



Oregon Small Farms Technical Report

Hood River Saturday Market Rapid Market Assessment

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Oregon Small Farms
Technical Report
Number 8

October 2001

Oregon State University
Extension Service

Oregon State UNIVERSITY **OSU** Extension Service

**Hood River Saturday Market
Rapid Market Assessment
August 18, 2001**

Market Name	Hood River Saturday Market
Assessment Date	August 18, 2001
Market Hours	9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Location	Large public parking lot near downtown
Market Staff	Manager plus assistant
Began	1991
Fees	Flat fee per space (\$12 for agricultural and \$15 for craft)
Vendors	50 total (9 ag, 5 food, 5 processed/bakery and 31 crafts)
Team Members	Larry Lev, Agricultural and Resource Economics, OSU Jeff Ball, Portland, Oregon Laura Barton, Oregon Department of Agriculture Diana Franklin, Hillsboro Farmers' Market Corinne Hickey, Lake Oswego Farmers' Market Kirsten Saylor, Department of Anthropology, OSU

Part 1: Consumer Information

Estimated total attendance: 1650 (last hour estimated rather than counted)

9:00 – 10:00	210
10:00- 11:00	360
11:00 – 12:00	396
12:00 - 1:00	402
1:00 - 2:00	186
Final hour estimate	96
 Grand Total	 1650

***Comment:** Based on our counts for the first five hours, 75% entered from the east end and 25% entered from the west end.*

Question 1: Where do you live?

Mid-Columbia	53%
Portland	12%
Other	35%

Comment: Tourists comprise 47% of this market's shoppers. Early birds, those who arrived during the first half of the market, were less likely to be tourists (43%) than those who arrived later (50%).

Question 2: Why did you come to the market today: for the crafts, for the agricultural products or for some mixture?

Crafts only	3%
Mostly for crafts	9%
Mixture of ag. and crafts	57%
Mostly for agricultural products	26%
Agricultural products	6%

Comment: This market is clearly viewed as a mixed market by the majority of those who shop here. Of the early birds, 36% chose one of the two agricultural categories. Only 27% of the later arriving customers put themselves in one of the agricultural categories.

Question 3: What market advertising, if any, influences your attendance at this market?

Newspaper	7%
Radio	3%
Brochures/Gorge Guide	8%
All, or 2 of 3	4%
None of them	79%

Comment: The Gorge Guide was added to the "brochures" category in mid-market. In addition to the Gorge Guide, respondents also mentioned the Saturday Market signs. Results were similar across time periods. It is difficult to make market advertising decisions based on these results.

Question 4: How much did you spend in the market?

Average = \$17.03 per "shopping group"

Comment: Note that spending is calculated by shopping group (adults who spend from one "wallet") and not by individual shopper. **Thirteen percent of shoppers reported spending nothing.** This would be unusual for a farmers' market, but not for a craft market. Also typical for a craft market, big spenders pulled up the average: 6% of the spenders represented 29% of the spending. Shoppers who indicated they had spent more than \$80, were considered to have spent \$100. This may be an under-estimate. Spending patterns varied by time period. For the early group, average spending was \$14.41 and 8% reported no spending. For

the later group, average spending was \$19.14 and 17% reported no spending. This reflects the greater influence of crafts on spending later in the market.

Total market sales can be estimated as follows:
(1650 people/2 per spending group) * 17.03= \$14, 049

Comment: *This estimate is more likely to be low than high because the size of the spending group is likely to be less than 2. Using 1.8 instead of 2.0 increases the estimate for market spending to \$15,611.*

Part 2: RMA 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 RMA process is about sharing – both the market being observed and the markets that sent the observers should gain new insights and ideas.

Physical Site

What team members appreciated about the physical site:

- A wonderful site -- beautiful setting, spacious, excellent parking, convenient, tidy. It will be even nicer as trees grow.
- The market is well laid out -- good flow from parking lot and other entrances and good flow within the marketplace.
- Clean, smooth, pathway, between vendor rows (very wheelchair accessible and also room enough for the bikes & strollers going through)
- **All** booths have weights to hold canopies down during gusts of wind. The vendors could provide training on wind strategies to vendors elsewhere in the state.

Comments, suggestions, or questions about the physical site:

- Try to obtain some permanent storage and make improvements accordingly.
- No seating for people eating items from hot food vendors or listening to music (people forced to use curbs, stairs & ground)
- Could the consignment booth also serve as an information booth?
- It would be useful if the manager wore a distinctive hat or vest so it would be easier to spot her in the market.
- Saturday Market signs at various curbsides are small & hard to see (although many customers told us they did direct them to the market). Perhaps they could be brighter in color to draw the eye more effectively.

