



PARTNERS FOR PROFIT

THE FARMERS' MARKET NEWSLETTER FROM

HARRIS® SEEDS

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EDITORS NOTES

Mark Greene

With the market season winding down in parts of the country, we at Harris Seeds hope that you all had a successful market season. We would also like to pass along some updated features here at Partners for Profit. The Newsletter is now on our website at www.harriseseeds.com. Please pass along to your vendors that they can now access this feature as well as look at **back issues!** As we mentioned in our last issue, you can now have Partners for Profit emailed to you by informing us at growers@harriseseeds.com.

Along with this issue you will find a sign up sheet for our new 2006 catalogs. If you or your vendors would like copies of any of our catalogs, please return the sign up sheet to us here at Harris Seeds or email us your requests. **Many of our new varieties are up on the web also!**

Is there a topic you would like covered in an upcoming Issue? An idea or event you would like to share with other market managers? We welcome any of your ideas and suggestions; just email them to us at growers@harriseseeds.com and we may feature **you and your idea.**

Market Spotlight

Mark Greene



The North Market

Located at 59 Spruce St in Downtown Columbus, OH, the North Market has been home to local butchers, bakers, fishmongers, greengrocers and farmers since 1876. Over the years, their merchant offerings have expanded to include ethnic food specialties, gourmet groceries and unique gifts. The market hosts many events during the year including an Herb Festival, Farmer's Festival, and the upcoming Children's Halloween Party on Oct. 29th. With **one million customers** visiting the North Market annually, the North Market serves, as it always has, as a gathering place to shop, eat, mingle and people watch.

CREATE YOUR OWN EVENTS

Suzanne Mears

EATING CONTESTS

Eating contests have been part of recorded history since before the days of the Roman emperors, and they continue to attract crowds and draw comments today. Incorporate this **event-for-all-ages** into your Market calendar to increase Market customer traffic and involve Market vendors directly in your events.



Focus the contests on vegetables, fruits, meats, and baked goods sold at your Market. Hot dogs, watermelon, sweet corn, and pies are perennial favorites. Create new contests based on regional specialties or areas of interest. Consider selecting one food from each basic food group.

Feature separate contests by age category, gender, or occupation so your full range of customers can participate.

Ask the vendors to donate the items for the contest, and invite the vendors to announce the events (or EAT-HEATS) in which their items are featured.

Invite the vendors themselves to compete in their own special eating event.

This event can be held from the first ripe strawberries to the final pumpkin pie, and it can **directly increase Market traffic and sales dollars.**

(As with all Market events, review this activity with your Market insurance representative. Be sure to have participants sign a waiver of responsibility before the contest.)

IA CO-OP SIGNAGE PROGRAM

Barbara Lovitt

IA State Farmers' Market Representative

The Iowa Farmers' Market Signage Program is a joint investment by individual farmers' markets and the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation for the markets to purchase farmers' market signage. The Program is coordinated by IDALS, Bureau of Horticulture and Farmers' Markets.

The purpose of the Iowa Farmers' Market Signage Program is to:

Foster commitment and investment by the market for improvement.

Address signage needs of many markets.

Provide markets with partnership assistance to purchase one of the most effective and least expensive marketing tools they can use to promote the market.

2005 is the first year for this joint partnership. 26 markets have been awarded funds to help purchase market signage.

Go to www.agriculture.state.ia.us for more information.



TRADE SHOWS

Suzanne Mears

Please visit our Harris Seeds' booth and introduce yourself at these shows:

Great Lakes Fruit, Vegetable, and Farm Market Expo December 6-8, 2005, in Grand Rapids, MI. www.glexpo.com.

Great Plains Vegetable Conference January 13-14, 2006 in St. Joseph, MO. Contact Tom Fowler @ (816) 279-1691.

NAFDMA January 13 - 14, 2006 in Austin/San Antonio, TX. **Harris Seeds is sponsoring the award for Farmers Market Manager of the Year.** www.nafdma.com.

