



The Huntingdon Valley Farmers' Market (HVFM) Tel - 215 947 3212 Email - market@stjohnshv.org

1.0 Executive Summary

St John's Episcopal Church proposes to create and manage the Huntingdon Valley Farmers' Market (HVFM) in the parking lot of St John's, at the intersection of Welsh Road (State Route 63) and Washington Lane. The Huntingdon Valley Farmers Market will operate as an outreach mission of St John's, enabling farmers to sell quality produce and consumers to support local farmers. The market would feature local farmers and producers selling farm fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as baked goods, honey, cut flowers, local meats and other products.

The time is ripe for farmers' markets in Pennsylvania. Cities and towns all across the United States are opening farmers' markets. According to the USDA, between 1994 and 2004 our nation experienced a 110% jump in the number of farmers' markets. Here in Pennsylvania, a recent poll conducted by Terry Madonna determined that 80% of Pennsylvania residents want more farmers' markets here in our state.

The Huntingdon Valley Farmers Market will focus on two groups of customers:

- 1) Area Residents – People living within 2 miles of the market
- 2) Commuters – People driving by Welsh Road (Route 63), a heavy traffic route. A new traffic light will be installed right beside the market site this summer.

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Newspaper articles, on site signage, and the distribution of flyers to neighborhood residents will market the market. Additionally, a solid reputation for high quality produce sold at an affordable price will help ensure good word of mouth advertising for the market.

Market start up consists of St John's Episcopal Church sponsoring the launch of the Huntingdon Valley Farmers Market. Ideally, for the first season of operation there will be one vendor selling mixed vegetables and some fruits, one vendor selling tree fruits, and one or two producers selling a variety of processed foods, such as meat, dairy, and other items, like cut flowers. Additionally, if business is strong, additional fruit and vegetable farmers' can be added to the market throughout the season.

The market income will come from the farmers themselves, who should pay a set fee equivalent to approximately 5% of their weekly sales in order to sell at the market. If farmers earn approximately \$300/week at market, seasonal market fees of 3 farmers would total approximately \$900. Higher sales and an increase in vendors at market could also significantly increase this figure. Some form of subsidies will likely be required for market operation. For the first year fees will be set at \$10 per week per farmer or 5% of weekly sales, whichever is the higher.

1.1 Objectives

Operate the market once a week for the duration of the growing season, approximately from July through September.

To supply the residents of Huntingdon Valley with fresh produce.

To make the market profitable for local farmers and producers.

1.2 Mission

Operate and expand through sound operations.

To build customer loyalty to the Farmers Market.

To create community in Huntingdon Valley by sustaining a flourishing Farmers Market.

1.3 Key to Success

Educate consumers as to the value of farm fresh, seasonal produce and products.

Sound marketing and promotions to ensure that the market is a profitable business for farmers each week.

Create a bond between farmers and consumers, with a special emphasis on superior customer service.

2.0 Farmers Market Summary

A weekly open air farmers market of at least three farmers selling fresh local produce would occur once a week in the community from 10am in the morning to 2pm in the afternoon on a Saturday.

2.1 Ownership

The market will be an outreach mission of St John's Episcopal Church and will require active, creative management. Careful nurturing of relationships with farmers is also necessary to encourage farmers to have a stake in the market. The Church is committed to empowering and involving all members of the community to become involved in the Huntingdon Valley Farmers Market. The Huntingdon Valley Farmers Market seeks to create a Market that serves a broad diversity of people reflecting the different races, religions, and economic positions of local residents, commuters and farmers.

2.2 Facilities

The market will operate in the parking lot at the intersection of Welsh Road and Washington Lane. St John's Episcopal Church will make available its restroom facilities for the duration of market hours for farmers and customers.

3.0 Products

Products will consist primarily of local farm produced items with some exceptions as deemed appropriate by the Huntingdon Valley Farmers Market, vegetables, meats, dairy products, honey and others may be considered appropriate. The Huntingdon Valley Farmers Market has also considered bringing prepared foods to market in future seasons. Crafts should not be permitted at market.

3.1 Product Description

The following locally produced fruits and vegetables should make up the core product offerings of the market while in season: asparagus, beans, beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, corn, cucumbers, eggplant, greens, kale, leeks, lettuces, mushrooms, okra, onions, peas, peppers, potatoes, pumpkins, radishes, scallions, spinach, squash, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, turnips, apples, berries, cherries, peaches, pears, plums, strawberries, and watermelon. Additional farm produced items will be offered at market such as honey, jam, cider, baked goods, cheese, eggs, meats, poultry, fish, cut flowers, potted plants, and more, as appropriate.

3.2 Competition

There are two nearby grocery stores about a mile away that sell fresh produce.

3.3 Sourcing

Products will be brought to market by local farmers.

3.4 Future Products

Provided that demand for produce is monitored carefully, management should consider adding additional fruit and vegetable producers to the market. Of some interest is to supply the market with a variety of exotic and tropical fruits and vegetables. Additionally, a variety of prepared foods may be brought to market, as are deemed appropriate. Possible products include but are not limited to salsas, sauces, herbs, and readily consumable food.

