



**A Case Study from the Ohio Direct Marketing Team**

This case was prepared as part of a USDA/ODA Specialty Crops Ribes project.

# Branstrator Farm

Est. 1821



Branstrator Farm  
885 North George Rd  
Clarksville, Ohio 45113  
[www.branstratorfarm.com](http://www.branstratorfarm.com)



## Business Overview & Marketing Situation

Established in 1821, the 180-acre farm of Jon Branstrator produces a wide array of vegetable and fruit crops. Jon's traveling overseas to Central America and agricultural experiences played a key role in 1995 when he returned home to his family's farmland. Jon transitioned the farm from a grain monoculture operation that his father had managed to that of a mixed fruit and vegetable farm and decided to use methods such as crop rotation that help maintain a healthy ecosystem. Located in southwest Ohio, most of the production and

marketing occurs between May with strawberries through October with the final pumpkin and fall squash harvest. According to Jon, "At Branstrator Farm, our priority is producing high quality fruits and vegetables for our community, while maintaining a healthy ecosystem".



## Products/Services

At Branstrator Farm, customers have the opportunity to purchase already picked fruit and vegetables at the home market or enjoy picking their own with more than 180 acres of crops, including currants, gooseberries, peaches, blueberries, blackberries, raspberries, tomatoes, cauliflower, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, fall squash, pumpkins and traditional grain crops. Branstrator sells a variety of his products and other local items through their retail farm market, farmers' markets, pick your own sales and to specialty food stores, chefs and farm markets in Dayton and Cincinnati. Jon also provides tours to school groups, senior groups and businesses; hosts weddings at his farm; and conducts special events, such as an annual asparagus and strawberry festival in the spring and an annual "Harvest Bash" pumpkin festival in the fall.



## People (Customers)

Like many Ohio producers, Branstrator sells to both retail and wholesale customers.

They sell about 40% of their products directly to consumers through their farm market, farm festivals and farmers' markets and about 60% to wholesale customers. In addition to selling to independent grocers and specialty food stores, a growing number of other farmers purchase Branstrator strawberries, peaches and pumpkins to sell at their farm markets, farmers' markets and CSAs (Community Supported Agriculture). At their retail farm market, about 80% of their customers are repeat visitors. Jon commented, "When customers come to my farm they can see how fruit and vegetables grow". Some of Jon's customers prefer number one fruit, while others prefer number two because they plan to bake with them, preserve them or process them into a value-added product like jams or jellies."



## Place (Distribution)

The Branstrator farm includes eight acres of strawberries, four acres asparagus, four of peach trees, twenty five of pumpkins and winter squash, two acres of blueberries, four acres of staked tomatoes, less than an acre of blackberries, raspberries and currants, and multiple acres of soy beans, rye, and soft red winter wheat. The entire farm has trickle irrigation with several irrigation ponds. Jon's self-service open air market is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in season. Managing the flow of the pick-your-own strawberry and pumpkin crop operation can be a challenge. "Because we have so many people coming onto the farm, it requires additional staff be hired to take care of all the customers", says Jon.



## Promotion & Positioning

With a focus on customer service, Branstrator benefits from word-of-mouth marketing. To attract new customers and communicate with existing customers, he has a website, blog, Facebook page, newsletter and listings in various directories, such as Ohio MarketMaker and DiscoverOhio. New customers can subscribe to his e-newsletter through an easy-to-use feature on his website. Branstrator is always featured in the many local and area media.



## Planning & Marketing Management

Jon operates a small farm operation and performs all of his own marketing and production. He has friends, neighbors and up to 6 dedicated seasonal employees to support the farm and marketing activities.



## Marketing Assistance Resources

For help with their marketing, management, and production practices, Branstrator turns to numerous organizations and programs including Ohio Produce Growers and Markets Association (OPGMA), Ohio Farm Bureau/Our Ohio, North American Farm Direct Marketing Association (NAFDMA), the International Fruit Tree Association, their local Convention & Visitors Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, and various grower groups and publications.



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