



Berry Marketing Options

Diana Alfuth

Horticulture Educator

Pierce County UW-Extension

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**Grow it and
they will
come?**





Marketing: Make your Product Special

- **Branding – connecting you and your product**
- **Labeling – identify you and your product/production methods**
- **Niche/Unique (i.e., off season, etc.)**



Marketing: Make your Product Special

- Packaging/bundling
- Certified/Organic
- Promotional Activities



DIRECT MARKETING

From the producer directly
to the consumer

- * Best way to build a relationship between farmer and consumer
- * Best prices for farmer
- * More effort needed for marketing



Types of Direct Marketing

- Roadside produce stands
- Pick-your-own fruits and vegetables
- Farmers Markets
- Special Events
- Subscription Farming (CSA)
- On-farm Retail Shops
- Farmer to Farmer
- Catalog/Internet Sales



Types of Less Direct Marketing

- ✓ Marketing to Restaurant
- ✓ Marketing to Grocery Stores
- ✓ Marketing to Processors or Distributors
- ✓ Cooperatives



Farmers' Markets

Individual farmers have a stand, usually for a fee, with other farmers who sell a variety of products.

Customers enjoy shopping for local food





FARMERS' MARKETS

Advantages

- * Good place to get feet wet and learn direct marketing
- * Make contacts with customers and others
- * Learn what customer wants
- * See what the competition is doing
- * Easy to try out new products





FARMERS' MARKETS

Challenges

- *Plan Ahead – Not all markets have space available and paperwork must be done early
- *Many markets limit new vendors to products not already available
- *Time/availability – commitment to be there every week, even in bad weather
- *May not sell everything you bring
- *Price pressure from other vendors
- *Customers may be loyal to market not you
- *Maintain relationships with management and other vendors

Farmers Market

Questions:

- How long is your farmer's market season?
- How many markets do you want to attend per week?
- Is there one large metro market in your region?

Points to Consider:

- Many markets close at the end of October
- Late varieties may ripen just when you want to sell out
- Do you want to deal with summer apples
- Small scale value added production could be a good use for low grade fruit.
- How much should you invest vs. how much can you market
 - Refrigerated storage
 - Refrigerated truck
- Winter markets for storage apples and value added products



Roadside Stands/On-Farm Stores

Staffed store with posted
hours

Self-Serve stands



ON FARM SALES

Advantages

- *No travel for farmer
- *Strong relationship with consumer





ON FARM SALES

Challenges

- *Interruptions with visitors, especially after hours**
- *Opening up your private space**
- *Must be there at all times, or risk of theft from self-serve**
- *Must have a convenient/visible location**

On-farm sales

Questions:

- How long is your sales season?
- Do you want to deal with summer apples?
- How fast should production increase? Slow steady increase as you naturally build customer base or come on fast and advertise advertise advertise
- Just fruit or a three ring circus?
- Sales of apples, gift shop, treats
- Do I like managing people and crowds?
- Do I want a part time job creating a little supplemental income or business that will support one person or provide a place to raise and support a family?

Points to Consider:

- Customers like a big selection. More options, more sales of the basics.
- Summer apples have to be refrigerated. Displays should be refrigerated or turned fast,
- August humidity makes cold apples sweat. Bags break, dry brushers won't work, washers leave apples wet. Nothing shines.
- Agri entertainment
- Tours, wagon rides, events, petting zoo, picnic area, weddings and parties
- Retail food
- Should I buy or make value added products.



Customers come to farm and pick the product themselves

May also offer pre-picked at a higher price



U-Pick



Advantages

- *Less labor for farmer
- *No transportation for farmer
- *Good client/farmer connection
- *Customers can see first-hand where their food is coming from
- *Produce is in customer's hands as fresh as it gets, and at a lower price

U-Pick

Challenges

- *Need to be present when open, and deal with visitors who stop after hours
- *Need to have good parking, traffic flow, restroom facilities
- *Need staff to direct pickers to proper area, and must clearly mark picked areas
- *Customers will pick only the best, and may have to re-harvest
- *Must schedule your farm work (weeding, irrigation) around presence of customers





- Extremely sensitive to weather!
- Crop will **not** be harvested during 'bad' weather.
- Concern about the new Food Safety Modernization Act. How can you train customers to harvest in a safe manner?

Pick Your Own

Questions:

- How long is your sales season?
- Do you want a pedestrian orchard or risk customers climbing trees?

Points to Consider:

- Layout varieties by season
- Create lanes for cars or wagon rides
- Highest volume in mid season. More customers in warm weather, fewer in cold.

COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE (CSA)

“MEMBERS” pay up front to receive a “share” of your farm’s current production (usually weekly)

Some CSAs allow members to work on farm as partial payment for their shares

Can be single farm or multi-farm





CSA

ADVANTAGES

- *Farmer gets money up front
- *Farmer doesn't have to absorb entire cost of crop failure or weather event
- *Builds strong relationship with customer, especially if they come to farm
- *Customers eat what they get—encouraging healthy eating and trying of new things



CSAs

Disadvantages

- *More management than farmers markets
- *More involved accounting, especially if members contribute labor
- *Planning for entire season must be accurate
- *Must keep customers happy and create a good experience so they return.
- *Less flexibility to change
- *More labor to pack individual boxes and coordinate distribution

AGRITOURISM

Selling a product along with an
experience

Entertainment or educational





AGRITOURISM

Advantages

- *Extra income using your farm's atmosphere**
- *Can provide educational experience or remembrance**
- *Customers can see where food comes from and what it takes to produce it**





AGRITOURISM

Challenges

- *Usually need a variety of activities/attractions for all ages**
- *More rules/regulations – must be safe and enjoyable for customers**
- *Need a convenient location, with parking, restrooms, etc.**
- *Need strong understanding of marketing and promotion**
- *Visitors don't always stay where they should and may encroach on private space**

DIRECT SHIPPING

Includes catalog or internet
sales and shipping product
directly to consumer





DIRECT SHIPPING

Advantages

- *Time flexible
- *No face-to-face people skills needed

Challenges

- *Less farmer/customer connection
- *Requires catalog or up-to-date web site
- *Shipping challenges to work out
- *Postage/shipping increases cost
- *Produce is fragile and perishable

Intermediate Marketing

**Selling your product to someone
who re-sells it**

**Less of a connection between
farmer and consumer**

Less time with marketing

**Lower prices to consumer than
retail**



FOOD RETAILERS

Includes

Restaurants

Grocery Stores

Specialty Stores





Restaurants

Advantages

- *Chefs like to experiment with unique varieties
- *May list your farm name on menu resulting in more market exposure
- *Work with restaurant to plan volume needed





Restaurants

Challenges

- * Restaurants often don't have much storage space so require frequent, smaller deliveries
- * Need good communication
- * Restaurant trends change
- * Must be top quality





Grocery/Specialty Stores

Advantages

- *Can sell large quantity of product
- *Good brand exposure
- *Convenient access to your product by customers



Grocery/Specialty Stores

Challenges

- *Competitive pricing situation
- *May require extra labeling (PLU, nutrition, etc.)
- *Store managers need convenience;
- *Making connections and showing value can be challenging

How we pack our fruit for direct store delivery

10x 3lb poly in a returnable wooden case



35lb bulk stickered apples in wooden case



PLU: Product Look-Up Numbers

- Mostly four- digit numbers- used in supermarkets to identify individual fruits and vegetables at the check-out.
 - Major varieties will have a PLU
 - Minor varieties will need a retail PLU number
- Some four-digit PLUs are prefixed
 - 8 (8xxxx) which denotes genetically modified produce
 - 9 (9xxxx) which denotes organically grown produce.
 - Both numbers are prefixes to the standard four digit PLU numbers.
- Sources
 - International Federation for Produce Coding <http://plucodes.com/>
 - Produce Marketing Association <http://www.pma.com/>

INSTITUTIONAL FOOD SERVICE

**Larger organizations that
prepare food for their users**

Includes: Schools
Hospitals
Nursing Homes
Prisons





Institutional Food Service

Advantages

- *Possible contract for full season
- *Can sell large quantities to one location
- *Can focus on narrow range of products





Institutional Food Service

Challenges

- *Institution may not be willing to do cleaning/preparation**
- *Food budgets may result in lower price to farmer**
- *May have to work through multiple layers of management**

DISTRIBUTORS AND WHOLESALEERS

Buyers who re-sell your
produce as well as other
products





Distributors/Wholesalers

Advantages

- *Sell large quantities to one location**
- *Can concentrate on production rather than marketing**
- *Distributor can deal with seasonality by sourcing product from others when yours is not available**



Distributors/Wholesalers

Challenges

- *Less/no farmer-to-consumer connection**
- *Less brand identification**
- *Price must be competitive and will be lower than retail**

Wholesale to a packing house

Questions:

- Do I want to put all of my crop under the control of one packing house?

Points to consider:

- Packing house chooses varieties
- Volume of each variety
- Volume of early mid and late season varieties
- Labor needs to harvest a large wholesale crop
- Low margin and high volume but you only have to worry about growing and harvesting the apples

COLLABORATIVE MARKETING

Working with other growers to
market product

Includes

Cooperatives

Aggregation partnerships

Produce auctions

Growers associations





Collaborative Marketing

Advantages

- *Can accomplish more together than each grower could on their own**
- *Allows producers to focus on growing**
- *Can pool products to gain access to large-volume markets**



Collaborative Marketing

Challenges

- *Group decisions may override individual farmers
- *Time needed for organization, meetings, etc.
- *Turnover of farmers within





Extension Marketing Information Resources

<http://learningstore.uwex.edu/Direct-Marketing-C12.aspx>

#A3811-13 “Developing Your Farm’s Marketing Plan”

#A3602 “Direct Marketing of Farm Produce and Home Goods”

#A3811-18 “Market Research: Surveying Customers to Determine their Needs”

#A3811-1 “Strategies to Attract and Keep Customers”

#A3811-6 “To Your Customer’s Door: Direct Delivery”

**Don't Put all your
Berries
in One Basket!**

