal documents, contracts, etc, on behalf of the corporation.

SECTION 5. DEPOSITS

A statement that funds of the corporation shall be placed in the Corporation's bank accounts on a timely basis. It can be as vague as this or more specific if that is practicable for your situation.

SECTION 6. INVESTMENTS

A statement that funds not needed for the daily activity of the Corporation may be invested, as permitted by law. This section should identify who makes those decisions on when and how much to invest, as well as where to invest.

SECTION 7. GIFTS

This section allows the board to accept gifts, grants, bequests or donations to the corporation for the purposes of the Corporation.

SECTION 8. FISCAL YEAR

This section will define the corporation's fiscal year. Look at the activity of the organization to help determine the fiscal year. Choose a time to end the fiscal year when Corporation's activity is in a low ebb to allow time for year-end financial reporting. If you are operating under a sponsoring entity, they may require you to adhere to their fiscal calendar.

SECTION 9. DISSOLUTION

In the event of dissolution of the Corporation, the Board shall, after payment of all liabilities of the Corporation, dispose of the assets of the Corporation, exclusively for the purposes of the Corporation in such manner, or to such organizations organized and operating exclusively for charitable, educational, religious or scientific purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law) and which is organized for purposes substantially similar to that of the Corporation.

This is a legal statement prepared by the lawyers of the Lawyers Alliance of NY to comply with IRS Nonprofit Law. This statement can be taken whole or reworded with your own legal advice.

ARTICLE VII: INDEMNIFICATION OF DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS

The Corporation shall, to the extent legally permissible, indemnify each of its Directors and officers against all liabilities and expenses, including counsel fees, reasonably incurred by him/her in connection with the defense or disposition of any action, suit or other proceeding in which he or she may be involved or with which he or she may be threatened, while in office or thereafter, by reason of his or her being or having been such a Director or officer. However, there shall be no indemnification with respect to any matter as to which such officer or Director shall have been adjudicated in any proceeding not to have acted in good faith in the reasonable belief that his or her action was in the best interests of the Corporation. Moreover, as to any matter disposed of by a settlement by such Director or officer, such Director or officer shall not be indemnified unless such settlement had been approved as in the best interest of the Corporation, (a) by the Federation Member, or (b) by a majority of the disinterested

Directors then in office, provided that independent legal counsel provides an opinion to the effect that such Directors or officers appear to have acted in good faith in the reasonable belief that his or her action was in the best interests of the Corporation.

This is a legal statement prepared by the lawyers of the Lawyers Alliance of NY to comply with IRS Nonprofit Law. This statement can be taken whole or reworded with your own legal advice.

ARTICLE VIII BYLAWS

SECTION 1. AMENDMENTS

This section allows for amendments to the bylaws and the process for board amendments and the process for ratification at the Annual Membership Meeting

SECTION 2. SEVERABILITY

Should any provision of these By-Laws be declared to be invalid, void or unenforceable by a court of competent jurisdiction, then such provision shall be construed so as to be enforceable and to give the closest effect to such provision as drafted, and the remainder of the By-Laws shall not be affected and shall remain in full force and effect.

This is a legal statement prepared by the lawyers of the Lawyers Alliance of NY to comply with IRS Nonprofit Law. This statement can be taken whole or reworded with your own legal advice.

References:

Lawyers Alliance of NY prepared the framework for the bylaws template for the Farmers Market Federation of NY.

Jude Barry and Brian Henehan, "Staff Paper: Enhancing Leadership and Organization for Farmers Market Success", Department of Applied Economics and Management, Cornell University, May 2007.

R. Harris, "Anatomy of a Mission Statement", www.nonprofitcenter.com, Spring 2008

Associapedia, "Bylaws", ASAE and the Center for Association Leadership.

Joan M. Hummel, "Starting and Running a Nonprofit Organization", Revised by the Center for Nonprofit Management, University of Minnesota Press, 2000.



**FreshConnect
Farmers' Markets**



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
Broome County





2016 Support Organizations for NYS Agriculture

Name	Address	Contact
Statewide Support Organizations		
Associated New York State Processors	Rochester Business Alliance 150 State Street Rochester, NY 14614	585-256-4614 Michele.hefferon@RBAAlliance.com www.nyfoodprocessors.org
Cornell Cooperative Extension		To find your county office: www.cce.cornell.edu
Farm Bureau, Inc	159 Wolf Rd. Albany, NY 12205	518-436-8495 www.nyfb.org
Farmers Market Federation of NY	117 Highbridge St., Suite U1 Fayetteville, NY 13066	315-400-1447 deggert@nyfarmersmarket.com www.nyfarmersmarket.com
Farmers Market Nutrition Program NYS Dept of Agriculture & Markets	10B Airline Dr. Albany, NY 12235	518-457-7076 farmersmarkets@agriculture.ny.gov
New York Agriculture in the Classroom	Cornell University Ithaca, NY 14853	nyaitc@cornell.edu www.agclassroom.org
New York Agri-Women		603-568-1404 newyorkagriwomen@gmail.com www.newyorkagriwomen.com
New York State Horticultural Society	PO Box 462 Geneva, NY 14456	315-787-2404 wilsonk36@hotmail.com www.nyshs.org
Organic Farming Association of NY (NOFA-NY)	1423 Hathaway Dr. Farmington, NY 14425	5852711979 info@nofany.org www.nofany.org
Small Farms Program (Cornell)	15A Plant Science Cornell University Ithaca, NY 14853	6072559227 smallfarmsprogram@cornell.edu http://smallfarms.cornell.edu/
Small Scale Food Processors of New York		212-421-1866 www.nysfpa.com
Taste NY	NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets 10B Airline Dr. Albany, NY 12235	tasteny@agriculture.ny.gov www.taste.ny.gov

Dairy		
New York State Farmstead and Artisan Cheesemakers Guild 21529 State Highway Delhi, NY	21529 State Highway Delhi, NY	607-746-9581 info@nyfarmcheese.org www.nycheeseguild.org
Cheese Manufacturers Association, Inc. (New York State)	116 Stocking Hall, Cornell University Ithaca, NY 14853	607-255-2892 www.nyscheesemakers.com
Greenhouse/Nursery		
Flower Growers Association (Long Island)	PO Box 102 Jamesport, NY 11947	631-886-2213 info@lifga.org www.lifga.org
New York State Flower Industries Inc.	3275 Webster Road Eden, NY 14057	716-649-4340 www.nyflowergrowers.org
Livestock		
Beef Industry Council, Inc. (New York)	PO Box 250 Westmoreland, NY 13490	315-339-6931 beefinfo@nybeef.org www.nybeef.org
Beef Producers Association (New York)	290 Four Rod Road Alden, NY 14004	716-902-4305 nybeefproducers@aol.com
Deer and Elk Farmers Association (Northeast)	1228 Munger Road Middlebury, VT 05753	802-388-4324 info@ndef.org www.ndef.org
Pork Producers Cooperative, Inc. (New York)	5146 Transit Road Depew, NY 14043	716-697-3031 www.newyorkpork.org
Sheep Producers Association (Empire)	69 Scism Road Tivoli, NY 12583	www.sheepgoatmarketing.info
Simmental Association (New York)	6493 Stauber Road Groton, NY 13073	607-423-4888 nysa@newyorksimmental.com www.newyorksimmental.com
Poultry		
American Poultry Association		607-847-6204 secretaryapa@comcast.net www.amerpoultryyassn.com
American Pastured Poultry Producers Association (APPPA)	PO Box 85 Hughesville, PA 17737-0085	888-661-7771 www.apppa.org
Eastern New York State Poultry Association		607-693-3433 jamie@enyspassc.com www.enyspassc.com
Produce		
Berry Growers Association (New York)	665 Sarah Court Lewiston, NY 14092	716-754-4414 pbaker.hort@roadrunner.com www.nysbga.org
NY Apple Association	PO Box 350 7645 Main Street Fishers, NY 14453	585-924-2171 www.nyapplecountry.com www.nycider.com

Potato Growers, Inc. (Empire State)	PO Box 556 Stanley, NY 14561	877-697-7837 mwickham@nypotatoes.org www.empirepotatogrowers.com
Vegetable Growers Association, Inc. (New York)	8351 Lewiston Rd, #3-304 Batavia, NY 14020	585-993-0775 nysvegetablegrowers@gmail.com www.nysvga.org
Other		
Christmas Tree Farmers Association of NY, Inc.	PO Box 705 Salem, NY 12865	518-854-7386 info@ctfany.org www.ctfany.org
Empire State Honey Producers Association	343 Morton Road Hamlin, NY 14464	585-732-2870 aedoan@rochester.rr.com www.eshpa.org
New York State Apiary Industry Advisory Committee	10B Airline Drive Albany, NY 12235	518-457-2087 paul.cappy@agriculture.ny.gov www.agriculture.ny.gov
New York State Maple Producers Association	301 Myron Road Syracuse, NY 13219	315-877-5795 office@nysmaple.com www.nysmaple.com
New York Wine & Grape Foundation	800 South Main Street, Suite 200 Canandaigua, NY 14424	585-394-3620 info@newyorkwines.org www.newyorkwines.org
Upper Hudson Maple Producers Association	50 Atkins Road Malta, NY 12020	uhmpa@sugaroakfarms.com www.newyorkmaple.com

All contact information and links are valid as of 2016.



**FreshConnect
Farmers' Markets**



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
Broome County



Together we strive to...

- **ENHANCE** the health of nutritionally at-risk New Yorkers
- **IMPROVE** nutrition knowledge and food skills
- **PROMOTE** use of farmers' markets by WIC families and low-income seniors
- **SUPPORT** New York farmers selling fresh produce at farmers' markets
- **EXPAND & DIVERSIFY** New York State fruit and vegetable production
- **PROMOTE** farmers' markets for sustainable and vibrant communities

For more information, visit:

Getting Fresh Food is a SNAP

www.snaptomarket.com

**Farmers Market
Nutrition Program**

www.fmnp.nutrition.cornell.edu



**Cornell University
Cooperative Extension**

Cornell Cooperative Extension is an employer and educator recognized for valuing AA/EEO, Protected Veterans, and Individuals with Disabilities and provides equal program and employment opportunities

Other resources used to buy fresh fruits and vegetables are available at some farmers' markets.

For information on **Fresh Connect Checks**, go online to www.FreshConnect.ny.gov

In New York City, learn more about **Health Bucks** at www.grownyc.org/greenmarket/ebt/healthbucks

The Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) New York State Outreach

Healthy People, Vibrant Farms and Food-Secure Communities



HELP FOR SHOPPERS AT NYS FARMERS MARKETS



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension

fmnp.nutrition.cornell.edu



Farmers' Market Consumer Programs in New York

The Basics

There are four government programs that offer low-income shoppers additional resources to buy produce at farmers' markets.

