

**MIFMA Marketing and Outreach Committee
Conference Call Summary
Monday, March 10, 2008**

Agenda Items:

- Prioritize tasks assigned by Board of Directors:
 - Facilitate EBT implementation and awareness *(below)
 - Recruit members for MIFMA
 - Promote farmers markets in general to the public
- Identify actions to complete tasks

Participants: Nic Welty (Black Star Farms), Laurajeanne Kehn (Frankenmuth Farmers Market), Dietrich Bronner (Frankenmuth Farmers Market), Hollie Hammel (Allen Street Farmers Market), Sher Watkins (Northville Farmers' Market), Lylene Hillman (Sault Ste. Marie Farmers Market). (Teleconference made possible by Black Star Farms. Capabilities were limited to 6 guests, so Joan Tobin and Dru Montri were unable to join).

Action Items:

- Dietrich will check with Dru if recruitment packets are sent out to every market in Michigan on an annual basis.
- Nic will lead committee members in developing lists of markets' benefits that we want to promote, customized for tourism, medical, economic, health, and other groups. Lengthy lists will be whittled down by the committee.
- Committee members should identify and explore different media options, enlist their feedback on how to promote markets, and report this at the next meeting.
- Laurajeanne will check with radio stations on the possibility of a weekly "(MIFMA) Farmers Market Report" feature.
- Dru will note, for future editions of the membership application, a question should ask if markets are interested in becoming a mentor
- Dietrich will discuss a Mentor Market program with Dru.
- Dru should ask MIFMA members for testimonials on how they enjoy being members or attending MIFMA's seminars.
- Dietrich will pursue having member markets post the MIFMA logo and link on their website, and perhaps highlighting vendors that are members.
- Dietrich will pursue the FMPP grant concerning EBT with Dru.

Prioritization:

- We should first promote farmers markets to the general public. This will flow into member recruitment as market interest and awareness of MIFMA increase.
- EBT is a good goal to pursue, but many markets aren't ready for it yet. They are aware of it but don't feel a need to implement it. Wireless or phone access is a problem. Perhaps they need further education about its benefits and how it is implemented. Increasing EBT awareness runs parallel to promoting markets and recruiting, but we can immediately do promotion/recruiting while EBT is a longer-term stretch.

Promoting Markets

- We should work with Select Michigan to encourage market visits among the public.
- We should tie in with the 2 current weeks: National Farmers Market Week in August and Select Michigan Week in September. MIFMA should have a big presence and participation in these weeks.
- Beyond these efforts, we need longer term, regularly scheduled, weekly promotions. For instance, radio, newspaper, television news, and other regular media promotions should promote markets in their area.
- Identify an existing, overarching organization or common bond that reaches all Michigan communities and then partner with them. What already exists out there that we can befriend to promote markets? How can we befriend them?
- Work with MDOT to promote markets at rest stops as mentioned in previous meetings.
- Encourage or standardize uniform signage for markets.
- Work with groups such as MIFMAT, MDOT, Travel Michigan, Select Michigan, state-wide medical groups, and other large state-wide groups.
- Promote the aspect of markets supporting the local economy with the pitch that “Markets and MIFMA can boost local economies while also helping farmers earn a living, contribute to the economy, and provide healthy food for everyone.” This is a win-win-win situation all the way around and the media is always looking for such stories of success or influence.
- Target hospitals to help promote markets. Many hospitals are hosting or sponsoring markets and they have a large employee base to spread the word to.
- What message will we promote? We need to identify the benefits of markets that we want to promote, keeping it simple and not complicated. We should create different benefit lists for different organizations such as tourism, medical, economic groups (Travel Michigan vs. medical groups).
- Committee members should identify and explore different media options, enlist their feedback on how to promote markets, and report this at the next meeting.

Recruiting MIFMA Members:

- Are recruitment packets sent to every known market in Michigan, on an annual basis?
- MIFMA could employ a mentor program, where members are designated as Mentors willing to guide other markets along. On the membership application, a question should ask if markets are interested in becoming a member. Markets that are members of MIFMA or potential mentors should have membership profiles, to match markets to mentors based on the mentor market’s age, characteristics, and personalities.
- Non-member markets wonder what they will get if they join MIFMA. We need to clearly, persuasively and effectively state this.
- We should get testimonials from members about MIFMA’s benefits and seminars.
- Hollie voiced how great it was to gather in person at a seminar with so many other market supporters and network with them. This is a huge benefit to play up.
- We need to have markets advertise they are a member of MIFMA.
- Members should post the MIFMA logo and link on their website. Also, we should encourage markets’ websites to identify and highlight their vendors that are also MIFMA members.

- Vendors should advertise that they are members. We should make it easy for them to do so, perhaps with a MIFMA sticker or mini umbrellas like the logo.
- MIFMA should establish a MIFMA Birthday week as a third week to celebrate farmers markets. When should this anniversary be? April 20 is too early, December 4 is too late, and the visioning session anniversary of Sept. 11 is very close to the Select Michigan week.
- MIFMA needs to use its slogan to instantly identify it: “Moving Farmers Markets Forward” so that everyone knows what MIFMA is about and its identity isn’t confused with other organizations.
- We should somehow try to have members recruit nonmembers to join without making it look like we’re tooting our own horn.
- For MIFMA’s different regions in the state, members could be identified as the go-to source for people wanting to know about MIFMA. “Interested in learning more? Ask THIS PERSON to learn about MIFMA.” We should develop general members as regional contacts.

EBT Implementation:

- The committee thought this was a longer-term process and not an immediate priority. We should first promote markets and recruit members, and EBT will later fall into place.
- Dietrich will pursue the FMPP grant concerning EBT with Dru.

Next Meeting: 3pm Monday, March 31

Possible Agenda:

- Green Street Fair participation in Plymouth, May 3 & 4
- Pick tasks and target audience to pursue for promoting markets
- Pick tasks and membership levels to pursue for recruitment
- Establish timelines for these tasks
- General feedback from committee as to MIFMA's direction, the public's reaction to and awareness of MIFMA, and new benefits to pursue