

<http://www.wvu.edu/~agexten/farmman2/frmmrktres.htm>

Beginners Craft Show Advice *Good tips for any kind of market* http://craftshowplace.com/for_beginners.htm

Books for Farmers Market Vendors <http://www.farmersmarketonline.com/a/farmersmarket-books.htm>

Pricing Horticultural Products [http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agdex918?opendocument](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agdex918?opendocument) Good information from Alberta including much more than pricing.

Food Business Information:

Idaho Specialty Foods Manual

<http://www.agri.state.id.us/Categories/Marketing/Documents/Specialty%20Foods%20Manual%202005.pdf>

Panhandle Health District 7402 Caribou Bonners Ferry, ID 83805 267-5558

Panhandle Health District Director: Jeanne Bock 8500 N. Atlas Road Hayden, ID 83835 415-5100 <http://www.phd1.idaho.gov/>

Food licensing information: http://www2.state.id.us/phd1/env_food.html

Regulation and License Requirements for Food Businesses

<http://adm.idaho.gov/adminrules/rules/idapa16/0219.pdf>

Bonner Business Center Commercial Kitchen *certified kitchen available by the hour*

The Bonner Business Center 804 Airport Way Sandpoint, ID 83864 208-263-4073

http://www.bonnerbusinesscenter.com/Kit_Main.htm

(rate sheet at bonnerbusinesscenter.com/RentRates2006-07.pdf)

ISDA Bureau of Wts & Measures

to get your scales inspected and certified. (\$4.50)

PO Box 790 Boise ID 83701-0790

Harold Hall hhall@idahoag.us 651-8088

Libraries have more books on marketing and business start-up ideas, and the Extension office has more as well.

Market Day Checklist

Did you remember.....?

- } Tables, products & displays, business sign; tablecloth.
- } Cash box or bag & tax chart; extra change (bills & coins).
- } Keeping a sales tax chart in your cash box is a good idea, along with extra pens and a receipt book.
- } Shade/rain shelter & weights.
- } Price signs, product list
- } Pens, pencils, receipt book, calculator, business cards, brochures
- } Notebook for ideas & reminders
- } Extra bags/boxes, tags, labels, notepad, tape & scissors, towels, trash bag
- } Water & a Snack
- } Rain/Snow gear &/or hot weather clothing; sun-block, bee-sting ointment if needed, band aids.
- } Something to sit on & a hat.

OUTDOOR MARKET HINTS

\$2.00

This flyer is to help you increase sales, have more repeat customers, and have an easier day at outdoor markets. There are tips here on display, signage, booth setup & customer satisfaction. Included also are some references and addresses for further information including where to check for state or other regulations that may apply to your product and a list of growers' suppliers.

Marketing Makes a Difference

Display, signage, packaging, pricing, advertising, public image—these are all things that may not seem to have much to do with farming, cooking or crafting. Yet they are of utmost importance in selling your products. The details—little and big—can make a huge difference in increased & repeat sales and profit. Catching customers' attention, drawing them into your booth, informing them about your products and holding their interest are all marketing. If your product is much the same as the next vendors', your marketing can set you apart. Imaginative signs and labels, sharp looking tables and crisp showy displays all increase profits by attracting & informing customers. These are all advertisements for you; they are your public image. None of this has to be expensive or difficult.

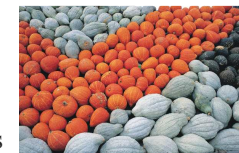
Your Booth's Appearance

Appearance of your booth, your product and yourself are about the most important part of attracting new customers. The more professional an appearance you present, the better your sales will be. Displays that are neat, clean, arranged in an orderly way and kept tidy throughout the market will sell the best for you and repay your time in tending them. A coherent theme (tablecloths all the same fabric or all wood crates for display, for example) are easier to look at and understand than a jumble of mixed items, as well as presenting a more professional appearance.

