



# Oregon Small Farms Technical Report

## Rapid Market Assessment: Portland Thursday Farmers' Market

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Portland Thursday Market  
July 31, 2003

**Market Name:** Portland Thursday Market  
**Date of Assessment:** July 31, 2003  
**Market Hours:** Thursday 4 PM -- 8 PM  
**Location:** Ecotrust Parking Lot (Pearl District)  
**Market staff:** Manager plus assistant manager  
**Began:** 2001  
**Vendors:** About 30 (agricultural and food)  
**Market attendance:** 1900  
**Team Members:** Larry Lev, Agricultural and Resource Economics, OSU  
Garry Stephenson, Benton County Extension, OSU  
Linda Brewer, AREc, OSU  
Daniel Barringer, Hillsboro FM  
Dawn Blankenship, Vancouver FM  
Suzanne Briggs, Oregon Farmers Market Association  
Ann Colonna, Food Innovation Center  
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Katrinka Hibler, Shelton, WA FM  
Chris Kells, Tillamook FM  
Melissa Layman, Vancouver FM  
Haixia Lin, OSU Graduate Student  
He Min, OSU Graduate Student  
Tim Nam, OSU Graduate Student  
Jan Piercy, Fox Island WA FM  
Scott Rice, Pike Place Market  
Janne Stark, Portland FM  
Tara Curb Stark, Portland FM  
Eric Wyncoop, Western Culinary Institute  
Nia Wellman, Squaxin Island Tribe  
Heidi Yorkshire, Portland FM

**Market Attendance (based on ten minute hourly samples):**

<b>4 PM to 5 PM:</b>	<b>462</b>
<b>5 PM to 6 PM:</b>	<b>564</b>
<b>6 PM to 7 PM:</b>	<b>480</b>
<b>7 PM to 8 PM:</b>	<b><u>408</u></b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1914</b>

**Comment:** The 2001 attendance estimate (using the same procedure) was **1578**.  
The 2002 “guesstimate” (no information on how derived) was **1700**.

2001 was a strange weather day with rain until shortly before the market started.  
2002 was the Thursday before Labor Day weekend and was viewed as a slow day.  
2003 was a normal weather day – hot (90 degrees) and sunny.

We did periodic counts during the course of the market on whether shoppers were entering or leaving as solo shoppers or in groups. Sixty-six percent entered or left singly, 32% in groups of 2 and 2% in larger groups. This gives an average group size of about 1.4. Note that individuals may enter or leave alone but attend the market in a group **so this estimate must be used very conservatively.**

**Dot Survey participation: around 600 respondents**

**Question 1. At which other Portland Metro markets have you shopped this summer? List all.**

<b>Market</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
None	127	24%
Portland Saturday	245	45%
Portland Wednesday	118	22%
Hollywood	48	9%
Beaverton	37	7%
Hillsdale	26	5%
Other	62	11%

Other markets receiving 15 or fewer mentions: Hillsboro, People’s, Eastbank, Vancouver, Tigard, Milwaukie, Gresham, Cedar Mills, Sauvie Island, Dundee

**Comment:** We didn’t keep track of the number of respondents for this open-ended question. The assumption for the table is that 540 people responded or 90% of the number who responded to the dot poster questions. *Nearly one-quarter indicated that they had not attended any other markets this year.* Forty-five percent had attended the Portland Saturday market and 22% had attended the Portland Wednesday market. On average, customers had attended about one other market. Note that we asked about other markets not the number of times visited.

**Time Comment:** Answers did not vary between the first and second halves of the market.

**Question 2: Where do you live?**

<b>Area</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Pearl District/Old Town (97209)	30%
Other PDX/Out of Area	19%
Near NE (97211, 97212, 97232)	14%
Near NW (97210)	12%
Near SE (97214, 97202)	10%
Near SW (97201, 97219, 97221)	9%
Near N (97217, 97227)	5%
Center	2%

**Comment:** We changed the question from the 2002 question (“What is your zip code?”) to avoid confusion between home and work zip codes. Because we have separated out those who in 2002 responded based on a Pearl District work zip code, the results may indicate even stronger growth in local patronage. The 2001 survey used the same question as 2003. Pearl District/Old Town comparison across the three years:

2001	23%
2002	26%
2003	30%

All three surveys demonstrate that the market draws from diverse areas.

**Time Comment:** While nearly 25% of the early respondents were in the Other PDX/Out of Area category, after 6 PM, this fell to 11% of the responses. The two areas that gained in percentage terms in the second half were Near NE (17% in second half versus 11% in the first half) and Near SE (13% in the second half versus 8% in the first half). The Pearl District percentage did not vary.

