

Great Lakes Fruit, Vegetable and Farm Market EXPO  
Session Evaluation 2017

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**Farm Marketing and AgriTourism Roundtable**

**What have you learned that you will apply on your farm next year?**

- Info on dogs on the farm
- Festival idea
- Do not be afraid to charge
- Stay out of PYO
- A lot of ideas, some not related to my field
- Every year the topics are different and give us ideas to take home
- Great topics / discussion; Evaluate policies; U-pick and dogs
- Sunflower festival; service dog regs; reduce garlic variety #. etc. Lots of ideas.
- Love the diversification ideas
- "Caught you doing something good" board
- Lots of ideas.
- U-pick procedures
- New ideas on u-pick and admissions.

**Do you have any specific comments for any of the presenters?**

- Excellent as usual
- Try and switch up topics
- Presenter were great and quick at getting microphones to commenters
- Love this session!
- Same people spoke too much
- Very interesting as usual
- Great job.
- Very informational, thank you. I like hearing others ideas
- I thought this was very well run and executed.

**Please share any suggestions for future speakers and/or topics for this session.**

- Great topics as usual
- Wish it could be longer so we could cover more topics
- Moderators need to limit topics more - way too long on certain ideas - but overall good
- Limit to three answers per topic and then move on to new topic; limit answers to one minute. Keep it moving. love the round table, but keep it moving.
- Has your B and B worked on your farm?
- Excellent - do this next year for farm market, hoop house, etc.
- Farm market; hoop house.

**Type of operation (please check the ONE that best describes your operation)**

**Fruit grower ( 8 ) Vegetable grower ( 5 ) Farm Market grower / operator ( 12 )**

**Greenhouse operator / manager ( 1 )**

**Other**

- corn maze
- government

**no answer ( 1 )**

**Other Comments**

- Very valuable discussion
- First time attending session
- Always a great session!
- From Ohio. We enjoy the people and the conversation. Great job!!

**Evaluations received: 17**

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### **Farm Marketing I: Keynote Session**

**DID ATTENDING THIS SESSION INCREASE YOUR KNOWLEDGE ON:**

**Being Strong During Tough Times**

Yes ( 16 ) No ( 13 ) no answer ( 1 )

**Michigan Agritourism Association**

Yes ( 10 ) No ( 11 ) no answer ( 9 )

**Creating Farm Experiences**

Yes ( 20 ) No ( 4 ) no answer ( 6 )

**WILL YOU CHANGE WHAT YOU DO IN YOUR OPERATION BASED ON WHAT YOU HEARD IN THIS SESSION?**

Yes ( 18 ) No ( 5 ) no answer ( 7 )

**If YES, what will you change?**

- Ideas from Saunders. Value family over farm and develop other interests.
- My thinking process on family and relationships; what we are really here for and purpose
- Open conversation about goals of farm rather than inventory
- That's up to dad.
- Conscious awareness of a work-life balance that gives more to the family than it takes.
- Opening my mind to new business opportunities
- Keep in mind to be good stewards to our children
- Incorporate family meetings in the busy season where everyone will listen and not just react.
- Will explore new services / products
- Think about what we do and why - Food for thought
- Training
- Based on third presentation:
- Communications. Confirmed we need to add more customer experience.
- Angela Saunders presentation was wonderful!
- Rethink some maze ideas + multiple. Would like to have staff training day.
- Tweak some of what we are doing.

