Sampling as a Promotion Strategy & a Food Marketing Database for Farmers’ Markets

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www.agecon.msstate.edu
Blogs.msucares.com/agecon
Food Marketing at Farmers’ Markets

Goal: Increase customer base and sales

A variety of promotion strategies out there:

• Community involvement
• Online marketing
• Product discounts
• Food sampling
Food Sampling at Farmers’ Markets
Food Sampling at Farmers’ Markets

Advantages:
• Introduce new and unusual products: Recipe cards & ideas
• Change the image of a product
• Generate word of mouth
• Already experienced by patrons in other retail settings

Drawbacks:
• A one-time advertising exposure (vs. print advertising)
• Labor constraints
• Limited booth space
• Can be expensive

Are economic benefits greater than the costs?
How, and to what extent, are consumer perceptions impacted by offering samples?
Food Sampling at Farmers’ Markets

**Costs**
- Product for samples
- Sampling materials
- Time/fees for sampling certificates, if any
- Staffing time to set up, deliver, and clean up samples
- Wash station

**Benefits**
- Resulting direct purchases
- Future purchases by visitors who would otherwise not have purchased the product
- Referral activity for booth the product and the vendor
Food Sampling at Farmers’ Markets

- What services do consumers consider important at FM?
- 2009 consumer survey: 302 visitors in 11 different Farmers’ Markets in Kentucky

**Services Most in Demand at KY Farmers’ Market**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>9 - Important</th>
<th>10 - Very Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sampling</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>30.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expanded market days</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>29.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expanded market hours</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>27.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest room access</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debit card</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking/recipe demonstrations</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expanded parking</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior nutrition and/or food stamps</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Food Sampling at Farmers’ Markets

• Lessons from KY
• 2011 Regional Farmers Market Sampling Survey: 3,406 responses in 8 states (IN, IL, KY, MO, OH, TN, VA, WV)

• Key findings:
  1. Market visitors perspectives
  2. Benefits of sampling
  3. Sampling tips
Food Sampling at Farmers’ Markets

1. Market visitors perspectives

• 95% of respondents who sampled products had an excellent or good experience, only 5% had a fair or poor experience

• Where did you have the “best ever” sampling experience? Most respondents had it at a FM

![Bar chart showing the percentage of respondents who had their best sampling experience at various locations. Community farmers market: 37%, Grocery store: 17%, Club store: 12%, On-farm retail market: 10%, Festival or event: 7%, Don't know/can't recall: 6%, Specialty food store: 4%, Other: 3%, Natural foods store: 2%, Restaurant: 1%]
Food Sampling at Farmers’ Markets

- The “best ever” sampling experience
  - Unexpected great taste
  - Friendliness of the vendor
  - Presentation of the sample.
  - Not so much about a cooking demonstration, discovering health benefits, or a special festival event.

- Market segmentation:
  - Older consumers placed more emphasis on taste and whether to buy, and less on entertainment
  - Urban consumers placed more emphasis on entertainment
  - Consumers with kids place more emphasis on entertainment, and less on taste and whether to buy
Food Sampling at Farmers’ Markets

- The top *general* food items visitors are likely to sample are favorite fresh F&V, cheese, and baked products.
Food Sampling at Farmers’ Markets

• The top unusual food items visitors are likely to sample are novel fresh F&V, and jams and jellies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Item</th>
<th>Likelihood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fresh fruit I have never tried</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresh vegetable I have never tried</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unusual jam or jelly product</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unusual baked good</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unusual cheese</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique ethnic food recipe demonstrated at the market</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorghum product</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pawpaw product</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Food Sampling at Farmers’ Markets

• **Top barriers to sampling.** Opinion of visitors who visited a FM but did NOT sample
  1. Crowded sampling area
  2. Uncertainty of taste and ingredients
  3. Food safety concerns
  4. Samples appearance
Food Sampling at Farmers’ Markets

• **Older consumers** who did not sample were more concerned about **food safety**. **Younger consumers** were more concerned about pressure from vendors (uncomfortable with confrontation) and ingredients standards (organic, natural, kosher, halal), and less concerned about pricing.

