



*Starting and Strengthening
Farmers' Markets
in Pennsylvania*

2ND EDITION

A GUIDE TO HELP FARMERS, CONSUMERS AND
COMMUNITIES RENEW THIS AGE-OLD
MARKETING METHOD



The Center for

Rural Pennsylvania

A Legislative Agency of the Pennsylvania General Assembly





Starting and Strengthening Farmers' Markets in Pennsylvania

2ND EDITION

The Center for Rural Pennsylvania is a bipartisan, bicameral legislative agency that serves as a resource for rural policy research within the Pennsylvania General Assembly. It was created in 1987 under Act 16, the Rural Revitalization Act, to promote and sustain the vitality of Pennsylvania's rural and small communities. The Center seeks to preserve and enhance the rural environment which makes the Commonwealth a unique place to live, work or visit; awards grants for applied research and model projects; maintains and disseminates information on rural trends and conditions; develops publications to share research and project results; and sponsors local, state and national forums on rural issues.

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INTRODUCTION

RENEWING AN AGE-OLD TRADITION

Pennsylvania farmers' markets are not just places to buy and sell fresh fruits and vegetables. They are also a proven asset in maintaining the economic health of communities and local agriculture. For farmers, markets are a local venue to sell products at better prices and for direct profit. For consumers, farmers' markets provide a variety of local farm fresh products at competitive prices. For communities, farmers' markets can attract people to the area who otherwise may not visit. Once there, travellers may be drawn to other businesses, events or attractions, thereby multiplying economic impact from their visit.

While farmers' markets bring tangible benefits to communities, it takes hours of time and dedication to research, plan, organize and sustain successful markets. A farmers' market is a business. Therefore, many of the strategies that go into running a small business, like marketing and accounting, are needed to successfully run a farmers' market.

To help get communities jump-started, the Center for Rural Pennsylvania is pleased to present this revised guide entitled, *Starting and Strengthening Farmers' Markets in Pennsylvania*. The Center for Rural Pennsylvania thanks the original author, Jeff Patton, formerly with the Penn State Cooperative Extension - Lehigh County Office for the time and effort that he devoted to writing the original guide. Much of the information from that guide is included in this revised edition.



WHO MIGHT USE THIS GUIDE

Simply put, this guide is for people who want to start a farmers' market or strengthen an existing market. The manager or volunteer president of a *seasonal*, open-air farmers' market will find it most helpful.

However, *seasonal* farmers' markets are only one way to go; so this guide includes information that can be useful to any type or size of farmers' market. Many pages will also help vendors. This guide includes:

- Advice on how to handle important issues.
- Ready-to-copy, easy-to-use sheets.
- Ideas on promotions.
- Referral to various sources of information.

PLANNING A NEW FARMERS' MARKET

If you are planning a new farmers' market, this entire booklet should be useful. As you go through it, keep one issue in mind: How likely is it that a new farmers' market might hinder the trade of other producers who sell at an existing one? If no net gain will be obtained from the establishment of a new market, then the real impact is a net loss to Pennsylvania agriculture.

STRENGTHENING AN EXISTING FARMERS' MARKET

Are you happy with the customer traffic from last season? Probably all farmers' markets can identify some areas for improvement such as:

- Better balance of shoppers throughout the day and over the months of operation;
- More interest from younger people and families;
- Greater willingness among buyers to try new produce items and varieties;
- More appreciation that high quality produce can't be sold at bargain-bin prices; and
- Better retention of first-time shoppers.

No doubt the market manager, along with individual vendors, has done creative things to increase overall sales – some working, some not. All retailers know

frustration. Consumers have habits, preoccupations, and shopping options that are counter to the growth of your farmers' market. Sometimes apathy – not competition – is the biggest obstacle.

This guide is intended to provide some helpful hints on starting your market or adding to its viability. As with any new business venture, there are no guarantees of success. Every farmers' market is different and each must find its own market niche.

WHAT IS A FARMERS' MARKET?

The words "*farmers' market*" get tossed around a lot these days in conversations about fresh food retailing. It can mean the produce stand at the end of a farmer's lane, the parking lot gathering of farmers who are seasonal vendors, and the market building filled with retail food stalls open year-round. Occasionally, a flea market even tags itself a farmers' market.

The key is the "s" at the end of "farmer." The word conveys that more than one farmer is present, so the produce stand at the end of a farmer's lane is not a farmers' market. The "s" also conveys that the entity is "for" or "owned by" farmers. Therefore, both the parking lot gathering of farmers and privately owned market building that allows growers as vendors are farmers' markets.

Consider a *farmers' market* as simply a group of farmers/vendors retailing various food products and plants. It's a small but helpful detail to get the apostrophe correct in the title of such markets: *farmers'*, not *farmer's* or *farmers*.

AN EXPLANATION OF TERMS

Following is an explanation of the terms used in this guide.

- *Open-air* refers to outdoor tailgate markets.
- A *vendor* is the retail seller at a stand or stall. Both farmers and non-farmers at a market are vendors.
- *Producer* refers to the farmer, grower, baker, maker of homemade foods, arranger of dried flowers, etc.

- *Member* is the vendor who is an official market participant (member of the association of vendors).
- *Reseller* is a non-farming vendor who buys fruit, vegetables, meats and other foods or plants wholesale and marks them up for retail sale.
- *Seasonal* markets may start as early as May with bedding plants or spring vegetables and continue to November or December.



TYPES OF MARKETS

Now let's look at the types of markets that operate in Pennsylvania.

Seasonal open-air markets strictly for farmers. Also called producer-only markets, these open-air markets are usually located in either parking lots or on a town square. Vendors sell their produce from the back of their trucks or from tables covered with colorful canopies. Typically, these markets are open once a week during the growing season.

Seasonal open-air markets allowing both farmers and resellers. These are the less controlled farmers' markets that are part of a larger flea market, or occur along the sidewalk in a warehouse district. The non-farming resellers may even offer locally grown produce bought wholesale directly from a local grower or a produce auction.

Year round, indoor markets with farmers and resellers. These are housed in buildings, often older historic structures built for the market purpose. Besides fruits and vegetables, the mix can include vendors offering meats, poultry, seafood, cheeses, prepared foods and desserts, baked goods, coffee, candy, honey and non-food items.

The phrase *farmers' market* has taken on a life of its own, conveying many positive images to a shopper in just one second. It's safe to say that the general public will refer to food vendor set-ups (with fresh produce) as farmers' markets, no matter what the make-up of the individual businesses.

STARTING A NEW FARMERS' MARKETS

THE ABCs OF ORGANIZING

Organizing a new farmers' market is not an easy endeavor. This section provides three keys to success and information about how to begin putting a team together.

THREE KEYS TO SUCCESS

1. What most open-air farmers' markets have in common is that *a leader took the initiative to create the market*. The power of one individual can still be demonstrated today in the creation of a farmers' market.

2. It's not who the initiator is that is important—any of the players named below can create a terrific market. Success depends more on a person's ability to *keep things positive, simple, and clearly communicated* among participants.

3. The initiator must be clear on the primary and secondary purposes for forming a farmers' market. It is important to have a goal in mind and a plan for obtaining that goal.

PUTTING A TEAM TOGETHER

The first step to putting a team together is to find growers. To start a farmers' market, the team must first locate enough growers to achieve a critical mass of vendors; three would be the minimum. However, for the true farmers' market ambiance, a minimum mix could include three to five produce growers, perhaps a baker or two, and one vendor featuring plants and related crafts. Much of the market's success depends on having one respected grower express and maintain faith in a farmers' market opportunity.

The team's scope is to act as a generator of support (through networking) and as an advisory panel. Potential team members include:

Key Growers: Try to include a mix of prominent direct marketers in the area plus newer producers seeking a market.

- ★ Will take over the lead in forming a grower-oriented market.
- ★ Can talk the idea up among producers.

- ★ Will make certain the market takes a grower-friendly direction.

County Agent

- ★ Will contribute insights to overall market plans and grower participation.
- ★ Can identify other potential team players.
- ★ Might notify area producers about the exploratory and planning meetings.

Civic Leader

- ★ Can build support for the market among elected officials, business community, and social services network.
- ★ Can help urge approval at municipal meetings or hearings about the market.

Consumer: May be a community minded homemaker, male or female, who is also a discerning shopper.

- ★ May be found already serving on boards for the library, Red Cross, and other social or religious interests.
- ★ Can talk the idea up among area consumers.
- ★ Ensures the market takes a consumer-friendly direction.

One of the first tasks of the team is to find a major market sponsor. This could be the municipal government, a civic organization, downtown or main street improvement association, shopping mall, corporation and/or others with valuable contacts and perhaps modest start-up monies. Credibility, name recognition, in-kind services and the ability to open doors are some potential benefits of having a credible sponsor.



EIGHT STEPS TO START

Organizing a team and finding a major sponsor are just two important steps to starting a farmers' market. Listed below are those steps and others that can get you on your way to opening your market. Each step is strictly a guideline; the steps will vary depending on the desired goals of each market.

