Creating a Culture of Data Collection and Use for Ohio Farmers Markets

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OEFFA Conference

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

Project Overview

- Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of Ohio Farmers Markets work in data collection
- Train managers and extension educators on the suite of available tools and appropriate methodologies
- Create a culture of shared data collection and use to increase farmers markets sustainability and success.

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Project Overview

Oct. 1, 2020 – Sept. 30, 2022

PI – Eric Barrett

Co-PI – Christie Welch

Funder North Central SARE

Collaborators – Farmers Market Coalition

https://farmersmarketcoalition.org/

Ohio Farmers Market Network

https://ohiofarmersmarketnetwork.org/

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Project Activities to Date

- Created a database of Ohio farmers markets and if/how they collect data
- Visited farmers markets throughout Ohio to learn how they collect data
- Provided training to OSU Extension Educators on tools to assist farmers markets with data collection

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Project Activities – In Process

1. Create a database of the data-collection projects among Ohio markets and vendors
2. A "train the trainer" training on market data collection needs and processes
3. Conduct case studies of Ohio direct marketers that sell at one or more Ohio farmers markets to learn how they use data for business decision making.

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Culture of Data Collection at Markets

FARMERS MARKET COALITION

Since 2013: Evaluation resources, one on one and network support, software development, and analysis

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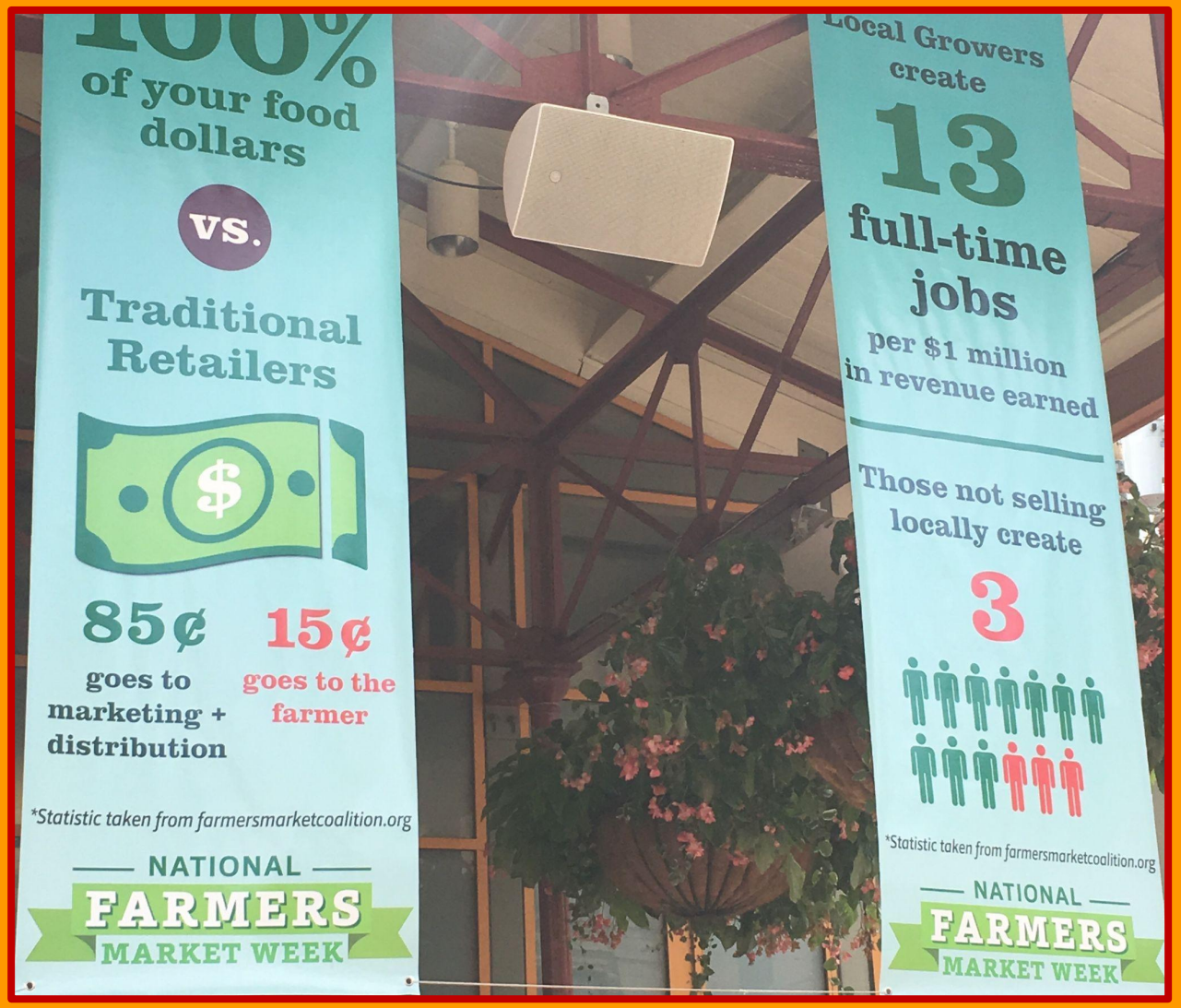
Culture of Data Collection