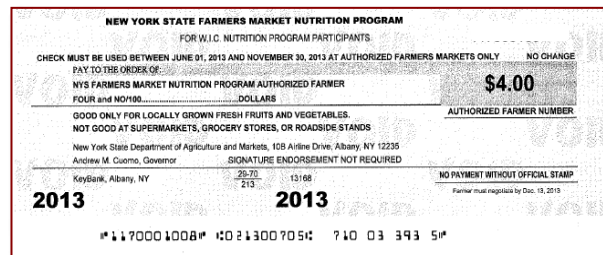
1. **WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP)**
2. **Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP)**
3. **WIC Vegetable & Fruit Checks (WIC VF)**
4. **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits** (formerly "Food Stamps")



WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP)

Eligible pregnant or nursing mothers, infants and children enrolled in the NYS Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for **Women, Infants and Children (WIC)** get checks worth \$4 each to buy fresh produce at farmers' markets.

To find a local **WIC agency**, call the **Growing Up Healthy Hotline** at 1-800-522-5006.

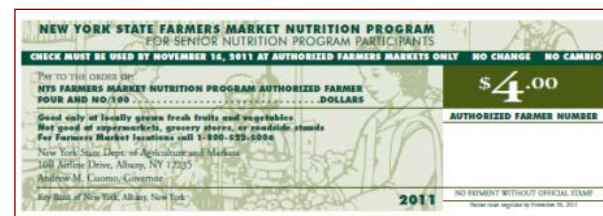


Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP)

Low-income seniors statewide may be eligible to receive checks worth \$4 each to buy produce at farmers' markets.

Eligibility is based on age (60 years and older) and income (no more than 185% federal poverty level).

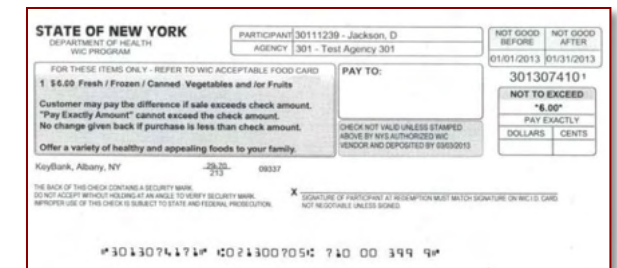
Senior citizens interested in the SFMNP should contact their local **Office for the Aging** or call the New York State Senior Hotline at 1-800-342-9871.



WIC Vegetable & Fruit Checks Program (WIC VF)

Pregnant and breastfeeding women, and children under the age of 5 enrolled in the **WIC Program** get \$8, \$10, and \$15 checks. WIC VF checks can be redeemed at traditional WIC retailers such as grocery stores and **NOW** can also be used at authorized farmers' markets.

To find a local **WIC agency**, call the **Growing Up Healthy Hotline** at 1-800-522-5006.



Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides monthly electronic benefits for purchase of food items at retail food stores and many farmers' markets, farm stands, and CSA's.

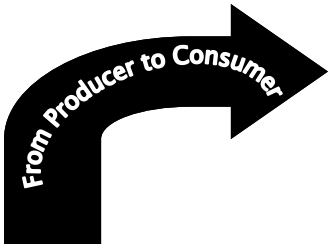
Look for the table at your local farmers' market with the sign that says

Use Your SNAP Card Here

Swipe your SNAP card and specify a dollar amount you wish to receive in tokens. Use tokens as cash to purchase products that are SNAP approved.

For more information about applying for SNAP, contact your local department of social services or call the toll-free hotline at 1-800-342-3009.





GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR FOOD DEMONSTRATIONS AT DIRECT MARKETING VENUES

Food demonstrations at direct marketing venues serve multiple purposes. Using local foods available at farmers markets, CSAs, or other outlets is a way to educate consumers about seasonality and cooking with local foods. Demonstrations also serve to increase farmer revenues by using locally available foods, which stimulate consumer purchases. Finally, while food demonstrations educate consumers about food and nutrition, they also promote proper at-home food safety practices by modeling proper behavior. As such, food demonstrations are excellent marketing tools for both the market and the participating farmers.

Food demonstrations, such as cooking demonstrations or other food events, are typically market sponsored, using either Cornell Cooperative Extension educators, local guest chefs or other food service professionals. To conduct a food demonstration in the market or any other venue that is open to the public, the following guidelines are recommended and in many cases, required:

License or permit required:

- Department of Health Temporary Food Service permit is required IF foods prepared on site will be sampled. Contact the local health department for local requirements.

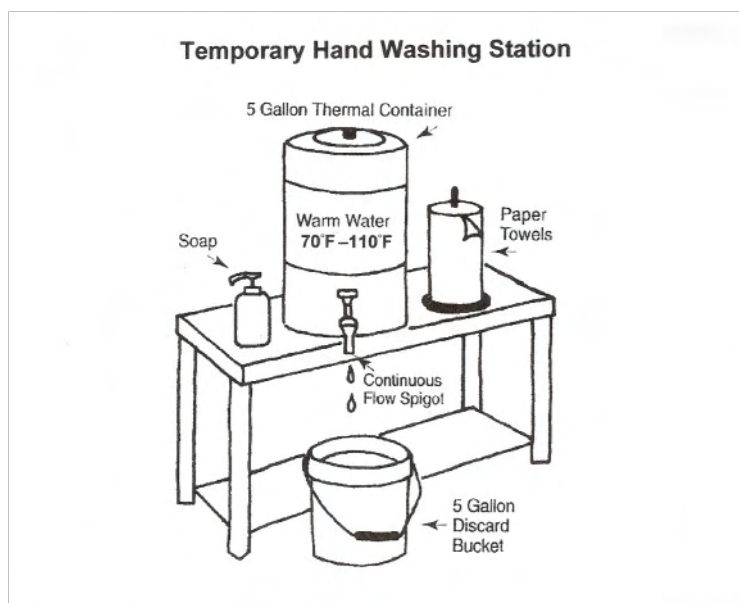
Demonstration site:

- Food Preparation site (booth) must be covered with a canopy or tent to minimize airborne contamination.
- If the booth is on grass, gravel or soil, a temporary floor must be used and can include rubber floor mats, tight wooden flooring or removable platforms. The flooring should be cleanable.
- Booths set up on pavement must be swept clean before set up.
- Covered waste receptacles must be used for garbage generated through the demonstration and for sampling waste.
- Only food handlers may be allowed in the demonstration booth.
- All food and supplies must be stored and displayed at least 18 inches off the ground.



Sanitation:

- Start with proper food preparation. Thoroughly rinse fresh produce with potable, running water, including those with skins and rinds that are not eaten. Rub firm-skin fruits and vegetables under running water with a clean vegetable brush.
- Use clean tools. Equipment, utensils and work surfaces must be clean and sanitized, and in good condition. Food contact surfaces should be cleaned with soap and water followed by an approved sanitizer and allowed to air dry before and in-between use. Single use paper towels can be used on food contact surfaces. Grills or other cook tops must be clean and in working condition. All tools should be constructed with materials that can be cleaned and sanitized easily to encourage proper sanitation practices at food demonstrations.
- Use safe practices. All propane tanks must be certified and chained to prevent toppling and potential damage to tank. Hot surfaces should be kept out of reach of the public.
- Personal hygiene is important. All individuals involved in food preparation should have clean body, hair and clothes and be free from any signs of illness or open sores. Hands should be washed before beginning food preparation and any time they become soiled, i.e. after using restroom facilities, handling live animals, raw meat, or after eating and drinking. Note that anti-bacterial gels are not a substitute for hand washing.
- A hand wash station in the booth is required. It can be a permanent facility or a temporary station (see illustration below), but must have warm water at a minimum of 105°F in a container with a valve permitting free-flowing water when activated, soap, disposable hand towels, and a means of collecting "gray" (waste) water.
- Any utensils used for cutting should be kept in sanitizing solution (70-135 ppm chlorine in water) between each use. Sanitizer concentrations must be monitored, using test strips, and replenished when concentration falls below 70 ppm.



What is the recommended method for washing hands?

Wet hands with potable, warm water, apply soap, and work up a lather. Rub hands together for at least 20 seconds. Clean under the nails and between the fingers. Rub fingertips of each hand in suds on palm of opposite hand. Rinse under potable, running water. Dry hands with a single-use towel.

What is an adequate sanitizing solution?

1-2 teaspoon household bleach (5.25% sodium hypochlorite) per 1 gallon potable water at approximately 75°F will achieve a solution of at least 100 parts per million (ppm). Note more bleach is *not* better, between 70 – 135 ppm is an acceptable range. As sanitizer breaks down over time, use test strips from sanitizer test kits or a pool test kit to ensure sanitizer strength. Bleach solutions cannot be allowed to fall below 50 ppm.

Preparation:

- Choose a recipe or menu that minimizes the use of potentially hazardous foods, such as raw meats, and emphasizes locally grown foods in season.
- Food ingredients must be from an approved source. No home canned or home prepared foods may be used.
- Prepare foods, i.e. cut and chop, using a permitted or licensed facility ahead of time.
- Cook and maintain all foods according to proper temperature. Use an instant read food thermometer to ensure accuracy.
 - Hot foods must be kept at 140°F or higher at all times*
 - Cold foods must be kept at 41°F or colder
 - Shell eggs must be maintained at 45°F or colder
 - Frozen foods must be kept at 0°F or colder until cooked
- Any foods held outside of the appropriate temperature range for 2 hours or more, must be discarded.
- Ice used for holding foods cold must be made with potable water and cannot be reused in drinks. Melted ice must be allowed to run off with no foods held in melted ice water.
- No bare hand contact or handling of ready to eat food is permitted. Use disposable food grade gloves tongs, deli paper or napkins to prevent bare hand contact. Gloves should be replaced whenever soiled, torn, changing tasks, or after 4 hours of continual use.
- Use single serve packets of condiments.
- Protect all food from dust, insects and consumer contamination by covering the food and supervising consumer sampling.
- Sampling must be conducted according to Food Sampling Guidelines.



**There are differences in temperature requirements determined by the regulatory agency. The recommendations above comply with the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, as well as the NYS Department of Health.*



GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR FOOD SAMPLING AT DIRECT MARKETING VENUES

Food sampling at direct marketing venues serves to provide customers with an opportunity to learn about farm fresh products and essentially “try before they buy.” As a way to attract attendees to a farmers market through cooking demonstrations, or as a selling technique within a vendor’s booth, sampling can be a very effective marketing tool. To provide samples at any direct marketing event open to the public, whether as a featured demonstration or as an agricultural producer, strict guidelines must be adhered to and food safety protocols followed.