Step 1: Set a Goal

Before you even consider starting a farmers' market, set a goal. For example, the goal of most farmers who may have an interest in such a market is to make a profit while providing a quality product directly to consumers.

Step 2: Find Farmers/Vendors and Customers

The next step is to find farmers/vendors that may have an interest in participating. Without farmers, there can be no farmers' market. One option would be to contact your local county extension agent. Also, you will need customers who would be interested in shopping at your farmers' market. A good way to find out if you can build a customer base is to conduct a survey. (See *Appendix A.*)

Step 3: Find Possible Locations

Once you have interested parties, you need to find possible locations to hold your market. Town squares, empty lots, supermarket parking lots, and fairgrounds are a few good examples of possible locations. The market needs to be located in an area that is easily accessible by both residents of your municipalities and non-residents. There should be plenty of parking for both vendors and shoppers. (See *Appendix B.*)

Step 4: Find Sponsors

Starting a farmers' market will take some initial capital to get things up and running, so it's important to have a major sponsor. You may also want to find additional sponsors that will take on some of the financial burden. Examples of sponsors are civic leaders and local businesses.

Step 5: Hold an Exploratory Meeting

The purpose of this meeting is to create an initial, viable proposal for a farmers' market, directed to potential sponsors and farmers/vendors. It's an opportunity to find out if there is enough interest in pursuing a farmer's market in your area. It is a good time to discuss the merits and limitations of the new market, possible locations for the market, and goals that you wish to meet. Be sure to designate a secretary to keep minutes for future reference. (See *Appendix C.*)



Step 6: First Planning Meeting

Attendees at this meeting should consist of all parties still interested in participating after the exploratory meeting. Compile a list of all persons in attendance and those who are interested but not present at the meeting so that you can contact them about future meetings.

Key items to discuss:

- Findings from steps one through five.
- Laws and regulations involved.
- Insurance needed.
- Funding availability.
- Next meeting.

If the meeting participants and others decide to pursue the creation of a farmers' market, the team leader/members should assign interested participants the job of finding answers to the above questions. Someone needs to draft bylaws, or rules and regulations, and an application. (See *Appendices D, E and F.*) The team may also want to develop a Farmers' Market Strategy Planner, which may be developed with the help of your area Pennsylvania Small Business Development Center. (See *Appendix G.*) If officially organizing, team members should also check on the specifics involved in establishing a checking account, and obtaining liability insurance and legal advice.

Team members will also need to contact the local zoning officer and property owners about potential

sites. Ask prospective members to find out if their farm liability insurance coverage will extend to their market stand. Finally, set up a date, time, and agenda for the next planning meeting.

Step 7: Second Planning Meeting

Start out this meeting by going over the minutes from the first meeting and allow participants to ask any questions or provide corrections. Also, allow anyone who was not at the first meeting to provide additional input. Discuss progress on the consumer survey, if using one, and the questions brought up at the first meeting. Finalize the bylaws and applications so that farmers/vendors can decide if they are ready to commit, and fill out and submit applications. Among committed parties, final decisions can begin. Lastly, raise topics for the next meeting so everyone can come prepared with information or questions. Possible topics include:

- Leasing agreement with property owner.
- Market stand styles.
- Operating budget.
- Market layout.
- Stand sizes and assignments.
- Hours of operation.
- Set up date and time for next meeting.

Step 8: Third Planning Meeting

The purpose of this meeting is to conclude the market organizational steps and tie up all loose ends. Invite the property owner to meet the farmers' market participants. Review the minutes of the previous meeting and cover any unfinished business. This meeting would be a good time to nominate and elect officers according to the newly written bylaws. Have the duties of each officer outlined in the bylaws so that nominees know what is expected of them before they accept.



Topics discussed at this meeting may include the budget, promotions (advertising and publicity), food safety, customer service, and the opening date of the market. Finally, set up the next meeting to finalize all plans and prepare for opening day.

NEW MARKET STRATEGY PLANNER

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

Four important questions need to be answered to form a strategy for your farmers' market: (1) what are the measurable objectives for your market this coming season; (2) how can you create and define customer groups; (3) how can you find out more about your customers; (4) who should be the target customers of the farmers' market, and what are their top needs? Examples of possible answers for each question are given to provide you with some ideas.

1. What are the measurable objectives for your markets this coming season?

Examples:

- ✓ Each vendor will set and achieve his/her own confidential sales goal and report 'yes/no' on whether they achieved it at the season's end.
- ✓ The market will have no less than two-thirds of all vendors at every fair-weather sales day.
- ✓ The freshness of all products shall be equal to or superior to all competing food retailers.
- ✓ Any valid complaint from shoppers or market neighbors shall be resolved within two weeks.
- ✓ There shall be something new for the shopper to try, learn or experience at every sales day.

2. How can you create and define customer groups?

Examples:

- ✓ Newer area residents, mostly in their 20s, unfamiliar with buying directly from growers, late-risers on weekends.

- ✓ Long-term residents who might know vendors, often over 55 and without children at home, early-risers everyday.
- ✓ Dual-income parents, often homeowners between 35 and 50, busy with chores on Saturdays.
- ✓ Adults who appreciate fresh and fine-tasting foods, of any background, alert and adventurous when it comes to produce, willing to make special trips for quality.
- ✓ Shoppers who are in the area of the farmers' market making other stops, in a hurry but spontaneous.
- ✓ Health-oriented shoppers wanting fresh produce and creative ways of preparing it.
- ✓ Ethnically diverse shoppers seeking products for their cuisine or the market 'experience.'
- ✓ Amusement-oriented parents who take their children to fun events.

3. How can you find out more about your customers?

Examples:

- ✓ Scan *American Demographics* and other magazines in libraries.
- ✓ Contact the Center for Rural Pennsylvania for population and socio-economic data.
- ✓ Get your hands on results of consumer surveys reported in the produce trade media.
- ✓ Do on-site customer surveys during shopping via clipboard interviews.
- ✓ Give shoppers a satisfaction-rating card when they shop.
- ✓ Engage shoppers in friendly, slightly inquisitive conversations.

4. Who should be the target customers of the farmers' market, and what are their top needs?

Examples:

- ✓ Evening commuters may want easy access and exit points, quick service, and crops to be reliably on-hand.

- ✓ Young parents may want produce items their children will eat, good values for the quality, and fun events and contests.
- ✓ Young adults without children may want Saturday afternoon sale hours, smaller portions, and quick cooking tips.
- ✓ Creative cooks may want to try anything exotic and new, buy in volume for freezing, and learn from chef demonstrations.
- ✓ Seniors may want to see good values, find some favorite varieties to be reliably on-hand, and the chance to learn more about the product and the grower.



DETERMINING A MARKET'S SHARE

In recruiting farmers for a seasonal market, it is important to provide them with some idea of their sales potential, which can be done by calculating the market's "share point." A share point is a marketing tool used to estimate the market's potential sales. The more share points a market is able to capture, the higher the sales for each farmer.

Why is this important? It is one of the few ways to estimate the value of total sales at a location. If vendors are willing to anonymously submit sales tallies at the end of the season, a benchmark may be established on which to set future goals. The biggest variable in determining market share is the size and extent of the trade area you select.

To figure the value of each point (one percent) of market share, first, determine your market area. A market area is a where the majority of your shoppers will come from. In more urban areas, the market area could be the surrounding neighborhoods or Census tracts. In a small town, it could be the entire borough and surrounding municipalities.

Second, collect as much demographic and socio-economic information as you can about your market area. This information is available from your local or county planning commission, local library, or the

Center for Rural Pennsylvania, and will also be useful for developing a market strategy.

Third, use a calculator to put demographic information into the formula in the box on page 10. An example using “strong market months,” or those months in which vendors have the most potential to sell their products, is included on the bottom of page 10.

ORGANIZING A FARMERS’ MARKET

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

When setting up a farmers’ market, it is important to establish some type of organizational arrangement. This arrangement provides a framework for making decisions critical to running the market. There are four general types of organizational arrangements for farmers’ markets:

- No organization among producers.
- Agreement with manager/owner.
- Unofficial agreement among producers.
- Official agreement among producers.

1. No Organization Among The Producers

Producers are on their own at this type of market. And it may work unless major problems arise. There are no group bylaws, officers, checking accounts, advertising or official meetings uniting the farmers at such a market.

These farmers’ markets usually just happen on a downtown square or city street on the day the city or merchants allow it. Whoever wants to sell just sets up their stand.

Strengths:

- Simple way to operate.
- No costs or time spent on group efforts.
- No restrictions imposed by group.

Weaknesses:

- No say over the number of vendors or what they sell.
- Harder for vendors to band together to address problems or conduct joint promotions.
- No liability protection for injuries that might occur at another vendor’s stand.

2. Agreement With A Manager/Owner

Producers are tenants at this type of market. The manager/owner may be the property owner of the site, operating as a sole proprietor, a group of investors operating as a partnership or corporation, a city authority, a parks department, or a community organization. The manager/owner makes the rules and fees and as tenants, the farmers, butchers, bakers, resellers, pretzel-makers and coffee-grinders must comply. This type of market is represented by the indoor, year-round market building and pavilions in and around many Pennsylvania towns.

