



# Brown Bag Lunch Webinar Series

## Farmers Market Benchmarks

### Income Potential for Farmers Market Farmers

#### 1. Potential Income by Commodity:

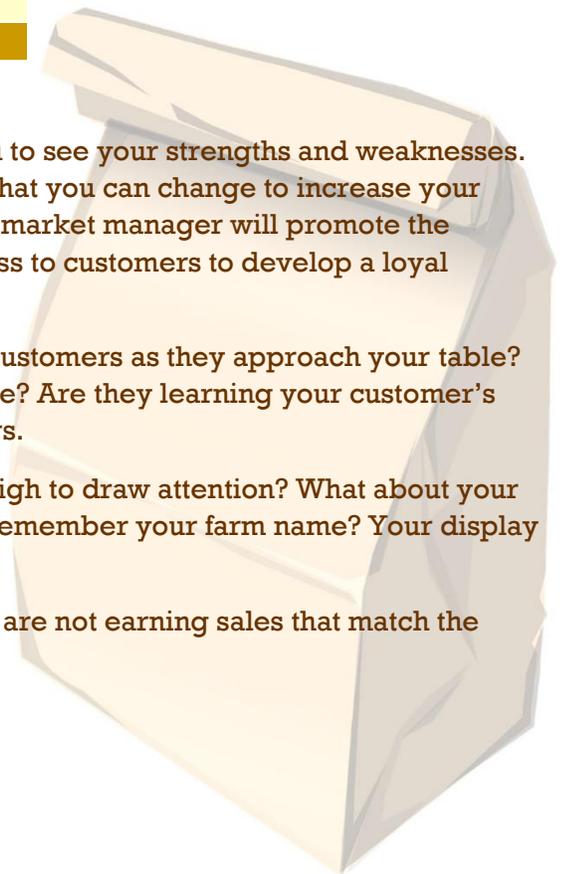
Commodity	Average Daily Sale \$	Average Sale per Transaction \$
Fresh Cut and Dried Flowers	225	20
Meat: Poultry	308	9.50
Meat Exotics	350	15.50
Honey Products	350	16
Wine/Beer	425	
Meat: Beef and Pork	438	12
Meat: Lamb and Goat	490	7
Eggs	510	8
Maple Products	550	11
Dairy Products	805	12
Bedding Plants	831	9
Vegetables	905	11
Fruit	1113	11
Baked Goods	1467	13

Comparing your own sales against the state average will allow you to see your strengths and weaknesses. If you are not reaching the average, then you will need to assess what you can change to increase your market sales. Are you adequately marketing your farm? While the market manager will promote the market, you need to continually promote yourself and your business to customers to develop a loyal following.

You might also need to look at your sales staff? Are they greeting customers as they approach your table? Engaging customers to close the sale or increase the size of the sale? Are they learning your customer's names, their likes and dislikes? This helps to create loyal customers.

What are your displays like? Are they neat and colorful? Stacked high to draw attention? What about your signage? Does it help you to sell your product, help customers to remember your farm name? Your display can make or break your sales at the farmers market.

These are just a few of the questions you should ask yourself if you are not earning sales that match the benchmark.



## 2. Regional differences in daily market sales

Region	Ave Daily Income \$	Counties within the Region
Niagara	325	Niagara, Erie, Wyoming
Southern Tier	383	Steuben, Chemung, Tioga, Broome, Tompkins
Rochester Area	400	Monroe, Orleans, Genesee, Livingston
North Country	469	St. Lawrence, Franklin, Clinton
CNY East	530	Oneida, Herkimer, Madison, Chenango, Otsego
Finger Lakes	563	Wayne, Ontario, Yates, Seneca, Schuyler
CNY	803	Cayuga, Onondaga, Cortland
Capital Region	938	Fulton, Montgomery, Schenectady, Albany, Saratoga, Rensselaer
NYC	1050	Brooklyn, Manhattan, Bronx, Queens, Staten Island
Catskills	1136	Schoharie, Delaware, Sullivan
North Country East	1159	Hamilton, Warren, Essex, Washington
Hudson Valley	1214	Rockland, Westchester, Putnam, Orange
Long Island	1300	Nassau, Suffolk
Southern Tier West	1350	Chautauqua, Cattaraugus, Allegany
Upper Hudson Valley	1654	Greene, Columbia, Dutchess

There are a number of factors that can impact the average daily income within a region. The study shows that the greater the number of vendors in the market, the larger the average sales. This could be due to greater diversity of product in the market, which brings greater numbers of customers to a market. Another factor is that the number of markets competing for the same customer base will negatively impact the average sale. You should also consider the pricing structure of the markets within the region. For example, the Rochester Public Market and the CNY Regional Market in Syracuse both feature well below average pricing on farmers products. Because they are very large markets with many farmers selling similar items, their pricing structure can bring down the average daily sales as compared to smaller markets. You can also look at the household incomes within the region. For example, average household incomes in the Hudson Valley and on Long Island are quite high compared to many of the other regions. Farmers have been able to capture higher prices in those markets. Finally, many of the regions with the lowest average daily income tend to have smaller, unstructured markets that may not be spending as much effort on advertising and promotions and therefore, a smaller customer base for their farmers.

## 3. Average sale based on day of market:

Market Day	Vegetables	Fruit	Meats
Mid-Week - Morning	\$8.25	\$14	\$22.50
Mid-Week - Afternoon	\$9.50	\$13	\$8
Mid-Week - Evening	\$11.50	\$8	No data
Saturday	\$10	\$8	\$18
Sunday	\$10	\$8	\$16

We would expect to see the highest average sale on the weekend because of higher attendance. However, weekend consumers tend to be more social. Weekday market consumers are more focused on shopping. But what weekend markets lack in average size of each sale may be made up by an increased number of sales due to a higher customer count.

### 3. The impact of production certifications on sales

Whether you have certifications for your production practices or not can have a big impact on your sales. Being certified organic can boost your sales by as much as 2.4 times the average, while non-certified producers tend to be slightly below average.

Meat producers who opt for the Certified Humane label earn sales as much as 4.5 times the average.

Certified Naturally Grown and being a member of Pride of NY made no difference in sales, most likely because these labels are not yet as well known to consumers.

### 4. Income by customer demographics

The highest average sale comes from families and senior citizens. When looking at shopping groups, couples shopping without their kids in tow, spend the highest amount. Moms shopping with their kids meet the average daily sale level.

### 5. Income based on age of farmer

As you could expect, income continues to climb as farmers age, coming to a peak around 41 – 50 years old. After that, the average income begins to drop off. Presumably we are seeing retirement kick in, meaning a lightening work load, income from a spousal pension and/or transfer of farm to the next generation.

### 6. Impact on sales based on length of time farming

The peak income occurs with farmers who have been farming for 16 – 25 years. It then begins to drop off as farmers begin to slow down, put more of the workload onto their adult children, and begin to retire through pensions for a retired spouse.

### 7. Nutrition Program participation

Those farmers that participate in programs such as SNAP, FMNP and Incentive programs, such as Fresh Connect Checks and Health Bucks, have a higher average income than those who do not participate. While FMNP and Health Bucks are limited to produce growers, all food producers can participate in SNAP and Fresh Connect and this is an easy way to increase your farm income.



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension  
Broome County



Project Partners: Cornell Cooperative Extension Broome County  
Farmers Market Federation of NY



Funded by NY Farm Viability Institute

