

# 5.1 Farmers' Markets and Roadside Farm Stands

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# Lecture 1 Outline: Farmers' Markets

## A. The Rationale Behind Retail/Direct Marketing

1. Capturing a greater percentage of the food dollar – Retail/direct marketing can be an effective strategy in improving the economic viability of small- and medium-scale farms. By marketing directly to the end consumers, farmers can capture 100% of the consumer food dollar (minus costs of production), instead of the smaller percent derived from wholesale marketing arrangements.
2. Market stability – Retail markets tend to be more buffered and stable than wholesale markets and therefore ensure a consistent and more reliable source of income for growers
3. Retail marketing and business planning – Despite the advantages of direct marketing, careful business planning and attention to detail at every step of the farming and marketing process are necessary to be successful. The following lecture outlines many critical considerations for small-scale growers interested in direct marketing through farmers' markets.
4. Direct customer feedback – The farmers' market is an excellent place to test new varieties and find out about varieties customers would like to have available
5. Farmer-to-farmer knowledge exchange – The farmers' market is a valuable place to meet other growers, get new ideas about production and marketing, and learn about creative presentation

## B. Advantages of Farmers' Markets for Growers

1. A farmers' market is an arrangement where more than one farmer installs portable displays in a central location for the sale of farm produce. By congregating, multiple farmers with different and complimentary offerings are able to draw a greater number of customers than if selling independently.
2. Farmers' markets offer an opportunity for small-scale farmers who do not have the volume or variety to supply a farm stand or other daily market a chance to participate in a larger market venue one or more times per week
3. Farmers' markets can also provide the opportunity for geographically remote farms to bring their produce to urban markets
4. Farmers' markets can provide an opportunity for farms to concentrate more on production and selling, leaving advertising and marketing considerations to the farmers' market management organization
5. Farmers' markets can often drive wholesale markets by introducing customers to the farmer as well as his or her products

## C. Farmers' Market Management, Organization, and Legal Considerations

1. Most farmers' markets are organized as nonprofit organizations. In some cases a sponsoring nonprofit agency (e.g., chamber of commerce) may host a farmers' market as a side project or, in some larger urban areas, nonprofits exist for the sole purpose of managing farmers' markets (e.g., New York Green Markets).
2. Producer-driven farmers' markets – In other instances core vendors might form a board of directors who develop the market and oversee the market rules
3. Farmers' market manager – Market managers are usually hired to oversee the market during hours of operation, enforce the rules, promote the market through advertising, and collect vendor fees

4. The farmers' market board of directors (or sponsoring agency) is generally responsible for establishing vendor guidelines. Critical issues to be covered in vendor guidelines –
  - a. The amount of space allocated to each vendor
  - b. The cost of space for each vendor – Some markets have a weekly space fee and others collect a percentage of each vendor's weekly sales. Money collected should go towards advertising and to pay the market manager's stipend.
  - c. Rules for balancing the specific types of products sold by the market vendors and allowing new vendors into a market – Market managers should try to provide as many types of local food products as possible, but mechanisms to prevent oversupplying particular items to the point where the business is spread too thin should be implemented. Policies should also be established regarding craft vendors and prepared food vendors.
  - d. Rules regarding the origin of produce sold by vendors – Some markets have a "producer only" rule (i.e., vendors must have grown all of the food that they bring to market). "Certified farmers' markets" are those markets that are certified by a local or state agency to be selling products produced solely by the vendors represented at the market. This rule prevents vendors from buying produce on the wholesale market and reselling it at a retail mark-up.  
 Other markets find that it is useful for both the consumers (by increasing market selection) and the vendors (by providing more sales) if vendors are allowed to supplement their produce with other locally grown products. These markets need very clear policies on what can be purchased and resold by vendors, and also how this produce is labeled for the consumer at the market. Some markets allow a percentage of a vendor's sales (e.g., 20%) to be derived from another farm, provided that farm is also local and provides a membership fee to the market. Both "producer only" and markets with other rules must have an enforcement policy to ensure that vendors adhere to the rules. Larger farmers' market organizations often conduct inspections of farmers' fields to ensure that the produce they bring to market originated on the vendor's farm.
5. Insurance – In some cases markets require that each vendor be insured for off-farm market sales. Most markets also have an insurance policy that covers the market in particular.

