

Collecting and Using Data



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Professional Development for Ohio Farmers Market Managers and OSU Extension Educators on Creating a Culture of Data Collection for Sustainability Planning for Markets and Farmers

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Data 101 for busy markets and vendors

1. Collect as little data as possible. Be strict with yourself and your stakeholders. Some of our stakeholders forget that the market is not a laboratory, but an actual mercantile space! Also, every piece of data you collect will need to be checked (probably by you) for accuracy and relevance so the less added work the better.
2. Hone those audiences for the data. Using a few simple tools, you should break it down to a few partners each season that you want to influence or keep engaged.
3. Start with the simple data. Any data point that requires complete collection (like vendor sales) or advanced calculations (like average sale per shopper) should be a later goal and not a goal at the beginning.
4. Promise yourself that for each main data point (metric) that you gather, you will use it often. On social media, in your email signature, on chalkboards, shared with vendors.

Collecting data is the next step; depending on the metrics you choose, the collection method will differ



DOT surveys; (part of the RMA suite of tools)



"bean poll" weather (and bias) safeguarded version of the Dot Survey



Interview or intercept surveys



online or self-selected surveys (including QR)



Dot Surveys pros and cons:

Pros

Very participatory!

Less onerous to manage

Easy to explain



Cons

Response bias is an issue

Weather can be a factor

Answers can be confusing



Interview Surveys pros and cons:

Pros

Detailed information

Easier to ensure representation

Follow up can be done

Cons

Requires training of surveyors

Time required can be a factor

Technology or transcription needed



FMC Market Observation Form

docs.google.com

QR/Online Surveys pros and cons:

Pros

Detailed information

Can be offered over time

Follow-up can be done

Cons

Requires a well-built survey

Time required can be a factor

Technology needed

Representation can be skewed

To begin data collection, plan the dates well ahead of time in order to organize the labor and resources needed. Weather or other issues may arise which as the day arrives, may make it seem better to cancel but if it all possible, keep that agreed upon date.

Alert your vendors and shoppers to the collection dates using the market website, Facebook page and signs at the market leading up to the collection days.

If volunteers are needed, then adding that request to chalked market signs, the market Facebook page and in email newsletters weeks ahead may increase chances of encouraging market enthusiasts to help with collection.

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Consider following or adapting the example schedule presented below. The underlined days are the primary days for two days of collection. However, if you have the data collection team available and would like more precise data, the other two dates should be added.

Counting Days	On the 4th, <u>10th</u> , <u>16th</u> and 22nd market days
Surveys	On the 5th, <u>11th</u> , <u>17th</u> and 23rd market days (if unable to conduct on Counting Days)
Observation	On the 6th, <u>12th</u> , <u>18th</u> and 24th market days

Ideally surveys should be conducted on the same day as counting visitors. If two seasons of data collection are desired, repeat the dates above for each season.

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1. Choose the tool that gets the information you need, NOT the tool you think is “easiest”
2. Build a team to assist, train them, support them. If done right ahead of time, survey time will be much easier.
3. Communicate early and often to the market community.

Comprehension Quiz

1. What are the 3 methods of data collection this guide recommends for farmers markets?
2. Name one drawback to Dot Surveys
3. How many times does this guide recommend that you count visitors in one season?
4. What does this guide recommend you do if you want to measure a multi season market site?