



# Oregon Small Farms Technical Report

## Corvallis Wednesday Market Rapid Market Assessment

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**Corvallis Wednesday Market  
Rapid Market Assessment  
July 17, 2002**

**Market Name:** *Corvallis Wednesday Market*  
**Date of Assessment:** July 17, 2002  
**Market Hours:** Wednesday 8 AM until 1:00 PM  
**Location:** Benton County Fairgrounds (3 miles from downtown Corvallis)  
**Market staff:** Manager  
**Began:** 1981  
**Fees:** Basic is \$10, there are early and late season discounts  
**Vendors:** 45 (agricultural and food)  
**Market sales** \$14,000 (approximate sales for this day)  
**Market attendance** 1500  
**Team members:** Larry Lev, Agricultural and Resource Economics, OSU  
Garry Stephenson, Benton County Extension, OSU  
Linda Brewer, AREc, OSU  
Noa O'Hare, Lane Co. FM  
Val Blaha, Forest Grove FM  
Chris Kell, Tillamook FM  
Barbara Slocum, Silverton FM  
Sheila Rosborough, Silverton FM  
Michael Fery, OSU, Crop and Soil Science  
Pete Gonzales, Oregon Tilth  
Dan Rosato, Salem Saturday Market  
Judi Thompson, Douglas Co. FM  
Jon Riggs, Douglas Co. FM  
Sandra Beck, Douglas Co. FM  
Roger Bairstow, OSU Yamhill County Extension  
Christine Coles, Coos Bay DTA  
Robin McNeeley, Canby Growers' Market  
Hattie Mittleman, Hillsdale FM  
David Rung, OSU Yamhill Co. Extension Intern  
Betty Shelly, Hillsdale FM  
Sharon Thornberry, OR Food Bank  
Dianna Smith, OSU  
Miltaud Wear, St. Helen's OR FM  
Carol Finch, Douglas Co. FM  
Diane Ashton, Douglas Co. FM  
Suzanne Briggs, Hollywood FM  
Chip Bubl, OSU Columbia County Extension

This Rapid Market Assessment (RMA) was combined with a Farmers' Market Managers training in RMA techniques. Twenty-four people participated in the training, including 16 people directly associated with markets, 3 Extension faculty, 3 OSU students, and one representative each from the Oregon Food Bank and Oregon Tilth.

### **Part 1: Consumer Information**

#### **Market Attendance: 1500 adults.**

This is the same attendance as for a similar week in 2001. In 1998 the attendance figure for a similar week was 1400 adults.

#### **Dot Poster Data Summaries**

**Question 1:** This summer, what will be your primary source of purchased locally-produced agricultural products?

This market	56%
Corvallis Saturday	16%
Richey's Supermarket	10%
This market and Corvallis Saturday	5%
Farm Stand/CSA	4%
Other	4%
Albany	1%

**Question 2:** How much have you/will you spend in the market today?

The average per shopping group was \$18.52

Although there are many solo shoppers at this market, for consistency the estimate for total market sales is calculated by assuming that the average shopping group consists of 2 adults

$1500/2 = 750$  shopping groups

$750 * 18.52$  per shopping group = \$14,000 (estimated sales for the market)

**Comment:** *In July 1998, we asked this question at this market for 3 successive weeks. Average sales for those 3 weeks were \$16.56. Shoppers are spending about 12% more than they did in 1998.*

**Question 3:** How long have you shopped here?

First time today	8%
This year	4%
Last year	12%
Many years	76%

**Comment:** *This data was collected from the first half of market only. We have asked a related question at two previous markets. At the Ashland Market 60% were in the many years category and at the Hollywood Market 67% were in that category.*

**Question 4:** This year, have you encouraged anyone to shop at this farmers' market? If YES, what was your one main selling point?

No	19%
Yes	81%

**Of the "yes" responses, the one main selling point was:**

Products	61%
Atmosphere	6%
Products and Atmosphere equally	12%
Buy Local*	2%
Combination of all	1%

\*This category was added by shoppers.

**Comment:** *This question was asked to discover whether current customers are recruiting additional customers. Eighty-one percent said that they had. Recruitment activity is related to both of the open-ended questions. Because of its location and time, this market can be challenge for many Corvallis shoppers to fit into their schedules.*

**Open-Ended Questions**

As an experiment, two different open-ended questions (each for half the market) were offered to respondents. Shoppers were instructed to submit their own responses, or they could agree with prior responses by adding tick marks. They were urged to limit themselves to three responses. Initially, team members recorded the responses, but over the course of the morning, shopping groups began recording their own responses. The responses are listed in the order they appeared on the poster. Because different responses appeared at different times it is not possible to directly compare the popularity of the diverse responses that eventually appeared. Both of these open-ended questions should be viewed as exploratory and cannot be analyzed in the same fashion as the Dot Posters.

