Improving the Market to Consumer Connection

The project will improve the connection between the Downtown Brookings Farmers Market vendors and consumers in the market area through a well-planned marketing campaign, vendor training, and consumer education opportunities. Project activities include follow-up with the collection of baseline data to ascertain the effectiveness of the program.

Final Report

Final Performance Report

• Project Summary. An outline of the issue, problem, interest, or need for each project.

1. Provide annual training to vendors in food safety, advertising, display, transportation and marketing at farmers markets;
2. Offer seasonal training and demonstrations for consumers in food handling and nutrition;
3. Conduct surveys of vendors and customers to assess the effectiveness of project activities.

• Project Approach. Descriptions of how the issue or problem was addressed.

1. The Farmers Market Promotion Project (FMPP) Planning Committee scheduled a training workshop for farmers' market vendors in February 2008, and invited vendors from throughout South Dakota. Presenters included Extension staff from South Dakota, Nebraska and North Dakota, as well as Market Managers from South Dakota and Nebraska. Training sessions included "Nuts & Bolts of Market Management," "Resources for Farmers Markets," Market Research," "Working With Partners," "Buy Fresh, Buy Local Program," "Displays That Really Sell Your Produce," "Food Safety," "What Sells? Best New Products/Product Mixes," and "Food Safety – Processed Foods."

2. We planned seasonal training and demonstrations for consumers in food handling and nutrition. Plans included sharing information about the vendors and recipes through a market calendar, scheduling special Saturday festivals, coordinating entertainment and special food demonstrations, and grinding and selling grain.

3. Volunteers conducted a survey at the end of the 2007 market and, again, at the end of the 2009 market.

• Goals and Outcomes Achieved. Descriptions of the results, accomplishments, and conclusions.

1. The Farmers Market Training Workshop attracted fifty-nine farmers' market vendors throughout South Dakota. The networking was as valuable as the presentations. The Downtown Brookings Farmers Market picked up an additional four vendors that attended the workshop. A new farmers market started up in a community 35 miles north of Brookings and those growers were very appreciative of the information and advice they received at the workshop. We developed a listserv for growers so growers and market supporters will continue to remain in touch.

   Based on the information at the training workshop, we reconfigured the market area to accommodate additional vendors and create an area for entertainment, demonstrations and events. We have a permanent electric box located beside the tent area. We secured the electricity and a 6 x 12 foot storage trailer for equipment through donations and a deal with the trailer supplier that provided the trailer at wholesale price. The new layout resulted in a more controlled market opening and greatly enhanced the flow among the vendors.

   A new market logo was developed. A website was developed - www.downtownbrookingsfarmersmarket.com. It lists the vendors, contact information and products. It has a harvest calendar so customers have an idea of when produce is available

throughout the market season. We purchased six menu boards, with market dates and times. We posted signs at major intersections in the community to remind consumers that the market is open. Four signs were posted at the City Plaza parking lot and along the highway with the market logo, dates, times and website address.

The market vendors now have training in food safety and marketing, some of which they can share with their customers. There are increased sales for the farmers market vendors. The number of vendors at the farmers market has increased and there is a new farmers market in a nearby community

2. A Market Calendar, with vendor photos and recipes was printed and distributed during both the 2008 and 2009 market seasons.

   Major Saturday events included: Strawberry Festival, Sweet Corn and Brat Feed, Salsa Festival, Battle of the Chefs, Harvest Festival, and Pioneer Day. These festivals offered an opportunity to taste prepared produce, share recipes with customers, watch chefs prepare meals that highlight vendors' produce, and celebrate the history and work of farmers.

   On other Saturdays throughout the market season, volunteers ground and sold grain, coordinated entertainment and food demonstrations, surveyed market consumers and recorded the excitement and activities of the Downtown Brookings Farmers Market. Food demonstrators used produce from the vendors and educated customers on proper food handling, nutrition and storage. These were extremely popular activities – more people attended the market on these dates and lingered at the market for a longer time.

   There is increased consumer satisfaction and education and an increased product mix available to customers.

