

# Port Angeles Farmers' Market

## Rapid Market Assessment

### September 25, 2002

**Market Hours:** Wednesday, 3 – 7 p.m.  
**Location:** Laurel Street between Front and First Streets, Port Angeles, WA  
**Market Staff:** Volunteer managers/board members, first week without paid manager  
**Opened:** 2002  
**Fees:** 5% or \$5 minimum  
**Vendors:** 23, including farmers, bakers, prepared foods and crafts  
**Market Attendance:** 1,000 estimated adults  
**Total Vendor Sales:** \$3,270 reported market sales  
**RMA Team:**

Vance Corum, Washington State University Small Farms Program, Vancouver  
Curtis Beus, WSU Clallam County Cooperative Extension  
Dick Carkner, Washington State University Small Farms Program, Puyallup  
Jan Piercy, Gig Harbor Farmers' Market  
Rebecca Loveless, Country Village Farmers' Market, Bothell  
Terrence Miracle, Cowlitz Community Farmers' Market, Longview  
Henry Tunes, South Whidbey Farmers' Market  
Sara Whisnant, Kelso Bridge Market  
Leslie Zenz, WSDA Small Farm & Direct Marketing Program, Olympia

## I. Total Attendance: 1,000 adults

Pre-opening shopper estimate = 10  
1<sup>st</sup> Hour (3:00-4:00) estimate = 222  
2<sup>nd</sup> Hour (4:00-5:00) estimate = 288  
3<sup>rd</sup> Hour (5:00-6:00) estimate = 300  
4<sup>th</sup> Hour (6:00-7:00) estimate = 180

*Comment: The customers were evenly split between the first half and second half of the market even though signage reflects a four o'clock opening. Earlier afternoon hours at farmers' markets typically get more older shoppers who prefer to shop and finish dinner early. The market might want to adjust its signage to fit the time reality of its customers.*

## II. Dot Survey Questions

Four dot survey sheets were begun shortly after market opening at 3:00 p.m. Four new sheets were installed at 5:00 p.m., half way through the market day. Answers from early shoppers and later shoppers are compared

under *Time Comment*. About 63% of all 343 dot respondents were during the first half and 37% during the second half of the market day. Thus, we did not capture as many customers to do the dots in the latter half of the market, even though customer numbers were equally as strong in the second half.

Customers were given only four dots to answer four questions. The responses total 100% (sometimes over 100% because of rounding). Had we provided more dots, people would have been able to respond several times; for example, they could have told us in Q2 that they will respond to newspaper, postcards and fliers. However, that would also unfairly weigh certain customers' responses.

### **Question 1: What hours do you prefer for our Saturday market?**

8-12	6%
9-1	18%
10-2	38%
11-3	38%

#### **Wednesday shoppers lean toward Saturday hours of 10:00 – 2:00.**

Early shoppers (before 5:00 p.m.) preferred later than the later shoppers.

*Comment: First, we should remember that these are Wednesday shoppers and not necessarily Saturday shoppers, so it would be good to survey existing Saturday shoppers at the market as well as non-shoppers who might become shoppers if the hours were more convenient. With 24% preferring earlier hours and 38% preferring later hours, a Saturday 10-2 market seems to satisfy the greatest number of people. It is noteworthy that one in four shoppers prefers either 8-12 or 9-1, which may mean that they prefer to get their shopping done early and go on to other Saturday activities. Before the hours are moved back from 9-1, it would be wise to explore how many people will not shop if you start at 10 a.m. or later.*

*Time Comment: No statistically significant differences existed between early and late Wednesday shoppers in terms of their preference for different shopping hours on Saturday.*

### **Question 2: What form of advertising for our farmers' market are you most likely to notice and respond to?**

Poster in store window	13%
Newspaper	53%
Radio	8%
Cable T.V.	2%
Postcard with coupon	3%
Flier with coupon	21%

#### **Newspaper is the preferred advertising for Wed. shoppers.**

*Comment: A majority of shoppers will respond to a newspaper ad. One in four customers would respond to an inexpensive flier or postcard with a coupon as a preferred advertising method. One in eight prefer to respond to a storefront poster, which can be inexpensive or even a fundraiser. Some form of print advertisement with an incentive coupon is likely to generate upwards of 80% response in current shoppers. We might want to test responsiveness by non-shoppers.*

*Time comment: Later shoppers were even more likely to prefer newspaper ads (60% versus 49% of early shoppers). Early shoppers are much more likely to prefer a flier with coupon (27% versus 11% of later shoppers).*

**Question 3: How much will you spend tonight at local businesses, including restaurants, in conjunction with your visit to the farmers' market?**

\$0	13%
\$5	17%
\$10	22%
\$20	20%
\$30	13%
\$40	5%
\$60	5%
\$80	2%
\$100+	5%

**Customers report spending an average of \$22.68 in local businesses, far more than they spend at the market based on vendor sales.**

*Comment: Thirty percent believe they will spend \$5 or less and 70% expect to spend \$10 or more at local businesses. Only one in six customers expects to spend \$40 or more but they account for more than one-half of total expenditures. (The figure of \$120 average was used for all customers reporting \$100+, based on lodging and meal expenses as well as purchases.) Based on a conservative estimate of 500 shopping groups (1000 adults counted) and \$3270 in reported sales, average customer spending is \$6.54. Thus, for every dollar spent at the market, shoppers indicate spending almost \$3.50 at local businesses, or a local business impact ratio of 3.5:1.*

