



Marketing the Unique Story of Your Farm Business for Success
2009 Cornell Strategic Marketing Conference Summary

Todd M. Schmit, Les Hulcoop, and Robert J. Weybright

December 11, 2009



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Storytelling: Marketing the Unique Story of Your Farm Business for Success

2009 Cornell Strategic Marketing Conference Summary

Todd M. Schmit, Les Hulcoop, and Bob Weybright¹

INTRODUCTION

The marketing decisions of today's small- to medium-sized agribusiness firms selling agricultural, food, and specialty products are becoming more and more complex. New markets and channels are developing for local products, changing consumer demographics and tastes and preferences are affecting the types of new and emerging products consumers are demanding, new

technologies are improving the way products are packaged and increase access to local and distant markets, and alternative business organizations continue to be created that capitalize on collaborative production and marketing synergies, to mention just a few.



The 2009 Cornell Strategic Marketing Conference, sponsored by the Agricultural Marketing and Management Program Work Team (PWT), encompassed many of these complex issues, but in a way that addressed that primal question of concern: “Why should I buy your product rather than someone else’s?” “This conference has always been about giving farm producers and value-added agribusiness operations specific marketing tools and improved marketing skills that they can go back and apply to their business right away,” noted Dr. Todd Schmit, co-conference organizer and Assistant Professor of Agribusiness at Cornell University’s Department of Applied Economics and Management.

“Our agricultural and food markets are dynamic systems continually influenced by changing supply and demand factors. Today’s food marketers need to understand the implications of changing markets to their business operations and have the necessary skills to adapt and adjust their businesses to retain and grow their competitive position. This conference’s objectives work to do just that,” added Schmit. Indeed, the annual marketing conference has focused on several important and timely topics recently, from improving local and regional food distributions

¹ Assistant Professor, Department of Applied Economics and Management, Cornell University; Extension Issues Leader, Cornell Cooperative Extension–Dutchess County, and President, Weybright and Associates, LLC, respectively. The authors wish to thank Nancy Halas and Carol Thomson for their tireless efforts in making this conference go so smoothly and productively each year. In addition, we want to express our gratitude to all of this year’s conference attendees. As always, your insightful comments and discussion provided a solid learning environment for everyone in attendance. More information about this year’s conference, including podcasts, video clips, and speaker presentations will be available on the PWT’s website at <http://marketingpwt.aem.cornell.edu>.

systems, identifying effective ways to market to and access large consumer markets, and developing effective marketing programs for today's food safety conscious consumer.

The conference is organized each year by the Agricultural Marketing and Management PWT at Cornell University, a collaboration of on-campus faculty and staff, Cornell Cooperative Extension educators and directors, and food and ag-based industry stakeholders, whose mission is to give New York food and agriculturally related businesses a competitive advantage over the rest of the world by significantly improving the knowledge of marketing as well as improving general management capacities and skills. More information about the PWT is available on their website at <http://marketingpwt.aem.cornell.edu>.

This year's conference was held on November 2-3, 2009 in Hyde Park, NY with nearly 60 attendees participating. The presentations encompassed a range of marketing topics, but with them all centered on building and telling your farm or firm's unique story. The theme of the conference was "Story Telling: Marketing the Unique Story of Your Business for Success!" "Marketing is all about telling your story, and telling it 'right' to get someone to buy your product. This year's conference picked up on a number of current issues, and teamed them with successful agribusinesses that have addressed them through their own unique story," says Les Hulcoop, Extension Issues Leader for Cornell Cooperative Extension of Dutchess County and co-conference organizer.



Today's buyers are demanding a closer connection to their food and knowing, not only more about the product itself, but more about the farm or firm that produces it. Whether it's improved product quality through alternative technologies, collaborative activities that support family farms and agricultural communities, or utilizing sustainable production practices, they all uniquely define your story. In this way, marketing the unique story of your business provides the opportunity to showcase the unique qualities your firm and products possess, separates you from your competitors, and allows you to capitalize on your competitive advantages. Effectively communicating that story to market your products was what this conference was all about.

Key producers, processors, and other agribusinesses showcased their business stories and ways they built success through improved marketing strategies. Particular attention focused on marketing products to growing markets, internet approaches to product marketing, and

diversifying marketing outlets to improve business performance. Professionals and industry experts were also on hand to provide methods that help evaluate the success of various marketing activities and how to analyze the financial implications of the marketing strategies employed.

