



***Farmers' Markets: Challenges and
Opportunities
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community
involved in sustaining
agriculture



Selecting a Market

- * Make sure you scope out the markets in your area so you know what to expect.
 - * Visit the market
 - * Ask the vendors and market manager how the market is
 - * Talk to customers you know that shop there to see how busy it is and what they think of it.
 - * See what vendors are selling, will your product be a good addition? Is there any competition? How many vendors sell the same product?
- * It is important to know what the market is like before you commit so you set your expectations.

Are Farmers' Markets Right For You?

- * Markets are fun, social places where you have to talk to lots of customers, are you ready for this?
- * Do you have an outgoing, social personality? Do you have an employee that does?
- * Direct Sales provide higher prices for goods which = increased cash flow.
- * Do you (or an employee) have time to be away from the farm ?
- * They are Rain or Shine and mostly outdoors.

Farmers' Market Challenges

- * **TIME!** The time involved prepping, manning the space and putting it all away can be daunting.
- * If you are completely new to market selling the startup cost and preparation of booth space can be more significant for you on the onset.
- * It can be challenging to determine how much product to harvest for market since you don't have any idea of volume when you first start and even when you do it can be tricky.
- * Pricing of product
- * Many times the more successful markets are harder to get into or are not an option at all.

Additional Challenges...

- * It can take years to develop a new market to be successful.
- * Limited sales volume.
- * Retail/Merchandising skills are needed to present a nice image for your farm/booth space.
- * People skills are a must!
- * Special circumstances like the weather have a tremendous impact on the success of your market.
- * What do you do with the product you didn't sell if it is perishable?
- * Training staff



**What Are the Challenges You
Have Faced?**

Opportunities of Farmers' Markets

- * Direct sales are more profitable than wholesale
- * Markets give you exposure to members of the community and this can be good marketing if you do sell wholesale to businesses in your area. Customers get to know who you are.
- * The Market is going to advertise for you!
- * Markets are a great place to test new products and get customer feedback directly.
- * Most are reasonably priced when it comes to fees.
- * Setup costs are lower for markets than retail space.
- * Once you build a customer base they can be pretty loyal.

How Do You Make a Market Successful for You?

- * Be Friendly, outgoing. If you are not the one at the market make sure your employees have the right personality to staff a booth, train them! This is key to making a market successful.
- * Interaction with customers and building relationships will benefit you for the long haul.
- * Your booth presentation should be attractive, clean and organized.
- * Staff should be clean and presentable as well.
- * Have proper signage on your booth as well as your product.

How Do You Make a Market Successful for You Cont'd.

- * Top quality products should be sold and displayed such that it is overflowing, colorful and appealing to the customers.
- * Educate your customers at the market
 - * Tell them about your farm and products
 - * Share recipes with them
- * Diversity of product can be more attractive to customers and benefit your sales, but it is not completely necessary to be successful.

Tips To Increasing Market Sales

- * Sell a large variety of products, but only if you are making money on them. If you are not, then it is time to drop that item and try something else.
- * Be creative, find your product niche, look around the market, what products are not available? Ask the market manager what customers say they need that the market doesn't have.
- * If you have culls or seconds, label them as such and SELL them--- price them accordingly.
- * Succession planting is very important for market sales.
- * Sell variety packs of things like cherry tomatoes or hot peppers. Often folks don't want 6 of the same variety so this could make you the place to buy.
- * Be creative with your signing. Think outside the box.

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What Works for You?