

Farmers Market Manager Report for 5/20/2021 Board Meeting

by Charles Reed

Vendor News:

New: Tejas Hemp, Mt. Hoppe Farms

Returning: BioSync Farm, Blanco Cowboy Kettle Corn, both last seen at DSFM in 2019.

Vendor Market Attendance:

Averaging 36-40; high 44 (pre-Mother's Day); low 34 (poor weather forecast 5/12).

Customer Attendance:

Clicker counts at the last three markets have ranged from 350-450, though this doesn't come close to representing total visitors, as many enter the market through gaps along Mercer St., with a few even coming in on the 290 side.

Market News:

Perhaps the biggest news is, of course, the news. The market was featured on three live segments and one taped segment by Fox7 Austin on Monday, May 10. After a series of recommendations and brief interviews, six vendors were selected for the event. Of those six, two later dropped out. One last-minute replacement totaled five vendors. The event was held outside the Ranch Park Office.

Vendors interviewed: Fran's Pies, Hamilton Pool Vineyards, Lua Brazil, Touta Biscotti, and EIEIO.

This event generated huge engagement. Customers drove two hours from Liberty Hill just to pick up a pie. After arriving early, they then waited an additional 2.5 hours. Many others arrived early because they misheard the market hours. * Several vendors reported sell-outs, with Fran's Pies running out of product within an hour of opening.

* *While Fox aired the correct hours several times, this is an ongoing issue with the DSFM listing on Google showing DS City Hall's open hours of 8-5. This causes 1-3 customers per market to show up at the Triangle before noon. Someday, Charlie will attempt to contact Google to have this listing updated.*

New Processes Introduced:

Charlie began sending a registration reminder to all vendors on Mondays. This e-mail reminds vendors to register and contains any news and relevant updates, including weather forecasts and their potential impact, as well as reminders about weights and parking. This email has immediately reduced late registration and fees, and has been positively received by vendors. After the first week, Brenda with Native Roots Salsa recommended a registration link as well, which is now standard.

New Market Layouts:

Beginning with the April 28 market, Charlie and Johnna began working with the dimensions of the market to create a more intimate environment and give shoppers a "fuller" impression and increase energy among vendors and shoppers alike. Customers and vendors have frequently remarked on how the atmosphere is improved.

Instagram Revived:

After a five-year hiatus, the DSFM Instagram account has been revived, and with Johnna Krantz driving its updating, it has seen a strong increase in engagement: 30% increase in followers (1,000 up to 1,350+ in two weeks); 400%-800% average increase in engagements; multiple shares by vendors, Fox7, and a local “influencer” who focuses on Austin-area markets. Instagram is relevant as a direct marketing and consumer engagement tool that has no cost.

Newsletter:

After a vendor remarked that she hadn’t received the newsletter, Charlie discovered that when people enroll via the web-site, they are not added to distribution lists and had previously not received the newsletter. He rectified, adding 100 more recipients. Charlie and Johnna are working on processes to start delivering the newsletter the day before the market, rather than day of, with the goal of having shoppers better able to plan. Currently, the vendor registration process is impacting this goal. This will be fixed when Charlie moves the registration cut-off to 12 p.m. beginning in June.

Newsletter Stats: +150 recipient adds April 7-May 12; Open Rate 33% (industry avg. 20%); Click Rate 13% (industry average 2.5%).