

**Fenton Farmers Market
Rapid Market Assessment
August 21, 2008**

**Elaine Brown Anne Scott
Jan Lawson Susan Smalley**



**Michigan Farmers Market Association
&
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan**



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Thursday, August 21, 2008**

Market Sponsor:	Southern Lakes Park & Recreation
Market Hours:	Thursdays during August, 5:00 to 8:30 PM
Location:	Downtown Fenton, between Leroy and Caroline Streets
Website:	www.slpr.net
Market Staff:	Allie Starr, Market Manager
Market Day Comments:	Warm, breezy, slightly overcast
Age of Market:	Started in 1997
Fees:	Full space (10x25 feet) \$55 Half space (10x12 ½ feet) \$35
Vendors:	38 vendors on day of assessment
Market Attendance Estimate:	1,155
Market Sales Estimate:	\$9,538
RMA Team:	Elaine Brown, MIFFS; Jan Lawson, MIFMA and market manager; Anne Scott, MSU; Susan Smalley, MSU

Introduction: The Fenton Farmers Market is operated by Southern Lakes Park & Recreation on behalf of the City of Fenton on Thursday evenings during the month of August, to coincide with weekly Concerts in the Park. Located next to the Fenton Community Center, the center's ring road is closed between South Leroy and West Caroline Streets to make room for 30 double-size (10 x 25 feet) vendor spaces.

I. Total Attendance: 1,155 Adults

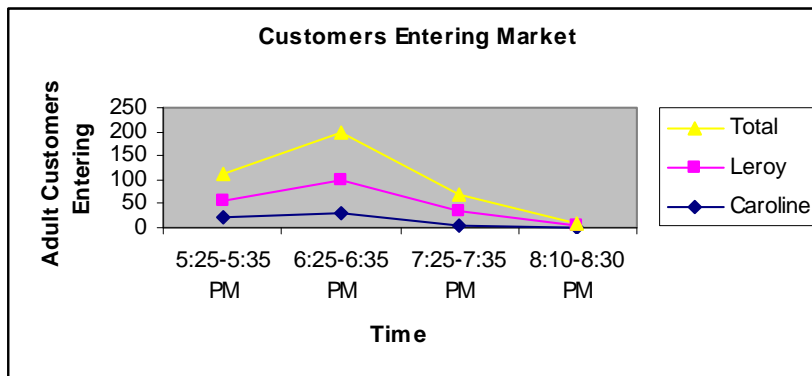
Hour	Count
1 st hour (5:25-5:35)	57
2 nd hour (6:25-6:35)	99
3 rd hour (7:25-7:35)	34
4 th hour (8:10-8:20)	5
Total count	195
Estimate of total market customers	1,155

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Comments: Team members counted the number of adults entering the market for ten minutes of each hour. The total number of adult customers counted during the first three hours of the market was multiplied by six and the number counted during the last half hour of the market by three, then added to estimate total market attendance. Team members noticed customer traffic and market sales even before the market “officially” opened at 5:00 PM, and there was brisk business at the very start. Customer traffic peaked between 6:00 and 7:00 PM and then dropped off fairly rapidly. Very possibly many customers shopped before going to the concert, which started at 7:00 PM. Very few customers entered the market after 8:00 PM and some vendors began to close down at about 8:00. Market management may want to consider ending the market at 8:00 rather than 8:30 and working with vendors towards greater uniformity in market opening and closing times.

Attendance by entrance and hour

	Caroline Street		Leroy Street		Total	
5:25-5:35 PM	22	37%	35	26%	57	29%
6:25-6:35 PM	32	54%	67	49%	99	51%
7:25-7:35 PM	4	7%	30	22%	34	17%
8:10-8:30 PM	1	2%	4	3%	5	3%
	59	30%	136	70%	195	



Comments: Over 2/3 of customers (70%) entered the market from Leroy Street, many needing to cross the street which had fairly heavy traffic. There appeared to be quite a bit of parking near the Caroline Street entrance. Market management may wish to advertise that parking and encourage customers to park where they need not cross a busy street.

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II. Dot Survey Questions

Question 1: Where do you live?

