

Always Something Farm

122 Glidden Road, Croydon, NH 03773

603-863-6787

407 NH Route 10, Croydon, NH 03773

Seasonal (April to October) - (603) 477-8120

Gary@ASFarm.com

www.asfarm.com

Marketing Plan

Summary of marketing plan

The goal of this marketing plan is to track ongoing marketing efforts, explore new marketing ventures and learn what marketing technique is best for our business, and to integrate the plan and action steps into the daily operation of our business for future growth, promotional opportunity, and increased sales.

Objectives:

- Continue to develop and sell consistent premium compost product.
- Increase production sufficiently to move toward more bulk sales.
- Explore expansion of feedstock and compost recipe to include food scraps from supermarkets, food production operations, etc.
- Continue to offer high quality services and diverse product sales from our sales yard.

Product Overview:

Always Something Farm recently expanded our business to include compost, garden mix, loam, super loam, and bark mulch. The farm is operated by Gary, Julie and Alexis Quimby. Gary has attended the Maine Compost School and earned a certificate in Technical Ability in Composting. Gary has learned the proper methods for mixing and processing a nutrient rich compost produced on our farm.

Always Something Farm has been composting for 2 years. We strive to mix the proper materials to develop the ideal environment for microorganisms to thrive and multiply. A temperature between 140 and 160 degrees is reached to kill any unwanted pathogens. A windrow process is used that slowly breaks down to make a nutrient rich compost. Once the curing process is complete, the compost is screened and ready for sale.

The Always Something Farm compost operator and owner runs the business full time. Approximately 50 percent of the time is spent in collections and 50 percent in compost operations, including facility management, marketing, and sales.

Our sales goals include: 1) Increase sales at least 25%, from 500 yards per year to 3,000-5,000 yards per year; 2) Maintain existing collection customers for ongoing quality feedstock; and 3) Expand potential revenues from tip fees.

Customer Analysis - Target Market – Who are our customers?

We will be selling primarily to:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Direct market retail customers | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Works |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Garden centers/other retailers | <input type="checkbox"/> Construction sites |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nurseries/Silviculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Top soil producers |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Erosion control | <input type="checkbox"/> Golf courses |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agricultural applications | <input type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse growers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sod production | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Landscapers/lawn care |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Turf grass | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |

We will be targeting customers by:

Product line:

Geographic area: 40 mile radius--Includes towns in New Hampshire and Vermont.

Demographics: Home owners, gardeners, small farms, landscapers

Psychographic: Local, farm produced

Needs/Preferences of customers: Natural, farm produced, locally-made, New Hampshire made. Multiple services provided – delivery, excavating, landscaping.

Competition Analysis – Who are our competitors?

| Company Contact Information | Types of products/ Characteristics | How Packaged | Service/delivery options | Price range |
|--|---|--------------|---|-------------|
| Go Green Landscapes Claremont, NH 603-410-7434 gogreennh@gmail.com | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bark mulches • Organic compost • Topsoil & soil mixes • Sands & Gravel | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 to 5 yard residential delivery • Does not have website | |
| Eccardt Farm Inc. Washington , NH (21 miles) 603-495-3157 Eccardtfarm@gsinet.net | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manure | Bulk | Des not have website | \$25/yard |
| Stonefalls Gardens Henniker, NH (32 miles) www.stonefallsgardens.com | | Bulk | Pick-up or delivery | |
| Bazin Farms Compost and Landscape Materials Bellows Falls, VT (35 mi) bazinfarm@hotmail.com | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cow manure • Horse manure • Yard trimmings | Bulk | | |

| Company Contact Information | Types of products/ Characteristics | How Packaged | Service/delivery options | Price range |
|---|---|--------------------------|---|--|
| Vermont Compost Company Woodstock, VT (36 mi) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved for organic use Manure, leaves, various | Various sized bags, bulk | Only sells in bulk and full pallets – retail and professional targets | Garden supply company sells on Internet— 6-Bags of Vermont Compost, 6 Quart each. Total weight is 32 pounds. \$43.50 Potting Soil 12 Qt. \$21.95 |
| Long Wind Farm Lyme Road Thetford, VT (39 mi) (802) 785-4642 longwindfarm.com | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Premium compost | | | \$50.00/cu. yd. \$20.00 loading fee applies; delivery fee applies. |

Market forecast (market needs analysis)—how competitive is the market? What are the market and industry trends?: The New Hampshire economy remains fairly strong. Always Something Farm is in a good location for marketing its compost. The farm sales yard has frontage on a main road (Route 10) with close proximity to cities and towns throughout central New Hampshire and Vermont. The Sullivan County UNH Cooperative Extension is active in the region and there are several farmers markets that are popular with residents.