OUR SPEAKERS

Forecasting for the Future – Current and Expected Changes in the Food Industry System

Dr. Gene German, Professor Emeritus in the Department of Applied Economics and Management and former Director of the Food Industry Management Program at Cornell University kicked off this year's conference by highlighting key changes within the broader food industry system and the underlying implications for small- to medium-sized food businesses. Dr. German emphasized the importance of knowing your market. "You need to know your market in order to *market* to it, and that includes knowledge of both your customers and your competition," noted Gene.



Once Upon a Time... Building and Telling Your Story

Margo Bittner from the Winery at Marjim Manor teamed up with professional storyteller Jeannine Laverty to show how key components of the art of storytelling were used in the development of her marketing story and how customers become part of that ongoing story. In addition to making the experience fun and welcoming for her customers, she says it's important to educate your customers at the same time. Her closing thoughts summed it up well, "We don't sell wine, we sell the wine experience."

Jeannine described key elements of the storytelling process and how farmers can use these elements in developing their own marketing programs. Knowing and visualizing your audience is important, and one that is not necessary the same as what you think your audience is. In developing your story, Jeanine also emphasized that it entails involving your customer in a way that goes beyond just buying your product. In addition, she noted that producers should try and read their business messages and stories as a stranger might, not only from their own 'informed' perspective.



Marketing Your Products to Growing Markets

A trio of marketing specialists and successful agribusinesses spoke about marketing products to growing markets. Identifying changes in consumer demographics and how your products, or new products you develop, meet the demographics is key to growing your business in the future.

Ethnic Markets and Vegetables

Bob Weybright, President of Weybright and Associates, LLC., a marketing consulting firm headquartered in the Hudson Valley, kicked off this part of the program by showcasing shifts in consumer demographics, how online resources can be used to identify growing ethnic markets, and how firms can carve out niche product marketing programs suited to those markets. In determining what types of products to sell Weybright recommended several investigatory approaches, including asking your customers what they want, checking out the bookstore (cookbooks work really well), asking at local Extension offices, and reviewing trade publications. He urged attendees to be adventurous and to try new things on a limited basis. Bob went on to talk about where to look for new ideas and provided useful links to business development resources. He summarized his talk succinctly, “Find your niche, leverage your story.”



Internet Approaches to Product Marketing

Following up on this ‘online’ message, Susan Gibbs of Juniper Moon Farm in Palmyra, VA showed how she uses various internet approaches (e.g., websites, Facebook, blogging and tweeting) to grow her customer base and attentive audience. This approach was so successful that she was able to effectively implement the world’s first yarn CSA. Susan noted the importance of using a mix of promotion, and to always be authentic, sincere, and approachable. She also emphasized “return customer strategies;” for example, keeping your customers coming back with content, giveaways, and meet-ups. Given positive feedback and suggestions from attendees, the PWT is considering organizing next year’s conference as a hands-on workshop, giving attendees real-time applications to developing their your own websites and other internet marketing approaches.



Diversifying Your Marketing Outlets

Ken Migliorelli of Migliorelli Farm, a family-run fruit and vegetable farm located in Northern Dutchess County in the Hudson Valley, closed out this part of the program by talking about how their family operation has effectively developed a marketing program that utilizes multiple marketing channels, including direct-to-consumer sales at farm stands and farmers markets, and wholesaling to restaurants and other channels. Migliorelli Farm provides fresh fruit and produce to over 30 fresh markets a week, both locally and in NYC. Part of Migliorelli’s story includes a production system that is transitioning from the conventional production of fresh produce and fruit into the newly developed Quality Low Input Food (<http://www.qlif.org>) production standard and implementing voluntary transparent protocols such as EUROGAP, HACCP and other voluntary safety compliance requirements.