#### **D. Location, Demographics, and the Regulation of Competition**

1. The location of potential farmers' markets should be carefully considered both by organizations and market managers as they consider opening new farmers' markets, and also by potential farmer/vendors who are considering joining a new market. Important considerations include the following –
  - a. Farmers' markets need to be in busy locations. In most cases they are located in downtown business districts in areas where people are already accustomed to shopping. Common locations include closed-off parking lots, town commons, and closed streets. Some markets have secured permanent locations and provide some form of shelter for vendors. These markets are usually located on busy roads if they are not near the city center.
  - b. Plenty of parking needs to be available near the farmers' market location. Customers ideally will be purchasing armfuls of produce and other farm goods, so they need to be able to take this to their vehicles easily. Farmers' market organizations should consider providing shopping carts or wagons for customers to use and return. Particularly markets that sell lots of plants can benefit from providing such carts.
2. Demographics of the potential customers should be analyzed
  - a. Determining how many people live within a 10-, 20-, 30- and 45-minute drive of the market location is useful in locating market places. Locating on established commuter routes is generally beneficial.

- b. Potential customers should also be analyzed for income levels, political beliefs, ethnicity, and other factors that will influence their interest in farmers' markets and the products sold there
- 3. Regulation of competition
  - a. Competition from other farm stands, farmers' markets, and retail stores must be considered when analyzing the viability of potential farmers' market locations
  - b. Regulating competition within farmers' markets – Competition among vendors selling similar products at the same market can be an issue. Competition is good to an extent, as it encourages individual vendors to strive for quality. A saturation point can be reached, however, in which case an overabundance of vendors selling the same products results in the sales of all of the vendors being too low to justify participating in the market. Farmers' markets must set standards and rules for balancing the numbers and types of vendors in such a way that the markets remain viable for the participating vendors and also offer adequate choice to draw the maximum number of customers.

#### **E. Presentation, Structures, Displays, and Infrastructure**

1. Presentation – As farmers' markets can potentially provide concentrated periods of high-volume sales, how an individual market display appears to customers is very important to successful marketing. Important considerations –
  - a. Displays at the farmers' market are one of the most important factors in a successful marketing effort. Although growing quality produce is essential, produce must then be cleaned, packaged or bunched, and displayed in a way that customers find attractive. This point can't be overstated.
  - b. Using wooden display crates and baskets can make a huge difference in enhancing retail produce displays. Although plastic crates are probably the most efficient type of container for handling and transporting produce, plastic generally is less appealing on the display. Using plastic containers to transport items that will be transferred onto tables, shelves, or into attractive wooden crates makes sense.  
Apple crates are stackable for transport if not overfilled. They can then be tipped on their side with the produce spilling out for a feeling of abundance when making the displays. Stacking apple or other wooden crates two or more crates high on their sides can make striking tiered vegetable tower displays. Wooden bushel baskets can also be attractive in displays, but they do not transport as easily.
  - c. Attractive packaging and unitizing (forming bulk produce into a unit) can be a good idea for some types of crops. Peck and half-peck bags for apples, pulp containers for berries and cherry tomatoes, mesh bags for onions and potatoes, plastic bags for topped carrots and beets are all examples of unitizing. This method can make it easier for customers to select their purchases, and it may also encourage them to purchase more volume than they otherwise would. Selling bunches of root crops and greens is another method of unitizing.  
When using this method provide full units in order to create a sense of abundance and value. Also, don't provide only unitized items. Some people want only very small quantities, or they want to try a little bit of lots of varieties. In general the more choices you can give your customers, the more satisfied they will be.
2. Pedestrian traffic – The flow of pedestrian traffic at the farmers' market booth must be considered and planned out. Is there an easy traffic flow from the entrance to the paying area? Does this traffic pattern draw people past the maximum number of product displays? Are point-of-purchase items located near the register in order to encourage impulse buys?
3. Displays of perishable items
  - a. Perishable items need special attention. At the farmers' market, displaying these items on vertical shelving and then manually pouring water over the greens and bunch crop display racks over the course of the market can be very effective. Shade must also be provided using umbrellas or tents.

