



Arizona State University Metro Phoenix, Arizona Farming/Garden

SCHOOL

Arizona State University, public 4-year, 72,000 students, Metro Phoenix, Arizona.

ABSTRACT

The Farmers Market @ the ASU Tempe campus is a semimonthly open-air market held at the Tempe campus on Orange Mall from September through April to promote healthy eating and sustainability among students, faculty, and staff. This program is a collaborative effort, sponsored by ASU departments, student groups and the Arizona Community Farmers Market Group. The market program provides options for locally grown and produced food in a convenient, central location that is easily accessible to both ASU and the greater Tempe communities. The program encourages a living-learning partnership with Arizona farmers and artisans to help create a socially embedded market tradition. During fall 2012, the Farmers Market @ the ASU Tempe campus will be entering its third, full season.

GOALS AND OUTCOMES

Goals

The Farmers Market @ the ASU Tempe campus embodies several of the design aspirations that guide ASU in creating the New American University. The Farmers Market was established to promote health and wellness through education and engagement with ASU and surrounding communities about whole foods and nutrition. The market educates the ASU community about the sustainable production, purchase and consumption practices occurring in the local food system. The Farmers Market provides an opportunity to engage thousands of students, faculty and staff as change agents, and it has the potential to contribute to a broader discussion about what it means to value food and food producers. Additionally, it is designed to encourage entrepreneurship among independently owned small businesses and to promote new and ongoing business ventures. Connecting people with their food and creating ties between producers and consumers strengthens the university's place in the local community and demonstrates ASU's commitment to societal transformation.

The Farmers Market @ the Tempe campus has compiled a list of goals:

1. Provide students, faculty, and staff with easy access to locally produced food
2. Promote health and wellness
3. Complement the conventional food industry
4. Support green lifestyle and sustainable practices
5. Build relationships and community ties
6. Connect people with their food
7. Educate the ASU community about local farming, agriculture, and food systems
8. Support local businesses and growers
9. Embed these values into the ASU culture

Accomplishments and Outcomes

Sustainable solutions ensure that the economic, social, and environmental aspects of a problem are addressed. The Farmers Market @ the Tempe campus is a solution that addresses all three of these components of the “triple bottom line.” One of the benefits of a farmers market is that a significant portion of the money spent at the market continues to support the local economy.

The social aspects of the Farmers Market @ the ASU Tempe campus are manifold and are some of the most prominent benefits of organizing and implementing a farmers market. By creating space for the ASU community to gather and exchange ideas, it allows interdisciplinary discussion and engagement. Market attendees are welcomed with a myriad of engagement opportunities. Shoppers can engage with the local growers and producers and learn about the origin of their foods. Indigenous, ethnic, and heirloom options encourage visitors to learn about new or unfamiliar food traditions.

The final aspect of the triple bottom line is environmental. Access to healthy and sustainable food choices is one of the major indicators of a livable community. Since the Farmers Market provides local, natural, organic, fair trade, and free-range foods, it helps to ensure the vitality of the ASU community by supporting food choices that benefit our local environment. Local foods travel less distance than conventional food options and have significantly lower food miles. Additionally, the support of local farmers allows them to continue to farm and preserve their agricultural lands from encroaching development. Local family farms also tend to use more traditional-farming methods. These methods reduce the damaging agriculture runoff that contributes to soil and water pollution.



The market has become immersed in several different programs on and off campus. For example, the Farmers Market @ the ASU Tempe campus provides an opportunity for the Arboretum at ASU to harvest campus produce and sell it at the market. ASU Recycling, Campus Student Sustainability Initiatives, and other undergraduate and graduate student programs have coordinated with the market to create internships, conduct research, and to collaborate with vendors to create fundraising opportunities.

Challenges and Responses

Conducting comprehensive, accurate customer feedback surveys can be difficult. Vendor recruitment is a challenge because vendors want to see evidence of success before joining. Based on survey responses, however, customers want to see a big market with many vendors. The market needs customers to recruit vendors, but vendors are necessary to attract more customers. This is where each partner must use their strength to bring new and retain existing participants; such as the Arizona Community Farmers Market Group on the vendor side, and ASU on the customer side. This relationship will continue to be developed over time by the Core Implementation Team, which consists of ASU staff and students who develop, implement and evaluate the Farmers Market program.