Colorful, showy packaging and presentation of products, even your clothes enhance sales. A nice assortment of props such as baskets, trays, tablecloths, vases and crates will help you create enticing displays. (Re-furbishing & consolidating your display as the market goes on also helps shorten pack-up time at the end of the day; floor-length tablecloths provide a covered space under your table to restock from.) *Be aware of the heaviness and size of your display items as you'll be lifting them in and out of the truck and setting them up all season.*

Different heights for displaying items create visual interest--fruit crates stacked in layers, for example. Keep things as close to eye level as you can for maximum sales. You may also want to vary your booth's layout from time to time to renew visual interest and remind customers of all that you have to offer.

Remember there will be vendors on either side of you; be sure when arranging the layout of your booth that you don't overflow into another's space, nor block access to



their booths. If you can't fit into the booth space, you'll need to re-design your layout or pay for two spaces (and in the busiest times there won't always be room for you to have two spaces.)

Do your best not to run out of product during the market—a full booth attracts more customers. Washed, crisp produce from a clean, neatly dressed vendor will attract more customers than muddy or wilting goods. Remember too that at a Farmers' Market your vehicle is often highly visible; if it is dirty, buyers may assume your goods are as well.

If you can, attend other markets to glean ideas and see what attracts you as a customer (or does not!)—you'll find display ideas you can personalize for your own use.

Labels, Packaging, Signs & Printing

CATCH CUSTOMER ATTENTION

Colorful, attractive signs, product lists and pricing make it easier for customers to buy from & remember you.

- An informational sign with farm or business name makes you stand out and easier to find for repeat customers. Some possible sign styles are sandwich boards, hand-painted wooden signs, bright posters, and fabric or vinyl banners. Remember these need to be waterproof and sun-fast. Pictures of the farm are eye-catching additions to your booth too.
- Posters with often repeated information on them, or those indicating new varieties you have and why they are special, can save you time and add to sales, talking for you while you are waiting on others.
- Price everything or have a sign listing all prices; this really speeds up transactions. Be sure your signs are readable at a distance so shopping is easy; customers often avoid asking questions and may not buy if they don't see a price. Individual price tags can help avoid confusion and speed checkout. Affix your signs to something to keep them from blowing away.
- Dry-erase boards, chalk boards with colorful lettering, and printed signs all work well for pricing. Hand-lettered price signs work if you have nice handwriting. Be sure your spelling and punctuation are correct! A hot laminating machine can be a very good investment for the waterproof, wipe-clean signs you can make quickly at home, even dry-erase signs for price lists.

TAGS, PACKAGING, WRAPPING

Produce is usually labeled on a sign or price board, or on packages. Unless you have an industrial scale or one inspected by the state inspector, it may be best to sell by each, bunch or bag. This is often faster too both for your prep and for sales.

Adding the variety name and some description helps customers decide and will increase the price you can ask.

- Processed foods such as jellies, pickles, dried fruits & baked goods have labeling, safety and packaging requirements available from the state &/or Health District. So do potentially hazardous foods such as those containing meat; see the Health department for guidance on those.
- Wrapping baked goods keeps them sanitary and appetizing.
- Waterproof labels &/or inks (grease pencil, dry-erase, sharpies) resist rain & are

Organic Produce

<http://www.nafdma.com/Public/Bookstore/Publications/> *This is a paid membership organization but they sell books to non-members.*

Pricing Your Service by Lois Golwals, Beginning Business publication # HE-32, Cooperative Extension Service, Purdue University

Checklist for Going Into Business, US Small Business Administration Management Aid #2.016

SUPPLIES

AM Leonard *pots, flats, tools, tags, equipment* 241 Fox Drive Piqua, Ohio 45356-0816 PO BOX 816 www.amleo.com

Cover Me Tarps & Canopies *canopies, tarps, fittings, shelving*
<http://www.tarps.com/> P.O.Box 1313 Pickens SC 29671 Tel. (864)878-1313

