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# Examination of a Farmers Market on a University Campus.

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Running Head: Campus Farmers Markets

Examination of a Farmers Market on a University Campus

A paper submitted in partial satisfaction of  
the requirements for Honors Colloquium

By

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To

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# Campus Farmers Markets

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## **Abstract**

Sustainability and locally sourced goods are pressing issues in today's society for many environmental, economic, and cultural reasons. Farmers markets are becoming a highly popular method of implementing these ideas. As universities have begun to address their own processes to support sustainable practices, appeal has grown for adding a farmers market on campus. Information pertaining to markets already created and the process of implementation is not readily available. This study seeks to explore the rationale for a campus farmers market as a sustainable development on a university campus and review the processes by which a market may be established as exemplified by the newly formed Farmers Market at East Tennessee State University.

### Introduction

Little information is available pertaining to farmers markets operating on university and college campuses. In a collegiate setting, vendors serve a unique population in a small microcosm of a regular community. This means that the market must be uniquely tailored to meet the needs of college students, faculty, and staff. This study serves as preliminary research on the nature of a campus farmers market. I looked at the rationale for implementing a campus farmers market by observing what social forces are currently creating a desire for farmers markets on campus. Then I talked to some of the people involved in bringing a farmers market to East Tennessee State University and the vendors who operated at the market in their first year to examine what the processes looked like for members of an individual campus. This preliminary research is meant to provide a better understanding of the reasons for starting a campus farmers market and insight into what the process looks like.

## Methods

This research was conducted from a review of literature concerning the rationale for a campus market and qualitative interviews to collect information concerning the implementation and early stages of a market.

Literature was chosen for its applicability toward understanding sustainability as a whole and how the campus farmers market fits into the local food movement, the larger farmers market construct, and “university greening.”

A list of interview questions was compiled for information pertaining to the East Tennessee State University campus market. See Appendix 2-Interview Questions. An invitation to participate in interviews was sent to all vendors and farmers market leadership. Those who opted to participate were asked to sign a form explaining the interview. See Appendix 3 – Informed Consent. Information-gathering qualitative interviews were recorded and were transcribed verbatim. They are listed in that format in Appendix 4 – Interview Transcriptions by Question.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Local Food Movement

In examining issues of sustainability, food is one of the major considerations for its impact on the environment and economy through all stages of production and consumption, affected by large-scale agriculture and transportation of food products. Because of this, local food is at the forefront of the public conversation, spawning the local food movement, and serves as a strategy to address sustainability within the university campus community as well.

The local food movement is a system that supports local food purchases and local economies. A USDA Economic Research Service report found that while there was no commonly accepted definition of local food, “According to the definition adopted by the U.S. Congress in the 2008 Food, Conservation, and Energy Act (2008 Farm Act), the total distance that a product can be transported and still be considered a “locally or regionally produced agricultural food product” *is less than 400 miles from its origin, or within the State in which it is produced.*” (Martinez, 2010, p. iii) Definitions vary greatly in respect to acceptable distance from point of sale for local food, and many farmers markets have a much more stringent requirement. The East Tennessee State University farmers market has implemented a 100-mile radius rule, which matches the requirements of the Jonesborough Farmers Market, the other local producers-only market.

Growing interest in locally or regionally produced foods stems from several other movements, including the environmental movement, the community food-security movement, the Slow Food movement, as well as consumers who wish to

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support local farmers. (Martinez, 2010) Author and food advocate Michael Pollan writes in his article “Food Movement, Rising” that the focus on making choices that prioritize local food economies over a global system began in the 1970’s with authors like Wendell Berry and Francis Moore Lappe writing criticism of industrial agriculture and Alice Waters’ restaurant Chez Panisse focusing on fresh local ingredients. Pollan describes the political atmosphere that turned attention back to local food, especially the food safety issues of recent decades with outbreaks of bacteria-contaminated food causing food-borne illness. (Pollan, 2010) Local food decentralizes production and provides more direct supervision, which alleviates some of the likelihood of contamination

