North Windsor Berries Marketing Plan

**Overview of Farm/Operation:**

North Windsor Berries is owned and operated by Bill & Linda Titus, and is located on a 24 acre (more land down the road? How much?) fruit and vegetable farm in their eighth year of operation (is this correct?). They transitioned from a dairy farm to a fruit and vegetable operation focusing on strawberries, pumpkins and sweet corn. They started in farmers’ markets 2006 and in their height were visiting farmers’ markets four days per week. In 2009 a high tunnel was constructed as part of participation in a Natural Resources Conservation Services grant program for the purposes of growing raspberries. In 2010 a greenhouse was constructed and a nursery component was added to the product mix. The farm grows their own starter plants and flowers as well as for other farms and to sell to the public. In 2010 North Windsor Berries left farmers’ markets to concentrate on their u-pick and farm stand. The farm operates a u-pick and farm stand operation open seven days a week, as well as marketing their products through wholesale channels and most recently a CSA program – started in 2012. Their season runs May through Oct 31st. Their average yearly net income is $(need this number), spread among their marketing channels.

The farm also donates produce throughout the season to local food pantries and recently started a gleaning program. This provides thousands of pounds of fresh vegetables to those in the greatest need while allowing the farm to keep their highest quality produce for the stand and their CSA without loss.

In 2013, North Windsor Berries is looking to transition out of one of their wholesale markets and enhance another – their CSA.

**Marketing objectives: What are you trying to accomplish?**

North Windsor Berries’ goal is to be known for quality and price for their products: greenhouse, small fruits and produce. They want to expand their customer base to include more young and middle-aged professionals (for their CSA) as well as young families (coming to the farm stand for u-pick). They want to increase their market share outside of Broome County and surrounding counties to include Central and Western NY, as well as the Northern Tier of PA, as they are one of only a handful of u-pick produce farms in NYS.

North Windsor Berries uses primarily print media for their marketing, as well as word of mouth and roadside signage. This includes listings in newspapers, postcards for their customers advising of the start of their season as well as special events. They are included on several online listings which are static. They do not have the capacity to maintain a social media marketing channel. They currently spend $xx (need this info & if you have broken out the way it is below or know % it would be great) on marketing through these channels (which includes printing, postage, and posting of classified ads.

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|   | **North Windsor Berries Marketing Cost Trends** |
|   | **2010** | **2011** | **2012** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** |
| **Marketing Channels** |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Fliers |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Postcards |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| CSA flier |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Newspapers |   |   |   |   |   |   |
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The farm is looking at how to maximize their marketing funds through more targeting marketing (dependent on customer location) as well as transitioning to email of some marketing materials – potentially their special events flier and postcard for the start of the season.

The farm wants to increase their sales in each of their respective marketing channels. Each year they project a 10-15% increase in sales, which is how they plan for planting. Since they will be exiting one of their wholesale market channels (a grocery store) and looking to double their CSA membership in 2013, it is worth using a table below to illustrate trends from the past few years and project trends for the upcoming years. Any information you can give here, even if it’s a guesstimate will be great.

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|   | **North Windsor Berries Sales Trends** |
|   | **2010** | **2011** | **2012** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** |
| **Marketing Channels** |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Farmers' Market |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| U-pick |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Farm stand |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Wegmans |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Agway |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Lone Maple Farm |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| CSA |  n/a | n/a |   |   |   |   |
| Local Restaurants |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

What this table does not show is that while the displacement of farmers’ market sales for sales at u-pick and the farm stand – the increase in available time for the farm to get work done as well as focus on their other channels was invaluable. This table does demonstrate the growth in sales as the farm was better able to focus on their u-pick operation and other market channels, including several wholesale options. Operating within these channels for a few years gave the farm the opportunity to evaluate their value and decide on whether to stay in or exit for another channel. This information, coupled with more not included on this table, helped the farm make the decision to discontinue selling to Wegmans (a local grocery store) due to the initial success of their CSA as well as information that future requirements for selling would make it unattractive and not worthwhile (in the ability to cover costs and make a reasonable profit).

