

**Pavilion on Court Downtown Farmers' Market
Gaylord, Michigan**

Rapid Market Assessment

July 23, 2005

Debby Williams
Susan Smalley
Jim Bingen
Dan Keane
Don Bubar



Michigan State University
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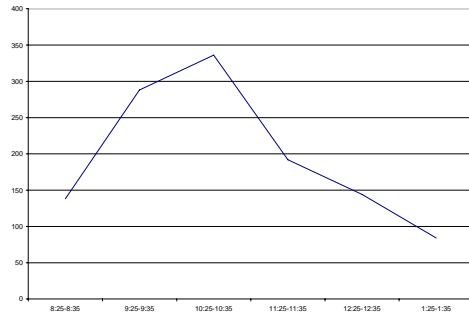
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Market Hours: Wednesday and Saturday; 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Location: Court and Main Street; Gaylord, Michigan
Market Staff: Ivan Witt, Market Master
Market Day Comments: Beautiful day: sunny, 65°F to 80°F. Some wind.
Fees: \$200 for season; Day trader rates \$7.50 - \$10.00 depending on stall size
Vendors: 8 produce vendors
Market Sales Estimate: \$7,300
Market Attendance Estimate: 1,180
RMA Team:

Jim Bingen, Michigan State University
 Don Bubar, Market Master, Springfield Recreation Area Farmers Market
 Dan Keane, Market Organizer, Downtown Saginaw Farmers Market
 Susan Smalley, Michigan State University
 Debby Williams, Michigan State University

I. Total Attendance: 1,182

1 st Hour (8 – 9) estimate =	138
2 nd Hour (9 – 10) estimate =	288
3 rd Hour (10 – 11) estimate =	336
4 th Hour (11 - 12) estimate =	192
5 th Hour (12 - 1) estimate =	144
6 th Hour (1 - 2) estimate =	84



Comments: Attendance for the market, with only 8 vendors, maintained a good rate until after 1:00. Vendors sold out early, with the first vendor leaving from the south end of the market before 11:00; the second vendor on the south end of the market sold out and left at 12:30. This second vendor was one of the large produce and flower vendors and should be considered a primary vendor. Soon after that, another large vendor left because the market “slowed down”, along with a small vendor that had sold out. This put the market at a disadvantage with only two large and two small vendors left. The dot survey results indicated that many of the people who attended between noon and 2:00 p.m. stopped in when they saw the market or its sign. If the vendors had been prepared for larger sales volumes and stayed until the end of the market, the rate of attendance might have remained at the same level as earlier in the day. Many people may have looked at the market and never entered due to so few vendors in attendance. If the vendors are not in a position to increase their product offerings, the other option to consider is to shorten the market day.

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Entrances (by number and percentage of each hour)

Time	North		South		Total	
8 – 9	90	65%	48	35%	138	12%
9 – 10	96	33%	192	67%	288	24%
10 - 11	144	43%	192	57%	336	28%
11 – 12	84	44%	108	56%	192	16%
12 – 1	66	46%	78	54%	144	12%
1 – 2	48	57%	36	43%	84	7%
Totals	528	45%	654	55%	1182	100%

Comments: The north side of the market is on Main Street; the south side of the market is on First Street. Some parking on Main Street is available; the parking lots are next to the market on First Street and across First Street at the corner of Court Street. During the first hour of the market day the majority of shoppers came from Main Street, but then traffic shifted to the southern entrances close to the parking lots until late in the day. This may indicate people stopping in after breakfast at a restaurant on Main Street, then the market becoming a destination during the morning, with a shift in the afternoon to casual shoppers stopping in because they saw the signs or market.

II. Dot Survey Questions

The dot survey was conducted in the center of the market between two vendors. This was an excellent location, providing access to shoppers as they moved from one vendor to another. Once one or two shoppers began placing dots, others would stop to see what was going on and were easier to recruit for the survey. Approximately 40% of the shopping groups participated in the survey. The number of survey respondents dropped considerably during the afternoon, possibly due to the reduced market size.

There were three survey sheets per question, each representing two hours of market time.

Question 1: How many adults are in your shopping group today?