Findlay Market National Farmers Market Week



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Culture of Data Collection at Markets

Culture of Data Collection at Markets

Markets as Data Users

10% Annual Report Maker

25% Internal Data User

<45% Reporter to Funders

>5% All of the Above

15% None of these yet

Data Collection Comfort Among US Farmers Markets

In most cases, the comfort level for building a sustained data collection culture at a farmers market falls into one of four clusters:

Data collection comfort and use. Those organizations that:	Estimated percentage of market organizations in U.S. (by FMC and state and network leaders)	Current strategy used by FMC and its partners to assist the market operators
Group 1: Collect data methodically and use it regularly for external social media, for funders, or for annual reports to their community.	Estimated to be about 10% of U.S. market operators.	Sharing the pros and cons of all software and data management systems currently in use across U.S. Metrics software subscriptions and other infographic support, National Farmers Market Week Toolkit, amplification of reports via FMC social media.
Group 2: Collect data sporadically and usually only on request by their funders, rarely using it for their own communications or for internal analysis.	Estimated to be about 25% of the U.S. organizations.	Work with funders to ease/better understand data collection requirements, offer collection templates and refined metrics list. Share case studies of Group 1 graphics and uses. Sharing the pros and cons of all software and data management systems currently in use across U.S. Support from partners in collecting data is very helpful.
Group 3: Collect data regularly but use only for internal analysis and decision-making This group does not use data management software or systems, often managing the data in an informal way. Usually very resistant to any input from network leaders in changing their system.	Estimated to be roughly half or about 45% of U.S. organizations.	Offer data collection templates, refined metrics list, and strategies for more analysis. Support their ability to make analysis more useable to their market community. Webinars and templates focused on how and why to become a more proactive data-driven market.
Group 4: Almost no data collection comfort. Even though this group does have it, it doesn't see it as "data." Sees no need to publish it to their stakeholders, or assumes a data collection process will be too difficult for their market(s) to adopt	Estimated to be about 20% of the market operators.	Webinars and templates focused on how and why to become a more proactive data-driven market. Seek out their data-driven vendors (often certified organic or multi-channel businesses) that would welcome data from these markets to assist their own business planning. General market-level capacity building support also needed

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Culture of Data Collection at Markets

Markets are Great at Story + Data…

Culture of Data Collection at Markets

But could use their vendors help!

What data points would YOU use to describe your market(s)?

we'll come back to this later on…

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Farmers Market Metrics

Metrics Table

This table presents twelve of the metrics used in the Farmers Market Coalition's **Farmers Market Metrics Training**, with recommended data collection methods, instruments, and frequency noted. To further highlight the range of benefits that markets bring to their communities, metrics are categorized by the type of benefit, or *capital* that each represents.

