

IMPACT

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Orofino Farmers' Market – impacting communities and producers

The Situation

Across the United States and within the state of Idaho the number of Farmers' Markets is on the rise. In 1994 the USDA counted 1,755 farmers' markets in the United States. At last count, there were 4,685. Across the nation, direct marketing is increasing twice as fast as total agricultural sales. In Idaho the number of markets has more than doubled since 2002, currently there are over 43 farmers' markets in operation.

Many consumers are tiring of the sterility of narrow supermarket aisles and opting to shop at bustling open air markets alive with a mix of farmers and shoppers. In most areas the farmers' market has become as much a social event as a point of sales.

Farmers' Markets benefit local communities in a variety of ways. For example, money spent at the market, whether it goes to a farmer, specialty food producer, or crafter, is then re-circulated within the community. Produce travels a smaller distance to reach the consumer. Farmers' Markets also provide an alternative outlet for local farmers to market their products directly to the consumer.

Our Response

University of Idaho Extension Educator worked with community members to form a local grassroots organization to develop an Orofino Farmers' Market. In the spring of 2009 UI Extension organized a series of informational meetings to develop the structure and marketing activities for the startup Orofino Farmers' Market.

A vendor training was held in June to prepare potential market vendors for the upcoming season. Topics included in the workshop were: Idaho State Sales Tax, Health Regulations, Market Policies and Procedures, Successful Direct Marketing, and Building



Debi Bordoni displays her products at the Orofino Farmers Market.

Your Market. Thirteen vendors attended the three hour workshop.

Program Outcomes

In July 2009 the Orofino Farmers' Market opened with eight vendors, live music and a tremendous community response. Each week the number of vendors continues to grow, to date over 25 vendors have participated in the market. Vendors have reported success at the market with average weekly receipts ranging from \$35 to over \$300. For the market the average weekly income is \$129.

In addition to the positive community response the local media supported the market through fantastic market coverage and a weekly vendor of the week feature article.

In September 2009 UI Extension Educators conducted a rapid market assessment. The purpose of the assessment is to provide markets with the essential in-

formation they need to improve their operations. The rapid market assessment is composed of three distinct components, a customer count, customer surveys and constructive comments from the rapid market assessment team.

To help the Orofino Farmers' Market plan for the future, farmers market shoppers and vendors were asked the following questions

- How much have you (or will you) spend at the Farmers Market?
- What is your primary reason for coming to the market today? (i.e. agricultural products, the atmosphere, prepared food or crafts)
- How did you find out about the market?
- What day would you prefer the Farmers Market to be held?
- What time would you prefer the Farmers Market?

On average customers spent approximately \$16.25 at the Orofino Farmers' Market. Customers primarily came to the market for agricultural products, and typically found out about the market through the local newspaper and word of mouth. In addition customer counts estimated that approximately 222 customers visit the market each week.

The Orofino Farmers' Market has enjoyed a successful first year and is poised to become integral to the local economy and community.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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