



Did you know?

Asparagus is a member of the lily family?

Ontario asparagus compares with blueberries and tomatoes for its anti-oxidant properties, containing both rutin and glutathione?

Glutathione, found in asparagus, is said to increase the efficacy of chemotherapy while reducing side effects, reduce blood pressure in diabetics and helps both HIV and chronic fatigue patients?

Did you know?

Babe Ruth wore a cabbage leaf under his hat to keep cool and changed it every two innings.



In the 1600s English women wore carrot leaves in their hats instead of flowers or feathers.

There are 10,000 fewer farms in Ontario than 10 years ago – so let's keep our farmers farming! Visit www.growourfarms.ca.

On average, each Ontario farm family produces enough food to feed over 120 people each year! www.farmsfoodfun.com



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Catching Lightning in a Bottle: Ways to woo and wow the media

Early spring, record-breaking warm spells, a stunning Easter weekend and the build-up to a fresh Ontario market season. Can you feel the buzz—that heightened sense of excitement as rivers flow freely once more, plants push through the earth, farms swing into action, life renews and another cycle begins?

What if you could sustain and even magnify spring's sense of possibility and awareness throughout the market season? While the thought seems as likely as catching lightning in a bottle, a well-planned media blitz does exactly that.

Plan your media releases now.

Three parts perspiration and one part inspiration, the media release lies at the heart of any media campaign. A well-written one is the market manager's best friend, along with a detailed media list, and the market event schedule.

Start with the event schedule. Plan to send a media release two weeks prior to each market event. A thorough media list includes the name of the organization; the contact person and pertinent contact information; the intended show, column, website, email list, newsletter, podcast, webcast, group or blog and all related deadlines.

Get with it with social media.

To those of you somewhat daunted by the concept of social media marketing now is the time to play catch-up. The communication principles are still the same: think one message and many outlets and

you're on the right track. If you're just getting your feet wet in the world of social networking, start to add relevant social media sites to your media list.

If word-of-mouth advertising is the best referral possible, and more and more families use social media to connect, how can you not give them the chance to connect to your market? Media people often post to their own blogs, or update work-related Facebook groups, so by engaging in social media, you're giving them another way to find you.

One of the most popular games on Facebook is a virtual farming application called **Farmville**. How can you connect with that passion and engage local virtual farmers in the actual market experience?



To a large degree, social networking is "lightning in a bottle." For example, many Facebook groups are based around specific towns or cities. Any individual with a Facebook account can create a

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THE MANAGER'S OFFICE

Telling the Real Story

Harvest Ontario is celebrating its 10th anniversary, and publisher Steve Watts has a lot to share on the topics of food, farming and agri-tourism.

Steve claims that the current media push for local food is carrying the message forward by leaps and bounds, and that the real story—the one that managers, farmers & market-goers need to communicate effectively is “the experience, the sense of community... and connection.”

Steve worked with FMO during the initial launch of MyMarket™ in Toronto, and it proved to be a timely initiative. Ultimately, even a large metropolis like Toronto is a collection of neighbourhoods and communities, and Steve remarks that there is a “renaissance of community” in Toronto.

The East Lynn MyMarket™ organizers serve up a home-cooked meal to their farmers every week—a heartfelt token of appreciation to vendors before they make the long trek home.

“The way farmers and urban neighborhoods have embraced the market experience is wonderful to see . . . it's a great tale to tell.”

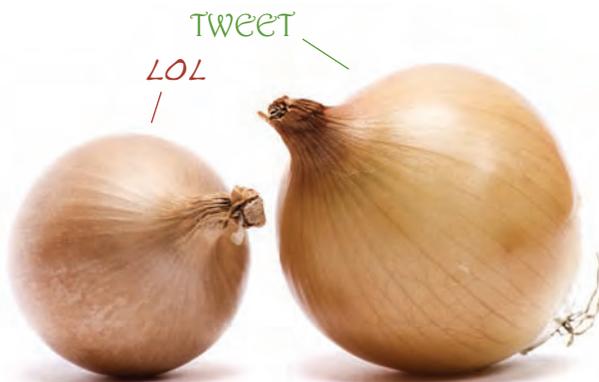


Lightning - cont'd from page 1

profile, page and/or group for your market, and post that fact to other groups for the same town or city, and update their Facebook friends, some of whom will join your market group. You can post media releases to your market group and create Facebook events for market days. And of course, link your Facebook and Twitter accounts to ensure that market day “tweets” are a sell-out.