- b. Some farm products such as eggs, milk, cider, frozen meat, etc. will need coolers or freezers in order to be stored and displayed safely. At farmers' markets this can be a challenge due to a lack of electricity. Some markets are now providing electricity to vendors so that coolers and freezers can be plugged in. Otherwise ice can be used to keep these products cool.
4. Transportation and set up
- a. Producers selling at farmers' markets require a portable display system and a vehicle capable of carrying the load. The type of vehicle should be carefully considered.
  - b. Vehicles must accommodate both the load of produce to be sold at market and the benches and tables that make up the displays. Consider designing a truck shelving system that holds the produce load in transport, and then transforms into the display structure upon arrival at the market. Many vendors at farmers' markets use box trucks, vans, or trucks to transport produce. Open pickup trucks can be detrimental to many types of produce due to wind and sun exposure.
  - c. Display arrangements should be easy to set up and take down (as light as possible), effective at showing off the produce and farm products, and efficient at using the limited space that is often allocated to each vendor at busy markets. Vertical tiered displays help fit more produce into the same ground space and can be visually exciting for the customer.
  - d. When loading for farmers' markets, a system should be established so that necessary supplies are always on hand when needed. Developing a checklist that is used every time loading occurs can help you remember important supplies. Sign-making supplies should always be included.
  - e. Most farmers use county certified digital scales that can calculate prices. Bags should be provided.

## **F. Growing Crops and Managing the Farm for Retail Markets**

1. Growing mixed produce for retail markets can be extremely challenging. A large variety of products attracts customers, and growers who offer a wide diversity of crops are often the most successful. For vegetable farmers, growing a wide diversity of crops can be challenging due to differing crop cultural requirements and equipment needs. The following are suggestions to help organize a farm to successfully grow a wide diversity for retail marketing –
  - a. Design the growing system to accommodate all of the possible crops. Have standard beds and spacing systems that accommodate all of the possible crops, even if spacing compromises have to be made on some of the crops. Often row spacing per bed can be relatively standardized, and plant density can be accomplished by adjusting in-row spacing. This allows use of standardized cultivation strategies.
  - b. Provide a diversity of varieties within crops. Tomatoes, peppers, winter squash, and tree fruits are all good examples of crops where this strategy can be used. By offering many varieties, the appeal of the retail market can be greatly enhanced without increasing labor requirements, as crop varieties often have similar cultural needs. Make sure popular crop varieties are always available (according to season).
  - c. Keep careful planting records by making maps of varieties as you plant
  - d. For most crops, differences in appearance (color or shape) make the varieties easy enough to distinguish. For varieties that look the same, customers will need to be educated about differences in taste and texture or it will not be helpful from a marketing perspective.
2. Managing harvests for direct marketing (see Unit 4.7: CSA Harvest and Post-harvest Handling for more information)
  - a. Managing harvest for retail markets requires careful planning prior to each harvest. Harvest plans should show a grid of the crops to be harvested and the breakdown for each retail or wholesale market. Harvest totals should then be tallied for each crop.

- b. Harvest should be done in an efficient order starting in the morning with the most heat-perishable crops. Use of standard stackable containers is recommended in order to both quantify the amounts picked and to ease the movement of produce.
- c. One or more people should be stationed in the packing shed once the first crops are harvested each day. This person is in charge of cleaning and packing the produce for the retail markets. In general, produce for retail markets can be packed into reusable plastic or wooden crates, as the empties can easily be returned to the harvest operation once the produce is stocked.
- d. Any time packing can be accomplished in the field in a clean and neat way, labor will be saved. E.g., lettuce, greens, cole crops, and any bunching crop can be field packed.

### **G. Pricing Strategies**

1. Establishing fair and reliable pricing strategies is essential for successful vending through farmers' markets
2. The most important initial consideration is to know (as accurately as possible) the cost of production for each item. This is easier said than done, as it can be remarkably difficult to track exactly how many inputs and how much labor go into any particular crop. However, establishing record systems that give the most accurate idea of production costs for each item is important. Prices should then be set to at least cover these costs. Don't forget to account for shrinkage and other losses. Base yield expectations on long-term averages that include both good and bad crops, as this will give a more realistic picture of costs.
3. Provide a mark-up that covers the cost of either purchasing-in or growing a product, and then 30–50% for profit
4. Some farmers sell certain crops as "loss leaders" either at or below cost to attract customers, who then spend money buying other things that more than make up for the poor return on the loss leader. However, consistently undercutting other growers may lead to conflicts, and disrupt the market's general pricing structure. The farmers' market manager is in part responsible for minimizing competition and preventing "price wars." Growers and market managers should work to ensure that everyone receives close to retail or premium prices.