• **Top reasons to sample.** Opinion of visitors who recently sampled at a FM
  1. Friendly vendor
  2. Ease of access to samples
  3. Samples’ appearance
  4. Curiosity about unknown product as well as familiarity with known products
  5. Signs
Food Sampling at Farmers’ Markets

Samples should be easy to access and experience, and well-presented. Use signage to indicate what is being sampled and how it is prepared. Help people learn about your product. Consumers like both familiar and unfamiliar products!
Food Sampling at Farmers’ Markets

2. Benefits of sampling. Opinion of visitors who recently sampled at a FM

Did you buy the product that day?

- Yes, and I hadn't planned to: 55%
- No, but planned to in the future: 17%
- Yes, but I already planned to: 16%
- No, and I didn't want to: 8%
- Was going to but changed my mind: 3%
- Can't recall: 1%

- **Impulse buying** was higher among older consumers (34+) and those with kids, while **planned buying** was higher among younger, urban, and shoppers without kids.
Food Sampling at Farmers’ Markets

Ideas for sampling at FM and other venues based on success stories:

Ayres Family Orchard: Apples and jam and jellies. Samples are prepared beforehand in 2 ounce plastic cups with lids and kept cool.

Henkle’s Herbs and Heirlooms: Tomatoes and homemade salsa. Sampling of salsa started as a way to show consumers what to do with their products, but consumers wanted to buy the homemade salsas. Processing helps them use veggies that would not be able to use fresh.
Food Sampling at Farmers’ Markets

Ideas for sampling at FM and other venues based on success stories:

“A Taste of the Market” program. Extension agents gather products from vendors and sample them at a central location in the market once a month. They direct people to the booth where they will find those products.
Food Sampling at Farmers’ Markets

Other venues.

Indicate all places where you’ve sampled food within the last 12 months:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grocery food store</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community farm market</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Festival or event</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Club store</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supercenter</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-farm retail market</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gourmet or specialty food store</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural food store</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Widespread use of sampling as part of food marketing highlights its potential.
Food Sampling at Farmers’ Markets

3. Sampling tips
Hand wash station:

Hand Wash Station Components:
1. Table
2. Potable water — 15 gallons
3. Free-flowing spigot
4. Used water discard bucket
5. Liquid hand soap
6. Paper towels
7. Wastepaper basket
## Food Sampling at Farmers’ Markets

Go over a check-list:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Tent, if market is not under cover</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Potable water – at least 15 gallons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. An adequate supply of ice</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Two coolers to use to store ice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Hand wash station set-up</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Hand soap</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Three-compartment wash, rinse, and sanitize station set-up</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Dish soap</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Sanitizer tablets or unscented household bleach</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Hair nets or caps</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Food service gloves</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Aprons and hats for servers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Grill, hot plate, skillet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Extension cord</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Thermometer (high and low)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Hot pads or pot holders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Two tables</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Table cloths</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>19. Netted table tents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Trays for samples</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Sanitary wipes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Paper towels (minimum of two rolls)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Individual serving cups or plates</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>24. Disposable forks/spoons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Toothpicks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Trash cans – one for you and one for samplers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Trash bags</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Plastic container with tight-fitting lid to protect utensils from contamination</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Knives, large and paring size</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Tongs (several sets)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Bowls (large)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Spoons and Forks (large)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Cutting boards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Tape</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. Aluminum foil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. Plastic wrap</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. Copies of your recipes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. Business cards to hand out</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. Road or yard signs explaining the event</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Food Sampling at Farmers’ Markets

**Pooled sampling:** One or two people operate a table with samples from several vendors at the market.

**Other staffing ideas:**
- High school clubs
- College Agricultural Clubs
- Culinary School students
- Summer farm interns
Market Maker: A Food Marketing Database for Farmers’ Markets
Market Maker

Web-based state and regional directory to connect food producers and buyers:
Market Maker

Participating States (20):

Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Nebraska, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Washington DC, Wyoming

Mississippi: http://ms.foodmarketmaker.com/
Who Can Use It?

- Anyone with internet access
- MarketMaker is a free tool for people who:
  - Grow food
  - Process food
  - Sell food
  - Everyone!
Total Number of Business by Category

1. Eating/drinking
2. Food Retail
3. Food Processor
4. Wholesaler
5. Farm/ranch

3,155 FM registered!
Goals of Market Maker

- Help **farmers** and food entrepreneurs identify potential markets
- Help **consumers** find fresh and locally grown food
- Help members of the food supply chain connect
- Educate users on food marketing and value-added agriculture marketing topics and regulations
Features

• **Business Search:** Maps and provides profiles of farmers and food related businesses.