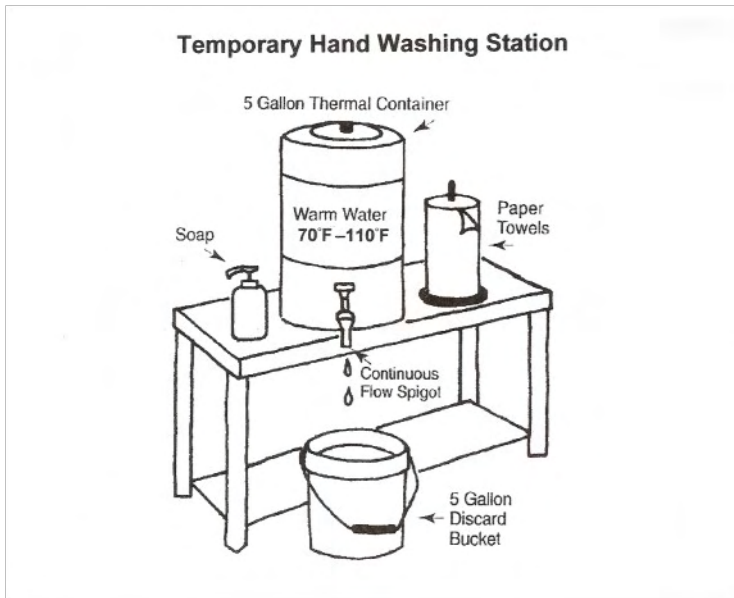
Please note that while sampling is generally allowed, local regulations may restrict sampling by adding requirements or disallow sampling altogether. Local regulations supersede state regulations and each market should contact their County Health Official (www.nysacho.org) and their NYSDOH District Office (www.health.state.ny.us) to verify local regulations before allowing sampling in the market.

License or permit required:

- Agricultural producers wishing to sample their own products at farmers markets must obtain permission from market managers.
- Department of Health Temporary Food Service Permit is required IF foods prepared on site will be sampled. Contact the local health department for local requirements.

Sanitation:

- Start with clean food. Thoroughly rinse fresh produce with potable, running water, including those with skins and rinds that are not eaten. Rub firm-skin fruits and vegetables under running water or scrub with a clean vegetable brush while rinsing with running, potable water.
- Use clean tools. Equipment and utensils must be easily cleanable and in good condition. Food contact surfaces should be cleaned with soap and water followed by an approved sanitizer and allowed to air dry before and in-between use. Single use paper towels can be used on food contact surfaces.
- Personal hygiene is important. All handlers of food samples should have clean body, hair and clothes and be free from any signs of illness or open sores. Hands should be clean and washed any time they become soiled, i.e. after using restroom facilities, handling live animals, eating and drinking. Note that anti-bacterial gels are not a substitute for hand washing.
- A hand wash station in the booth is required. It can be a permanent facility or a temporary station (see illustration), but must have warm water at 105°F in a container with a valve permitting free-flowing water when activated, soap, disposable hand towels, and a means of collecting “gray” (waste) water.



What is the recommended method for washing hands?

Wet hands with potable, warm water, apply soap, and work up a lather. Rub hands together for at least 20 seconds. Clean under the nails and between the fingers. Rub fingertips of each hand in suds on palm of opposite hand. Rinse under potable, running water. Dry hands with a single-use towel.

What is an adequate sanitizing solution?

1-2 teaspoon household bleach (5.25% sodium hypochlorite) per 1 gallon potable water at approximately 75°F will achieve a solution of at least 100 parts per million (ppm). Note more bleach is *not* better, between 70 – 135 ppm is an acceptable range. As sanitizer breaks down over time, use test strips from sanitizer test kits or a pool test kit to ensure sanitizer strength. Bleach solutions cannot be allowed to fall below 50 ppm.

Preparation:

- Protect foods at all times, using covers, to prevent contamination.
- Agricultural producers of raw fruits and vegetables and vendors producing foods as a NYSDAM registered Home Processor may provide samples to customers. Vendors of potentially hazardous foods (including eggs, dairy, meat, poultry and seafood), prepared or processed foods must bring pre-packaged individual serving size samples from a permitted or licensed source unless samples are prepared under a NYSDOH Temporary Food Service Permit.
- Proper temperature of samples must be maintained during transit to and while at market. Cook and maintain all foods according to proper temperature. Use an instant read food thermometer to ensure accuracy.
 - Hot foods must be kept at 140°F or higher at all times*
 - Cold foods must be kept at 41°F or colder
 - Shell eggs must be maintained at 45°F or colder
 - Frozen foods must be kept at 0°F or colder until cooked
- Any foods held outside of the appropriate temperature range for 2 hours or more, must be discarded.
- Ice used to chill samples should be made from potable water. Containers should provide for drainage to ensure that samples do not sit in melted ice water.
- Vendors should provide trash receptacles for trash generated from sampling. Trash receptacles should be covered and emptied frequently.




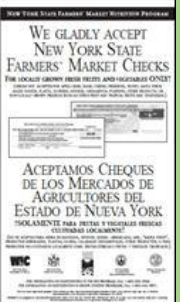
**There are differences in temperature requirements determined by the regulatory agency. The recommendations above comply with the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, as well as the NYS Department of Health.*

Distribution:

- Supervise food sampling. Dispense or serve food samples (avoid self-service) to interested consumers.
- Use single serve portions. Avoid dipping into a common container to prevent cross contamination.
- Utilize disposable food contact materials, i.e. toothpicks, plastic utensils, etc.
- No bare hand contact. Use disposable food grade gloves, tongs, deli paper or napkins to prevent bare hand contact. Gloves should be replaced whenever soiled, torn, changing tasks, or after 4 hours of continual use.
- Samples should be provided free of charge to the customer and bite-sized as the intent is only to show the quality of the product.



**2016 WIC Vegetables & Fruit Checks (WIC VF) and Farmers Market Nutrition Program Checks (FMNP Compared
Information for Market Managers and Farmers**

	WIC VF	FMNP
What are the values of the checks?	\$4 \$8 \$10 \$17	\$4
Can the participant “pay the difference” if the purchase price exceeds the value of the check?	Yes	Yes
Can the participant use the check with other benefits (Health Bucks, EBT tokens, FreshConnect Checks)	Yes	Yes
Can the participant combine two or more WIC VF checks together or two or more FMNP checks?	No	Yes
Can the participant receive change if the purchase price is less than the value of the check?	No	No
Can the participant buy non-locally grown produce?	Yes	No
Can the participant buy culinary herbs?	No	Yes
What is the period of time that the check can be used by the participant?	There are specific dates listed on the check, each check is good for 30 days only	Between June 1 – November 30
Is the participant’s name on the checks?	Yes	No
Does the participant need to show an identification card during the transaction?	Yes	No
Does the participant need to sign the check?	Yes	No
Does the farmer need to stamp the check with a state issued stamp?	Yes	Yes
Can the farmer redeem checks for cash at the bank?	No	Yes
How long does the farmer have to deposit the check in the bank?	60 days from the “Not Good Before” date on the check	Until December 15
Must the farmer sign up for the program before accepting checks?	Yes	Yes
Can the check be used at approved farm stands?	Yes	Yes
What does the check look like?		
What does the sign look like at the farmer’s stall?		





FARMERS MARKET SPECIAL EVENT – IDEAS

Remember – the only limitation on ideas is your imagination.

Organizations to contact for events at your market:

Along with the following list of suggested groups (which is just a “short” list), keep your eyes and ears open for suggestions!

Grade School, Middle School and High School

Bands

Band Booster Clubs

Drama/Mime Groups

Jr. College/College bands

Local musicians, musical groups

Disc jockeys

Art groups/local art councils

Cub Scouts

Girl Scouts

Boy Scouts

Eagle Scouts

Camp Fire Girl & Boys

Horizon Club

Big Brother/Big Sister

YMCA/YWCA

Tae Kwon-do Groups/Martial Arts Academy

Local Sports groups (Little League, Soccer, Football, T-ball, etc.)

Dance & Gymnastics groups

Master Gardeners

Men’s Garden Club

Women’s Garden Club

Quilting Group – display/demonstration

Weavers Guild

Pork Producers

Egg Producers

Turkey Federation

Beef Producers

Corn Producers

Soy Bean Producers

Fruit & Vegetable Growers Assn.

Dairy Council

Department of Natural Resources

County Conversation Board

Farm Service Agency

Animal Rescue League, or City Pound, County

Animal Shelter

Zoo

County Extension Office

FFA, 4H

American Heart Association

American Cancer Society

American Lung Association

American Dental Association

Hospital – (Nutrition or Dietary Dept.)

American Ophthalmology Assoc.

American Podiatry Assoc.

Medical School or Local Clinic

Fire Department

Police Department

Schools

Church groups, choirs

Chefs/Restaurants

Radio/TV stations
Armed Forces (Coast Guard, Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, ROTC, Jr. ROTC)
Veterans Groups
Community Economic Development groups
Chamber of Commerce
Resource, Conversation and Development (RC&D)

County Extension Office
Kiwanis
Rotary
Lions Club
Local Farmers Federation
Community Church and/or Church Coalition
City or a Department within the City

The following is a very limited list of event suggestions.

How you make them into your own event is up to your creativity!

Celebrate Opening Day, Middle of the Season Day, Last Market Day, etc.
Celebrate a Vegetable or Fruit Day (e.g. Broccoli Day, Strawberry Day, etc.)
Market Birthday/Anniversary – host a birthday/anniversary party for your market
Cooking Demonstrations
Arts & Crafts Day – Christmas in July
Essays/Photo/Drawn Pictures – tie in with any type of promotion
Recycling Collection Point
Eyeglass Collection Site for the Lions Clubs
Food Drive
Clothing Drive
Kid’s parade
Unusual/ugly vegetable contest
Coupon “cents off” for a particular featured vegetable at that day’s market
Market Bucks
Market Basket giveaway
Produce tasting

Scrambled Egg Breakfast – afternoon market cookies/coffee
Chili Breakfast
Spaghetti Breakfast
Popcorn giveaway
Agi-sculpture, Play With Your Food – art forms made from vegetables/fruits
Children’s Produce Tractor Pull
Hands On Art Affair/play & craft time for children
Collection for a Mission or homeless shelter
Cucumber/Zucchini races
Family Picnic Day – July
Free plant giveaway
Cooking demonstration
Ice Cream Social
Contests: pie eating, seed spitting
Bicycle Safety Day, Bicycle Rodeo
Pep rally for football game
End or beginning site of an organized 5K, 10K race or fun-walk

National Days/Weeks/Months Observances during a Market Season

The following pages are lists of nationally declared days, weeks or months celebrated during the months of a typical market season (May-October). Any of these could be an event/celebration at your market. Make your market THE place in your community for informative activities and events during the market season.

