

# Michigan Farmers Markets: Business & Community

**Preliminary Ideas**  
Lansing City Market  
Rapid Market Assessment Training

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# One of the toughest jobs in Michigan... why?

- **Meeting multiple objectives** identified by different groups with different interests – commercial, marketing, cultural
- **Farmers markets as partnerships:**
  - Who owns your market site?
  - Who sponsors your market?
- **Site ownership:**
  - local govt-2/3rds; non-profit/other-1/3<sup>rd</sup>
- **Market sponsor:**
  - Local govt-13%; DDA/CoC-40%; non-profit/other-47%

# Another Dimension – business management

- Farmers markets as **public places** for **farmers/others to sell** their produce or products
- How many are paid from market sales?
- How many have market boards just of farmers?
- How many have market boards that include farmers?
- 40% with some farmer participation; 60% none

# The Business Challenge

- Literal explosion in #s
  - 60% < 5 yrs; 10% 6-9 yrs; 30% >10 yrs
- Anyone looking for farmers?
- Most common “strategy” – word-of-mouth
- Is your market a successful business?
  - At best, equivocal responses” fragile, but successful at this point” – “because we have return vendors” – “we don’t loose money” – “could not survive w/o the general fund” – “completely underwritten” – “yes – we have huge community support”

# The Community Connection

- Friends of the Market?
  - 75% without
- Consumer education?
  - focused on cooking; recipes; seasonality
- Children's activities - entertainment – special events?
- Volunteers, community groups?

# Back to Business (new basics)

- Retaining Vendors
  - Mostly personal relationships & contact; some with pre- and post-season meetings
- One vendor, several farms
  - Very mixed approaches
- Collecting sales data

**YOU ARE THE FRONT LINES!**