Another challenge to develop and implement a farmers market is budgetary, which the Core Implementation Team has worked diligently to overcome. This is especially important as university funding supports the Farmers Market. ASU Health Services worked with the Core Implementation Team to create a reduced-fee permit specifically for Farmers Market vendors to keep costs down. Innovations in social media have allowed the Core Implementation Team to leverage the market community to make more community members aware of our program, at little to no cost.

Campus Climate Action: Your School's Carbon Footprint

The Farmers Market @ the ASU Tempe campus has an indirect effect on ASU's carbon footprint. While not having an appreciable effect on the university's zero-waste and carbon-neutrality goals, it is worth noting that the principles of the program align with these concepts. Supporting local food results in fewer food miles, which reduces the transportation needed to get products from the producer to the consumer. Organic, fair trade, and free-range options also minimize the carbon footprint by supporting natural, traditional and chemical-free methods of raising food. The market's location provides students and the off-campus community easy access to sustainable produce through public and alternative transportation. The Farmers Market engages and educates ASU and the greater Tempe community about the benefits of supporting local farmers and businesses. This engagement allows individuals to make informed decisions about sustainability and begins to shift the social paradigm of how a community should interact and live to attain a healthy, sustainable lifestyle.

Commentary and Reflection

Arguably, the market's biggest strength lies in its ability to actively engage the ASU community. We begin to make an impact on the everyday lives of students, faculty, staff and the greater Tempe community by providing an outdoor area to teach about sustainable food options and the need to support local businesses. The creation of a farmers market is a great way to educate the public about important issues and instruct them on different ways they can make an impact at home, work or school. The market allows for the expansion of community bonds for ASU, local vendors and the public.

ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

Leaders and Supporters

Before 2009, students first presented the farmers market idea as a part of their service-learning course. The students brought their research findings to Sun Devil Dining and the Office of University Sustainability Practices. Because of the collaboration, a one-time Farmers Market event was held in September 2009. This event was very successful, and made it evident to all involved that ASU students, faculty and staff would value having a farmers market on the ASU Tempe campus.

A Farmers Market advisory board was created following the 2009 event. The advisory board consists of directors and vice presidents from University Business Services and University Sustainability Practices (Ray Jensen and Nick Brown), University Housing (Jennifer Hightower), Memorial Union (Kellie Lowe), ASU Health Services (Allen Markus), ASU Wellness (Karen Moses). The board assists with navigating bureaucratic or political issues within the university, and provides funding approval and guidance as requested by the committee. The Core Implementation Team was appointed by the board in late 2009 to develop, implement and evaluate the new Farmers Market program.

Core Implementation Team Members consist of staff and students from the Office of University Sustainability Practices (Betty Lombardo), University Housing (Rebecca Reining), Memorial Union, (Judy

Schroeder), ASU Wellness (Lynda Seefeldt), ASU Health Services (Suzette Kroll), and Campus Student Sustainability Initiatives (Alex Davis and Ryan Cleary).

ASU collaborated with the Arizona Community Farmers Market Group (Denise Logan and Samantha Halvorson) to help the Farmers Market @ the ASU Tempe campus run more efficiently. Because the Arizona Community Farmers Market Group manages vendors as a core function of its organization, the Core Implementation Team is able to focus on marketing, promotion and student engagement. Another major partner that helped create the market was Sun Devil Dining. Previously, Sun Devil Dining supported sustainable-dining initiatives through the establishment of Engrained Café and its satellite store, e2, which offers sustainable-food options.

The Farmers Market @ the ASU Tempe campus worked with a variety of other campus organizations to make the market possible, including Parking & Transit Services, Grounds Services, Environmental Health & Safety, Moving and Event Services, and Facilities and Development Management. The market also worked with undergraduate and graduate students in Campus Student Sustainability initiatives, as well as the Arboretum at ASU, the School of Sustainability, and the Hugh Downs School of Human Communications to encourage entrepreneurship, internships, research, and community outreach.