Information taken from *Chase’s Calendar of Events* (an annual publication, you can check your local library reference desk) *also see* www.butlerwebs.com/holidays

Examples – You’ve selected National Healthy Vision Month (May) as an event. Contact your local Lions Club and ask them to come to the market and provide a collection box for used eyeglasses –and allow them to promote their organization. Be sure to put out press releases – also do signage at your market prior to the event to remind people to bring their unused eyeglasses.

May 25 is National Tap Dance Day – get a local dance studio to come and perform!

MAY NATIONAL DAYS/WEEKS/MONTHS OF NOTE

National Beef Month
National Barbecue Month
National Egg Month
National Hamburger Month
National Clean Air Month
National Bike Month
National Older Americans Month
National Physical Fitness & Sports Month
National Strawberry Month
National Salad Month
National Asparagus Month
National Bike Month
National Book Month
Eat Dessert First Month
National Salsa Month
National Tennis Month
National Military Appreciation Month
National Historic Preservation Month
Mother’s Day (8th)
Armed Forces Day (21st)
National Tap Dance Day (25th)
Memorial Day (30th)
National Police Week (15th-21st)
National Tourism Week (7th-15th)
National Safe Boating Week (21st-27th)
National Emergency Medical Services (EMS) week (18th-24th)
(May is filled with health awareness campaigns. These are just a few. You might think about having a health fair or health information table at your market).
National Osteoporosis Prevention Month
Better Sleep Month
National Mental Health Month
National Allergy/Asthma Awareness Month
National Women’s Health Care Month
National Arthritis Month
National Correct Posture Month
Healthy Vision Month

Better Hearing & Speech Month

JUNE NATIONAL DAYS/WEEKS/MONTHS OF NOTE

National Dairy Month
National Safety Month
National Turkey Lover’s Month
National Perennial Gardening Month
National Zoo & Aquarium Month
National Fresh Fruits & Vegetables Month
National Accordion Awareness Month
National Rose Month
National Adopt a Shelter Cat
National Rivers Month
Summer Solstice (21st)
Flag Day (14th)
Father’s Day (15th)
National Yoyo Day (10th)
National Little League Baseball Week (13th-19th)

JULY NATIONAL DAYS/WEEKS/MONTHS OF NOTE

Anti-Boredom Month
National Ice Cream Month
National Baked Bean Month
National Hot Dog Month
National Picnic Month
National Recreation & Parks Month
National Culinary Arts Month
Independence Day (4th)
National Farrier’s Week (13th-19th)
Air Conditioning Appreciation days (July 2nd - August 31st)

AUGUST NATIONAL DAYS/WEEKS/MONTHS OF NOTICE

National Farmers’ Market Week (7th-13th)
National Inventor’s Month
National Back to School Month

National Peach Month
National Immunization Awareness Month
National Smile Day (1st Monday in Aug.)
National Mustard Day (6th)
National Sisters Day (7th)
Herbert Hoover Day (Sunday nearest Aug 10th)
National Clown Week (1st week in Aug)
National Simplify Your Life Week (5th-12th)

**SEPTEMBER NATIONAL DAYS/WEEKS/MONTHS
OF NOTE**

National Piano Month
National Library Card Sign-Up Month
National Chicken Month
National Honey Month
National 5-A-Day Month
National Cholesterol Month
National Potato Month
National Rice Month
National Organic Harvest Month
National Sewing Month
Prostate Cancer Awareness Month
Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month
National Hispanic Heritage Month (Sept. 15th-
Oct. 15th)
Deaf Awareness Week (18th-24th)
National Farm & Ranch Safety & Health Week
(18th-24th)
Labor Day (5th)
National Grandparent Day (11th)
First Day of Autumn (22nd)
Talk Like a Pirate Day (19th)

**OCTOBER NATIONAL DAYS/WEEKS/MONTHS
OF NOTE**

National Pork Month
National Apple Month
National Fire Prevention Month
National Breast Cancer Awareness Month
National Adopt a Shelter Dog Month
National Dental Hygiene Month
National Popcorn Month
National Cookie Month
National Roller Skating Month
National Eat Better – Eat Together Month
National Lupus Awareness Month
National Animal Safety & Protection Month
National Stamp Collecting Month
National Crime Prevention Month
National Chili Month
National White Cane Safety Day (15th)
National Children’s Day (9th)
World Smile Day (7th)
Columbus Day (14th)
National Grouch Day (15th)
World Food Day (United Nations 16th)
United Nations Day (24th)
Make a Difference Day (22nd)
Halloween (31st)
October 16th-22nd: National Chemistry Week,
National Forest Products Week, National
Massage Therapy
Week, National School Bus Safety Week

PRODUCE TYPICALLY AVAILABLE AT MARKETS – Create a promotion around these:

EARLY-MID MAY MID-LATE MAY

Bell Pepper
Blueberries
Cabbage
Cucumbers
Eggplant
Greens
Peaches
Peas
Potatoes
Snap beans

Squash
Tomatoes
Bell Pepper
Blueberries
Cabbage
Cucumbers
Eggplant
Greens
Peaches
Peas
Potatoes

Snap beans
Squash
Tomatoes

EARLY – MID JUNE MID – LATE JUNE

Bell Peppers
Blueberries
Cabbage
Cantaloupe
Cucumbers
Eggplant
Greens
Green Beans
Lima Beans
Onions (Green)
Peaches
Peas
Potatoes
Okra
Snap Beans
Squash
Sweet Corn
Sweet Potatoes
Tomatoes
Watermelon

EARLY – MID JULY MID-LATE JULY

Apples
Bell Peppers
Blueberries
Cabbage
Cantaloupe
Cucumbers
Eggplant
Green Beans
Greens
Lima Beans
Okra
Onions (Green)
Peaches
Peas
Potatoes
Squash
Sweet Corn
Sweet Potatoes
Tomatoes
Watermelon

EARLY – MID AUGUST MID – LATE AUGUST

Apples
Bell Peppers
Blueberries
Cantaloupe
Cucumbers
Eggplant
Green Beans
Greens
Lima Beans
Okra
Onions (dry)
Peaches
Peas
Potatoes
Squash
Sweet Corn
Sweet Potatoes
Tomatoes
Watermelon
Winter Squash

**EARLY – MID SEPTEMBER MID – LATE
SEPTEMBER**

Apples
Bell Peppers
Cabbage
Cantaloupe
Cucumbers
Eggplant
Green Beans
Greens
Lima Beans
Okra
Onions (Dry)
Peaches
Peas
Pumpkins
Squash
Sweet Corn
Sweet Potatoes
Tomatoes
Turnips
Watermelon
Winter Squash

EARLY – MID OCTOBER MID – LATE OCTOBER

Apples
Bell Peppers
Cabbage Cucumbers
Greens
Lima Beans
Okra
Onions (Dry)

Peas
Pumpkins
Rutabaga
Sweet Potatoes
Tomatoes
Turnips
Winter Squash



**FreshConnect
Farmers' Markets**



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
Broome County





Special Events Check List

The following checklist is a suggested guide to organizing and executing a special event. Include project deadlines for each step. You may or may not use all of these steps, but be sure all essentials are covered.

Completed	Step	Deadline
Staffing:		
	Number of staff needed	
	Police Notifications (call day before and day of)	
	Volunteers	
	Develop list of responsibilities to be accomplished before, during and after	
	Review Firs and Safety Policy for site with staff and volunteers	
	Custodial staff notified	
Location:		
	In-house or other site – secure permit or permission	
	Secure Clean up Supplies	
	Plan set up – arrangement of space – clean up	
	Attendance Policy (i.e. once you leave, can you re-enter) Post Policy	
Entertainment		
	Secure contracted services for availability and cost (i.e. DJ, band, entertainer, etc)	
	Begin Contract process	
	Equipment requirements (i.e. sound system, mics, CD player, etc)	
	Electric requirements	
Refreshments		
	Decide on food and drinks	
	Get 3 quotes for any items to purchase	
	Safe food handling materials (i.e. latex gloves)	
	Know safe food handling regulations	
	Storage of food and drinks	

Publicity		
	Distribution of plan	
	Gimmicks to get people there	
	Photographer for event	
	Video for event	
	Invitations	
	Make a list and have several people look it over so as not to miss anyone that should be invited	
Miscellaneous		
	Decorations – theme ideas, quotes for purchasing, make sure it is part of the budget	
	Helium tank, if using balloons	
	Evaluations and debriefing after event	
	Any additional supplies needed	



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Special Events Planning Tips

Done	Planning
	Select chair and members of your planning committee.
	Develop a master plan and set the event dates.
	Select chairs for subcommittees such as refreshment, setup and cleanup, tour guides, traffic and safety, volunteers, speakers and invitations.
	Organize volunteers for each committee
	Formulate a publicity plan. Decide when/how media should be contacted. Be sure to alert the media of photo and interview opportunities.
	Prepare copy for program and printed materials.
	Hold a “tie down” meeting the day before the event. Distribute a schedule of events to each committee member. Discuss assignments. Distribute identification badges. Answer any questions.
	Set up several registration tables and stagger tour schedules to avoid bottlenecks. Distribute a program as guests arrive, so they know what to expect.
	After the event, mail the printed program with an appropriate letter to “significant others” who were unable to attend.
	Remember to thank everyone who participated. Send photos if possible.
	Conduct an evaluation.



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What is the Westside Farmers Market?

The Westside Farmers Market is a wonderful community gathering place located in the parking lot of St. Monica Church at 831 Genesee St., with approximately 500 people gathering on a Tuesday night, sharing dinner, music, and a great fresh food shopping experience.

Why does the Market exist?

The Westside Farmers Market has a mission to bring fresh local produce into the neighborhood while fostering a community spirit. We offer more than produce. We have a wonderful variety of fruits, vegetables, and greens, and we also offer youth orientated activities, music and entertainment, blood pressure screening, dining, bike repair, and so much more.

What can we do for you?

We can promote your business in a number of ways. We send out a weekly newsletter during the market season, we have an active website, and a Facebook page with over 500 likes and still growing. We have a booth space available at the market for local merchants; we have posters, and make announcements. In 2015 the market will be open 19 weeks, and we can promote your business all of those weeks.

What can you do for us?

