



## **Springfield Farmers Market Rapid Market Assessment**

**September 26, 2007**

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



**Springfield Farmers Market  
Rapid Market Assessment  
Wednesday, September 26, 2007**

**Market Hours:** May - October  
Saturday 8 am - 1 pm  
Wednesday 2 - 6 pm  
*(No Wednesday market in October)*

**Location:** 503 Military Avenue, just off M-96  
adjacent to Begg Park

**Website:** [www.springfieldmich.com](http://www.springfieldmich.com)

**Market Staff:** Kris Vogel, Market Manager; Lee  
Newport, Assistant Market Manager;  
Alice Newport, Assistant Market  
Manager

**Market Day Comments:** Pleasant, overcast day  
Temperature mid 60's to low 70's;  
Season's final Wednesday market

**Age of Market:** Established in 2002

**Fees:** \$10 per day, \$15 per week, or \$300  
per season for 10x10 booth

**Vendors:** Average of 12/day through season  
4 on the day of assessment

**Market Sales Estimate:** \$434

**Market Attendance Estimate:** 84

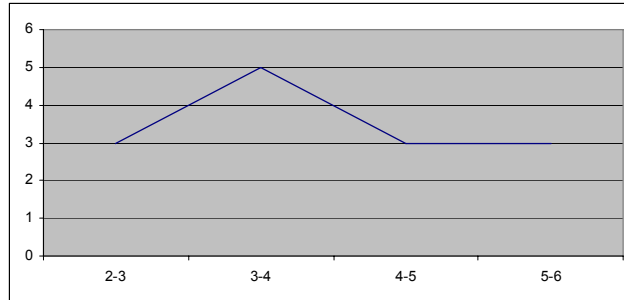
**RMA Team:** Elaine Brown and Emily Buckham,  
Michigan Food and Farming Systems;  
Dru Montri, Michigan Farmers Market  
Association

**Introduction:** Springfield Farmers Market is family oriented. The market is open in conjunction with events such as the craft show on the first Saturday of every month and the Classic Car Show the first Saturday of September. The market provides fresh and processed products. Springfield Farmers Market is owned and operated by the City of Springfield.

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## I. Estimated Attendance: 84 Adults

1st Hour (2-3) count = 3  
 2nd Hour (3-4) count = 5  
 3rd Hour (4-5) count = 3  
 4th Hour (5-6) count = 3  
 Total 14



Estimated of total market customers = 84

*Comments: Team members counted the number of adults entering the market for ten minutes of each hour. The total number of adult customers counted was multiplied by six to estimate total market attendance. Attendance was very low through the market day, peaking between 3-4 p.m. and decreased again after 4:15 p.m.*

*If this traffic is typical for a Wednesday market, organizers may need to consider changing market days and/or hours. Consider when people within target market may be available to shop at a farmers market. (Following the RMA, market management indicated that this traffic is not typical for Wednesday markets.)*

### Attendance by entrance and hour

Time	Main Entrance		Playground		Road		Total/Percentage	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
2-3	0	0%	3	33%	0	0%	3	21%
3-4	0	0%	1	11%	4	100%	5	36%
4-5	0	0%	3	33%	0	0%	3	21%
5-6	1	100%	2	22%	0	0%	3	21%
Total	1		9		4		14	

*Comments: The playground entrance accounted for over half the customers entering the market on the survey day. Individuals seemed to park in the parking lot on that side of the market and enter either through the side entrance or through the vendor entrances. The main entrance was not utilized as the main entrance as it is not the nearest entrance to either of the side parking lots nor are the doors open in a welcoming manner like those of the side entrance. The market may consider enhancing the entrances, both main and side, so the individuals use them.*

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**II. Dot Survey Questions**

**Question 1: Which of these products would you most like to buy in this market?**

	<u>Number/Percentage</u>
Lawn/Garden	7 17%
Cheese	13 32%
Spices	2 5%
Dried Fruits/Nuts	6 15%
Herbs	1 2%
Organic Products	12 29%
Total	41

*Comments: Nearly one-third (32%) of the customers surveyed selected cheese as the item they would most like to buy at the market. The market had a cheese vendor earlier in the year and it is recommended that either that vendor or another cheese vendor be invited back for the 2008 season. Organic products were a close second with 29%. Lawn/garden items and dried fruit/nuts came in third and fourth with 17% and 15% respectively. The strong interest in cheese and organic products is consistent with customer preferences in other markets.*