### **H. Advertising and Customer Communication**

1. Advertising is an art as much as it is a science. On farms the profit margins are often slim, and it seems that there is always something to spend meager profits on that is more important than buying ad space. However, effective advertising and consumer awareness are key to maintaining and improving sales. Free and low-cost methods of advertising should be used as much as possible, and paid advertising should also be considered.
2. Farmers' market organizations should have clear and noticeable street signs to direct people to the market and announce the presence of the market. In general, a sign that states the market's presence and hours of operation should be permanently installed for the season. Additional temporary signage should also be installed when the market is actually open.
3. Writing a newsletter for customers can be a great way to communicate with them. Farmers' market organizations and individual vendors should consider providing a newsletter. Use newsletters to tell people about the farm or market, and how to store, preserve, and prepare local produce. Provide recipe ideas, and highlight special events and crop availability. Different farms and markets publish newsletters on seasonal, monthly, biweekly, and weekly schedules.
4. Providing recipes at the market, particularly for less common crops, can give people ideas on how to cook vegetables and thus increase sales

5. Using the media to generate free press for the market is an essential strategy. Learn to write a press release and send releases to TV, radio, and newspaper media. When the media reporters show or call, give them all of the attention and genuine farmer outlook that you possibly can. A good news story about your farm or market is worth far more than the same space devoted to advertising.
6. Paid media advertising should not be discounted. Paid advertising can be a very effective way to bring consumers to a farmers' market. It can be used both to raise awareness of the market in general and to increase the customer base over time. General newspaper, radio, or television advertising, or announcing specific events such as the ripening of a particular crop or a special festival being hosted by the market, are all worthwhile considerations.

### **I. Special Marketing Strategies**

1. Using special strategies can help enhance farmers' market sales. Using the internet/world wide web, providing farm stand membership options (see Lecture 2 Outline), and offering produce samples are all options that can be added to farmers' markets.
2. The world wide web is an important marketing tool. Farmers' market organizations and individual vendors should consider a basic web site that provides background information.
  - a. Content – Provide farm, crop, seasonal information, and directions to the farmers' market. A web page should be linked with local farming nonprofits and related food groups. The web can also be used in more savvy ways to allow pre-ordering of produce by customers, web-based bill paying, and sales of vendor products by mail order.
3. Providing samples of your produce can be a great way to attract customers and generate interest in new items. At most markets, cut samples are only allowed if kept under cover and served with toothpicks. However, giving whole items such as fruit or vegetables like tomatoes can not only help a customer decide on quality and taste, it also initiates an important relationship between the grower and customer.

### **J. Money Management and Customer Service at the Farmers' Market**

1. Vendors should have a money management system when helping customers at markets. Some farmers prefer money pouches so that they can move around the booth and make change for anyone on the spot. This also helps prevent theft attempts. Other farmers use a money box, which can help organize coins in addition to providing a place to store sign-making supplies and calculators.
2. Be sure that financial transactions can be made efficiently. Price items so that they can be added up quickly in your head and bunch group items so that they add up to even sums.
3. Some farmers' markets are now developing systems so that customers can use credit cards or debit cards to purchase produce. In most cases the cards are swiped at the market manager booth, and then the farmer is reimbursed for the purchase. These same machines can also allow food stamp cards to be processed. Many states also have farmers' market coupon programs that provide coupons to elderly and low-income residents. These coupons can then be redeemed to vendors, and the farmers in turn send these coupons in to the state for reimbursement.
4. When helping customers it is important to be friendly and courteous, even to hostile customers. People who enjoy interacting and talking to people about the products being sold often enjoy farmers' market vending. At the market, vendors should be more neatly dressed than usual. Preferably a farm T-shirt or farmers' market T-shirt should be worn in order to establish professionalism and help customers identify the vendors. When ringing up customer orders, sales can be increased by asking customers "if that is all?"
5. Get to know as many customers' names as possible. This shows that you care about them and their business.