We invite you to join us as a Sponsor of the market. The other side of this letter has ideas on how you can become a sponsor, and how we can co-promote. We have other ideas we would like to share with you. For instance, maybe you would like to sell our market bags, or maybe you would like to offer incentives to your customers.

How will your sponsorship money be spent?

Education – We bring in organizations like the Seneca Park Zoo or Wild Wings and provide cooking demonstrations for our shoppers.

Entertainment – You can always find music at the market and very often a magician or photographer, sketch artist or dance group – your donation could provide a stipend for them.

Promotion – Our promotional materials, ads, and mailings will include the name of your business.

Coupons – Market coupons introduce new shoppers to the market (and your business).

Youth activities – Craft projects and snacks for the young people who participate in these activities every week.

And more – the activities your donation might cover are almost endless...

We have more ideas on how we can promote each other. You probably have some also. We look forward to talking to you personally about our market, your business, and how we can work together.

*We hope that you choose to be a Westside Farmers Market Sponsor!
The levels below are only suggestions. We assure you the money will be spent wisely.
An amount of \$50.00 or more offers you promotion through our market.*

Platinum Eggplant - \$500 - We will give you:

Your own booth at the Market once during the season, with promotion - 1st 50 customers with receipt from your business get \$1 market voucher, paid for by the market.

Featured sponsor write up in our weekly newsletter once during the season plus time in a shared merchants' booth at the market as often as you like.

Business card ad in market newsletter.

Always listed in our weekly newsletter and on a sign at the market. You will receive a poster or decal for your business that says "I Sponsor the Westside Farmers Market."

Named as a market sponsor on our website.

Gold Corn - \$250 – We will give you:

Featured sponsor write up in market newsletter once during season plus time in a shared merchants' booth at the market as often as you like.

Business card ad in the market newsletter.

Always listed in our weekly newsletter and on a sign at the market. You will receive a poster or decal for your business that says "I Sponsor the Westside Farmers Market."

Named as a market sponsor on our website.

Silver Onion - \$100 – We will give you:

Business card ad in market newsletter.

Always listed in our weekly newsletter and on a sign at the market. You will receive a poster or decal for your business that says "I Sponsor the Westside Farmers Market."

Named as a market sponsor on our website.

Bronze Carrot - \$ 50 – We will give you:

Always listed in our weekly newsletter and on a sign at the market. You will receive a poster or decal for your business that says "I Sponsor the Westside Farmers Market."

Named as a market sponsor on our website.

In addition to sponsorship –

How about hosting a Westside Farmers Market sandwich board? Are you near a busy intersection? Have you seen the market sandwich boards out on Tuesday afternoons? We are looking for businesses to 'adopt' a sandwich board. The business would keep the board for the market season and set it up each Tuesday afternoon and take it in at the end of the evening. We would happily send you a reminder email or call each week.

Interested? Call us at 585-436-8999 or email westsidemarketrochester@gmail.com.

Want to send a check today? Make it payable to "SWPC/Westside Farmers Market" and mail to: Westside Farmers Market, 470 Rugby Avenue, Rochester, NY 14619.



Program Planning Model

Program: _____ **Agency:** _____ **Date:** _____

Purpose(s): _____

Start here and work to the left or right. Use bullets and quantify information where possible.

Program Planning Section			Evaluation Section				
Inputs	Activities	Outcomes	Targets or Objectives	Indicators	Methods/Tools	Timeline	Who
Ingredients needed to conduct the activities and accomplish the outcomes (Examples: participants, staff, volunteers, materials, equipment, \$)	How, or, the methods and actions undertaken to achieve the outcomes	The benefits, changes or improvements that will result from your implemented program or project	Projected level of success or result you hope to achieve	The way change is observed and the data you will collect to measure the progression towards an outcome	The way in which you will collect the indicator data. How?	When you will measure the target(s) or objective(s)	Persons or entity responsible for evaluation



Sample Winter Market Agreement

Operating Plan/Agreement

Name of Market

General Conditions

Operating Schedule Days & Hours	Indicate market days and hours for load in and load out. Make sure you give yourself 1 ½ hours for load in and also the same for load out. Site manager needs to be on duty for the full time.
Market Location:	Indicate place.
Traffic Control:	Note all the particulars of entrance to site, parking, where vendors trucks will be parked, load in, where A-frames will be placed.
Financial:	What you will pay for the space. If there is a several year contract, indicate the increases agreed on. 2013 season: fee per day, number of days, total fee 2014 season: fee per day, number of days, total fee 2015 Season: fee per day, number of days, total fee
Payment Schedule:	Payment 1: amount, date to be paid Payment 2: amount, date to be paid Payment 3: amount, date to be paid
Other:	Special conditions can be noted here. Such as if they require tarps to be put down on the floors and if all items need to be hand-trucked in.

Your Responsibilities

Vendor selection & recruiting	Indicate here that you will decide and determine the vendor mix.
Management and Administration:	Explain how you will manage and administer the market. That there will be a site manager on duty for the full market duration, from load in to load out and cleanup.

Insurance You will maintain a general liability insurance policy naming the sponsor as an additional insured. The policy limits will be \$1,000,000 per incident, \$2,000,000 aggregate and will be valid for the market season.

You will ensure that all vendors selling in the market maintain general and product liability insurance policies naming the sponsor as additional insured.

Rules governing Processing and sale of Food and agricultural Products: Market vendors will be responsible for securing any licenses or permits required by county, state or federal laws.

Promotion and advertising: Indicate what kind of promotion and advertising you will do.

Clean-up: Indicate here what has been agreed upon. Will a cleaning service come in or will you broom clean and mop floors.

Sponsor Responsibilities

Site conditions and Maintenance: Market management will accept the site "AS IS"

Indicate if they have agreed to provide trash receptacles and who will remove garbage.

Traffic control: Indicate the particulars on traffic here.

Signage: Indicate where they have agreed to have you put A-frames and banners. Will they install hanging banners or will you?

Promotion: Note here what the sponsor will do to help promote the market.

Sign and send two copies and ask them to send one back to you.

For the Management:

For the Sponsor or Property Owner

By: _____

By: _____

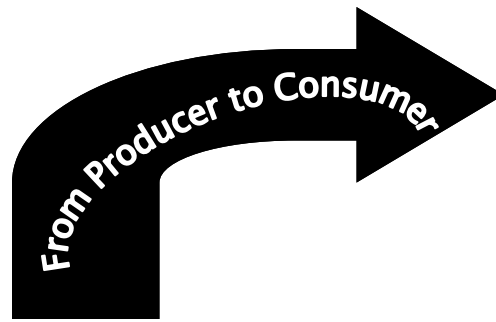
Title: _____

Title: _____

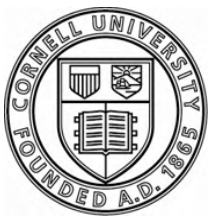
Date: _____

Date: _____





FOOD SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FARMERS MARKETS



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
Jefferson County





FOOD SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FARMERS MARKETS

Farmers markets provide a direct connection between farmers and consumers. A market is an opportunity for consumers to reconnect to food and agriculture, as well as a way for farmers to develop relationships with consumers that will generate greater sales of their farm products. At farmers markets, consumers have the opportunity to ask questions, learn about food production, get to know the producers and develop a comfort level with the foods they eat and feed to their families. This direct connection and a farmers knowledge of food safety practices becomes increasingly important as reports of foodborne illnesses become more frequent in the news. Foods purchased at farmers markets are perceived to be safer than foods bought through other, more impersonal venues and consumers may want to know what farmers are doing to keep food safe.

Are foods purchased direct from farmers at farmers markets any safer than foods purchased elsewhere? Not necessarily. Farmers should consider food safety not only as a health issue, but also as a marketing tool. By implementing food safety practices, farmers reduce the likelihood of contaminating the food they are producing and sharing this information with their customers demonstrates their commitment to their consumers, which may translate into sales. Practices for ensuring a safe food product begin at the farm, using Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs). In addition, there may be federal, state, or county regulations that must be adhered to during production and/or packaging based on the product and handling procedures. GAPs cover all aspects of fruit and vegetable production, from planting through postharvest handling, as well as transporting foods from the farm to selling foods at the farmers market. Farmers Market Managers need to be involved in ensuring that the farmers market is a safe food environment for all vendors and customers. Setting standards and providing infrastructure to support food safety practices will create an environment that will benefit the market, customers, and the farmers.

Knowing and following food safety practices protects the market and farm from loss and liability associated with foodborne illness. Farmers or markets that are linked to an outbreak of a foodborne illness will find themselves legally liable for damages, and potentially punitive damages as well, not to mention media attention that can impact market attendance. Both the market itself, and the market vendors should carry product liability insurance to help protect against a potential lawsuit. Of course, the best prevention is to follow safe food practices.

What follows is a listing of potential sources of contamination and recommendations for best practices to follow to reduce the potential of unsafe food being sold at the market.



In order to reduce food safety risks and prevent the likelihood of foodborne illness outbreaks at farmers markets, each farmer needs to understand how to identify risks and implement practices to mitigate these risks. This document is intended to help farmers understand what microbiological, chemical, and physical hazards exist on their farms and at the market they attend, assess the risks associated with these hazards, and adopt outlined recommendations that can reduce these risks. Each farmer must perform their own risks assessment and determine which guidelines are appropriate for their operation. It may be beneficial to work with farmers market managers and other vendors to conduct a farmers market risk assessment and work collaboratively to implement practices at the market to reduce risk.

References:

Food Safety Begins on the Farm: Good Agricultural Practices for Fresh Fruits & Vegetables, www.gaps.cornell.edu/

Farmers Market Federation of NY Checklist for vendor permits/licenses and certificates: www.nyfarmersmarket.com/pdf_files/vendorpermitreqmts.pdf

New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets Sanitary Regulations for Direct Marketing: www.agmkt.state.ny.us/FS/industry/sanitary.html

Attachment: Farmers Market Food Safety Checklist



POTENTIAL SOURCES OF CONTAMINATION

1. POTENTIAL SOURCE OF CONTAMINATION: WATER

Water is a basic ingredient of life. However, water can also be a source of bacteria that can contaminate foods and cause serious illness and death. Thus, water quality and its intended use are very important in assessing food safety risk. Water at farmers markets may be used for hand-washing or to rinse fresh produce prior to consumption. All water used at farmers markets needs to be potable. During the Washington, NY County Fair in 1999, one well used by vendors in their food preparation and as drinking water for thousands of fairgoers was contaminated with *E coli* O157:H7. A hard rain on drought-parched soil caused significant runoff. That runoff passed through a cattle barn on its way to the underground aquifer. The contamination was enough to cause over 1000 people to become sick, 65 requiring hospitalization. It also resulted in the death of 2 people. What this shows is that water can be a source of harmful bacteria and developing and following food safety practices, including testing of water sources used for food production will protect the health of consumers, and thus, the safety, image and survival of the market itself.

