

## **Farm Marketing in the Internet Age**

**The Massachusetts Federation of Farmers & Gardeners Markets** of Waltham, MA received \$72,813 to develop a “viral marketing” (word-of-mouth) model for farmers markets, develop a Web site to help consumers to locate farmers markets, and provide low-cost promotional materials to farmers markets. This was an effort to identify alternatives to conventional advertising for farmers markets.

### **Final Report**

## **Summary of issue being examined:**

Mass Farmers Markets (MFM) seeks to encourage farmers and farmers market managers to take advantage of the Internet's increasing role as a primary source of information for consumers. This project aims to help farmers and managers replace traditional and prohibitively expensive marketing approaches with sustainable marketing techniques. These techniques use the internet and consumer advocacy to propagate the distribution of marketing messages that lead to increased market share and revenue for family farms.

## **How we addressed the issue:**

Overall Work Plan- Channel the wisdom of farmers market advocates into a set of actionable marketing actions (dissemination of information and opinion), while incenting attention to electronic communication through hard copy materials.

Detailed activities:

1. Redesign and increase functionality of MFM website using shopper and manager input. Train managers and farmers to use website functions to maintain up-to-date information.
2. Translate the MFM website into three languages to expand its reach.
3. Produce and distribute a series of incentive materials: refrigerator magnets, and recipe cards highlighting seasonal local produce.
4. Research: gather information to determine strategies for viral marketing campaigns.
5. Develop a viral marketing campaign based on the research.
6. Test and implement the viral marketing campaigns.
7. Analyze results.
8. Produce a "user's guide" to viral marketing that can be used to enhance market operations and increase sales at farmers markets nationwide.

Time line:

July 2008: Work began with self funded study of shoppers at various MA and CA farmers markets. These initial studies laid the groundwork for proceeding with the detailed viral marketing work contained in our proposal.

October of 2008: Consultants engaged. Fall Recipe Cards created and disseminated. Viral marketing and website consultants each had existing commitments at grant award, limiting their capacity until late November, 2008. During this time they evaluated reports from self funded studies and provided oversight to MFM staff in conducting additional research while also pursuing their own information gathering.

December 2008 to January 2009: Shoppers, members, managers and other advocates engaged in detailed research, and analysis of information gathered conducted by contractor. 2008 baseline market performance data collected. Website re-design, expanded database, and software engineering for increased functionality initiated.

February, 2009: Viral initiatives concept development with follow-up research as appropriate. Remaining few elements of website design parameters finalized and incorporated into work plan/timeline. Key crops for remaining seasonal recipes identified, nutrition information research initiated, and recipes from local chefs solicited.

## Mass Farmers Markets (The Federation of Mass Farmers Markets)

Jeffrey Cole - 781-893-8222 - [jeff@massfarmersmarkets.org](mailto:jeff@massfarmersmarkets.org) [www.massfarmersmarkets.org](http://www.massfarmersmarkets.org)

March, 2009: Volunteer engagement and viral marketing brainstorming meeting. Critical elements of website programming and enhanced data set finished and instituted. Web site user secure log-in, secure user data control, and reminder service enabled. Refrigerator magnets (incentives) designed and ordered. Agenda, content, procedures, schedules, and sites set for farmer and manager trainings, in which they will learn to use the MFM website to post & propagate information and messaging.

April through May 2009: Beginning viral initiatives finalized. Crop experts (Extension agents & crop consultant) solicited and engaged. Recipes collected and evaluated. Recipe photographer contracted. Final website functions implemented. Web-page templates and connectivity to data made operational. Trainings on website utilization for farmer and managers completed.

June to October 2009: Viral initiatives implemented; Social networking site <http://fmfmrnd.ning.com/> to capture commentary, set-up and operated. Market managers trained on collecting information and reporting on crop status. Face book and Twitter accounts tied to viral marketing activities. Blog platforms and templates identified and tested. Simple website (blog) created and connectivity implemented with Bose Corporation. MFM website data managed weekly along with farmer and manger help/phone training on website use/functionality. Farmer surveys developed, shopper surveys implemented and data collected. Recipes finalized, recipe pictures taken and submitted for review and final selection. Protocols for website translation finalized. Electronic distribution of selected recipes and extensive distribution of refrigerator magnets occur.

November 2009 to March 2010: Farmer and manger surveys implemented, data collected and compiled. Website statistics compiled. Drafting of “user guide” initiated. Final proofs of recipes created. Request for extension submitted to AMS (to allow more viral marketing action in 2010 along with dissemination of printed recipes in order to evaluate the combined approach as envisioned in our proposal). Bids for website translation solicited.

April 2010 to November 2010: Translate web site. Continue with data management and one on one farmer and manager training. Collaborate with other organizations to showcase market services search function on our website and specifically to promote EBT at markets. Print and distribute 57,000 farmers market listing brochures with EBT accessible markets designated (non-AMS funding) in tandem with website data work. Print and distribute recipe cards. Fine tune and continue with viral marketing campaigns, including more sophisticated Facebook work. Survey and collect evaluation data for 2010. Study publication formats for “Users’ Guide” to viral marketing,

December 2010 to March 28 2011: Evaluate project using data generated from November 2008 to November 2010. Continue with website data management. Create final draft of users’ guide, send draft to expert volunteers for editing (professional publication editors), finalize edits, and publish.

## **Results, Lessons:**

### **1. Website Redesign & Training**

MFM collected shopper, manager, farmer, and vendor input on our previously funded website regarding its features and usability. Based on this input along with an understanding of ‘state of the art’ website design Cape Cod Consultants (CCC), our contractor, volunteered to redesign the look of our website while implementing grant funded changes to the web site data base and its functions. CCC and MFM staff worked with member market managers, vendor members, and the MFM BOD to establish details regarding the desired functional interface of our site which guided us in graphic design concepts for the website. MFM staff spent extensive time reviewing website design templates as well as the functionality of many business websites in order to finalize the design.

Armed with information generated above, we created web-page templates for managers to use in establishing their own on-line presence, a critical element of internet marketing.

In tandem with the above work, because our website content is generated directly from our database rather than from static HTML coding, our database structure was significantly re-worked and enhanced by CCC to improve functionality, ease of “back office” use, and to create an effective manager/farmer interface for data management. This work was funded by MFM, other non USDA sources, as well as volunteer effort by CCC. Following this, CCC added the information types called for in this grant to the data structure. MFM staff collected, verified, and input large amounts of data to populate the new structure.

The following functions were established:

- Organization of information and searching by; week, day, market hours, market services (such as EBT), and zip code.
- Display/search of extensively expanded crops and related nutritional information. USDA funds were leveraged to obtain a small grant from Equal Exchange in support of this element.
- Programming that allows farmers and managers to log in to our website to modify information about their farm or market and access other functions such as reminders, website templates and their related webpage, upload pictures, use Google maps, etc.
- Programming that allows consumers to register for an automated reminder service that will call/e-mail/text (their preference) a reminder message on the morning that their chosen market(s) is/are open. This system was designed to address the need to be reminded stated by shoppers as an enhanced version of our proposed 24 hr call line.
- 24 hr call line created. Originally envisioned as a line for shoppers to gather market information, website technology provided this capability in multiple delivery formats, including voice mail. We have termed the system “reminder service”. However, voice mail reminders are recorded using a phone line that managers call to update their voice reminders. For security the manager must call from a phone registered with the system to connect and record their market’s voice reminder. Call line operating expenses are donated by COMMEX, a local phone service company.
- Search by market services – things such as EBT, FMNP coupon acceptance, children’s programs, etc.

- Web page templates posted and fully operational.
- Mapping and mapping functions for markets. Google Maps was chosen as a well known universal system that provides the ability to generate directions as well as locating by GPS.
- Sophisticated website statistics recorded using Google analytics.