**What suggestion do you have for future topics in this session?**

- The keynote opening session sets the tone for attendees. The first presentation was very monotone and there was a lot of "reading" his notes. Need to have a more excited and conversational speaker to begin the entire conference. The first 25 minutes of this presentation were his biography (rough presentation). It was very telling when no one in the audience had any questions.
- Please get someone relevant to today's farming / families. His topics would have been helpful originally 30 years ago. He read his entire talk! Most of us could read these things on our own. He referenced to the 80s so many times ... does he realize that women are farmers now? It was so boring. The family farm dynamic has changed - obviously Mr. Farmer is stuck in a bygone era. When he wakes up and realizes that the world is so different, he will want to know about what we are facing now.
- Continue to share experiences; just hope everyone will listen and consider the wisdom
- The EXPO is becoming very costly. May be our last year here after 16 years. Hope the price does not go up again next year.
- The lengthy lead-in intro of speakers background and qualifications is not necessary. He the the speaker. obviously he has been vetted. Future topics can include actual "How to" not want to kill each other! Transition from secular work plus hobby farm to retiring from M-F job and planning full time farming at retirement age. ??? Eek!
- Enjoyed the stories / practical applications. Start was slow and unfocused.
- Time in between sessions (7-8 minutes)

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- Keep copies of Power Point; add stories (short version) as applicable. Good info in Power Point that was not shared - too many long read stories.
- How to grow labor, find labor for season business.
- More actual marketing. Great having family help ideas, but not in a marketing session. Things I know our farm and others are interested in: Different ways of marketing / advertising; School tours; Events - weddings, corporate events, birthday parties; Farm pricing - general admission versus pay for different activities
- Keep the great speakers - farm marketers and their experiences
- Mental health; Coping skills
- First presentation: Less sexist, way less Christian, and how about actual tangible examples of how to change certain habits instead of platitudes?
- Trends and things to add excitement to farm markets; The next big thing; What is unique about your location, operation to market
- It seemed very male centric. as a female farmer (not farmers wife) it seemed out of date.
- Mentioning resources for all sessions.
- Angela Saunders was awesome - invite her back again!
- Thank you. Always engaging and something I can take home apply.

### Other Comments

- First speaker, poor presentation - did not follow slide show as printed. Should have had all "stories" in Power Point or at least highlights so we could follow his talk. I learned nothing except he likes to read!
- First presentation - just a wine session
- Great end Saunders!
- Second presentation: give examples of how you help. Third presentation: Fun speaker!
- First presentation: First 25 minutes was devoted to his glory days 40 years ago, not the topic.
- Usually best speaker is first - not the case. First speaker as keynote: little energy, downer to start conference; message has value but delivery slow/monotone is tough to listen to. I HATE to be "read to" by a speaker.
- First presentation: I am not really sure what he was talking about? Misleading topic headline.
- Dr. Farmer was very knowledgeable, but I do not feel like he got much of that knowledge to us.
- Started full time farming in the 80s. Lived through the worst, made it, some still haunts us. 8-(
- Val Farmer was good, but too long and quiet for first thing in the morning

**Evaluations received: 30**

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### **Farm Marketing II: Marketing Session**

**DID ATTENDING THIS SESSION INCREASE YOUR KNOWLEDGE ON:**

**Establishing a Farm Market TRSAIL**

Yes ( 10 ) No ( 5 ) no answer ( 11 )

**Dealing with customer complaints**

Yes ( 26 ) No ( 0 ) no answer ( 0 )

**Establishing a photography policy**

Yes ( 22 ) No ( 2 ) no answer ( 2 )

**Dealing with theft and vandalism**

Yes ( 17 ) No ( 1 ) no answer ( 8 )

**WILL YOU CHANGE WHAT YOU DO IN YOUR OPERATION BASED ON WHAT YOU HEARD IN THIS SESSION?**

Yes ( 21 ) No ( 0 ) no answer ( 5 )