Economic Capital
identifies financial rewards, including job creation and built infrastructure

Social Capital
facilitating social inclusion, bridging and bonding, and civic engagement

Human Capital
acquiring knowledge, skills, habits and capacity to make healthy choices

Ecological Capital
restoration, conservation or stewardship of natural resources

Metric	Collection Method	Collection Instrument	Collection Frequency	Capital	Reporting Context
* Average distance in miles traveled from farm to market	Document Review	Vendor Application	Once per season		{X} miles is the average distance food travels from farm to our market. That's fresh! Most food eaten in the U.S. has traveled nearly 2,500 miles.

Culture of Data Collection at Markets

Profile + Data

Remember to show what makes each market unique

Charlottesville City Market (established 1973)	**OnTheSquareVA Farmers Market** (established 2018)
Run by city Parks & Rec assisted by Friends of Market org	State sponsored - Governor's office supported but run by non-profit
Saturday mornings	Friday lunch time
Paid staff, full-time, year-round	Paid staff, part-time, seasonal
Parking lot	Grassy area surrounded by state agencies; very little parking
100 -110 vendors	16-25 vendors
Downtown, population 43,475	Downtown, population 227,000
20,001 - 30,000 square feet	<10,000 square feet
Permanent roadway signs; parking deck; surrounding by downtown shops, restaurants, businesses	Created primarily for state employees as part of an employee wellness campaign

Farmers Market Coalition Evaluation Resources

https://farmersmarketcoalition.org/education/evaluation-101/

https://farmersmarketmetrics.guide/resources/

https://lfscovid.localfoodeconomics.com

https://farmdirectincentives.guide/

Designing an effective, scalable data collection tool to measure farmers market impacts Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development
Volume 8, Supplement 3 / January 2019

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Data Collection at Ohio Markets

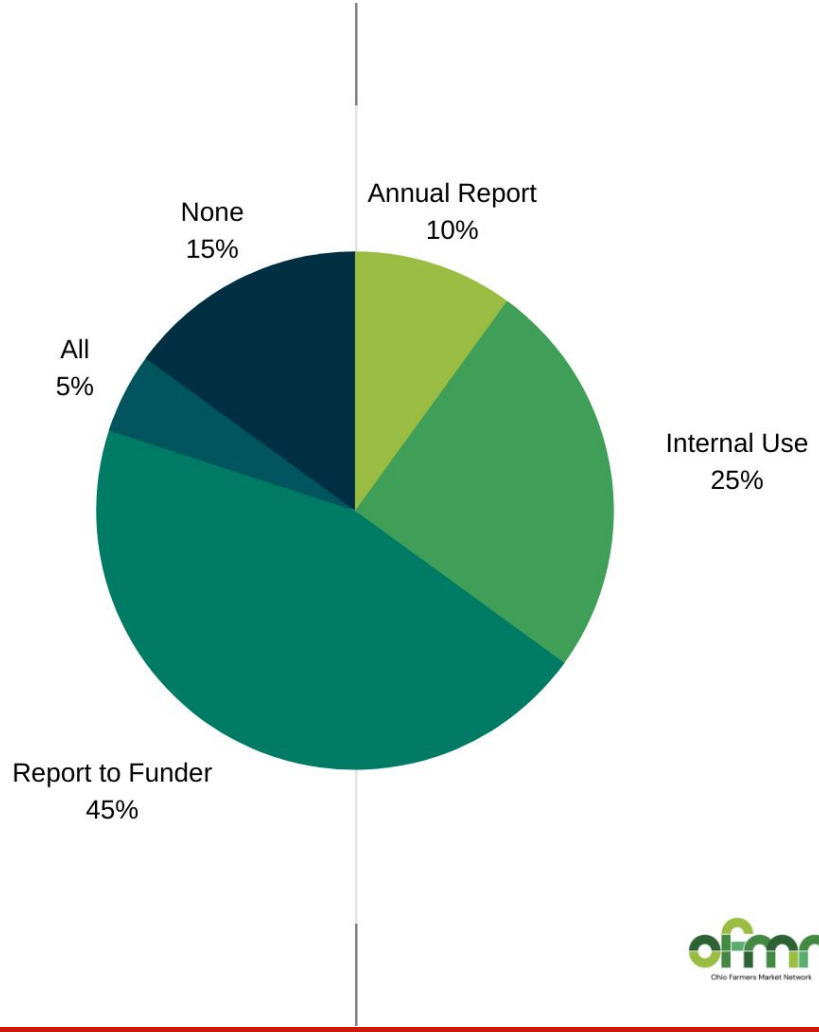
OHIO MARKETS FOLLOW NATIONAL TREND

What information do Ohio markets collect?