Three group training sessions were held in April and early May 2009, one in eastern MA, one in Central MA, and one in Western MA. All trainings garnered very high reviews. The sessions were designed to provide “hands on” information and experience for farmers and market managers with the new website, its functions, and the capacity to manage information in a manner that enhances the markets’ and farmers’ on-line presence. Each training was held at a facility where broad band internet was functional and where we set up at least 10 computers for participants to work on along with the ability to incorporate any of their own computers they chose to bring. One training took place at a Community College using a student “computer lab”. This setting and its features proved to be exceptionally advantageous and much easier on the trainers and trainees due to its “turnkey” nature.

Following these in person trainings, one- to-one training by phone regularly occurred throughout 2009, 2010, and continue to this time. One-to-one trainings typically consist of a brief overview followed by specific instructions for posting information, often consisting of joint work in real time with the manager or farmer to post the desired information. We have found this format not only results in accuracy of information posted, but the hands-on effort greatly enhances learning.

## 2. Website Translation

To implement efficient translation CCC organized website data in a manner that allowed for importing Excel files, in specific formats, into the database that produces our website. These imported files create the translated web sites. While simple in concept and providing for relatively simple translation into additional languages, this system requires detailed knowledge of our website data structure to operate.

Expansion of our website efforts, noted above, delayed our readiness for website translation. In addition, it increased the amount of work needed to perform translations. However, the expansion produced a superior product. In the summer in 2009 we concluded, in conjunction with CCC, that it would be best to pursue translation into Spanish, Brazilian Portuguese, and Vietnamese when we were sure that the English version was 100% functional/accurate and at the heart of the 2010 season so that the most up-to-date and relevant information would be translated by professionals.

By November 2009 we were fully confident in the English operations of our site, however MFM staff struggled with developing the necessary Excel files/formats due to insufficient technical expertise coupled with other commitments at that time, including extensive work required to start new farmers markets in the 2010 season. In March 2010 we came to understand that MFM staff continued to struggle to find time to develop the necessary Excel files for translation and to develop the technical skills to accurately load translations into the specific locations in our database that is required. Also at that time translation contractors, who provided estimates during our grant proposal writing, were committed to other projects and unable to translate for the foreseeable future.

CCC, because of past work in foreign countries, had access to reliable translators. They offered to bid to provide all of the required work, including Excel file creation, translation, and loading of required information to our data structure. We approved them to bid, which came in \$111.00 over funds requested in our grant. MFM executed the agreement using MFM funds for the balance. This proved to be effective with translation and full functionality in place in a matter of weeks and on budget.

### 3. Incentive Materials

Refrigerator magnets: 10,000 magnets with the MFM logo and URL were ordered in early 2009. The first distribution was at a major Boston consumer event called D2E, [www.d2eboston.com/](http://www.d2eboston.com/). This was followed by distribution at our local Earth Day event, at the annual “agriculture day” in the State House, and then at farmers markets, agricultural fairs, partner events, and other locations where consumers congregated<sup>1</sup>. By March 2010, we had exhausted our supply and another 10,000 were ordered. In addition to the original text, these new magnets included “find a market near you” before our URL<sup>2</sup>. By February 2011 this supply (except for 200 held for special events in April 2011) was also exhausted.

**Recipes:** A total of 49 seasonal, unique, MFM branded recipes were created. USDA funds provided leverage to gather a small Boston Public Health Commission award (\$3400.00) a portion of which was used to enhance the work and provide electronic distribution of these incentive materials to partnering organizations: The Food Project, the City of Boston, Mass WIC, Boston Steps, and others.

Of the 49 recipes, 43 were selected for printing and hard copy distribution based on farmers market appropriateness and quality of associated pictures. 80,000 cards were produced with addition of MFM funds. This is twice as many as proposed. Distribution in hard copy began at the beginning of September 2010. Market managers handled the distribution at farmers markets. There, since recipes focused on seasonable produce, they were most often distributed a few at a time throughout the remainder of market season in order to incent consumers to come back to market for the next recipe.

Recipe cards were also distributed at local consumer-oriented events including the Eastern States Exposition – mid- September to October 3. At one-time events such as this we typically displayed all recipes leaving it up to the public to select those they wanted. Interestingly, at the fairs, many consumers selected only recipes that were fall based yielding nearly a 2-to-1 dissemination of fall over other seasons’ recipes. By the end of 2010 we saw a 20 percent increase in distribution of fall recipes over spring/summer recipes.

A notable distribution opportunity came out of a promotional appearance that General Motors - Chevrolet made at the Framingham, MA farmers market. (The company had arranged an event at the market to showcase one of its new vehicles.) MFM worked with their marketing team on an appropriate ‘giveaway’ item to attract consumers. We decided upon a bound collection of the complete set of 43 recipe cards. 700 collated and bound sets were produced and distributed at the Framingham market event and at subsequent appearances in the Metro- Boston area at Whole Foods Markets.

---

<sup>1</sup> See appendix for an expanded list.

<sup>2</sup> See appendix for proof copies

Just over 40,000 cards were distributed in 2010. The remainder will be distributed at events and markets in the 2011 season. There was significant positive response to the recipe collection in general and in particular from Whole Foods and their shoppers during distribution of the bound sets, all of which were disseminated in 2010.

#### 4. Viral marketing- Research and Information Gathering

Our consultant Vahe Katros visited farmers markets with Jeff Cole in the summer of 2008. There Katros solicited information from Cole about the market and observed shoppers. Katros held brief conversations with a few shoppers and with the onsite market managers. Katros created a recruitment form<sup>3</sup> for our managers to use so that we would be prepared for immediate action should we be awarded this grant. (This preliminary research was pursued and solely funded by MFM and Katros in the summer 2008.)

Managers found it difficult to focus on shopper recruitment along with their regular management duties. As a result, we connected with a limited number of shoppers through this method (15) for Katros to interview in depth. But their opinions and information provided us valuable context for the remainder of our research.

In October of 2008 Katros began grant-funded research. Because websites may be part of a viral marketing effort he reviewed the input collected for website design work on the functionality of our then existing website. He made recommendations for our enhancement of the shopper interface and its functions, including the reminder service. Katros then conducted research in Massachusetts and his home state of California designed to discover:

- What is the full range of types of people who come to farmers markets?
- Why do they come?
- How do they integrate farmers market shopping into their lives?
- What information is valuable in making shopping decisions?
- How does word-of-mouth (viral marketing) impact knowledge of markets?
- What were the challenges impacting our customers' ability to shop at markets?
- Who doesn't come to farmers markets?
- Are "conditions" similar in other regions of the country?

Candidates for in-depth interviews were recruited in an online survey and an email solicitation through the MFM newsletter in late 2008 and early 2009. A detailed questionnaire<sup>4</sup> was sent directly to 220 respondents, and ultimately, Katros conducted 25 interviews from this group. This included 15 in-depth interviews and 5 that lasted more than an hour. Katros also interviewed shoppers in some depth at Ferry Plaza, Palo Alto, Oakland, and Berkeley, CA markets.

Secondary research was performed by Katros, volunteers, and the MFM staff, including analysis of market reviews on Yelp, a review of YouTube videos involving farmers markets, visits to other farmers markets' websites, and a web search of blogs and other write-ups by fans of farmers markets. Katros interviewed a former community services manager at Whole Foods because Whole Foods has provided financial support to farmers markets and they have invested

---

<sup>3</sup> See appendix for form

<sup>4</sup> See appendix for copy

significant resources in learning how to connect with shoppers around the sale of food. Katros concluded that it would be wise to gain insights they might have related to our project. This interview was video recorded and shown during our campaign development “ideation” meeting, outlined below, and impacted important elements of our work plans.

## 5. Campaign Development

A significant demographic to emerge from our research was the presence of the “occasional shopper”, a customer who knows about the existence of farmers markets but does not shop frequently- typically one or two times a year. We found that these shoppers represent nearly 40% of the customer count at markets and that they are mostly “invisible” to managers and farmers.

