

PFM Vendor Questionnaire June 2012 Results:

1. Are you happy with how the market is going? Why or why not?

Not super happy about it because it seems overcrowded with vendors on Saturdays and the farmers aren't getting along like they used to.

I think that the Portland farmers market is an invaluable economic opportunity for the farmers who attend it. I am not happy with how contentious the farmer relationships within it are. I am not happy that so many decisions are made without all of the farmers being in the loop

I was happier before the market got bigger and more political.

Yes, I don't seem to have any problems as is.

who is "we"? the association? the vendors? the market as a joint identity? the market is great. the vendors, are spending a lot of energy in conflicting ways. the association is right on, i am in 100%support of it. i would like to see the market figure out how to grow the customer base, before growing in vendors any further. parking parking parking right.

I am mostly happy.I do express the concern of the need to keep the specialty products spread out throughout the market not placed side by side of each other

We have been very happy with the market as a whole

Too big on Saturdays- number of vendors should not increase at this point unless newcomer offers something unique!

2. What do you think are important goals for the Portland Farmers' Market Association to have? (How can the PFMA best serve the market) (If you are suggesting new events/programs to happen at the market, are you willing to volunteer to make them happen?)

I used to think having a PFMA was a harmless idea coming from folks who really wanted to just improve market, but now, though I still think they are truly coming from that place, I think it will just do harm in the long run if they want to take over the city's responsibility of regulating things.

To continue running the SNAP program

The market has been a success in the past without any Association. I am making less now than before because my customers can't find parking. I think we should make dogs forbidden at market.

Have people speak to the public as a gathering every now and then at a certain time. I'd like to see if there is a way to get WiFi in the park. I far prefer Square over tokens and WiFi would open some opportunities to use tablets both for payments and multimedia at peoples tent.

i want to see the 3 roads around the market be changed to perpendicular parking, for saturday only. i want the city to get behind this, and say "this market is awesome, it is important, and it is a civil service to the community, to enable the people to get to it, and keep money moving. OR we should move. i need to see A LOT more people moving around on market day. if anyone has nbeen to any of the other great markets in the country, then you know, we are small change.... but. we could totally change that... the customer base is there... we should have 3 times the people coming EASY, we just need to coordinate it FOR them, so they can get there.

I think there seems to be too much politics in something thats supposed to be a place for the farmers to sell their products.Its unfortunate it has had to come to this in order to have a market

the market assn should focus on day to day operations of the market like a protocol for early and late season vendor placement (when there are gaps because vendors are not at market. there should be a clear cut way to assign spots) advertisement/ promotion of the market, balance of vendor types (veg, meat, dairy, mixed, etc)

Set up "court of appeals" (i.e. if vendors can not settle dispute themselves, then allow vendors to seek viewpoint of "court") Yes it would seldom used but at least be there.

3. Can the market be more supportive of your farm business in a way that it is not currently?

Everyone is plenty supportive of us at market.

Not really. That the market exists in a city like Portland is an amazing support to any farm lucky enough to attend.

No How could it anyway. Food stamp thing is fine but not worth a lot of money to me. I would not pay for it if I had a choice.

The market could find a way to have recipes available that make customers go to multiple vendors to get the ingredients.

no, its great. i guess its up to me to improve my listing on the web site, im just not a computer person, so ill never do that. i should have photos on it, a better description. i do struggle with where i physically am on saturday. i get to market before almost everyone, and i have to set up in the middle of nowhere, and then deal with everyone else driving around and through my display, and then deal with space crunches, if the spots aren't filled evenly. i am doing my best. i can't DO anything different. i feel, because of the size of my stand, and the time i get there, i should be further up the line. HOWEVER, i do not expect that this could or will happen. spots are touchy. its just that, before i demanded assigned spots, i was consistently 5 spots further up, than i am now. but, i also feel my stand, where it is better helps the market as a whole. so, i expect nothing, just voicing my deal

Yes, it has been asked for you to move us or the other vendor next to us considering we both sell similar products and apparently have the same labels. In years past there were 2 people selling the same product one of them complained he was immediately moved to the other end of the market, why is this so different? Just put some space between us, please

the market does a good job supporting the farms on facebook, etc. A map of the market at the information booth would be helpful so people could look to find a particular farm or product

4. Do you have questions, concerns, complaints, or feedback related to the market that you'd like to contribute and be addressed? (Here is your chance to get any issues off your chest, please be honest and respectful)

Like I said, I think it is a bad idea for the PFMA to take over the regulating of farmers at market from the city. I believe in the old waiting list idea and that you get your spot at market and keep it unless you find it not profitable enough to bother with, or the city kicks you out for not complying to regulations. The variety of goods sold at market will change naturally with what the consumers want.