Quimby Construction has been a reputable construction business in the area for a number of years excavation, septic systems (certified by state of New Hampshire and Presby Environmental), and miscellaneous carpentry. The Company’s expansion into the composting business is a natural way to complement the family’s farm operation. The good reputation of Quimby Construction and its extensive contacts in the region supports its composting, mulch, and soil farm enterprise.

Always Something Farm offers a wide diversity of services, including manure pickup, excavation, lot clean-up, hay sales, and more. These service add strength to its product sales business component.

Always Something Farm offers two compost products—a pure compost which is a great soil amendment for garden or lawn and a compost/loam mix (a garden mix or super loam) great for raised gardens and lawn repairs or new lawns. We also carry three kinds of bark mulch, a dark blend (a fine textured pine and spruce blend a red blend (pine and spruce blend color enhanced to look like hemlock at a cost savings) and a light blend (a mix of fir, spruce, and pine that produces a natural light brown bark).

Always Something Farm has permit by notification for potentially accepting food waste. The Farm already accepts a variety of materials, including yard waste and other organic

materials, along with asphalt and concrete. Accepting food waste from supermarkets and other large generators would allow for additional tip fee opportunity and increased revenue.

Currently there are two other compost operations in the County. These operations are also farm-based and sell directly from farm (no off-site yard sales). Other operations are located more than 30 miles away. With little competition, its prime sales yard location, and diversity of products offered, Always Something Farm is well positioned for strong growth opportunity.

Additional Potential Markets

Longacres' Nursery Center
Lebanon, NH 03766 (20 miles away)
(603) 448-6110
www.longacresnurserycenter.com

Walpole Mountain View Winery
Walpole, NH
(603) 756-3948
www.bhvineyard.com

Putney Mountain Winery
Quechee, VT
(802) 295-5335
www.putneywine.com

Robert Haas Vineyard
Chester-Chester Depot, VT
(802) 875-2139

J T's Landscaping & Lawn Care
Claremont, NH
(603) 542-2385
www.jtlandscapingnh.com

Bull Landscaping, LLC
Newport, NH
(603) 863-3366

Avery Lanes Landscaping
Newport, NH
(603) 863-5588

Berry's Landscaping Services
Charlestown, NH
(603) 542-2871

Ringscape Landscaping
 3613 Claremont Road, Charlestown, NH
 (603) 542-7779

Situation Analysis: Utilize the SWOT analysis to list your company’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (location, resources, reputation, services, personnel, product, competition, etc):

| Strengths | Weaknesses | Opportunities | Threats |
|--|-------------------|--|--|
| Excellent business diversification – diverse services & products | | Diversification presents tremendous options for growth | |
| Good road frontage | | Great opportunity for increasing number & diversity of customers | |
| Good business contacts from associates with Quimby Construction | | Opportunity for growth in landscape & construction business | |
| Good website and local advertising; great business connections | | Locally produced; off-farm, yard sales; professional business expertise; compost expertise | Two nearby farm competitors; bagged sales from Vermont operations. |

Factors that may affect our business

Economic factors: Always Something Farm is utilizing our existing business experience and operation, Quimby Construction, to leverage our on-farm composting resources and expertise to develop a diversified operation offering a wide-range of services and products. Our competition is limited and our growth potential in the business strong.

Regulatory and Legal Factors: None; has permit by notification.

Environmental Factors: None.

PRODUCT

Describe the product: Always Something Farm strives to mix the proper materials to develop the ideal environment for microorganisms to thrive and multiply. A temperature between 140 and 160 degrees is reached to kill any unwanted pathogens. A windrow process is used that slowly breaks down to make a nutrient rich compost. Once the curing process is complete, the compost is screened and ready for sale.