Question 3: Which site would you prefer for the Thursday evening market NEXT season: The current location (Ecotrust) or SW Salmon and Park (site of the Wednesday mid-day market)?

<b>Preferred Site</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly prefer Ecotrust	52%
Prefer Ecotrust	25%
Equal preference	8%
Prefer Wednesday Market Site	3%
Strongly Prefer Wednesday Market Site	4%
Don't Know	7%

**Comment:** Location questions are very difficult to interpret. This year 77% of the respondents preferred the Ecotrust site. In 2002 a similar question found that 90% preferred the then “current location” in the North Park Blocks and only 5% selected the Ecotrust site. Obviously the current site has an advantage with the shoppers who are there.

**Time comment:** No difference between the two halves of the market

Question 4 Will you be doing additional Pearl District shopping/eating on this trip? If yes, how much will you spend?

<b>Other Shopping/Eating</b>	<b>Amount</b>
NO	58%
\$5	8%
\$10	10%
\$20	11%
\$30	6%
\$40	3%
\$60 and above	3%

**Comment:** Most (58%) did not shop at neighboring stores/restaurants. Of those who did, 69% spent twenty dollars or less. The average amount spent across all shoppers was \$8.88. The 42% who spent something had average expenditure of \$21.13.

**Time comment:** The “No” responses were higher in the first half of the market (63%) than in the second half (52%).

## **Part 2: Team Member Comments/Suggestions/Questions**

The purpose of this section of the report is NOT to provide an overall grade to this market or rank it against any other market. Rather the team of outsiders used their “fresh eyes” to provide feedback about the individual market elements that they observed. They noted what they liked, what they thought could be changed or improved and questions that they had. The compiled report represents the views of many individuals. As a result, the report does not try to be consistent – the very same feature that some liked, others put on the “needs to be improved list”. The RMA process is about sharing – both the market being observed and the markets that sent the observers should gain new insights and ideas.

### **Market Site**

#### **What team members appreciated about the market site:**

- **Well-organized, professionally-managed market**
  - Given the customer count, the aisle space worked well. Many of the team members had questioned aisle space before the market opened)

- Customers have a chance to linger without being hurried.
  - Flow is clear and well directed with no apparent bottlenecks.
  - Tripping hazards have been dealt with effectively. *“Your power cord coverage is a great example for me – ours is covered but folks still trip on it! What you used (rubber mats) to cover your power cords is really effective and convenient”.*
  - Dog manners poster for the market is well done
  - Consistent signage for Portland Market is a plus. Signs are visible & clear.
  - Lots of convenient trash cans
  - Lots of great public seating with good chairs
  - Nice to put plant vendors on at the entrances. South entrance with Hogan & Sanderson Nursery is particularly well done
- Comments about the location
- Surrounded by buildings on four sides, the market becomes an urban oasis.
  - Having the streetcar stop right next is a big plus. It is not clear how many customers use the streetcar.
  - Paved surface is convenient for and used by those with wheelchairs & strollers
  - Brick wall provides a great wind break
  - A vendor commented that the space is easy for set up
  - Vendors are well trained to stay within the parameters of their space – this allows the market to work in tight quarters.
  - Great bike parking!

### **Suggestions and questions related to the market site:**

- Walls and plants hide the Market somewhat
- Minor liability concern –sign boards fall with wind gusts
- Lots of ‘excuse me’s’ early in market from crowding – this is not necessarily a bad thing; it makes the market seem energized.
- No cover is a problem early on a hot day (any way to get more shade?)
- Would hosing down the blacktop with water before the market opens provide some relief from the heat?
- Back sides of some booths in center row are unattractive for some vendors
- Music/chef demo create a bit of congestion in the center of the market
- Several customers commented that they would prefer a park location to the current parking lot location.
- More parking would give customers easier access.
- Aisles should be a little wider. Comment: Given the size of the area I’m not sure if this can be accomplished.
- After the recent accidents in Calif. & Florida, I would recommend barriers (i.e. tall cones) at the street level.
- Did music location block an entrance & prevent some passers-by from entering?
- Found an exposed electrical cord across one entrance. Putting down a mat & resetting the cones corrected this problem.
- PVC pipe extensions on legs of chef’s demonstration table could be used to raise it to a more appropriate height.

- Two signs on the corner of 9<sup>th</sup> and Johnson, none on the corner of 9<sup>th</sup> and Irving.
- Green colored signs can be hard to notice.
- Entrance & exit banners encroach too far into the walkway.