I am not happy with how new members are chosen for the market. Half the farmers in Maine would probably like to attend this market and for years, there was a waiting list - imperfect as that method is, I think that it is better than the one currently employed. It genuinely feels to me like new vendors are chosen based on their connections with the "cool kids". And that too many farmers are being dragged along to be part of a system that they don't want. I really don't feel like the PFMA is ready to exist - there is WAY too much contention within the group; WAY too much animosity and nastiness flying around and that more than anything is going to affect all of our abilities to effectively market our products. If there is that much venom between farmers, our customers are going to start picking up on that eventually. Not good for anybody.

Get rid of the dogs. We don't need t-shirts or more advertising. We don't have enough parking already. Farmers need to farm not regulate themselves it doesn't work.

My big thing is that I think decision making power should remain with the city, we shouldn't get our hands into regulatory affairs. I'd rather see the PFMA as a lobby representing the farmers to the city. What I see missing in the way we chose some vendors this winter is input from the customers, they should have just as much of a say in the matter.

The main concern I have is that the application to join the Wednesday Monument Square market was EXTREMELY non-transparent. We applied to join this market and only found out well after the deadline that there was a parallel application on the PFMA website. No one at the City or at the PFMA told us that we needed to do two applications, not at any time in the process, not when we asked questions related to other parts of the process, and not when they saw that we submitted just one of them. When I tried to discuss this later, I was given a complete run around. The City Clerk told us that she had never heard of the parallel PFMA application. But when I talked to a friend who sells at the market, she said there had been numerous meetings between the PFMA and the City and they must have been aware of it. I'm still not sure what happened and what the real story is.

i am REALLY tired of the anti association sentiments. i dont and cant undertsnad the fears. this "gastapo" is already running the market, is responsible for so much of its success, and is the ONLY sensible way for it to continue in the future. i ask any of you who oppose it: what market out there, would you like to emulate? what sysytem works?? crystal springs? kenebunk? union sq nyc? then ask, how is it run? and then ask, why are we fighting so hard to continue to be

administered by the city. i hear so much nostalgia, for when larry just ran the show. larry has joined the association!!!!!!!!!!!! did he like running the show? do YOU want to run the show? and what about when larry retires one day? then who? daniel? he doesnt want it either! hes a memeber of the association too.

Once again please consider those of us that have been at the market for years and allow us to have a space without getting shoved out the door on the end by newer vendors. I have been told for years seniority rules as I sit and watch my stand get shoved out the gate and newer vendors move ahead of me.

I would like to take this opportunity to praise the work done by the steering committee and in particular Jamie: the 'public face' of the steering committee to the rest of the vendors- The Committee's hard work is evident and I feel the approach is respectful and considerate in a professional way

Last Saturday (6/23/12) I was squeezed to the very gate and had problems positioning there. Yet other- some other vendors left too much space between their truck & their neighbor. Vendors should use only a certain amount of space. Define that space!

5. Do you have any other comments that you'd like to share?

I realize the people who innitiated the PFMA are just trying to help. Maybe it would be cool to have this association, but I do not think they should take over for the city. The people on the waiting list for licences should be given them in order and if they pull it off they can stay. Changing this system that has worked well for so long seems unnecessary and unfair.

Thank you, Jaime, for providing us with this survey to air our feelings. Farmer meetings don't feel like a particularly safe place to do that.

I would not be willing to pay more fees that serve no purpose. I am very concerned that the selection of new vendors will not be fair. I feel the market is to big already and should be downsized.

are people really upset about paying dues? and the making of t-shirts? who cares! why do you have to control everything? give in. it feels good to submit to a joint athority. it really does. im so proud of us already.

I know its hard to keep this market moving forward.I do think the whole market needs the same rules not just half the market.It seems up in the front there is a semblance of order where as at the stage end its first come first serve and alot of people trying to make it up as they go to whatever suits them.Once again Ive watched as people come and people go and I still get stuck at the end further away from where I started 6 years ago.I dont have time to haggle at meetings I pretty much go with the flow and dont say much,if theres a problem please tell me and Ill make every attempt to fix it.Thank you for all you do.

Jaime and company! One reason many of us are doing what we do is because we want a kind of freedom in our work life that may not include being organized. I admire your courage even tho I may disagree- in future- with your ideas!