Depending on the manager/owner, producer-vendors may find themselves competing against non-farm resellers. In the outdoor, seasonal farmers’ markets sponsored by a city parks department or community organization, rules are often written specifying producers only.

Strengths:

- It is easy to be a vendor since the coordination, promotions, tax forms, and liability insurance are someone else’s responsibility.
- In the case of public-sector markets (run by a city authority, parks department, or community association), farmer/vendors often have some say in rules and restrictions.
- Owner/managers of year round markets are often supportive of farmer-vendors in various ways.

Weaknesses:

- Some year-round markets have high rents and entry fees.
- Ultimate control is in the owner’s or sponsor’s hands, and rules, site fees, and even the very existence of the market can be changed as the lease allows.
- Reseller vendors can often offer lower retail prices than producers while still profiting.





3. Unofficial Agreement Among Producers

This type is the independent, self-managed market association that is not legally organized or incorporated. These tend to be seasonal, open-air farmers' markets with no assets in land or buildings, no employees, and just enough money collected from vendors to cover rent and promotional expenses.

Each vendor is a member of the market "association." The association may have bylaws on paper, a lease with the property owner, a checking account, officers, an insurance policy, business meetings, voting opportunities for vendors on issues, and a set market time with assigned vendor stands. It is possible to get an umbrella insurance policy if there is an officer to sign for it.

Such a low-budget, casual, non-profit, informal arrangement fits many seasonal farmers' markets. However, it is even more risky to operate this way than the two options discussed previously.

The greatest risks fall onto the officers who sign the checks, lease, insurance policy, etc. A hapless, tiny farmers' market could be caught in a general crackdown on under-the-table businesses, with the officers called on to explain. Or a lawsuit over a trip-and-fall injury could, in a worst-case scenario, claim the officers were negligent. In fact, the personal assets of each farmers' market participant could be endangered.

Strengths:

- Producers maintain internal controls on themselves and products and can pool money and talent for joint promotions.

- Little time or money is spent on the internal organization.

Weaknesses:

- Banks will not set up checking accounts without a tax identification number (employer identification number) from the Internal Revenue Service. It takes a legal entity to get one.
- Producers are vulnerable to tax authorities and lawsuits.
- Farmers/vendors must handle the market, its expenses, and the promotions. If a few end up with all the work, tensions may arise because of the disproportionate share of responsibilities.

4. Official Agreement Among Producers

As an organization, farmers' markets can register as a legal entity. This type of agreement provides a secure legal and tax status. It also provides protection to market participants (if they are incorporated) and the basis for more involved activities (hiring a market master, owning property, etc.). As with all legal issues, an official agreement can be time consuming, expensive, and hard to figure out. However, if you are operating as a non-profit organization, the Internal Revenue Service will require proper reporting, and an official agreement may be prudent.

Strengths:

- The group is a legal entity and, with proper tax report filings, is in compliance with tax authorities.
- Liability is limited to the amount owners have paid to the corporation.
- The group can get its Internal Revenue Service (IRS) tax number and open a checking account.
- The market has a legal basis on which to progress, such as owning property or hiring employees.

Weaknesses:

- Vendors must work out details and pay legal fees before the market opens.

- Paperwork and choices (incorporation, tax forms, records, fictitious name registration) are plentiful.
- Tax reports must be filled out properly every year.
- Bylaws must be written professionally.

For more information on tax issues, or assistance on legal and tax issue concerning your farmers' market, contact the Internal Revenue Service at (800) 829-1040 or at www.irs.gov. The website has forms and information on the tax laws involved for nonprofits and corporations.

Another resource is the Department of Community and Economic Development. Visit its website at www.inventpa.com for more information on starting a new business. Another state website that has information on starting a new business in Pennsylvania is www.paopen4business.state.pa.us. (See Appendix G for more resources.)

VENDOR TYPES

Producer-Only vs. Reseller Markets:

The Trade-offs

Should a farmer be allowed to buy and resell fresh produce or other products from another grower, or should every vendor sell only what's harvested at his or her farm? Existing markets vary widely. Some are strictly "sell-only-what-you-grow" (producer-only), while others are "anything-goes." Some require that

only Pennsylvania produce be resold. Others state that an item can be resold only when the vendor's only crop comes in short for a particular week.

Opinions among farmers can vary so much that neither choice will assure more farmer-vendors. Each farmers' market member must understand that violating the chosen rule is a breach of good faith with other vendors. Consequences of violations might be stated in the bylaws.

Here is a run-down of the trade-offs:

RULE: Allow vendors to resell another grower's products.

Positive:

- Ensures consumers will find the widest selections and longest in-season period possible.
- Can be tempered with a "Pennsylvania source," maximum-percent, temporary shortfall allowance, or "buy-resell if no one is growing it" rule.

Negative:

- Weakens direct-from-the-grower authenticity.
- Is harder to verify, even with tempering rules.
- Can undermine the sales of a grower when other vendors resell the same product, perhaps dumping the market.

RULE: Restrict products to only what the vendors grow.

Positive:

- Assures consumer of authentic direct-from-the-grower purchase.
- Easier to verify compliance.
- Rewards the more innovative producers.
- More likely to win support of community businesses.

Negative:

- Disappoints shoppers when growers do not have a desired product available.
- Requires growers to more carefully plan timing and selection of their crops.



STRENGTHENING A FARMERS' MARKET

MARKETING TOOLS AND PUBLICITY

Producer-vendors at a farmers' market have no time to spare – first growing, then harvesting, and then traveling to and from the farmers' market. This is what competing food retailers are counting on – a non-aggressive farmers' market.

The goal of promotion is to create a positive image in the consumer's mind. Remember:

- Not enough people will tell their neighbors about the farmers' market.
- Not enough people who drive by the market will stop spontaneously.
- Good, local produce is available elsewhere (even from roadside stands).
- People are so busy that many will forget the farmers' market exists.

Review the possible promotional and advertising activities that your market can use to create that positive image in the consumer's mind and encourage consumers to shop the market. Be sure to:

- Narrow promotions down to the few that will be carried out well.
- Put just a few market participants in charge of planning promotions.
- Make sure many market participants are involved in carrying out planned promotions.
- Test, as much as possible, the approaches with unbiased consumers.
- Informally evaluate the results and keep notes.
- Make a table listing the promotional choices and the pros and cons of each.

There are a variety of promotional tools and advertising tactics that will help you gain exposure for your farmers' market. Following are some of the more basic tools/tactics available and the possible advantages and drawbacks to using them.

NAME AND LOGO – IDENTIFY THE FARMERS' MARKET

Good news – An effective name and logo for the farmers' market is a quick way to catch attention, create an image, and build recognition among consumers. Developing a name and logo certainly is something even the most casual farmers' markets can do.

Bad news – It is easier to do a bad logo than a good one. Poorly done logos can actually hurt a market. A professional artist can be costly.

Worth doing? – Every farmers' market needs the right name and logo to compete. Look at how supermarkets and other retailers use the farm theme image effectively. Recapture what is yours! Beware of the many pitfalls, however, such as:

- Everyone has a strong opinion. Even an organization sponsoring a farmers' market may want their logo wishes carried out for the wrong reasons.
- Most growers go for rather dull, low-impact, cluttered clip art such as a cornucopia of fresh produce plus a title and slogan.
- Some growers may feel slighted if a single product, such as an apple, is the logo and does not represent their products.
- If someone without contemporary marketing savvy and artistic talent volunteers to do the logo, it may be difficult to refuse it once it has been developed.
- A logo might not fit the situation where it is needed. A logo may look great on a sign but terrible in a newspaper ad; beautiful in color but lost in black and white.

First – If the logo seems to concern a farmers' market group, remind participants that “beauty is in the eye of the beholder” and that the target consumer is the most important beholder. Get an agreement that a superior logo is essential for the market's long-term success. Also get opinions on the most important message the logo should convey. Investigate short cuts. Do any participants have a good friend who is a commercial artist and might do a logo in exchange for fresh produce? Would the town's best advertising agency do one as a pro bono (free) project to gain exposure? If a professional sign maker is doing a sign or if a newspaper is doing an ad, how much extra would it be for them to develop the logo?



Next decide – What are the most important promotional uses of the farmer’s market name and logo? What are the limitations on size, colors, cost and reproduction that those uses have? Is there a budget for developing a logo? What is the best name for the market? Will people know you are producers? Might an existing entity claim name infringements? Should you pursue the Fictitious Name Registration with the Pennsylvania Department of State?

Then – Find out if there is one person who will take command of this project and see it through.

Hint – If it comes down to having one of the market participants do the logo, find an appealing print of a fruit or vegetable in a turn-of-the-century book at the library or historical society. They are usually not copyrighted and give a sense of authenticity and character. Add a minimum of wording, either from a laser-quality printer or rubdown letters from an art store.

The *Pennsylvania Pride* logo by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture is available for use by calling the Bureau of Marketing Development at (717) 787-4210. The logo “100% Farmers” is one way to convey authenticity of a seasonal market. Have a few high quality copies of the final logo made to place in future printed materials and advertisements.

