Data-Driven Advocacy: Communicating the Value of Markets

One Market’s Journey from Operational Data to Advocacy

Nancy Staisey, PhD, The Historic Lewes Farmers Market
Lewes, Delaware, USA
info@historiclewesfarmersmarket.org
Founded in 2005 by volunteers (Currently 100+ volunteers)

Non-Profit

Manages two producer only markets (Wed & Sat open May thru Nov)

$700,000 in sales annually (35+ farmer/producers)

45,000 customer visits annually

We are a community based, mission driven team working to support local sustainable agriculture and small businesses, protect the environment, and educate our children about food and the land.
Challenges Describing the Value of Markets

**Shared Issues**

- Complexity of Operations
- Operate in a larger ecosystem
- Many Stakeholders
- Mission not obvious to shoppers
We began collecting data for operational use

- total attendance and by gate
- total sales and by market stand
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- $ value of food donated to charities
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- farmer distance traveled
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- farmer acres
- farmer distance traveled
- weather on day of market
- special events in town / holidays
How We Have Used Our Data

Operations
How We Have Used Our Data

Operations

Stakeholders
How We Have Used Our Data

Operations

Stakeholders

Research
How We Have Used Our Data

Operations

Stakeholders

Research

Join Us
Friday June 7
14:30
Committee Rm 1
City Hall
for
Unconference*-
Experimental Markets: How to Turn Your Market Into a Living Lab
How We Have Used Our Data

- Operations
- Stakeholders
- Advocacy
- Research

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Data Driven Advocacy – A Four Step Approach

- **Data**: Data are the starting point not the end point
  - Stay ‘true’ to the data

- **Context**: Put your data in context
  - Describe the implications

- **Qualitative**: Provide a qualitative story
  - Make it local and meaningful

- **Call to Action**: Describe what you are advocating for
  - Be clear on action requested
Data - the Starting Point

- We list our “Data Accomplishments” at the market
Data - the Starting Point

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So what?
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Placing Data in Context

- Data statements without context:
  - Eggs from Twin Post Farm travel just 60 miles to reach your plate.
  - Food at our market travels an average of 27 miles to reach your plate.

- Adding context:
  - Food at our market travels an average of 27 miles to reach your plate. Food at a grocery chain travels an average of 1500 miles.*

- Adding implications:
  - In most cases, the farther your food travels the less nutritious and less tasty it is.
  - Fresh food lasts longer and so there is less waste.

* "Food, Fuel and Freeways," Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture (Iowa State University).
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Creating a Data Driven Story

**Quantitative Data**
- The farmers who sell at our market farm over 6,000 acres of land on the Delmarva Peninsula.

**Contextual or Comparative Data**
- 175 acres of agricultural land is lost to development per hour in the US.* By supporting our farmers you help keep over 6,000 acres of local farmland in production.

**Qualitative Information**
- Story of local development on farmland.

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*Farms Under Threat: The State of America’s Farmland (America Farmland Trust, 2018)
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- True to the data
- Local
- Verifiable
- Compelling
- Lead to action
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"Tell me the facts and I will learn, tell me the truth and I will believe, but tell me a story and it will live in my heart forever.”  American Indian Saying
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Quantitative Data

- We have provided over $32,000 in scholarships and grants to farmers to attend workshops and conferences. Regular ‘Meet the Farmer’ demos educate our customers on the challenges young farmers face.

Contextual or Comparative Data

- The average age of principle farm operators in the US is 58. More than 31% of principle farm operators are 65 or older.* Access to land is the number one challenge young farmers face. **

Qualitative Information

- Kathleen’s story

* USDA Farm Household income and Characteristics report
** The National Young Farmer Survey (National Young Farmers Coalition)
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Call to Action: fund her loan

Funded $10,000
Creating a Data Driven Story

Audiences & Actions

- **Customers** – Shop at our market to help create the next generation of farmers, save local farmland and ensure access to local fresh foods.

- **Farmers** – We are more than a market, we are here to create a community of support for local sustainable agriculture and young farmers.

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Another Data Driven Story and Call to Action

Quantitative Data
- Our market has done $26,000 in SNAP business

Contextual or Comparative Data
- Our market accounts for over 25% of the total SNAP $ spent at markets and farm stands in Delaware

Qualitative Information
- Story of little boy and the peach
Another Data Driven Story and Call to Action

Audiences & Actions

- **SNAP recipients** – You are welcome at our market, come for the match.
- **Volunteers** – You have helped create this success. We need you to help address hunger in our community.
- **City Council** – We are serving our community as a non-profit organization.
- **US Representative** from Delaware on the Agriculture Committee – This why the Farm Bill should fund SNAP.

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June 21, 2018

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congresswoman Lisa Blunt Rochester (DE-AL), member of the House Committee on Agriculture, took to the House floor to advocate for a bipartisan Farm Bill. Blunt Rochester shared a story from “Kids Day” at the Historic Lewes Farmers Market.
Thank You

Nancy Staisey

www.historiclewesfarmersmarket.org
info@historiclewesfarmersmarket.org
+1 302-644-1436
A Data-Driven Story is worth a thousand data points!

Nancy Staisey
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Call to Action: Secure the next generation of farmers

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June 21, 2018

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“...Mr. Speaker, I traveled across my state and heard countless stories from Delawareans of all backgrounds – farmers, emergency food providers, and working families. And I want to share one story.

During Kids Day at the Lewes Farmers Market, every child who attended with a SNAP participant was given five dollars in tokens to spend on fresh fruits and vegetables. One boy – clutching his tokens – asked, “is this enough to buy a peach?” The organizers told the boy it was enough to buy a whole basket. He looked up and said, “Good, because I’ve never tasted a peach.”

That’s what the Farm Bill is about. It’s about connecting people from farm to fork. This bill is too important for one party to go alone. I hope my colleagues will vote again against the bill so we can get back to work on a truly bipartisan Farm Bill that strengthens the rural economy, farm safety net, and ensures that all children have the opportunity to taste a peach.

I yield back my time.”
Where is Lewes, Delaware?
## Challenges Describing the Value of Markets

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<th>Similarities</th>
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<td>Type of Mission</td>
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<td>Mgt &amp; Stakeholder Structure</td>
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Challenge Describing Value