- Street signs or other attention getting devices could be more evident on street above market site. A permanent street banner and signage visible from I-84 would also be very useful in attracting additional tourists to the market.
- Suggestion: Do you have an aerial photograph? Might want to use this for advertising/marketing – to show people just how big, and well located you are!
- A bike rack closer to the market would be useful.
- Landscaping of hillside would be nice.
- Have market trash cans (in addition to vendor trash cans)
- Try to eliminate truck & trailer parked across 6 parking spaces (city truck, vendor?)
- A slight feeling of remoteness for the NW corner of the market
- Watermelon spitting board (a contest) needs to be in center of the market.

Vendors and Products

What team members appreciated about the vendors and products

- Overall, the market is very inviting (some attractive displays; some good signage) and seems to be a community staple.
- Overall, product quality is very good (the crafts that weren't high quality didn't seem to be selling -- a self-culling effect).
- The DOT results seem to indicate strong support for the current mix of vendors.
- Most vendors greeted customers and were friendly: 'Can I help you with anything today?' 'I do custom orders.'
- Crafts work if you watch the mix, and if you mix them among produce & food vendors (see below as the team debated this issue!)
- Master Gardener booth attracts lots of questions
- Consignment booth is great! Place to sit, place to mentor new growers.
- Kettle corn really seems to be a draw.
- Those roasted peppers smell too good to be true!

Comments, suggestions and questions about vendors and products:

- Additional produce vendors and more diversity in offerings (fresh fish, goat cheese, honey, top of the line vegetables) would complement the overall appeal & draw to the market (but must remember how limited the local market is).
- Grouping produce (and prepared food) might create a sense of togetherness & belonging. Would this help or hurt the market as a whole?
- Can additional Fruit Loop farms be convinced to join the market? Elsewhere this has worked by encouraging vendors to cross-market their farm stands. Challenge here is that Saturday is their busiest day at the stand so they may not feel that the benefits of the market justify the effort.
- Produce displayed rather simply (just boxes), not as appetizing, as at some markets. Signage could also be improved. Produce on the ground should go

up on tables especially boxes right in front of tables makes for awkward reaching over the table.

- Produce on west side pretty grim – no signage, fruit boxes and sitting hot in the sun. Who are they? What do they practice?
- More aggressive sampling would help sell produce.
- Several people were looking for a specific vendor they'd done business with in the past and were disappointed they weren't here today (this is a dilemma for the craft vendors)
- More cold drinks
- What is vision for market? Help people be in crafts/ag production? Celebrate Hood River County & environment?
- Pottery vendor next to us says that although she doesn't do any big business until 11 am but she accepts earlier start time. Another said, people buy either agricultural products or crafts but seldom both.
- Massage and pet hair picker up across from each other gives feel of county/state fair.
- Is more consumer education needed on when fruit will be available and what to do with different varieties? At least one vendor is doing a bit with this.
- Fair amount of similar style jewelry.
- Would be nice to have a central information table for the manager.
- A number of crafts vendors were very slow at interacting with customers, with little interest in their product – why do they bother coming to market?
- Prepackage food products (at least two vendors) in sun throughout market. Concern for food safety.

Market Atmosphere

What team members most appreciated about the market atmosphere:

- You have a nice market. I wouldn't do anything but a few tweaks to it; don't change anything that would shift it from being the community asset that it has become.
- Hood River strikes me as eclectic – people here because they want to: grown up here, for the nature, to visit. It seems to me Hood River FM is best off being a representation of the county: and thus to celebrate everybody here.
- Really liked having the music -- when it was over the market seemed quiet. Some customers indicated that music was a draw. Music could be heard throughout market without being too loud close up;
- The continuity of canopies brought atmosphere together.
- Good steady flow of people after 10 am.
- Cheerful, happy attitude of shoppers & most vendors, no feel of stress of having to elbow way through the crowds. Locals came to see their friends. All age groups present in market. Seemed to be good mix of all ages, mostly Anglo, very family oriented with kids.
- Some people hang out at the market – both tourists and locals are comfortable.
- Sign in the restroom promoting next event a nice touch

- Activity posters around the market seemed well read by attendees.
- Prepared foods popular with vendors (many people eating while working the market)
- Sandwich board signs interest customers (but they could be a bit brighter)

Comments, suggestions, and questions about the market atmosphere:

- How about a 'café' section with tables & chairs – near the music and shaded by a tent? As is, people sat on the concrete to eat or listen to music.
- Make information more central & visible.
- Too many dogs for my comfort, but didn't see any dog/people or dog/dog conflicts.

Discussion Questions

- What would be the advantages and disadvantages of reorganizing the Hood River market so that all of the agricultural producers are grouped in one section, all the prepared food vendors in another section and all the craft vendors in a third section?
- What advantages would seating near the music and prepared food provide to the market. Is on-site storage one requirement for making this feasible?
- Can additional Fruit Loop farms be convinced to join the market? What is in it for them? How about other agricultural vendors – is the customer base really there to justify bringing more vendors in?
- How can the market encourage improved vendor display and signage?
- What can be done to improve links with tourism? Is cross-marketing possible (such as signs at Multnomah Falls and other attractions)?
- Attracting volunteers -- any further ideas for making this work in a community such as Hood River?