
So you think you want to start a farmers market?

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Fayette County Meeting
February 12, 2008

Outline

- What is a farmers market?
- Why a farmers market?
- Challenges
- Major Components for Consideration
- Overview of Tennessee Farmers Markets
- Steps in Consideration and Development of a Farmers Market
- Resources available



What is a farmers market?

- A common facility or area where several farmers/ growers gather on a regular, recurring basis to sell a variety of fresh fruits, vegetables and other farm products from independent stands directly to consumers



Why a farmers market?

- Potential benefits to
 - Farmers
 - Consumers
 - Communities
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Why a farmers market – for farmers?

- Desire opportunity to direct market products to consumers efficiently and effectively
 - Value-added
- Ability for new or small farms to generate income
- Ability to develop new customers for products



Why a farmers market – for consumers?



- Increasingly interested in buying fresh, local, source-verified, high-quality products
- Interested in supporting local farmers and economy
- Looking for a fun, community atmosphere

Why a farmers market – for communities?

- Communities interested in revitalizing business districts or downtowns
 - Bringing consumers back to these areas may result in economic benefits for neighboring businesses
- Communities interested in retaining farmland



Challenges

- Accumulating resources (land, labor, capital)
 - Working with multiple people from several groups
 - Varying goals, agendas, personalities
 - Developing new by-laws, policies and procedures
 - Recruiting vendors
 - Addressing regulatory issues
 - Marketing
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Major Components for Consideration

- Number of vendors with variety of products
- Number of customers willing to shop
- Organization, operation and management of the market
- Location and facilities needed and available
- Marketing strategies for the market