Creative Shelters *canopies, tarps, design tool to make your own canopy kit*
<http://www.creativeshelters.com/>

Growers' Discount Labels *Custom labels* P.O.Box 70 632 Tunnel Road Tunnel, NY 13848 800-693-1572 <http://www.growersdiscountlabels.com/>

Harvest Moon Seed Company *Seeds, CSA & grower supplies: bags, bins* PO Box 143 Union City, Indiana 47390 Phone (765)964.3971

Iprint.com *signs, banners, postcards, letterhead, rubber stamps, custom labels*
www.102.iprint.com, 1475 Veterans Blvd. Redwood City, CA 94063

Johnny's Selected Seeds *seeds, equipment, grower supplies* 955 Benton Avenue Winslow, Maine 04901 www.johnnyseeds.com 877-564-6697

Jordan Seeds, Inc. *grower supplies* 6400 Upper Afton Rd Woodbury, MN 55125-1146 (651)-738-3422 or 651-739-9578 www.jordanseeds.com

Kitchen Krafts *food crafters supplies, packaging, tools, jars, more* PO Box 442 Waukon, Iowa 52172-0442 800-776-0575 <http://www.kitchenkrafts.com>

Lamar's Stationery *items, hang tags, card stock, markers & pens, labels*. Main St., Bonners Ferry. 267-3314

Monte Package Company *Produce containers, baskets, bags, much more* 3752 Riverside Road PO Box 126 Riverside, MI 49084-0126 269.849.1722 <http://www.montepkg.com/index.asp>

Putnam Plastics Farm Products *produce packaging supplies*
www.putnamfarm.com 255 South Alex Road West Carrollton, Ohio 45449 1.800.457.3099

Rockford Package Supply *baskets, bags, bottles and other display items*. 800-444-7225; www.rockfordPACK.com

Territorial Seed Company *seeds, tools, books, supplies, organic fertilizers* PO Box 158 Cottage Grove OR 97424-0061 www.territorialseed.com 800-626-0866

West Coast Supply *Wide range of Farmers Market Supplies, canopies to scales* 9032 Artesia Blvd. #102-A Bellflower CA 90706 888-478-5524 www.westcoastsupply.com/

Farmers Market Resources for Vendors--nice list from West Virginia University

or be gotten into. Dividers make change-making faster.

- * If you bring a book to read, don't. Be sure not to ignore customers or appear to be too busy to wait on them. Customers are doing us a favor by shopping from us!
- * Don't directly copy others' products, ask them to tell you how to copy what they do, nor ask for the names of their suppliers without offering something of value in return. *If you really admire other vendors' work, though, saying so is pretty nice and can open up extra avenues of friendship and cooperation.*
- * Don't work yourself to a total frazzle on Friday evening if you can possibly avoid it--Saturday will be a much better day if you have slept.
- * Wear comfortable shoes!
- * Bring something to sit on; it can be hours before you get a chance to sit and you'll really appreciate it when you can. A tall stool will keep you at eye-level with your customers for a business-like look.
- * The more vendors and products at the market, the more customers are attracted and the better everyone does. A grocery store with only soups, or just one brand of cereal would be awfully boring, but a well stocked one with lots of different brands and types to choose from attracts repeat customers; the same is true of outdoor markets. Crafts and non-produce items also attract more customers, making the market a destination for shoppers.
- * Be sure you are up-to-date on legal requirements for all your products. If you're not ready to do that, you're not ready to be in business. Respecting health regulations is respecting your customers' safety & well-being & the hard work the other vendors have done to build up the market.
- * *Look for your niche--what's special that you grow or make that sets your business apart---* hand-spun yarns, giant pumpkins, early season tomatoes--*that will make customers come to you?*
- * Quoting John Ikerd: "*your uniqueness is the only source of profitability that cannot be competed away, and thus, is the only source of sustainable profits.*"

Resources

Idaho State Department of Agriculture

Domestic Market Development 208-332-8530 P.O. Box 790 Boise, Idaho 83701 *Marketing specialists dealing with Farmers Markets & small farmers*

International Trade and Domestic Market Development, Idaho State Department of Agriculture PO Box 790, Boise ID 83701-0790 , 208-332-8500

<http://www.agri.state.id.us/Categories/Marketing/FMmarketing.php>

—lots of good marketing information for farmers & small businesses, **free**.