New York Market Maker – New Online Tools and Resources to Market Your Products

Dr. Khin Mar Cho of Cornell Cooperative Extension-New York City, along with Barbara Lewis of Lewis Polled Herefords in Essex, NY, provided updates and explained the new features of the NY MarketMaker. Program. Barbara explained how her farm is using NY MarketMaker to improve the marketing component of their farm's operation that is focusing on management-intensive, organic cattle production. MarketMaker is a national



network of state websites, currently available in 14 states, connecting producers/farmers and processors with food retailers, consumers and the food supply chain. The network contains one of the most extensive collections of searchable food industry related data in the United States (5,000+ producers, 340,000+ food industry data), and each state's MarketMaker site allows users to query, map and locate food-related data. The site is open and accessible at no cost and is a web-based resource that brings market intelligence to small and medium-sized producers while developing the value-added food supply chain. New additions to the MarketMaker program include a Marketplace Buy & Sell Forum and the MarketMaker Blog. More information about this marketing tool is available on their website at <http://ny.marketmaker.uiuc.edu/>.

Changing Your Marketing Plans to Meet Today's Consumer – The Case of New York Potatoes



John Mishanec, Area Vegetable IPM Educator with Cornell Cooperative Extension in Albany NY, discussed recent results on a study working to improve variety selection and marketing of NY-grown potatoes. The project started as evaluations of different potato varieties for resistance to insects but, from there, the research team has established relationships with local culinary schools to evaluate specific cooking characteristics of NY-grown potatoes. From this information a "Potato Culinary Use Guide" was developed this past year. In addition, the New York Times recently did a feature article on using NY potato varieties (www.nytimes.com/2009/10/14/dining/14spuds.html). The Cultural and

Culinary information on varieties enables growers to select a variety to grow that fits their needs and will help growers better market what they grow.

Marketing Channel Assessment – What Channels are Working for You?



While identifying and implementing new and innovative marketing strategies is important for any business, having the ability to evaluate and analyze the effectiveness of these strategies is important in adjusting future marketing efforts and for long-term marketing program success. Matthew LeRoux, Marketing Specialist with Cornell Cooperative Extension-Tompkins County presented a methodology for assessing the performance of alternative marketing channels utilized on small- to medium-sized fruit and vegetable farms. The *Marketing Channel Evaluation Program* is a ranking system

developed to summarize the major firm-specific factors across channels and to prioritize those channels with the greatest opportunity for success based on individual firm preferences. Matthew Glenn, of Muddy Fingers Farm in Hector, NY, discussed how they utilized the channel assessment tool and how they used the results to alter their marketing strategies in the future. These efforts are part of a larger two-year project recently funded by the New York Farm Viability Institute to enroll an additional 50 farms in the program. Expected farmer benefits from enrolling in the farm include: better informed decision making, increased profitability and enjoyment of work, decreased in labor needs, stress, and risk, and benchmarking against similar farms. For more information on the project or signing up to participate, you can contact Matt LeRoux by email at MNL28@cornell.edu or phone at 607-272-2292.



Low Cost and Effective Marketing Methods for Telling Your Story



Charleen Heidt, President of Research & Design, a market research consulting firm in Ithaca, NY closed this year's program by bringing us back to the 'Marketing as Storytelling' framework we started with, and emphasizing the *small company dilemma*; i.e., the inability to describe what you do in simple language, bringing that description to life with stories, the fear that storytelling might give an air of unprofessionalism, and the thought that the only appropriate marketing mechanism is face-to-face. She discussed how stories are a powerful way of illustrating the value of your product/service and that there are three ways to create customer value: product/service innovation (good), customer service (fast), and price (cheap). It's tough to satisfy all three, so she recommended picking two. In the end, she emphasized that your story needs to do four things: (i) resonate with your target markets (i.e., it needs to be relevant), (ii) differentiate your offering from others (i.e., illustrate your offering's unique value), (iii) it must "stick" and have "legs" (i.e., it needs to be short, easy to tell, and memorable), and (iv) it must be sustainable and concrete (or quantifiable).

KEYS TO MARKETING SUCCESS

In addition to the impressive presentations on developing and evaluating marketing practices, each attendee also walked away with each speaker's *5 Keys to Marketing Success*, a new element to this year's program added to help facilitate the conference's objective in providing attendees with concrete ideas and tools to apply to their own business. "The *5 Keys* helped ensure that the essential elements from each speaker were captured for the participants and helped link each speaker's topic with the necessary skills for



producers to focus on in their own marketing process,” added Bob Weybright co-conference organizer. While developed independently from each other it is interesting to note the similarities and commonalities in many important themes to marketing success. For the interested reader, we have included these keys from each speaker in an appendix to this document.