Our interviews yielded some basic findings about the occasional shopper:

- They have favorite products and feel a deep reward for adding seasonal farm products to their tables. If the seasonal crops are exceptional, they tell friends. Many had personal stories relating to the role particular products had in their early lives.
- Coordinating their visits with market times is a challenge. Shopping at a farmers market was not typically about supporting a cause, it was an errand, and convenience is a key factor.
- They agree that knowing when their favorites were at market would be good information, but if that information were not at their fingertips they would not actively seek it out.
- Most respondents shared their personal efforts to learn more about health and wellness to address health care concerns.
- The MFM newsletter<sup>5</sup> provided more information than what they needed, or wanted – it is too much like a magazine for this customer. They report that the Sunday circular from the local supermarket is a more a useful tool for them.

In addition to occasional shoppers our research uncovered the usual “cast of characters” and shopping patterns well known to seasoned market managers:

1. The Hard Core Expert
2. Novices
3. Moms
4. Local/ lunch time crowd
5. Restaurants and Chefs
6. The end of day shopper
7. The social shopper
8. Purpose driven shoppers
9. Foodies
10. Tourists

In order to create and develop additional support for viral marketing campaigns to test we held an ideation/brainstorming meeting on Saturday, March 14, 2009<sup>6</sup>. The meeting included market

---

<sup>5</sup> See <http://myemail.constantcontact.com/Fresh-From-The-Farm---October-Issue.html?soid=1101342191063&aid=UIUOZxq8rGQ> for example

<sup>6</sup> See <https://sites.google.com/site/farmersmarketmarketing> for meeting details.

mangers, MFM staff & BOD members, publicists, shoppers, health care professionals, and market volunteers.

Four main themes that we associate with opportunities for viral marketing campaigns came out of the session:

- a) **The Peak Season Initiative** – Aiming to highlight crops that are at the peak of harvest or recognized as core crops in our markets. We saw an opportunity to leverage the celebrity of a farm or a chef with products that were in season to attract shoppers to market.
- b) **The Proximity Campaign** – Designed to reach out to those who live or work near farmers markets. For example, making commuters aware of markets proximate to public transportation stops.
- c) **The Lifestyle Partner Campaign** – Executed jointly with a partner organization, business or individual (e.g. a blogger) who shares the values of farmers markets. Based on shopper research we concluded the focus should/would be on the relationship between health and food.
- d) **The Viral Video Campaign** – Using the power of a compelling story and a viral platform like YouTube. For example, a video campaign highlighting an eccentric and well liked farmers market personality.

We understood that the work involved in creating and executing all four of these elements was more extensive than the MFM staff could effectively handle. So we solicited and obtained volunteers during the brainstorming session. The team self selected into 4 groups, each volunteering to work on one initiative for the 2009 season with one MFM staff person assigned to each group.

## 6. Viral Marketing Campaign Implementation

Viral messages are viral because the re-sender thinks they will enlighten, help, or entertain the recipient. Our research also provided us no reason to conclude that viral marketing would be any different than other marketing strategies, where the time proven strategy holds that it is easier to increase sales to existing customers than to solicit new customers from the general population that does not know about you. However, one of Viral Marketing's great advantages is that, when successful, existing customers become the path to reach the population that does not know about you, creating a cascade that dramatically increases exposure and increases sales. Therefore, we conclude that Occasional Shoppers hold the greatest potential to effectively use the limited resources farmers markets typically have available, and they became one of our focal points.

Reinforcing this decision was the fact that volunteer interest waned over the two months following our brainstorming meeting and little work was accomplished by the teams. To address this, Katros and Cole developed 4 initiatives that were achievable with work provided by Katros and MFM staff. These initiatives were an effort to create synergy; focused on tangible results, combined themes outlined in the brainstorming, served multiple shopper segments concurrently, and in large measure focused on addressing reasons why occasional shoppers were not visiting our markets more frequently. The dedication Katros had for this work incited him to work regularly with MFM staff, directing and implementing daily activity, as well as to consult. His effort included uncompensated trips from California to Massachusetts. However, we were not able to proceed with the viral video campaign as discussed in theme (d).

We had learned that Occasional Shoppers valued seasonal products but are challenged when it came to knowing when to visit a local farmers market to buy them. This challenge is intensified by our region's dramatic seasonality and weather related variability in the local foods available at any given time. We also learned that once a week markets are easily "lost" in shopper's consciousness during the course of their hectic lives. Therefore simply reminding shoppers the market is open is an important action that we fulfilled with our market reminder service. As a result, we placed significant initial attention on that work in our website design, shopper communication, and in our communication to and training for managers.

Our next action began by creating an initiative based on the peak season theme (a), combined with elements of lifestyle; theme (c), above. We called this our "**crop alert system**".

**1. The Crop Alert System:** The concept of seasonal alerts is not new. Our effort is designed to create messages that, beyond notice of crop availability, provided content that fit viral requirements. A new twist to this campaign is the formation of a panel of product experts who report on the state of produce. The idea behind this is to create, in the mind of the shopper, the notion that they will be in-the-loop with experts if they participate, and more importantly, so will their friends and family if they decide that the service is interesting enough to be passed along – viral.

We formed a crop advisory panel in April of 2009 to assist us with predicting crop conditions at markets. The group was also charged commenting on crop status and providing "tips" and interesting information on crops. The panel included Jeff Cole as farmer/editor, Vahe Katros as editor, a private Integrated Pest Management (IPM) crop consultant, and four University of Massachusetts Extension crop agents as agricultural experts. To facilitate the flow of information, we launched a social network on NING (see <http://fmfmrnd.ning.com>). Based on our experts' input we next identified twelve Massachusetts farms that attend MFM markets representing nearly all microclimates in the state. We added our managers to the NING network and established procedures and requirements for them to collect information and post it with manager comments and farmer comments. Katros created a crop alert template<sup>7</sup> based on what his research showed shoppers to be most interested in. This template is our attempt to lessen manager burden, in that by using a template a manager does not have to add creativity (and the needed time) to their task list in creating crop messages. Cole and Katros used the template, along with information posted on NING and additional research (often nutrition related), to create the text of crop alerts.

In the process of designing our crop alert system it became clear to the team that, because our efforts were designed to forecast crop availability, we might look to local weather forecasting for design clues. This is because in the Northeast local weather reports/forecasts often become viral, with the public frequently passing along weather information, factoids, tidbits, and the like. We studied local weather forecasting intensively for one week and occasionally for some time thereafter. Katros, Cole, and MFM staff met to discuss our findings. We observed the mix of information (current, future, and past [almanac] information), presentation styles and formats, and enticements to continue tuning in. We concluded that we could, and given that weather reports are successfully viral, should, try to emulate these style elements in our work.

---

<sup>7</sup> See appendix for our template and our user's guide at <https://sites.google.com/site/farmersmarketmarketing> for details in using the template.

We talked about connecting with local television stations to work together to produce a daily brief “produce report” within the context of the weather report. This was met with excitement, but also the realization that such work would exceed our capacity in the near term.

We launched the **crop alert system**, our first fully viral initiative, on July 13, 2009. It was sent to our full e-mail newsletter list in a format that was easily forwarded-shared. Comments from shoppers have been positive, sharing occurred, and participation in the system has increased over time. Based on positive feedback, we expanded the reach of our crop alerts by including crop information in our weekly e-news market updates and selected newsletters.

Very interestingly to us, MFM was contacted shortly after our crop alert launch by a local television meteorologist. He approached MFM about collaborating with him to produce weather forecasts including crop information from a local farm, garden plot, or a plot (that we were asked to find a farmer to maintain) on the roof of the television station he works for. Talks with the station went on for two months. MFM provided expert advice before the project took a new direction with a focus on children and their gardening. This focus, while perhaps helpful in the general sense of connecting weather to harvest, was not directed enough at our goals for continued collaboration. But we remain grateful for the attention and interest in our work.