Funding and Resources

Cost of the Farmers Market to ASU:

Projected Farmers Market @ the ASU Tempe campus 2012-2013 Budget

2012-2013 Farmers Market Budget			
Expenses	Unit Cost	Extended Cost	Notes
Marketing			
Newsstand ads	\$132	\$2,112.00	Production/printing for 8 ads per semester (16 total ads)
Newsstand ads		\$ 400.00	Production Fee
Flyers/Posters		\$1,400.00	11 x 17 posters and ¼ page handouts
Facilities Management Banner Request	\$50	\$ 100.00	Hang large banner each semester for market promotion
Postcard Mailer		\$1,000.00	Postcard printing
Staff, volunteers & vendors T-shirts		\$1,000.00	Promotes market-brand identity
Campus Mail		\$ 300.00	Fee to mail postcard to all faculty/staff
Market Baskets, Prizes		\$ 200.00	Giveaways to promote the market
Subtotal		\$6,512.00	
Operations			
Misc. Event Equipment		\$ 80.00	Bungees, chalk, clamps, etc.
Internal Service Charges		\$ 724.00	Average X 12 markets
Subtotal		\$ 804.00	
Total		\$7,316.00	
Fund Source		Funding Per Year	Notes
University Sustainability Practices		\$1,036.00	
Memorial Union/Housing		\$2,824.00	
ASU Wellness		\$1,000.00	
ASU Wellness Marketing		\$2,456.00	ASU Wellness has committed to payment needs as part of its nutrition & wellness education mission (posters, ¼ page flyers, 8 weeks of newsstand ads).
Total		\$7,316.00	

Education and Community Outreach

In addition to engaging market attendees, the project also provided an effective partnership opportunity for ASU students, faculty, and staff as well as Sun Devil Dining. The Farmers Market @ the ASU Tempe campus continues to work with undergraduate and graduate students in various disciplines. The students have conducted research through a campus-wide survey of students' communication methods and preferences for learning about food production as well as a semester-long study of food-commodity sustainability issues. Collaborating with students, faculty and staff from a variety of different disciplines across the university creates stronger ties between these constituencies, whether their stated purpose is research, teaching and learning, or community outreach. The Sun Devil Dining partnership allowed for the marketing and advertising of more sustainable-food options and incentivized education on these new menu items among the greater campus community.

Market attendance increased by approximately 7% during 2011-2012, compared to 2010-2011. Attendance is based on traffic headcounts every half hour during hours of operation. Market sales increased by approximately 21% during 2011-2012 compared to 2010-2011. The first two markets of the 2011-2012 season in particular show significant increases in sales. Of 17 vendors returning in fall 2011, 15 reported a daily sales average higher than that of fall 2010. This leads to the conclusion that as time passes, community involvement in the Farmers Market @ the ASU Tempe campus is steadily growing and reaching more of the community.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Contacts

Betty Lombardo, Manager, University Sustainability Practices, betty.lombardo@asu.edu

Case study submitted by: Betty Lombardo and Melissa Merrick

Betty Lombardo, Manager, University Sustainability Practices, betty.lombardo@asu.edu

Melissa Merrick, ASU Class of 2014, mamerric@asu.edu

MORE ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL

Campus Sustainability History

The Global Institute of Sustainability evolved from more than 30 years of environmental research conducted by the Center for Environmental Studies at Arizona State University (ASU). The institute conducts research, education and problem solving related to sustainability, with a special focus on urban environments. Within the Global Institute of Sustainability, there is a University Sustainability Practices group. This group of several individuals is dedicated to oversee campus sustainability. We initiate and coordinate sustainability efforts of several campus community groups and stakeholders. University Sustainability Practices has established four goals for campus sustainability. 1) Carbon Neutrality, 2) Zero Waste, 3) Active Engagement and 4) Principled Practice. We have established several sustainability initiatives to help the university achieve these four goals. <http://sustainability.asu.edu/>

Image Credit: Patrick G. Clark, ASU Wellness