**Question 2: What one change would you recommend to improve the market?**

	<u>Number/Percentage</u>
Offer cooking class	4 11%
Accept Bridge/debit/credit cards	11 29%
Offer child-care while you shop	1 3%
None of these	22 58%
Total	38

*Comments: Over half (58%) of the customers surveyed were not interested in any of the changes listed. They may be satisfied with the market as it is or may desire other changes not listed. The most desired change at 29% was for the market to accept Bridge/debit/credit cards. This would allow food stamp recipients to shop at the market and others to use credit or debit cards rather than cash when shopping. Such a change, if successfully marketed, has potential to both expand the market's customer base (Bridge card) and increase per-customer expenditures at the market (debit/credit). Accepting the cards also carry costs, so the market will need to consider carefully how to balance options.*

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**Question 3: How much have you/will you spend at the farmers market today?**

<u>Reported Spending</u>	<u>Number/Percentage</u>
\$0	5 14%
\$5	14 38%
\$10	9 24%
\$15	4 11%
\$20	2 5%
\$25	1 3%
\$30	2 5%
\$35	0 0%
\$40	0 0%
\$45	0 0%
\$50 or more	0 0%
Total	37
Mean	\$9.32
Median	\$5
Mode	\$5

*Comments: The mean or average expenditure that shoppers reported was \$9.32. The median was \$5, meaning that half the shoppers spent less than \$5 and half spent more than \$5. More shoppers spent \$5 than any other single amount.*

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

<u>Number of Shoppers in Party</u>	<u>Number/Percentage</u>
1	14 37%
2	20 53%
3	3 8%
4	0 0%
5	0 0%
6+	1 3%
Total	38
Mean	1.8
Median	2
Mode	2

*Comments: The mean or average number of people each customer was shopping with was 1.8, with the median or middle 2, and the mode or most common also 2.*

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**Question 5: Which of the following is the main reason you encourage others to shop at the market?**

<u>Reason</u>	<u>Number/Percentage</u>
Fresh products	35 73%
Interact with local farmers	8 17%
Social interaction	2 4%
Special events	3 6%
I do not encourage others to shop here	0 0%
Word of mouth	0 0%
Total	48

*Comments: Nearly three quarters (73%) of customers surveyed told the team that they encourage other people to shop at the market due to the fresh products available there. It could be assumed that the market's fresh products are also very important to these customers and are a main reason they shop there.*

**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 (84) by the mean number of people customers were shopping for (1.8) and multiplying by the mean customer expenditure (\$9.32). This method very conservatively estimates total market sales for the day at \$434.

**I. Constructive Comments/Observations**

**Physical Site**

**What team members appreciated about the physical site**

Access:

- ❖ Convenient parking
- ❖ Signage off main road, located at the park
- ❖ Handicap accessible
- ❖ Multiple entrances, easy for customers and vendors to get in

Flow of people and traffic:

- ❖ Space allows for easy flow of traffic
- ❖ Plenty of room for folks to wander among vendors
- ❖ Easy for people to move from vendor to vendor

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Liability Issues:

- ❖ Easy to use handicap accessibility

Organization of market:

- ❖ Great building
- ❖ Permanent structure
- ❖ "Garage doors" allow vendors to back in trucks
- ❖ Table and chair
- ❖ Permanent restrooms
- ❖ Great facility and set-up

Access to electricity:

- ❖ One plug in per two vendors
- ❖ Multiple outlets, both electric and natural light

Other:

- ❖ Great access to water, restroom facilities
- ❖ Wonderful that the market is near the park
- ❖ Market manager had a name badge
- ❖ One vendor had a rolling display loaded and ready to put in place
- ❖ One community organization vendor/week can set up at no cost (church, social group, etc.) to build awareness

**Improvements and Questions**

Access:

- ❖ Main entrance is not used
- ❖ At 2:35, no one had entered the front door
- ❖ Door not open to invite in
- ❖ Most parking at sides of building
- ❖ Opening the front doors would help optimize use of that entrance

Flow of people and traffic:

- ❖ Very low customer traffic: Are these the right hours?
- ❖ Shuttle service from senior facilities=people use Project FRESH at market
- ❖ Use main entrance to attract more people

Organization of market:

- ❖ When low numbers of vendors why not have all vendors on one side, near each other?