*Time Comment: There was no significant difference between early and late shoppers in total expenditures reported.*

**Question 4: Would you be most inclined to make more farmers' market purchases if it were:**

Open-air, uncovered, as is	61%	
Open air with roof	29%	<b><u>90% prefer an open-air market.</u></b>
Roof with slidable sides (barn-door style)	8%	
Enclosed building	2%	

*Comment: Typically existing customers like where they shop or they wouldn't be there. Importantly, they don't want change when they can't assure whether the change's impacts will all be positive. It would be wise to survey non-customers to see if a building or some form of sun, wind and rain protection would encourage them to shop at the market. Currently two in five shoppers would like to see some building erected. If the Olympia Farmers' Market is any indication, customers respond to a building that achieves a sort of landmark status within the community of which they can be proud. Education and an architectural drawing or model would be helpful in demonstrating the benefits of weather protection if the market decides on the path.*

*Time Comment: Later shoppers appeared slightly more inclined to prefer a building. Given a margin of error, there may be no statistical significance in 57% wanting the market to remain “as is” compared to 62% of early shoppers.*

### **III. Constructive Comments/Observations**

The purpose of this section of the report is NOT to provide an overall guide to the market or to rank it against any other. Rather, it allows for feedback from a fresh “outsider” perspective. The team noted elements they liked, what they thought might use improvement and any questions they had. The RMA process is rooted in sharing; both the observed and the observers should gain new insights and ideas.

#### **Physical Site**

##### **What team members appreciated about the physical site:**

- A street market can be very nice. One block is sufficient to create a great market.
- Beautiful lightpole banners, murals, fountain and planters create pleasant environment.
- Good site and good traffic flow around the market – nice scale of market
- Public parking nearby is a real plus including parking lot down alley.
- Easy to cross busy streets to get to market.
- Most impressed at city cooperation to make site possible and support of county commissioner.
- Plenty of space in street room makes for comfortable shopping.

##### **Physical Site – Improvements and Questions:**

- Does city code prevent more/better signage around town?
- More signage slows traffic, reduces accident risk, creates safe zone like Vancouver market.
- Need sign on Front Street at least ½ block ahead of Laurel – let people know market is open.
- “Farmers’ Market Wednesday 3-7, Saturday 9-1” sign at either end in place of “Street Closed”
- Why not free parking during market hours? Need highly visible directional signs for parking.
- Strong liability concern from dangerous alley cross traffic; also bikes riding through market.
- Tighten up the vendor spacing, leave half one side for seating, street chalk art, holla hoops, etc.
- Blank spaces detract from “full” or “busy” look – need director ensuring proper market look.
- Provide convenient trash cans.
- A small seating area with tables would cause people to linger.
- Need restrooms close to market with directional sign.
- Could you use the beautiful wall art as a backdrop for seating, music, chef demo, etc.?
- Consider a Market/Downtown cross-promotional campaign including posters and coupons.
- Move clothing stall out of prime spot.
- Depressed area – empty buildings; is it symptomatic?
- Might consider Wednesday and Saturday market at same site.
- Is market in city and business brochures? Need trifold/rack card for hotels and ferry.

## Market Atmosphere

### What team members appreciated about the market atmosphere:

- Beautiful, landscaped cliff on one end and water on the other end of market.
- Well organized but casual atmosphere; quietness is an asset
- Range of light to serious food shoppers – a few observers but many with two bags full.
- At least 50% tourists, not many kids; wide age range of customers
- Clown interacting with children added color and fun, but an unnecessary expense – few kids.
- Relaxed customers; friendly, informative vendors; customers very interested in the produce.
- Evening market is a great event; shoppers look to be enjoying themselves.
- Market banners 1) very visible, 2) easy to see and read, 3) promote market visibility – strong.
- Great hanging baskets along the sidewalk!

### Atmosphere – Improvements and Questions:

- Music is a nice addition to the flavor of a market – draws people in, sense of “fun place to be.”
- Music, chef demos, kids’ activities all needed to bring folks in and liven the place up.
- Subdued atmosphere. Eve activities advertised and noted on street signage?
- No educational activities, except ostrich farm tour promoted.
- The market could take advantage of tourists by letting them know more about the area.
- More ready-to-eat food would encourage people to linger and give it a busier feeling.
- A shorter timeframe (3-6) also would help concentrate customers to create a desirable feel.
- People do not have their own bags – not many intentional shoppers; need a bag campaign.
- Develop a coordinated campaign around an event with many more products and customers.

## Vendors and Products

### What team members appreciated about the vendors and products:

- Good mix of local produce, pretty consistent quality, locally grown, appreciated by customers.
- Upbeat, attentive vendors willing to talk to customers.
- Vendor signage is good but a few didn’t have them.
- Great to see ostrich and emu eggs.

### Vendors – Improvements and Questions:

- Need real, edible food to eat on site – espresso, chili, soup, cornbread, tamales, crabcakes, etc.
- Ease out the importer – nothing homemade – location gives appearance of flea market.
- Vendors lack feeling of “abundance.”
- Market could use more competition within various product categories.
- Expand the kinds of crafts through a jury process.
- Need campaign to ensure all canopies are tied and weighted down.
- Vendor signage mixed – some good, some poor. Some very creative. Vendor education?
- Organic farms need declarative signs and price signs that reinforce quality of produce.
- Keep produce off the ground and provide more trash receptacles.
- Be sure food samples are distributed safely.
- Would more accurate, certified scales be a good idea, especially for high value items?