3. Volunteers conducted a survey of vendors and consumers at the end of the 2007 market and, again, at the end of the 2009 market to assess the effectiveness of project activities

   There is better signage and market awareness. An established market website further educates market customers on product availability, recipes and food safety tips. Customers enjoy the enhanced market displays as well as the improved layout and flow of vendor booths.

• Beneficiaries. Description of the people, organizations, marketing entities and/or communities that have benefited from the project's accomplishments, and a quantitative measure of the current or future benefits to be derived from the project.

1. Farmers Market Vendor Training
   Forty-nine vendors (part-time, fulltime and retired farmers) and potential vendors benefited from the training. Printed information was distributed to an additional 22 vendors and potential vendors. A list of workshop attendees and other market vendors was developed so they could stay in contact and receive market updates from the State Extension staff. Vendors have indicated increased attendance and increased earnings from the market. The Downtown Brookings Farmers Market added four additional vendors (a 25% increase).

Market customers benefited from the information, which the vendors put into practice at the market (improved displays, customer relations, better market flow). The number of market vendors doubled (100% increase).

The workshop provided an opportunity for Extension educators and SDSU staff to fulfill their purpose to help educate the public.

Broadcast and print marketers benefited from the increased marketing efforts, while those marketing efforts greatly enhanced the bottom lines of the vendors. Vendor income increased 25 percent.

2. Training and demonstrations for consumers in food handling and nutrition
   An average of 200 people shopped at the market at the height of the season. An average of seventy-five consumers attended the food demonstrations. An average of 250 people attended the special events.

   The food demonstrations provided an opportunity for Extension educators and SDSU staff to fulfill their purpose to help educate the public.

   Downtown Brookings Inc staff were able to cross promote the downtown to market goers. The market attracts additional consumers to downtown stores on market days. The farmers market is a positive image for the downtown so it fulfills their promotional goals.

3. Survey vendors and customers to assess the effectiveness of project activities
   The survey results help vendors better understand how they are currently meeting their customers' needs and what they can do to improve variety, pricing, market layout and customer relations.

   Survey results provided valuable feedback to Extension staff on how successful their demonstrations have been and additional topics that consumers would like to hear about.

• Lessons Learned. Lessons learned for each project. If outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help expedite problem solving.

1. Farmers Market Vendor Training

   We were hoping to attract forty vendors or potential vendors to the training. We registered forty-nine people. Not everyone was able to attend that wanted to, so there is a need to continue the training on an annual or biennial basis. The vendors who attended said they would like more information on: Specifics on Market Organization and Management, Attracting Vendors, Places to Find Display Products, Signage, Specifics on What the Health Department Allows Vendors to do, Traffic Flow Ideas, Determining Strengths and Weaknesses of a Market, Buy Fresh Buy Local Program, Using Certified Kitchens, and Using the Internet for Marketing.

   Printed information was distributed to those vendors who were unable to attend the workshop. Seeing examples of other markets enabled our vendors to enhance their booths with better displays, signage and good customer relations. The vendors have become better sales people and are enthusiastic about sharing recipes and tips to prepare their produce.

2. Training and demonstrations for consumers in food handling and nutrition

   Though it was a difficult for the market vendors because Downtown Brookings Inc staff was constantly changing, they learned that they could plan and coordinate events themselves. New staff and Board Directors did not always understand the importance of working closely with the Market Master while still allowing her the independence to coordinate the market vendors.

   The shopping strip owner allowed them to use the parking lot to park cars during the Summer Arts Festival and earn a little income to help cover some of their expenses for special events.

   After the end of the 2009 market season, the vendors intend to apply for a 501©3 nonprofit status. As soon as the status is secured, they will request that the ownership of the market equipment (purchased with funds from the 2007 FMPP grant) be transferred from Downtown Brookings Inc. to the Downtown Brookings Farmers Market. The market will be able to apply for grants, coordinate events, and manage their own affairs.