# Lecture 2 Outline: Roadside Farm Stands

## A. Roadside Farm Stands

1. Roadside farm stands are usually operated on the farming location by a single farm operation. Some farms are able to devote their entire production to a single farm stand outlet, but in many cases farms operate a retail farm stand in addition to other marketing arrangements such as wholesale, farmers' markets, or community supported agriculture (CSA). Other variations include multiple farms cooperating to grow for a single stand and off-farm stand locations.
2. Many of the specific recommendations for running farmers' markets also apply to roadside stands and are outlined in Lecture 1 Outline: Farmers' Markets

## B. Legal Considerations for Farm Stands

1. Before opening a farm stand it must be determined that such agricultural retail ventures are compatible with county or city zoning
2. Liability insurance must be secured prior to opening a farm stand. Most farm insurance policies can be arranged to cover retail sales from the farm premises.
3. Most towns require health inspections and scale inspections for retail food operations

## C. Structures, Displays, and Infrastructure for Farm Stands

1. A farm stand's appearance is critical to successful marketing
  - a. Farm stands need to be both functional for the grower/vendor and inviting to the customer
  - b. Structures should be attractively designed to fit into the farmscape. If possible, production fields should be nearby in order to create the association of purchasing with agriculture and farming, as many Americans have an appreciation for farming and rural life.
  - c. Structures should be as attractive as possible. Using wood construction, flower gardens, and landscaping can make your stand into an attractive destination.
  - d. If at all possible, locate parking areas to the side of the stand. Vehicles and parking lots tend to be unattractive. Try to arrange things so that parking areas do not dominate the landscape.
  - e. Locate stands in such a way that product can easily be moved from the packing area to the retail area. If possible, design everything to be at the same level or with ramps so that product can be moved easily using two-wheel hand trucks, carts, and pallets. If packing doesn't occur near the stand, design a loading area and back room to accommodate back stock and deliveries.
  - f. Walk-in cooler storage is generally necessary for storing back stock. Insulated cold rooms and old refrigerated truck bodies can both be good options.
2. Creating attractive displays inside the farm stand is one of the most important factors in a successful farm stand venture. See Lecture 1 Outline for produce display ideas.
3. Checkout systems at farm stands – Small stands often use self-serve money-box systems. This can work well provided customers are honest. Advantages are reduced labor costs for staffing the stand. Disadvantages are that there is no one to answer questions, assist customers, or watch and prevent theft. Larger-volume stands usually hire one or more people to stock and cashier.

#### **D. “Purchasing-In” Produce and Value-Added Products**

1. Some stands sell only produce and products grown or made on the farm. Many other farmers find that it is not economically sensible to grow all of the possible crops that ideally would be offered. Growers will therefore purchase additional produce and/or other products to supplement produce grown on the farm.
  - a. Example: Many small-scale farmers find it unprofitable to grow sweet corn on a small scale, but find that sales of other produce are compromised if sweet corn is not offered. In response, small-scale growers will often purchase fresh corn from other growers producing sweet corn at a larger scale and resell it at their farm stands.
2. When purchasing produce for resale, farm stand business owners must establish guidelines for sourcing products. Some local growers only purchase in certified organic or locally-produced products or both. Providing as much information as possible to stand consumers regarding the origin and growing practices is suggested, as many consumers now seek to support regional economic viability in agriculture.
3. Supplementing produce grown on the farm with other products can greatly enhance customer interest and therefore the economic viability of farm stands. E.g., bread, local honey, maple syrup, local milk, crafts, jams, pickles, etc., can expand the farm stand’s offerings. Some stands add a processing kitchen and make their own value-added products from farm produce (e.g., preserves), while others simply sell the products of other businesses. Another option is to rent space in a commercial processing kitchen in order to make value-added products for a farm stand.
  - a. Sales of product that is purchased and resold should be tracked and inventoried. For self-serve stands a weekly inventory of “grocery” type products can help keep track of sales categories. For staffed stands, a register system should be able to keep track of product sales by category.

#### **E. Pricing Strategies**

1. Establishing fair and reliable pricing strategies is essential for successful farm stand marketing
2. Defining costs of production – The most important initial consideration is to know (as accurately as possible) what your production costs are. Though often difficult to develop and maintain, a record system that gives production costs for each item should be created. Prices should be set to at least cover these costs. Don’t forget to account for shrinkage and other losses. Base yield expectations on long-term average yield information.
3. Mark-up – Provide a mark-up that covers the cost of either purchasing-in or growing a product, and then 30–50% for profit
4. Some farmers sell certain crops as “loss leaders” either at or below cost in order to attract customers, who then spend money buying other things that make up for the poor return on the loss leader

#### **F. Special Marketing Strategies**

Using special marketing strategies can help enhance farm stand marketing efforts. Using the web, providing farm stand membership options, and using pick-your-own crops in conjunction with the usual farm stand offerings are all options that can be added to increase direct market sales.