	<u>8 - 10</u>		<u>10 – 12</u>		<u>12 – 2</u>		<u>Total</u>	
One Adult	40	40%	58	39%	11	32%	109	39%
One Adult with children	2	2%	7	5%	2	6%	11	4%
Two Adults	47	47%	61	41%	15	44%	123	43%
Two Adults with children	3	3%	10	7%	4	12%	17	6%
Three Adults	2	2%	6	4%	1	3%	9	3%
Three Adults with children	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Four or more adults	5	5%	4	3%	1	3%	10	4%
Four or more adults with children	1	1%	3	2%	0	0%	4	1%

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Comments: The largest percentage of shopping groups, 43%, consisted of two adults with no children and 39% of the shopping groups had 1 adult with no children, giving an overall 82% of the shopping groups consisting of one or two adults with no children. This may be because the market is known as a place to shop for produce, not for entertainment. If the market committee would like to increase the number of families with children in attendance at the market, an image change may need to be made which emphasizes children's activities. This would need to be done carefully, with vendor sales being monitored during the process. One vehicle for introducing the market to families could be working with the MSU Extension office to hold the Project FRESH! Coupon education and distribution session at the market. The Project FRESH! Program targets mothers of infants and toddlers.

A follow up dot survey question for additional demographic information, could ask shoppers to classify themselves by the popular demographic groups: Gen Y, Gen X, Baby Boomers, and Swing Generations.

Question 2: How much money will you spend at today's market?

	<u>8 - 10</u>		<u>10 - 12</u>		<u>12 -2</u>		<u>Total</u>	
Less than \$5	10	11%	45	30%	12	38%	67	24%
\$5 - \$10	52	55%	79	53%	11	34%	143	51%
\$10 - \$15	16	17%	13	9%	6	19%	35	13%
\$15 - \$20	7	7%	5	3%	1	3%	13	5%
More than \$20	10	11%	6	4%	2	6%	18	7%

Comments: For the first four hours of the market, the largest percentage of shoppers spent between \$5 and \$10 while shopping at the market. This dropped after noon to less than \$5, which may be due to the lack of product availability. Sales estimates for the day are estimated at \$7,300

Question 3: How did you first learn about the Downtown Gaylord Farmers' Market?

	<u>8 - 10</u>		<u>10 - 12</u>		<u>12 -2</u>		<u>Total</u>	
Word of mouth	24	24%	35	24%	6	19%	65	23%
I saw the sign or the market	12	12%	33	22%	11	34%	56	20%
Newspaper	11	11%	10	7%	5	16%	26	9%
Radio	3	3%	0	0%	0	0%	3	1%
Website	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Printed promotional material	5	5%	2	1%	0	0%	7	3%
<i>I've been coming to the market for over 2 years</i>	46	46%	67	46%	10	31%	123	44%

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Comment: This question was intended to determine what current advertising is bringing in new customers to the market. 23% of respondents heard about the market through word of mouth and 20% saw the sign or the market. This indicates that the "free" advertising is proving to be the most effective. It is interesting that no one indicated that they had first learned about the market through the website. It may be beneficial to follow-up with survey questions about the web site including: do they know about the web site, have they visited it, did they use it to find out about location and time, would they use it to check produce availability and event schedules? To increase web site activity, consider adding the address to market signs and fliers.

Question 4: What other agricultural product would you most like to see at the market?

	<u>8 – 10</u>		<u>10 – 12</u>		<u>12 -2</u>		<u>Total</u>	
Dried beans and grains	16	17%	20	14%	10	31%	46	17%
Eggs	22	24%	32	23%	6	19%	60	22%
Dairy (milk, cheese)	7	8%	8	6%	1	3%	16	6%
Meat (poultry, smoked meats)	13	14%	24	17%	4	13%	41	15%
Prepared foods	6	6%	10	7%	2	6%	18	7%
Gourmet items	17	18%	14	10%	8	25%	39	15%
Organic	12	13%	34	24%	1	3%	47	18%

Comments: The organic choice was not on the original list of selections and was added by a shopper early in the morning. It is interesting to note that one of the vendors is a certified organic vegetable producer with appropriate signage.

