Further Questions for Producers

Hello,

My name is Elizabeth Spoth and I am working with Cornell Cooperative Extension on the Finger Lakes Cheese project. Some of the goals of this project include finding more and better ways to market Finger Lakes Cheeses to consumers, restaurants, and new retailers in more markets.

As part of this project, I am trying to gather as much information as possible about the existing cheese market and avenues that are already being used to get cheese to consumers. In order to have as complete of a picture as possible, I was hoping you could answer some questions about your business. I have attached some questions below you can complete and send back to me, and then I would like to follow up with a phone interview if possible.

Thank you,

Elizabeth Spoth

**PRODUCTS**

* What is your total annual production? Volume? Sales?
* Are your products available year round or seasonally?
* Do you sell your products wholesale? What is the price? Retail?
* Are you able to increase production for more wholesale?
* What format do you sell your products in (per pound, fixed weight, wheels, etc.)?

**MARKETING STRATEGIES**

* Where do you currently sell your products? What volume (lbs.) and sales ($) do you move through each avenue?
  + Which strategy do you find most successful and profitable? What are some of the pros and cons of each?
    - On farm sales?
    - Farmers’ markets?
    - Retail outlets?
* On-farm sales
  + Approximately how many customers do you have each week? How does this vary seasonally?
  + How do you advertise your farm/how do people hear about it?
  + What impact do Cheese Trail weekends have on your sales?
* Do you participate in other festivals or event weekends? What impact do these have on sales?
* Other retail Outlets:
  + What retailers or restaurants do you sell to?
  + How do these retailers place orders?
  + How often/how do you make deliveries?
  + What volume do you sell through this avenue?
  + If you deliver, what is your typical delivery day?
  + Is your price the same for every customer? Does it vary with volume/season/convenience for you?

**DISTIBUTORS**

* Do you go through a distributor to sell your products?
  + What distributor/location?
* What is your ordering frequency and volume?
* Do you deliver, or do they pick up?
* What do you think the pros/cons of using a distributor are?

**ONLINE SALES**

* What are your annual sales volume/$?
* What method do you use for payment (paypal, credit, pay on delivery, etc)
* Do you have wholesale prices online? Retail? Both?
* How do you deliver your products?
* What are the pros and cons of online sales?

**OTHER QUESTIONS**

* What are some major challenges that you face and how do you think they could be addressed?
* How do you envision growing your business?
  + Direct marketing? More wholesale? New markets?
* Is there anything else you think we should know?