



Oregon Small Farms Technical Report

Portland Thursday Farmers' Market CCO Rapid Market Assessment

By Larry Lev and Garry Stephenson

Oregon Small Farms
Technical Report
Number 9

August 2001

Oregon State University
Extension Service

**Portland Thursday Farmers' Market CCO
Rapid Market Assessment
August 23, 2001**

Market Name	Portland Thursday Market
Assessment Date	August 23, 2001
Market Hours	4:00 to 8:00 PM
Location	North Park Blocks at NW Flanders
Market Staff	Manager plus 2 assistants
Began	2001
Fees	Flat fee, \$30 per space
Vendors	23 in total (17 agricultural, 6 food)
Estimated Market Sales	\$8800
Team Members	Larry Lev, Agricultural and Resource Economics, OSU Garry Stephenson, Benton County Extension, OSU Rebecca Landis, Corvallis-Albany Farmers' Markets Beth Wilbur, Forest Grove Farmers' Market Chris Peterson, Corvallis Erica Frenay, Friends of Zenger Farm Vance Corum, Northwest Direct Project

Part 1: Consumer Information

Estimated Total Attendance: 1578

Comment: This is a lower-limit estimate because there were people not accounted for in the market before the 4:00 PM opening.

Question 1: Of the 8 Thursday markets, how many have you attended?

1 (this one)	32%
2	13%
3	11%
4	15%
5	9%
6	7%
7	4%
8	8%

Comment: *Thirty-two percent of the respondents were there for the first time. Twenty-eight percent had attended five or more markets.*

Question 2: Where do you live?

Pearl District	18%
Old Town/River District	5%
Central Downtown	5%
NE Portland	14%
NW Portland	24%
Suburbs/Other	16%
Portland	
Other	18%

Comment: *There was a bit of confusion between “Suburbs/Other Portland” and “Other” so a few in SE or SW ended up in “Other”. This market is not only drawing from the neighborhood.*

Question 3: Which change if any would most increase your attendance at this market?

Earlier hours	5%
Different day	2%
More agricultural vendors	10%
More food vendors	15%
Off-street parking	3%
Safer area	1%
OK as is	63%

Others suggestions we recorded were:

- Longer season
- More organic
- Restrooms
- Coffee
- Babysitting
- Publicity

Comment: *Market patrons seemed fairly satisfied. The highest vote total other than “OK” was for more food vendors. Without pizza, prepared foods were in short supply. It would be nice, of course, to know the thoughts of potential patrons who did not come.*

Question 4: Have you also shopped at other farmers' markets this summer? If yes, which one most often?

No	33%
Portland Wednesday	10%
Portland Saturday	31%
Portland Wed & Sat*	2%
Hollywood	8%
Other	16%

*People who placed their dot on the line between the two categories

***Comment:** Patrons to this market also support for the other two Portland Farmers' Markets. Respondents include a marked number of people who have not attended any other markets this year. It would be interesting to know more about the demographics of this group.*

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:

- Site is beautiful – trees – sidewalks
- Convenient location with good access from all sides
- Good flow pattern with little crowding (partly because of relatively small size of crowd)
- Anchor arrangement is good.
- Lots of places to sit down -- Park benches add free seating (& people seem to prefer them to the resin chairs, at least early in the market)
- Lots of people walk to the market and some bike
- Information booth was staffed (most of the time) & ready to answer questions
- Manager did a great job in re-organizing the market on the fly (when vendors didn't show up).