The results of this question indicate demand for quite a variety of products that are not regularly at the market. Eggs obtained the highest percentage, but were closely followed by organic, dried beans and grains, meat and gourmet items. A conversation with one of the shoppers indicated that there is a lack of understanding about how milk could be sold at a farmers' market and be kept from spoiling. If introduced into the market, dairy products may require either a very visible refrigerated truck or an education process.

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Question 5: What is most important to you when shopping at the farmers' market?

	<u>8 – 10</u>		<u>10 – 12</u>		<u>12 -2</u>		<u>Total</u>	
Fresh products	58	53%	80	53%	18.5	47%	156.75	53%
Local products	29	27%	42.5	28%	4	10%	75.5	25%
Organic-chemical free fruit and vegetables	16	15%	16	11%	8.5	22%	40.5	14%
Low prices	5	5%	6.75	4%	1	3%	12.75	4%
Wide selection	1	1%	2	1%	6	15%	9	3%
Atmosphere	0	0%	3	2%	1	3%	4	1%
Other	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

Comments: This question generated lots of discussion with shoppers as many valued multiple attributes equally. This is indicated by the fraction totals, as many shoppers split their dots. Throughout the day, fresh products were considered the most important attribute when shopping at the farmers' market. This was followed by local and organic. Low prices were a slight concern, possibly indicating most consumers are willing to pay a premium for products considered fresh or that shoppers felt the current price levels are appropriate.

Constructive Comments/Observations

Physical Site

What team members appreciated about the physical site:

- Great site!
- Great Pavilion!
- Great downtown location.
- Easy to see from the main road.
- Very good access to the market.
- Good parking.
 - Great access with multiple points of entry from easy parking.
 - People have good access to the market from major parking on the east side of the pavilion.
 - Rear entrance and parking provides excellent access for the handicapped and elderly.
 - Excellent access from the side street parking lot and M-32.
- Market was very busy, good equity at all the stalls.
- Easy flow makes it easy for people to visit all the vendors.
- Room for more vendors; the market could easily extend south past the pavilion on Saturdays.
- Good stall arrangement; it made relatively few vendors fill the overall space well.

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- Plenty of trash barrels. Very clean. Vendors kept stalls clean.
- Convenient rest rooms

Improvements and Questions:

- Dogs in the market area. How should people walking their dogs be handled? Perhaps post a courtesy sign at each end?
- Customers commented on the two Gaylord markets. They would really like the apple vendor to join the downtown group. Perhaps it is time to actively work towards reconciliation?
- A little more signage at the north end of the pavilion where cars come in and pedestrians cross. Could be a safety issue.
- Barricades could be a tripping hazard if not set up with a walk through area. Early in the day they were together, later they were spread apart. Once the market is set up, suggest you move the street barricade at M-32 to make it easier for people to walk in.
- Do you think the Downtown Development Agency or Chamber of Commerce would be willing to invest in some banners for the pavilion to make it more festive?

Atmosphere

What team members appreciated about the market atmosphere:

- The market looked and felt like a great farmers' market to shop at when it was time to open.
- Great location.
- Clean and roomy.
- Nice energy level.
- Nice small town feel.
- Shoppers were mostly older, couples and groups.
- Good mix of ages; quite diverse age range of shoppers.
- Seemed to be a good mix of locals and visitors.
- Some Project FRESH customers were at the market.
- Almost all vendors said it was a very good day.
- Friendly greetings from vendors.
- Educational opportunities to tell people more about local products, how to use them and why they should support local agriculture.

Improvements and Questions:

- Seemed to be few families with children. Do you wish to increase this demographics attendance?

