

Introduction

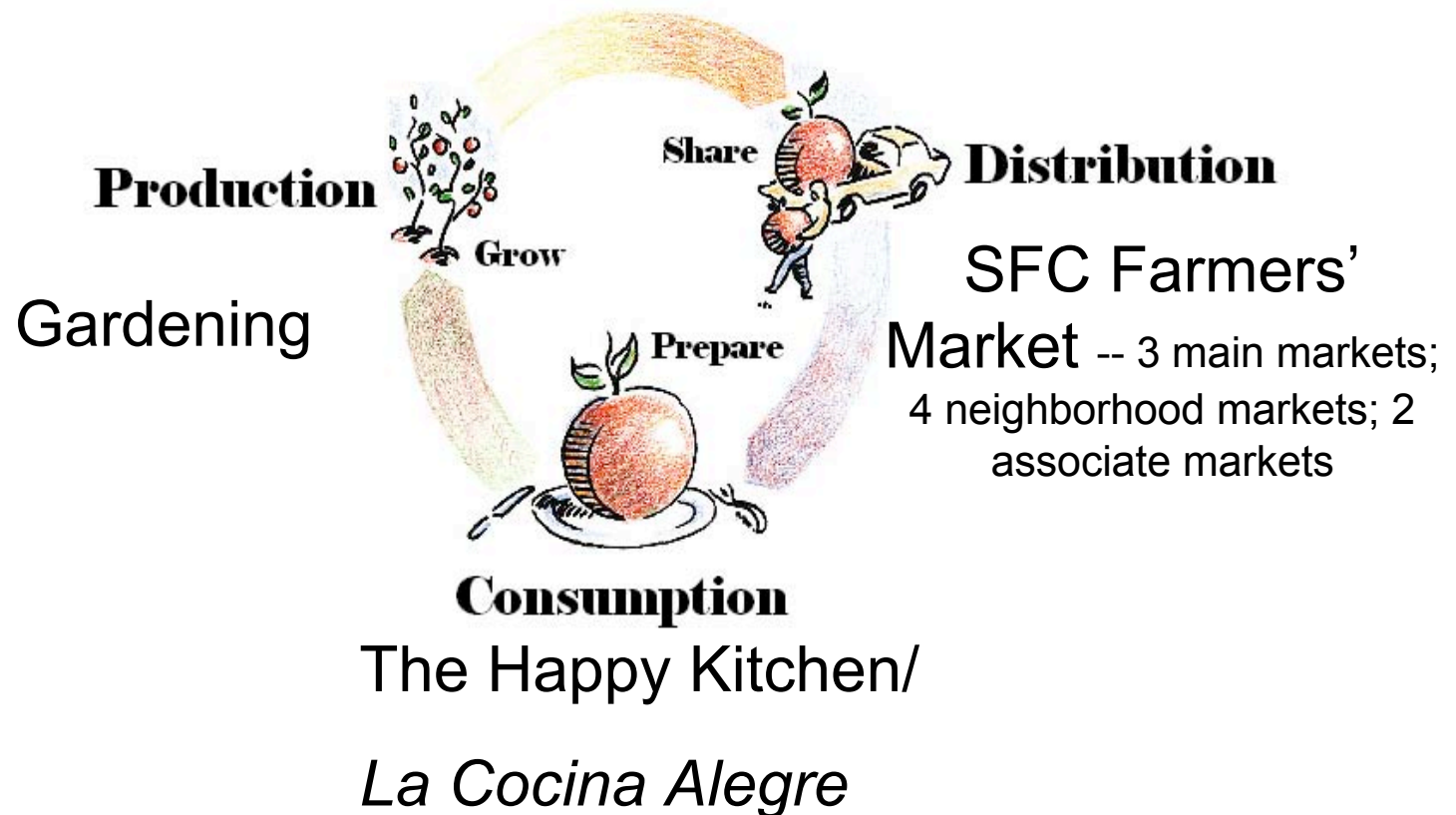
- What is Sustainable Food Center?
- Suzanne Santos, SFC Farmers' Market Director



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Sustainable Food Center

To cultivate a healthy community by strengthening the local food system and improving access to nutritious, affordable food.





How to Start a Farmers' Market & Be in One

1. Leadership
2. Management
3. Vendor membership – Products
4. Rules Governing Market
5. Logistics of site
6. Sticky issues – insurance, health codes, legal entity
7. Publicity & special events & education



SFC Farmers' Market – Mission

Drives all operations, education and programming

Farm Direct program of SFC

- Mission is to provide Austin and the surrounding Central Texas region with locally grown farm products, locally made specialty foods and goods in a direct farm-to-consumer marketing venue that will serve diverse populations, preserve and promote regional agriculture and improve our quality of life.



Leadership

- Committed group
- Need expertise in planning, community relations, media relations, fund raising, government relations
- Prepare a business plan
- Make subcommittees for start up efforts – initiative, eg 1) site selection; 2) governance; 3) marketing/pr; 4) fund raising



Leadership

- Feasibility studies :
 - a) Customers, through web (survey monkey) or local newspaper
 - b) Farmers, through extension, commodity groups, TDA, organic certification, newspaper
- Business plan spells out finances
- Business plan spells out marketing plan
- Site selection process is thorough
- Fund-raising plan is implemented, if needed



Management

- Set up a Board of Directors
- Set up by laws, mission, goals
- Responsibilities- set policy, rules and regulations, set up business structure, tax returns, settle market disputes, developing annual operating budget and give market manager direction and leadership.