Comments, suggestions, or questions about the physical site:

- Long stretches w/o vendors in the seating area don't promote flow between the pods.
- Arrangement of vendors on north side of market was a little strange – big open space by basketball hoop. Is there normally a vendor here? Could vendor placement be reconfigured to create more distinct aisles to direct the flow? North pod was strengthened when Alsea Acres cheese moved a bit.
- Can't figure out flow – seems like its split into 2 sections with music in the middle
- Can customers use the restrooms that are available to vendors? If not this is a major weakness.
- At least one vendor set up well after opening.
- Is parking an issue? All spaces surrounding market were full. (*Note: This certainly wasn't a priority based on survey responses.*)
- Some “alleys” could be a problem w/ larger crowd.
- No vendors are weighting their tents (possible liability issue)

Vendors and Products

What team members appreciated about the vendors and products:

- Nice balance of organic/conventional produce, flowers, baked goods, value-added products, plants.
- Baked goods & other prepared foods have a sophisticated urban look – (but perhaps too many for the size of the market.)
- Most vendors had very attractive, colorful displays.
- Chanterelle mushrooms in August – there is reason enough to come here!
- Pick 6 berry boxes @ Lupold is a great idea.
- Tamales are great addition.
- Lobster mushrooms & multi pepper items are impressive.
- Vendors set up in circle, angles – makes for an interesting configuration.
- Some vendors have been here since beginning and it has gone well for them.
- 100% offload market provides a neater appearance than markets that permit selling from trucks.
- Importance of signs in drawing customers & making them feel comfortable
- Prices are higher than mid valley (but so are vendor costs).
- Fewer kids than at weekend markets

Comments, questions or suggestions about the vendors and products:

- Additional vendors would add to the market (lamb, West Union Gardens, Greenfields)
- Recruit more organic vendors
- Poor or no signs for some vendors.
- Where is operator of booth with impatiens?
- Dahlia booth unlabeled
- Mushrooms from Montana? (but I bought than anyway)
- Signage for market is not great, but the location is so prominent that it probably doesn't matter.

- One customer indicated that he'd heard from several people they would like a larger market – they go to Sat. market instead of this one because it's got more selection
- Not all items were priced
- Somewhat limited on vegetables and fruits
- Berry flats on ground with no empty below (probably happening in all markets)

Market Atmosphere

What team members appreciated about the market atmosphere:

- This market has made a good start and is bringing in new people who don't attend other markets. You have all the elements needed (except the staff time, of course)
- Potential to advertise "Go to Thursday to avoid the crowds" – smaller crowd than either Wednesday or Saturday.
- Involvement of community gives the market a neighborhood feel.
- This market demonstrates that evening markets don't have to be in restaurant areas.
- Good music & "the best happy hour in town"
- Trees superb, mellow w/ grass seating.
- Park benches are great
- Urban surroundings are good (except INS parking lot)
- Marimba music is a mood enhancer (but doesn't foster conversation so it's hard to tell how many people would be chatting normally in this setting)
- Musicians are unusually long-playing for marimba groups
- Large seating area & the live music encourage people to linger a bit
- Flowers on tables are a particularly nice touch
- Many customers (5-10) stopped me specifically to tell me they loved the market & want it to keep going. There was some disappointment that this was the last night! Many people are passionate about this market because of convenience (time, proximity to work/home). Definitely want it to return.
- Good customer mix – not so much racially as income - & age-wise – typical of this area I guess
- Late crowd are gallery people – all couples
- I liked that the educational booths represented projects that are particularly relevant to residents of the area around the market
- I saw dozens of people either laughing or just looking around & smiling (including myself!) surely a good sign
- Lots of bicyclists!
- People very eager to provide their input
- Activity for children – part of community organization they portrayed together, younger crowd now; people more than willing to help w/pots;
- Steady flow – not crowded – but a good flow; people planning meals & bringing lists

- People taking their time walking through – the pace gets slower as the evening moves along;
- Volunteers help with set up for cooking.
- Leashed dogs seemed to bring smiles and conversations
- Loved the multi-level park! Piece of rural in the city

Comments, suggestions and questions about the market atmosphere

- Not many WIC/SN coupon users.
- People eat on the go – not many sitting to stay for dinner
- Historical video was a distraction – while music was on couldn't hear it – when music was off it was too loud
- Need more advertising – many people discovered it passing by (thanks to music)

Discussion Issues

- What constitutes success for this market?
- What can/should markets do about encouraging vendors to improve signage & display?
- What can the market do to further encourage neighborhood support for the market?