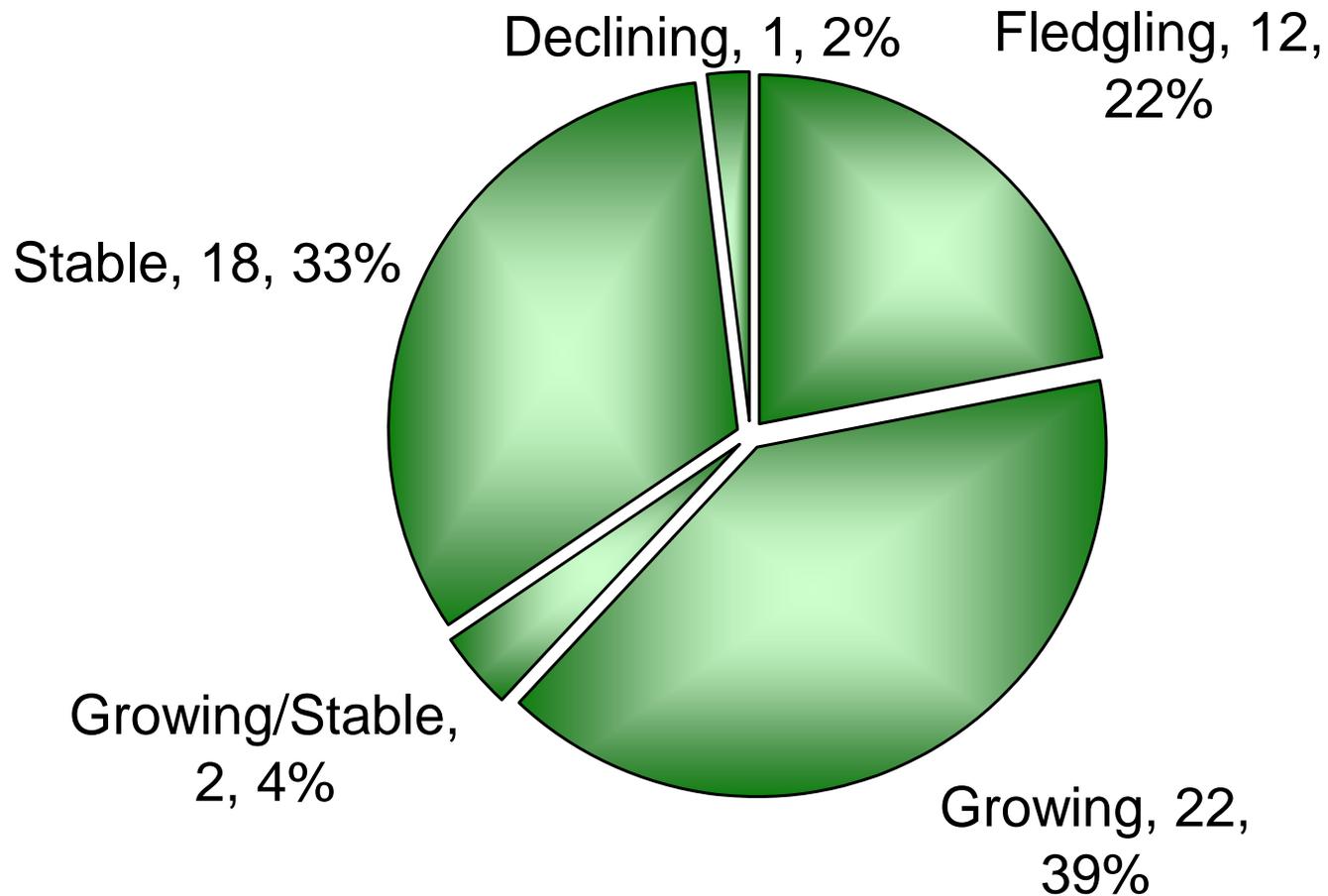
Overview of Tennessee Farmers Markets



From inquiries with 55
Tennessee farmers
markets during the
summer of 2006.

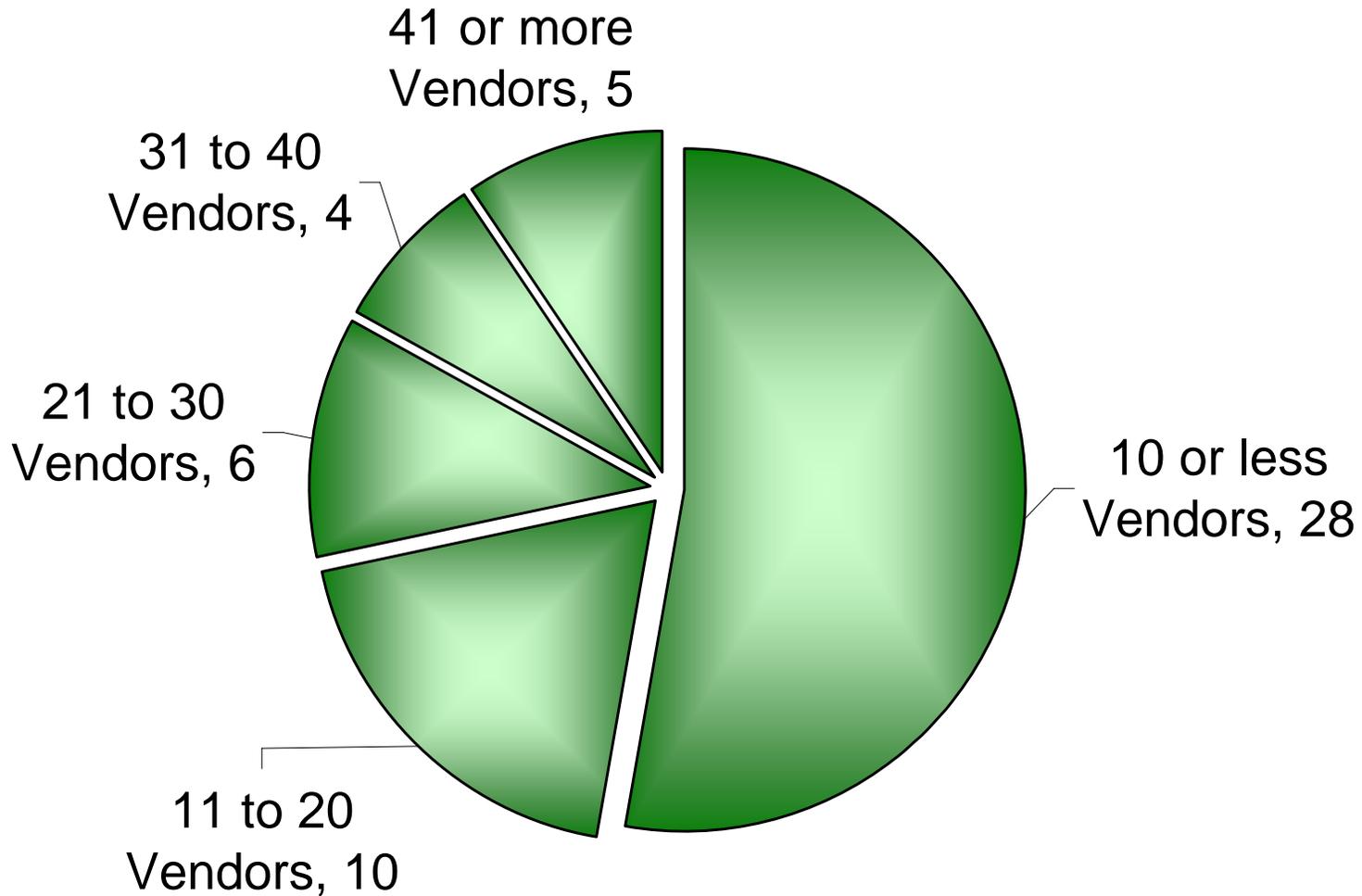
Number and Percent of Markets by Market Status

