

Slide 1: This can be seen as my TL;DR (too long; didn't read) for the entire ppt! In other words, as we have increased linkages and impacts for DTC channels, we have to work even harder to make sure that new work is visible.

Slide 2: And when we think of who we should be talking to about those impacts and goals, those of us working on data think it is very important to think of it as a spectrum. If anyone is interested in digging down deep into this at your market org, FMC has a great exercise for you to do.

Slide 3: When you consider the possibilities and barriers that are in front of us right now, it is so important

to think across the spectrum in terms of audiences and partners.

Slide 4: And for our vendors, there is no question that proactive channel partners are what they are hoping for to help them choose and refine their products. (How many market managers regularly talk to their vendors about their OTHER channels?)

Slide 5: What is interesting about this is that very often, it is the vendors who are already data-driven. I just attended 3 small farms conferences in the past 2 months, and the amount of data and technology that producers are using or considering using is impressive. If any of you read Growing For Markets, you see regular evidence of this. The article about

rounding down is very detailed and really useful.

The other thing that often comes up when talking DTC or really any channel analysis is this idea that vendors are only using total sales as their rubric. This is an example of what farmers and other vendors told us during the report on farmers markets in Pgh that we just finished, and it is similar to other surveys I have seen on why our businesses choose certain outlets. Of course profit is a key indicator, but who wants to work somewhere they feel unwanted or unheard?

Slide 6: This saturation story came up this weekend with a story on NPR. Let me be clear: I'm not saying it's NOT true; I'm just saying I don't see

enough data that says this is the factor that should be changed.

This is the kind of data that I use to provide context for things like the NPR story; if this is the reality, then the answer isn't FEWER markets, but more support for market organizational capacity. (One hypothesis I'd offer to be proven or disproven is that I think what vendors are saying when they say "too many markets" is that many markets in the same region have the exact same mission, the exact same product offerings, the exact same shoppers. If I were a vendor at two or more of them, I'd ask myself why I needed to deal with two different administrations, two different reimbursement systems and so on, if the return is simply split between the two.)

So I'd like to understand more about where, and what the saturation is; is it at vendor level, or market level, or at the network level? Is it a clash between established and new markets? Data would help answer those.

Slide 7: It is as important that market operation is understood as market day impacts. NOFA-VT issues a report each year with results from the market survey and data like this landmark study from Oregon in the late 1990s remains true. And needs to be shared with stakeholders along with other data.

Slide 8: Another example of how your data can be paired with other market data: 85% of the responses from our national survey had vendor numbers

that stayed at the same number or increased. How does that relate to your market experience?

Slide 9: And in terms of external pressures, this is the biggest and most dangerous to our work right now. Words matter, and the way we define and use those words in our work can help reduce this, or at least raise up our values behind those words.

Slide 10: Mary Berry (yes, the daughter of that Wendell Berry, and Director of The Berry Center) also said this; I'd make this part of my message and a call-to-action for collecting data and sharing it with new market users.

Slide 11: The graphics that are coming out of Farmers Market Metrics are showing Story + Data, and markets are doing it in beautiful ways. Look on the Metrics In Action page on our www.farmersmarketmetrics.guide page for more.

Slide 12: But remember, if it's just data, then how does the small market show how efficient it has been in attracting shoppers? Or how does the large market explain its many programs in terms of its impacts? This has been a main focus over the past few years: raising up the market organization in the public eye in terms of food work. Just as the food hub or community garden is seen to be intentional and working on short and long-term impacts, the market organization needs to do the same.

This is from FMC's Metrics program, in the area we call the Market Profile which collects info on market traits.

Slide 13: Another way to think of Story + Data is to think about the number 8758. That is the number of markets the USDA currently lists in their directory and is considered the official number (and if your market isn't on there, it isn't counted, so add it!) That's a number but what is the story? This video contains other research that I have been doing, asking founders about their market origins and seeing this timeline of outcomes that were added.) What is your own market history? How can that tell a better story with your data?

SLIDE 14: This is from the work that FMC just finished for the City of Pgh. Because we know markets are not one-size-fits-all, we began this classification from the very start of the research to classify the 25 or so markets in the city. This helped not only us, but the City and the markets themselves understand the local context. Often this is called typology of markets, and you can see some of this early work at:

<https://www.helpingpublicmarketsgrow.com/typologymarket-characteristics.html>

Slide 15: That kind of data from the previous group of slides may help us address issues like this, which is why it is important to collect and share. In addition, the graphics and data that NOFA-VT and VTFMA and FMC

collect on statewide and national markets and farmers should be part of your reporting too.

Slide 16: When you put story + Data, you can affect policy or create new streams of funding.

This is, of course, from National Farmers Market Week which is growing in its reach and engagement every year. As soon as the NFMW activities are over for the previous year, the FMC Communication Team begins to think about and prepare for the next. To accomplish that, we collect and look at what data you are collecting in markets and use it to create the story for that year. That, along with citations that tell a systemic impact can really grab media attention.

Slide 17,18: And the truth is, markets already have loads of data! They just haven't organized it or decided which audiences would want to use it. NOFA-VT and FMC have resources to help figure that stuff out.

Slide 19: Believe it or not, the number of people you need to collect survey data or count people or items is usually smaller than you'd think. (One such group to ask for help from are your dedicated shoppers, and also high school or college-aged vendor offspring.)

Slide 20: This is an example of graphics from our Farmers Market Metrics program. Having a way to immediately kick data out to reports is vital for hard-working markets.

Slide 21: This is one example of how a market used their Metrics data (Ruston La).

Slide 22: My apologies to one of my favorite writers but I borrowed this as I think it is very apt and helps remember why data matters.

Slide 23: Check out our FMC Resource Library and Members-Only resources (because if you are a VTFMA member, you are also an FMC member due to our State Partner Program).

And my site has some resources I have developed as a consultant, including the 2013 VT Market Currency Report that also includes data on your work.

Thank you.

