Yakima Farmers' Market
Rapid Market Assessment
August 11, 2002

Market Hours: **Sunday 9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.**
Location: **Third St. at Yakima Ave., Yakima, WA**
Market Staff: **Manager, assistant and volunteers**
Opened: **1999**
Fees: **6% of sales, minimum $15 for farmers/artisans**
Vendors: **50, including farmers, artisans, and prepared foods**
Market Sales: **$29,614 estimated sales for the day**
Market Attendance: **4,100 estimated adults**
RMA Team:

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I. Total Attendance: 4,082 adults

Pre-opening shopper estimate	=	14
1st Hour (9:00-10:00) estimate	=	612
2nd Hour (10:00-11:00) estimate	=	1026
3rd Hour (11:00-12:00) estimate	=	936
4th Hour (12:00-1:00) estimate	=	762
5th Hour (1:00-2:00) estimate	=	528
6th Half-hour (2:00-2:30) estimate	=	204

Comment: Our counting method indicates that about one-third more shoppers came during the first half of the market day than during the latter half.

Entrances (by number and percentage each hour)

	Parking Lot		North (Yakima)		South		ALL	
1st Hour	45	6%	31	5%	26	4%	102	15%
2nd Hour	87	13%	34	5%	50	7%	171	25%
3rd Hour	98	14%	31	5%	27	4%	156	23%
4th Hour	66	10%	39	6%	22	3%	127	19%
5th Hour	46	7%	39	6%	3	0%	88	13%
6th Hour (1/2)	16	2%	10	1%	8	1%	34	5%
	358	**53%**	**184**	**27%**	**136**	**20%**	**678**	**100%**

[When added, percentages may not be exact due to rounding to the nearest whole number.]

Comment: About half of all customers appear to park in the lot immediately next to the market. One in four walk across Yakima Avenue from street or lot parking to the north. Almost an equal number walk in from the south side of the market.

II. Dot Survey Questions

Four dot survey sheets were begun shortly after market opening, about 9:15 a.m. Four new sheets were installed at 11:45 a.m., half way through the market day. Thus, answers from early shoppers and later shoppers are compared under *Time Comment.* About 64% of all dot respondents were during the first half and 36% during the second half of the market day. Increasing heat during the day contributed to the lower response rate from later shoppers; our research team found it difficult to maintain enthusiasm in 100 degree heat, so we can safely assume shoppers similarly didn't want to spend extra time answering our dot questions.

Question 1: Where do you live?

98901	13%	
98902 (and 3)	28%	
98908	19%	
Wapato	1%	**40% of shoppers are from outside Yakima.**
Toppenish	1%	
Other Lower Valley	3%	
Selah	9%	
Other	26%	

Comment: Selah residents are very responsive. The market draws customers from a wide area and is a significant draw for tourists. If a targeted marketing effort was to be developed for outsiders, it might be helpful to further breakdown "Other" by county, community or otherwise.

Time Comment: During the original formation of the market in 1999, it was believed that Westside visitors would come to the market late in the day before heading home to Seattle and elsewhere. While that appeared to be logical, it is not backed up by the data. "Other shoppers" were just as common during the first half as the second half of the market day.

Question 2: How often do you shop at this farmers' market?

Every week	14%	
Almost weekly	25%	
Twice a month	13%	**Half are not regular customers.**
Once a month	7%	
Occasionally	41%	

Comment: In the future we might focus a question on how to make occasional shoppers more regular, asking for suggested improvements.

Time comment: Later customers may be somewhat more likely to shop regularly (almost or every week), 42% versus 37% of early shoppers. While not statistically significant, if this question were probed in the future, you might find that regular shoppers include after-church shoppers.

Question 3: How much did you/will you spend at the farmers' market TODAY?

$0	7%
$5	18%
$10	18%
$15	17%
$20	20%
$30	11%
$40	5%
$60	1%
$80	3%

Average customer spending =	**$17.41**
Early shopper (before 11:45)	$17.94
Late shopper (after 11:45)	$16.44

Comment: The median expenditure was $12.05; half of shoppers spend less and half spend more than this amount. Only one in five shoppers spends more than $20. We might look at how to increase the number of serious shoppers through various marketing and educational programs. Markets have used frequent shopper cards,$1 market tokens, co-advertising with local businesses and education about average household grocery expenditures so that they realize how much is spent elsewhere in relation to the market.

Time Comment: Early shoppers were not inclined to spend significantly more money.