**If YES, what will you change?**

- Design a template for customer complaints; I will consider a photogra[hy policy and I know we need to install more cameras.
- Revisit photo policy and change how we deal with complaints.
- Create policies and plans
- Deal with customer complaints better
- Add to photography policy - just tweak it; Use 7-step approach to get emotions out of complaints
- Establish a photo policy; Be more laid back with customer complaints
- Farm photography - insurance coverage
- Using Angelas format for answering complaints; Working more with photographers - creating a policy
- I loved the 7-steps in dealing with complaints; We had issues with photographers this year and will be implementing a policy; We have not had to deal with that but found it very interesting
- Ads for trial brochures; Customer complaint documentation and change of perspective in handling complaints; addition of an online photographer shoots
- Redo photography policy; Look at theft and internal controls
- Dealing with complaints better; Creating photo policy
- Establish photography policy; Establish a "guest complaint process"
- Establish better complaint and photography policies
- Update complaint system
- Build a template for responding to customer complaints and be OK with refunds
- How to handle complaints; Possible photo policy
- I think we may adapt letting photographers into our farm; Maybe adding more cameras
- Review what we do and make corrections; It is about making it right and bringing them back
- Forms and document ALL complaints; I have usually been the "orange" person to deal with people and their issues; Trickier to deal with and have staff / team members change behaviors, and have "lessons" with all team members in a positive way;
- Look into surveillance system; Handling customer complaints effectively and documenting

**What suggestion do you have for future topics in this session?**

- I really enjoyed the customer complaint part.
- Angela Saunders was extremely informational and is widely knowledgeable on a lot of farm related topics
- Needed more handouts for Saunders farm discussion on complaints
- Employee training best practices; online retail
- Hiring / firing / interviewing employees for retail farm market; Questions to ask, things to look for

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### Other Comments

- Angela was great!
- First presentation: but a lot like MIFMAT
- Fourth presentation: did not really apply to my situation
- First presentation: 50% yes/50% no - nice photos; Second presentation: EXCELLENT speaker; Third presentation: lovely pics and nice speaker
- First presentation: 50% yes. Third presentation: Photographer did not answer tough questions. More of a sales point - could not offer sample policy; Did not give do/do not; Really looked forward to this session, but I was bummed; She was very nice, just not on topic.
- Very good speakers for all!
- Second presentation: Amazing
- First presentation: Wish she had passed out their catalogs / booklet from Fruit Loop; Idea our wine trail and other attractions in our county. Third presentation: Makes me more positive to setup with local photographers

**Evaluations received: 26**

## Session Evaluation 2017

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### **Farm Marketing III: Business Management Session**

**DID ATTENDING THIS SESSION INCREASE YOUR KNOWLEDGE ON:**

**Better Business Operation**

Yes ( 8 ) No ( 0 ) no answer ( 2 )

**Barn Moving**

Yes ( 2 ) No ( 1 ) no answer ( 7 )

**What take-a-way/s did you get from the Tammi Packer presentation on Packer Orchards?**

- Only made the tail end; Great own to earth speaker; Surprised about sunflower not selling as pre-picked bouquets; Really made sense about Photo Opportunity - cheap printers AND one set prie for cutting regardless of amount - only a couple took excess
- Sunflower festival - always good to see and hear what people are doing
- Trees do not make you money - cars do!
- Maybe doing a sunflower festival
- Operations are alway changing to accommodate customers and long term viability
- Did not attend this section
- Any size is great and build on your strengths

**Will you change what you do in your operation based on what you heard in this session?**

Yes ( 6 ) No ( 1 ) no answer ( 3 )

**If YES, what will you change?**

- We had planned to sell bouquets - not now! Love th u-pik idea! And photo op!
- A rethink to us: grooming; meaningful meetings under control; communication
- More things to draw customers; More fun things for kids
- Communication
- Communiante goals to all and succession planning
- Passed out these handouts to my family - excellent; We need more meetings on this subject (ed: probably Better Business Operation)
- Use more engagement toward others work and abilities

**What suggestion do you have for future topics in this session?**

- How to get along with family members
- Val Farmer was excellent; topic for future: Communication skills

**Other Comments**

- Barn moving: like info on farm, but that was long; how to move barn?