RESOURCES FOR YOU

Additional programming information, upcoming events, and links to member programs and industry stakeholder websites are available on the Agricultural Marketing and Management PWT website at marketingpwt.aem.cornell.edu. *Smart Marketing* articles published by the PWT are also available at marketingpwt.aem.cornell.edu/publications.html#smart. In fact, the December 2009 article was authored by David Becker, an attendee of this year’s Strategic Marketing Conference, and weaves in many of the ideas he heard during the conference.



The article, “20 Ways Farmers Can Improve their Marketing Chops,” is included at the end of this bulletin and was re-printed with permission from David and the website Friend of the Farmer (accessed at <http://friendofthefarmer.com/2009/11/20-ways-farmers-can-improve-their-marketing-chops/>).

All speaker’s presentations, video files, and audio podcasts will be made available on the PWT website soon. We encourage you to use these in your own educational programming. If you were not available to attend this year’s program, we encourage you to check back to our website frequently to catch the latest updates.

Cornell’s eClips was at our conference to record our speaker’s presentations. eClips is the world’s largest video clip collection on entrepreneurship, business, and leadership (<http://eclips.cornell.edu>) and clips of the presentations will be added to their collection and strengthening its content on ag-related enterprises. Podcasts, clips, and video files will be made available on the PWT website and through the searchable eCips database for use in educational programming. Please credit the PWT and eClips in your utilization of this information.



CLOSING THOUGHTS

The annual Strategic Marketing Conference was a huge success again this year. The philosophy of this conference has always been to present, educate, and discuss hands-on, usable information that participants can walk away with and begin utilizing immediately. Based on feedback received, the conference lived up to this philosophy once more. On a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), attendees rated the set of speakers a 4.1 average, with several averaging over 4.5. They rated the overall quality of the workshop a 4.5 average, overall value of the workshop a 4.4

average, and the probability that they will attend future Strategic Marketing Conferences a 4.4 average.

We received many important suggestions and comments on ways to improve the conference and potential topics for next year. We look forward to working with our agricultural producers and other industry stakeholders, extension educators, and agri-service providers in developing a useful and educational session next year. Comments and suggestions are always welcome and can be addressed to Todd M. Schmit, Agricultural Marketing and Management PWT co-chair, via email tms1@cornell.edu or by calling (607) 255-3015. Check out our website for continuing updates and event postings.

To close, we would like to express our appreciation to the sponsors and collaborators for this year's program. We are grateful to exemplary service and attention provided by Henry A Wallace Visitor and Education Center at the FDR Presidential Library and Museum in Hyde Park, NY. No trip to the area would be complete without an evening meal at the Culinary Institute of America. In addition to great food and service, the event is a welcoming atmosphere for the productive networking that occurs during the conference. Finally, we recognize the additional funding and support that was provided by the Cornell Program on Agribusiness and Economic Development, the Department of Applied Economics and Management at Cornell University (Warren Teaching Endowment Fund), Cornell Cooperative Extension, and Cornell Cooperative Extension-Dutchess County.

We look forward to seeing you and many more at next year's conference!

APPENDIX 1. Five Keys to Marketing Success

Five Keys to Marketing Success

Gene German, Cornell University

Market Knowledge	• Knowledge of the market – you need to know your market in order to <i>market</i> to it.
Customer Knowledge	• Know your customer, including understanding of consumer demographics.
Competition Knowledge	• Knowledge of your competition – Who are you competing with? What are your competitive strengths and advantages?
Creativity	• Finding a unique market and/or product.
Business Sense	• Sound business sense includes accounting skills, computer skills, people skills, and the ability to interact with people.

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Five Keys to Marketing Success

Margo Sue Bittner, The Winery at Marjim Manor

Fun and Welcoming	• Make the experience fun and welcoming for the customers
Sell the Experience	• Sell the experience, not the product
Customer Education	• Educate your customer. Everyone likes to feel smart and show off new knowledge.
Hire the Right People	• Hire people who smile and are welcoming. Manners and attitudes are intrinsic, skills can be taught.
A Mix of Promotion	• Create a blend of advertising, press releases, internet use that fits your market. It may take a while to find the correct mix

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Five Keys to Marketing Success

Jeannine Laverty, Storyteller/Farm Worker

To Whom?

