

# THINK YOU HAVE the next big thing for a farmers market?

## Interested in producing a new crop, yet unsure how to market it?

We in Wyoming can produce a wide variety of products; however, because we can produce an assortment of products doesn't mean we necessarily should. Some products might not be well suited for farmers markets for reasons outlined later.

Conversely, small and entrepreneurial producers thrive and drive many of the farmers markets in Wyoming. With passage of the Wyoming Food Freedom Act in 2015, state government has encouraged local producers to explore options and find feasible marketing options.

The farmers market setting is a great place local producers can showcase their specialties and connect with consumers. Let's explore a few things to think about before marketing a new product or specialty crop at a farmers market.

### Product selection

Make sure your product is suited for a farmers market. You wouldn't take a bundle of hemp fiber to a farmers market and expect someone to buy it; however, you could have examples of how to weave a bracelet. If your product

is raw, or could be used for many different endings, have examples.

A not-so-new wave of marketing is to provide videos and instructions on the many ways to use the product. If the product is an edible crop, have videos of yourself baking or cooking with the product. Consumers won't buy a product they don't know how to use.

If your new specialty crop or product isn't "farmers market" material, don't attempt to sell at a farmers market. If you grow hops for beer brewing, a better use of your time may be approaching a local brewers club.

### Think seasonally

Thinking about seasonality might include an example of not trying to sell cotton stocking hats in summer. The hats might be amazing but may not sell well because consumers are not interested in buying hats in mid-July. Farmers markets are very seasonal, which is why fresh produce is a major staple at markets. Be realistic with expectations; you may have the best products in the state, but if products aren't on consumers' radar, consumers may not be interested.

### Marketing

Your job as a marketer is to inform, in addition to trying to sell a product. Marketing is just one small part of the overall process, a process that also includes research and production. Marketing is tough, but necessary to be successful.

If you can only complete a few of these tasks, you may need help with those areas in which you are lacking.

### Resources that can help you introduce new products at farmers markets

- *Food Ventures in Wyoming: A Resource and Regulatory Guide*, Extension Bulletin B-1324, [bit.ly/food-ventures](http://bit.ly/food-ventures)
- Wyoming Farmers Market Coalition, [bit.ly/wyofarmersmarkets](http://bit.ly/wyofarmersmarkets)



Shutterstock.com

If you're not great as a salesperson, find someone who is. Reach out and utilize available resources. There may be someone in your area with similar interests or who would make a reasonable partner in your enterprise. If producing a raw product, find a partner who then can make a finished product, or learn how to do it yourself.

### Love what you do

Interest and excitement help promote your product and get consumers excited about what you do. Most producers are truly interested and love their products and what they do, but this message has to come across to consumers. Excitement is contagious.

What you are marketing is probably very interesting and very well could be the next big thing in agriculture. Your challenge is to take that product to the next level.

New products are risky, but that just means some work needs to be done. If you can show consumers why you developed this new product, then you can show why it will benefit their lives. You have to show the consumer the product will give them some value.

Another important point to consider is the idea of loyalty. Customers are going to be more willing to do



Photographie.eu, shutterstock.com

business with a vendor who they have purchased from in the past. Reputation and quality of your products will go a long way in the farmers market business.

Resources to help introduce new products into farmers markets are listed on page 12. There are many opportunities for adding valuable products to farmers markets in Wyoming.

.....  
**Brian Lee** is the economic research scientist at the James C. Hageman Sustainable Agriculture Research and Extension Center near Lingle. He can be reached at (307) 837-2000 or at [blee@uwyo.edu](mailto:blee@uwyo.edu).



Stephen B. Goodwin, shutterstock.com