Best Practices for Farmers’ Markets

Christie Welch, Farmers’ Markets Specialist
• Low or no-cost marketing ideas.
• Food safety: What do vendors and managers need to know?
• What are cottage foods?
• How to accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP) benefits
• Networking
Low or No-cost Marketing Ideas
Top reasons consumers shop

#1 Freshness
   Taste
   Access to local foods

#2 Supporting local farmers

*The Ohio Survey of Food, Agriculture and Environmental Issues*
• Information about the farmer/producer
• Recipe cards
• Business cards
• Product storage and use information
Low or no cost marketing ideas

- Design displays to be eye-catching and draw customers in
- Easy to read signs with prices
- Offer quality products
- Educate consumers on how to use the product
- Ask consumers what other local foods they would purchase
Low or no cost marketing ideas

Be Creative
Low or no cost marketing ideas

Pile it high and watch it fly!
Low or no cost marketing ideas

For eye appeal, mix up the color
Low or no cost marketing ideas

Table coverings accent a display
Low or no cost marketing ideas

*Increase customer reach with layers*
Use aroma to draw attention...
Low or no cost marketing ideas

Easy to Read Signage
Low or no cost marketing ideas

Sampling sells product...
Low or no cost marketing ideas

Every product needs a price sign…
Consumer education such as recipes, cooking demonstrations, health and nutrition information.

Low or no cost marketing ideas
Invite your customers back!

Low or no cost marketing ideas
Add in Customer Service

Always educate your customers.
Hold packages
Take orders
Let your customers know what’s coming next week
Look at your presentation, both display and yourself, from the customer’s point of view.
Websites – Great for an online presence

- Weekly vendors
- Vendor profiles
- Recipes
- Location, times, special events
- SNAP/EBT acceptance and education
- Contact information
Websites (continued)

Ohio Get Online  http://www.gybo.com/ohio/
Free for 1 year; $6.99/month after that.

Weebly  http://www.weebly.com/
Basic package is free; but you have to buy your own domain name.

Wix  http://www.wix.com/
Also basic package is free; but you have to buy your own domain name.
Social Media

- Good for similar info as a website
- Stay relevant – post at least 1-2 times/week; especially near market times
- Also useful for specials, weather updates, specific vendors
Social Media (continued)

Facebook – http://www.facebook.com/
- Most widely used; easy to set up a business page.
- Examples
  https://www.facebook.com/pages/Athens-Farmers-Market/142927645732169
  https://www.facebook.com/PickawayCountyFarmersMarket

Twitter - http://twitter.com/
- Good for short, quick info
- Example - https://twitter.com/PEARLMARKET
More Social Media

Pinterest – http://www.pinterest.com/
- Online bulletin board.
- Great to link pictures and recipes back to your website.

YouTube - https://www.youtube.com/
- More than just for funny videos
- Useful for market tours, vendor profiles, cooking demos
- Example - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BT-D0J_J2Tc
• Determine which type(s) of social media will best fit your customers.
• Get feedback – what do they use the most?
• Set an amount of money and time should be spent on online marketing.
• Establish who has access to edit and post.
• Track social media – ask customers how they heard about your business.
Where to get help?

OSU South Centers
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The Farmers’ Market Management Network
www.fmmn.org

The Farmers’ Market Coalition
www.farmersmarketcoalition.org
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http://southcenters.osu.edu/farmers-markets