Creating a Culture of Data Collection and Use for Ohio Farmers Markets

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OEFFA Conference
Project Overview

- Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of Ohio Farmers Markets work in data collection
- Train managers and extension educators on the suite of available tools and appropriate methodologies
- Create a culture of shared data collection and use to increase farmers markets sustainability and success.
Project Overview

Oct. 1, 2020 – Sept. 30, 2022
PI – Eric Barrett
Co-PI – Christie Welch
Funder North Central SARE
Collaborators – Farmers Market Coalition
https://farmersmarketcoalition.org/
Ohio Farmers Market Network
https://ohiofarmersmarketnetwork.org/
Project Activities to Date

- Created a database of Ohio farmers markets and if/how they collect data
- Visited farmers markets throughout Ohio to learn how they collect data
- Provided training to OSU Extension Educators on tools to assist farmers markets with data collection
Project Activities – In Process

1. Create a database of the data-collection projects among Ohio markets and vendors
2. A "train the trainer" training on market data collection needs and processes
3. Conduct case studies of Ohio direct marketers that sell at one or more Ohio farmers markets to learn how they use data for business decision making.
Culture of Data Collection at Markets

Since 2013: Evaluation resources, one on one and network support, software development, and analysis

CFAES
Culture of Data Collection

Findlay Market
National Farmers Market Week

100% of your food dollars

vs.

Traditional Retailers

85¢ goes to marketing + distribution

15¢ goes to the farmer

Local Growers create

13 full-time jobs per $1 million in revenue earned

Those not selling locally create 3

CFAES
Culture of Data Collection at Markets

- $14,026 in SNAP Sales (foodstamps)
- $3,200 in WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program sales
- 4,086 Acres of Farmland
- 2,600 Weekly Customers
- 8 Minority Farmers
- 392 Varieties of Produce
- 14 Farmers
- Food Access to 3 Zip Codes
- 232 Low-income Seniors Served
- $62,052 in Fruit & Vegetable Sales
- 11 Cooking Workshops
## Culture of Data Collection at Markets

### Markets as Data Users

- **10% Annual Report Maker**
- **25% Internal Data User**
- **<45% Reporter to Funders**
- **>5% All of the Above**
- **15% None of these yet**

### Data Collection Comfort Among US Farmers Markets

In most cases, the comfort level for building a sustained data collection culture at a farmers market falls into one of four clusters:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data collection comfort and use; Those organizations that:</th>
<th>Estimated percentage of market organizations in U.S. (by FMC and state and network leaders)</th>
<th>Current strategy used by FMC and its partners to assist the market operators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1: Collect data methodically and use it regularly for external social media, for funders, or for annual reports to their community.</td>
<td>Estimated to be about 10% of U.S. market operators.</td>
<td>Sharing the pros and cons of all software and data management systems currently in use across U.S. Metrics software subscriptions and other infographic support, National Farmers Market Week Toolkit, amplification of reports via FMC social media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2: Collect data sporadically and usually only on request by their funders, rarely using it for their own communications or for internal analysis.</td>
<td>Estimated to be about 25% of the U.S. organizations.</td>
<td>Work with funders to ease/better understand data collection requirements, offer collection templates and refined metrics list. Share case studies of Group 1 graphics and uses. Sharing the pros and cons of all software and data management systems currently in use across U.S. Support from partners in collecting data is very helpful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 3: Collect data regularly but use only for internal analysis and decision-making. This group does not use data management software or systems, often managing the data in an informal way. Usually very resistant to any input from network leaders in changing their system.</td>
<td>Estimated to be roughly half or about 45% of U.S. organizations.</td>
<td>Offer data collection templates, refined metrics list, and strategies for more analysis. Support their ability to make analysis more useful to their market community. Webinars and templates focused on how and why to become a more proactive data-driven market.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 4: Almost no data collection comfort. Even though this group does have it, it doesn’t see it as “data.” Sees no need to publish it to their stakeholders, or assumes a data collection process will be too difficult for their market(s) to adopt</td>
<td>Estimated to be about 20% of the market operators.</td>
<td>Webinars and templates focused on how and why to become a more proactive data-driven market. Seek out their data-driven vendors (often certified organic or multi-channel businesses) that would welcome data from these markets to assist their own business planning. General market-level capacity building support also needed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: farmersmarketcoalition.org
Markets are Great at Story + Data...

Williamburg Farmers Market

3,075 acres of diversified farmland in production by vendors.

America loses an acre of farmland every hour to development.

farmersmarketcoalition.org

Hampton Blvd Farmers Market

21 miles average distance food travels from farms and kitchens to our market.
That's fresh! Most food eaten in the U.S. has travelled nearly 1,200 miles.

11 miles average distance food travels from farms and kitchens to our market.
That's fresh! Most food eaten in the U.S. has travelled nearly 1,200 miles.
Culture of Data Collection at Markets

What data points would YOU use to describe your market(s)?