- Customer counts
- Customer zip codes
- Vendor sales

What methods do Ohio markets use most often?

- Rapid Market Assessments
- Anonymous surveys
- Tally counter



Data Collection at Ohio Markets

Data Collection at Ohio Markets

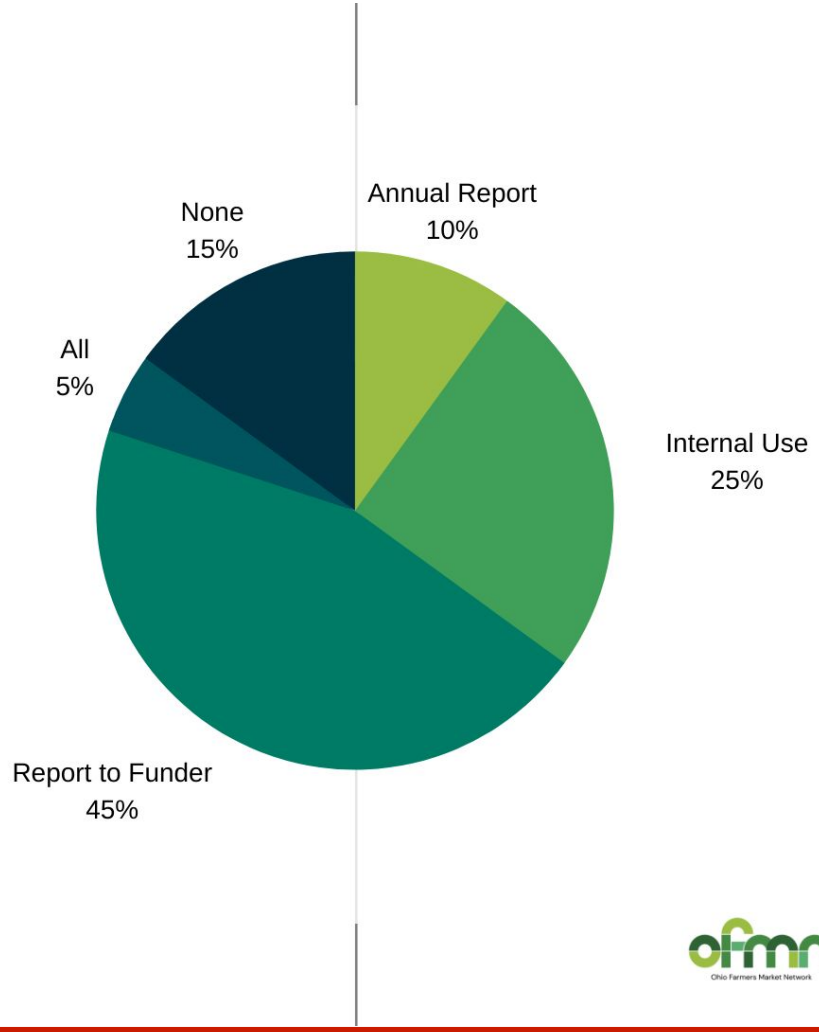
OHIO MARKETS FOLLOW NATIONAL TREND

What information do Ohio markets collect?

- Customer counts
- Customer zip codes
- Vendor sales
- Vendor zip codes
- Farm acreage
- Number of women or BIPOC owned businesses
- Number of different products sold
- Ratio of product types
- Distance traveled by vendors
- Total number of tokens sold
- Total number of SNAP dollars sold, used, reserved
- Number of social media followers
- Number of click throughs on newsletter

What methods do Ohio markets use most often?