Market Manager

- Do you want a inefficiently run market that gives you little return but it doesn't cost you much of anything?

Or,

- Do you want an efficiently run market that you pay something for that gives you increasing sales?



Market Manager Duties

- Administers the Market and oversees the operating rules and regulations, a paid professional
- Works with board to select vendors
- Assigns placement of vendors, supervises on-site logistics, arranges special events, music, food education
- Enforces safety, health, and other official codes/laws



Market Manager Duties

- Supervises volunteers
- Collects fees
- Inspects farms with board
- Maintains records on market stats, vendor files, reports to sponsors
- Fund raises for operational expenses not covered in vendor fees
- Supervises and conducts pr for the market (speak, enewsletter, website, etc)

Four Main Categories of Duties

Administration
Grower and
Other Vendor
coordination
Market day
coordination
Promotion





Vendor Membership - Products

What Kind of Membership: Determining What Kind of Market

Resellers allowed?

Just farms / ranches / dairies / honey / eggs?

From all of Texas, or just a region?

Specialty Foods?

Crafts at all?

Any services allowed, like massage?

Any space for non-profits?

What is your goal for farmer to other vendor ratio?



Recruitment

Recruit farmers, other vendors

Through surveys

Visits to farms (localharvest.org)

Visits to farmers' markets – be courteous

Texas Dept. of Agriculture

Websites where farms list themselves

Farmers' meetings at extension, fairs

News release in local papers, ads in local papers, trade mags

Start a Facebook Page on recruiting, put in a beginning website



Recruitment

Hold series of meetings in your area

‘Get to know you’ sessions

Post at feed stores, garden supply

Gardener meetings, craft shows

Crafter newsletters, group meetings

Small Business Devel. Office of city,
county

Chamber of commerce, business
districts, Farm Bureau

Local grocery stores that buy local



Rules Governing the Market

Who may sell, and what type of products

Assignments of space, reserve status

Hours, day, season

Professional business expectations, eg no
rude behavior, no smoking, clean up after
self

Weather contingency, early exit, call ins,
changes in product mix

Reselling violations or safety violations



Site Coordination

- Weigh options from site selection and go after top 3
- Negotiate agreement(s)
- Get Insurance
- Site signage, fixtures (like shed, electrical)
- (Semi) permanent stall markings
- Parking, parking, parking



Site logistics – Market Day

Closures of streets?

Mapping of where vendors go

Post directional signs

Hand washing station by toilets

Information booth or kiosk

Food Stamp or new WIC smart card terminal

Music set up or special event set up

On/off electricity, or generators

On/off water

Trash





Sticky Issues

Insurance: At least trip & fall liability insurance

Carry land owner / partners as additionally insured

Volunteer waivers

Health Codes:

Food manufacturer's license, local food permits (county/city), permits for selling eggs, retail food estab. Permit, aquaculture licenses, hand-carry permits, sampling restricted, hot food cooked on site



Sticky Issues

Sales and Use tax permit

Scale and balance permit

Floral / nursery license

Organic certification

Disparaging remarks written / verbal

Building and fire safety regulations

Zoning and deed restriction on land

Oversight of sponsoring organization

Emergency plan – first aid, CPR



Services – Weigh benefits

(as well as the paperwork)

Women, Infant and Children (WIC) –
Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

Food Stamps

WIC Smart Card pilot project

New matching program / f-v prescriptions

Food donations after market

Recycling / composting / landfill



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Do you need an “entity” to run FM?

A Farmers’ Market can run better with an organization behind it

Why?

- Fund Raising
- Permits
- Insurance
- Intra-communications
- Advertising
- Leverage “synergies”



What types of organizations?

- Who? Churches
- Chambers of Commerce
- City Councils
- Merchant Associations
- 4-H Clubs
- FFA
- Lions, Kiwanis, service groups
- Historical societies
- Hospitals
- Non-profit food organizations



Sponsorship / Lead agency

- Basic responsibilities of sponsorship include:
 - Service on a FM's board of directors
 - Negotiating Site Agreements and FM insurance
 - Supervision of "back office" including finances and personnel
 - FM's can become independent later on and dissolve the formal ties with the founding sponsor



Publicity – Public Relations

- Website
- Press releases , press conference
- Special events
- Appearances on radio, tv
- Radio, media sponsorships
- E-Newsletter
- Speakers Bureau
- Meet and greet at others' meetings
- Brochures, posters
- T-shirts, caps, bags, signs



Special Events

Fruit and Veggie Fest – all month

Kick – off grand opening ceremonies

Always music

Partner with other groups who hold events
anyway (Wine & Food, SV Artfest, Theatre
Action Project)

School's Out and Back to School

Environmental, camping, or bike event

Chef's demos





Education

The Little Kitchen project / Culinary Academy presentations

Signage with bios of farmers

Through weekly e-newsletter

Festivals with activities from farm,
like pea shelling, wool spinning,
pecan cracking, soap making

A-frame explanation boards

Taste-the-Place



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How to be in a Farmers' Market

Get marketing plan of FM's

Look at rules & regs

Is it a fit in your own business plan?

Are you, or a member of the family, a
"people person"

Plan far in advance – talk with MM about
what consumers like, select seeds/trees

Be self-assured enough to be innovative

Learn about merchandising, labels, ways to
set up stall, signage



Being in a Farmers' Market

Check out potential markets!

Would you like to go to more than one?

Check out the market organization, do you like the personalities?

Do you like to types of customers coming to the market? Would they like your products you grow?

Then, see what grows on!

