

Farmers Market Manager Report for 5/26/2022 Meeting

by Charlie Reed

Vendor News:

After a five-month stoppage, we resume reviewing of vendor applications this month. To keep our participation up through seasonal fluctuations and with a few departures, I've provisionally approved a few vendors. They understand that it is provisional, and I do my best to ensure they're within scope of the market's mission.

Departing Vendors:

- Chow Hound (insufficient revenues, problems with placement and with market manager)
- EDG (staffing difficulties and HQ relocation focus)
- Lamba (staffing)
- Metcalf (focusing elsewhere with difficulty hiring market sellers)
- Mother Shipton (insufficient revenues)

Provisional Vendors (Applications submitted, fees paid):

- 3D Fabrications
- Rock'n Foods (Crepes) – *highly recommended by vendors; Charlie met with and vetted at Pedernales and B.C. FMs.*
- Space Cow Bakery
- Lakeway Botanicals
- Oli Tea Company
- Freshly Made (Acai Bowls) – *highly recommended by vendors*
- Heavenly Angel Kisses (Candles)
- La Salumeria (1st market 5/25)
- Mazi Bakery (1st market 5/25)
- Golden Pineapple (1st market 5/25)
- Orobianco Creamery (can't commit due to lingering staffing issues)
- Hill Country Shaved Ice (desserts plus unannounced comfort foods)

Provisional Vendors (Produce; Applications not yet started and fees not yet paid):

- Better Days Gardens
- Hat & Heart Farm (came once on lowest attended market without canopies; not looking like they'll be back)

Market News:

April and early May have seen challenges, with Johnna out for family needs and her wrist injury, and Charlie out a week for vacation. Craig (city maintenance) kindly provided assistance for Johnna with setting up 5/11 market.

Incidents:

- 5/11: Light post damaged by Yallatizers vendor. Vendor was new and unaware she hit post, but accepted responsibility the next week. Pound House has not yet submitted repair invoice. Owner is out of country.
- 5/18: SoCo vendor showed up late and was rude to market managers and certain fellow vendors.
- 5/18: Wow Honey vendor verbally reprimanded twice during market; first for unsafe driving on grounds and later for loudly using foul language when complaining about SoCo vendor.

Customer Feedback:

- Vendors have reported that some regular customers still aren't aware of our move to the Pound House.
- Customers have repeatedly asked for more RTE (ready-to-eat) options.
- Nobody is complaining about parking or bathrooms!
- A few queries about hours and days of operation, with some requesting later hours and others asking why we don't run a Saturday market.

Vendor & Customer Attendance, Total Sales, and Avg Sales (data below):

After averaging more than 500 customers per market in March/April, we've dipped to counts ranging from 390-485 in May. This was roughly the average at the Triangle, but down +/- 30% from our opening month. Theories of contributing factors for decline:

- Weather – windy Wednesdays have prevented tent canopies at 5 of last 8 markets, driving down vendor energy and market's visual appeal. Canopy absence has also dissuaded some produce vendors from attending, as the sun damages products.
- Signage & Communications – still hearing that some customers don't know we moved or where we are.
- Lack of Produce – cyclical freezes in Feb/Mar crippled planting and the reverse into heat/drought have crippled growth.
- *Inflation and higher gas prices have put a strain on customer wallets.* Vendors have reported that customer attendance at other markets is also down, indicating that this is the main driver.

Social Media:

- Instagram followers up to 2,365 (+45 over last month).
- Facebook Likes up to 5,394

Newsletter:

1. Subscribers: 1,475 (+50)
2. Open Rate 53% (industry avg. 20%)
3. See fun response from reader we got below.

Newsletter Feedback:

Sent: Thursday, May 19, 2022 2:33 PM

To: Farmer Market <farmersmarket@cityofdrippingsprings.com>

Subject: Re: Snake, Rattle, and Stroll! Hot Salsas are Cooler than (Shaved) Ice.

I love your love for the rattlesnake! I moved to Texas 10 years ago. Three years ago i had the greatest serpent encounter I will probably ever have in my life. My girlfriends were in from Illinois for the week. We went to Driftwood Estates Winery. Just as I sat down by the overlook outdoors, a big beautiful rattlesnake came up the wall to observe. He was around 4 feet long. He had 7 segments and 9 black rings if I remember correctly. He watched me. I talked to him quietly. Wherever I went he went. It was the most amazing thing. I talked to him and told him he's probably not going to be very welcome at a winery. I crossed the wall that divided the sitting area nature. He followed. I walked down the way he followed. I set my wine glass down he came up to it. At no point did he move quickly and neither did I. It

lasted about an hour. Enough time to have my girlfriends finish their wine and be ready to leave. Needless to say I did not get any wine and really don't care because it was one of the greatest experiences of my life.

