



MINUTES
FFM Production Team
3:30 PM, Monday, September 21, 2009

Present: Sandy Brenneman (moderator), Lori Wellmon (team leader) Greg Traywick, Daniel Shires, Lara Worden, Cynthia Glidden, Ronnie Roper.

Agenda items were identified as follows:

- Status report on Community Table (consignments)
- Reports on visits to Davidson & Lincolnton markets
- Gearing up for extended market season (Saturdays through November)
- Developing a planned production strategy for the 2010 season
- Vendor meetings
- Satellite markets & additional hours

Community Table

The Community Table was utilized only once during the 4-week test period, despite being advertised to potential users by direct mail, word-of-mouth, and web site. All of the muscadine grapes consigned by grower Steve Norris sold, however.

- *The **Steering Committee** should investigate why the Community Table was not better utilized.*
- *The Production Team recommends keeping the Community Table available as an alternative sales option for the remainder of the 2009 season and through 2010.*

Visits to Davidson & Lincolnton Farmers' Markets

Lori Wellmon and Lara Worden shared a wealth of knowledge resulting from their recent visits to these markets and their resulting discussions with vendors and market managers.

*The following items were identified for consideration by the **FFM Steering Committee and the Organization & Promotion Teams** as they develop strategic plans, operational guidelines, bylaws, grant requests, promotional strategies, etc.*

Participating vendors should be allowed the opportunity to voice their opinions regarding these issues before they are adopted

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- *Establish a "Growing Kids" program that allows youth to sell items they have grown at the Market at no cost.*
- *Develop and promote opportunities for a limited number of non-profit community tables.*
- *Establish a committee structure or other process to coordinate and advertise special attractions for the market, including chef/volunteer cooking demonstrations, live music, etc. Explore options for compensating these supporters (honorariums, tip buckets, etc.).*
- *Explore opportunities for special Holiday Markets prior to Thanksgiving and Christmas. These markets could potentially attract a greater number of artists & craftspeople, in addition to traditional vendors.*
- *Establish a membership plan in which certified vendors pay seasonal dues (could be tiered/graduated based on frequency/duration of sales) in addition to daily space fee.*

- *Establish criteria for accepting new vendors. The Davidson Market, e.g., will only accept a new vendor if they can deliver a totally new & different product to the marketplace.*
- *Consider assigning spaces based on vendor needs for electrical access and allowing seasoned/dedicated vendors the opportunity to select a desired location.*
- *Showcase vendors on the web site, providing them an opportunity to promote their products & services, provide recipes, etc.*
- *Implement strategies for conducting a daily customer head count and for collecting sales figures from vendors.*

Gearing up for extended market season (Saturdays through November)

Several existing vendors are in a good position to continue to supply FFM with a good selection of vegetables, meats, and value-added food items.

We recommend that the **Promotion Team** consider the following:

- *Securing commitments from existing vendors to continue to support the market during its extended season.*
- *Advertising the extended season to other potential vendors, including artists & crafters.*
- *Make agriculturally-based holiday décor items available at the market (pumpkins, ornamental gourds, corn, straw bales, wreaths, etc.).*
- *Plan and promote a special “Holiday Gift Market” near the Thanksgiving Holiday. Include vendors who might provide handmade items suitable for gift-giving.*

Developing a planned production strategy for the 2010 season / Vendor meetings

The Production Team identified the need to engage vendors in two (2) face-to-face meetings as outlined below. The Production Team will plan and conduct these meetings:

- **Early November – Vendor Needs Assessment / Feedback Session**
 1. **Organization Team** to present working drafts of bylaws and operational guidelines for vendor review and feedback.
 2. **Steering Committee** to present results of revised customer survey (including request for new products, etc.)
 3. Identify vendor-specific and/or market equipment, supply, training, or other needs to be incorporated into GoldenLeaf or other grant requests.
- **January – Production Planning**
 1. Encourage vendors to share production plans for 2010 and engage them in discussion aimed at reducing oversupply and gaining commitments for the production of new commodities (based on customer survey data and collective knowledge/experience).
 2. Establish a vendor-friendly system for informing market management about when various commodities will be available for sale (to assist in web site maintenance, e-newsletter development, media efforts, special events, and other customer relations/promotional efforts).

Satellite markets & additional hours

This agenda item was tabled. We are lacking information and feedback from Cleveland County Health Department on the status of their 2009 market and the plans for next season.