



Ann Arbor Farmers Market Rapid Market Assessment

September 22, 2007

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**Michigan Farmers Market Association
&
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan**



**Ann Arbor Farmers Market
Rapid Market Assessment
Saturday, September 22, 2007**

Market Hours: January- April: Saturday 8 am - 3 pm
May - December, Wednesday &
Saturday 7 am - 3 pm

Location: 315 Detroit Street

Website: www.a2gov.org/market

Market Staff: Jessica Black, Market Manager

Market Day Comments: Early morning rain, mid-60's. Cleared and beautiful later. University of Michigan home football game. Jewish religious holiday, Yom Kippur.

Age of Market: Established in 1919

Fees: \$25/stall/day, \$4/parking/day,
\$250/stall/year, \$575/two-stalls/year,
\$970/three-stalls/year, \$100/parking/year

Vendors: 142 vendors sold through season
78 vendors using 171 stalls the day of
the assessment

Market Sales Estimate: \$133,841

Market Attendance Estimate: 9,792

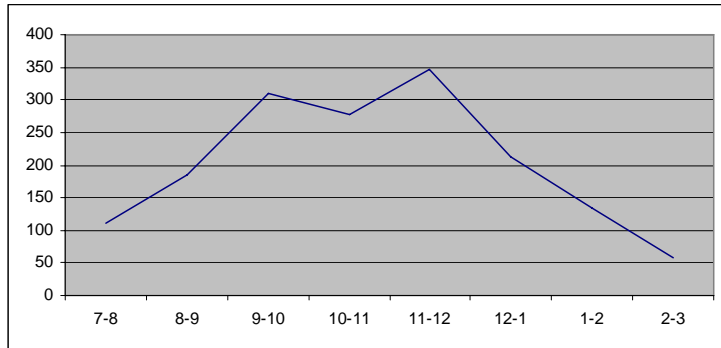
RMA Team: Allen Anderson, volunteer; Patricia Alameda, MSU; Diane Black, volunteer; Kathryn Colasanti, MSU; Kay Cummings, Fremont Farmers Market; Laura Kassenbrock, MSU; Vicki Morrone, MSU; Michelle Ribant, Fremont Farmers Market; Genia Service, volunteer; Susan Smalley, MSU

Introduction: In operation for 88 years, the Ann Arbor Farmers Market is vibrant and attracts both vendors and customers. The market is surrounded by restaurants and shops providing a wide variety of products. It is sponsored by the City of Ann Arbor, Parks and Recreation Services.

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I. Total Attendance: 9,792 Adults

1st Hour (7-8) count =	110
2nd Hour (8-9) count =	185
3rd Hour (9-10) count =	309
4th Hour (10-11) count=	277
5th Hour (11-12) count=	347
6th Hour (12-1) count=	212
7th Hour (1-2) count=	135
8th Hour (2-3) count=	57
Total count	1,632
Estimated total market customers	9,792



Comments: Team members counted the numbers of adults entering the market for ten minutes of each hour. The total number of adult customers counted was multiplied by six to estimate total market attendance. Customers arrived steadily from the time the market opened, with attendance peaking during the middle of the market day and then tailing off fairly sharply in the afternoon.

A University of Michigan home football game the afternoon of this assessment brought about 100,000 people to Ann Arbor causing considerable congestion. Game goers may have been among early market shoppers but later in the day it seems plausible that football fans were tailgating and others were staying home, out of the traffic. In addition, the Jewish holiday may have reduced the number of market customers.