**Market Research: What is the market size?**

There are two aspects considered in evaluating the market size. The first is the immediate market (within 75miles) and then the extended market (within 200 miles). This two-pronged approach is key as a mapping of customers showed that customers are coming from either the immediate area (within an hour-plus drive) or making their visit more of a destination due to either passing through on their way to summer homes/vacation or as a destination visit combined with other stops (potentially).

The market size for the immediate market extremely attractive for North Windsor Berries as it includes several universities, hospitals, and high-tech firms – indicating potential for disposable income. As well, there is a general increase in those interested in knowing where their food comes from, preparing more foods from scratch, home preservation and more. This coupled with the fact that there is fairly little competition for the u-pick aspect of their operation means a large potential market size. I need to fill both these in still.

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| **Southern Tier of NY/Northern Tier of PA Target Market** |
| **Counties** | **Population** | **Median Income** | **% of 30-45yrs old** | **% of 55+yrs old** | **Concentration of farm stands/u-pick** |
| Broome (NY) |   |   |   |   |   |
| Tioga (NY) |   |   |   |   |   |
| Chenango (NY) |   |   |   |   |   |
| Delaware (NY) |   |   |   |   |   |
| Sullivan (NY) |   |   |   |   |   |
| Ulster (NY) |   |   |   |   |   |
|   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Bradford (PA) |   |   |   |   |   |
| Susquehanna (PA) |   |   |   |   |   |
| Tioga (PA) |   |   |   |   |   |
| Wayne (PA) |   |   |   |   |   |

The market size for the extended market is a little more difficult to pinpoint. But the same table can be used to ascertain potential. This is definitely much more dependent on marketing.

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| **Central NY, Finger Lakes, Western NY, Downstate NY, Northern Tier of PA Target Market** |
| **Counties** | **Population** | **Median Income** | **% of 30-45yrs old** | **% of 55+yrs old** | **Concentration of farm stands/u-pick** |
| Cortland (NY) |   |   |   |   |   |
| Chemug (NY) |   |   |   |   |   |
| Tompkins (NY) |   |   |   |   |   |
| Cayuga (NY) |   |   |   |   |   |
| Onondaga (NY) |   |   |   |   |   |
| Otsego (NY) |   |   |   |   |   |
| Oswego (NY) |   |   |   |   |   |
| Ontario (NY) |   |   |   |   |   |
| Seneca (NY) |   |   |   |   |   |
| Yates (NY) |   |   |   |   |   |
| Steuben (NY) |   |   |   |   |   |
| Schuyler (NY) |   |   |   |   |   |
| Wayne (NY) |   |   |   |   |   |
| Monroe (NY) |   |   |   |   |   |
| Orange (NY) |   |   |   |   |   |
| Ulster (NY) |   |   |   |   |   |

**Competition: Who else is doing this?**

North Windsor Berries competition in the region (Southern Tier of NYS) is comprised of a handful of other farm stands and u-pick fruits with comparable product selection and quality. There are roughly three or four within the county open each season; and roughly that many (on average) in the surrounding counties. However, their competition in the u-pick vegetable arena is virtually non-existent. There is one other farm in the county who allows u-pick for ~2 crops and another in the surrounding county (Tioga County). As well, they are only one of three CSA’s in the county, as well as the only CSA which delivers to work-sites. Therefore they possess a competitive advantage and want to gain as much market share in these areas as possible.

As the main goal is to bring customers to their farmstand or else purchase their produce through the CSA, they must focus on telling the story of their quality and diversity of produce as well as longevity of season.

**Communication Plan: How will you reach the market?**

North Windsor Berries main marketing methods are through print media as well as word of mouth and roadside signage. They are listed on several searchable websites. They do not have the infrastructure to start or maintain a social media presence. Through their expansion into the CSA market they have expanded their marketing base to those who would never have visited their farmstand but want access to fresh produce. They will be expanding the shares in their CSA program to 50 (from 25) so this will greatly enhance their communication with the market. As well, they are always expanding their marketing area – expanding their marketing into counties further on the periphery of Broome County to encourage agri-tourism visitors and customers.