Information for new business starters in Idaho: <http://business.idaho.gov/>

Idaho Dept. Agriculture Administrative Rules PO Box 83720, Boise, ID 83720-0306 (208) 332-1820

Growing for Market *A national monthly newsletter for direct market farmers:*

P.O. Box 3747 Lawrence, Kansas 66046 800-307-8949 [Highly informative.](#)

E-mail: growing4market@earthlink.net www.growingformarket.com/

North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Association

professional. There are several companies that will make custom labels for you--we list a few in the resources.

- Be sure to have enough bags for customers to carry home your produce. Clear produce bags are available by the roll from packaging & supply houses.
- When you are recycling grocery bags, be sure they have not held meat or fish, which carry the possibility of contamination with disease.



LABELS AND HANG-TAGS are a good place for image-enhancing things such as artwork, farm motto, logos and recipes or care instructions. Individual tags also make craft items more 'gift-able'. Your business name and address on these tags also make it easier for people to find you for repeat sales. Creative packaging is another way to make your goods stand out, from special wrappings and bags to fabric tops on jelly jars or special berry boxes. Try also including recipes or information on how your products are grown or made. These special details add value to your products.

BUSINESS CARDS & BROCHURES are a big asset in getting your name out to customers and helping them find you for repeat sales. CSA farmers will want to have a brochure with price list and contact information; so will crafters, for listing upcoming fairs they will be attending or courses they will be teaching; you could make one of your brochures as a postcard or mailer.

You can make your own tags & business cards on a PC with a good printer or have a print shop do them; whatever method, get the best printing you can afford; this is your public image and customers will be passing these things on to others.

Pricing

New vendors are often unsure about pricing and how to calculate it. You *could* price exactly the same as at the store, but that might not cover your costs. (Prices at big box stores or grocery stores are often too low for marketers to live on.) Farmers markets aren't flea markets, and customers know they are getting very fresh, locally raised & made farm product that is the equal of (and better than!) what is shipped in at the stores, so don't be afraid to ask a good price. Remember to consider all your costs when pricing, including:

- materials (seeds/starts, soil, pots, tags, fertilizers / beads, wire & findings/ fabric and thread/ flour, canning jars..)
- labor (planting, care, harvesting, time cooking or at the sewing machine)
- overhead (water, tools, taxes, wear & tear on equipment, refrigeration, electricity, insurance)
- office or market supplies such as markers, tape, pens, cash box, bags
- marketing costs (advertising, labels, display items etc.)
- packaging & shipping (cost of getting to market, bags/boxes, fuel incl. the trip to town!)

There are many different formulas to help you find the perfect price. Most add up your costs plus a multiple for profit, and the price you get should be your minimum price. For perishable items, it's smart to add another turn to account for losses & spoilage. Berries, pansies and pies can't be stuck in a drawer until next spring to sell again! (Though jams & pressed flowers can be nice value-added products.)

<i>One method of finding a price:</i>	
Cost of materials to make one item	<i>Actual cost of produced item</i>
+ labor cost per hour / # of items produced per hour	+ (actual cost of produced item x 10 %) [or whatever % you choose] = actual profit
+ overhead /total # of items to be sold in a year	= Wholesale price
= <i>Actual cost of produced item</i>	Wholesale price x 2 or 3 = retail for non-perishable item

Established vendors at your market or fair have spent years working out the costs of production, so if your prices are far above or below theirs for similar sizes, you may want to consider recalculating to keep from losing money or pricing too high for sales.

