

Farmers Market Manager Report for 7/15/2021 Board Meeting by Charles Reed

Vendor News:

New: Jake & Jubi's, Bottles and Birds

Provisional: Southwest Farm; Bubb's Seltzer; Crescent City Flavors; Vista Brewing; RioGood Bread

Vendor Market Attendance:

June 9: 48 (record)

June 16: 45

June 23: 50 (record)

June 30: 44

July 7: 44

Customer Attendance and Sales:

- Clicker counts at all June markets exceeded 500, with a high of 650 at the 6/9 market.
- Sales for 6/16 market: \$15,000 (80% reporting); \$25 avg. per customer
- Sales for 6/23 market: \$10,200 (60%); \$20 avg. per customer

The sales reporting system is still being developed. DSFM has a goal of 100% reporting compliance beginning at the 7/7 market. The added responsibility of setting up and taking down the market, combined with exploration of data gathering methods, has prevented 100%.

There has been light pushback and questioning from vendors around sales data collection. I communicated our reasoning broadly, along with other issues, in an e-mail to all vendors 7/5 (at end of report).

New Market Layout:

On July 1, members of the FMB met at the Triangle to restore the market to a pre-pandemic, community-centered layout by returning picnic tables to the tree area, giving residents a place to enjoy the market, music, and each other's company. This alignment eliminated four booth spaces, giving the market a new capacity of 48 booths.

Market News:

1. We have a volunteer to help corral early customers and work the desk! Come on down and introduce yourself to Susan (when she returns from vacation).
2. So far we've only had one market take place during a heat advisory, which unfortunately resulted in one vendor having heat related health issues. We escorted him to the information desk and ensured he was able to lie down and cool down. The booth's owner came to break down the booth at close of market and the vendor was back the next week with vip and vinegar.
3. The American Farmland Trust yearly FM vote is back. We've broadcast across all platforms and will continuously feature in the newsletter through September. Starting at 7/7 market, Johnna and I will have a tablet at the info desk where customers can vote on the scene.

Social Media:

1. Instagram, which will have passed 1,600 followers by 7/7, is clearly our most effective way of engaging followers, with a 6-1 rate of engagement over Facebook. With increasingly limited availability, we're primarily focusing on Instagram.
2. Johnna is working with a Central Texas farmers market "Influencer" (@eatin_and_sippin_locally) to arrange a contest giveaway. Selected vendors have agreed to donate products to the giveaway basket.

Newsletter:

1. Open Rate 34-39% (industry avg. 20%); Click Rate 8-11% (industry average 2.5%).
2. Response from customers has been both frequent and positive.
3. After consulting with Lisa Sullivan (CODS Director of Communications), we removed the Mask advisory section from the 7/6 newsletter.
4. We used Constant Contact, our newsletter delivery platform, to update social media accounts with a link to the newsletter. These posts had very low engagements and resulted in no new subscriptions.

7/5 e-mail to Vendors:

Friends,

I apologize for the length of this email, but please read thoroughly.

First, I want to thank you – you all have clearly been saying good things about DSFM at other markets. Our vendor attendance has increased to 45+ for each market, and I'm fielding 10-20 inquiries from new vendors each week. You also bring a delightful mix of offerings, and as the pandemic winds down, the number of visitors has jumped from an average of 250 per market last year to well over 550 for each of the last five weeks.

As you know, while Johnna and I manage individual markets, a board determines broader aspects such as membership, marketing, and theme. We've been meeting with more frequency post-pandemic, which means we have some changes.

1. We're returning to the pre-pandemic market layout, which brings the picnic tables back under the trees. The market's goal is to have a community-centric environment, giving people the chance to meet, sit a while, and enjoy some of the products they buy. Unfortunately, this reduces the number of booths we can squeeze into the triangle and gives us a hard cap of 48 spots.
 - a. **What this means for you:**
 - Register early – there are caps on registration categories (farmer/rancher: 20; foods: 24; crafts: 4)
 - If you miss registration, *this doesn't mean there isn't room, just that the category is filled*. If other categories don't fill by registration cutoff, the spots will open up, so let me know you're interested.
 - As we have different vendors at each market, booth positions will change. I do my best to consider each vendor's needs, but the market's layout is what it is. It is not a good idea to grow accustomed to a "usual" spot. If you have regular customers who can't find you, they ask us at

the info desk and we point them in the right direction. If you have product that is impacted by heat and direct sunlight, I'll do my best to make accommodations. Beyond that, work with your market neighbors to provide shade for each other. You're veterans of the Texas heat and know more about how to deal with it than I do.

2. Sales totals – Johnna and I have been trying different methods to collect data for each market. So far we average about 60% collection. The board wants this at 100%. They say that under the market's previous manager, collection was 100% and not anonymous.
 - a. **What this means for you:**
Get us your numbers at the end of the market – they may be exact or your best estimate. I will have to hound with e-mails and calls if we don't get data.
 - b. **Why collect data?**
It helps us determine what is and isn't working at the market and how we can better apply marketing budget. Do sales go down in certain weather? Does the type of music impact the looseness of customer wallets? How much does Instagram impact sales? Does widening the lanes reduce sales? Etc...
 - c. **Are we tracking each vendor's sales?**
No. Johnna and I are both part-time. The less we have to think about, the better.
 - d. **Who will see the data?**
Only Johnna and I will see specific sales numbers; final collations will be shared monthly with the board and quarterly/annual reports will potentially be shared with city leaders.
 - e. **Will this drive up registration costs?**
The market is operated by the city for the community of Dripping Springs. You are part of that community. We want you to benefit, and no, we don't want to charge more. We just want our efforts to be more effective.
3. Final Set-Up time Before Market: On the market rules that everyone signed when applying, it says to arrive by 2:30 for set up. This will be changing this month to say "set-up will be final 15 minutes before market opening."
 - a. **Why?**
Johnna and I would like to do a live Instagram videos before each market. We want to have time to do inspections, hear vendor concerns, and, if needed, have time for quick pre-market meetings.
 - b. **What this means for you:**
Be set up by 2:45. I don't give fines for lateness. Failure to do be set up on-time will result in a rejected registration for the next week's market.

Now that we're through with all that, here's your link to register for Wednesday's market, which will be far more fun than this e-mail: <https://apm.activecommunities.com/dsrp/Home>

Thank you ALL, and as always, happy sales,

Charlie