Features (what features will you emphasize):

- Brand name (logo): Always Something Farm
- Quality: Premium, consistent
- Scope of product line: two premium compost products – compost and garden mix
- Unique characteristics: Locally produced by experienced and trained composter operator.
- Packaging: Bulk

- Price: \$35 yard; \$40 yard (delivered); Garden mix/Super Loam: \$30 yard; \$35 yard (delivered)

Services provided: Bulk product sales; onsite loading or delivery available. Delivery offered at \$1 per mile. Collection services provided for manure pick-up.

Comparison: The advantages our product has over our competition....: Clean, high nutrient content. Locally produced. Great product for home and garden uses, landscaping projects, and more.

How does the product meet the needs of targeted segments? Homeowners and gardeners are using Always Something Farm compost to meet their home and garden soil supplement needs. Landscapers purchase the product for landscaping projects, erosion control. Small farms benefit from consistent, premium quality and competitive pricing.

How is inventory managed to meet demand?: Product placement is carefully monitored to assure that demand can be met and sufficient product moved.

Quality – How is quality assured? Type of testing to be done? Frequency? Compost ingredients are monitored for contaminants prior to mixing in windrows. Windrow temperature is regularly monitored. Compost is tested.

Feedstock

What feedstocks will you use?: Manure, yard waste, small amounts food waste

Where do off-farm feedstocks come from? How do they get to the operation?:

No tip fee charged for drop-off of leaf and grass clippings, yard waste, manure, or vegetative waste. Tip fee charged for drop-off of brush. Tip fee is charged for pick-up services for manure.

PRICING

Pricing strategy – which strategy?

Markup on cost (What % mark-up?):

Suggested price:

Competitive: Competitive for premium product, plus competitive tip fee.

Other: Tip fee charged on brush

Discuss the pricing strategy, expected volume, and decisions for the following

- List price: Compost - \$35 yard; \$40 yard (delivered); Garden mix/Super Loam: \$30 yard; \$35 yard (delivered)
- Discounts: **Discounted for larger volume bulk sales**
 - Note: If trying to use down inventory, never sell at a straight discount on product (e.g., 25% off), Instead, offer a “buy one (yard, bag, etc.) and get a second one at half off.” This still equals a 25 percent discount on the total purchase if the customer buys two, and no discount if they only purchase one.
- Bundling (e.g., product and delivery): Provides loading and delivery services; offers a wide-range of other services.

- Payment terms and financing options:

Are the prices in line with our image? Yes, competitive for high quality product.

Describe the anticipated immediate effects of the marketing strategy and expected long-term results (for example, revenues and expenses, break-even analysis). Start slow, but consistent to ensure adequate supply of materials to meet demand and not become too overstretched in terms of labor.

Do prices cover costs and leave a profit margin?

Sales Forecast: **How are sales tracked on a monthly basis? Who is responsible? How does sales compare to forecasts.** – Owner and operator of Always Something Farm

PLACE -- PRODUCT DISTRIBUTION

Distribution channels: Direct market sales.

Describe direct marketing strategy: Good road frontage and signage for sales yard; Use of companion business, Quimby Construction to help market product; website and word of mouth.

Logistics, including delivery and order fulfillment: Provides onsite loading and delivery.

Packaging: Bulk

PROMOTION

Our image is: high quality and good service.

What we say about our product and business: Our products are 100% Natural, 100% Recycled, and 100% Organic. Good for gardening – GREAT for the environment!