3. Survey vendors and customers to assess the effectiveness of project activities

   A base survey of vendors and customers was taken in the fall of 2007 and a final survey in September 2009. The following improvements or increases are noted from the CUSTOMER surveys:
   • The market traffic doubled.
   • Specific requests for products (i.e. meat, eggs) were met by new members.
   • The market attracted more internationals through better marketing and signage.
   • The number of zip codes for customers doubled.
   • The overall satisfaction of market characteristics (quality, appearance, convenience, friendliness and price) increased.
   • When asked what market changes they enjoyed the most, customers replied: Special Saturdays, setup, entertainment, more vendors, samples, cooking events, music, arrangements of booths, variety, large tent, friendly faces, more product selection, appearance, shade, tables & chairs, lots of business, longer hours, more food, great market manager, like listening to manager on the radio, my granddaughter loves it!
   • More people said their intake of vegetables and fruits increased.

   The following improvements or increases are noted from the VENDOR surveys:
   • There was an increase in the number of vendors – from 9 to 15.
   • The variety of produce increased (especially chicken, beef, eggs, heritage varieties, of vegetables, jewelry).
   • Entertainment and special events brought more people to the market.
   • Training increased vendors' knowledge of safe growing of produce, safe post-harvest handling of produce, product display, image, advertising and customer relations. (Those that were unable to attend the training workshop, learned from other vendors who had attending the workshop.)
   • The reconfiguration of the market enhanced their business.
   • The vendors are more confident about their ability to display and sell their products, plan and coordinate events, and plan for additional enhancements to the market in the future. (They are excited and work better as a team than they have in the past. They are looking forward to applying for 501c3 nonprofit status.)

• Additional information. Include specific contributions of project partners and any relevant information available (e.g. publications, web sites, photographs).

1. Specific contributions of project partners for the Farmers Market Vendor Training included:

   • Extension staff from North Dakota, South Dakota and Nebraska presented educational sessions and informational handouts at the vendor training sessions.
   • The Downtown Brookings Farmers Market Manager worked with the Main Street staff to notify their vendors and potential vendors of the training workshop. The Market Manager distributed informational materials to those vendors who were unable to attend the vendor workshop.
   • The Downtown Brookings Inc, staff coordinated the vendor workshop.

2. Specific contributions of project partners for training and demonstrations for consumers in food handling and nutrition included:

   • Brookings County Extension and South Dakota Extension staff provided consumer training in "Low Acid Canning," "Testing Pressure Cookers," "Freezing and Canning Sweet Corn," Canning Tomatoes," "Grilling Vegetables," "Sun Drying Corn," "Retaining the Nutritional Value of Stored Foods," "Incorporating More Fruits and Vegetables Into the Family Meal," "Cooking for One or Two," "Preserving Green Beans," and "Pumpkin and Squash Pie Baking."
   • The South Dakota State University (SDSU) Garden Line television show filmed one of their shows at the farmers market. SDSU Horticulture staff presented educational sessions and informational handouts at the vendor-training workshop.
   • The Downtown Brookings Farmers Market vendors worked with the Main Street staff to plan the educational sessions at the market for consumers and provided produce for those sessions.
   • The Downtown Brookings Inc, staff oversaw the FMPP budget and the market coordinator, worked with the market vendors to plan educational sessions, entertainment, and special events, and filed reports with USDA. They cross-promoted the market to the downtown and cross-promoted the downtown at the market.
   • Two downtown retail businesses provided lessons on "Cake Decorating" and "Pumpkin Bouquets."

3. A summary of the 2009 surveys of vendors and customers is attached.

• Contact person. List the contact person for each project with telephone number and email address.

1. Farmers Market Vendor Training – Doris Roden, Retired Program Manager of Downtown Brookings Inc., 605-692-5562, jdroden@brookings.net

2. Training and demonstrations for consumers in food handling and nutrition – Doris Roden, Retired Program Manager of Downtown Brookings Inc., 605-692-5562, jdroden@brookings.net

