

## **Marketing Tips for Farm Business Success**

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### **SEMINAR ABSTRACT**

Customers are the most important part of any farm business and how you communicate with them will determine how many you have. Marketing is the pathway through which you communicate with your customers; through your products, packaging, pricing, branding, and promotional techniques. That's why marketing is such an important aspect of growing a profitable and sustainable small fruit or vegetable business.

The purpose of this seminar is to share with you some practical and proven tips that will strengthen your marketing efforts and improve your bottom line. Effective marketing tips that have helped farm operators improve their profitability will be presented and discussed.

### **Marketing Tips for Success**

While there is no "cookbook formula" for success, here are ten proven tips that have helped farm businesses strengthen their marketing efforts and improve their bottom lines.

#### **Tip #1: Research Your Market**

The success of your farm business depends on your ability to effectively compete in a changing marketplace and profitably meet the changing wants and needs of your customers. Market research can be as simple as asking your customers a few questions or reading about the latest industry trends. The intent is to learn as much as you can about the market so you can grow and sustain your farm business.

#### **Tip #2: Target Your Market**

Your target market includes all of those customers you are trying to attract. It's important to remember that while everyone out there is a potential customer, there are some who have a greater need or ability to buy your products than others. So, focusing your limited resources on those customers with the greatest likelihood of buying your products is an important strategy for success.

#### **Tip #3: Educate Your Customers**

While it's important for you as the farm business operator to learn as much as you can about your customers, it's equally important for you to help your customers learn about you, your farm business and the products you produce and services you provide.

#### **Tip #4: Price Your Products for Profit**

Pricing is an art, not a science. You need to know your costs, your customers, and your competition, and you need to be flexible in the prices you charge. The key to pricing is to set the price high enough to cover your costs and ensure a profit, yet low enough to encourage people in your target market to buy your products.

#### **Tip #5: Diversify Your Marketing Strategies**

A common feature among successful farm businesses is that they use a number of different strategies to market their products. Many small producers both wholesale and retail their products. Some growers sell their products to restaurants and through their local farmer's market. It's important to recognize that for many small farm businesses, diversifying their marketing is a good method of managing risk and increasing profitability.

#### **Tip #6: Market for Quality**

Many farms in New England have a difficult time competing in the high-volume commodity markets. They have to focus on quality not quantity. One way for New England farmers to compete is to focus on offering the highest quality products possible. In most cases, high quality and profits go hand in hand.

#### **Tip #7: Practice Excellent Customer Service**

Customers **are** the most important part of any business. Research shows that 60% of customer defections are a result of poor customer service. Practicing good customer service will help satisfy existing customers and bring in new customers.

#### **Tip #8: Communicate with Your Customers Through the Web**

An increasing number of people are using social media to communicate with one another. If your customers are part of this growing group of consumers, you should consider using web-based and/or mobile technologies to reach and interact with them.

#### **Tip #9: Create a Brand for Your Business and Products**

Creating a brand name or local identity for your farm business and products may improve the demand for the products, the prices you receive, and farm profitability. Developing an image and logo are important first steps in establishing an effective brand for your farm business.

#### **Tip #10: Develop a Marketing Plan**

A marketing plan is a written document that communicates your farm's marketing goals and objectives and how you plan to achieve them. A marketing plan will help you prioritize your marketing efforts and help to ensure that you are communicating with your target market as efficiently and effectively as possible.