· Know and Visualize Your Audience

What to Say

· Highlight Your Family/Your Crew/Your Animals

Is What I Said
What You Said?

· Try to Read Your Business Name/
Headlines As a Stranger Might

Why?

· Give Visitors Something to Do Besides Buy Your Product

I Am the Host You
Are My Guest

· Be Willing to Meet Special Requests with Speedy
Efficiency

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Five Keys to Marketing Success

Bob Weybright, Weybright & Associates, Inc.

Maintain Awareness
and Curiosity

· Be aware of who your customers are, and curious about how the mix might be changing in terms of demographics and personal needs. Be curious about what they might be missing or wish for that links them to their past and heritage.

Be Knowledgeable

· Know what you are selling, how to use what you sell, and look for additional ways to utilize what you sell. Know what your customers want, & if you choose to try new items, know how to produce them.

Hire Well and Be
an Educator

· Mirror your passion as a business owner. Teach more than "train". Educate your employees & your customers.

Maintain Respect

· Maintain respect for your customers, your employees, and your business.

Work Hard

· Intelligent pricing takes a lot of work. Being a farmer, not just a grower, is hard work. Working with customers on a daily basis is hard work. Keeping abreast of new ideas and customer needs takes hard work.

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Five Keys to Marketing Success

Susan Gibbs, Juniper Moon Farm

Who are Your Customers?

- Identify your customers.

Where are Your Customers?

- Find out where your customers are, and go there.

A Mix of Promotion

- Tell your story via blogging, twitter, video, etc.

Be Authentic

- Be authentic, sincere, and approachable.

Return Customer Strategies

- Keep your customers coming back with content, giveaways, meet-ups.

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Five Keys to Marketing Success

Khin Mar Cho, New York MarketMaker

Frequent Contacts

- Make regular contact with business partners/producers, processors, and consumer via phone, email, fax

Find Marketing Options

- Direct marketing, farmers' markets, CSA

Use Marketing Resources

- Register on free online marketing websites, looking for market information and business models

Meetings and Conferences

- Attend marketing meetings and conferences. Meet business partners and consumers at county harvest fair, farm day, conferences, and shows and expo's

Marketing Materials

- Post free advertisements of product information, get marketing newsletter, find marketing events, and exhibit products as shows and expo's

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Five Keys to Marketing Success

Matthew LeRoux, Cornell Cooperative Extension

Value Your Time

- As a farmer/business owner, you should place a value on your own time when evaluating or comparing marketing opportunities.

Keep Records!

- Take the time to keep records, even if only for snapshot periods, so you can make informed decisions about your business.

Multiple Channel Strategies

- Combine marketing channels to maximize your sales. Have one "steady" channel and one that is more flexible (in terms of demands)

Clear Communication

- Communicate simply and clearly with your customers

Learn from Others

- Make the time to visit other, similar operations in order to learn new ideas that will improve yours.

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Five Keys to Marketing Success

Charleen Heidt, Research & Design

Know Thyself

(and to thine own self be true)

- Know Your CUSTOMERS
- Know Your COMPETITORS

Create VALUE For the Customer (Pick 2)

- Price
- Product/Service
- Customer Service

Define SUCCFSS

- In Your Own Terms

Embrace Change

- Keep Your Story Fresh
- Be Flexible
- Never Stop Learning and Trying New Things
- Learn to LISTEN

Do What You Love

- And Love What You Do!

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December 2009

20 Ways Farmers Can Improve their Marketing Chops

David Becker, Friend of the Farmer

The following article was re-printed with permission from David Becker and the website Friend of the Farmer (accessed at <http://friendofthefarmer.com/2009/11/20-ways-farmers-can-improve-their-marketing-chops/>). David was a recent attendee of the Agricultural Marketing and Management Program Work Team's 2009 Strategic Marketing Conference held on November 2-3. His recent posting weaves in many of the ideas he heard during the conference. For more information on Friend of the Farmer, please go to their website <http://friendofthefarmer.com/>, or contact David directly at 917-664-9752 or davidandrewbecker@gmail.com.

Farmers are business people, alchemists, scientists, economists, and stewards of the land. But sometimes they need help with that most basic and necessary of skills: marketing. Last week I sat in on the 2009 Cornell Strategic Marketing Conference organized by the Agricultural Marketing and Management Program Work Team (<http://marketingpwt.aem.cornell.edu>) on the power of storytelling. Herewith a modest partial list of ways for farmers to craft a story around their products, personalities, and people more effectively, especially at farmers markets.