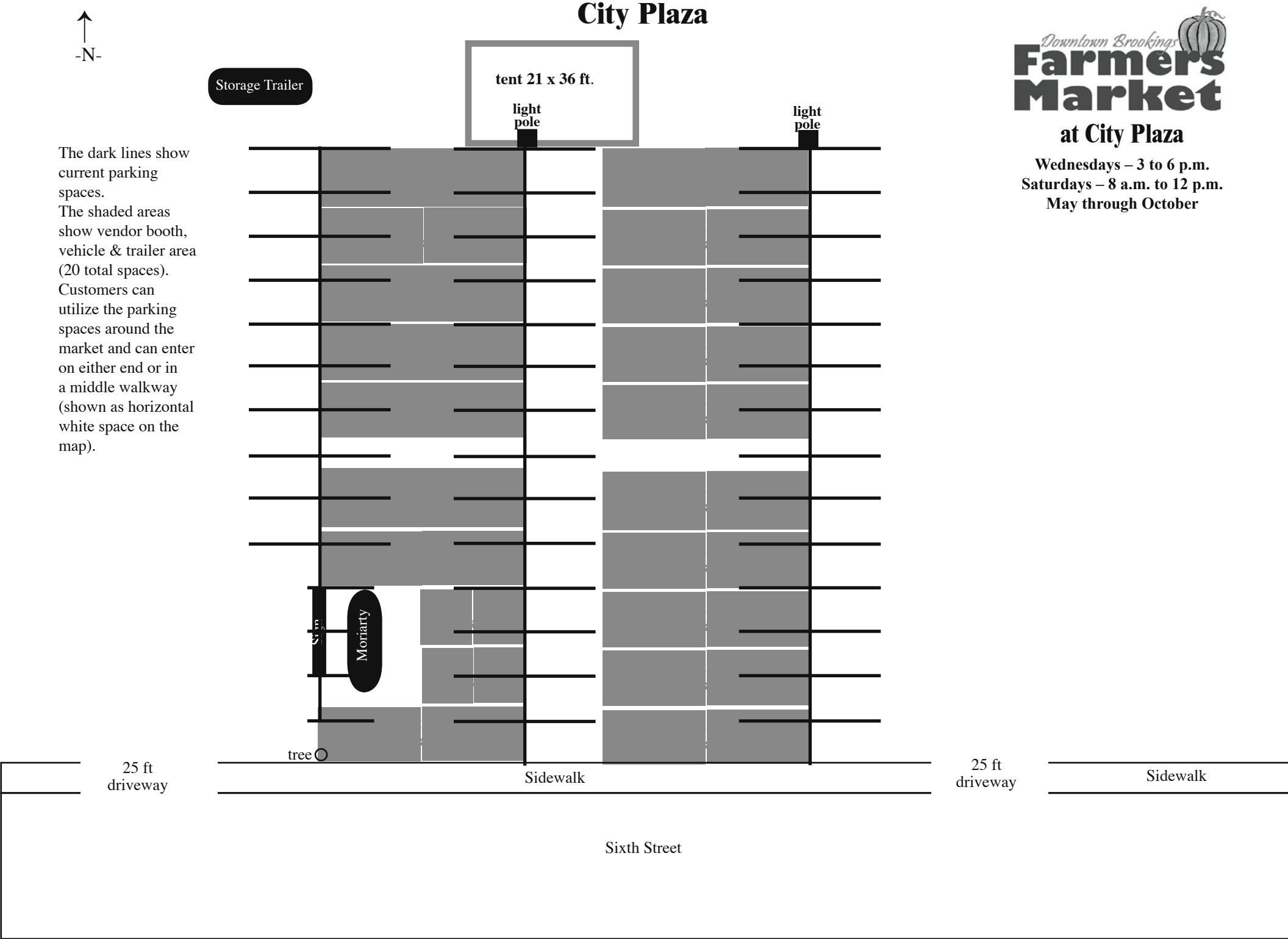
3. Survey vendors and customers to assess the effectiveness of project activities – Doris Roden, Retired Program Manager of Downtown Brookings Inc., 605-692-5562, jdroden@brookings.net

B. Financial Reports

1. Financial Status Reports. "Financial Status Reports" (**Form SF-269**), which includes any program income, must be submitted quarterly. A final submission Financial Status Report, is required no later than 90 days following the project's ending date and can be downloaded from the FMPP website at **www.ams.usda.gov/FMPP** and **http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/sf269.pdf,** or may be requested from FMPP.

