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Farmers' Market Display Checklist

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Before the market season begins (or between market seasons), take some time to evaluate your display and make any necessary changes/upgrades. The time and resources you invest in participating in a market are significant; you deserve the best return on that investment. That return will be achieved by having a quality product to sell, a display that shows your product to best advantage and a great attitude.

Display Preparation

	Complete	In Progress	Not Required	Comments
Sketch out your display area on graph paper				
Make a product list month-by-month of the items you will be selling				
For each of the products identify what type of container you will use to display it				
Make a list of the supplemental display materials you will need—banners, signs, table coverings, awnings/umbrellas, tables, racks, water containers, misting bottles, bags, etc.				
If you use a scale at your market...get it calibrated				

Plan Ahead Tasks

Collect photographs of your farm and determine how you want to use them in your display				
Collect recipes, product use and care tips, brochures, business cards or any other promotional items—get them designed and printed making sure your farm name and contact info are clearly visible and accurate.				
Evaluate your display materials. Repair broken parts, clean/repaint tables, racks, etc. Wash/clean banners, tarps, table coverings.				
Make attractive, durable product labels. Do not include the prices on the permanent labels; instead leave a space where the price can be added.				
Create a binder with frequently asked questions and the answers for market staff to reference				
Set up a mock display and check your measurements. Take photos, makes notes.				

Tips for increasing your sales...

- **Make sure your signage and prices are clearly visible.**
 - Nothing smaller than 12 point font
 - Choose a plain and readable font
 - Use high-contrast colors
- **Set up your display to have as many linear feet of display space as possible**
 - If you have the room, consider a U-shaped or V-shaped display.
 - Consider smaller “islands” rather than a single, long space.
- **Be customer-centered**
 - Leave a bit of open space near the register so that customers can easily write a check or at least set down their purchase to get out their wallet.
 - Give a little something extra—a recipe, a sample, or just a sincere smile
 - Provide opportunities for customers to give feedback
 - Treat your last customer as graciously as your first
- **Give your product the love it deserves**
 - Keep your display looking full at all times
 - Replenish often
 - Provide shade and moisture whenever possible



Survey Says...

Shoppers are fickle animals; hard to attract and quick to move on to greener pastures when they don't get what they want.

- *“I don't like to bend over.”* Don't put things you really want to sell on the ground. From eye-level to waist-high is prime shopping space.
- *“That looks pretty narrow....?”* Don't overcrowd your display. Customers don't like being worried about bumping into things or knocking something over.
- *“Oh look...”*. Use color, movement and smell to draw shoppers into your display. And understand that most customers will immediately turn (or look) right first so put your most compelling products where they will get noticed.
- *“Hmmm...I wonder what that is?”* Label, label, label! Some shoppers will stop and ask questions...many will just move to another vendor.
- *“Sorry, I don't carry much cash...”* If you are not set up to accept credit or debit cards then you should be prepared to take personal checks.



Additional Resources:

- **National Sustainable Agriculture Information Center.** ATTRA (<http://www.attra.org/>) provides many useful resources for farmers in the form of in-depth publications on production practices, alternative crop and livestock enterprises, innovative marketing, organic certification, and highlights of local, regional, USDA and other federal sustainable ag activities.
- **Agricultural Marketing Resource Center.** AgMRC (<http://www.agmrc.org/>) is an electronic, national resource for producers interested in value-added agriculture. Browse commodities and products, investigate market and industry trends, study business creation and operation, read research results and locate value-added resources.
- **eXtension Entrepreneurs and Their Communities** (<http://www.extension.org>) offers a monthly webinar series with many topics of interest to direct marketers.
- **Vermont New Farmer Network** (<http://www.uvm.edu/newfarmer>) offers information on all aspects of starting and operating a farm business.
- **Women's Agricultural Network (WAgN)** (<http://www.uvm.edu/wagn>) provides education and technical assistance for all ages and stages of farm business development.