- Rapid Market Assessments
- Anonymous surveys
- Tally counter
- Point of sales systems
- Market application
- Social media statistics
- Newsletter statistics



Data Collection at Ohio Markets

Data Collection at Ohio Markets

2014

Host Darlene Wolnik at Ohio Farmers Market Conference to lead market managers on an exploration of data.

2018

Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP) grant focused on Central Ohio farmers markets in partnership with City of Columbus and Franklin County Local Food Action Plan.

2021

Regional Food Systems grant partner to Green Umbrella in Cincinnati region.

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Data Collection at Ohio Markets

INCREASE DATA COLLECTION

- OFMN led projects and grants with data focus
- Get more markets collecting more data
- Work with national partners like FMC

Data Collection at Ohio Markets

RAPID MARKET ASSESSMENTS

Also known as "dot surveys" or RMAs.
Completed 25 in 2019, 21 in 2021.

IN-DEPTH CONSUMER STUDIES

Completed 4 studies - Canal Winchester, Clintonville, Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens, and Hilliard in 2019.

VENDOR INTERVIEWS

Interviewed more than 50 stakeholders.

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Data Collection at Ohio Markets

BY THE NUMBERS

AVERAGE $ PER SHOPPING GROUP

2019 - $21.44

2021 - $28.29

AVERAGE ATTENDANCE

2019 - 973

2021 - 750

AVERAGE PRODUCER SALES

2019 - $375.96

2021 - $403.76

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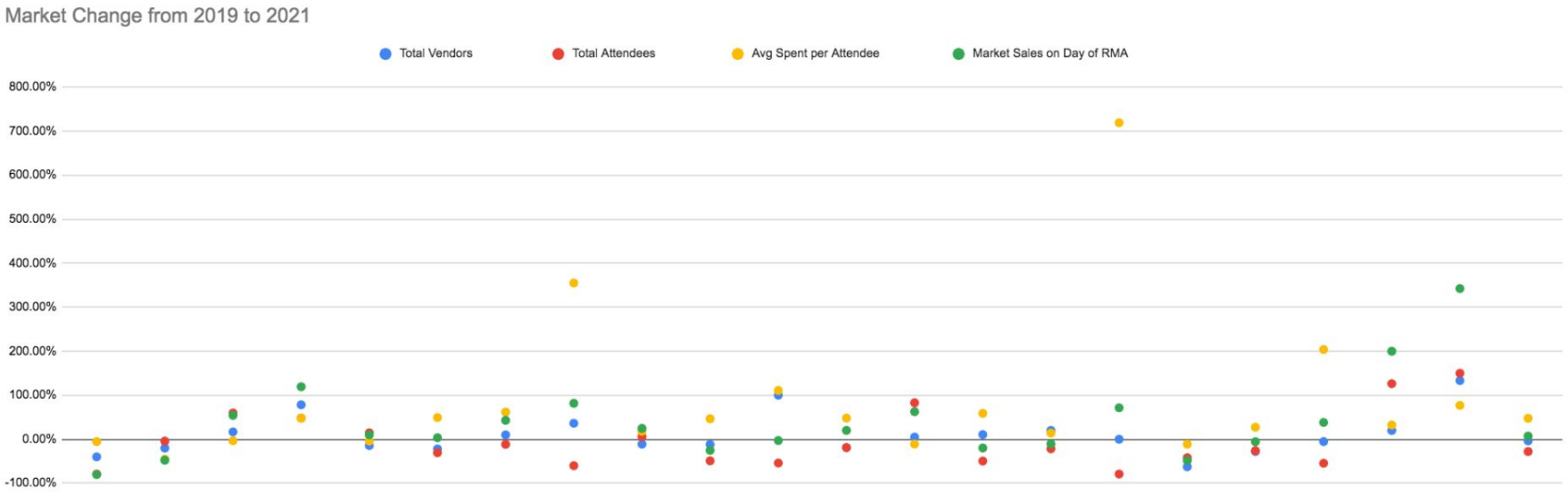