1. The world wide web/internet – The web is an important marketing tool. At a minimum, a basic web site that provides background information on the stand and farm, crops and seasonal information, hours of operation, and directions to the farm should be established. A web page should be linked with local farming nonprofits and related food groups. The web can also be used to allow pre-ordering of produce by customers, web-based bill paying, and sales of farm stand products by mail order.

2. Farm stand memberships – Farm stand memberships integrate the economic support of a community supported agriculture (CSA) project with the freedom of food choices of farm stands. This arrangement offers the consumer more options than a traditional CSA, while still providing the farm with guaranteed sales and up-front operating capital. Like a CSA arrangement, farm stand memberships also offer the consumer a feeling of involvement with and support of the farm.
  - a. How farm stand memberships work – Like CSA, most farm stand memberships involve the member paying a lump sum to the farm in advance of the season. The member then has credit that can be used over the course of the season. In most cases a slight discount is provided compared to the retail prices normally paid by customers. A careful record-keeping system is needed in order to keep track of the memberships. Sending a regular newsletter to members can be a good way to remind people of the farm stand and encourage the use of the prepaid credit over the course of a season.
3. Pick-your-own operations – Pick-your-own operations for popular berry, fruit, and other crops such as beans, peas, and pumpkins can be a profitable undertaking. For this to work the pick-your-own operation fields ideally will be located near the farm stand, or there will be a way to get people parked, to the field, and back out to the stand to pay. Cart or hay rides can also be used to transport people to the field, particularly in the case of apples or pumpkins, when the picking trip is often as much of an outing for the customer as it is a way to harvest food. Sometimes a separate pay station is established in the field, but this is not as useful at encouraging customers to also buy other stand products before or after they pick.

#### **G. Advertising and Customer Communication**

1. Advertising is an art as much as it is a science. Advertising is very often a sound investment in your business, as consumer awareness is key to developing, maintaining, and improving sales. Free and low-cost methods of advertising should be used as much as possible, and paid advertising should also be considered.
2. Signage – Good street signage is perhaps the most important initial advertising consideration for a farm stand. Clear signs that state the farm's name, along with specific product signs, can help get people into the parking lot. Before building signs, it is important to check with the town, as most towns have rules and restrictions about what size and type of signs can be installed. Types of signage include –
  - a. Trail blazing signs – These direct people from busy roads as appropriate. In many cases barns can provide a good space to install large signs with the farm's logo.
  - b. Changeable chalk board or magnetic lettering signs – These can also be useful for grabbing the attention of drivers, particularly if they are updated regularly
3. Writing a newsletter for customers can be a great way to communicate with them. Use newsletters to tell people about the farm, how to store, preserve, and prepare seasonal produce, provide recipe ideas, and highlight special events and crop availability. Newsletters can be sent to farm stand members, e-mailed to a larger mailing list, and also provided to customers at the stand. Different farms publish newsletters seasonally, monthly, biweekly, and weekly .
4. Providing recipes at the farm stand, particularly for less common crops, can give people ideas on how to cook vegetables and thus increase sales
5. Using the media to generate free press for the farm is an essential strategy. Learn to write a press release and send releases to TV, radio, and newspaper outlets. When the media reporters show or call, give them all of the attention and genuine farmer outlook that you possibly can. A good news story about your farm is worth much more than the same space devoted to paid advertising.
6. Paid media advertising should not be discounted. It can be a very effective way to bring consumers to a farm stand.

## **H. Off-Site Farm Stands**

1. In some cases a farm is simply too remote from a busy road or population center to successfully support an on-farm stand. In other cases an off-farm stand can help reach a wider market of consumers. Some farms have lots of machinery, pesticide residue, or other concerns that preclude having an on-farm stand.
2. Off-site stands can be successful if arranged carefully. Produce transport is the biggest obstacle. In some cases additional duplicative infrastructure such as property and phones will be needed. This may make the start-up process more capital intensive and financially risky than an on-farm location. Nevertheless, location and convenience for the consumer are of key importance in the success of farm stands, so locating off-farm might be worth the inconvenience in the long run.

# Resources

## BOOKS

Backyard Market Gardening, The Entrepreneur's Guide to Selling What You Sow, by Andy Lee and Jim Hightower. Good Earth Publications, 5th printing, 1993.

*A complete why-to and how-to of small-scale market farming. Email [goodearth@rockbridge.net](mailto:goodearth@rockbridge.net) for more information.*

Dynamic Farmers' Marketing: A Guide to Successfully Selling Your Farmers' Market Products, by Jeff Ishee. Bittersweet Farmstead, 1997.