Another option would be to find a local high school or college art student who could develop a logo as part of a class assignment.

Bottom line – An effective logo is needed by all farmers’ markets – and worth doing right the first time.

MARKET SIGNS – TELLING PEOPLE WHO AND WHAT YOU ARE

Good news – A permanent market sign informs people seven days a week. Even a sandwich board sign can convey important messages, such as hours of operation or the “100% farmers” message. If each vendor uses a similar farm name sign, the market appears neater and well organized.

Bad news – It takes a lot of time and talent as well as the right materials to do a good sign. Good lettering is hard to paint and signs with plastic letters

or spray-painted letters may look tacky. Vinyl-lettered signs are a bit more expensive. Permanent roadside signs often require a permit.

Worth doing? – A half-decent sign is better than no sign, but no sign is better than a poor-quality sign. The standard home-made farm road sign can give the impression that this is a “seconds” market, low quality at cheap prices. The quality-image road signs are hard to do on your own, but certainly possible if there is a good logo. Not all farmers’ markets need a road sign, because many will be self-evident to passers-by. A sandwich board or vinyl banner represent the best compromise for most seasonal markets – basic, portable and inexpensive.

The design and monthly cost of most billboards put them out-of-reach to all but the largest farmers’ markets.

Coordinated signs for each farm vendor are a surprisingly nice touch. They help consumers remember their favorites and may boost sales back at the farm stand. A word processor and laser printer can produce nice signs on a sheet of paper. To help them look nice, mount them on a board and laminate them in plastic.

First – Know the possibilities. Some communities may share costs for a farmers’ market sign. A sign maker might help out for the exposure. Custom-cut vinyl lettering can be bought from some sign shops to apply on a board. Perhaps a participant has a steady hand to paint a projected logo, or maybe a colorful, classy banner made of weatherproof “sonic” nylon can be sewn together by a talented crafter.

Also find out the limitations. Signs cannot be placed within a road’s right-of-way. Municipalities often have limits on sign sizes and requirements on setback and permits. The property owner and neighborhood may object to larger signs. The utility owning the telephone poles might prevent a banner from stretching across the street. Take care with portable sandwich board signs; they may fall down in a strong wind and hurt someone.



Next decide – What can be realistically done this year and next with the time, money and talent available? Assign a coordinator to discover and carry out the best approach.

Then – If the decision is to make a do-it-yourself sign, use professional materials and techniques such as:

- Vinyl lettering custom-made by a sign shop for self application,
- Aluminum – or vinyl-clad plywood signboards sold by some lumber or plastics suppliers,
- Sign maker’s paints sold at better paint and art supply stores in small cans, and
- Project a logo onto the signboard for painting using an opaque projector rented from an audio-visual equipment shop (about \$25/day).

The sign coordinator should ensure that every sign uses the official market logo effectively. A sign intended for passers-by should show the market’s hours of operation for those shoppers who prefer to stop another time.

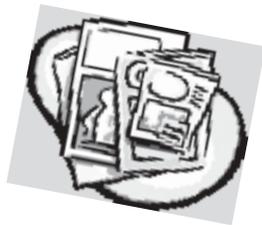
Hint – Work with the sign shop to learn what your best options are for how you intend to use the sign. Ask to see samples so that you can get a better idea of what the final product will look like and if it will suit your needs.

Bottom line – At least one sign for the farmers’ market is worth the trouble and cost.

PRINTED MATERIALS – USING FLYERS, POSTERS, BUSINESS CARDS

Good news – A farmers’ market organization can make sure people notice the market by developing simple printed announcements and other materials that can be posted on bulletin boards, distributed throughout the community or stuffed into a shopper’s bag. Distributing printed materials will not cost much if everyone helps.

Bad news – Even if desktop publishing is readily available, materials still have to be printed. It is hard for busy vendors to stuff sheets in bags or hang posters at area diners. For some people, a flyer is just more clutter.



Worth doing? – As with other visual advertising, final results depend heavily on artistic design, color printing, and conciseness. What would reach the potential customers of farmers’ markets? How about posters placed in churches, libraries, diners, convenience stores, municipal buildings, day care centers, doctor’s offices, etc. Why not place a stack of business cards at the counters of non-competing retailers?

One surprisingly effective promotional piece for a farmers’ market could be folding business cards. They are big enough to carry an attractive image and vital information. They are easy for the shoppers to scan and save – unlike most flyers and brochures.

First – Determine what printed materials will give your farmers’ market the best benefit for the cost and time involved. Do this at least six weeks before the desired date of use, allowing for printing lead-time.

One of your market participants probably has a computer and printer to create a master copy. Perhaps the county extension office will assist the market with this. Or, for an extra fee, printing shops can design and lay out materials. They may do a better job, especially with business cards.

Check the quantity discounts, color and paper options, possible use of photos and turn-around times with a few different printers. Charges vary so it’s worth the effort to get price quotes from a variety of printers. Some printers will give discounts if several pieces are being printed at the same time.

Next decide – Will the market vendors commit to active use of the materials?

- For flyers and business cards, will they get staff to give them to all customers?
- For posters, will they each hang up five in the community?
- For produce availability charts, will they briefly explain them to customers?

Active use is the key. Look around at supermarkets and other food markets to see how little regard is given to informational brochures. They are often left forgotten on shelves or buried under other merchandise. Passive handling means they will be passed by.

Then – Be sure all materials include the market name and logo, months open and hours of operation. Provide phone numbers for further information. Include a map for newcomers and tourists, even for the most obvious locations.

Get the materials made well in advance. Posters should be up in the spring. Availability charts should go out with the media release (see below) announcing the opening of the market.

Hint – To save money on getting posters or other low-volume materials in color, have them printed in one color only. Then use waterproof felt-tipped markers to color in the fruits and vegetables in the logo.

Bottom line – Print materials are worth doing as long as they are truly used – and useful. Remember: You are looking for high visual impact.

PUBLICITY – WORKING WITH THE NEWS MEDIA

Good news – Publicity is free and valuable advertising. An article in the newspaper or a segment on the local television news can make an event truly successful. Market days may even be listed at no cost in the community events calendar that most media outlets run. Such coverage lends credibility, visibility and excitement.

Bad news – The news release writer has a lot of work to do: get the facts and get them right, write a news release that relates the facts, call the media ahead of time and then follow-up. After all that work, there is no guarantee that the story will be covered to a great extent.

Worth doing? – The season's opening of every farmers' market is newsworthy. Someone must volunteer to work with the news media so the opportunity is not missed. One of several story angles may be stressed, such as: enjoy old-fashioned fun; get just-picked freshness; meet the growers; rebuild

rural-urban ties; find foods for healthy diets; and discover what is in season.

In mid-season, a second and third news release can go to the media on other topics, including: how to use fresh products; guest chef demonstrations; the season's weather; young farm families; what is in season this month; and new varieties, new flavors.

First – Get all the facts together (who, what, where, when and why it is important).

Next decide – Which media would like to share this information with its audience. Consider:

- Regional, general circulation newspapers, daily or weekly,
- Local, general circulation newspapers, usually weekly,
- Publications for a specific audience like ethnic groups, tourists or businesses,
- Organizations that have newsletters, including some housing developments, health groups, professional associations, larger corporations, churches, local government, etc.,
- Cable and independent television stations, commercial radio and public radio stations.

Then – Develop a straightforward news release, about one or two pages long. Be sure to include:

- “For Immediate Release” or “For Release After (date)” on the first line,
- The farmers' market contact person's name and phone number on the next lines,
- A simple headline like, “New Farmers' Market to Open in Town Square,”
- An informative story of the market. Vary sentence length and offer facts, not hype. Stress the things a reader might want to know about the market, and
- Invite news organizations to cover the market's opening day.

In general, print media should have your news release (proposed article) about a month in advance of the opening of the farmers' market. Electronic media can use it two weeks in advance. Newsletter/



magazine editors need a few months advanced notice. Radio and television often have a community awareness show that features guests. This can be an effective, no cost way to tell the story of the farmers' market and the family operations behind it. The media also might read public service announcements for broadcast about the market. Work with the media to develop the announcements.

Hint – Call each media organization ahead of time to find out exactly who should get the release/information: newspapers may have a food editor, and television stations and radio stations may have a special-events or health reporter. Briefly tell the person about the farmers' market and when to expect the release. Do not press too hard for coverage – the story should be able to stand on its own good merits.

Bottom line – Don't end publicity efforts with the opening announcement. Try to find interesting stories about the market or the producer/vendors (the stories may relate to a current event or hot community topic) and write a release. Work with your local media.

PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES – DOING THINGS PEOPLE WILL NOTICE

Good news – Promotional activities offer greater sales potential than most advertising. Food shopping alone is pretty dull. People want things to do and

PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITY IDEAS

<input type="checkbox"/> Cooking demo: Using new varieties	<input type="checkbox"/> Community fair with booths for youth groups	<input type="checkbox"/> Contest: Guess-the-weight
<input type="checkbox"/> Cooking demo: Making homemade salsa	<input type="checkbox"/> Display on market in a main street storefront	<input type="checkbox"/> Contest: Pumpkin decorating
<input type="checkbox"/> Cooking demo: Grilling Vegetables	<input type="checkbox"/> Ethnic fair with booths and local dance troupe	<input type="checkbox"/> Contest: Potato sack race
<input type="checkbox"/> Cooking demo: Making herb vinegars & oils	<input type="checkbox"/> Face painting, stickers, balloons for kids	<input type="checkbox"/> Contest: Goat milking
<input type="checkbox"/> Cooking demo: Drying tomatoes	<input type="checkbox"/> Clown, kid's character or animal costume	<input type="checkbox"/> Market float in holiday parade
<input type="checkbox"/> Cooking demo: Using super-sweet corn	<input type="checkbox"/> Mini-farm show with tractors and equipment	<input type="checkbox"/> Meet elected officials day
<input type="checkbox"/> Cooking demo: Appreciating French beans	<input type="checkbox"/> Zombie jamboree in October for kids	<input type="checkbox"/> Used book sale and trade
<input type="checkbox"/> Cooking demo: Freezing produce	<input type="checkbox"/> Market anniversary celebration	<input type="checkbox"/> Workshop: Canning fruits and vegetables
<input type="checkbox"/> Cooking demo: The non-iceberg salad	<input type="checkbox"/> Small farm animal petting zoo	<input type="checkbox"/> Workshop: Fruit tree pruning
<input type="checkbox"/> Cooking demo: Using fresh herbs	<input type="checkbox"/> Give-away tokens with market logo	<input type="checkbox"/> Workshop: Wildlife plantings
<input type="checkbox"/> Health fair with educational groups	<input type="checkbox"/> Ceremony to thank local leaders, supporters	<input type="checkbox"/> Plants donated to city garden
<input type="checkbox"/> Dietitian-guided market tours	<input type="checkbox"/> Press conference on health of local farms	<input type="checkbox"/> Collectors' or hobbyists' fair
YOUR IDEAS:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

learn. Farmers' markets are a natural setting for any number of popular activities.

Bad news – The organizer or committee has a lot of planning and followup to do. Farmer-vendors do not have a lot of time to visit with people at events. Rain can put an end to outdoor events. Results of activities are rarely immediate.

Worth doing? – Most marketing experts say person-to-person promotions are the best choice for small businesses. They can do any of these things for consumers:

- Build family ties,
- Strengthen a community,
- Offer fun activities,
- Provide useful food tips,
- Offer information about agriculture, and
- Provide nice prizes or freebies.

Farm-vendors will also benefit when activities and events are well run because they will boost the day's sales, garner added publicity for the market, allow vendors to update their mailing lists, bring new customers to the market, and build consumer loyalty.

First – Answer three questions:

- 1) Does the market need activities or could an easier promotion accomplish what is desired?
- 2) Are you ready for crowds or is some basic flaw holding the market back?
- 3) If there is an event, will vendors make an extra effort to create a good impression?

Next decide – Which of the ideas in the box at left best matches the time, money and expertise that the farmers' market can put together?

Then – When outside talent is needed, assign helpers to check out who is available. Select and start to plan the best events for the market.

Hint – Let potential guest celebrities know the benefits of participating in the event, such as wide area exposure and in-depth press coverage. In many cases, local celebrities will not charge for their appearance.

Bottom line – When a farmers' market needs excitement, events are the way to go. Be sure to appoint and support an event coordinator.

NEWSPAPERS – PLACING ADS AND INSERTS

Good news – This old advertising standby still works for getting the word out. Besides display ads, single sheet inserts offered by many newspapers can target subscribers right around a farmers' market location. Some consumers still check the classified ads for farms listing produce.

Bad news – People who take time to scan headlines certainly will not wade through dozens of stuffed display ads. Display ads are an expensive proposition.

Worth doing? – Check with various business on their use of newspaper advertising, and you will get a rich blend of advice.

The under-reported factor in newspaper advertising's impact is visual appeal. Examine newspapers, and you often find that every square inch of most ads is filled. It seems efficient considering the cost. Now scan a paper as if you had only two minutes to spare. If you noticed an ad at all, it was probably the one that was "light" and open, with few words.

If you are doing a display ad, put a breath of fresh air in the space you buy. A farmers' market that carries out good promotions in other ways probably does not need newspaper ads. But if time is tight and nothing else gets done, collect the funds necessary for a strong showing in the paper. Ads can help reverse the typical sales drop-off in mid-August or a post-sweet corn and peaches slump. They can help a farmers' market survive new competition. Farm markets are just discovering single sheet inserts, the one page flyers tucked between sections. The competitively priced cost-per-thousand inserts may include layout, printing and insertion into papers for the zones you choose. Options include colors, two-sided printing, and half-page size.

First – Estimate the strength of all less expensive promotions and advertising, including the chance for free newspaper coverage. Newspaper ads will help; the question is, are they cost efficient?

If instincts tell you that advertising is needed, determine the upper limit of what market vendors will chip in.

Develop a clear objective, target audience, and well-suited ad concept.

Next decide – Which ads seem most promising:

- A single sheet insert for a certain locale,
- A display ad in a certain edition or zoned supplement, or
- A run-of-press display ad or classified?



Days of the week may not be the big decision that it first appears to be. Wednesday is the traditional food feature day, but a farmers' market ad could get lost among the full-page price list ads of supermarkets. Weekends typically cost significantly more. The choice between Mondays through Fridays probably depends more on the market day. Successive days bought at a discounted cost are worth investigating with the sales representative.

Then – Do not let control of the ad get away from you. Make your decisions after collecting all options and prices. Assert your preferences for visually easy and appealing ads. Ask to see a proof. This implies you have started well in advance; rushing ads risks technical errors.

Hint – Judge a proposed ad in its true context. Place a proof right onto a news page over a similar sized ad, or slip a mock-up of a single sheet insert into the newspaper and open it. Do the ads still “work” among the normal distractions? Keep in mind that the ad headline should relate to the main concern or desire of your target market, whether it is freshness, value or convenience. Ask if there are plans for a food story or feature on fresh produce, and time ads accordingly.

Bottom line – Newspaper ads must be planned with care and creativity, or your money will be wasted.

RADIO & TELEVISION ADS – GOING FOR THE WIDEST EXPOSURE

Good news – Electronic media offer some pleasant surprises in the way of cost and value, especially with package purchases. A simple 10-second segment urging people to eat five servings of fruits and vegetables a day can spread the word about the market.

Bad news – The high initial cost of commercials on radio or television and the fragmented listening public make this one of the riskiest advertising choices. It is mostly untried among farmers' markets.

Worth doing? – Television and radio stations have discounts and special assistance for volume purchases of commercials. It is easy to get a media chart on the station's popularity. Diverse opportunities with television stations, radio and cable companies include:

- 10 or 30 second commercials on most stations,
- Special arrangements for a cable company's own program station,
- A 24-hour Food Channel which accepts commercials,
- Regularly programmed cooking shows,
- Public stations that take program sponsorships, and
- Public bulletin board listings, community events calendars and electronic classifieds.



How can a farmers' market run a commercial that is up to television's standards? A scene of a local vegetable field or fruit orchard showing actual harvesting (with voice-over) can do more to portray unique freshness than will a scene at the market. Most media stations will furnish data on how they stand in the special audience measurement polls. Staff can advise you on the making of commercials and how to get good value.

First – Start by keeping the scope of radio or television advertising simple. More so than with any other promotional choice, start in a small way (perhaps an electronic classified on cable television or a five- or 10-second mention on radio). You will have to convince the other vendors of the farmers' market that the electronic media are worthwhile.

If instincts tell you that the small things have helped, gradually work up to commercials. The relationship your market is able to develop with the station representatives should have a lot to do with the progress. The station should be able to offer advice and observations that help you get the most benefit from its programs.

As with newspaper ads, remember to:

- Determine the upper limit of what market vendors will chip in for ads,
- Develop a clear objective, target audience and well-suited ad concept, and
- Only go as far with their advertising choices as you are comfortable.

Next decide – Which media, station, and programs seem most promising. The station may or may not be able to offer the exact time slots requested, but try to pin details down as much as possible.

In order to compare stations and make special requests, it is essential to have a well-defined target audience. “Yuppies” is not enough of a definition. But “middle-aged men and women trying to eat healthier” can lead to you to advertise on a health-oriented radio show.

Develop your advertising for media programs that attract your target audience.

Then – Keep track of customer traffic and how they decided to come to the market. Set a goal with all vendors, that each visit briefly with one customer per hour and report on their impressions. It is a tough call to pronounce final judgment on the success of radio and television ads, and unless dramatic benefits occur, the final judgment will come as vendors are willing or unwilling to chip in more for advertising.

Hint – Recording audio separately in television commercials is generally less expensive than recording while filming.

Bottom line – Big-ticket commercial time seems, on the surface, to make this impossible for farmers’ markets, but extra care and good advice can yield benefits over costs.

