**Marketing for Profit: Tools for Success Case Studies**

Farmer Interviewed: Linda Titus, North Windsor Berries (Windsor, NY)

The lessons that stuck with me the most was that my customer base is fragmented due to the number of marketing channels I participate in (wholesale, CSA, and farmstand/u-pick) so my message needs to be both more targeted and have different ones depending on the channel. As well, I learned that I need to have someone (my daughter) focus time on keeping our social media presence up to date since it is very important but I don’t have the time for it.

**Did the webinars and online program prompt you to review your own farm’s marketing practices, strategies or tactics?**

Each year I work at being better able to target my customers through a variety of paid marketing strategies. Because we operate in several marketing channels this can sometimes be challenging. We are moving more into the wholesale and CSA markets and this message is very different from the retail/u-pick message for customers. This creates a scenario where we must be much more savvy about our use of technology, including email, social media and printed brochures. As well, we must be very targeted and clear in our messaging since in these channels we often are not the ones selling ourselves to the end user of our produce. We are working with our local CCE Educator to hone our marketing message. As well, we have joined a local group who has created a CSA specific to low-income consumers. They sell our shares for us throughout the season (which takes the burden off of us) but also means that we need to have a very clear message about our farm, products, philosophy, etc. so that nothing gets lost in translation.

We are working at being better at collecting our customer’s contact information so that we can send information on opening day and when we start picking strawberries and tomatoes as those are some of the largest “pulls” for people. This is especially important as many of our customers are driving several hours to visit our farm and pick items such as strawberries, tomatoes, beans, sweet peas and more! We still need to do a better job of marketing ourselves as one of the only farms in the region who does u-pick of vegetables, especially as more interest is created in understanding the local food system. As well, more of our customers are looking for communication via email or other electronic methods so I am looking at how to satisfy this. I am not comfortable with technology, but will be adding the ability for customers to pay by credit card this season since I understand it is a convenience and will allow for larger sales, especially for flowers and u-pick of fruits and vegetables, such as tomatoes.

I will also be programming my cash register to track which products are being sold in the following categories (retail/farm stand, u-pick, wholesale, etc…) so that I can better understand which vegetables are most popular and how I should dedicate my land resources. I already do this on a basic level for crop insurance purposes but not to this extent.

**What were the impacts of these changes on your farm? (Please elaborate on how your changes brought about these impacts.)**

* New customer base/ increased customer base: Our CSA has grown from 25 members in 2012 to 150 in 2015! Our wholesale markets have transitioned from a single vendor (Wegmans for winter squash in Oct/Nov) to now several food banks/food pantries purchasing 15+ cases/week during the period of July-October or November. This has given us more stability, increased revenue, and the ability to provide produce to those most in need while still remaining profitable.
* Increased product line: Each year we evaluate which types of produce sold best/better than the rest. We try to add several new lines of produce each year on a trial basis (50-100 row feet). In 2015 these products will include leeks, Brussel sprouts, and honeydew.
* Added/changed marketing venues: We have moved out of direct marketing at farmers markets and into bringing people to our farm for the farmstand and u-pick as well as CSA and more wholesale.
* Changed from part time to full time farming: In 2015 we will be hiring our first full time employee who is not family! This is directly tied to the growth in our CSA.