Attendance by entrance and hour

Time	Power box		Sandbox*		Main 1		Main 2*		Kerrytown		Detroit St.		Total/Percentage	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
7-8	7	8%	0	0%*	28	27%	46	10%*	24	5%	12	6%	117	8%
8-9	20	23%	0	0%*	36	34%	9	2%*	36	7%	16	8%	117	8%
9-10	15	17%	0	0%*	41	39%	141	31%*	68	14%	39	19%	304	21%
10-11	28	32%	22	17%	24	23%	82	18%	94	19%	40	19%	290	20%
11-12	13	15%	44	33%	31	30%	83	18%	118	24%	43	21%	332	23%
12-1	4	5%	36	27%	14	13%	52	12%	62	13%	35	17%	203	14%
1-2	0	0%	25	19%	4	4%	30	7%	56	11%	16	8%	127	9%
2-3	0	0%	6	5%	5	5%	6	1%	33	7%	7	3%	52	4%
Total	87		133		105		449		491		208		1632	

Comments: All six market entrances received traffic through all or most of the day. The Kerrytown entrance was most popular, followed by Main 2, Detroit Street and Sandbox entrances. This use of multiple entrances makes sense given that parking is spread out in all directions around the market.

** For the first three customer counts, the people entering via the Sandbox entrance and the Main 2 entrance were counted by one person and the numbers combined.*

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I. Dot Survey Questions

Question 1: What educational amenity would you most like at this market?

	<u>7-9:40</u>	<u>9:40-11:45</u>	<u>11:45-close</u>	<u>Total/Percentage</u>
Food demos	27 21%	35 21%	20 21%	82 21%
Master Gardener presentations	23 18%	27 17%	13 13%	63 16%
Entertainment	11 8%	35 21%	18 19%	64 16%
Vendors accept credit cards	16 12%	29 18%	28 29%	73 19%
None	54 41%	37 23%	18 19%	109 28%
Total	131	163	97	391

Comments: Over one-fourth (28%) of surveyed customers were not interested in any of the listed activities. About one-fifth of those surveyed would like food demonstrations (21%) or for vendors to accept credit cards (19%). And Master Gardener presentations and entertainment are each desired by 16% of those surveyed.

Responses reflect the great popularity of the market as it is. It appears that any of the possible educational amenities would be appreciated by a segment of the market's customers, but none of the changes listed drew strong support.

Question 2: What structural change would you most like to see at this market?

	<u>7-9:40</u>	<u>9:40-11:45</u>	<u>11:45-close</u>	<u>Total/Percentage</u>
Additional covered stalls	59 44%	66 41%	20 21%	145 37%
Heated stalls	12 9%	6 4%	3 3%	21 5%
Additional vendor parking	9 7%	5 3%	6 6%	20 5%
Benches and picnic tables	19 14%	42 26%	49 52%	110 28%
None	34 26%	42 26%	17 18%	93 24%
Total	133	161	95	389

Comments: Surveyed customers were interested in the market adding covered stalls (38%) and adding benches and tables (28%). Heated stalls and additional vendor parking was desired by only 5% each of those responding to the survey, possibly reflecting that customers were most focused in changes that would most directly impact them rather than the vendors. About one-quarter (24%) of those surveyed were not interested in any of the potential structural changes.

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Question 3: How much did you / will you spend at the market today?

	<u>7-9:40</u>		<u>9:40-11:45</u>		<u>11:45-close</u>		<u>Total/ Percentage</u>	
\$0	0	0%	3	2%	3	3%	6	2%
\$5	4	3%	12	8%	8	8%	24	6%
\$10	9	7%	29	19%	20	21%	58	15%
\$15	7	5%	15	10%	16	16%	38	10%
\$20	25	20%	16	10%	21	22%	62	16%
\$25	19	15%	17	11%	7	7%	43	11%
\$30	9	7%	24	15%	6	6%	39	10%
\$35	14	11%	11	7%	1	1%	26	7%
\$40	14	11%	12	8%	7	7%	33	9%
\$45	5	4%	3	2%	1	1%	9	2%
\$50 or more	22	17%	13	8%	7	7%	42	11%
Total	128		155		97	0%	380	
Mean					\$25.97			
Median					\$25			
Mode					\$20			

Comments: The mean or average expenditure that shoppers reported was \$25.97. The median was \$25, meaning that half the shoppers spent less than \$25 and half spent more than \$25. More shoppers spent \$20 than any other single amount.