n=55



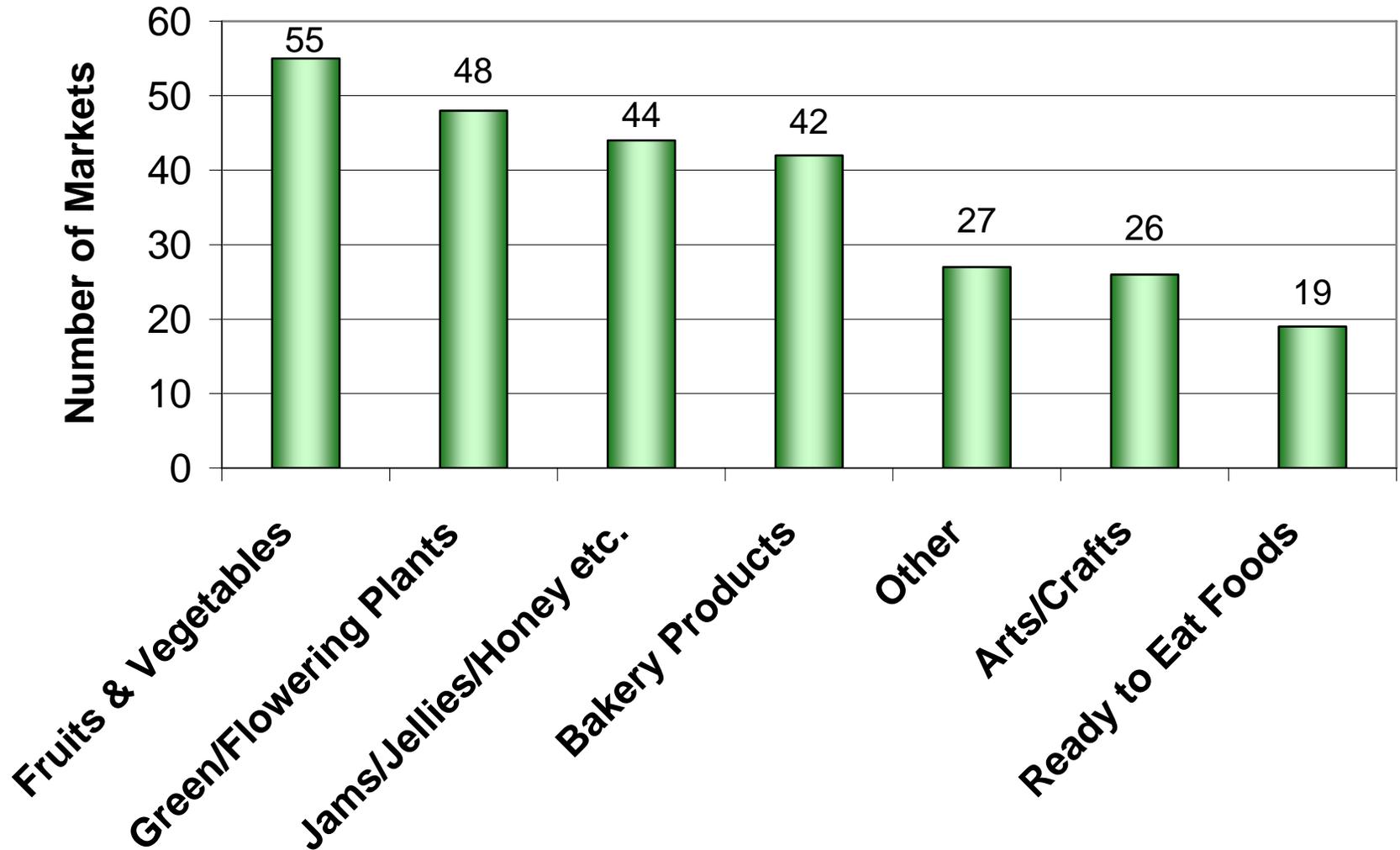
Number of Markets by Average Number of Vendors Per Day