DIRECT MAIL – SENDING YOUR BEST MESSAGE

Good news – A simple sign and attractive postcard reminder will announce the major harvests to customers. A list of current customers can be compiled in a few easy ways. Potential customers can be reached by purchasing labels from mailing list suppliers found in the yellow pages.

Bad news – Maintaining a mailing list and handling the tasks is tedious and hard to justify when so much

else must be done. Postage costs are high; let alone paying a direct mail company to do the work. Plus, people really do not want more unsolicited mail.

Worth doing? – It is easier and cheaper to retain customers than find new ones. Keeping in touch with customers using occasional notices is a way to do this effectively. Think first of the person who takes precious time to tear open the third mystery envelop in today’s mail, fumble with the folded letter, scan down to see if it is truly important (or just a sales pitch), and then discard or save the letter, brochure, card and return envelope.

Then think of the two-second glance needed for a colorful postcard with a nice drawing of a peach with the words, “Hooray! They’ve Ripened!” with the market logo and details along side.

Direct mail can work when it is user-friendly to the receiver. It can also be friendly to the sender. Shoppers can be encouraged to sign up on a mailing list. Freelance data entry workers can be hired for the task of typing names and addresses and printing them out. Mailing services can take care of printing and sending.

Do not overlook direct mail’s ability to attract new customers. A mailing list broker can furnish the mailing labels of households you closely define for them.

First – If you want to develop a mailing list of existing shoppers, give them a reason and make it easy to sign up. Communicate the benefits on a tabletop sign, next to an address book or form on a card table that is central to the market. Some people will be glad to see a statement assuring them that the list will not be shared or sold to anyone else.

Another way of collecting names and addresses is through a contest sign-up ticket. The benefits of being in this list are that they will know when a harvest is coming in – they will not miss a favorite summer or fall produce item. Ambitious farmers’ markets may include an informative produce brochure or a short newsletter in such a mailing.



Next decide – Who will keep that card table stocked and collected, and make additions to the mailing list.

In the case of reaching new customers, the decision is which household criteria will provide a chosen mailing list source.

If such mailings are bound to continue, consider getting your own postage permit which allows the market to achieve some savings in mailing costs. Annual fee information may be obtained at any post office.

Then – Prepare the notice to send to the audience, and share an advance copy of it with a few others to get some feedback.

Hint – Contact your local post office to get information on mass mailings, and any discounts that may apply to you.

Bottom line – Sending friendly reminders is a way to retain the customers that do stop by the market, as well as to reach out to new ones.

WORLD WIDE WEB – USING TODAY'S TECHNOLOGY

Good news – There are sites online that will host your website at no charge. Most of them provide a simple how-to guide for you to use so that even the most inexperienced person can create a website. If your market is located in an area where most of your customer base has access to the internet and uses it regularly, a website is an excellent way to provide information about the market, its vendors, its products, its months, days and hours of operation and its promotions.

Bad news – Maintaining a website takes time and effort. To encourage customers to revisit your website, it has to be current and up-to-date. Every time something changes with your market, the site must be updated. It may be difficult to find one of the



vendors to volunteer for this task, and a webmaster may need to be hired, which can be costly. Also, if your market is located in an area where Internet use is minimal, it may not be to your benefit to use a website as a form of advertisement.

First – First you need to decide if a website will be a sensible mode of advertisement in your community. If your customer base is mostly senior citizens with no computer experience, you may want to stick to conventional methods of advertising. If you decide that a website will be beneficial, you need to find a service provider that offers free website services. This is as simple as going on line and searching for different sites. You also have to find a vendor or some other person who is willing to take on the task of creating and maintaining the website, or you must hire a webmaster or possibly a local high school or college student to create and maintain the page.

Worth doing? – Web-based advertising can be an excellent way to provide information about market hours, events and products. It is not the best option for every market. It depends on how your community uses the Internet. If you do not need to hire a webmaster, it is a free way to get the word out about your market.

Then – Once you have established your website, be sure to get the word out that your market has a website that provides valuable information about the market. Include your web address on your signage and other methods of advertising.

Hint – If you keep your site updated and add changes on a regular basis it will keep customers coming back to see what is new.

Bottom line – Web-based advertising can be an inexpensive way to get information out to the public about your farmers' market. However, the site must be maintained and updated regularly, which can be time consuming and/or costly.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – SAMPLE SURVEY

Include a cover letter describing your intentions of opening a farmers' market and what you plan to do with the information provided in the survey. Be sure to include a "respond-by" date.

Here's the site for the farmers' market we are thinking about: _____

1. Would you shop at the farmers' market at this site?

- Yes (**Go to question 3**) No (**Go to question 2**) Unsure

2. Would you shop at a farmers' market at a different site?

- Yes (**Go to question 3**) No (**Go to question 8**) Unsure (**Go to question 3**)

3. What market times would suit you best?

- Monday from about _____ to _____ o'clock
 Tuesday from about _____ to _____ o'clock
 Wednesday from about _____ to _____ o'clock
 Thursday from about _____ to _____ o'clock
 Friday from about _____ to _____ o'clock
 Saturday from about _____ to _____ o'clock
 Sunday from about _____ to _____ o'clock

4. During which months would you shop?

- | Month: | What is in season: |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> May | asparagus, bedding plants, green onions, leaf lettuce, peas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> June – early July | items above + beans, beets, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, carrots, cherries, cucumbers, flowers, greens, herbs, strawberries, summer squash |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mid-July – August | some items above + apples (early), blueberries, cantaloupe, eggplants, garlic, leeks, nectarines, onions, peaches, pears, peppers, potatoes, plums, raspberries, sweet corn, tomatoes, watermelon |
| <input type="checkbox"/> September – October | some items above + apples, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, cider, gourds, grapes, potted mums, pumpkins, winter squash |
| <input type="checkbox"/> November | items from September – October only |

5. Regarding the produce mentioned above, circle the five crops that interest you most.

(Continued on next page.)

6. Check any of the items below that you would like to see offered at the market.

- Baked goods
- Herb vinegars
- Dried herbs
- Eggs
- Homemade jams
- Organically-grown produce
- Dried flowers
- Orders taken for meats

7. Check which choice you prefer...

- Farmers selling only the products they grow or make, so you know you are buying directly from the grower.
- Farmers allowed to bring in products grown by others, so you will have a greater selection of produce on hand.

8. Please add your thoughts about the site, and products and services to be offered, or provide any other comments:

9. Would you like to be on our mailing/email list? If yes, sign up below.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State, Zip: _____

Email: _____

APPENDIX B – FARMERS’ MARKET SITE REVIEW SHEET

Site Number: _____

1. Site Name _____

2. Location _____

3. Visit date, day and time _____

4. Evaluator’s Name _____

5. Evaluator’s Address _____

6. Municipality _____

7. Current use _____

8. Previous use _____

9. Zoning Designation _____

10. Property Owner _____

11. Phone Number _____

12. Status with owner:

- Approves of market use
- Disapproves of market use
- Contacted but undecided
- Hasn’t been contacted

13. Issues with owner:

- Requires the market to have a group insurance policy for trip-and-fall liabilities
- Wants a rental fee of \$ _____ per _____
- Will provide these extras:
- Requires these limitations:

14a. Observations on...

a. Adjacent property uses _____

b. Nearby destinations for shoppers, workers, tourists _____

c. Surrounding residential neighborhoods _____

d. Convenience for area residents _____

e. Convenience for drivers, commuters _____

f. Proximity to other farmers’ markets or farm stands _____

g. Proximity to food retailers selling local farm products _____

h. Proximity to other local business generally not selling local farm products _____

i. Visibility at street level _____

j. Customer parking _____

k. Vendor parking _____

l. Effects of times and days on potential trade _____

m. Ability to cluster stands logically _____

n. Road sign status, possibilities _____

o. Nice extras (shade, restrooms, bus stop) _____

p. Troublesome things (barriers, blind spots, hazards) _____

q. Other observations _____

14b. Regulations concerning

a. Zoning variance to operate a farmers’ market? _____

b. Permit to place a road sign? _____

c. Driveway permit for new entrance? _____

d. Business license for each vendor? _____

e. Other inspections, permits? _____

APPENDIX C – EXPLORATORY MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

Type your version double-spaced. Call media to determine appropriate person to receive it.

(Today's date) _____

For Immediate Release *(or give a desired release date here)*

Contact: *(your name and daytime phone number)* _____

AREA PRODUCERS SOUGHT FOR NEW FARMERS' MARKET

Farmers looking for a new opportunity to retail their products next season are invited to attend an exploratory meeting about a new farmers' market in _____ *(town)*. The exploratory meeting will take place _____ *(day, date, time and place)*.

Selling fresh produce and other farm products directly to consumers is not new to the _____ *(city or county name)* region. What would break new ground is a more convenient site for consumers, featuring the best from area farm families, according to _____ *(market initiator's name)*.