But could use their vendors help!

we’ll come back to this later on…
Farmers Market Metrics

Metrics Table

This table presents twelve of the metrics used in the Farmers Market Coalition's Farmers Market Metrics Training, with recommended data collection methods, instruments, and frequency noted. To further highlight the range of benefits that markets bring to their communities, metrics are categorized by the type of benefit, or capital that each represents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Collection Method</th>
<th>Collection Instrument</th>
<th>Collection Frequency</th>
<th>Capital</th>
<th>Reporting Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average distance in miles traveled from farm to market</td>
<td>Document Review</td>
<td>Vendor Application</td>
<td>Once per season</td>
<td>Ecological Capital</td>
<td>{X} miles is the average distance food travels from farm to our market. That's fresh! Most food eaten in the U.S. has traveled nearly 2,500 miles.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Economic Capital identifies financial rewards, including job creation and built infrastructure
- Social Capital facilitating social inclusion, bridging and bonding, and civic engagement
- Human Capital acquiring knowledge, skills, habits and capacity to make healthy choices
- Ecological Capital restoration, conservation or stewardship of natural resources
## Culture of Data Collection at Markets

### Profile + Data

Remember to show what makes each market unique

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Charlottesville City Market (established 1973)</th>
<th>OnTheSquareVA Farmers Market (established 2018)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Run by city Parks &amp; Rec assisted by Friends of Market org</td>
<td>State sponsored - Governor’s office supported but run by non-profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday mornings</td>
<td>Friday lunch time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid staff, full-time, year-round</td>
<td>Paid staff, part-time, seasonal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking lot</td>
<td>Grassy area surrounded by state agencies; very little parking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 - 110 vendors</td>
<td>16-25 vendors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown, population 43,475</td>
<td>Downtown, population 227,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20,001 - 30,000 square feet</td>
<td>&lt;10,000 square feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent roadway signs; parking deck; surrounding by downtown shops, restaurants, businesses</td>
<td>Created primarily for state employees as part of an employee wellness campaign</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

farmersmarketcoalition.org
Data Collection at Ohio Markets

Ohio Markets Follow National Trend

- What information do Ohio markets collect?
  - Customer counts
  - Customer zip codes
  - Vendor sales

- What methods do Ohio markets use most often?
  - Rapid Market Assessments
  - Anonymous surveys
  - Tally counter
Data Collection at Ohio Markets

WE WANT MORE DATA

BUT HOW DO WE GET THERE?
Data Collection at Ohio Markets

**Ohio Markets Follow National Trend**

What information do Ohio markets collect?
- Customer counts
- Customer zip codes
- Vendor sales
- Vendor zip codes
- Farm acreage
- Number of women or BIPOC owned businesses
- Number of different products sold
- Ratio of product types
- Distance traveled by vendors
- Total number of tokens sold
- Total number of SNAP dollars sold, used, reserved
- Number of social media followers
- Number of click throughs on newsletter

What methods do Ohio markets use most often?
- Rapid Market Assessments
- Anonymous surveys
- Tally counter
- Point of sales systems
- Market application
- Social media statistics
- Newsletter statistics
Data Collection at Ohio Markets

WE WANT MORE DATA

BUT HOW DO WE GET THERE?
Data Collection at Ohio Markets

2018
Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP) grant focused on Central Ohio farmers markets in partnership with City of Columbus and Franklin County Local Food Action Plan.

2014
Host Darlene Wolnik at Ohio Farmers Market Conference to lead market managers on an exploration of data.

2021
Regional Food Systems grant partner to Green Umbrella in Cincinnati region.
Data Collection at Ohio Markets

INCREASE DATA COLLECTION

- OFMN led projects and grants with data focus
- Get more markets collecting more data
- Work with national partners like FMC
Data Collection at Ohio Markets

RAPID MARKET ASSESSMENTS
Also known as "dot surveys" or RMAs. Completed 25 in 2019, 21 in 2021.

IN-DEPTH CONSUMER STUDIES
Completed 4 studies - Canal Winchester, Clintonville, Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens, and Hilliard in 2019.

VENDOR INTERVIEWS
Interviewed more than 50 stakeholders.
Data Collection at Ohio Markets

**AVERAGE $ PER SHOPPING GROUP**
- 2019 - $21.44
- 2021 - $28.29

**AVERAGE ATTENDANCE**
- 2019 - 973
- 2021 - 750

**AVERAGE PRODUCER SALES**
- 2019 - $375.96
- 2021 - $403.76
Data Collection at Ohio Markets

Market Change from 2019 to 2021

- Total Vendors
- Total Attendees
- Avg Spent per Attendee
- Market Sales on Day of RMA
Data Collection at Ohio Markets

Market Day Data is the best place to start

MORE MARKETS MORE DATA

Data collection training sessions with Farmers Market Coalition, best practices, document creation, etc.
Data Collection at Ohio Markets

MARKET MANAGER CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

Series of webinars designed with more experienced market managers in mind. Dar and her team lead this presentation.

OHIO FARMERS MARKET CONFERENCE

Statewide, annual conference in March for market managers, farmers market vendors, and other stakeholders with a vested interest in farmers markets.

TEMPLATES

Document creation to ease the burden of data collection.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Access to resources such as the Farmers Market Coalition resource library.
Data Collection at Ohio Markets
Data Collection at Ohio Markets

IS YOUR MARKET SHARING DATA?

Does your farmers market manager share the data collected with you?

ARE YOU COLLECTING DATA?

Your farm or food business can do a lot with data!

WHAT DATA WOULD BE HELPFUL?

What data can farmers markets collect and share that would be helpful to vendors?
Project Activities – In Process

Conduct case studies of Ohio direct marketers that sell at one or more Ohio farmers markets to learn how they use data for business decision making.

We would appreciate your input.
1. How do direct marketers that participate in one or more Ohio farmers markets use data to make business decisions?

2. How do the direct marketers collect and analyze this data?

3. What data does the farmers market collect? How is this data shared with the direct marketer?

4. What data collected by the farmers market would be helpful for the direct marketer to improve their business?
Project Activities - In Process

If you would like to be a case study participant?

Email Christie Welch

welch.183@osu.edu
How can you be involved?

• Volunteer to participate in a case study.
• Share information about farmers markets in your county/community
• Attend the train-the-trainer session on available tools to assist with data collection
• Connect with the OSUE Direct Food & Ag. Marketing Team, Farmers Market Coalition, and the Ohio Farmers Market Network