**2. Today @ Market:** Next we combined proximity and lifestyle, themes (b) and (c) above, with occasional shopper solutions into a second viral initiative; developing a targeted website called Today@Market for the Framingham, MA farmers market. We selected the market as our test market due to its characteristics being more universal than other markets we managed. Katros designed and built this web site/blog system using open source software (Word Press) so that market expense would be minimal and transfer to other markets is easily facilitated. This site enabled our market managers to post real time crop status information using mobile broadband wireless internet technology. Here again, templates are used to lower manager burden and crops are selected or de-selected for display with one click of the mouse. Text fields are kept to a minimum, preformatted, and easily modified.

The manager would post crop and other information before market opened and throughout the day as crops neared sell-out and when sold out. We had learned from talking with shoppers that this was critical information for them, particularly if making the trip from work. We also learned that many employees from the nearby business park (with large, major corporate offices) were not aware of the quick and simple “back way” to market and found using the very congested major artery a significant disincentive to come to market. This problem was addressed by placing Google maps functionality on the site along with a pre-planned route from the business park.

We invited Framingham bloggers and an “ultra local” website – [www.framingham.com/](http://www.framingham.com/) to publish links to Today@Market, which they did successfully.

**3. Corporate:** In October 2009, Bose Corporation, a Framingham company with 850 employees, worked with us to publish the Today@Market site on their internal Intranet. This

was well received by their employees and management. In 2010, we were pleased and grateful to have Bose seek us out before the opening of market to re-instate the initiative.

**4. Facebook & Twitter:** Our viral marketing efforts included platforms on Facebook and Twitter. We created a Facebook page - “Mass Farmers Markets-Framingham Farmers Market”. This ties the Framingham market page to our organizational page so that shoppers can connect to Framingham through us or to us through the Framingham page. Multiple editors were set up to modify the content from their personal accounts and via the Mass Farmers Markets Facebook accounts. This maintained connectivity under various circumstances and enabled controlled collaborative work. These efforts focused on, but were not limited to, re-posting of crop alerts and/or Today@Market information.

Twitter was used to communicate a wide variety of messages on MFM’s work and was not limited to viral marketing of farmers markets. Our tweets included information on industry events, MFM fundraising news and news from partner organizations. However one focus of tweets was posting basic crop availability alerts - a note that a crop was coming in, just came in, or was almost gone.<sup>8</sup> Significantly, because of the real-time nature of the Facebook and Twitter platforms, we recognized and took the opportunity to communicate information on high-demand crops running short during the market day at all managed markets. This provided a service much appreciated by shoppers. Farmers and managers reported anecdotally that shoppers came to market with reported alternate menu plans and that resulted in higher end of day sales than was otherwise the case. We surmise that advance notice and ability to plan alternate “menus” with some leisure rather than “on-the-fly” at market is the cause of this result.

## 7. User’s Guide

Creating a User’s Guide became a complex process that prevented us from pursuing a collaborative process with outside input for its creation as we had originally planned. Katros initiated a draft User’s Guide in July 2010. Cole and Katros worked throughout July and August editing the draft using 2009 and nascent 2010 results for material. Prepared by this effort Cole worked with MFM staff to review results and analyze performance of our 2008, 2009, and 2010 efforts beginning in October 2010. Market reports<sup>9</sup> and Shopper surveys<sup>10</sup> were compared from late 2008, 2009, and 2010. Farmer surveys<sup>11</sup> compared 2009 information to 2010.

Cole presented an initial summary of results to Katros in late November 2010. Katros and Cole began revisions to the User’s Guide while FMFM staff continued evaluations. In late January armed with full evaluation results Katros simultaneously worked on creating a wiki publishing platform while collaborating with Cole in edits to the user’s guide. During this process, major revisions to the user’s guide occurred in order to facilitate online publishing and as a result of expert volunteer input solicited by Katros. Conference calls, two to three times a week, along with joint editing, occurred between Katros and Cole from January 24 to February 20 and again from March 7 to March 15. The document was then submitted to a professional copy editor (volunteer) solicited by Katros for final review.

---

<sup>8</sup> See appendix for examples of tweets

<sup>9</sup> See appendix for example

<sup>10</sup> See appendix for example

<sup>11</sup> See appendix for examples

We discovered that wiki-templates would not work with the Word Press platform we implemented for publishing the user's guide. Katros contacted our site's host (chosen for their service of continual updating of Word Press, its addons, and plugins) seeking assistance. They concluded that the wiki software was not compatible with our Word Press site but were unable to identify the specific issues so that corrections might ensue. Katros and Cole published the user's guide using Google sites because of its ability to provide open access as the next best option. The User's Guide, perhaps the most important outcome of this grant, is found at: <https://sites.google.com/site/farmersmarketmarketing>.

## 8. Analysis

Market customer counts, dot surveys, and farmer surveys show:

- Weekly customer counts increased 42% at the Framingham market right after launch of our crop alerts and Today@Market efforts in 2009. This growth was maintained throughout the remainder of the 2009 season. Customer counts in other markets increased 11% right after the launch of alerts. Over time a 35% increase was observed in our "control" markets in 2009.
- Average customer counts went up 15% in one control market (2009 to 2010), while the other control market decreased 26% over the same time frame. The Framingham market saw an increase of 16% to 20% (% grew as the weeks went on) in the early season of 2010. In July 2010 major road construction (road closures and one way lane diversions) took place right in front of the Framingham market. Drops in customer counts occurred through early fall, compared to the same time frame in 2009, culminating in a 10% drop late in the season.
- Farmers reported increased sales after the launch of Crop Alerts in 2009 at all tracked markets. Of particular note: Farmers at the Framingham market reported increased sales in 2010 over 2009, while farmers in the control markets reported on average<sup>12</sup> decreased sales from 2009 to 2010. Since customer counts in Framingham decreased from 2009 overall, apparently shoppers who came to market came ready to buy, and bought more per customer than in 2009.

Website statistics, Facebook statistics, market reports, and general communications show:

- For the months of July, August and September, the peak of our market season, the MFM website saw a 37% increase in visits in 2010 over 2009. The number of page views grew by 29% over the same period. The average time spent on the website decreased by 12%, suggesting that the relevant website data may have been easier to find, creating a more efficient user experience.
- From the launch of our viral marketing initiatives in July 2009 to the end of our peak market season in October 2010, the number of subscribers to our Constant Contact email list increased by 50%, from 3,547 to 5,312. The graph in the appendix<sup>13</sup> charts the increase in subscribers throughout the period of our grant work.

---

<sup>12</sup> Individual farm reports were highly variable in the control market that had increased customer counts in 2010. The majority of vendors however reported flat sales or a decrease in sales. In the market that had lowered counts all vendors reported lower sales except for 2 who reported no change.

<sup>13</sup> See 13\_News\_Subscribers

- The MFM market reminder service grew rapidly upon “publication”, growing from 0 at inception (March 2009) to 3991 sent during July 2009 and 8355 sent during September 2009. Reminders grew modestly in year two of our work. See the chart<sup>14</sup> in the appendix.
- Shoppers did not use Facebook and twitter for market information in 2008 & early 2009 while an average of 23% of Framingham farmers market shoppers *did* use Facebook in 2010. We observed a smaller percentage of shoppers (3 to 5%) indicating Facebook use for market information in the control markets. The Framingham Facebook posts were viewed an average of 258 times each, considerably more than the number of active fans, with most page interaction occurring via user response to weekly market updates. Users were 73% female and 22% male. 13% of users were 55 and older, and this was the only category where the percentage of male users was the same as the number of female users. 79% of users were between 25 and 54 years of age of which 28% were women 35 – 44, and 23% were women 45-54. The greatest percentage of participating male users was among the 45-54 age group. Only 1.7% of all users were 18 – 25, and virtually all of these were women.
- The Framingham market manager reported early in 2009 that shoppers frequently asked for recipes. “People ask for recipes, recipes, recipes. Would love to see a return of [the] beautiful series we had a few years ago.” She reported in her daily logs that vendors were reporting some of their best sales in the history of the Framingham market after the viral system was launched in 2009. She reports customers frequently talked with her about posts transmitted through the ultra local website (notably a viral action) and that she was pleasantly surprised at the number of people who came to tell her that they read her postings online. She also reported that shoppers confirmed with her what we already knew: they want to know what produce is at the market that day in advance of coming.
- Mass Farmers Market staff reported consumer e-mails of praise upon our launch of the crop alert system in 2009.
- As noted in section 6, the crop alert system drew attention from a local television station and one of its chief meteorologists which provided potential for expansive viral behavior before the station decided on a different focus with their work.