## **Vendors and Products**

### **What the team members appreciated about the vendors and products:**

- Many vendors had good signage in term of farm names, farm pictures, location, products, prices, organic certification & production practices
- A good variety of vendors for the size of the market. Vendors are well placed in the market.
- Most vendors were friendly, helpful & interactive; many provide fantastic customer service
- Wonderful product quality at most booths. The produce mix (sauces, pestos, produce, chocolates) is an adventure in discovering new things to try.
- Lots of vendors giving out samples. In the state of Washington, many vendors are intimidated by sampling rules.
- Great market for value-added fruit products & bakery items
- Good level of competition in many product categories such as tomatoes, berries, flowers, fruit
- Market is small enough that there are not long lines for purchases.
- Like plant display at South end – creates open space effect.
- Great produce vendors; appreciated Spring Hill display!
- Market Booth display clean & simple.
- Appreciate the ag/food product only Market Rule.
- Great to see frozen meats & fresh salmon in the market.
- Good use of different containers for product display – especially like the oval paperboard trays for beans used by one farmer.
- Some nice shade hangings on west side of booths (others are not so nice)

### **Suggestions and questions about vendors and products:**

- Not all vendors set up by 4 pm
- Need to be careful to ensure food safety/handling of temperature-sensitive foods
  - Rainbow Bakery product in sun with melted chocolate
  - Is the market monitoring temperature of frozen meats/dairy products? Fish, on ice (top of), but in direct sun
  - I was a little put off by Blue Ribbon Bakery having the perishable things out in the sun. I would have purchased something if I knew the ones out were “display only” and the “real thing was in a cooler on ice, but I am a fanatic about food safety.
- Repeated whiffs of decaying product at 4:15 (probably melons on this hot day)
- Food products on tables without sneeze guard

- There was one booth with no attendant when a customer wanted to purchase product. Later the same booth had someone sitting in the back reading paperback
- More prepared foods would be nice as this is around the dinner hour
- A few vendors do not have identifying signage. Some have poor display
- Some vendors need to pay attention to sign placement
- Plastic shopping bags/canvas bags may increase purchases
- Organic products could be more strongly promoted
- Lots of bakeries, but that's not a problem if they're getting business.
- Some vendors had difficulty loading in and out of the market.
- Many vendor canopies are not weighted and could blow over

### Market Atmosphere

#### **What team members appreciated about the market atmosphere:**

- Very pleasant atmosphere and kind people throughout the market.
- Center activity (music & demo) draws people into the market.
- Number and flow of people appears to pick up after 6 pm. Many people came here with their children in the second half of market. Earlier, older people came.
- Good Cajun accordion player – he did a great time entertaining the kids. Many parents and kids hung around. Music right volume & pleasant.
- How do you recruit musicians?
- Chef was well received. I enjoyed Janne “riding shot gun” with the chef adding pertinent comments about product availability, freezing tips, etc. I noticed that several of the customers stayed for quite awhile – over 1 hour.
- The children & pets were so well behaved. How does this happen in a crowd?
- Good age spread from young to old shoppers.
- Good response from management with lost child issue
- Good information booth
- Some shoppers seem of the neighborhood (relatively wealthy) – but most seem like typical Portlanders of average income and fairly low key.
- Lots of people seemed to be shopping alone. People (shoppers) seem to enjoy chatting with vendors. Shoppers recommending “good vendors” to friends.
- Intimate market; very pleasant urban setting
- Cozy but not crowded feel. I am amazed at the diversity of customers.
- Artists who use the market for their drawings are a nice touch.
- Fair number of groups of friends sitting & chatting.
- Great “Welcome” sign to co-promote 3 Portland Markets.
- Much nicer after sun dropped below buildings, people more likely to linger.
- Sophisticated shoppers.
- Nice to have community group visible.
- Market seems reasonable & relaxed given asphalt location.
- Restaurant/dining area is nearby
- Dogs at market, but not as many as at many weekend markets

Suggestions and questions related to market atmosphere:

- Not a market where you can spend a lot of time, not enough eating establishments or places to sit/park.
- People talking on cell phones — should be cell free zone
- Educational table didn't seem to get a strong stopper
- Market is a bit slow but we NW's tend to hole up & lay low in the heat.
- Music is a bit lost at edge of market. It needs to compete with traffic noise, doesn't carry well and seems hidden. Could it be up on the patio by the building?
- Seem to be higher – income shoppers – good for vendors; may be alienating to lower income shoppers.
- Chef stand good idea but space is not utilized for most of the market. Comment: I was informed that most weeks this space is used for food tastings in addition to the Chef demo.
- Shaded side busier than sunny throughout first half of the market
- I think all of us running around with clip boards puzzled the vendors. Did they know what was going on and how it would benefit them in the long run? – OSU should pass out an explanatory sheet to vendors.