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- Get Project FRESH! to distribute coupons and do education sessions at the market.
- Need to have drinks available to customers. Could you get Brothers to sell coffee at the market?
- Great seating and gathering locations; need to encourage people to hang around.
- Get Master Gardeners to have an information booth at the market. Would provide incentive for a vendor with landscape plants to be at the market.
- Add entertainment of some form.
- Consider music at the market.
- If you want to draw families with kids, consider adding a story hour. Maybe ask for stories that feature food, farming and/or gardening.
- Potential to collaborate with the bookstore to promote local business. Have a cookbook talk and hand out recipes.
- Recipes will help sell.
- Educational activities might be something to consider.
- Customer education is needed. Conversations indicated a lack of understanding of "buy local" philosophy. Customer stated that Otsego County soils could not grow fruits and vegetables. Customer also stated that one should not eat seasonally, that consuming tomatoes year round will prevent cancer. Suggest two educational efforts: over the winter, provide guest columns in the local paper explaining why the "buy local" philosophy is important for family farms and the local economy; enlist the aid of a nutritionist to provide information on eating seasonally and maintaining good health.
- Cooking demonstrations at the market will help people get beyond the most common seven vegetables in preparing their meals. A source of potential demonstrators may be the Gaylord University Center family life education or allied health students, nutrition majors from Central Michigan University, or restaurant management students from Northwood University.
- Is there a local "gourmet" restaurant? Does the chef shop at the market? Recruit him/her as a spokesperson and demonstrator. Good promotion for both organizations.

Vendors and Products

What team members appreciated about vendors and products:

- Baked goods complement produce.
- Good variety and mix of products. Few to no crafts and that's good.
- Product quality looked good overall.
- Most product quality very good. Products appear very fresh.
- Great market sign on M-32. Also noticed one on Otsego.
- Market name, logo and market master ID great on shirt!
- Easy to see stalls

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- Noticed clothes on all the tables.
- Attractive arrangements.
- Heard vendor offer to help carry produce for customer.
- Vendors did nice job with their customers.
- Very friendly.
- Vendors were very friendly and welcoming.

Improvements and Questions:

- Vendors should stand when addressing customers. When sitting and reading, customers will be reluctant to approach and interrupt. Eye contact is needed to draw customers into the booth.
- **Need more vendors and current vendors to bring more product. **
- When vendors leave early, it affects everyone by reducing the visible draw to the market for shoppers. Guidelines should be added to the agreement for vendors to stay as long as they have product to sell.
- Salad greens vendor: would suggest placing arugula with the salad mix display, to “spice up” the flavor of one’s salad.
- Could use more product variety.
- There is opportunity for a bit more product variety.
- Tourists, summer residents inflate the population. Plan for it. The Chamber of Commerce or Convention Center could provide assistance with this.
- Vendors should plan on returning home with 10% of what they brought to sell. This will keep the display looking abundant and draw in shoppers.
- What to do about vendors who sell out?
- Consider “sold out” signs to put out where vendors have left an empty spot. It’s important to encourage people who come late when vendors have left and selection is limited, to return on another day.
- Vendors come from quite a distance. Keep working for more local vendors.
- Might want to mist produce to keep it looking fresher longer.
- Vast majority of peaches that were purchased had split pits. These are usually considered cull fruit. Need to better define expected produce quality.
- Vendor Business Signs:
 - Would be nice to have signs identifying each vendor.
 - Signs are required in the rules but only a few were visible.
 - Signage was highly variable. Most could be significantly better, follow Witt’s as a model.
 - Need better signs for each vendor with more vendor identification.
 - Vendors should have visible signs with names.
- Retail vendors could have a sign indicating that produce is from Michigan and or from a particular farm or location. Overheard many customers asking where the melons were from since they were early.
- Encourage vendors to clearly price all items. Are vendors given any guidelines on pricing?
- Descriptive signs will increase sales.

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- Market Signs:
 - Could use more market signs directing people in.
 - Market signs are needed showing hours and times of operation; possibly a couple of portable bulletin boards.
 - Perhaps the Downtown Development Authority could put up street banners promoting the market.
 - Could you get a permanent banner with market days and times hung on one or both ends of the pavilion?
 - Could use another Farmers Market sign at the corner of Main and Otsego for Main Street traffic (east bound). The one on Main is blocked by parked cars until you get very close.
- There were vendors that are eligible to accept Project FRESH! Coupons and did not. If they are willing, provide them with a sign and an agreement to complete.
- Tilting displays slightly toward customers will show the products better.
- Tables are a bit low, get product display up a bit higher.
- Electricity available – consider implementing Electronic Bridge Card acceptance.

For more information about Michigan State University farmers' market research and education, please contact Jim Bingen, bingen@msu.edu, (517)353-1905; or Susan Smalley, smalley3@msu.edu, (517)432-0049.