We drew the attention of MIT: Dr. Abel Sanchez: <http://mit.edu/doval/www> and the [Intelligent Engineering Systems Laboratory](http://www.intelligent-engineering.com) and with <http://www.1000radishes.com/> a local food website. We worked to form a joint effort with MIT & 1000 Radishes to assist in maintaining and sharing accurate data around dates, times, and location of market operations and more significantly, real time product lists for web and i-phone applications. While the effort around data did not come to fruition during our grant, it provided us with multiple opportunities to have Dr. Sanchez educate MFM staff, market managers, and farmers on electronic messaging at our 2009 annual meeting, at our manger workshop in 2010, and the regional direct marketing conference in 2011.

We drew viral attention from “BostonZest” [www.bostonzest.com](http://www.bostonzest.com) with a posting<sup>15</sup> about our reminder service in 2009. And we found that shoppers appreciated our reminder service. However, many found the extensive registration process incorporated into our

---

<sup>14</sup> See 14\_MFM\_reminders

<sup>15</sup> See appendix for screen shot

purchased website software to be taxing. We eventually found MFM funds needed to alter the programming and simplify the registration. A good number of shoppers found updating their reminder preferences (for example shutting them off at the end of the season) challenging in that they did not log in to manage preferences regularly, typically just once at set-up, and thus were not familiar with the process. They called or e-mailed staff for help regularly. Security issues prevented us from being able to help them directly with reminder maintenance. Although it was somewhat time consuming, we were able to train them by phone or e-mail to resolve their issues.

### **Conclusions:**

Market managers prefer one information database to manage- for MFM web information as well as their own web sites or pages. This understanding led to web page template designs that integrated information existing in the MFM database (vendor list, product list, market information, mapping/directions) with a markets web page or website. We anticipated/hoped that this design would provide incentive for managers to maintain their data more regularly. However the data complexity driven by shoppers' desires often thwarted this plan.

The background to this is: Equal Exchange (EE) provided a small grant to us to increase the number of products listed on our website, based on their understanding of shoppers interest in complex on-line product listings (perhaps as a result of EE's on-line shopping experiences). Market managers and farmers, however, did not generally tolerate the amount of work and effort required to maintain these more complex databases. Most made it very clear that managing product lists with multiple entries for each product type (apples for example) became far too time intensive. Many elected to avoid maintaining the data or frequently displayed summary information only, especially in regard to products. Using apples again as an example: by a listing such as; "Apples - August to close" rather than listing each variety and its harvest season, or as we had preferred, listing only those varieties currently at market. To address this matter, we seek to develop the capacity to shrink or expand the product list for each market (and web display) as the manager or farmer chooses. Funding will be required for the programming needed.

We expected and hoped that our viral work would become viral in itself. To some degree this did happen, as our work did attract the attention of others. Though we had planned on extensively showcasing our work during implementation as part of a viral process, we found that doing so was problematic because of our lack of sufficient staffing (volunteer drop off), coupled with the significant staff time required to create and implement viral messaging. In addition our efforts incited enthusiasm in our contractors, staff, and volunteers as well as with external organizations which caused expansion of the detail and scope of our work and formed new relationships that additionally expanded our work by testing new and/or expanded concepts and ideas.

We see this concept expansion as something viral in itself, which we had not adequately planned for, exemplified by the discussion with local television noted in section 6. We were elated with that unsolicited contact. It indicated to us that our crop alerts had created the feeling

we were seeking as well as proving to us that we were on target with our analysis. It also provided an opportunity, though unfulfilled, for highly viral behavior for our work.

Internally and externally incented expansion made for a more robust effort and likely produced better results overall. But, it did create delays in executing our original work plan. The more robust effort and delays resulted in less capacity and attention devoted to publishing results of our work incrementally to create a potential viral attention to our work as originally planned.

We conclude therefore that farmers and market managers should pay careful attention to the potential of expanding work plans while engaging in viral marketing and related activities. Decision makers should assess the benefits of immediate goals versus long-term outcomes and the capacity of the individual or organization to implement both short and long-term strategies at the same time before accepting expanded work and allowing enthusiasm to create additional goals.

We observe that tracking statistical information based on customer counts, farmer reported income/sales, and shopper answers to dot surveys were very difficult to analyze. This is due to the great variability in results generated by weather and local conditions such as road construction, large community events, and other such uncontrollable externalities. While more complex regression analysis helps resolve this issue, such analysis is likely outside the capacity, or interest, of most market managers. Reports might be generated more quickly by combining anecdotal information with season long averages of data, and may be just as reliable.

We confirmed the anecdotal understanding many farmers market managers have that consumers want food shopping to be close to their place of work or residence. This understanding goes hand-in-hand with our work across the state providing counsel and advice to those who seek to set up a new farmers market. In that work we find most often that individuals do the work in order to facilitate a connection to local food very close to their place of residence or work. We call this the “in my back yard” syndrome.

Not surprisingly, we found that a market must prepare for the side effects of successful marketing. In the case of Framingham, our work increased traffic to the extent that parking became problematic. The market manager, shoppers, town officials, and local residents all observed and commented on the inadequate parking and poor traffic flow the site offered. This somewhat hampered our efforts to serve the needs of time pressed occasional shoppers. Unfortunately, the physical layout precludes easy solutions and road construction in the area, which might have been designed to address these concerns, did not take market and shopper needs into account. We also found that markets that target occasional shoppers should consider other elements of convenience, from customer traffic flow inside the market to vendors’ internal booth layouts so that they provide for a rapid checkout. And we believe markets/vendors should think about providing services such as pre-ordering, assistance in getting products to the car, and other such conveniences that serve the occasional shopper’s need for brevity, while at the same time allowing the traditional shopper to engage with farmers, socialize, and experience the market as they desire.

An important finding is that shoppers of farmers markets appear to be similar throughout the country. And of course the discovery of the high volume of occasional shoppers is highly significant. Note: When this was first reported by Katros, Cole, all of MFM staff, and the majority of farmers challenged his finding. However, in the face of hard evidence, all did admit the reality of the finding. Numerous conversations with farmers and market managers across state lead us to conclude that this initial resistance is due to the fact that these shoppers are essentially invisible to farmers as well as managers. These are the shoppers that do not create personal connections or make themselves known at market. We found that when we were able to identify these individuals as the customers that frequently come to market looking for products out of season, and often do not return for some time, a deeper understanding and acceptance was created.

Perhaps one of the most important conclusions/lessons learned is that the creation of a viral message requires a significant amount of work on the part of the market manager. Essentially, replacing paid advertising with free or nearly free viral/internet messaging transfers the burden of work to the manager. We experienced this as a trade of time for cash. Creating crop alerts, including communication with farmers and research on nutrition and other components, can easily consume a half day even with user-friendly templates. Note: We recommend limiting communication to one to two interesting points per crop so as not to run out of material quickly as well as to increase recipients' incentive to view future communications.

While conceptually simple, posting on Facebook and Twitter required a fair amount of time and attention. The Twitter process in particular confirmed for us what many writers are already aware of – that short and succinct writing is far more time-consuming to produce than writing longer communications. Therefore, managers operating by themselves are likely to be challenged by time constraints required for viral marketing. This finding was confirmed by the managers of the Framingham market, who reported struggling with the workload necessary to engage customers, run market events, support farmers, and deal with daily issues surrounding operations while also posting information from the market. These managers frequently called the MFM office staff for assistance in posting, and fortunately office staff members were able provide the backup needed.