1. **Create a Narrative.** The story should be real and worth repeating: How you got into raising sheep when a farmer left a flock on your pasture and never came back to reclaim them. (That one's true.) Weave in details that create an image. People want—desperately need—the connection with the farm and an honest day's work.
2. **Smile and Make Eye Contact:** Margo Sue Bittner of [The Winery at Marjim Manor](#) found that if you smile and make eye contact within the first 10 seconds of greeting a customer you reduce theft by 20%. Is that a scientific fact? Could be. But even if its not, it's a great start. You're not running an art gallery that gains its cachet by turning away traffic.
3. **Identify Staffers Who Like to Talk:** Sometimes customers want a simple answer. Is this easy to cook? How should I store that? The kind of questions most workers who staff farmers markets should be able to address gracefully. But not all workers at farmers markets also work on the farm. Have a designated staffer who enjoys talking about the difference between sustainable and organic. What exactly is Integrated Pest Management? Why you grow kohlrabi or celeriac.
4. **Be Honest:** If someone complains that "these carrots are long and stringy" you can respond "Oh God. Can you imagine what they're like to wash and harvest? They taste perfectly fine, but next week we have Spanish Blacks that are gorgeous and very rare."
5. **Presentation is Everything:** Show abundance when you have it. When you don't, display products as if they were featured in Martha Stewart's magazine. Spring for wicker baskets or wooden boxes lined with burlap. You have 10 tomatillos left? Put them in a small basket and highlight them at checkout as an impulse purchase (Make a great salsa verde!).
6. **Tell a Story about Your Area:** The largest producer of cabbage and sauerkraut in America. Best known for artisanal Munster cheese. Benedict Arnold slept there. Pamela Anderson was born up the street. (Actually Pamela Anderson was born in Ladysmith, British Columbia.)
7. **Feature Clear Labels:** Easy to read and laminated. Describe the taste and some potential uses. Not all apples make a great pie but every apple has a use. Same is true for potatoes.
8. **Provide (Easy) Recipes:** There are literally millions of recipes available online. If you don't cook often pick some and try them. Or have your friends test a recipe. Product trade groups often have a wide range of [well-tested recipes](#). Print them out. Offer to provide a recipe with every purchase.

Group together items that go into the recipe into preparation (like a Butternut Souffle that includes squash, onions and thyme).

9. **Promote Your Press:** If you've been featured in any newspaper, blog (even this one), radio or TV report, print it out and laminate it. Make copies for journalists who prowl farmers markets looking for story ideas.
10. **Meet Controversy Head On:** When there is a food-borne disease story in the news don't be shy about explaining how your product is different, or how raising your animals is vastly different from a factory operation, and what that means in terms of food safety.
11. **Price for Rarity:** Describe how the breeds you choose are distinct from what you can buy in the supermarket. More flavor, more vitamins. If something is rare or really hard to grow then narrate your journey of bringing this potato, pig, turkey back from the brink of extinction. Assure the consumer that he or she is now playing a role in preserving this heritage breed. And then price appropriately.
12. **Get Good Pictures of Your Farm:** There was a time in our history when almost everyone spent some time on the farm. Understanding what goes into raising plants and animals can be translated with a single photo. "There's our herd of English Black pigs running in a field. There's a chicken pecking for her favorite meal—grubs." Show, don't just tell.
13. **Knock Something Off a Big Buy.** Amazing how rounding down by 50 cents from \$20.50 to \$20.00 makes people feel like they're getting a deal—and you don't have to spend time making change.
14. **Give Free Samples.** Get people to try more than one. A winesap vs. a Northern spy. If you make sausages, get out a hot plate and grill up a platter. The aroma will draw fans and sales.
15. **Offer Paper Bags and Helping Hands:** I sometimes find myself balancing a half dozen butternut squash when a worker comes over and rescues me. Grateful, I turn around and buy something else.
16. **Move Quantity:** You don't want to bring your bumper crop home. If it's getting late, start telling people about making pesto that will keep all year round in ice cube trays.
17. **Selling Meat? Then Show It:** Don't just surround yourself with ice chests and a price list. If meat is vacuum bagged and frozen, get trays of ice and put your meat on a tabletop. Start up a small grill and give samples (see #14, above). The smell will pull in buyers—who will be reassured by visual access to the goods.
18. **Show Where You Live:** If you say your farm is 4-1/2 hours north of Manhattan near Seneca Lake it might as well be the moon for some New Yorkers. Even Albany is a vague location. If you show a map with a pin in it, people begin to get the idea—and how much time it took for you to get to the market to start setting up tables at 6:00 this morning. Customers will leave with a greater appreciation for your hard work.
19. **Ask Customers What They Want:** No, the customer is not always right but they may inspire you to try something new. If a good customer is asking for a rare potato tell her you'll try growing it for her next season. You've won a customer for life—if you follow through.
20. **Maintain a Sense of Humor:** That's not always easy to do if you've already been up for 10 hours and a hard rain is starting to fall. But if you can pull it off then your customer will respond with a smile and bigger purchase. And next week they'll search out your table.