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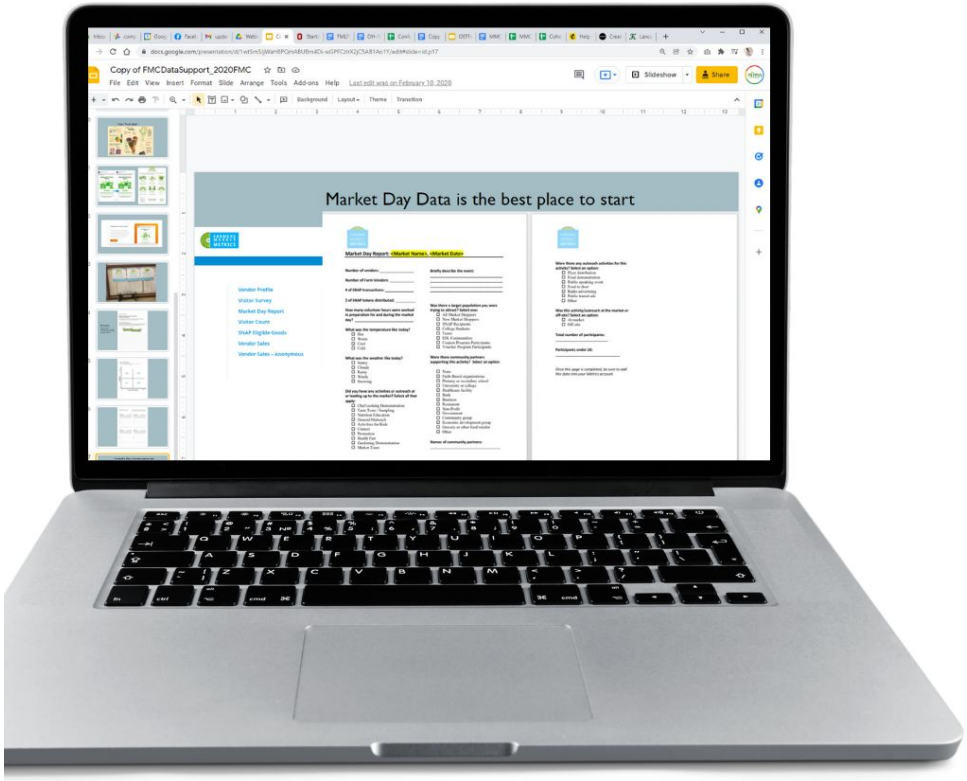

MORE MARKETS
MORE DATA

Data collection training sessions with Farmers Market Coalition, best practices, document creation, etc.

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Data Collection at Ohio Markets

MARKET MANAGER CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

Series of webinars designed with more experienced market managers in mind. Dar and her team lead this presentation.

OHIO FARMERS MARKET CONFERENCE

Statewide, annual conference in March for market managers, farmers market vendors, and other stakeholders with a vested interest in farmers markets.

TEMPLATES

Document creation to ease the burden of data collection.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Access to resources such as the Farmers Market Coalition resource library.