This leads us to believe that effective viral marketing campaigns should involve volunteers in the community whose goal is to support the market manager at multiple levels, particularly when a manager is a volunteer her/himself. This, we feel, is often feasible because community members are generally receptive to helping a farmers market thrive, and many are willing to volunteer time and effort to ensure that it does. However, pursuing a course of engaging volunteers will change the nature of work that a typical manager performs, moving from daily hands-on activities to overall coordination, facilitating a collaborative work environment, and volunteer training and coordination.

And, this effort is likely to be of value. We found, even with our enhanced electronic communication, shoppers often shared verbally- telling their friends about our work in person while suggesting that they form electronic connectivity with us on their own. We also observed and were told by shoppers that they would pick up and pass along our

incentive materials, particularly refrigerator magnets or one recipe card<sup>16</sup>, in order to share so that their friends too could connect with us. This action likely results from the personal values of core farmers market shoppers, where farmers markets are more than simple shopping endeavors, rather a material effort to connect with the social structure inherent at most farmers markets. For these individuals viral marketing efforts become viral through traditional word of mouth means enhanced by providing content for conversation.

Lastly, we conclude that carefully crafted messages distributed in electronic format are messages with value and messaging that will be passed on in the manner best aligned with the recipient's values and life style. Thus, these forms of marketing, especially when coupled with low cost hard copy materials, become a universal communication strategy in those areas where internet connectivity is wide spread. However, in order to facilitate this type of work we believe market managers need to become proficient in working with volunteers and suggest that efforts to provide education and training along these lines will greatly enhance farmers markets' sustainability.

### **Benefits of the project**

Our project generally provides a deeper understanding of forces that create the extensive interest in and support for farmers markets in our nation. It gives us deeper insight into consumer characteristics and provides additional options for managers and farmers in approaching their marketing opportunities. It also provides information that may be used in creating sound public policy at the local, state, and federal levels.

Our work created a direct benefit to farmers and other vendors at markets in Massachusetts, and particularly those served by MFM management, by increasing their sales. The increase in sales translates to increased financial capacity to support their markets' operations.

Our work benefited shoppers at multiple levels, including increased access to healthy foods and increasing their connection to us. Increased connection to shoppers has fueled more charitable support for MFM, which has provided us with greater capacity to serve the farmers market industry.

This project increased MFM's general visibility and our volunteer pool has greatly expanded as a result. Using that expanded pool we have been able to facilitate a dramatic expansion of SNAP acceptance at Massachusetts, thereby greatly expanding access to healthy local produce.

We anticipate that, with dissemination of our work, farmers markets will be enhanced, managers will be able to better assess and implement various marketing alternatives, markets will be more robustly sustained, and that the benefits experienced by MFM, such as access to more volunteers, will be more easily available to many farmers market managers directly.

---

<sup>16</sup> Shoppers told us that recipes were personal enough in taste that unless they were very sure about likes and dislikes they would not presume to pick them up for their friends, but would venture one to 'show & tell'.

Mass Farmers Markets (The Federation of Mass Farmers Markets)  
Jeffrey Cole - 781-893-8222 - [jeff@massfarmersmarkets.org](mailto:jeff@massfarmersmarkets.org) [www.massfarmersmarkets.org](http://www.massfarmersmarkets.org)

## APPENDIX

<b>Viral Marketing Opportunities Spring 2009 – March 2011</b>	
April 4 & 5, 2009	Down:2:Earth Exposition, Boston, MA
4/1/2009	Nixon-Peabody Law Firm Earth Day Event, Boston, MA
4/1/2009	Earth Day Event at Massachusetts EPA Office, Boston, MA
5/20/2009	WBOS Earth Fest, Boston, Ma
8/11-12/2009	NOFA Summer Conference, Amherst, MA
September 18 -- October 4, 2009	Eastern States Exposition, West Springfield, MA
10/23/2009	2nd Annual Urban Barn Dance, Cambridge, MA
11/13/2009	4th Grade Class Visit to Copley Square Market, Boston, MA
1/11/2010	Somerville CSA Fair, Somerville, MA
February 27 & 28, 2010	Russell's Winter Garden Fair, Wayland, MA
4/8/2010	Healthy Living Event for City Employees, Cambridge City Hall
April 10 & 11, 2010	Down:2:Earth Exposition, Boston, MA
4/22/2010	Nixon-Peabody Law Firm Earth Day Event, Boston, MA
4/24/2010	SlowFest, Boston, MA
5/22/2010	WBOS Earth Fest, Boston, MA
May -- November 2010	Central Square Farmers Market, Cambridge, MA
May -- November 2010	Davis Square Farmers Market, Somerville, MA
June -- October 2010	Union Square Farmers Market, Somerville, MA
June -- October 2010	Framingham Farmers Market, Framingham, MA
8/11/2010	Charity Night at Flatbread Pizza, Somerville, MA
8/29/2010	How2HoeDown Event at Smolak Farms, N. Andover, MA
September 17 -- October 3, 2010	Eastern States Exposition, West Springfield, MA
9/24/2010	Harvard Medical School Wellness Fair, Boston, MA
10/3/2010	Boston Local Food Festival, Boston, Ma
10/28/2010	Harvest Co-op Annual Meeting, Jamaica Plain, MA
11/5/2010	3rd Annual Urban Barn Dance, Cambridge, MA
11/13/2010	Brookwood School Sustainability Fair, Manchester, MA
1/29/2011	100 Best Communities for Youth Celebration, Somerville, MA
January -- March 2011	Somerville Winter Farmers Market, Somerville, MA
2/7/2011	Let's Move Sign-On and Press Opp, Cambridge, MA
March 5 & 6, 2011	Russell's Winter Garden Fair, Wayland, MA



**— MASS —  
FARMERS  
MARKETS**

**Find a market near you**

**[massfarmersmarkets.org](http://massfarmersmarkets.org)**

# **Recruitment Form**

## **A. What to begin with:**

### **MFM invitation – Friends of Farmers Markets**

Help us get smart.

The mass farmers markets is launching a research study help us improve, and to reach more shoppers. We are looking for folks who are both shoppers and non shoppers who won't mind being recorded knowing that the materials will remain private to the farmers market.

The interview will take around 30 minutes during which we will ask you questions around how and why you shop or don't shop the farmers market and your thoughts on food, cooking and eating. The work helps local farmers.

## **B. Discussion Guide - Key Informant Interview Protocol**

2008

### **Preamble:**

- We will need to record the interview because it's hard to take notes and conduct the interview.
- You will remain completely anonymous, the information will be used internally to help us design new ways to improve the farmers markets.
- Do you have any questions?

## **C. If you are interested we will take your name & contact info. And we have a few basic questions to ask today:**

1. How much time do you usually spend at the farmers market?
2. Do you usually come alone ?
3. When you shop for food, are you shopping for yourself or other people?
4. Give me five words that describe the farmers market for you.
5. When someone says locally grown, what do you think?
6. When they say organic, what do you think.

# Mass Farmers Market Recruiting Form

Recruiters Name:

Location:

Name	email address	phone number	shopper type	Comment
------	------------------	-----------------	-----------------	---------

These are questions we will use to segment people. If you wish to use these to conduct intercept surveys to help you engage with and identify customers feel free to print and use. Hopefully you won't have to go to these lengths however.

Name:

Sex:

Age:

Town or City:

Your primary market:

Please answer the following questions using the following designations:

5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neither Agree/ Disagree, 2 = Disagree, and 1 = Strongly Disagree,

1. I seek out local foods whenever possible.
2. I am a farmers market enthusiast and make the markets the center of my produce purchases.
3. There are periods during the year or season where I will do the bulk of my purchases at the farmers market.
4. I am considered a farmers market expert and give out advice to other shoppers.
5. One of the primary reasons I go to the market is for the social and entertainment aspects.
6. I am a foody or a cooking hobbist and I rely on freshness to make my recipes shine.
7. I shop for others as well as myself.
8. I am very conscious of trying to buy items when they are at their peak or in season
9. I shop the market at lunch time.