We use the following promotion/advertising: Good use of website promotion. Sales yard frontage signage.

| Type of Promotion | Timeline | Estimated Cost | Projected results |
|--|---|----------------|--|
| Website | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2011- Developed a professional appearing website • Describes products, prices Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using testimonials • Pictures of plants grown with compost • Posting ingredients on website • Volume of compost suggested for various uses • Posting compost analysis on website • Create and trade links to related websites • List website in Buy Fresh Buy Local, localharvest.org, other farm guides • Use an e-newsletter that links to your website • Put your website and email address on all farm printed material. • Look at additional ways to expose website – signage, ads, business cards, listings on tourist websites, etc. | Low | Excellent exposure for increasing customer base and business |
| Facebook | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider FB page –its free | Free | Offers increased exposure opportunity |
| Twitter Blogging YouTube | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link FB page to twitter – announce spring compost available, etc. | | |
| Electronic newsletter | | | |
| Personal contacts Business cards | Ongoing – always have business cards to distribute | | |
| Brochures | | | |
| Fliers | | | |
| Direct mail | | | |
| Coupons | | | |
| Newspaper Magazines Telephone Directory | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does advertise in local Shopper. • Consider sending press | Low cost/Free | |

| Type of Promotion | Timeline | Estimated Cost | Projected results |
|-------------------|--|----------------|-------------------|
| | releases. | | |
| Radio | | | |
| Television | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider doing educational spots on local TV – e.g., provide compost for plants that are featured in garden show. Get product placement if possible. | Free | |
| Other | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has place mats in local restaurant (Country Kitchen) Consider offering workshops, provide compost for demo plots at local garden, town hall, etc. | Low cost/Free | |
| Other | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get listing on New Hampshire Made http://www.nhmade.com Consider listings on Craigslist, regional listserves, garden listserves, ebay | Free | |

Key points of marketing strategy

Always Something Farm marketing strategy includes:

- Designing appropriate compost operation to supplement business plan.
 - Attended the Maine Compost School and earned a certificate in Technical Ability in Composting.
 - Learned the proper methods for mixing and processing a nutrient rich compost produced on the farm.
 - Extensive literature review and research on compost businesses, techniques, operations, and sales strategies
- Researching compost marketing techniques
 - Attending compost marketing workshop.
 - Consulting with compost experts, on pricing, packaging labels, etc..
- Researching and testing appropriate packaging to meet the needs of customers.
- Researching area compost products, how sold, pricing, etc.
- Good use of website for marketing product and services.
- Excellent business development through leverage of Quimby Construction with Always Something Farm for diversity of services and products to create strong business portfolio.

Additional Marketing Strategies to Consider:

- Get to know the local Agricultural Extension agents.
- Shop materials around at Farmers markets, even if you do not have a booth.
- List on NOFA, regional farm and local promotion websites.

- Get listed on County/regional tourism websites.
- Provide demos and education to retail outlet sales staff.
- Decorate farm stand, farmer market stand with pictures of feedstock suppliers, process, and product.
- Showcase plants (and pictures of plants) grown with your compost.
- Market product to garden centers in February-March.
- Get listed on Find-A-Composter - <http://www.findacomposter.com>
- Consider listings on Craigslist, regional listserves, garden listserves, ebay
- Join Internet discussions – both helpful for learning and getting the word out about your product.
- <http://forums2.gardenweb.com/forums/soil/>
- List products and services on agricultural websites, blogs, listserves.
- Focus on selling your brand, not “compost.”
- Sell benefits, deliver features: Features are true, factual statements such as “this compost contains 10 percent organic matter.” benefits are the favorable attributes associated with the feature, e.g., elevated levels of organic matter improve water holding capacity, pore space, friability and cation exchange capacity in soil. “Success with a 35-pound bag.”
- Provide a strong product guarantee; List all of the product’s beneficial attributes;
- Showcase high-profile property(ies) where compost was used or users of product – local celebrity, town offices, etc.
- Leverage the value added opportunity created by the sale of complementary products, such as compost and topsoil, or a plant in a pot containing your compost.
- Get to know local landscape designers, garden associations, etc. A lot of these folks have blogs that are great for promotion. Send them product samples, do demo gardens in conjunction with them, etc.
- Post testimonials on website, literature, booths, etc.
- Advertise in local community newspapers, “shoppers,” etc. Send them press releases as well.
- Join garden blogs, etc. post educational information on composting, vermicomposting.
- Join business networking groups in local area, local Chamber of Commerce, and trade associations.
- Consider a joint venture with other businesses in advertising your product/service (e.g., nursery, vineyard, etc.). Inquire about providing a seminar or workshop for potential customers.

Disclaimer:

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