RECOMMENDATION: All water used at the market should be potable. If not from a municipal source, all water sources should have microbiological testing conducted prior to each market season opening and as often as may be warranted. In addition, all sources of water should have signs indicating its potability.

Testing of all water sources will ensure consumers that the water is safe for drinking, for hand washing and that any water used in the preparation of foods at the market, is clean and bacteria-free water. While requirements may vary from county to county, generally nonpublic water sources will need to be tested for coliform bacteria on a quarterly basis during the months in operation and a nitrate test annually. Test results should be maintained on file as proof of testing.

References: www.health.state.ny.us/environmental/water/drinking/regulations



2. POTENTIAL SOURCE OF CONTAMINATION: PRODUCTS

A wide variety of products are sold in farmers markets, from fresh fruits and vegetables, meats, dairy, maple syrup and honey, wines, prepared foods, processed foods, as well as plants, fresh cut flowers and crafts. Each product may have health code regulations that must be followed. See the Farmers Market Federation of NYS checklist, referenced above and attached, for regulatory permits and licenses required, based on product sold. To guarantee that each vendor is complying with such codes, market managers should maintain a copy of each up-to-date license or permit in their files.

Farm producers should produce, harvest and handle food products following Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs). These practices have been developed as a means to minimize microbial contamination and reduce the chances of foodborne illnesses coming from the farm. Farmers should consider the marketing impact of being able to tell their customers that they are concerned about their well-being, and therefore, are GAPs compliant.

It should be noted that a small scale producer is no safer than a large producer, nor do production methods (e.g., organic, biodynamic, etc.) alter the inherent safety of the foods produced. Rather it is important that each producer understand the risks that exist and implement GAPs that address these risks and are scaled to each producer's farm practices so that they are effectively practiced.

RECOMMENDATION: Understand and implement GAPs to minimize food safety risks that exist in production and post-harvest handling of fruits and vegetables.

Washing Produce Washing appropriate fruits and vegetables to remove field debris or field heat can be an important step in providing safe foods for consumers; however, it does not ensure the produce is free from contaminants. Therefore, it is important to understand that produce washed at the farm is not a ready-to-eat food. To be a ready-to-eat food requires a food service license from the health department and then washing under food service protocols. Produce coming in from the fields with a high level of organic matter attached should be rinsed in a single pass method; e.g. rinsed under running water. If washing in a sink, dunk tank or other submersible means, a disinfectant should be added to the water to prevent contamination that may be present from spreading. Disinfectants added to water (even single pass water) can improve the shelf life of the produce by helping to control plant pathogens and spoilage organisms.

RECOMMENDATION: All water used in post-harvest handling should be potable.

RECOMMENDATION: All water used in a communal or dunk tank must contain a disinfectant appropriate for the commodity with levels monitored for effectiveness.

RECOMMENDATION: Signs should be posted with a message to consumers to thoroughly rinse all produce in cool, running water before consumption.

Value Added A growing trend has been for farmers to find ways to add value to their farm products. This helps them to extend their marketing season and increase farm profits. Many are turning their fruits and vegetables into “value-added” products, such as jams, jellies, sauces, and pickles. Before farmers turn to processing their foods, they must be certain that they are complying with all state and federal regulations with respect to their recipe and process. This is important to assure a flavorful product with long lasting shelf life, as well as a safe food product.

RECOMMENDATION: Processed foods must be produced under NYS Department of Health and/or NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets regulations, including the use of Certified Food Handlers, where appropriate.

Live Animals In a few markets, live food animals are brought in for sale to consumers. This is a tradition among some ethnic groups, and one that markets wish to respect. However, having live food animals in vendor stalls can be a concern for cross contamination with other foods nearby.

Occasionally, live animals being sold or displayed are provided by farmers who also sell fresh fruits or vegetables. The farmer does not normally have the ability, either through staffing or market design, to sponsor two separate booths to accommodate the separation of food and live animals. In this case, the farmer should use extreme precautions to prevent cross contamination. The person working with the animals should not handle other foods for sale.

RECOMMENDATION: All live animals for sale or display should be kept segregated, and be located downwind from foods being sold in the market.

References:

Food Safety Begins on the Farm: Good Agricultural Practices for Fresh Fruits & Vegetables, www.gaps.cornell.edu/

Small Farms Task Force: A Resource Guide to Direct Marketing Livestock and Poultry, www.nyfarmersmarket.com/publications/ResourceGuideDirectMarketingMeatPoultry.pdf

Food Handler Certification: http://www.servsafe.com/RegRequirements/rr_state_juris_summ.aspx?st=New%20York&id=119

Attachment: Permits/Licenses/Certificates Required for Farmers Market Vendors



3. POTENTIAL SOURCE OF CONTAMINATION: ANIMALS

Many people are concerned about having animals in a food environment. Dander, saliva, urine and feces can easily contaminate foods, either directly from the animals, or transferred from people touching the animals and then touching food. Some animals in the market may be a danger, for example, pets may become agitated and bite people or customers might trip over leashes. The issue of animals in the marketplace is a serious consideration, especially when in a park setting where dog-lovers come to exercise their dogs while shopping the marketplace.

RECOMMENDATION: Markets should be animal-free sites, excluding service animals.

Customers who bring pets While it is recommended to maintain foods free from animal-related contamination, it is recognized that this is not always appropriate or possible. Many markets would lose some of their customer base if dogs were not allowed in the market. In this case, additional care must be taken to guarantee the market is protecting consumers from food contaminated by animals. As role models for consumers, vendor's personal animals should be prohibited. This should be reflected in the market's rules and regulations. If markets allow animals to be in the market, the following would apply.

SUBSTITUTE RECOMMENDATION 1: The market should maintain a designated area for animal hygiene, providing waste bags, sanitation containers, and a hand washing station. Signage should be displayed in the animal area, "Please wash hands before returning to the market and handling food products."

SUBSTITUTE RECOMMENDATION 2: All animals should be on a short leash and under the owner's control at all times.

Live animal displays for entertainment Live animal displays at farmers markets introduce consumers to farm animals. These displays can be very educational to those unfamiliar with farm animals. However, care needs to be taken to prevent cross contamination with the other foods offered for sale in the market.

Market managers also must be concerned with public safety. All animals on display should be vaccinated. While baby animals are cute and cuddly, if they are too young to have had their vaccinations, they should not be part of the farm animal display. It is also advised to restrict the public from touching the animals. A first aid kit should also be on hand near a farm animal display, as well as a hand-washing station with signs reminding visitors to wash their hands after attending the exhibit or touching the animals.

RECOMMENDATION: All live animals for display should be kept segregated from the food and vendors and, ideally, located downwind from foods being sold in the market.

RECOMMENDATION: Consumers should be prohibited from eating in the animal display area.

RECOMMENDATION: A first aid kit, hand-wash station and signs should be used to remind visitors to wash their hands after visiting the exhibit.

References: Food Safety Begins on the Farm: Good Agricultural Practices for Fresh Fruits & Vegetables, www.gaps.cornell.edu
Small Farms Task Force: A Resource Guide to Direct Marketing Livestock and Poultry, www.nyfarmersmarket.com/publications/ResourceGuideDirectMarketingMeatPoultry.pdf

4. POTENTIAL SOURCE OF CONTAMINATION: VENDOR HYGIENE

Farmers must take care to present a positive image to their consumers. Good hygiene is as much a marketing tool as it is a food safety precaution. Clean clothes, hair and body minimize the risk of spreading germs and contaminants from person to product.

Whenever a vendor has an open wound, it should be cleaned and covered with a bandage. Gloves should be worn as a secondary barrier to protect food from being contaminated with blood and blood-borne pathogens.

RECOMMENDATION: All market vendors should have clean body, hair, and clothes and be free from any signs of illness or open sores.

RECOMMENDATION: All vendors must wash hands before beginning work and any time they become dirty, e.g. after using the restroom, handling live animals, or eating and drinking. Note that anti-bacterial gels are not a substitute for hand washing.

Vendors should refrain from smoking and eating while selling food and all breaks should be taken in designated areas away from the vending booth. Vendors should wash their hands after returning from a break.

RECOMMENDATION: Smoking should not be allowed while selling and/or handling food. NYS Health Laws prohibit smoking where food is being handled, whether it is preparation or the sale of food.

RECOMMENDATION: Designated areas should be available for vendors to take a break, eat and smoke. Hand-washing facilities adjacent to these areas will encourage hand washing prior to returning to farmers market booths.



References: Food Safety at Farmers Markets and Agritourism Venues: A Primer for California Operators, http://sfp.ucdavis.edu/farmers_market/food_safety.pdf
Farmers Market Guidelines: Minimum requirements for food safety, Oregon Dept of Agriculture, http://www.oregon.gov/ODA/FSD.docs/pdf/guide_farmer_market.pdf?ga=t
Food Safety Regulations for Farmers Markets, Purdue Extension, <http://www.ces.purdue.edu/extmedia/EC/EC-740.pdf>
Safe Food Handling at Open Markets, Kansas State University Extension, <http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/library/fntr2/FOODASYST/8market.pdf>

5. POTENTIAL SOURCE OF CONTAMINATION: CONSUMER CONTAMINATION

Consumers can be the cause of food contamination. Dirty hands, sneezes, even children who take a little taste, can contaminate foods. Farmers should provide supervision over their displays to guard against such possibilities and remove any products that have potentially been contaminated. To reduce risks, consumers should be encouraged to follow proper hygiene and food handling practices. Signs can be posted encouraging consumers to wash their hands before handling fresh produce and rinsing all fresh produce in cool water before it is consumed.

RECOMMENDATION: Hand washing stations should be available within the market for consumer use, with signs saying, "Food Safety is a Priority at our Market. Please wash your hands before handling produce." Anti-bacterial gels are not a substitute for hand washing.

References: Fight BAC campaign, www.fightbac.org

6. POTENTIAL SOURCE OF CONTAMINATION: PRODUCT DISPLAYS

Product displays should be designed to limit consumer handling of products and should be supervised to recognize when cross contamination has happened and allow for all contaminated foods to be removed.

Display heights Food displayed off the ground protects consumers by eliminating potential contamination from animals and pests, as well as soil and ground debris. To maximize sales opportunities, a consumer should not have to reach for product below the knees and above the shoulder. This is as much a marketing tool as it is a food safety issue.