	5-6:40 PM		6:40-8:30 PM		Total	
City of Fenton	64	44%	68	40%	132	42%
City of Linden	5	3%	7	4%	12	4%
Fenton Township	20	14%	36	21%	56	18%
Holly	18	12%	12	7%	30	9%
Tyrone Township	18	12%	25	15%	43	14%
Other	20	14%	23	13%	43	14%
Total	145		171		316	

Comments: This market attracts and serves mostly local customers with 42% coming from the city of Fenton and 18% from Fenton Township.

Question 2: What is the most important reason that brings you to this market?

	5-6:40 PM		6:40-8:30 PM		Total	
Fresh produce	107	70%	101	59%	208	64%
Plants & flowers	3	2%	3	2%	6	2%
Jam, jelly, honey	2	1%	2	1%	4	1%
Crafts	1	1%	3	2%	4	1%
Variety of vendors	14	9%	20	12%	34	10%
In town for concerts	10	7%	15	9%	25	8%
Other	16	10%	28	16%	44	14%
Total	153		172		325	

Comments: Clearly fresh produce is the major reason that people come to this market, with nearly 2/3 (64%) of shoppers surveyed selecting this as the most important draw. The second most important draw was “other”. Several of the shoppers surveyed spoke to team members and indicated that the reason they come to the market is to support local farmers and other vendors. One shopper said that she could purchase items available at the market elsewhere but wanted to support local people. Researchers did not ask directly about the draw of baked goods, which was identified by the market manager as important to many customers. It is noteworthy that only 1% of customers surveyed identified crafts as the most important reason for them to visit the market despite a fairly large craft selection within the market. Efforts to further diversify or expand the market should likely focus on food products.

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Question 3: How much did/will you spend at Fenton businesses OUTSIDE the market on this trip?

Amount	5-6:40 PM		6:40-8:30 PM		Total		
0	69	49%	71	47%	140	48%	0
\$10	24	17%	34	23%	58	20%	\$580
\$20	19	13%	17	11%	36	12%	\$720
\$30	12	8%	12	8%	24	8%	\$720
\$40	5	4%	3	2%	8	3%	\$320
\$50	3	2%	6	4%	9	3%	\$450
\$60	0	0	1	1%	1	0%	\$60
\$70	1	1%	1	1%	2	1%	\$140
\$80	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
\$90	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
\$100	5	4%	3	2%	8	3%	\$800
More	4	3%	2	1%	6	2%	\$600
Total	142		150		292		\$4390
Mean	\$15.03						
Median	\$10						
Mode	\$10						

Comments: Slightly over half (52%) of the customers surveyed indicated that they had spent or would spend money at Fenton businesses outside the farmers market during this trip. The median and mode amounts were each \$10. We conservatively estimate total outside the market expenditures by dividing the estimated total number of adult customers (1,155) by the mean number of adults per shopping party (1.9) and multiplying by the mean customer expenditure (\$15.03). This suggests that total outside-the-market sales for Fenton businesses by market customers were roughly \$9,137 for August 21.

Question 4: How many adults are there in your shopping party today?

	5-6:40 PM		6:40-8:30 PM		Total	
1	55	36%	46	28%	101	32%
2	68	45%	89	55%	157	50%
3	22	15%	15	9%	37	12%
4	5	3%	11	7%	16	5%
5	0	0	1	1%	1	0
6 or more	1	1%	1	1%	2	1%
Total	151		163		314	
Mean	1.9					
Median	2					
Mode	2					

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Comments: The mean or average number of adults per shopping group was 1.9, with a median and mode of 2.

Question 5: How much did/does your shopping party plan to spend TODAY at the Market?

Amount	5:00-6:40 PM		6:40-8:30 PM		Total		
0	5	3%	9	6%	14	5%	0
\$5	39	26%	32	20%	62	20%	\$310
\$10	39	26%	41	26%	80	26%	\$800
\$15	20	13%	26	16%	46	15%	\$690
\$20	22	14%	29	18%	51	16%	\$1020
\$25	11	7%	8	5%	19	6%	\$475
\$30	10	7%	5	3%	15	5%	\$450
\$35	4	3%	3	2%	7	2%	\$245
\$40	2	1%	1	1%	3	1%	\$120
\$45	1	1%	0	0	1	0	\$45
\$50	3	2%	5	3%	8	3%	\$400
More	5	3%	0	0	5	2%	\$325
Total	153		159		311		\$4880
Mean	\$15.69						
Median	\$10						
Mode	\$10						

Comments: The average or mean amount that each shopping group surveyed spent or planned to spend at the market was \$15.59. The median and mode were each \$10.