• **Market Research:** Maps potential markets by demographic characteristics. Provides census profiles of the markets being targeted.
Create Account

When you register your business with MarketMaker, you have the ability to post an ad in the Buy & Sell Forums as well as manage and update your profile information and notification preferences.

* required

*Email: 

*Username: 

*Password: 

Passwords must be at least 8 characters long and contain both letters and numbers.

Account Preferences

MarketMaker wants to help you manage the information you receive. We have created notification preferences to help you narrow down the information so it is beneficial and specific to you.

- Email: Receive notifications by email

- Text Messages: Mobile Phone Number: Provider: Allied

Text Message feature is currently under development, but please include this information if you like to receive notifications when available.

  You will receive Buy/Sell Forum Notice. Narrow your preferences?

- Trade Alerts: Member only notification of product availability, product needs, food industry alerts, and related services.
  You will receive Trade Alert. Narrow your preferences?

- New Members: Receive notices of farmers, ranchers, families, and businesses that match your product preferences and region of interest. This is under development.
  You will receive New Member notifications. Narrow your preferences?

- Newsletter: Receive important MarketMaker updates and information by selecting to receive the monthly newsletter. You will receive a monthly email that directs you to the National MarketMaker website where newsletters are posted.
  Narrow your preferences?

- Farm to Food Bank Donation Hotline: Receive important updates regarding food donation opportunities in your state. Currently available to Georgia residents.
  Narrow your preferences?

Alerts by Location

You will receive alerts from all MarketMaker sites. This is under development. Narrow your preferences?

<<< Back  Continue >>>
Business Search
Mississippi Central Farmers Market

929 High Street
Jackson, Mississippi 329202

Email: Contact Us
Phone: (601) 354-6573
Contact: Will Scarborough
Last Updated: Feb 19, 2013

Business Details

Market Details
Sponsor: Mississippi Central Farmers Market, Location: 929 High Street, Jackson MS 329202.
Products Sold: Locally grown fruits and vegetables. Also have an assortment of local arts and crafts. Open Saturday year round and Tuesday/Thursday (May-August).

Methods of Sale
Debit/Credit Card, EBT/SNAP, WIC

Days/Times Open
Saturday (Hours of Operation: 8:00 am-2:00pm)

Months Open
Only Specific Months (February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, December)

About Us
Bringing all the richness of Mississippi’s fruit and vegetable production together in one location means having a structure large enough to handle the state’s rich output. This wonderful facility is the largest of its kind in the state and is conveniently located on High Street near the Fairgrounds. An all-weather building, it offers 18,000 square feet and 12 stalls with roll-up doors. The Mississippi Farmers Market is helping to re-establish that time honored tradition of fresh market produce sold directly to consumers by the folks who grow it. The people who grow it. No middlemen, no big chain supermarket are involved but just the best food that comes straight from the field to you. Some of the attractions at the market include Mississippi craftsmen and artisans, cooking demonstrations from culinary schools and chefs from area restaurants, live entertainment, senior citizen and children activities, and seasonal events and promotions. Breakfast and lunch are served in the Farmers Market Grille located inside the Market. So stop by soon and come home to homegrown.

Business Connections
No connections yet.

Industry Affiliations

On the Web

Find us on Facebook

Buy & Sell Forum Listings
Mississippi Central Farmers Market
929 High Street
Jackson, Mississippi 39202

Email: Contact Us
Phone: (601) 354-6573
Contact: Will Scarborough
Last Updated: Feb 19, 2013

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Business Connections
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Industry Affiliations

On the Web

Driving directions to High St

1. Head northwest on Russell St toward Bois Extension Dr
2. Turn left onto MS-12 W
3. Slight right to merge onto MS-25 S
4. Merge onto MS-15 S/MS-25 S via the ramp to Louisville/Jackson
   Continue to follow MS-25 S
5. Merge onto I-55 S via the ramp to McComb
6. Take exit 96B toward State Capital
7. Merge onto High St
   Destination will be on the left

