



Kentucky Cooperator

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Lexington Farmers' Market: Taste of the Season

Spring/Summer 2011
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KCARD

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Save the Date

KCARD Summer Board Meeting

July 28, 2011

Summer has arrived and the Lexington Farmers' Market is in full swing for the season.

"The market is open four days a week at three different locations in the city," explained Jeff Dabbelt, executive director of the Lexington Farmers' Market. "Even with the wet spring we kicked off the season with a great start at all markets, but there is no doubt that it is the Saturday market at Cheapside is really bringing in the crowds."

The 2011 season marks the third year of the Saturday market at the Cheapside location, the second with the completed pavilion, and the new site has proven to be quite successful for the market members and a big hit with the customers.

"We had our largest

Saturday opening ever this past April, more than 1,000 people at the market," said Dabbelt.

"For most of our customers a trip to the Saturday market isn't just about picking up fresh tomatoes or salad greens, they come out for the diverse selection of local foods along with the entertainment of the market experience."

Throughout the season at the market shoppers can find berries, grass-fed beef, eggs, cheeses, honey products, pastured poultry, organic produce, wines, flowers and much more local products to go along with their vegetables at the market.

"Typically I plan to buy pastured organic eggs,



Lexington Farmers' Market at Cheapside

beef, and chicken for the week ahead, and then I have my wish list," said Rona Roberts, a Lexington resident and a dedicated locavore. "I'm always hoping for real Kentucky foods that are hard to get in the city: fresh tart cherries, peas, wild blackberries, black walnuts or hickory nuts, Morel mushrooms -- or ANY Kentucky mushrooms."

Dabbelt says that over the years he has seen a change not just in the diversity of products sold at the market, but also in the farmers that are selling at the market.

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Cooperatives

With over \$3 trillion in assets under their control, our nation's 29,000 cooperatives play a major role in building wealth among members and owners in our local communities.

Cooperatives touch our daily lives by providing a variety of goods and services such as food, electricity, insurance, capital, equipment, building supplies, hardware, farm supplies, housing and health care services.

The goods and services provided by cooperatives in our local communities contribute greatly to our ability to provide a home for our family, to feed and clothe our family, keep them warm/cool as the season dictates, to earn a living on and off the farm, and to invest or save money for not only today's needs but for our family's secure future.

Often individuals buy products or receive services from a cooperative without understanding that the business is locally owned and operated by members of the local community.

Cooperatives often provide you with groceries, electricity, insurance, credit, banking services, hardware, etc. Your local RECC, Southern States, Ace Hardware and often other businesses are cooperatives that are owned by the customers that they serve.

I encourage you to explore your local community to see for yourself how cooperatives impact your daily lives and your ability to build wealth not only for yourself and your family, but for the community that you live in.

KADB to review policies and programs

The Kentucky Agricultural Development Board (KADB) will hold its annual two-day planning meeting October 18-19 at General Butler State Resort Park in Carrollton.

In addition to considering any policy changes proposed at the KADF Forums being hosted across the state, the board will also review requests for changes to programs, such as the County Agricultural Investment Program.

If you have an idea to enhance investment areas, eligible cost-share



items or guidelines to the CAIP or other programs, then please mail or email your suggestions to your area project analyst, fax them to (502) 564-8990 or email govkyag-policy@ky.gov.

For current guidelines visit <http://ag-policy.ky.gov/funds/>. Please submit your changes by Aug. 26.

Save the Date

2011 Kentucky Agricultural Summit: Agricultural Economy & Rural Communities

The Kentucky Agricultural Summit will take place on Friday, November 18th from 8am until 5pm at the Commonwealth Convention Center in Louisville, Kentucky.

The one-of-a-kind event will feature agricultural leaders from across the country. If you are part of Kentucky's rural agricultural economy, you will want to be there.

The Summit is presented by Kentucky Agricultural Council. The lead sponsor for the summit is the Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund, with additional support from Kentucky Proud.

More information will be coming soon at www.kyagcouncil.org.



Taste of the Season *cont...*

“Today we have great farmers producing niche products like artisanal cheeses, wines, pasture eggs, and organic meats for the market year round,” explained Dabbelt. “But what makes the market new each week is the variety of seasonal products our farmers produce, from fresh berries to the heirloom vegetables.”

Roberts agrees that while it is great to have fresh meats, cheeses, and breads available at the market year round she loves the seasonal nature of fruits and vegetables at the market.

“I watch for the foundation foods to come in season -- the first lettuces, beets, kale, green garlic and onions, potatoes, strawberries, peaches, tomatoes (of course), melons, sweet red peppers, and the great parade of summer-early fall-late fall apples,” said Roberts.

Unlike many farmers’ markets in Kentucky that are only open in the spring and summer, the Lexington Farmers’ Market is open year round, providing customers the option to buy fresh meats, eggs, processed

foods, and produce through the cold winter months.

Dabbelt points out that consumer education is key to the success of a year round market.

“In the peak of the summer it is easy to see the variety that can be purchased in the market, but if you are willing to try new items there are great products year round produced by our farmers,” said Dabbelt. “Hydroponic tomatoes and lettuces, winter produce, meats— if customers demand these products there will be farmers that will try to meet the customer demand.”