Question 4: How many adults are in your shopping party today?

	<u>7-9:40</u>		<u>9:40-11:45</u>		<u>11:45-close</u>		<u>Total/Percentage</u>	
1	49	39%	31	19%	23	24%	103	27%
2	71	56%	105	66%	57	61%	233	61%
3	7	6%	14	9%	6	6%	27	7%
4	0	0%	9	6%	5	5%	14	4%
5	0	0%	0	0%	3	3%	3	1%
6+	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	127		159		94		380	
Mean					1.9			
Median					2			
Mode					2			

Comments: The mean or average number of adults in each shopping party was 1.9, with the median or middle 2, and the mode or most common also 2.

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Question 5: What is the primary reason for your market visit today?

	<u>7-9:40</u>		<u>9:40-11:45</u>		<u>11:45- close</u>		<u>Total/ Percentage</u>	
Food items	68	50%	65	39%	34	35%	167	42%
Art/craft items	3	2%	1	1%	2	2%	6	1%
Atmosphere and experience	14	10%	26	16%	11	11%	51	13%
Support local	38	28%	47	28%	31	32%	116	29%
Purchase organic	11	8%	24	14%	14	14%	49	12%
None of these	2	1%	4	2%	6	6%	12	3%
Total	136		167		98		401	

Comments: Of those surveyed, 42% indicated that the primary reason for their market visit was food items, while 29% indicated that their primary reason was to support local. Smaller numbers came primarily for the market atmosphere and experience (13%) and to purchase organic (12%). Only 1% of respondents indicated that they came to the market primarily for art/craft items, which was not surprising because such items comprise a very small portion of market products.

Estimated Market Day Sales

A conservative estimate of total market sales for the day is developed by dividing the estimated total number of adult customers (9,792) by the mean number of people in market shopping parties (1.9) and multiplying by the mean customer expenditure (\$25.97). This method very conservatively estimates total market sales for the day at \$133,841.

II. Constructive Comments/Observations

The following comments were compiled from the notes of ten team members. In some instances observations do not agree and may even be contradictory. It is beyond the scope of this report to reconcile the differences. We encourage market leaders to further explore them.

Physical Site

What Team members appreciated about the physical site

Access:

- ❖ Great foot traffic
- ❖ Many entrances/ points of access facilitate a good traffic flow

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- ❖ Market is in a great part of the city
- ❖ By road is nice; easy to carry heavy things

Flow of people and traffic:

- ❖ Flow of people is okay if you are going the same direction
- ❖ Love the flow of people of many ethnic backgrounds
- ❖ Most of the sidewalks/aisles are wide enough to keep the traffic flowing

Liability Issues:

- ❖ Dogs are not allowed (but customers have them walking outside the market).
What if a customer has the dog inside the market?

Organization of market:

- ❖ Have a great number of vendors
- ❖ Street-side vendors on Fourth add to market visibility and draw pedestrians
- ❖ Almost all of the vendors are very organized
- ❖ A good variation of placing stalls
- ❖ Seniority: longer-term vendors can choose stall location first
- ❖ Very organized
- ❖ Plenty of space
- ❖ Dry erase board with vendor locations is very helpful

Access to electricity:

- ❖ Available only in the middle part of the market. Good? Bad?