Access to electricity, phone line:

- ❖ Could easily be set up to accept food stamps

Other:

- ❖ Signs for Michigan-grown product

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**Atmosphere**

**What team members appreciate about the market atmosphere**

Market feel:

- ❖ New building
- ❖ Inviting and clean
- ❖ Very friendly, lots of potential

Shopper Demographics:

- ❖ Many, predominately older, women
- ❖ Noticed many people using their Project FRESH coupons
- ❖ A lot of elderly people and wheelchairs
- ❖ Lower-middle income
- ❖ Total minorities observed: 12
- ❖ Appears to attract primarily older/retired adults

Interactions, Conversations:

- ❖ Very open and friendly between vendor/customer and customer/customer

Educational or Entertainment Activities:

- ❖ Often have events at the Saturday market
- ❖ Sounds like a number of special events are planned that help draw in the crowds: craft, sales, etc.
- ❖ Mom-to-mom sale
- ❖ Craft and farmers market together (go on throughout the year)
- ❖ Car show/farmers market (go on throughout the year)
- ❖ Halloween activities

Other:

- ❖ Wonderful for vendors that tables and chairs are provided

**Improvements and Questions**

Market feel:

- ❖ Invite groups to attend: senior centers, children's day care field trips, partner with the library
- ❖ A livelier atmosphere could be created by adding music
- ❖ More vendors during the week would improve atmosphere, as it felt empty today with only four vendors

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Shopper Demographics:

- ❖ Think about nearby businesses and neighborhoods – target those individuals
- ❖ Target wider range of customers

Interactions Conversations:

- ❖ Little interaction between vendors, even though ample time

Educational/Entertainment Activities:

- ❖ Could do more to attract more folks on Wed. p.m.
- ❖ Could also focus on children's events, include master gardeners working with senior center and other area clubs
- ❖ More activities on weekdays for kids, students, retirement communities, etc.

Other:

- ❖ One customer wanted a flea market as well, but market needs to decide on its primary purpose and develop around that focus.
- ❖ Add recipe cards for vendors and products
- ❖ No minorities took the survey

**Vendors and Products**

**What team members appreciate about vendors and products**

Product Mix:

- ❖ Peppers, onions, eggplant, tomatoes, green beans, squash, maple syrup, apples, pumpkins, gladiolas, mums, potatoes, pears, raspberries, canned goods, cookies, cider, some crafts
- ❖ A lot of products available both fresh flowers and food and prepared foods, some crafts as well

Product Quality:

- ❖ Okay
- ❖ All products looked great, no obvious issues

Signs:

- ❖ Nice, appealing signage (banners) when driving into the market
- ❖ Each vendor had prices displayed

Display:

- ❖ Nathan does a nice job with display; produce on an angle, uses height
- ❖ Clean, bright displays

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Customer Service:

- ❖ Vendors friendly and helpful
- ❖ Very friendly and welcoming vendors

Food Safety:

- ❖ Majority of product sold is fresh fruit or vegetables

**Improvements and Questions**

Product Mix:

- ❖ One woman was looking for a pie
- ❖ More variety of products
- ❖ Organic products

Product Quality:

- ❖ Could offer products such as organic or labeled production practices

Signs:

- ❖ Could have signs inside market with hours and days of operation, or advertising special events
- ❖ Vendors should clearly display the price of their items
- ❖ Vendors should clearly indicate where the product is from if they didn't grow/produce
- ❖ Vendors and customers could benefit from larger signs: price and farm name
- ❖ Sign outside front doors saying welcome could help

Display:

- ❖ Vendors could consider using table cloths
- ❖ Vendors could advertise themselves better

Customer Service:

- ❖ Help customers understand what could be done with produce, how to prepare through recipe cards
- ❖ Senior care facility visited this day for the first time
- ❖ Welcome signs

Food Safety:

- ❖ Canned goods must be prepared in a licensed certified kitchen under current Michigan law
- ❖ Market could/should offer more info to vendors on licensing, inspections, etc.

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Other:

- ❖ Vendor indicated Wednesdays are slow days, only four vendors vs. many on Saturday