



Agritourism Fact Sheet

Tips on Direct Marketing

Growing fruits and vegetables for some farmers is easy compared to selling the produce through farmers' markets, community supported agriculture (CSA) or road-side stands where earning the customer's trust and loyalty is important. Winning customers over can take time, but can be financially rewarding.

Below are some suggestions:

Look neat, clean and happy to see your customers. You only have a few seconds to make a good impression. People will judge your products by your appearance. If you are a farmer, look the part; wear clean jeans, a fresh shirt or coveralls. Identify yourself by wearing a name tag or a shirt with your farm's logo.

Engage customers quickly. Always assume a standing position, instead of a sitting position. Standing allows you to move toward the customer with a greeting. Greet the customer with a "Hello, good to see you today," or "What are you hungry for today?" These questions will help you begin a dialogue with the customer. Tell the customer your name and ask theirs if they do not volunteer it. Ask them what types of fruits and vegetables they like. Let them know what you have today and what you plan to have throughout the season. Ask them how they like certain vegetables. Do they like their summer squash large, or small and tender? Do they normally shop early in the day or do they shop just before meal preparation time. How do they like their peas? Do they like to buy in small quantities and shell them or would they prefer to buy fresh peas shelled in bulk? These are just a few of the questions that can help you establish a relationship with

customer. Remember customers who feel valued, buy and return again and again.

Keep consistent hours. Arrive when the market opens; stay until the market closes. If you are experiencing growing problems due to drought or too much rain, let customers know that you are experiencing problems which may keep you from having their favorite produce. Suggest where they can purchase until you have those products again.

Be informative about your products. Customers like to ask questions about how produce is grown, when it's in season and how to serve or prepare certain produce. Be as informative as possible. If you are unable to answer some of their questions, refer them to the LSU AgCenter.

Exceed customers' expectations. Carry heavy items to cars, provide recipes, give an extra hand-ful of the product they are purchasing. All these go a long way in making the customer feel valued and appreciated. Everyone loves something for nothing.

Apologize when things go wrong. Apologize when things go wrong. It's difficult to make everyone happy all the time. Realize there will be days or moments when things go wrong and a quick apology even though you have done nothing wrong will show the customer you value their business.

Thank customers for their business. A simple thank you lets customers know you appreciate and want to have the opportunity to serve them again.

For more information, contact:

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