**Evaluations received: 10**

## Session Evaluation 2017

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### **Farm Marketing IV: Bakery/Process Session**

**DID ATTENDING THIS SESSION INCREASE YOUR KNOWLEDGE ON:**

**Use of Social Media**

Yes ( 18 ) No ( 4 ) no answer ( 1 )

**Jam and Jelly Making and Marketing**

Yes ( 14 ) No ( 4 ) no answer ( 5 )

**Equipment Purchases**

Yes ( 11 ) No ( 4 ) no answer ( 8 )

**Food Dehydration**

Yes ( 12 ) No ( 4 ) no answer ( 7 )

**WILL YOU CHANGE WHAT YOU DO IN YOUR OPERATION BASED ON WHAT YOU HEARD IN THIS SESSION?**

Yes ( 12 ) No ( 4 ) no answer ( 7 )

**If YES, what will you change?**

- Try to be more quick in answering questions
- Social media changes; experiment with dehydrated products
- More social media presence for our customers; Going to dehydrate
- Using 2-piece lids with high acid products like pickles
- Ways of preparing jams
- More attentive to social media posts and audience post
- We are new to processed stuff, so yes very much change; Like to keep up to date with multi-media stuff
- Canning by weights instead of other measurements
- Using social media
- By placing media a higher priority of my time
- More proactive in social media
- Will be going on-line

**What suggestion do you have for future topics in this session?**

- Do not start a section of the session before the time in the program
- I enjoy hearing cooking kitchen practices
- Resale items
- How to upsize formulas for larger batches
- Canning ideas - packaging, new ideas, marketing ideas
- Display - how it impacts sales
- This was an info material
- Social media needs to cover Snapchat! Thought jam and jellie speaker would share her tips, instead turned into question and answer time - did not help me
- More in-depth sessions on social media; Seems like every session is too general; Most people know how to use the basics already; maybe having a panel of marketers who use these platforms come in and speak on their own experiences
- Deeper dig into dehydration

**Other Comments**

- Presentations 3 and 4: Do not sign up folks that do not prepare a presentation ... what a waste of time
- Presentation 3: This was too short and no info was given

**Evaluations received: 23**

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### **Farm Marketing Workshop A Processing: Dehydrating - Nothing to Waste**

**Did attending this session increase your knowledge on dehydrating?**

Yes ( 20 ) No ( 0 ) no answer ( 0 )

**Will you consider dehydrating based on what you heard in this session?**

Yes ( 18 ) No ( 0 ) Maybe ( 1 ) no answer ( 1 )

**What suggestion do you have for future topics in this session?**

- Excellent - glad you brought in Michigan product development; Good to include supplier and farmer; Thanks!
- More hands on workshops will be nice
- Any other mgt of dehydration products, I have Cabellas
- More food possibility for farm markets
- More value added / easily added products for farm markets / bakeries
- Dehydrated produce marketing
- The personal testimony was the most valuable part
- Info on all the tools needed for prep and packaging (covers, slicers, moisture gauges)
- Bring in more farmers that are using these to share their experiences, plus the Legacy company to show the actual dehydrators; Leaman did a great job.
- Marketing - more popular items to dehydrate

**Other Comments**

- Already doing dehydrating
- Love this show, but it is very expensive and a long drive to see people in the trade show, sales reps, with their face in a phone or not at their booth; My hope is that the cost will not go up much higher and that the trade show becomes more professional
- Doing more of the Wednesday om prep, dry overnight, show Thursday am, maybe bring in the vendor with the automatic slicer; How about a food safety person to talk about how to do things right fr re-sale, any rules for Mich farmers markets; Bring in the corporate chef to share ideas

**Evaluations received: 20**



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### **Farm Marketing Workshop B: 101 Workshop**

**DID ATTENDING THIS SESSION INCREASE YOUR KNOWLEDGE ON:**

**Dealing With Donations**

Yes ( 11 ) No ( 1 ) no answer ( 0 )

**Maintaining Infrastructure**

Yes ( 11 ) No ( 1 ) no answer ( 0 )

**Purchasing Tips**

Yes ( 11 ) No ( 0 ) no answer ( 1 )

**What suggestion do you have for future topics in this session?**

- Setting hours (seasonal)
- Market designs - use of different structures on farms; How some prior farm buildings have been re-purposed
- Maybe some lessons on hand repair for farm buildings; A good, thorough how-to
- Maybe two or more speakers for different style operations