*An informal book dedicated solely to the topic of selling at farmers' markets. Save two years of trial and error just by studying and implementing the tips found in this book.*

The Flower Farmer: An Organic Grower's Guide to Raising and Selling Cut Flowers, by Lynn Byczynski. Chelsea Green Publishing, 1997.

*A comprehensive introductory guide to commercial cut flower production, including variety recommendations, cultivation, harvest and post-harvest handling, flower marketing, yield and pricing, woody ornamentals, dried flowers, arranging, profiles of successful growers, and an appendix with production and harvest advice on 100 species. A lovely book as well. Available from 'Growing for Market' (see Web resources, below).*

Flowers for Sale, by Lee Sturdivant. San Juan Naturals, 1992.

*This book covers topics related to growing and selling cut flowers.*

Harvest: An Introduction to the Physiology and Handling of Fruit, Vegetables and Ornamentals (4th edition), by Ron Wills, Barry McGlasson, Doug Graham, and Daryl Joyce. Oxford University Press, 1998.

*A comprehensive post-harvest physiology text. Many useful charts and concepts for direct produce marketers to consider.*

Market Farm Forms: Spreadsheet Templates for Planning and Tracking Information on Diversified Market Farms, by Marcie A. Rosenzweig. 1999. 100 pages plus diskette. Order from Full Circle Organic Farm, 3377 Early Times Lane, Auburn, CA 95603. E-mail: [fullcircle@jps.net](mailto:fullcircle@jps.net).

*Developed to help with planning, planting, and income diversification. The book explains how to enter your farm's information into the templates, and what the calculated data tell you. Cross-platform CD works seamlessly with Excel. Computerless farmers can use the printed forms with a pencil and calculator.*

Market Gardening, Growing and Selling Produce, by Rick Stains. Fulcrum Publishing, 1990.

*A good overview of market gardening. The book starts with an extensive chapter on marketing considerations. Topics such as protective cropping, machinery, and cropping possibilities are also included. Author is from England, making this an interesting book for American readers.*

Metro Farm: The Guide to Growing for Big Profit on a Small Parcel of Land, by Michael Olsen. TS Books, 1994.

*Thorough and fun to read, this book generates a million ideas and helps you chart your course for creating a new small farm enterprise. See [www.metrofarm.com](http://www.metrofarm.com)*

The New Farmers' Market: Farm-Fresh Ideas for Producers, Managers and Communities, by Vance Corum, Marcie Rosenzweig, and Eric Gibson. Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education, 2001.

*Provides extensive information in a clear, nuts-and-bolts manner. Contains invaluable insight and advice for both those selling at market, and those organizing them. See: [www.sare.org](http://www.sare.org).*

Sell What You Sow, by Eric Gibson. New World Publishing, 1990.

*Great overview of marketing techniques for a variety of situations. Appendices and resource list. Aimed at small- to medium-scale farmers. E-mail [egibson@jps.net](mailto:egibson@jps.net).*

The Small Commercial Garden, by Dan Haakenson. Pc-Services, 1995.

*Detailed information from the author's own records on designing a market garden. Includes advice on marketing, commercial design of necessary structures, planning, growing, harvesting, and information on basic crops that are the mainstay of any good market garden (no unusual crops). Highly recommended for small market growers. Accompanying video available.*

Successful Small-Scale Farming, An Organic Approach, by Karl Schwenke. Storey Publishing Co., 1991.

*This book goes beyond growing crops to show everything you need to know, including which direction to begin plowing your fields, machinery you might not need, how to pull up old fence posts, and other info you missed from your farming grandparents!*

Sustainable Vegetable Production from Start-up to Market, by Vern Grubinger. Natural Resources Agriculture and Engineering Services (NRAES), 1999.

*Covers equipment thoroughly, as well farm planning and business management. Contains a section on grower profiles for 18 crops, including their enterprise budgets. A great overview for farmers starting out or those looking for different angles. See [www.nraes.org](http://www.nraes.org).*

Western Profiles of Innovative Agricultural Marketing: Examples from Direct Farm Marketing and Agri-Tourism Enterprises. Western Extension Marketing Committee, Cooperative Extension of the University of Arizona. Publication AZ1325, 2003.