Save to My Maps

These directions are for planning purposes only. You may find that construction projects, traffic, weather, or other events may cause conditions to differ from the map results, and you should plan your route accordingly. You must obey all signs or roadblocks regarding your route.
Farmer/Rancher > Fruits & Nuts > Fruit Product Type > Strawberries

Memory Orchard

180 Drive 990
Tupelo, Mississippi 38804

Email: Contact Us
Phone: (662) 842-4370
Alt. Phone: (662) 321-5389
Fax: (662) 842-4370

Contact: Mrs. Marian Fay Maloney
Last Updated: Nov 1, 2011

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**Fruits & Nuts**

- Fruit Product Type
  - Apples, Apricots, Blueberries, Cantaloupe, Figs, Melons, Muscadines, PawPaws, Peaches, Pears, Persimmons, Plums, Pomegranate, Raspberries (Red), Strawberries
- Nut Product Type
  - Chestnuts, Pecans
- Product Attributes - Producer Verified
  - GMO Free, Natural, No Preservatives
- Product Forms
  - Canned, Jams/Jellies, Pickled, Salsa
- Methods of Sale
  - Delivery, Farmers Market, On Farm Sales, Retail Storefront, Wholesale

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**About Us**

Naturally grown fruits and flowers, fresh and preserved

**Business Connections**

No connections yet.

**Industry Affiliations**

No affiliations yet.

**On the Web**

No social network links yet.

**Buy & Sell Forum Listings**

No Buy & Sell Forum ads yet.
Eating & Drinking Place
Restaurant
ro chez

204 west jackson street
Ridgeland, Mississippi 39157

Website: www.rochezdining.com
Phone: (601) 503-8244
Contact: James Roache
Last Updated: Oct 5, 2010

Restaurant
Type of Restaurant
Fine Dining

Menu Details
Price Range of Entree ($23 on up per entree), Website Address of Restaurant
Menu: www.rochezdining.com

Cuisine
Other: Live music changes weekly

Special Features
Artisan Foods, Catering Facility, Gluten Free Friendly, Heirloom Heritage Foods, Live Music, Off-Premise Catering, Outdoor Dining, Reservations, Seasonal Menus, Vegan Friendly, Other: cooking done all off-wood

Business Details
Association Memberships
Buy Fresh Buy Local, Slow Food

Methods of Sale
Direct, Internet

Business Details
Days/Hours of Operation: thurs-sat 6pm and 8pm seatings cooking class 2nd tues each month, cookie show tuesdays 7pm on request Local 85 private parties call, Annual Sales (Not Available), Number of Employees (1 to 4)
Market Research
How to use MI MarketMaker
This short, concise flyer provides key user information for farmers/producers, consumers and food businesses.
Category: Training
Posted by: Tom Kalchik
Created on: 2013-03-05 12:00:11.260
Views: 8
Downloads: 10

My Connections
Flyer to promote “My Connections”
Category: Marketing
Posted by: Gene Backes
Created on: 2012-11-06 15:39:24.410
Views: 28
Downloads: 28

How to Register a MI Farm
Step by step instructions about how to register a farm on Michigan MarketMaker.
Category: Tutorials
Posted by: Tom Kalchik
Created on: 2012-10-26 16:03:25.243
Views: 19
Downloads: 17

How an Alabama School District Buyer Can Locate Farm to School Participants
This fact sheet describes how a local school district (or other) buyer can identify and contact businesses who participate in Farm / Seafood to School.
Category: Art Assets
Posted by: Bethany Walton
Created on: 2012-10-23 11:57:01.093
Views: 8
Downloads: 0

How To Register a Producer for Alabama's Farm / Seafood to School Program
Login

Members Area
Log in to change your business information.
Username: [Enter Username]
Password: [Enter Password]
Login  Forget Password?

Register Your Business
To register, click "Register Your Business" and complete the steps to the registration form. Please note a valid email address is required to receive important information regarding account access and service notifications. Please read our Privacy Policy and Disclaimer.

Request Account Access
If you are included in our database and need a member account to access and edit your information, click "Request Account Access".

Request Account Access
Thank you.

More info:

Alba J. Collart, Ph.D. | Assistant Extension Professor
Department of Agricultural Economics | Mississippi State University

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Fax: 662.325.8777
Collart@agecon.msstate.edu

www.agecon.msstate.edu
Blogs.msucare.com/agecon