“Smart Marketing” is a marketing newsletter for extension publication in local newsletters and for placement in local media. It reviews elements critical to successful marketing in the food and agricultural industry. *Please cite or acknowledge when using this material.* For more articles go to marketingpwt.aem.cornell.edu/publications.html.

2009 Cornell Strategic Marketing Conference

Story Telling: Marketing the Unique Story of Your Business for Success

November 2-3, 2009

The Henry A. Wallace Visitor and Education Center at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum
and Home of the FDR National Historic Site
4079 Albany Post Road, Hyde Park, NY

AGENDA

DAY 1 – Monday, November 2nd

- 8:00 - 9:00** **Registration**
Continental Breakfast
- 9:00 – 9:30** **Conference Welcome & Objectives**
Todd Schmit, Applied Economics & Management, Cornell University
Les Hulcoop, Cornell Cooperative Extension – Dutchess County
- 09:30 – 10:30** **Forecasting for the Future – Current and Expected Changes in the Food Industry System**
Gene German, Professor Emeritus and former Director, Food Industry Management Program, Cornell University
Potential discussion points:
- *What are the important trends and issues currently happening within the broader food industry system?*
 - *How do these issues affect how I should think about my business and what are ways to capitalize on available opportunities through alternative marketing strategies?*
- 10:30 – 10:45** **Networking Break**
- 10:45 – 12:00** **Once Upon a Time... Building and Telling Your Story**
Jeannine Laverty, Professional Story Teller, Saratoga Springs, NY
Margo Sue Bittner, The Winery at Marjim Manor, Appleton, NY
Potential discussion points:
- *What is your business story?*
 - *How do I create or update my business story?*
 - *Using the story as a marketing tool*
 - *Where do I seek my inspiration*
- 12:00 – 1:15** **Lunch and Networking**
- 1:15 – 3:30** **Marketing Your Products to Growing Markets**
Potential discussion points:
- *Growing markets are as different as your businesses are. what is out there that we should be considering?*
 - *Alternative marketing technologies to reach new or existing customers*
 - *Diversifying into alternative marketing channels to grow your business*
- 1:15 – 2:00** **Ethnic Markets and Vegetables**
Bob Weybright, Bob Weybright and Associates, Hyde Park, NY
- 2:00 – 2:45** **Internet Approaches to Product Marketing**
Susan Gibbs, Martha's Vineyard Fiber Farm, Edgartown, MA
- 2:45 – 3:30** **Diversifying Your Marketing Outlets**
Kenny Migliorelli, Migliorelli Farm, Tivoli, NY

- 3:30 – 4:00** **Networking Break**
- 4:00 – 5:00** **New York Market Maker – New Online Tools and Resources to Market Your Products**
Khin Mar Cho, Cornell Cooperative Extension – New York City
Barbara Lewis, Lewis Polled Herefords, Essex, NY
Potential discussion points:
- *Updates and new features of NY MarketMaker*
 - *New partner-states involvement*
 - *Producer-Users evaluation and survey results*
 - *Real-time demonstration and marketing resources*
- 6:00** **Networking Dinner at the Ristorante Caterina de' Medici, Culinary Institute of America, 1946 Campus Drive, Hyde Park, NY (optional)**
<http://www.ciachef.edu/>