2. Cash Transaction Reports. "Federal Cash Transaction Report," (**Form SF-272**) must be submitted quarterly (or after (quarterly) payment request) by the awardee after the receipt of Federal grant funds. The report must be submitted not later than 45 calendar days after the end of each quarter. The information will used be to determine the use of cash provided by FMPP and the organization's spending practices in correlation to the financial status (SF-269) also provided. The form can be downloaded from the FMPP website, at **www.ams.usda.gov/FMPP**, and sent by mail.

City Plaza



The dark lines show current parking spaces.
The shaded areas show vendor booth, vehicle & trailer area (20 total spaces).
Customers can utilize the parking spaces around the market and can enter on either end or in a middle walkway (shown as horizontal white space on the map).

Downtown Brookings
Farmers Market

at City Plaza

Wednesdays – 3 to 6 p.m.
Saturdays – 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.
May through October

Battle in the Market

ONE SECRET INGREDIENT, TWO CHEFS...
ON THE FARMERS MARKET CULINARY GRIDIRON

Chef Robert Koch
w/Zach Ervin and Lisa Koch
Hagmans Dine 1879

VS

Chef Kip Pharis
& company
Bravo's Restaurant

Downtown Brookings Farmers Market

July 18th - 9 am to 11 am

6th Street and Main Avenue, City Plaza

Downtown Brookings is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation working to stimulate economic development in Downtown Brookings and to promote it as an exciting place to shop, work, play, live and invest.

love thy farmers' market

DOWNTOWN
BROOKINGS

Brookings Downtown Farmers' Market

6th and Main Avenue, City Plaza

Wednesday 3 to 6 - Saturday 8 to Noon

May thru October

Farmers Market Vender/Grower Survey

Approximately how many times during the market season do you sell at the Farmers Market?
Vendors sell from 30-100% of the time. Average is 70%.

How long have you been selling at the market?
Four vendors are long-term 12 or more years. The rest have been with the market from one to six years.

How far do you drive to sell at the market?
Vendors travel from one to fifty miles to the market. The average is 19 miles.

List the types of produce or products that you sell.
All kinds of vegetables, flowers; grassfed beef; bread, scones, cookies, pies; bison meat and other bison related products; unique varieties of organic potatoes, garlic, greens, tomatoes, squash; all vegetables; honey, candles, hand cream, honey straws, soap, lip balms, creamed honey, quilted items; homemade jewelry and hand-painted items; most Zone 4 produce, strawberries, garlic, flowers, eggs, dog biscuits; grassfed chicken, lamb, beef, pork, jam and jelly; vegetables, fruits, flowers, bedding plants; produce, rolls, specialty breads, desserts.

Approximately how many customers stop by your booth each market day?

___ Less than 25 ___ 25-50
___ 50-100 ___ more than 100

Less than 25 to more than 100. Saturdays draw more customers than Wednesdays. The day the survey was taken, approximately 300 customers visited the market.

What is your average income each market day?

___ Under $25 ___ $25-50
___ $50-100 ___ $100-200
___ $200-300 ___ $300-400
___ $400-500 ___ over $500

Most vendors take in approximately $200 per market day, two vendors take in more than $500, one said less than $25. Saturdays result in larger sales than Wednesdays.

Reason for selling at the Farmers Market.

14% Hobby - enjoy doing it
14% Main source of income
64% Supplemental income
7% Other - delivery site, source of private treaty customers (some marked more than one answer)

Check all that apply.

54% I am a full tine grower/farmer
0% I work full time off the farm
38% I work part-time off the farm
8% I am retired

Have you had training in any of the following?

100% Safe growing of produce
100% Safe post-harvest handling of produce
85% Display of products at the farmers market
80% Image
85% Advertising
92% Customer Relations

Did you attend the training session sponsored by the Downtown Brookings Farmers Market in 2008?

50% Yes 50% No

Has the reconfiguration of the market enhanced your business?

85% Yes 15% No

Have the music and activities at the market enhanced your business?