RECOMMENDATION: All foods should be kept off the ground or floor during storage and display.

Meat displays Meats sold at farmers markets are packaged from the slaughterhouse. While the packaging minimizes the risk of contamination, leaks do occur. Raw meats should be kept separated from other foods to minimize the risk of cross contamination.

RECOMMENDATION: Vendors should segregate the foods handled at market to ensure there is no cross contamination; particularly raw meat, poultry, or seafood, and eggs.

Display materials Foods can be contaminated if displayed or packed in contaminated containers/surfaces. To minimize the risk of contamination, containers and display surfaces, such as tables, should be cleaned and sanitized before each use. All containers should be kept covered to minimize the risk of contamination. Display surfaces should be cleaned between uses or covered with clean tablecloths to prevent contamination from residues of past market sales.

RECOMMENDATION: Storage and display containers should be free from food and plant residue and other debris. They should be cleaned and sanitized (if possible) before each use.

RECOMMENDATION: Display surfaces should be cleaned and sanitized before each use.

Shopping bags Once a disposable bag has been used, it should never be used for the sale of foods. It could be contaminated with soil, spoiled food particles, blood from meat, or other contaminants. In addition, bags that are not food grade may leach harmful chemicals into any food that is placed in it.

RECOMMENDATION: Bags for foods sold to consumers should be new and free from chemicals that would contaminate food products.

Egg cartons Reusing egg cartons is a common practice at farmers markets. Environmentally conscious consumers will return egg cartons when they are ready to purchase another. However, used egg cartons can be contaminated with pathogens, such as Salmonella, that can contaminate new eggs placed in the carton. Farmers should consider the risk of contamination when choosing to reuse them.

RECOMMENDATION: Using only new cartons is the safest action. However, if reusing cartons, all prior markings, including producer identification, grade and size statements should be removed from used egg cartons. The cartons should be clean and free of any residue, and re-labeled with the farmer's identification, according to NYS Labeling Laws.

RECOMMENDATION: Shell eggs must be held at 45°F or below.



Temperatures *There are differences in temperature requirements determined by the regulatory agency. These recommendations comply with the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, as well as the NYS Department of Health.

Outside of the recommended temperature ranges, bacteria will grow. Any foods requiring temperature control and held outside of the recommended temperature ranges for 2 hours or longer should be destroyed.

When using a cooler to maintain cold or frozen foods, a thermometer should be available to test the temperature throughout the market day to guarantee the appropriate temperature range is maintained. In addition, the ice used must be made from potable water. The cooler should have proper drainage for ice melt to prevent food products from sitting in water. Ice melt should be collected and disposed of properly.

RECOMMENDATION: While on display all hot foods MUST remain hot, 140°F* or above, cold foods MUST remain cold, 41° or below, with shelled eggs held at 45°F or below, and frozen foods MUST remain frozen, 0°F or below.

RECOMMENDATION: All potentially hazardous and prepared/processed foods brought to the market must be prepackaged. Foods prepared on site under New York State Health Department Temporary Food Service Permit should be covered with protective cover, to prevent contamination.

RECOMMENDATION: All ready-to-eat foods brought to the market under NYS Agriculture and Markets regulation, such as baked goods, should be pre-packaged. Foods prepared on site as per NYS Department of Health Temporary Food Service Permit regulations must be covered with protective cover or prepackaged, to prevent contamination.

RECOMMENDATION: All prepackaged foods must be labeled in accordance with New York State Labeling laws.

References:

New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets Meat Regulations:

www.agmkt.state.ny.us/FS/industry/04circs/Art5BsaleofmeatCIR914.pdf

www.agmkt.state.ny.us/FS/industry/04circs/meatforsaleatretailCIR934.pdf

Small Farms Task Force: A Resource Guide to Direct Marketing Livestock and

Poultry, www.nyfarmersmarket.com/publications/ResourceGuideDirectMarketingMeatPoultry.pdf

New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets Egg Regulations:

www.agmkt.state.ny.us/FS/industry/shelleggs.html

New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets Food Labeling Regulations:

www.agmkt.state.ny.us/FS/pdfs/FSI514.pdf

Shared Wisdom: Selling Your Best at Farmers Markets DVD available at Extension Offices throughout NYS

7. POTENTIAL SOURCE OF CONTAMINATION: TRANSPORTATION

Transportation can represent a risk to foods due to exposure to dirt, dust, or other things that could lead to contamination of the food. In addition, foods are also at risk if they fall outside the optimum temperature range for safety during transportation. To reduce risks, proper food handling, sanitation and temperature maintenance should be considered. Truck beds, vans or other transportation vehicles should be clean and the load covered during travel to eliminate possible contamination while on the road. If transporting a mixed load, potentially hazardous foods, such as raw meats and eggs, should be segregated from other foods such as fresh produce. Coolers or other insulated containers can be used to maintain the proper temperatures during transportation.

Hot foods must remain hot, cold foods must remain cold and frozen foods must remain frozen throughout the trip from farm to market. A thermometer and a temperature log should be utilized to verify appropriate temperature at departure and arrival, with necessary steps taken en route to maintain such temperatures.

RECOMMENDATION: Trucks, vans or other vehicles used to transport products for consumption should be free from dirt, food residue, livestock or domestic animal debris, chemicals, fertilizers and all other potential contaminants. The enclosed space should be brought to the proper temperature for foods being transported before loading. All loads should be covered or enclosed for transporting food products, either with an enclosed body, such as a van, a truck cap or with a tarp covering to minimize exposure to the elements during transportation.

RECOMMENDATION: While en route all hot foods MUST remain hot, 140°F* or above, cold foods MUST remain cold, 41°F or below, with shelled eggs held at 45°F or below, and frozen foods MUST remain frozen, 0°F or below.

Reference: NYSDAM Meat and Poultry Safety Flyer: www.agmkt.state.ny.us/FS/pdfs/meatand.pdf

Attachment: Temperature log

**There are differences in temperature requirements determined by the regulatory agency. The recommendations above comply with the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, as well as the NYS Department of Health.*



8. POTENTIAL SOURCE OF CONTAMINATION: AIRBORNE

Most farmers markets are open-air markets, occurring on a street or in a city park setting. Winds and air currents can blow contaminants over foods being offered for sale in the market. Bird droppings are another consideration. A canopy or tent provides protection against contamination from leaves, bird droppings, etc. In addition, food products can be covered to further reduce exposure risks.

RECOMMENDATION: Tables of food products for sale in an open air market should be covered by a tent or canopy to prevent direct contamination from overhead risks.

RECOMMENDATION: Displayed foods should be covered to reduce risks from airborne contamination.

9. POTENTIAL SOURCE OF CONTAMINATION: ANOMALOUS EVENTS

Unusual events may occur that require a special look at food safety issues. For example, flooding can contaminate products. When flooding occurs in a market located on a street, floodwater may contain road residues including oil, gas, antifreeze, tire rubber, etc. If the food products are immersed in these flood waters, they are irretrievably contaminated and need to be discarded. This can also occur with flooding at the farm. Fields and produce that are underwater may also be contaminated and should not be harvested for sale.

Other unforeseen situations may occur while at the farmers market. Each event should be looked at in terms of potential for contaminating the foods being offered and whether those foods can be safely sold to consumers or must be discarded.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR FOOD SAFETY AT FARMERS MARKETS:

BATHROOM FACILITIES

Every market should have bathroom facilities. It is undesirable to host the public without providing for their needs and comfort. That doesn't mean that the market must build public restrooms, but the market should be able to accommodate this need. Many markets will seek permission from a neighboring business to allow market vendors and patrons to use their bathroom facilities on market days. In the absence of this kind of community partnership, the market should provide port-a-johns for consumer and vendor use. When locating a port-a-john at the market, it should be close enough to be convenient for both customers and vendors, but should be kept at enough distance so that any spill will not come into contact with food being sold.

Along with port-a-john toilets, or any bathroom facilities, is the need for a hand washing station. The hand washing station should be maintained outside of the port-a-john. This will prevent back splash, keep the toilets available for optimum use, and promote hand washing when its practice is visible to all. Hand washing stations require potable water, soap, a catch basin for gray-water, single use towels, and optimally hands-free operation of faucets. There must be signage posted at the hand washing station that "Employees/Vendors must wash hands before returning to work."

TRACEABILITY

A concern of the FDA in foodborne illness outbreaks is being able to trace tainted food back to the source of contamination. For food processors this may involve batch coding and elaborate electronic tracking systems to follow each batch through the food system. For farmers markets, this is much easier because there is a direct sale from farmer to consumer. However, consumers will shop with multiple farmers during each market visit and remembering who they purchased from is not always possible. Farmers should make every effort to identify their market booth with their farm name, as well as their product, allowing consumers to track where their food comes from. Farm records should be kept to identify the field, harvest date and field worker for each week's product offering. All producer information should be on hand for products purchased for resale. Again, this is also a valuable marketing tool as it makes it easier for consumers to return to their favorite market farmers.

RECOMMENDATION: All vendors in farmers markets should display farm signage at their booth that identifies the farm name.

Farmers should also consider other ways they can keep their farm name in front of customers, such as table signage that includes the farm name, farm brochures, business cards and name tags on clothing.

For markets that allow reselling of products, the products should be clearly marked with identification of farm of origin. This allows consumers to choose whether or not to buy products that are not coming directly from the producer, and also allows traceability should there be an issue with the food's safety.

RECOMMENDATION: All products being sold in the market that are not produced by the vendor, should be marked with the farm of origin.

Finally, it is important that each farm document harvest information for each lot they harvest, including the field from which it was harvested, date of packing, (if different from harvest date), person(s) involved in harvesting and packing, and any other information specific to the crop. For each market day, a log should be kept to document the type and amount of each commodity that was taken to the market. This information should be linked to harvest logs so that all relevant information is available to help trace the product should an illness occur. Harvest logs are not only important to food safety, but can also help farmers track harvest quantities and sales at markets. This information allows farmers to estimate revenues for each market and plan for upcoming markets by noting what items sell best and how they can modify their marketing strategies to encourage sales of items that may not be selling so well.

**Attachment: Traceability Procedures
Harvest Logs**



FOOD DEMONSTRATIONS IN THE MARKETPLACE

Food demonstrations provide excellent opportunities for customers to learn about the products sold at a farmers market. Occasionally customers are unfamiliar with the seasonal foods local farmers grow, cuts of meats not found at the grocery store, or may not recognize foods in their raw state. Customer satisfaction, familiarity, and sales can be improved when customers are shown how to prepare and cook these foods, as well as taste them. Markets that sponsor food demonstrations, whether by a chef, educational organization or other entity, can use this as an opportunity to demonstrate food safety practices.