MOSES February 23 - 25, 2006 in LaCrosse, WI. www.mosesorganic.org

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PROBLEM SOLVERS' CORNER

Suzanne Mears

DETERMINING STALL FEES AND STALL LOCATION

In talking with the more than 1,400 Market Managers who receive Partners for Profit each quarter, we are often asked how other Markets set stall fees and how Market stall locations for the vendors are determined.

Most often, there's a flat fee per week or per season for the stall, and stall location is first-come, first choice. This solution eventually becomes unwieldy: vendors who attend every Market want preferred rental fees, and growers develop a preference for a specific location.

Solutions:

Stall fees established on a sliding scale, with sheltered locations or prime positions having a higher fee. Stall fees for growers who attend only part-season and for "box growers" are usually set at a higher rate.

Location determined by seniority, with vendors selecting their preferred stalls based on the number of years they've sold at the market.

Establishing a point system combining years of Market participation and Markets attended per year, plus a variable for sales dollars.

The November, 2004, issue of Growing for Market outlined a program used at the Fayetteville, AR, Farmers' Market that successfully combines these factors and that establishes the criteria based on goals the Market hopes to achieve.

MARKET TRENDS

Suzanne Mears

COMPANIONS AT THE MARKET

One of the most creative concepts I've seen at Market is "companion" products:

Ready-to-prepare medleys combined with a free recipe: green or red salsa, pasta sauce, pesto, mixed leafy greens garnished with edible flowers, gazpacho

Tomatoes, basil, onions for a simple side dish

Selection of complementary cheeses for a cheese board

Soaps, candles, lotions made from natural ingredients

Knitted items, skeins of wool, sheepskins, leather goods

Fresh vegetables and fruits with homemade sauces, oils, and vinegars

Berries and homemade biscuits for instant shortcakes

RESOURCE LINKS

Suzanne Mears

www.provenwinners.com Invaluable to bedding plant growers looking for creative ideas for baskets, containers, and combination plantings.

www.ascfg.org Here's a great resource for tips and ideas from the Association for Specialty Cut Flower Growers.

Farm-Fresh Recipes by Janet Majure - A cookbook created specifically for growers who provides recipes to their customers. The author has provided permission to reproduce the recipes. Contact Lynn Byczynski at Growing for Market, (785) 748-0605, or at www.growingformarket.com. With Lynn's permission, we've included a sample page with this issue.

FOR YOUR GROWERS

Mark Greene

HELPING CUSTOMERS GET THE MOST OUT OF THEIR FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

How many times have you had a customer ask if it is possible to only get a half bag of greens or smaller portions of items because they would not be able to eat it all before it spoiled? How many customers buy only three ears of corn from you instead of the six they would eat if it only kept its flavor? These problems can be easily avoided by helping your customers understand the best ways to store their fruits and vegetables once they get them home. By doing this your customers may buy more items from you to eat between market days. This information can easily be displayed with each item, or create you own handout for your customers. It also helps to explain to the customers that certain varieties store better than others, like storage onions versus table onions or that a sugary (SU) corn will not hold its flavor as long as a Shrunken (Sh2) variety will.

The Department of Pomology at the University of California has put together several low cost posters for growers to display with their fruits and vegetables explaining the best storage methods. The poster selections include: Storing for Better Taste, Longer Life, and Compatibility. These posters and many food storage tips can be found at http://postharvest.ucdavis.edu or call 530-752-6941 for more information.



FARMERS MARKET - CUSTOMER PROFILE

From IDALS "Fresh News" at www.agriculture.state.ia.us

- The average customer expects to shop at a farmers' market 13 times during the season.
Nearly 86% of customers purchase fruits or vegetables, 42% baked goods, 20% prepared or ready-to-eat food.
The average money spent by customers during a market visit was \$11-\$20.
The average distance a customer traveled to market was 8 miles.
The average age of a farmers' market customer is 51-65 years.

How can you use this information to help your Market grow?