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**Appendix
Pavilion on Court Downtown Farmer's Market
Vendor Information**

Pavilion on Court Downtown Farmers' Market
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City of Gaylord
Pavilion on Court Downtown Farmer's Market
225 West Main Street
Gaylord, MI 49735
989.732.6073
gaylorddda@hotmail.com

2005 General Rules and Regulations for Market Operation

1. The market will be for Michigan resident growers of Michigan produce only. Resident growers will grow over 90% of their own product. All vendors will complete a producer's information application before attending the market. All appropriate licenses/permits should be attached to the application. Vendors will clearly display their (farm) name and location at their booth.
2. The market master will be responsible for stall assignment on a daily or reserved basis. Those vendors who pay an annual market fee shall receive prioritized and permanent market locations annually. Stall spaces will be 20' wide or 10' wide.
3. All products for sale must be fresh and of good quality. The market master will have the right to examine all produce for spoilage or damage. Vendors will be prohibited from selling damaged or unfit products.
4. Regular vendors not planning to attend the market should notify the market master by 5:00 PM the day preceding the market day. Those spaces shall then be available to day traders.
5. Stall fees for annual spaces (May-November) will be \$200.00. Day trader rates will be \$10.00 for a 20' space and those spaces will be available on a first come first serve basis. Day trader rates for a 10' stall will be \$7.50 per day and must be paid at beginning of market day. Trucks must be removed from trailers and parked in adjacent parking lot.
6. The market will be open from 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM on Saturdays from May 29th thru the month of June and every Wednesday and Saturday starting July 7th to November. The City requires all vendors to be out of the pavilion by 3:00 PM. Last vendor leaving the market will remove street barricades, if they are still in place. Vendors must maintain and leave their stall and the surrounding area in a clean and orderly fashion. Product residue, i.e. corn husks, etc., will be removed by vendor.
7. The Market will be moved due to other activities under the pavilion July 13th and 16th (Alpenfest) to the temporary location at 100 N. Court Street (immediately north of craft vendors); and Sept. 10th to the adjacent parking lot at the corner of Court and 1st Street.

8. Vendors will conduct themselves in a courteous fashion, no foul language will be tolerated, and children shall not be left unattended. Per the City of Gaylord ordinance animals are not allowed in the Pavilion area.
9. Michigan grown produce is defined as that produce and animal products grown or raised on a Michigan farm, orchard, truck garden, nursery or greenhouse (including honey, maple syrup, herbs, apple cider and other juices). Value-added agricultural products, such as baked goods, jam/jellies, cheeses, soaps, oils, hand crafted items from home grown plants and animals, and forest products such as mushrooms, wild crafted plants, raw wood products, i.e. firewood, fence posts, will be permitted as long as they are being sold by the primary producer. Foliage plants (including tropical plants, flowering plants, hanging baskets and bedding plants) may be sold if they have been raised or cared for by the vendor since transplant or seedling stage. Trees, shrubs and other types of landscape planting vegetation will be allowed.
10. Anyone not complying with these rules or creating disturbances or disruptions as determined by the market master or a City of Gaylord representative will be suspended from the market for a period of 30 days without refund. If a second offense occurs that vendor will not be allowed to attend market again for the duration of the season.
11. Vendors participating in Project Fresh agree to comply with program rules. Vendors must redeem coupons taken in at the Gaylord Pavilion on Court Farmer's Market only. Project Fresh plaques shall be on visible at all times. Anyone not complying with the program rules or submitting false information will be asked to leave the market.

Retail Vendors:

12. Retail vendors will be permitted to sell fresh Michigan fruits, vegetables, nursery stock or bedding plants only.
13. Retail vendors will adhere to the same rules and regulations as the farmer vendors.
14. Retail vendors will pay a daily market fee of \$20.00 or \$450.00 annually. The retail vendor may receive a permanent stall location if they rent their space annually. The day retail vendor will be placed in the market on a first come first serve basis.

Any and all questions in reference to this document should be directed to the City of Gaylord Downtown Development Authority office at 989.732.6073 or the market master, Ivan Witt at 989.983.3024. **The DDA in conjunction with the Market Master shall have the discretion to amend the rules when deemed necessary.**