DAY 2 – Tuesday, November 3rd

- 7:30 – 8:30** **Continental Breakfast**
- 08:30 – 08:45** **Day 1 Review and Announcements**
Todd Schmit, Applied Economics & Management, Cornell University
Les Hulcoop, Cornell Cooperative Extension – Dutchess County
- 08:45 – 09:15** **Changing Your Marketing Plans to Meet Today's Consumer – The Case of New York Potatoes**
John Mishanec, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Albany NY
Potential discussion points:
- *Effective methods in educating producers on variety selection*
 - *Effective strategies in accessing traditional market channels*
 - *New and growing demand channels*
 - *Industry education and promotion.*
- 09:15 – 10:15** **Marketing Channel Assessment – What Channels are Working for You?**
Matthew LeRoux, Cornell Cooperative Extension – Tompkins County
Matthew Glenn, Muddy Fingers Farm, Hector, NY
Potential discussion points:
- *Tools to use now and into the future*
 - *Easy-to-use, effective analysis tools to assess multiple-channel strategies*
 - *Benchmarking your performance with others*
 - *Diversifying channel set for improved product management and sales*
- 10:15 – 10:30** **Networking Break**
- 10:30 – 12:15** **Low Cost and Effective Marketing Methods for Telling Your Story**
Charleen Heidt, Ithaca College, Ithaca, NY
Potential discussion points:
- *Where to look and how to be ready for the future*
 - *Applying agribusiness stories to marketing plans*
 - *Differentiating marketing methods by commodity or marketing channel*
 - *Time investment and skills you need*
- 12:15 – 12:30** **Participant Input & Conference Evaluation**

THANKS FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION! HAVE A SAFE TRIP HOME!!

OTHER A.E.M. EXTENSION BULLETINS

EB No	Title	Fee (if applicable)	Author(s)
2009-21	Dairy Farm Business Summary, New York Dairy Farm Renters, 2008	(\$16.00)	Knoblauch, W. and L. Putnam
2009-20	New York Economic Handbook 2010	(\$10.00)	Extension Staff
2009-19	Fruit Farm Business Summary, Lake Ontario Region New York, 2008		White, G., DeMaree, A. and J. Neyhard
2009-18	2009 Federal Reference Manual for Regional Schools, Income Tax Management and Reporting for Small Businesses and Farms	(\$25.00)	Bouchard, G. and J. Bennett
2009-17	2009 New York State Reference Manual for Regional Schools, Income Tax Management and Reporting for Small Businesses and Farms	(\$25.00)	Bennett J. and K. Bennett
2009-16	Bedded Pack Management System Case Study		Thurgood, J., Bagley, P., Comer, C., Flaherty, D., Karszes, J. and M. Kiraly
2009-15	Dairy Farm Business Summary, Northern New York Region, 2008	(\$12.00)	Knoblauch, W., Putnam, L., Karszes, J., Murray, P., Vokey, F., Ames, M., Deming, A. and J. Prosper
2009-14	Dairy Farm Business Summary, Central Valleys Region, 2008	(\$12.00)	Knoblauch, W., Putnam, L., Karszes, J., Murray, D., Radick, C., Wickswat, C., Manning, J., Collins, B., Balbian, D., Allhusen, G. and S. Buxton
2009-13	Dairy Farm Business Summary, Northern Hudson Region, 2008	(\$12.00)	Conneman, G., Putnam, L., Wickswat, C., Buxton, S., Smith, R. and J. Karszes
2009-12	Dairy Farm Business Summary, Southeastern New York Region, 2008	(\$12.00)	Knoblauch, W., Putnam, L., Kiraly, M., Walsh, J., Hulle, L. and C. Wickswat
2009-11	Dairy Farm Business Summary, Intensive Grazing Farms, New York, 2008	(\$16.00)	Conneman, G., Karszes, J., Grace, J., Beck, R., Staehr, A., Benson, A., Murray, P., Glazier, P., Carlberg, V., Anderson, J. and L. Putnam
2009-10	Dairy Farm Business Summary, Western and Central Plain Region, 2008	(\$12.00)	Knoblauch, W., Putnam, L., Karszes, J., Hanchar, J. and K. Getty
2009-09	Census of Agriculture Highlights, New York State, 2007		Bills, N. and B.F. Stanton

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