Estimated Market Day Sales

A conservative estimate of total market sales for the day is developed by dividing the estimated total number of adult customers (1,155) by the mean number of adults per shopping party (1.9) and multiplying by the mean customer expenditure (\$15.69). This method suggests that total market sales for the say were roughly \$9,538.

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III. Constructive Comments/Observations

Market Atmosphere

What team members feel is working well

Market “feel”

- Feels like a social event with lots of friends meeting at the market
- Friendly “home town” vendors
- Convenience of vendors providing ready-to-eat food, beverages at dinner time
- Bustling, busy
- Shoppers seemed relaxed

Shopper Demographics

- Good mix of ages
- Larger percentage of senior citizens by a slight margin
- Customers appear mostly middle class
- Customers appear mostly white, limited racial diversity
- Quite a few families with young children



Interactions, conversations

- Talked to several vendors who were very friendly
- Customers were friendly
- Very much a community with folks visiting as they shop

Educational or Entertainment Activities

- Several stalls were promoting local events and charities (mission outreach, high school fundraiser, Chamber of Commerce dinner)
- Good coordination of market with community concert
- Face painting great for kids

What could be improved upon

Market “feel”

- Market entrances could be made more inviting
- One shopper suggested shifting market to Saturday mornings because evening hours can be hard to catch after work.

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Educational or Entertainment Activities

- Potential for nutrition/health education outreach for seniors, younger customers
- Potential outlet for community education

Other

- “No dogs” policy caused unpleasant response from a dog walking customer and seemed to be disregarded by some. Try to limit rules to those that the market can and will enforce.

Physical Characteristics

What team members feel is working well

Market Access

- Paved market area allows for people in wheelchairs, with canes and walkers, with strollers
- At least 12 wheelchairs observed
- Access from two roads a plus
- Lots of nearby parking

Flow of People and Traffic

- Good flow & wide aisle for customers
- Enough space for people to stop and chat as they shop
- Most customers walk through entire market, past all vendors

Organization of Market

- Good organization with stall on both sides
- Room for additional vendors

What could be improved upon

Market Access

- Was surprised that market is open only during August; there appears to be potential for a longer season and/or for selected special market days during other times of the year – spring flower day, late fall harvest day, etc.
- Observed two senior citizen customers needing to pause, put down their bags, and rest on their way leaving the market because what they had bought was a lot for them to carry.

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Liability Issues

- Many people crossing Leroy Street could pose problems

Organization of Market

- There seemed to be several “holes” in the market, perhaps where expected vendors had not come.
- Might want to position vendors closer together to create solid rows on both sides
- Some vendors lack easy access to their vehicles

Other

- Could use some seating in or near market
- Is there potential to use restrooms in adjacent community center?

Vendors and Products

What team members feel is working well

Product Mix

- Reasonable mix of produce, meats, flowers, plants, value-added, ready-to-eat, crafts
- Great to see local farmers at the market
- Based on customer comments, suggest that vendor recruitment focus primarily on food products.

Product Quality

- Food products seemed high quality
- Products look fresh and clean

Signage

- Banners through downtown are excellent reminders of market
- Some vendors lack signs that identify their farm/business

Display

- Several vendors used creative ideas to display craft items

Customer Service

- Vendors seemed very friendly



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Food Safety

- Baked good wrapped well

Other

What could be improved upon

Product Mix

- Potential for even more fresh produce vendors as major item drawing customers to the market

Product Quality

- Quality of craft items appeared variable

Signage

- Market banner is high on lamp post and easy to miss

Display

Customer Service

Food Safety

- Some food samples were not covered

Other

- Some vendors and some customers expressed interest in extending the market season
- Craft items are nice but will not draw repeat customers weekly like food products

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