This meeting will help set the direction of such a market. Farmers who raise fruits, vegetables, herbs, eggs, plants, honey, maple syrup or almost any other shelf-stable farm product for sale to consumers should attend. They will hear a brief overview of the opportunity and have ample time to discuss choices and voice preferences. Details such as potential sites, rules, products, and sales time will be covered.

There are numerous farmers' markets of various types in communities across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Some are seasonal, outdoor markets made up of primarily farmers. Others are indoor, operating year-round with a mix of vendors who are both farmers and resellers. Both seek to make it easier for consumers and local farmers to get together. The focus of this effort will be the _____ *(seasonal, outdoor or year round, indoor)* farmers' market.

No reservations are needed. For more information, or if interested growers cannot make the meeting, contact _____ *(initiator's name and phone number)*.

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APPENDIX D – SAMPLE OUTLINE OF AN APPLICATION FOR NEW FARMER/VENDOR

Date distributed: _____

We always consider new vendors for what should be a great next season! Here is an explanation – just return the application when you are finished.

We organized this farmers' market for the following reasons:

- To create a new source of income for area growers.
- To offer consumers high quality, farm fresh products at a convenient location.
- To strengthen ties between the urban and rural communities.

The location of the market is: _____

Open these days and times: _____

From _____ (*opening date*) until _____ (*closing date*).

For a farmers' market to succeed, it has to run smoothly. We have set up several rules so vendors know what is allowed and expected. Some of our basic rules include: (*List a few of your most important guidelines. Also, be sure to have a contact person's phone number for questions and an address to return the application.*)

APPLICATION

Please print

1. Name of main contact person _____

2. Others involved _____

3. Business Name _____

4. Address, City, State, ZIP and County _____

5. Daytime phone _____ Evening phone _____

6. Name the major products you intend to sell at the market: _____

7. If you are a producer, please describe your farm operation:

Approximate acres in fruit _____

Acres in other crops _____

Is farming your primary or part-time occupation? _____

If you also run another retail farm market or pick-your-own fields, please describe briefly:

Please sign here if you understand and agree to our rules and fees:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX E – FARMERS’ MARKET SAMPLE BYLAWS

Each farmers’ market must develop its own policies and rules. Below is an outline of market bylaws. This outline does not attempt to address all the legal and tax issues concerning a farmers’ market. Groups wanting to use this outline may still want to consult legal and tax advisors. The outline provides a starting point for a new farmers’ market.

Although the discussion and decisions in this outline may seem complicated and tedious, their aim is to avoid future problems. When a tough decision has to be made down the road, it is often hard to separate the issue from the people involved. Making decisions about your bylaws will provide you with some framework by which to make these decisions.

1. Name of the market and umbrella organization

The (name) Farmers’ Market

The (name) Farmers’ Market Association

2. Purpose of the farmers’ market

Starting Point:

Provide consumers with locally grown, good-value farm products at a convenient location.

Provide farmers with a profitable, well-organized and operated retail marketplace.

3. Purpose of the farmers’ market organization

Starting Point:

Ensure orderly operation while striking a fair balance between all participants.

Provide a legal basis to operate as an official, non-profit entity.

4. Vendor membership

Starting Point:

Those actively engaged in the production of accepted products, whether on a full or part time basis.

Bakers and other actual producers of foods and other accepted non-farm products.

Membership is signified in the form of one share of stock to the farm business unit, entitling the holder to a position on the board of directors and one vote.

There is an associate member category for advisors or area leaders, voted in as such, with no stock or voting privileges.

5. Rights of members, voting issues

Starting Point:

Each shareholder in good standing has one vote on issues and by-law changes.

Advance notice of discussion and vote shall be made to all shareholders.

Market-related issues shall be decided on the basis of 51 percent or greater of votes cast.

Types of issues requiring a vote include: adding or ejecting vendors, changing sales periods or locations, electing officers, setting fees, making purchases or entering agreements, and terminating the farmers’ market.

Changes to the bylaws shall be decided on the basis of 66 percent or greater of votes cast.

A vendor who willfully violates these bylaws can be ejected following discussion and vote.

6. Member duties

Starting Point:

Pay state sales taxes, local gross sales taxes, or business license fees due.

Restate their decision for participation next season by the group’s deadline.

Pay fees to the treasurer on time.

Show up on at least two-thirds of the sales days for the sales season.

Be ready to sell at the opening time on market day, but conduct no sales prior to it.

Refrain from consistently pricing products far below profitable levels.

Do not offer unsalable products or misrepresent the quality of an item.

7. New vendors

Starting Point:

Those qualifying as vendors can apply to be accepted by a vote of existing members.

Reasons to disallow an applicant include, but are not limited to: insufficient space or customers, excess supply of products to be sold, or membership criteria not met.

8. Officers

Starting Point:

Term of officers shall be one year. Elections are to be held at the first meeting to prepare for the next season of the farmers' market.

President chairs the meetings, serves as contact for outside groups, appoints committees and conducts votes.

Secretary maintains correspondence, up-to-date bylaws, list of members, applications, and minutes of meetings.

Treasurer collects fees, pays bills, keeps financial records, ensures tax reports are filed, and makes a financial report of the farmers' market organization.

Positions may be combined.

9. Fees

Starting Point:

Fees that can be imposed on vendors include: annual entry fee, sales day fee (in advance, every sales day, weekly, monthly?) and special project fees.

The annual entry or advance sales day fees are not refundable.

Vendors must pay the sales day fee for each day the farmers' market is operating whether or not they are present at the market.

10. Committees

Starting Point:

The president can appoint members and market associates to committees such as promotions, consumer research, site and safety, and audit.

The Site and Safety Committee shall propose stand placements and assignments for approval before the sales season.

11. Stands, vacancies

Starting Point:

A stand can be shared between no more than two producers (who pay and vote as one).

One vacant stand can be absorbed into an adjacent stand by that vendor (who pays double the sales day fee but has only one vote). If both adjacent vendors want a vacant stand, a coin toss will decide.

If neither adjacent vendor wants a vacant stand, a new member can be placed there.

Stands are to be kept hazard-free, reasonably attractive, and activities should be fair to neighboring stands.

Trash and litter around the stand from any source is to be disposed of properly or taken home by the vendor before departure.

12. Products

Starting Point:

These items may be sold at the farmers' market: vegetables, herbs, fruit baskets, bedding plants, baked goods, canned goods, eggs, hay, straw, Christmas trees, fruits, cider, preserves, ornamental produce, potted plants, cut/dried flowers, honey, maple syrup, wool, fleeces, and plant arrangements.

(Continued on next page.)

12.a. Produce containers

Products not sanctioned should receive clearance from members before sale.

Vendors must comply with applicable local, state and federal regulations such as:

- Approval seal on weighing devices.
- Pesticide licensing and safe use.
- Participation in mandatory commodity orders for agricultural commodities.
- Organic certification on claimed products.
- State sales tax collected as required.
- Food safety, sanitation, health permits and labeling issues that apply to the item.

13. Product source

Starting Point:

All products displayed must be produced by the vendor who sells them.

Violations of this source restriction can result in a vendor's expulsion from the market and forfeiture of fees paid.

14. Termination

Starting Point:

The farmers' market will be intact as long as two members remain active in good standing.

Failing that, or if facility or municipal arrangements close the market, the treasury is to be maintained for the period of time required to meet all outstanding bills, taxes, and obligations.

The remaining funds shall be split among all current members of the farmers' market in good standing, pro-rated according to their length of participation. All tax and reporting requirements must be satisfied prior to this.

APPENDIX F – WEST CHESTER GROWER'S MARKET BYLAWS

WEST CHESTER GROWER'S MARKET 1995 Rules and Regulations

I. Purpose

1. To provide consumers with fresh, locally grown or produced products at a convenient location.
2. To provide area farmers with improved marketing opportunities.

II. Participation/Organization

1. The West Chester Grower's Market is an unincorporated association.
2. Vendors must be full or part-time producers of accepted products that are offered for sale at the market.
3. Vendor categories are:

- Vegetables
- Fruits
- Baked goods
- Cut flowers
- Live plants
- Other

4. Application to Market:

- All persons intending to sell in the West Chester Grower's Market must, prior to participation in the market, file an application with the Market Manager verifying that they are the actual grower or producer of the specific items that they intend to sell. Vendors must apply to sell at the market under one of the six categories, based on their primary commodities; however, they may sell any approved product at their stand.

- Market organizers will strive for a balance of vendor categories, with additional fruit and vegetable growers taking preference over the other categories. In the case of too many applicants for one category, priority will be assigned by lottery. Those applicants who cannot be accommodated at the market will maintain their priority on the waiting list for one year.

- Additional vendors will be added to the market at the beginning of each season, or as need permits, if the new farmer agrees to these rules and regulations and is approved by a vote. Reasons for adding a new vendor may be a shortage of a particular product, adding diversity to the mix of goods at market, or the overall growth of consumer demand.

5. Voting: One representative from each vending space is entitled to one vote on issues facing the grower's market. Everyone must be given the same notice and opportunity to vote on issues as they arise. Market related issues shall be decided on the basis of greater than 50% of votes cast. Types of issues requiring this vote include but are not limited to adding or rejecting vendors; changing hours, days or location; setting fees; making major purchases or agreements for the grower's market, and distributing excess funds at the termination of the grower's market.