Other:

- ❖ No pet and no smoking rules clearly posted
- ❖ Market manager is well-known by vendors and many shoppers; this seems very effective
- ❖ Market roof very helpful

Improvements and Questions

Access:

- ❖ Congested; Didn't see any city signs directing us here
- ❖ Will be nice to have sand pit gone
- ❖ Parking; difficult to get around center due to vendor trucks
- ❖ Get rid of sand pit
- ❖ Parking is especially difficult on game day (UM)
- ❖ Large carts strewn about in access area
- ❖ Parking spaces are a big issue for vendor/customers; metered spaces don't allow the customer to stay long

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Flow of people and traffic:

- ❖ Parking is challenging; could provide more accessible parking, free parking
- ❖ Benches would be nice with market being so big
- ❖ Aisles could be wider
- ❖ The flow is kind of strange for first-timers
- ❖ Maybe maps posted at entrances

Liability Issues:

- ❖ Not sure goat cheese was on ice
- ❖ People could trip in the gravel area
- ❖ Curbs, remove? Too much visual stimulation to look for them
- ❖ More “No dogs allowed” signs inside market
- ❖ Uneven surface in the “sand lot” area could be dangerous (I saw one little girl trip and fall)

Organization of Market:

- ❖ It looks haphazard
- ❖ Better cover for vendors and product from sun or rain

Access to electricity, phone line:

- ❖ Do not see any phone line availability

Other:

- ❖ Vendors should be able to back up vehicles to their stalls
- ❖ Too many details required of a vendor to report an application
- ❖ Most of the lights under the awning are burned out
- ❖ The grounds were sloppy; weeds growing around market, pavilion needs paint
- ❖ Encourage more diversity at market (e.g. Amish); both vendors and patrons

Atmosphere

What team members observed and appreciated about the market atmosphere

Market feel:

- ❖ Lively, friendly, energetic
- ❖ Full of good food, flowers
- ❖ Calm but with active attitudes
- ❖ Everyone is friendly, nice
- ❖ Flower, plant vendors interspersed creates a “festive atmosphere”
- ❖ Lively, vibrant, high-energy atmosphere
- ❖ Absolutely wonderful market
- ❖ Ironic: While I feel the market is sloppy, that is part of its charm

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- ❖ So nice with Kerrytown
- ❖ Today is kind of cold, so people are getting warm at coffee shop
- ❖ Vibrant market, buzz of activity
- ❖ Busy, bustling

Shopper Demographics:

- ❖ Young and old (infant to 80 years old)
- ❖ Mixed income
- ❖ 2 Hispanic vendors and one African American vendor
- ❖ Customers mostly 30 years old and up
- ❖ Age: University students to senior citizens
- ❖ Some kids
- ❖ Large percentage is senior
- ❖ The market is open to everyone and is accessible to all
- ❖ A lot of young people 20-25
- ❖ Loved that I saw people of all ages
- ❖ I see some diversity (man bought prayer rug)
- ❖ There are young people/old people/families
- ❖ Great variety

Interactions, Conversations:

- ❖ Lots of conversations-old friends, new friends, shoppers and vendors
- ❖ Human interaction and sense of community is great!
- ❖ Positive interactions
- ❖ Vendors to customers, helping choose perfect fit produce
- ❖ Vendors seem to know a lot about their products and about Ann Arbor and seem happy to share
- ❖ Very social conversation among customers
- ❖ It had a very friendly environment
- ❖ Vendors were more than happy to chat with customers
- ❖ People overall look like they come to the market for 1) food, and 2) to see people
- ❖ I love the place, but I love all farmers markets
- ❖ Lots of friends greeting friends and regular customers

Educational or Entertainment Activities:

- ❖ None apparent today
- ❖ Not necessary during harvest time, Saturday's; these types of activities could be done on Wednesday's or some other time
- ❖ Great place to bring kids to learn about commerce, food, how to grow

Other:

- ❖ I think the market is working very well, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

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Improvements and Questions

Market feel:

- ❖ The new enclosed area with renovation will be nice to have; who will get those stalls?