10. I shop the market mainly on the weekends.

11. I have recommended the market to others.

12. I have volunteered my time for farmers markets or organizations that share the values of the farmers markets.

13. Produce and products at a farmers market are a good value.

Comment Box 1 : List the items you purchase regularly in order of volume

Comment Box 2: Why do you shop the farmers markets

Yes, I am willing to take a 10 minute phone call to help the farmers market.

Email address:

Phone number:

Finally, please share all of this info with vendors so that they can help you to recruit.

## **Crop Alert**

### **Pears**

#### Crop Notes:

pears are reported to be just starting to be harvested.

#### Tidbits:

Pears are members of the rose family and related to the apple and the quince. They were once referred to as the gift from the gods. Although not well documented with scientific research, pears are often recommended by healthcare practitioners as a fruit that is less likely to produce an allergic response than other fruits and pear is often recommended as a safe way to start infants on fruit.

#### Nutrition:

Pears are a good source of dietary fiber, vitamin C, copper, and vitamin K.

#### Time saver:

Add cubed pears to your salad with walnuts for a delicious change of pace or serve with goat or bleu cheese for a quick delightful dessert.

### **Forecast Notes for the coming weeks**

Heat will bring on delicious melons later in the month. Stay tuned.

## Tweets

[MAFarmMarkets](#) Mass Farmers Markets

First 8 2 post a mushroom recipe 2www.facebook.com/MassFarmersMarketsPage win a lunchtime tour of the Central Sq. Market w.ChrisSchlesinger!

[MAFarmMarkets](#) Mass Farmers Markets

Farmers Market Weekly Update 9/13 <http://conta.cc/bmjleUf> via [#constantcontact](#)

[MAFarmMarkets](#) Mass Farmers Markets

Sweaty commutes may bring you down, but 90 degree days also bring ripe peaches + other treats to beat the heat. Come get 'em @ Copley today!

# Market Manager Daily Report Form



Market: FRAMINGHAM

Date: 7/3/08  
(Day before the 4th)

Manager: Elizabeth A.

Weather: Sunny, very windy  
Upper 70's  
T-storms predicted for late in day

Customer Freeze Counts	Before Opening	1 <sup>st</sup> Count Time: <u>12:45</u>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Count Time: <u>1:30</u>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Count Time: <u>2:30</u>	At Closing <u>3:30</u>	<u>4:30</u>
Counts:	<u>10</u>	<u>35</u>	<u>331</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>27</u>

This information is important and helpful for the future. Please respond fully. Use the other side and additional paper as needed.

<p><b>Farmer &amp; Vendor Concerns / Comments / Issues</b></p> <p>Farmers want 4<sup>th</sup> history</p> <p>Roxanne mentioned someone asking <sup>for us</sup> to stay open until 6pm because she returns from city &amp; can't get here sooner. This prompted a discussion about</p>	<p><b>Consumer Concerns / Comments / Issues</b></p> <p>"Where's Ernie" people want to know.</p> <p><u>Need MORE Daily Report Forums</u></p>
<p><b>Market Activities</b> (i.e. Entertainment, Education, Tastings, etc.)</p> <p>Roxanne is grilling</p> <p>Our signs today: Local MEAT, HERBS, PRODUCE &amp; BAKERY</p> <p>+ "4<sup>th</sup> of July BBQ &amp; Gifts"</p> <p>"LOCAL PRODUCE IS SAFE PRODUCE"</p>	<p><b>General Public Outreach Activities &amp; Leads</b> (i.e. Media, Business, Government connections and visitors of note, promotion and advertising)</p> <p>Jane from Dept. Health stopped by to check out Roxanne's grilling set up.</p> <p>I asked her about chef cooking demos - she just needs to check their credentials ensure H<sub>2</sub>O is on hand &amp; she is in support of idea.</p>
<p><b>Your Comments / IDEAS/Miscellaneous</b></p> <p>Ed's idea to include "Ernie Update" is great! People ask for Ernie</p> <p>eslvial@gmail.com - Elizabeth's e-mail</p> <p>Knife sharpening / How to use Knives</p> <p>Pamper chef</p>	

## Market Dot Survey

Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

Market: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>1) How did you find out about this market?</b>	MFM Website	Facebook/Twitter	Word-of-Mouth	Road Sign	Other –flyer, sign, posting, etc
<b>2) How often do you visit this market?</b>	1-5 times per season	6-10 times per season	11-15 times per season	Every week during the season	Comments:  A few times every couple years
<b>3) Have you visited in previous years?</b>	yes	no			
<b>4) Which, if any, of the following would you be interested in?</b>	General Market alerts	Cancellation only alerts	Market facebook group	Market twitter	Other
<b>5) How would you like to receive the above information?</b>	Text message	e-mail	voice message	other	

## Farmer Survey

### End of Year:

Thank you for participating in this survey for the Federation of Massachusetts Farmers Markets. Your responses will help us to improve your markets and respond to the concerns of both farmers and consumers.

Please answer the following questions and return this survey to:

**Federation of Massachusetts Farmers Markets  
240 Beaver Street  
Waltham, MA 02452**

**Market Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**1a)** Were there crops or products you had significant excess or shortage of in 2009?

(Please check one)      **Yes**\_\_\_\_ **No**\_\_\_\_

**1b)** If yes, why do you think that was? (use other side if needed)

**2a)** Are there crops or products that you have concluded you need to grow/produce more of?

(Please check one)      **More**\_\_\_\_ **Less**\_\_\_\_ **The Same**\_\_\_\_

**2b)** If more or less, which one(s)? (use other side if needed)

**3)** Do you think there were more or less people attending this market in 2009 vs 2008?

(Please check one)      **More**\_\_\_\_ **Less**\_\_\_\_ **The Same**\_\_\_\_

**4)** Did your market sales increase, decrease, or remain the same in 2009 as compared to 2008?

(Please check one)      **Increase**\_\_\_\_ **Decrease**\_\_\_\_ **Remain the same**\_\_\_\_

**5a)** Did you raise your prices this year?

(Please check one)      **Yes**\_\_\_\_ **No**\_\_\_\_

**5b)** If yes, on what products? (use other side if needed)

5c) By what percentage did you increase prices? (If different products were increased at different rates please average and answer with a single percent value)

\_\_\_\_\_%

6) Were customers purchasing more or less of higher-priced items than in past years?

(Please check one)

**More**\_\_\_\_ **Less**\_\_\_\_ **The Same**\_\_\_\_\_

7) What comments or questions you frequently receive (if any) from your customers about the market or pricing? (Please List) (use other side if needed)

8) Did you attend more than one Mass Farmers Market managed market?

(Please check one)

**Yes**\_\_\_\_ **No**\_\_\_\_\_

*If you answered **Yes**, please answer the following questions. If **No**, you are finished with the survey.*

What differences did you notice between the various FMFM-managed markets you attended – in:

**Davis**

**Copley**

**City Hall**

**Central**

**Framingham**

9a) Sales per hour?

Higher (H), Lower (L)

Same (S)

9b) Prices?

Higher (H), Lower (L)

Same (S)

9c) Customer count?

Higher (H), Lower (L)

Same (S)

9d) Other? (use other side if needed)

## Farmer Survey

Weekly:

**Date:** \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

**Market:** \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for participating in this survey for the Federation of Massachusetts Farmers Markets. Your responses will help us to improve market attendance and respond to the concerns of both farmers and consumers. Please answer the questions on the following page and return this survey to the market manager.