Working to create a vibrant and successful market to meet the needs of the consumers hasn’t always been an easy road for Dabbelt and the Lexington Farmers’ Market Board. That is why they have turned to KCARD over the years to seek assistance in every aspect of the business,



The relationships between the farmers and the customers is the heart of the market.

from Board planning to business analysis.

“KCARD has been a great resource for me and the Board as we have worked to address major issues these past several years,” said Dabbelt. “Sometimes it helps to have that impartial third party opinion to help a group put issues into perspective.”

Dabbelt admits that it is also the relationship between the market and the community that was key to helping make the transition to the new Cheapside location.

“I think the city embraces us and see us as an asset,” said Dabbelt. “As a member-owned cooperative, we will continue to need the city if/when we continue to try and grow our footprint, especially for the Saturday market”



Kids and adults can blend their own fresh fruit smoothies at the market



Fresh local meat and produce is on the menu for brunch at the market!



Many of the Saturday market vendors come out for the Sunday market at Southland Drive.

Marketing and Market Plans

Marketing is an important topic that can be frustrating for many business owners. Marketing strategies can become a trial and error process, even for experienced managers that are faced with the task of offering products and services that match changing consumer preferences.

KCARD encourages business owners to realize that the right marketing strategies are often a major factor in business success or failure. KCARD can assist managers and business owners with development of a marketing plan that addresses specific goals of the business and provides marketing strategies that fit their targeted customer groups to achieve those goals.

Developing the Plan

The development of a good marketing plan typically starts with setting goals for the business and defining the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that are perceived by the owners and management. KCARD often facilitates meetings at this stage and validates specific strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats as an impartial third party.

Defining the customer groups that are most likely to purchase the products and services provided is typically the next step. This can include

performing industry research, gathering demographic information on customers, finding comparable benchmarks, and facilitating focus groups to better understand customers. Knowing the specific targeted customer groups is an important step to providing strategic marketing that results in increased sales. Keeping informed of changing customer trends and trying to stay ahead of change is a key to successful targeted marketing.

An evaluation of the products and services that the business provides or will provide is typically performed next, along with customer analysis to determine if the products align with customer tastes and preferences. A business should strive to develop a “pull” type relationship with customers, such that the customers are “drawn” or “pulled” into the business because they are looking for specific products.

Pricing should be thoroughly analyzed as a next step to make sure the business isn’t mispricing products and services. If products are priced too high or low, it could be devastating in terms of lost sales dollars. Additionally, in most businesses, profit margins vary among products, and the ones with higher margins should typically garner more marketing attention. KCARD

can assist businesses with pricing analysis and determining profit margins.

Competitors should be evaluated to determine the competitive position faced by the business. Often times, whether a business is gaining or losing market share versus the competition is determined by the marketing strategies employed, or lack thereof. KCARD can help businesses evaluate competitors and help determine areas where businesses can improve their competitive position.

The final part of a marketing plan typically involves developing specific targeted marketing strategies to accomplish goals stated in the marketing plan. This involves determining the actual advertising and promotional tactics that the business will employ.

Depending upon goals and customer analysis, businesses might segment specific strategies that target the stages of customer development. Strategies might first strive to create awareness and bring in new customers. This would then further lead into strategies that help develop an emotional bond with customers and strive to create long term, positive relationships and repeat sales.

Beyond carrying out the strategies in a marketing plan,

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Boardmember Spotlight

Dave Maples

Dave Maples first came to Kentucky in the late 1970's to attend college at Western Kentucky University. While Maples decided to return to his family farm in Elkmont, Alabama after graduation, Kentucky and the friendships Maples made at WKU left a lasting impression on the young cattleman.

"I worked on the family farm for eight years and then took a job with the Alabama Cattlemen's Association," said Maples. "I had been working for the Association for about ten years when I got the call from Dell King to ask me to apply for the position in Kentucky."

Maples admits he was excited about the chance to return to Kentucky as the Executive Director of the Kentucky Cattlemen's Association, but he never imagined the opportunities that lay ahead for the Association.

"It has just been unreal what the Ag Development Fund investments have done for Kentucky's cattle industry,"

Dave Maples is the Executive Director of the KY Cattlemen's Association.



said Maples. "What has been even more amazing is how everyone has worked together to make it all happen, from our producers working at the county level to the industry leaders across the state."

Maples says the past twelve years at KCA has been a dream job for him, and it is because of his experience that he wants to give back to the agriculture industry. That is why he said yes when Larry Snell contacted him to serve on the KCARD Board last year.

"I'm still learning about KCARD and what my livestock experience can bring to the table," said Maples. "I do know that the organization helps many of our rural businesses, and I'm looking forward to working with this great group."

Marketing *cont...*

business managers should track their marketing expenses and monitor the effectiveness of their strategies in terms of changes in sales and customer levels. KCARD can assist businesses with the development of tracking mechanisms that can help determine the value of marketing strategies.

Marketing is often an undefined area for businesses that relies upon anecdotal evidence for development of strategies. This

can leave managers with wasted dollars spent on unproductive marketing strategies.

KCARD can assist start ups and existing businesses develop and update marketing plans and perform the necessary market research. With a well defined marketing plan, businesses will have a greater chance of making their marketing dollars pay in terms of more customers and higher sales.

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growth by developing and
delivering technical
assistance and by providing
Business Advisory services
for agricultural and
rural businesses seeking
to enhance their
economic opportunities
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To learn more about KCARD visit our web site at
www.kcard.info

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