Early sampling period open-ended question and responses

<b>5. What suggestions do you have for attracting more customers to this market?</b>	
<b>Response</b>	<b>n</b>
Have enough cinnamon rolls	4
I like the market the way it is	25
Open later; close later	13
Open earlier	2
Direct traffic on 53 <sup>rd</sup> Street (regarding left turn onto the street)	9
Advertise on the fairground's marquee/ GT ads on Sunday	9
Seating area near music (gathering space with coffee)	4
Advertise beginning and ending dates in the Albany paper	1
Do outreach to churches	2
Announce what is in season so I can plan	3
Offer recipes	7
Use bigger signs, use more signs	3
Have the market all year	8
Don't have any road construction	1
Be open after work (e.g. 5:00 – 8:00 PM)	10
Have more ready to eat foods	3
Let people know about the variety of produce	1
Emphasize social aspects	1
Signs in Laundromats; ads on radio	3
Promote the e-mail list	4
Flyers on bulletin boards	1
Have children's activities	1
Prices for same product higher here	1
Have craft booths	2
Wineries	1
Have more samples	1

Late sampling period open-ended question and responses:

<b>6. How does shopping here compare to shopping at the grocery store?</b>	
<b>Response</b>	<b>n</b>
Prefer the quality of the produce	67
Can sample the produce	43
Support local farmers	73
See people (I know)	24
Don't feel rushed, and I'm outside	42
More relaxed, friendlier	43
Can bring dogs.	13
Similar to First Alternative Coop	3
Like freshness of products	59
Like the variety of products better	35
Organic	39
Booth space too expensive	1
Love the music	18
Shade and grassy area	34
Less waste, more efficient use of resources	30
It is very expensive	3
Supports the community	27
No comparison to shopping at the grocery store (positive toward market)	1

### **Changing Questions During the Market Day**

Two questions were asked during both the first half of the market and the second half of the market: *“How much have you/will you spend in the market today?”* and *“This summer, what will be your primary source of purchased locally-produced agricultural products?”* In both instances, the answers from the two sampling periods were virtually identical (for the spending question the average expenditure in the first half was \$18.53 and the average expenditure in the second half was \$18.51). This can be taken as an indication that with a large sample size, and for questions for which answers do not vary as a function of time, *it is feasible to change questions during the market day.*

### **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 RMA process is about sharing –

both the market being observed and the markets that sent the observers should gain new insights and ideas.

Three comments captured the overall RMA team member reaction to the Corvallis Wednesday market:

- ❖ Way too much fun!
- ❖ This site is wonderful!
- ❖ I'm jealous! (Referring to the market atmosphere)

## **Physical Site**

### ***Aspects that team members appreciated:***

- Trees, shade, and grass are a huge plus for vendors, produce, and customers
- Excellent access for farmers as they can park their vehicles right in behind their stands
- Good spacing between vendors and good visibility of all the stands

### ***Suggestions for changes or improvements:***

- Not enough trash cans
- Provide seating in the market, perhaps in the oak grove
- Music location did not draw shoppers into the market (note however that music is usually where the DOTs were set up)
- Place anchor vendors so as to draw shoppers into the market
- Have a market entrance on the south side
- If needed, consider increasing vendor sites by taking advantage of wide center aisle ("kiosks") and adding bulges and islets.
- Concerns about the suitability of site for people with disabilities (uneven surfaces etc.)

### ***Questions and comments:***

- Could/should the market provide carts or wagons? What size is optimal?
- Is it appropriate to have dogs are allowed in this market.
- Is the parking sufficient?
- Is there handicap parking?

## **Vendors and Products**

### ***Aspects that team members appreciated:***

- "Consigned by" signs at vendor stands are good.
- Food sampling met safe food handling standards.
- Meat and eggs are good examples of the market's increasing product line
  - can get almost everything for weekly meals.
- Nice mix of organic and conventional growers.
- Variations in display sophistication reflects market niches

- Customer service in general good (there were some exceptions)

***Suggestions for changes or improvements:***

- Many vendors need better signs (true of all markets)
- Would be nice if the market had cheese, wine, more pie, fresh pasta.
- Try to have a coffee vendor & more ready- to-eat food booths .
- Add a market manager's booth.

***Questions and comments:***

- Are there too many flowers in the market?
- What are the requirements for labeling and wrapping baked goods?
- What is the protocol for offering meat samples?
- Prices viewed as high by those from the southern part of the state
- Many vendors were employees and not knowledgeable about production details (true for many markets in this part of the state)
- Wide variation in berry price gave rise to some vendor grumbling (but may have been appreciated by customers).

**Atmosphere**

***Aspects that team members appreciated:***

- Market has an old-time feel; overall a happy social event
- This market is friendly to older, able-bodied shoppers (but not very good those who are not able-bodied)
- Good diversity of customers
- Low key, no-hurry market (no cell phones in evidence)
- The market is attractive enough that it could be a destination point for group outings (Corvallis groups or people from out of town).
- Kid-safe, kid-friendly; relaxed moms
- Works for this market to exclude crafts

***Suggestions for changes or improvements***

- Provide bus for seniors to get into market
- Absence of education in the market, e.g. OSU Extension Master Volunteer groups, Oregon Tilth – in the long run education can be critical for customer development
- Would be good to have activities for children (there are some on certain days).
- Consider offering recipes, product use information, chefs in the market
- On hot days having more beverages around might keep people in the market longer

***Questions and Comments***

- The market doesn't appear to attract customers from local ethnic groups and low-income workers? – May be lack of transportation and work conflicts.