**1a)** Have your sales have increased, decreased, or remained the same since last week?

(Please check one)    **Increase**\_\_\_    **Decrease**\_\_\_    **Remain the same**\_\_\_

**1b)** Why do you think this is?

**2a)** Have your sales have increased, decreased, or remained the same compared with the same week last season?

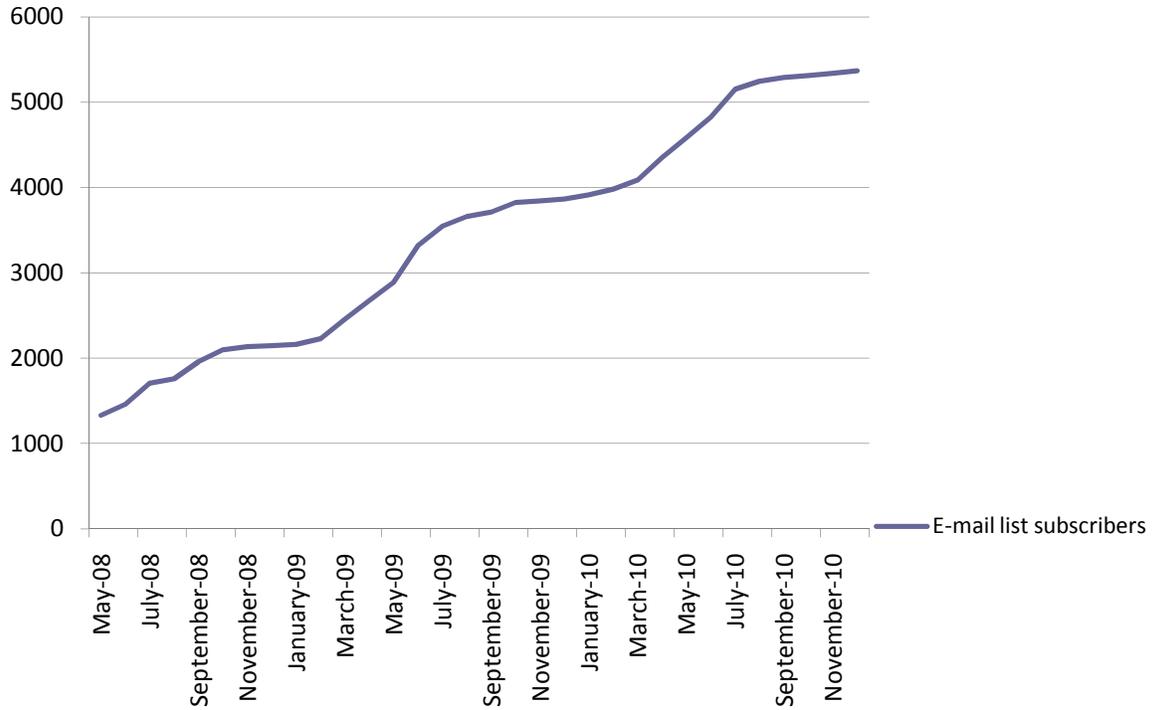
(Please check one)    **Increase**\_\_\_    **Decrease**\_\_\_    **Remain the same**\_\_\_

**2b)** Why do you think this is?

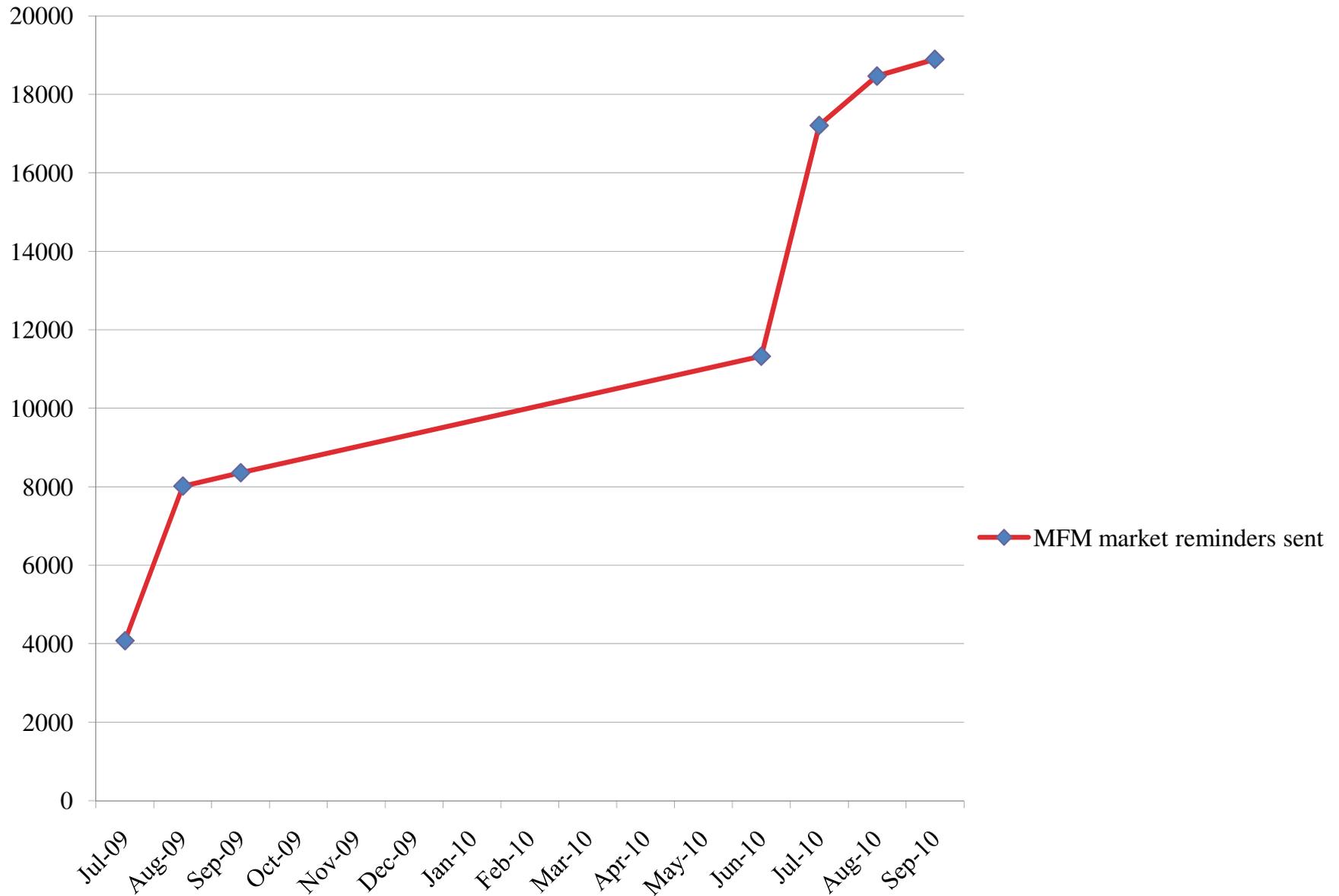
**3)** Do you think there were more or less people attending market this week over last?

(Please check one)    **More**\_\_\_    **Less**\_\_\_    **The Same**\_\_\_

E-mail list subscribers



# MFM market reminders sent



June 17, 2009

## Farmers' Market Reminder Service

It's farmers' market day in your neighborhood. But, you forgot! Don't you hate it when that happens? So do the farmers, but they have a solution. [Mass Farmers Markets](#) has set up a e-reminder service on their website and we are making that our Friday Link.



Click [here](#), sign up for the markets you shop, and on market day you'll receive a reminder that the market is open. They explain their service by saying,

"Having trouble remembering when your local farmers market is open? We can help! Sign up [here](#) to set up a weekly reminder about the dates and times of your local farmers market; (you will be able to choose between text message, email message or telephone voicemail)"

For those who visit several markets, the message includes the name of the market, day, or days it is open, and the hours.

Martha Sweet from Mass Farmers Markets reports that the number of people receiving reminders each week is growing. Subscribers are saying, "I loved getting the reminder!" and "Susan who will indeed go to the farmer's market this afternoon!"