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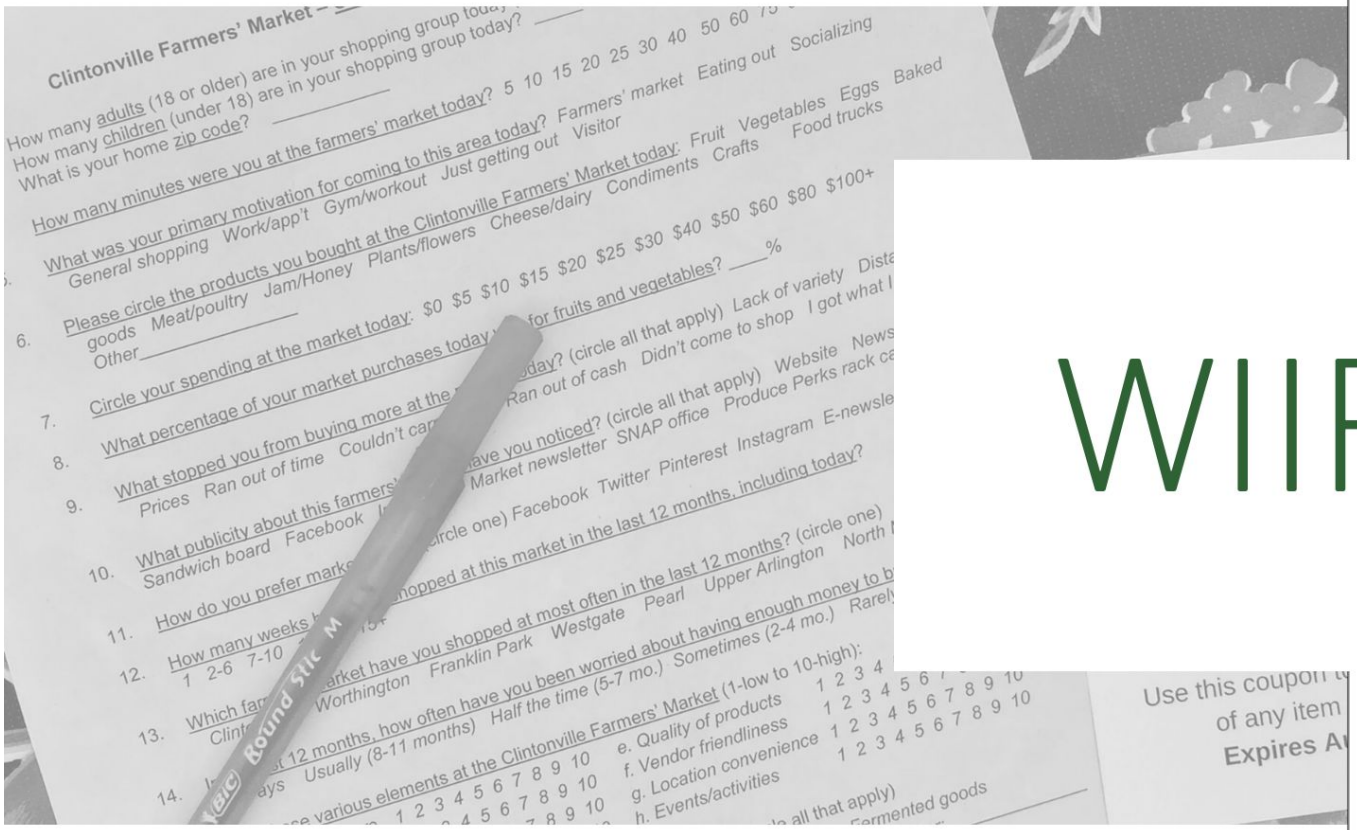
Data Collection at Ohio Markets



WIIFM?

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Data Collection at Ohio Markets

IS YOUR MARKET SHARING DATA?

Does your farmers market manager share the data collected with you?

ARE YOU COLLECTING DATA?

Your farm or food business can do a lot with data!

WHAT DATA WOULD BE HELPFUL?

What data can farmers markets collect and share that would be helpful to vendors?

DATA IS FOR EVERYONE

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Project Activities – In Process

Conduct case studies of Ohio direct marketers that sell at one or more Ohio farmers markets to learn how they use data for business decision making.

We would appreciate your input.

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Project Activities – In Process

1. How do direct marketers that participate in one or more Ohio farmers markets use data to make business decisions?
2. How do the direct marketers collect and analyze this data?
3. What data does the farmers market collect? How is this data shared with the direct marketer?
4. What data collected by the farmers market would be helpful for the direct marketer to improve their business?

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Project Activities - In Process

If you would like to be a case study participant?

Email Christie Welch

welch.183@osu.edu

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How can you be involved?

- Volunteer to participate in a case study.
- Share information about farmers markets in your county/community
- Attend the train-the-trainer session on available tools to assist with data collection
- Connect with the OSUE Direct Food & Ag. Marketing Team, Farmers Market Coalition, and the Ohio Farmers Market Network

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OSU Extension Direct Food and Agricultural Marketing Program

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