Thank you for sharing your story. It made my day.

-Michelle Rosen
Dripping Springs resident
Community volunteer

Grant Awarded

In response to a suggestion from Gouri, we submitted a grant request to TX Capital Farm Credit on 5/2. DSFM has been a recipient of this grant several times in the past. On 5/26 we were informed that we'd once again been chosen to receive \$1,000 and 200 market bags to give away.

Market Bag Sales

With very little promotion at market, we've sold 10 the last month for \$100. Overall sales are @ \$259. Customers have not shied at the price; we just haven't had the bandwidth to actively engage.

Merchandising at Other Markets

Johnna and I visited the Waco Downtown Farmers Market 5/23. They had two types of market bags selling for \$15 and \$30, in addition to a range of other merchandise (cups, t-shirts, etc).



Market Bucks and Vendor Payments:

Market Bucks Tracking						
Category	Event Details	Amount	Vendor	Recipient	Date Redeemed	Paid
CoC Welcome Bags		\$5.00	Solaro Estates		2021.10.06	y
Instagram Promo	Eatin' & Sippin' Locally	\$15.00	Momo's Michelada	Natali Oriole	2021.11.22	y
Instagram Promo	Eatin' & Sippin' Locally	\$10.00	Go2 Bites	Natali Oriole	2021.11.22	y
Instagram Promo	Eatin' & Sippin' Locally	\$15.00	Touta Biscotti	Natali Oriole	2021.11.22	y
Instagram Promo	Lindsay's Apothecary	\$10.00		creatiffly		
CoC Welcome Bags		\$5.00	Not returned	n/a	2022.01.05	n
Gift Certificate	Friends	\$25.00	Brenham Kitchens	n/a	2022.03.09	n
	Friends		Hello Bread		2022.03.09	n
CoC Welcome Bags		\$5.00	3D Fabrications	n/a	2022.05.04	y

DSFM Sales Data					
Market Date	4.20	4.27	5.04	5.11	5.18
Vendors	44	46	44	46	45
Vendors Reporting	41	45	n/a	n/a	45
Total Sales	19,092.00	23,722.00	0.00	0.00	18,017.00
Average per Vendor	465.66	527.16	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	400.38
Farmers	1,800.00	1,925.00			1,739.00
Ranchers	5,447.00	5,888.00			4,344.00
Crafts	1,594.00	2,335.00			948.00
Foods	9,271.00	12,774.00	0.00	0.00	10,236.00
Baker	1,860.00	1,976.00			2,136.00
Beverage	1,761.00	2,980.00			1,902.00
Value Add	4,670.00	7,018.00			5,448.00
Pet	980.00	800.00			750.00
Visitors	390	430	425	485	413
Sales per Capita	\$48.95	\$55.17	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$43.62
Temperature	85	80	92	92	98
Skies	Mostly Cloudy	Cloudy	Sunny	Sunny	Sunny
Humidity (low=1,med=2,high=3)	2	2	2	2	2
Winds (15 mph+)	25		20	14	15
Music	B.Slaughter	J.Kirk	B. Slaughter	A. Dormont	J. Rivers

Totals and Averages by Month (FY'22)								
	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May
# Markets	4	4 (3)	5 (4)	4 (3)	4 (3)	5 (4)	4	3 (1)
Vendors	165	134	183	154	113	220	182	135
Vendors Reporting	165	124	179	117	92	172	178	45
Total Sales	\$76,769	\$59,596	\$78,920	\$47,366	\$41,824	\$92,611	\$88,941	\$18,017
Avg. per Market	\$19,192	\$19,865	\$19,730	\$15,789	\$13,941	\$23,153	\$22,235	\$18,017
Average per Vendor	\$465.27	\$480.61	\$440.89	\$404.84	\$454.61	\$538.44	\$499.67	\$400.38
Customers	2250	1425	1750	1375	970	2257	1987	1323
Per Market	563	475	438	344	323	564	497	441
Sales per Customer	\$34.12	\$41.82	\$45.10	\$43.06	\$43.06	\$41.03	\$44.76	\$43.62