Total market sales can be roughly calculated as follows:

- 4,082 shoppers/2.4 adults per shopping group = 1701 shopping groups (assumes 50% shopped as couples, 5% as singles, 45% with three adults)
- 1,701 shopping groups x $17.41 = **$29,614**
- Sales per vendor: $29,611 / 50 = $592

If we were to use a less conservative figure of 2.0 adults per shopping group, we would arrive at 2,041 shopping groups, a sales total of $35,524 and average vendor sales of $710. The figure of 2.4 adults per shopping group was based on the team leader's observations during the market. Attempting to avoid any exaggeration of sales, we estimated 5% of shopping groups to be single adults and 45% groups of three adults.

It might be worthwhile to continue probing customers regarding the amount of purchases and what products are missing, given vendor comments that many shoppers are not buying.

Question 4: What market advertising most influences your attendance at this market?

Word-of-mouth	57%
Television	5%
Radio	3%
Yakima Herald-Republic	6%
"Old timer" – 2+ years	29%

Comment: Since 87% are not most influenced by advertising, vendor training in customer relations to build further WOM might be valuable. To better understand how to direct advertising expenditures, future questions might address TV, specific radio stations, newspaper usage, street banner and sandwich boards (drive-by influence), hotel rack cards and tourist magazines. With zero response to the Penny Press column, it was changed to "Old timer" after about an hour during the first and second half of market. This figure would have been higher had we been consistent throughout the market.

Time Comment: Respondents saying TV, radio or newspaper influenced them were more common during the latter half of the market, about 20% versus 11% of early shoppers. That may reflect early shoppers' greater likelihood of being regular shoppers. Given the Question 2 time comment, this might be investigated further.

III. Constructive Comments/Observations

The purpose of this section of the report is NOT to provide an overall grade to the market or rank it against any other. Rather, it allows for feedback from a fresh "outsider" perspective. The team noted elements they liked, what they thought could be improved and questions they had. The RMA process is about sharing; both the markets observed and the markets that sent observers should gain new insights and ideas for improved operation.

Physical Site

What team members appreciated about the physical site:

- Great site and convenient parking.
- City support for street use, parking barriers, etc.
- Very organized opening of market.
- Good organization with farmers selling from vehicles and artisans down-loading.
- Customer flow seems even on both sides of market – looks good.
- Appreciate music stage under theatre canopy and seating in middle of market.
- Fantastic trailer with market logo.

Physical Site – Improvements and Questions:

- ❏ Need more dramatic "entrance" from parking lot into market
- ❏ Major shade trees need to be planted between the sidewalk and street.
- ❏ Get City to build restrooms and clean-up stations
- ❏ Shopper aisles too wide – do you need that width for emergency vehicles?
- ❏ Vendors could be lined up more evenly
- ❏ Could there be more seating for customers here to eat lunch?

Atmosphere

What team members appreciated about market atmosphere:

- Customers are having a great time – very laid back feeling.
- Very friendly event with good mix of seniors and families, all ages.

- Since there are several food sites, the smell adds to the atmosphere.
- Music all day gives a great air to the market.
- Very local base of regular shoppers, yet lots of tourists and even out-of-staters.
- Customers eager to participate in dot survey.
- Love seeing so many Hispanic vendors but not aware of Hispanic shoppers.

Market Atmosphere – Improvements and Questions:

- ❏ Are there many Hispanic shoppers? Food stamps? WIC?
- ❏ Vendors say percentage of purchasers is low – work on samples and product promotions.
- ❏ Need to restrict dogs at market.
- ❏ Some benches in park but more shaded seating areas are needed.
- ❏ Target ethnic areas with ads (incl. ethnic vendor photos) to improve customer attendance.

Vendors and Products

What team members appreciated about vendors and products:

- Market has good feel – most vendors are outgoing and courteous.
- Love seeing the fresh fish.
- Good number of farmers and nice selection of baked goods.
- Reasonably good mix of crafts.
- Several food booths help increase sales and visitor time in market.

Vendors and Products – Improvements and Questions:

- ❏ Get more farmers to wear logo shirt and cap.
- ❏ You are lopsided with craft and brick-a-brack – do you have a jurying process?
- ❏ Farmers <u>all</u> need better signage with business name and location.
- ❏ Many great displays, yet some need education re: display and customer service.
- ❏ Organic farmers might use additional, organic logo signs that are consistent.
- ❏ Might survey customer desires for other products like brot cabbage.
- ❏ Strong support for baked goods and prepared food vendors – do you want more?