n=53



Products Offered by Number of Markets

n=55



“A good mix of products is essential for a successful farmers market.”

Number of Customers



- Markets reported less than 20 customers per day to more than 1,000 per day

Policies and Procedures

- 83% of markets had written policies, by-laws and/or procedures
 - In the words of market vendors...
 - “We have a good set of understandable rules and policy – not too wordy and not too polished, just straightforward and to the point.”
 - “What’s the point of having rules if they are not enforced.”
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Management...in the words of market vendors

- “Leadership is really the key to getting a market going and keeping it going.”
 - “We really do not have any authority or person that sets policy or enforces it. We need some rules, and they need to be enforced.”
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Management

- Variety of individuals/groups in charge of market management
 - Manager and board of directors
 - Manager/director/coordinator
 - Extension Agent and Chamber rep, City rep, Volunteer or Board
 - Agency employee (City, County, USDA)
 - Chamber or Merchants Association
 - Volunteers
 - Compensation varied
 - none → perks → salary
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Location/Facilities

- Variety of locations/facilities
 - Open air such as parking lots, vacant lots, parks
 - Buildings/sheds/pavilions
 - Covered facilities attractive to vendors for comfort and maintenance of product quality
 - High traffic area is helpful
 - Restrooms are desirable
 - Adequate, close, safe parking for customers needed
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Marketing

- Signs
- Press releases
- Demonstrations
- Special events
- Brochures
- Posters
- Web sites



Steps in Consideration and Development of a Farmers Market

- Assessment of interest
- Feasibility
- Organization and Implementation
- Operation
- Continued Operation and Evaluation

Assessment of Interest

- Assess interest by meeting with community leaders who may be interested in a market
 - Include city/county, Chamber, business leaders, farmers, Extension, TDA, consumers, etc.
 - Is there a need for a market?
 - Discuss the purpose, type and size of market envisioned
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Assessment of Interest

- Identify any potential assistance and funding
- Identify any potential opposition
- Organize a market study committee to consider opportunity in more detail



Feasibility

- Market study committee should determine
 - Are there farmers interested in selling at a farmers market?
 - Is there sufficient customer demand to support the market if established?
 - Is there a general consensus in the community that a farmers market is needed?
 - Is there any opposition to the formation of a farmers market? What are the objections?
 - Is there financial support for the market if it is not a profit center?
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Feasibility

- Identify purpose of the market
 - Identify potential sponsors
 - Gather more information about potential opposition (why, intensity)
 - Identify characteristics of the market
 - Size, who able to market
 - Identify organizational structure and market management alternatives
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Feasibility

- Identify local government and community issues
 - Zoning, health department, liability insurance, etc.
 - Identify site/facility alternatives
 - Identify financing needs and alternatives
 - Identify publicity strategies and alternatives
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Organization and Implementation

- Convene permanent market steering committee
 - Begin to develop policies, goals, priorities and standards for the market
 - Survey potential vendors and customers
 - Develop preliminary budget for implementation
 - Develop market rules and regulations
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Operation