Shopper Demographics:

- ❖ Could market directly to students at move in
- ❖ For older people, go to art fair (when it is in town) on Tuesday nights, with a map of the market for Wednesday morning. Or delivery!
- ❖ Customers want to support local farmers; sometimes a little more talk about that would get more business
- ❖ Morning predominately white
- ❖ Mostly white, some black and Asian

Educational/Entertainment Activities:

- ❖ Are there events at this market?
- ❖ Provide an educational activity for customers or entertainment activity for children
- ❖ Could do a project with a local school

Vendors and Products

What team members appreciate about vendors and products

Product Mix:

- ❖ Nice mix of products; not a lot of duplication
- ❖ Excellent; wide variety of produce/arts/crafts/ready-to-eat/beverage
- ❖ Flowers!
- ❖ Many produce vendors encourages more affordable prices
- ❖ Lots of organic produce
- ❖ Great place to buy local, handmade gifts
- ❖ Offers a wide variety of tomatoes

Product Quality:

- ❖ The products looked to be high quality
- ❖ Seems good
- ❖ Some of the biggest tomatoes I've seen
- ❖ All local!

Signs:

- ❖ Market sign displaying the days and times-good idea
- ❖ Project Fresh signs are very clear
- ❖ Market has "Producer ID" signs for each stall

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- ❖ Great price displays
- ❖ I love the handmade signs; Frog Holler does a great job
- ❖ Plants have information sign inside pot
- ❖ Very visible signs with big price
- ❖ Large market sign with hours is good

Display:

- ❖ Having all different types of displays is part of the charm
- ❖ Most of the displays are neat
- ❖ Some have table coverings
- ❖ Clean/sharp displays
- ❖ Weight and scale
- ❖ Lovely!
- ❖ Great variation
- ❖ A few vendors had displays that put items at eye level

Customer Service:

- ❖ People I spoke with were very pleasant
- ❖ Very good customer service
- ❖ Very nice, helpful vendors were getting more people
- ❖ Vendors seem to genuinely enjoy the interaction with customers
- ❖ Vendors are very nice
- ❖ Seemed to be going well
- ❖ I observed several vendors providing product info
- ❖ One vendor made great signs to describe products and save them time

Food Safety:

- ❖ Some are well-packaged (bread)
- ❖ Had sign in the bathroom reminding vendors to wash their hands before going back out
- ❖ Very little sampling
- ❖ Meats in freezer
- ❖ No smoking

Improvements and Questions

Product Mix:

- ❖ More green vegetables
- ❖ Very few meat vendors
- ❖ Only one pre-cooked food vendor
- ❖ Some vendors are right next to a similar vendor
- ❖ I would not buy white flour products, but other people can
- ❖ Did not see poultry
- ❖ May be potential for more value-added products
- ❖ Market needs a yogurt vendor or a wine/beer vendor

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Product Quality:

- ❖ I would limit some of the previously baked, frozen and defrosted baked goods
- ❖ I can “tell” when a vegetable doesn’t look local because it is not in season; so I do not buy it

Signs:

- ❖ Very few have farm signs to ID themselves
- ❖ More consistency in signs; some are great and some are hardly noticeable
- ❖ Would be nice if all vendors had a banner or sign
- ❖ Even bigger signs
- ❖ Not all items are priced
- ❖ Provide recipes, use suggestions

Display:

- ❖ Some dirty tables, sloppy set-up
- ❖ Very few people using vertical space
- ❖ Few using table coverings/décor
- ❖ Possibly use more baskets
- ❖ Encourage farmers to look at their backdrop; should all look neat and clean
- ❖ Table drapes would disguise items stored under tables
- ❖ Big trucks buy up spots and reduce visibility among goods

Customer Service:

- ❖ One vendor was glaring at me, I think because he saw me writing on this paper and standing around

Food Safety:

- ❖ Cover fresh bread with plastic
- ❖ Eggs?
- ❖ Gloves when handling bread
- ❖ Some produce, baked goods sitting in the full sun
- ❖ Saw eggs sitting in the sun
- ❖ Only on very hot days do I worry about the eggs
- ❖ Some Thanksgivings, the lettuce has been frozen

Other:

- ❖ I have heard concern from some vendors that there are a few vendors who claim to produce all their products but are actually buying some of them and selling them as home grown.
- ❖ At 2:30, a lot of vendors were packing up