6. Market Manager:

- The Market Manager supervises the daily activities of the market, enforces the market rules, collects and maintains applications, serves as a contact for vendors and outside groups, collects fees, pays bills, keeps financial records and makes a financial report of the association's activities at the end of the year.
- The Market Master is a volunteer.
- The annual vendor's fees of the Market Manager will be covered by the other vendors.

7. Meetings: Meetings of the Association will be called on an as-needed basis. Members will take turns chairing the meetings and recording the decisions.

III. General Rules

1. Permitted Items for Sale:

a. Items allowed for sale shall include fruits, vegetables, plants, herbs, cut flowers, baked goods, jellies, jams, honey, eggs, cider and crafts from farm raised products. The resale of items purchased by the vendor shall not be permitted, and could result in expulsion from the market.

b. Crafts: Crafts generated from farm-raised products are acceptable. Examples would be wool products, dried flowers, and bees wax candles. Vendors must be the producers of these items.

c. Cider: Cider is only permitted if it is pressed by the vendor, or, if it is pressed exclusively from the vendor's fruit. The sale of apples to an operator of a cider press and the subsequent purchase of bottled cider back from the press operator shall not be considered to have been produced exclusively from the vendor's fruit.

d. Baked Goods: Baked goods must be a product of the vendor. If the baked goods contain fruit or vegetables, the vendor must be the grower of those fruit or vegetables.

2. Market Fees: Fees for the market will be set by the association at the beginning of each market season. Fees must be paid by vendors before their participation in the market. Two vendors sharing one vending space will only have one fee to pay. Fees will cover the joint costs of the Grower's Market for:

- Rent to the property owner,
- Advertising and promotion,
- Liability coverage,
- Charges for a bank account and other products or services, and
- Seasonal fees of the Market Manager.

3. Payment Schedule: For the year _____, total fee will be \$____. \$200 is due with the vendor application, and the balance due July 15. Checks should be made payable to the West Chester Grower's Market Association.

4. Regulatory Compliance: Vendors must comply with local, state and federal regulations that apply to their business. These include:

- Pesticide licensing and their safe use,
- Approval of weigh scales by the area weights and measures officer,
- Organic certification for products claimed as such,
- State sales tax collected as required, and
- Health and labeling regulations that apply to preserves, honey, cider, baked goods, canned goods, eggs, dairy products, etc.

5. Operation of Stands: Vendors have the right to operate their stands as they choose, after meeting the following minimum standards:

- Vendors must ensure safety at their stands and be careful of extended canopies,
- Vendors must attend at least 50% of sale days,
- Producers and growers will strive to sell only products of highest quality and freshness in keeping with the market's desired image,
- Producers will display a sign identifying the name and location of their farm, and
- All vendors are jointly responsible for cleaning up the parking lot at the conclusion of the market day.

6. Market Location: The Grower's Market will be held at the Municipal Lot #10, corner of Church and Chestnut Streets, West Chester, PA.

7. Length of Season: Market will start on _____ and run through _____.

8. Market Times and Days: The market shall operate on Saturdays, from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Selling shall not begin before the market opens, with the exception of selling to customers with a physical handicap. Vendors shall be ready to operate by opening time. Vendors shall clear the parking lot by 2:00 PM.

9. Parking: *To be determined*

10. Space Designation: Vending spaces will be chosen by lottery the first year. In subsequent years, returning vendors will be given the option of returning to their original space, remaining spaces will then be chosen by lottery or by mutual agreement. The size of each vending space will be based on the total amount of space available.

11. Sharing of Vending Spaces: A maximum of two growers may apply to share one vending space. However, each of the two growers must attend at least 50% of the total market days, and must be present on all days when their goods are available for sale. Two growers sharing one vending space are limited to one vote regarding market decisions.

12. Educational and Community Activities: One space will be made available free of charge for educational activities relating to sustainable agriculture and for non-profit community groups. This space will be made available on a first-come, first-served basis, but must be approved and booked with the Market Manager in advance.

IV. Liability

Neither the Borough of West Chester, the County of Chester, nor any of the sponsoring organizations provides any insurance to cover activities of a grower or producer, his or her employees or agent at the Grower's Market. The Grower's Market Association will purchase blanket liability insurance. The insurer of the blanket insurance may require that each vendor carry individual insurance.

V. Termination

The West Chester Grower's Market will terminate when there are less than four active members, or by mutual consent of the vendors.

APPENDIX G – RESOURCES

Following is a list of resources that provide information related to starting or strengthening your farmers' market:

Bureau of Market Development, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture: The bureau has information and vendor application forms for the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (participating vendors can accept coupons from WIC recipients for fresh Pennsylvania-grown produce); *Pennsylvania Pride* logo and promotional campaign for agricultural and food products; merchandising aids from Commodity Marketing Act programs for apple, vegetable and other producers; free price cards, cookbooks and brochures on Pennsylvania agriculture; and *A Consumer's Guide to Pennsylvania Farm Markets*, a publications that lists Pennsylvania's farm markets by county. Contact the Bureau of Marketing Development, PA Department of Agriculture, 2301 North Cameron St., Harrisburg, PA 17110, phone (717) 787-4210 or visit www.pda.state.pa.us.

Center for Entrepreneurial Assistance: The CEA is a Pennsylvania government agency dedicated to small business development. The mission of the CEA is to enhance the entrepreneurial vitality of the Commonwealth and build an environment, which encourages the creation, expansion and retention of successful small, women owned, and minority owned businesses. The CEA oversees the Small Business Resource Center, Minority Business Advocate, and the Women's Business Advocate. Experienced consultants are available to help with business-related issues. The CEA works closely with the 16 state and federally funded Small Business Development Centers that provide business management consulting, information, and educational programs. The CEA also coordinates efforts with the seven Local Development Districts (LDDs) that serve Pennsylvania's 52 Appalachian counties. For more information, contact the Department of Community and Economic Development, Commonwealth Keystone Building, 400 North Street, 4th Floor, Harrisburg, PA 17120-0225, phone (800) 280-3801 or (717) 783-5700, email: ra-dcedcea@state.pa.us or visit www.inventpa.com and search under "Business in PA."

County Cooperative Extension Offices: Extension agents offer expertise in financial management, agriculture, marketing and more. Many counties are covered by farm or business management agents who are available for assistance regarding business and tax issues. Find the office nearest you listed under the County Government section of the blue pages in the telephone book or visit www.extension.psu.edu. Some available publications include: *Farming Alternatives*, an 88-page planning guide to help growers evaluate and select their best enterprise and marketing channel (order NRAES-32); handouts on parliamentary procedure and duties of officers; information on the *Mid-Atlantic Direct Marketing Conference and Trade Show*, which takes place every February for farm marketers in a four-state region.

Fictitious Name Registration: The Corporation Bureau of the Pennsylvania Department of State has forms available for fictitious name registrations. Contact the Fictitious Name Search, Corporation Bureau, 308 North Office Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120, phone (717) 787-1057 or at www.dos.state.pa.us/corps/forms.htm.

Internal Revenue Service: Package 1024 is the application for non-profit, tax-exempt status. Form 990 is the annual information return for non-profits. For more information about IRS requirements and forms, contact the IRS Forms Service Distribution Center at (800) 829-1040 or visit the IRS online at www.irs.gov.

Marketing Resource Guide: The Lehigh County Cooperative Extension Office offers a list of marketing and merchandising-related publications and services. Contact the Lehigh County office at 4184 Dorney Park Road, Allentown, PA 18104, phone (610) 391-9840.

Pennsylvania Small Business Development Centers: The SBDCs work with small firms to help them compete and grow in today’s highly competitive global economy. The SBDCs help aspiring entrepreneurs turn ideas into businesses, and help small firms expand. By combining the expertise of a professional staff and the resources of the state’s best colleges and universities, the SBDCs provide high quality one-on-one business management consulting, information and education programs that build small firms’ capacity to compete effectively in domestic and international markets. More information on SBDCs is at www.pasbdc.org.

Pennsylvania Small Business Resource Center: The SBRC is designed to be the first stop for individuals interested in starting their own businesses in the commonwealth, as well as for entrepreneurs seeking to expand their companies. The center’s staff provides counseling on issues such as business registration, state licenses and permits, and financing options, and coordinates referrals to other state agencies as well as public and private service providers. The SBRC also publishes *The Entrepreneur’s Guide: Starting and Growing a Business in Pennsylvania*. For more information or a copy of the guide, call (800) 280-3801. Information on the SBRC is also available at www.paopen4business.state.pa.us.

Pennsylvania Department of Revenue: The Department of Revenue will send tax forms and handle inquiries for corporations. For further assistance, call the department at (717) 787-1064 or visit its website at www.revenue.state.pa.us.

U.S. Department of Agriculture:
USDA offers information on farmers’ markets through its Agricultural Marketing Service. Visit the service online at www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets or call the Farmers Market Hotline at (800) 384-8704.



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