**Evaluations received: 12**

## Session Evaluation 2017

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### **Farm Marketing Workshop C: Social Media: What's New? What's Next? What's Best for Me?**

**Did attending this session increase your knowledge on using social media?**

Yes ( 20 ) No ( 1 ) no answer ( 2 )

**What forms of Social Media do you currently use?**

Face Book ( 21 ) Twitter ( 7 ) Pinterest ( 2 ) You Tube ( 2 ) Instagram ( 9 ) Reddit ( 0 )

**Other**

- Snapchat ( 3 )
- Emails ( 2 )

**Do not currently use anything ( 2 ) no answer ( 0 )**

**What suggestion do you have for future topics in this session?**

- Workshop - build your Facebook page; Define or describe what each of these media is and how they work (other than Facebook and YouTube)
- The social media world is HUGE; Perhaps have a session where someone takes 3 or 4 agri-business social media advertising examples and reviews them: what business is? how often they use? how they manage it? Show their analytics
- Open forum not a good idea, need more statistics and technical info; Basic question a waste of my time
- Speakers are only kind of knowledgeable on the topic; Do not really seem like the experts speaking
- Great roundtable discussion - do it again, as everything keeps changing
- Have the hands on learning - info can directly apply on our farm Facebook page
- Social media is a "must have" topic each year; This session was excellent!! The best I attended all week and worth the price of admission
- Great presenters - very versatile - could "go with the flow"; How about having the group actually do a post from @GLEXP0
- Love this topic, and so needed!! Maybe worth breaking down into an introductory and more advance sessions
- Best photos to use or short video workshop
- Keep us informed about changes on platforms (good luck!) 8-
- What to be careful NOT to post ... legal issues that may be concerns for businesses
- Please do this again next year - we always need help with social media; Wonderful presentation!
- Love the interactive nature of this session; Only suggestion might be to begin an extra hour for even more detailed walk through of the various social media platforms with screen shots; In each you could probably do a whole day on this; Overview in the morning and then hour walk through in the afternoon on each platform
- This was a very good session

**Other Comments**

- Cost of event getting very pricey; Been coming for over 15 years; Cost is too high and seminars not a good as past; Becoming less about growing! Vendors are missing from booth or busy on phone, are they here for business or to play?
- This program made the 3-hour drive worth it!
- Awesome job ladies!!!
- Please consider more attention to the list of exhibitors in the show program. They are the reason our registration fee is so low (I think). Listing them in 4-pt font makes it difficult for attendee to review and find them
- Thank you for pulling up pages (Facebook, other examples) to actually show us what the screens look like; This greatly enhances the engagement and buy-in of the audience; I am pretty sure everyone in the room will go home and apply something discussed in this workshop; Much improved as compared to last year
- Great session!!!

**Evaluations received: 23**

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### **Farm Marketing Workshop D: Managing with HEART: Making Caring Communication the Heart of Your Farm**

**Did attending this session increase your knowledge on Managing your Business?**

Yes ( 9 ) No ( 0 ) no answer ( 0 )

**What specifically did you learn that you could apply to your business this coming season?**

- Improve inter-personal skill of adult communication
- This has been good for husband and I to listen to, together; Great to work on; Will try to do this together and with family
- How to effectively communicate with people directly involved in your business
- Communication skills
- More meaningful conversations with family; Work on more caring conversations and better listening
- Learning to listen; How to handle conflicts
- Learning to be a better listener; Learning to create better communication skills
- How to resolve conflicts
- Be a good listener

**What suggestion do you have for future topics in this session**

- People are intelligent and emotional; How to integrate feeling and rational
- I would like to see how to deal with people not family involved (people working for you, not family) effectively, and difficult customers
- Do it again
- Hold more sessions covering communication in agriculture; It is a topic that needs to be covered more!
- More sessions on family farm difficulties in communication
- Follow-up on running family business meetings successfully

**Other Comments**

- Great session. Thank you

**Evaluations received: 9**