If a product isn't selling, think of ways to improve it, make it more visible or package more attractively, cut your costs, or re-think selling that item. Having a sale is better than dropping all your prices; and if customers find you'll slash prices at the end of the day, you'll train them to wait to buy until you do. *(One intriguing thing many vendors have noticed is that a slow selling item sometimes actually sells better if the price is raised.)*

While it may be tempting to slash prices to the bone or undercut other sellers to get quick sales, this is one of the most damaging things a vendor can do to a market. No one wants to compete to make the least profit on their hard work; that's not why we have Farmers Markets. For the market to do well, we have to be good neighbors to each other and the community as a whole.

Fair pricing benefits everyone, making not only your own operation sustainable but everyone else's too; there would not be a market for us to sell at, if it were not for the other vendors working together to create it. The better we all do first, the better we each do in the end.

Advertising

Most businesses, including Farmers Markets, advertise in print & radio; individual vendors may want to do so as well and build a mailing list too. Classified ads in local papers are often inexpensive for the exposure you get; the same can be true with radio mentions. Many vendors will benefit from compiling a mailing list--one of your brochures could be designed as a mailer or postcard. If you add "bring in this coupon for ..." or "mention this ad for..." you can begin to track which type of advertising is right for you.

A simple sign-up sheet for customers to be notified if you're having a sale, or which markets you'll attend if you're at the market intermittently, can quickly build a mailing list. It's good to remind customers that you're not going to sell or give away their information to others.

Shelter

Markets see rainy, snowy, stormy, windy and scorching weather, sometimes all on the same day. A canopy will not only protect the quality of your goods but make the shopping experience nicer for your customers and yourself. It also adds to the professionalism of your business.

Fresh produce stays fresher out of the sun and so will you. Baked goods, fruit & vegetables, artwork, fiber crafts, candles & more all benefit from being out of direct sun and heat.

Coolers and ice or ice packs will greatly enhance the quality of your produce. Some products can only legally be sold at the market this way. And on a hot August day, ice cold cucumbers will taste pretty good! To avoid drawing the ire of vendors and customers, don't try to bring a generator to power a cooler; there are battery/inverter setups that can accomplish this noiselessly and odorlessly.

There are a number of kits & canopies on the market to choose from which will make your day easier and enhance your image & sales. Canopies also offer places to hang signs, ristras, craft items, shade cloth and more. You can get corner kits and have conduit cut locally for the legs, for a totally custom canopy/booth. Whatever style you choose, be sure to keep your canopy size at 10' or under (the size of most market stalls & outdoor craft fair booths.)



- Weights or stays to anchor the canopy in the wind are a must. Un-weighted canopies can tip and wreck (including products) or fly away and be a danger to you and others. (Ask me how I know!)
- Weights must be generally over 30# per leg to be secure. These can be made at home from varying materials, from nursery pots or 8-gallon jugs filled with water or concrete to tractor weights. Be sure not to make them trip-hazards and have a secure method to attach them.
- Be sure your cover is waterproof! Rain or shade side panels are also often useful. Be sure also you can lift your canopy in and out of the vehicle by yourself, and do a trial setup or two before going to market.
- Umbrellas are unadvisable--they tip, tear, go inside out, or whirl away across the parking lot.

Good to Keep in Mind:

- * Farmers' Markets are chatty places so be prepared to visit a lot with customers. Cheerfulness and knowing your product makes for more sales.
- * When you're swamped with customers, a friendly nod or smiling eye-contact with those waiting in line will go far to keep them happy.
- * While pointing out the good points of your product, avoid making negative comments about the competition--it leaves a bad impression of you.
- * New vendors often need 4 to 5 weeks' attendance to make an impression on shoppers' minds; don't give up too quickly.
- * Leaving early can disappoint customers; so does spotty attendance. If you can't be at every market, try to keep a regular schedule and make note of it for your customers. Leave word with the manager and your neighbor vendors what your schedule will be, so that customers looking for you will not be disappointed.
- * A waist-bag for cash is even better than a locking cash box as it's harder to lose