*Provides 16 case studies of successful innovative direct farm marketing enterprises.*

## PERIODICALS

Growing for Market

*A very useful national monthly newsletter for direct market farmers. Covers production and marketing of vegetables and flowers. P.O. Box 3747, Lawrence, Kansas 66046. Phone: 785-748-0605, Fax: 785-748-0609. E-mail: [growing4market@earthlink.net](mailto:growing4market@earthlink.net). Also see [www.growingformarket.com](http://www.growingformarket.com).*

Marketing Your Produce

*From Growing for Market publishers, a compilation of the best marketing articles that appeared in Growing For Market, 1992–1995. Chapters include information on specialty produce, selling to restaurants and/or supermarkets, farmers' markets, CSAs, and expanding your market. Ends with a list of recommended books. See above for ordering information.*

Small Farm News

*The Small Farm News is a quarterly publication of the UC Small Farm Center. The newsletter features farmer and farm advisor profiles, research articles, farm-related print and web resources, news items and a calendar of state, national and international events. See: [www.sfc.ucdavis.edu/pubs/SFNews/news.htm](http://www.sfc.ucdavis.edu/pubs/SFNews/news.htm) for the online editions.*

## WEB SITES

California Federation of Certified Farmer's Markets:  
[www.cafarmersmarkets.com](http://www.cafarmersmarkets.com)

*An information clearinghouse on certified farmers' markets in California. Includes comprehensive information on certified farmers' markets; links to locate farmers' markets in a given area; product-specific listings of associations and organizations; links to information on agriculture and trade policy, and much more. The California Federation of Certified Farmer's Markets is a statewide non-profit membership organization of California Certified Farmers' Markets.*

California Department of Food and Agriculture Regulations:

[www.cdffa.ca.gov/cdfa/pendingregs](http://www.cdffa.ca.gov/cdfa/pendingregs)

*California Department of Food and Agriculture Regulations (CDFAR) is a California state agricultural agency with divisions of Animal Health & Food Safety Services; Fairs and Expositions; Inspection Services; Marketing Services; Measurement Standards; and Plant Health and Pest Prevention Services. The web site contains links to the services and programs of the above agencies as well as links to county agricultural commissioners and official statements and policies of the USDA, FDA, and CDFAR on current events in agriculture.*

Farmers' Market Manager Resource Center:

[www.wvu.edu/~agexten/farmman2/managers.htm](http://www.wvu.edu/~agexten/farmman2/managers.htm)

*Many resources for promoting fruits and vegetables. Farmers' Market Coloring Book. Courtesy of USDA.*

Farmers' Market Resources for Vendors:

[www.wvu.edu/~agexten/farmman2/frmmrktres.htm](http://www.wvu.edu/~agexten/farmman2/frmmrktres.htm)

*Diversifying your products, new crops growing tips, and seed sources, organic certification, and more.*

Farmers' Markets:

[attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/farmmrkt.html](http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/farmmrkt.html)

*This publication is a resource for those who want to organize a farmers' market or to sell at one. ATTRA publication.*

Maine Federation of Farmers' Markets:

[home.gwi.net/~troberts/mffm/Main.html](http://home.gwi.net/~troberts/mffm/Main.html)

*"The World Wide Guide to Farmers' Markets, Street Markets, Flea Markets and Street Vendors." A nice site with lots of links to markets and market resources.*

UC Small Farm Center:

[www.sfc.ucdavis.edu](http://www.sfc.ucdavis.edu)

*The UC Small Farm Center was established to enhance the viability of small- and moderate-scale agricultural producers by stimulating research and extension education in production systems, marketing, and farm management. Contains a fully searchable library and database for many topics on small-scale agriculture in California, including farmers' markets and roadside stands.*

**POWER POINT**

**"Reap New Profits: Marketing Strategies for Farmers and Ranchers":** A PowerPoint presentation for Educators on CD-ROM

*This PowerPoint presentation developed by the Sustainable Agriculture Network depicts some basic alternative marketing strategies and helps answer common questions from producers seeking to increase profits. The presentation describes how you might help farmers explore new ways to market and add value to their products through such tried-and-true techniques as: farmers' markets, farm stands, agritourism, community supported agriculture, creating value-added farm products, working in a successful cooperative, selling directly to restaurants, mail order and Internet sales. Available from Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE), 301.504-5326, or email [san\\_assoc@sare.org](mailto:san_assoc@sare.org). Order online at [www.sare.org/publications/marketingCD.htm](http://www.sare.org/publications/marketingCD.htm).*