How to learn how to capitalize on social media

Local Chambers of Commerce or business enterprise centres often hold seminars on social media, or can point you in the right direction. A local high school or college may have a program to provide you with support, or undertake your market as a group project, create an overall social media strategy and help put it into action. Failing that, perhaps you know a teenager who needs to do some community service hours to graduate from high school. Harness that know-how!



Tools at Your Fingertips!

FMO is creating a virtual toolbox to make your life easier. Expect one or two new tools per newsletter. Let us know what information and tools you would find helpful so we can ensure that what we're offering is in keeping with what you're looking for!

This month's tool is a media release template intended to help you start writing. Here's how it works. Go to www.farmersmarketsontario.com. Click on Member Login in the Tool Bar. Click on **Admin**, select **Member Library**, then select **Media Release Template**.

Motivating by Media Release

A media release is a call to action. Here are a few tips to help:

1. Know who you're writing for, and what *action* you want that person to take before you begin.
2. Think like your intended audience. Reporters and potential market-goers alike are bombarded by information—they are not your friends (yet), and they act according to their own self-interest.
3. You have a second to capture audience attention and pique interest. Speak to reader self-interest and solve their problem—in the headline. For example, leading with “Mom gets Fresh at ___ Farmers' Market!” hooks people with humour (we all need to laugh), reminds Mom the market is opening, highlights its benefit as a fresh-food source and reminds the rest of us that Mothers' Day is approaching. A reporter will do a double-take at this headline because:
 - a) it screams photo op and
 - b) it's entertaining, demonstrating that someone at your market is doing something right.
4. Expand on the lead with a sub-header that acts as a call to action (limiting header & sub-header to about 20 words). “Join us for Mom Appreciation & a Market Launch Parade on _____.”
5. In the first paragraph or two, cover all the critical elements, including who, what, where, why & when. “Farmers know what it takes to feed a family. This Mothers' Day weekend, the ___ Farmers' Market says ‘thanks Mom’ with flowers, fresh-food coupons and a breakfast served by _____. Moms eat for free!”
6. Useful resources for more information include:

- **Sharing the Harvest**, pgs. 118-121, R. Chorney & Mary Ann Colihan
- www.publicityinsider.com
- www.free-press-release-center.info
- www.prweb.com (sign up for a free account and run through the tutorials; there's a good introduction to social media marketing as well.)

Profile: Linda Cook, Market Manager



Linda Cook manages a unique “city” market which is completely vendor-operated. In its fifth year, the Ottawa Farmers’ Market has quickly mushroomed from 12 to 130 vendors! Situated in the heart of Ottawa, Linda attributes the market’s success to two factors: a prime location and a group of vendors with a unified vision.

The initial growers established clear guidelines and principles, based on their experience at other markets. “We are producer-based; no resellers are allowed. All board members are vendors; we screen everyone and make farm visits to verify producers. Vendors fill out a membership application and if accepted, sign a form stating that they’ll abide by our guidelines.” Every member gets a handbook making it clear that membership is a privilege, not a right.

To learn more about the Ottawa Farmers’ Market and see Linda “ring in the market day” visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=JBdBqTYXu1A.

THE VENDOR’S STALL



Customer Service Begins at Home!

Lori Colborne, author and President of LSI Marketing Consultants was the keynote speaker at FMO’s recent networking symposium. Lori’s topic, “Leading with Ease & Excellence” provided some interesting food for thought.

Lori insists that a farmer or market manager’s primary customer is not the paying one; if you want to improve customer service, start with your staff and family members.

“It’s very common in industries where family members are employees, for them to be held to demanding high standards. I can walk into a family-run operation and know right away who is paid staff and who is a family member—often the paid staff is accorded more respect.”

Lori states that change begins with the internal customer relationship: “the people you sleep with, gave birth to, or work with at market.” Look to serve these people better, and external customer relations are bound to improve.