86% Yes 14% No

Do you have suggestions for future activities and/or improvements to the farmers market?

- Someone cooking/preparing meats/veggies for taste test/sale.
- More music (live or CD).
- Salsa Contest.
- Hot Popcorn Eating Contest.
- More things for kids.
- More/better coordinated special events.
- Seasonal food preparations.
- Mutual respect/cooperation with Downtown Brookings organization.
- CSA arrangement with local buying club.
- Apply for 501(c)3 nonprofit status for market.
- Sweet Corn Festival
- Raspberry Festival
- Tomato Festival
- Apple Festival
- Pumpkin Festival
- Dreams - portable commercial kitchen/concessionaire facility
- Tailer mounted abbatoir for poultry producing coop; greenhouse coop
- Year-round market in coop facility.
- Find enough help/volunteers to keep drinks and extras going for the public.
- Better promote the market and products.

Farmers Market Customer Survey

Age?
11% 21 to 35 yrs. of age
18% 36 to 50 yrs. of age
49% 51 to 65 yrs. of age
13% 66 to 75 yrs. of age
9% over 75 yrs. of age

Gender?
71% Female 29% Male

Ethnicity?
95% Caucasian
1% African-American
0% Hispanic
3% Asian/Pacific Islander
1% Other

Household Makeup?
17% 1 person
63% 2 persons
20% children under 18 yrs. of age

Annual Household Income?
11% less than $20,000
41% $20,000 to $60,000
35% $60,000 to $100,000
13% over $100,000

Zip Code? 57006 - 68%; 57071 - 3%; 57231 - 4%; 57801 - 2%; 57002 - 5%; 57268 - 3%; 57248 - 2%; 57220 - 2%; 75077 - 1%; 57028 - 2%; 57276 - 3%; 57007 - 2%; 55904 - 1%; 56178 - 1%; 90034 - 1%

How did you first learn about the farmers market?
33% Word of mouth
15% Newspaper article
11% Newspaper ad
5% Shopper ad
10% Radio
21% Passing by
5% Other - daughter, vendors, friend, mom

How often do you shop at the market?
17% Twice a week
44% Weekly
20% Few times a month
19% Few times a summer

On average, how much do you spend at the market?
32% Under $10
52% $10 to $20
16% More than $20

List products you regularly purchase at the market?
Veggies - 40%; fruits - 14%; bread - 14%; meat - 8%; herbs - 4%; pastries - 9%; flowers - 3%; eggs - 3%; jewelry - 1%; jams - 1%; bee products - 3%

What additional products would you like to see the market carry?
More baked goods, more demonstrations, great as is, fruits, great variety already, duck, rabbit, fish, make-up, fresh dairy, handsewn items (bags, clothing), more jewelry choices

What is important when shopping for fresh produce?
2% Quality
18% In season
19% Grown in SD
14% Free of chemical residues
21% Grown by a local vendor

How important is having organically grown produce?
64% Somewhat important
36% Very Important

What do you expect at the farmers market?
56% Higher quality
39% Greater variety
5% Same price

Number one reason you shop at the farmers market?
52% Product quality and freshness
43% Supporting local farmers
5% To socialize/meet people

Are you interested in more information?
35% Recipes
22% Food preparation
19% Storage
8% Safety
16% Nutrition

Have you bought new products because of the market?
66% Yes 34% No

Has your fruit/vegetable intake increased as a result of buying from the farmers market?
75% Yes 25% No

What market changes have you enjoyed the most?
Special Saturdays, setup, entertainment, more vendors, samples, cooking events, music, arrangements of booths, variety, large tent, friendly faces, more product selection, appearance, shade, tables & chairs, lots of business, longer hours, more food, great market manager, like listening to manager on the radio, my granddaughter loves it!

Please Rate the Farmers Market Characteristics:

Factors	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Quality of Products	92%	8%	0%	0%
Appearance of Market	76%	22%	1%	1%
Convenience of Location	84%	16%	0%	0%
Friendliness of Vendors	91%	8%	1%	0%
Prices	48%	42%	10%	0%