RECOMMENDATION: Food demonstrations must follow the “General Guidelines for Food Demonstrations at Direct Marketing Venues” as outlined in the attached reference.

Attachment: General Guidelines for Food Demonstrations at Direct Marketing Venues



FOOD SAMPLING

Featured Demonstrations: Samples of the featured product/recipe through a food demonstration cannot be provided to customers unless local NYSDOH regulatory agencies allow it and if foods are either: 1) Prepared ahead of time using an approved source and brought to the farmers market in pre-packaged single serving quantities and the demo food products are not used for public distribution; or 2) The demonstrator attains a temporary food service permit through the local NYSDOH office and prepares food on site following NYSDOH protocols for a temporary food service establishments.

Agricultural producers: Raw fruits and vegetables and products produced under a 20C exemption; home processed foods, maple and honey; from the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets may be sampled at the vendor's booth. Samples of potentially hazardous foods; such as meats, poultry, and dairy; and ready-to-eat foods must be prepared in an approved facility* and brought to the market, prepackaged, unless being sampled under a temporary food service permit. All samples must be made available free of charge, without any further preparation, such as heating or cooking, and the proper sanitary facilities are used. These facilities would include running water maintained at 105°F, equipment cleaning and sanitizing facilities, hand washing facilities (see Guidelines attached) and accessible toilet facilities. Likewise, proper temperatures must be maintained for the products as outlined in the Product Displays section above. If an agricultural producer wishes to prepare their product for sampling, (e.g., cook and serve meats) then a NYSDOH Temporary Food Service Establishment permit must be attained as outlined above for food demonstrations. Any product that has been cut, or otherwise processed on site, must be used for free samples and cannot be sold either in whole or in part.

RECOMMENDATION: Food sampling must follow the "General Guidelines for Food Sampling at Direct Marketing Venues" as outlined in the attached reference.

*An approved facility refers to an Article 20C licensed establishment under NYSDAM, a permitted facility under NYSDAH or a local DOH, or a NYSDAM registered Home Processor.

Attachment: General Guidelines for Food Sampling at Direct Marketing Venues

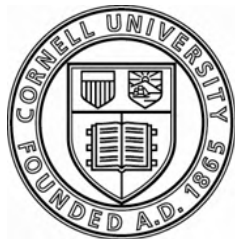


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Friends of the Market Toolkit: Volunteer Interest Form

Volunteers are important to keeping the market operating efficiently and effectively. We rely on our volunteers to help us make each market day successful. To help us match our market's needs with your interests, please complete the information requested.

Name:	Date:
Address:	Phone:
City, State, Zip	Cell:
Email:	

1. Work experience:

2. Volunteer Experience: What and where

3. Skills: Check your level of skill in each of these areas.

Skill:	Slight level	Okay	Pretty good	Expert
Graphic Arts				
Fundraising				
Grantwriting				
Salesmanship				
Accounting/Bookkeeping				
Food Service				
Teaching				
Computer/web				
Advertising/Promotion				
Other (please specify):				

4. Certificates/Permits or Licenses held: please list

5. Ongoing Volunteer Needs: check the tasks that interest you:

- Market greeter
- General market day operations needs
- EBT program volunteer
- Market advertising and promotions
- Educator:
 - Farmers
 - Consumers
- Fundraising
 - Fundraising events
 - Grantwriting
 - Fundraising campaign
- Social media/blogging
- Website updates
- Special events
- Other:

6. Times available: please check the boxes for your current availability

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Mornings							
Afternoons							
Evenings							
All Day							
Varies							

7. Potential commitment level:

- Ongoing market needs
- Short term market needs
- Special, one-time project or event
- Undecided, but willing to give most anything a try



Sample Farm Inspection Report

Site:

Date of Site Visit:

Farm Representative:

Inspector:

Started with market:

Markets Attending:

Percentage of Sales from Market:

Acres owned:

Acres Leased:

Acres in Production:

Staff:

Farm History and Description:

Land:

Owned:

Rented:

Infrastructure and Equipment:

Production Methods:

Production Schedule:

Crops:

Audit:

Application Updates:

Crop List Additions:

Special Challenges:

Farmer Comments:

Follow Up Required

Summary:

The contents of this report are confidential between the inspector, the inspected party, and (Market). This report does not constitute consultation, nor should it be used for promotional purposes. All compliance assessments are made in reference to the rules and regulations of the (Market) and are based on the inspector's observations, review of documents and operator interview.

Inspector Name:

Inspector Signature

Date



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DRAFT

Crop Inspection Checklist

Date:	Time Arrived:	Time Departed:			
Farm Name:		Producer Contact:			
Main Location:		Contact Phone:			
Market Location					
Crop Products Listed in Application:					
Inspector:					
Previous Conditions or areas of concern:					
1. Land:					
<i>Parcel Location(s)</i>					
#	Owned?	Date/Term	Location	Crop(s)	Acres
<i>Verify field documents, crops and note whether a lease was available at the time of inspection. Note the term of the lease (begin and end date). For perennial crops, note bearing and non-bearing acres and if possible, tree or vine densities.</i>					
2. Facilities and other Locations of Production (greenhouses, high tunnels, hydroponics):					
#	Owned?	Location	Crop(s)	Sq Ft.	
<i>Verify location dimensions, crops and note whether a lease was available at the time of inspection.</i>					
3. Seeds and Transplants					
a. Is the seed storage area accessible? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No					
b. Are seed receipts available? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No					
c. Does the farm grow any genetically modified plants, as defined by market rules? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, how are those plants used or sold?					
4. Methods of Production					
a. Does the producer make any label or marketing claims about production methods? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No					
b. If yes, are these claims third-party verified? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No					
c. If not, what is the basis for determining whether the claims are honest and accurate?					
<i>Note fertility management, water management, pest management, weed management, and growth regulators used</i>					

5. Labor, Equipment and Infrastructure

- a. Does the farmer hire labor? Yes No
Number of employees at peak season:

- b. Does the farmer use only his own production equipment? Yes No
If no, what operations are performed by custom operators and for which crops?

- c. Is the harvest of crops conducted by the producer? Yes No
If no, what crops are not harvested by the producer and who is responsible for harvest?
For perennial crops, note names on packing bins.

6. Handling and Packing Facilities

- a. Packing location:
- b. Number of employees (full time equivalent):
- c. Does the operation purchase or handle crops from other producers? Yes No
If yes, what crops:
- d. How are the purchased or handled crops sold or used?

- e. Does the operation irradiate produce? Yes No
- f. If yes, how is the irradiated produce sold?

Note washing, grading, packing and bagging equipment.

7. Storage Facilities

- a. Unrefrigerated storage capacity: _____ cu. ft.
- b. Refrigerated storage capacity: _____ cu. ft.
- c. Inventory products on hand:
- d. Are all products sold at market in inventory? Yes No
- e. If not, explain:

Perform sample inventories of products sold at market

8. Processed Products:

- a. Does the operation make any processed food products sold at market? Yes No
If no, skip to 9
- b. Is the processing facility on the farm? Yes No
If no, give the address of the processing facility:

- c. Does the operation purchase ingredients from other sources? Yes No
- d. If yes, from what sources?

- e. In what products are they used?

- f. Are inventories of purchased ingredients stored at the facility? Yes No
- g. Are any products containing artificial trans fats made or stored at the processing facility? Yes No
If yes, how are products containing artificial trans fats sold?

- h. Does the facility have a Hazard Analysis/Critical Control Points (HACCP) Plan? Yes No
- i. If so, is the HACCP Plan available with documentation of implementation? Yes No

For processed products, perform sample audits to verify that the percentage of purchased ingredients in processed products meets market standards.

The Crop Inspection Checklist is derived from a document used by Greenmarket and shared by John Ameroso at the Farmers Market Manager annual conference Nov 2015.





Designing Evaluation Questions

“The most serious mistakes are not being made as a result of wrong answers. The truly dangerous thing is asking the wrong question”

Peter Drucker

Common Forms of Questions

Open Ended - No absolute limit to response (e.g., What do you think about...)

- When you don't know full range of answers
- Respondents have time and inclination to answer
- When you have time to analyze

Binary - Two separate, complete response alternatives (e.g., True or False)

- When there are only 2 alternatives
- When the responses can be stated without overlap

Multiple Choice – Selections from a range or set group of options (e.g., Choose three...)

- When the full range of answers is known
- When responses should be standardized
- When alternatives are realistic, balanced and relevant

Combinations – (e.g., Please select one and explain your choice...)

General Principles of Asking Questions

Eliminate “luxury” information

Don't assume; explain

Don't put respondents on the spot

Don't lead (e.g., Why did you enjoy this?)

Don't load (unbalanced choices)

Keep things short and simple

One thing at a time

Give clear instructions

Pilot test it!

Improving Evaluation Responses

- Clear purpose – and let people know it
- Grease the skids (let them know it's coming)
- “Anonymity” mechanism
- Attractive questionnaire
- Keep “sensitive” questions near end
- Provide incentives



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What Information Will Stakeholders Want?

Identifying key stakeholders and knowing what information they want or need, can help to focus evaluation questions. If you know what information you want, you can find ways to collect that information.

<u>Stakeholder</u>	<u>Typical Questions</u>	<u>Evaluation Use</u>
Program Management, Staff	Are we reaching our target population? Are our participants satisfied with our programs? Is the program being run efficiently? How can we improve our program?	Programming decisions Day-to-day operations
Participants	Programming decisions, day-to-day operations Did the program help me and people like me? What would improve the program next time?	Decisions about participation and support
Community Members	Is the program suited to our community needs? What is the program really accomplishing?	Decisions about participation and support
Public Officials	Who is the program serving? What difference has the program made? Is the program reaching its target population? What do participants think about the program? Is the program worth the cost?	Decisions about commitment and support. Knowledge about the utility and feasibility of the program approach.
Funders	Is what was promised being achieved? Is the program working? Is the program worth the cost?	Accountability and improvement of future grant making efforts.





EVALUATION WORKSHEET **Designing YOUR Evaluations**

1. Identify an **EVALUATION QUESTION** to address (what is it you want to know):
2. **WHERE**, or from **WHOM**, will you seek information pertaining that question:
3. What **EVALUATION TECHNIQUE(S)** will you use to collect information pertaining to the question?
4. Specify the **SPECIFIC QUESTIONS** you will ask:
5. **WHEN** will you carry out this evaluation?
6. **WHO** will conduct the evaluation?
7. **WHO ELSE** needs to be involved in planning this evaluation?



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