Look for more of Lori’s leadership insight in the next issue of Market Matters.



FMO in action: special MyPick™ coverage in Harvest Ontario



Facts & Figures:

Of the 65,000 copies printed last year, 55,000 went to Home Hardware stores, 2500 to Ontario Tourism offices and 7500 to farmers’ markets and grower associations.

Don’t miss Harvest Ontario 2010—featuring MyPick™ Verified Local Farmers™.

This year’s issue of *Harvest Ontario* is due for release in Home Hardware stores across Ontario in early June.

Be sure to look for it in Home Hardware, Home Furniture and Home Building Centre stores across Ontario because this year, FMO has sponsored 9 pages devoted to MyPick™ Verified Local Farmers™.

It’s great exposure!

Introducing the new FMO Board of Directors for 2010



1. Ray Sheldon, St. Marys, 2. Philip Powell, City of Ottawa (Past Chair), 3. Bert Andrews, Milton, 4. Jim Harris, Orillia, 5. Jenny Groenheide, Thunder Bay (Vice-Chair), 6. Sam McLean (Executive At-Large), 7. Vicki Schlosser, Trout Creek, 8. Shaun Funk, Chesterville, 9. Diane Garrington, Kitchener (Treasurer), 10. Tom Neufeld, St. Catharines, 11. Ken Ferguson, Little Current, 12. Michael O’Shea, Zurich (New Chair), 13. Robert Chorney, FMO Executive Director

TIP OF THE MONTH

Is your market going to the dogs?



This month's contributor is **Jim Harris, manager of Orillia Farmers' Market.**

It's amazing the number of market customers who walk their dogs to market, yet the combination of dogs and food is definitely not a good one.

Not wanting to chastise customers (or worse, discourage them from attending the market) Jim came up with a win-win solution: He created a special dog-sitting area where customers can "park" their dogs before visiting the vendors.

And as a friendly approach to introducing this "no pooch" policy, one of the market vendors offers up homemade dog biscuits to customers. Next evolution of the idea: tie a note to the dog biscuits, thanking customers in advance for not walking their dogs through the market's food-laden aisles.



Share your tips here. Email us your ideas along with your name, address, market's name and (if applicable) a photo. Not only will we give you credit—we'll send you some FMO merchandise as thanks!

MyPick™ Verified Local Farmer™ Profile: Bluewater Beef, Lambton County, ON



Murray Shaw, Chad Anderson and Ralph Eyre's families are well-rooted in generations of Lambton County farming. In a recent departure from tradition, the three farms united their marketing efforts under the Bluewater Beef banner to circumvent declining prices at auction. Frustrated with rock-bottom auction prices that threatened their livelihood—and weren't even being passed on to beef consumers at the grocery store—the three formed a unique alliance.

"It's unusual, especially in beef farming, for three individuals to get together, lay their cards on the table, and get agreement on a common set of practices to ensure a consistent product, let alone market together," says Murray Shaw. With the initial help of a grant from the Ontario Cattlemen's Association, Bluewater Beef now sells artisan, hormone and growth-stimulant-free beef packs directly to consumers at the Pretrolia Farmers' Market, through their website and by word-of-mouth.

For more information, visit www.bluewaterbeef.com.

Upcoming Market Events

London Covent Garden Outdoor Farmers' Market Opening
with featured author and baker, Erin Bolger, "The Happy Baker"

Sat. May 8th, 2010 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Trinity Bellwoods Farmers' Market – First Day!

Tues. May 11th, 2010 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Carleton Place Farmers' Market – First Day!

Sat. May 15th, 2010 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

London Covent Garden Outdoor Farmers' Market
Cooking with Ontario Beans, 11 a.m.

Sat. May 29th, 2010 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Post your market events on the FMO website.

If you don't have your member log-in and password, please email us at the address below.

Next issue: June 1
Theme: Promoting Success
Submissions: Deadline is May 10

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Find out all about the MyPick™ program at MyPick.ca

Over to you. Please tell us:

1. What are your principal challenges as a vendor or manager?
2. What would you like to ask another manager or vendor?



Supported through the Ontario Farmers' Markets Strategy, part of Growing Forward, a Federal-Provincial-Territorial initiative