4.0 Strategy

The Huntingdon Valley Farmers Market will draw on customers living within a 2 miles radius of the market as well as commuters driving past the market site. A sound media strategy, as well as flyers and on site signage will be use to help market the market.

Market fees will be set and collected by the Huntingdon Valley Farmers Market.

Prices at market will be set by farmers.

4.1 Marketing & Promotion Strategy

Marketing efforts should include press releases to local media, flyers, and on site signage. Press releases should be sent to local broadcast media, print outlets, and community groups that may be distributing newsletters. An initial release should be sent out one and a half months before market opening, and a reminder release three weeks prior to market opening, as well as a final email reminder one week before market.

A sign should be placed on site, permanent if possible, stating the location and hours of the farmers' market. The sign should be visible to both pedestrian and auto traffic. Visual components of the sign will include pictures of fruits and vegetables.

Flyers for both display and distribution should be given to nearby businesses and community groups, and also available at market during hours of operation. Flyers design should resemble the sign.

4.2 Market Fees / Pricing Strategy

Market Fees should be set at a standard, per stall amount, that is equivalent to 5% of market sales. Based on sales information from other farmers' markets in the region, we would expect average sales at market to be \$300 per market per vendor. As a result fees can be set at \$10 per market per vendor. While the market is small, market fees should be collected at the close of each market. In subsequent seasons, a seasonal or monthly fee can be negotiated to minimize collection time and bookkeeping.

Additionally, fees can be further discounted in an effort to keep a variety of types of small producers at market. To keep a baker involved in the market, market fees could be set at \$5 or another appropriate amount that was approximately 5-10% of weekly sales.

In year 2, if sales expand considerably, market fees can also be raised. Large increases could be imposed if sales reach an average of \$600 or more. Even if sales remain relatively flat, fees can be raised by \$1 per market each year.

Prices at market are set by farmers. Emphasis should be placed on fair pricing for quality produce. If necessary, management may wish to circulate prices charged by other nearby farmers' markets.

4.3 Strategic Alliances

Several types of strategic alliances should be sought out.

Local Media – Will help promote the market and aid in the development and expansion of a customer base.

Local Agriculture Groups – Will help provide producers for the market and possibly be able to provide marketing assistance to those selling at market.

Local Community Organizations – Will help spread word about the market. Buy in from these organizations can help develop and expand a customer base. Community organizations may also be invited to set up an information booth at market.

Local Government Agencies – Will help ensure smooth market operations. Assistance of the local municipal government as well as area Department's of Health and Licensing will be necessary to ensure uninterrupted operation of the market.

Local WIC/Senior – Low income mothers in the WIC program, and low income seniors receive vouchers each year to spend at farmers' markets. Capturing a significant share of this market can be of critical support to the market.

Local Businesses – Should be encouraged to support the market, by hanging flyers in prominent places and distributing flyers to customers at point of sale. Careful attention should be paid to this alliance, as existing businesses may contend that the Farmer's Market creates unfair competition.

4.4 Milestones

First market day: July 2007

All vendors achieve \$300 a week sales: September 2007

Consistent, weekly market attendance by 5 farmers/producers from July-September 2007, with verbal agreements by all vendors to return in 2008. Understandably, some vendors may cease market activity early given a short growing season.

Expand market to 5 farmers/producers with addition of 2 new vendors: May 2008

Consistent, weekly market attendance by five farmers/producers, May-October 2008, with agreements by all vendors to return in 2009.

Expand market to 7 farmers/producers with addition of 2 new vendors: May 2009

5.0 Management and Market Rules

The market management will be overseen by the Huntingdon Valley Farmers Market outreach mission of St John's Episcopal Church, who will also be responsible for setting and enforcing market rules.

5.1 Management Structure

A successfully run market on this scale should require no more than three hours a week or less to manage in season, in addition to the six hours a week spent onsite overseeing market operations. Out of season, management of the market should take one hour a week or less. Market management should be performed by a local organization, perhaps a civic association, business association, or by a dedicated entrepreneur in the area. More time may be spent managing the market if it seems appropriate to expand the scale of the market in subsequent seasons. Additionally, other area non-profit agencies may be invited to market to help promote their causes and as partners in programming at market.

Farmers should be consulted when new products are introduced to market, or changes are made to the rules of the market. While it is not desirable to make these changes based on an up or down vote of producers at the market, a telephone or face to face conversation about any changes proposed to the market is important in maintaining a sense of buy in from market producers.

5.2 Market Rules

A set of market rules should be drafted and sent to all producers attending market. Several of the rules central to sound market operations are as follows:

- 1) Products sold should be local.
- 2) Preference should be given to farmers growing crops, and farmers should not purchase products wholesale that compete directly with products already at market. For example, a farmer who does not grow corn should not purchase corn wholesale when it is already being grown by another farmer at market who is selling the product at market.
- 3) Farmers need to sell their products in accordance with local health and sanitation standards.
- 4) Farmers should attend market each week, and should notify market management by telephone when they cannot attend market.
- 5) Market hours need to be agreed upon, farmers' stalls need to be set up prior to the opening of the market, and farmers should not sell their products either before or after market hours.
- 6) Payment of market fees is mandatory.
- 7) Other rules can be agreed upon as is appropriate.

Acknowledgements

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