Growing Your Farmers Market

A Growers Perspective
So You Want To Start a Farmers Market

You are in good company. There has been an explosion in the growth of farmers markets in the country.

Number of Operating Farmers Markets

Source: USDA-AMS-Marketing Services Division
Our Markets

- Lawrenceville Farmers’ Market
- Whistle Stop Norcross Farmer’s Market
- Phoenix Gardens “Goodness From Guinnett”

- Auburn Farmer’s Market
Lawrenceville Farmers Market

2006
Lawrenceville Farmers Market

2009
Lawrenceville Farmers Market

2009
What Are Your Goals?

• Having a clear vision of the goals for your market will help make it easier to make your vision a reality.

• Some Common Goals
  – Connect Consumers with Local Food
  – Increase Foot Traffic to Business Districts
  – Provide Farmers with Additional Marketing Outlets
  – Provide a Community Gathering Place
Getting Started
Key Considerations

You will need to address some important factors when planning your market

– Seasonality
– Local vs. Non-Local
– Organic vs. Conventional
– Reselling

“And where the heck am I going to find farmers?”
Understanding Seasonality

• Understanding the growing seasons in your area can help you plan an effective market.

• 3 Seasons in Georgia
  – Short Spring
  – Long Summer
  – Long Fall

Understanding these seasons can help you develop a realistic market schedule
Local vs. Non-Local Market

“Locally Grown” is all the rage these days. But what does “Locally Grown” really mean?

There are many definitions for what constitutes locally grown.

Some definitions that have been used
- Anything grown within a 20 mile radius
- Anything grown within a 50 mile radius
- Anything grown within the State
- Anything grown within an 8 hour leisurely drive

If you are going to make your market a “Locally Grown” Market, you will have to define what local is for your circumstances.

In most cases, the narrower your definition, the smaller the pool of farmers to choose from.
Another decision you may want to make is whether to be an all organic market or one that allows the sale of conventionally grown products.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organically Grown</th>
<th>Conventionally Grown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pros</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pros</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong Consumer Demand</td>
<td>Larger Selection of Vegetables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmentally Friendly</td>
<td>Larger Farmer Base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture is trending this way</td>
<td>Strong Consumer Demand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cons</strong></td>
<td><strong>Cons</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller Farmer Base</td>
<td>Negative effects on environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Many Certified Organic Farms</td>
<td>Not Many Certified Organic Farms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can be more expensive than Conventionally grown</td>
<td>Can be more expensive than conventionally grown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Reselling**

Reselling occurs when a vendor purchases a product and resells it at market.

**Pros**

- Can help jump start a market
- Can bring in crops that would otherwise be unavailable

**Cons**

- “Terminal Market Syndrome”
- Consumer turn-off if over used

You will have to evaluate whether reselling might be required at your market based upon your particular market situation. This is an area that needs to be monitored carefully to make sure it does not get out of hand and cause long term problems.
Rules & Regulations

It is advisable to have a set of rules & regulations even if your market will be very small to begin with.

• Make sure rules don’t inhibit growth
• Be willing to revisit rules & revise if necessary
• If market is large enough, consider some sort of governance structure
Recruiting Vendors

You can find vendors in a variety of places:

• Farmers Market Bulletin
• Other Markets (Check w Market Manager First)
• Farmer Referrals
• Local Gardening Clubs
• Extension Service
• Feed Stores
• Conferences & Seminars
Recruiting Vendors

Try to aim for a mix of vendors:

• Pros - Growers who farm fulltime for a living
• Backyard Gardeners - Growers who grow on a smaller scale (not necessarily for market)
• Prepared Foods
• Crafts - (Try to limit to no more than 20% of vendor total and have them be farm related)
Space Planning

- Plan Your Market Space!
  - Your market area should be planned as if it were a commercial retail space
  - ‘The Full Table Theory’
  - Condense & Consolidate
  - Encourage Foot Traffic
Space Planning

Set Up Time
7:00-7:15

Lucille & Mindy
Kathy's Creations
Jerry's Baskets
Davis Boys
Clarissa's Cakes
Creative Enterp.

Set Up Time
7:15-7:30

Rebel Yankee Farms
Bountiful Bohemian Farms
Miranda Chave

Set Up Time
7:30-7:45

Stokes Family Farm
4Paws

No Sales Before 8AM

Back Lot

Reserved for Clay and Short Term Vendors

Vacant

Beatrice & Friends
Phoenix Gardens
Naturally for You
Issac Sheffield
Jamo's Organics
Cakes by Me & Gee

Vacant

Vacant

Vacant

Vacant

Vacant

Systems of Sound

LWC Main Tent
The Lunch Box
Back in Time Breads

59 Feet

106 Feet
Marketing

• Marketing will be your single most important activity in growing your market.
  – Establish Your Market “Brand”
    • Develop a Logo
    • Signage is very important
  – Market All Year
    • E-Newsletters
    • Social Networking
      – Facebook
      – Twitter
      – Wordpress
Lawrenceville Farmers Market Signage
Raffles to Build Lists
Raffles to Build Lists
Community Involvement

Bountiful Harvest - Season Long Food Drive
Community Involvement

Babes for Boobs-Race for the Cure Breast Cancer Fundraiser
Resources

• Farmers Market Magazine
• Daves Garden-Market Growers Forum
• Georgia Organics Conference
• Existing Markets

Brennan Washington
brennan@phoenixgardens.net
770-616-4686