- Pursue financing
- Acquire and prepare site
- Identify and/or hire a market manager
- Recruit vendors
- Begin public relations

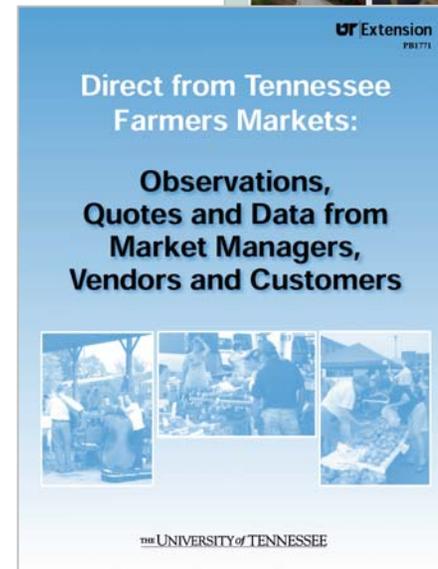
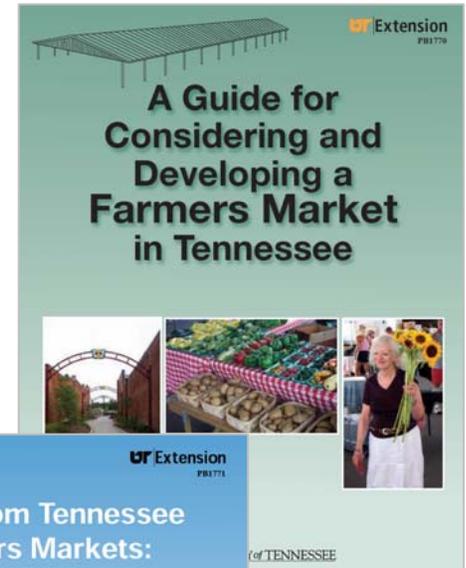
Continued Operation and Evaluation

- Collect information in order to evaluate progress of market
 - Determine communities awareness of new market
 - Allow vendors and customers to submit suggestions for changes or improvements
 - Grower/vendor plans to market next season
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Resources Available

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- **New Publications**
 - A Guide for Considering and Developing a Farmers Market in Tennessee
 - Direct from Tennessee Farmers Markets: Observations, Quotes and Data from Market Managers, Vendors and Customers



Resources Available

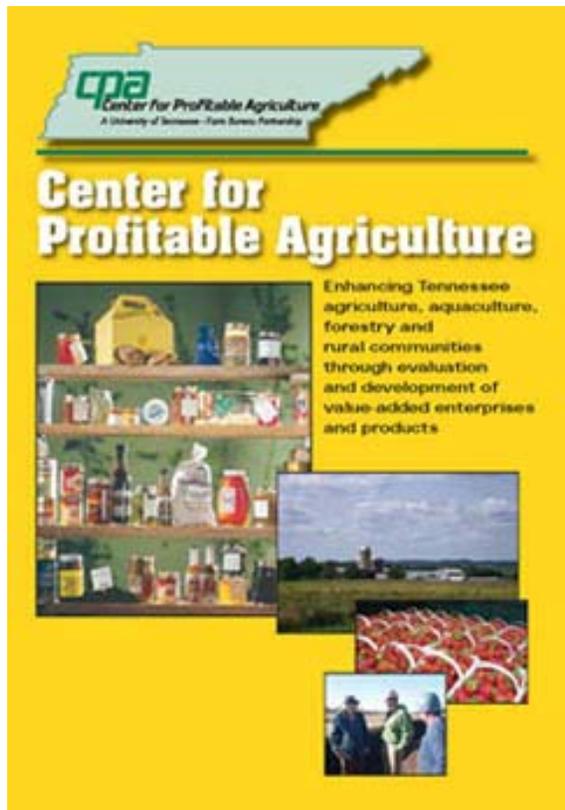
- Potential Funding Assistance
 - TDA -- Tennessee Agricultural Enhancement Program
 - Contact Laura Fortune (laura.fortune@state.tn.us or 615-837-5160)
 - USDA Rural Development
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Contacting the Center



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