Pollan cites as another reason for the local food movement’s growing popularity that many hope to combat the diseases of civilization by steering away from processed foods, where fats and sugars are added and disguised in the product. This makes it almost impossible for someone to choose between packaged foods at the grocery store in a way that efficiently considers their healthfulness. Individuals shopping for local foods often hope for an opportunity to connect with growers and better understand the product they are purchasing. Concern over the connection between processed foods and disease is likely to become more widespread in government and healthcare as changes in the national health care plan make room for many people who suffer from these diseases. Pollan states that “The Centers for Disease Control estimates that fully three quarters of US health care spending goes to treat chronic diseases, most of which are preventable and linked to diet: heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and at least a third of all



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cancers.” (Pollan, 2010, p.6) Pollan points out that as healthcare reform is enacted, it will have to focus on reforming the American diet.

Local food is likely to continue to grow in popularity throughout the national healthcare shift as more people are encouraged to making educated food decisions, choosing whole, organic foods over conventional, processed, and genetically modified foods. Many small farmers choose sustainable practices such as organic farming, so farmers markets offer a variety of options for people looking for alternatives. They also offer a social space for communities to interact and a forum for discussion. Pollan explains this dynamic saying, “The food movement is also about community, identity, pleasure, and, most notably, about carving out a new social and economic space removed from the influence of big corporations on the one side and government on the other.”(Pollan, 2010, p. 9)

In his book *Closing the Food Gap*, Mark Winne discusses the problems of food insecurity and poverty-related food issues in America and its relation to local food. Winne’s three decades of work with Hartford Food Systems in Connecticut focused on making healthy food readily available to low-income populations while supporting Connecticut farmers. Hartford Food Systems represents widespread efforts in the U.S. to cope with the rise of populations who were at greater risk of health issues such as obesity due to the lack of available healthy food options. (Winne, 2008)

In the wake of these rising health concerns and the national contamination scares discussed by Pollan, shoppers have come to trust local producers accessed through direct contact to a greater degree than food acquired through the global

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food system. Winne states that “Today’s shopper at one of the nation’s more than four thousand farmers’ markets is likely to assume that the products there are of a higher level of purity, health, and safety than he or she would find almost anywhere else.” (Winne, 2008, p. 130) A study the Hartford Food System conducted in one of its low-income neighborhoods shows that more impoverished consumers had the same concerns and perceptions about food health and safety attributed to those already shopping at farmers markets. “The awareness of the benefits of local and organic food, while not clearly understood or accepted by people of all classes and education, including the scientific community, was nevertheless very high among this group.”(Winne, 2008, p. 129)

A Food Marketing Institute report found similar motivations for seeking out locally produced food between demographically diverse populations of local food consumers. “The majority of respondents to a national study cited freshness (82 percent), support for the local economy (75 percent), and knowing the source of the product (58 percent) as reasons for buying local food at direct markets or in conventional grocery stores (Food Marketing Institute, 2009)” (Martinez, 2010, p. 29) Placement of farmers markets in food insecure neighborhoods, programs such as Community Food Project Grants Program, the Senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program, the Community Facilities Program, the WIC Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program, and the Federal State Marketing Improvement Program are examples of the increasing number of programs government and communities have used to address widespread demand for local food and support access to farmers markets.

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They illustrate increased concern with purchasing food products locally as a means of countering food issues. (Martinez, 2010)

Other benefits of local food markets mentioned in the Food Marketing Institute report include economic benefits of support for local businesses and keeping money in the community, environmental benefits of decreased oil dependence from food transportation, land preservation through increased numbers of small farms, preservation of genetic diversity through the efforts of small-scale growers and market support of diverse offerings, and the increase of social capital in local communities. (Martinez, 2010)

These dynamics have led to a major grassroots foods movement that encompasses all of the diverse environmental, health, and community-based concerns of individuals and groups across the country. The movement has grown to the point that one of every four American meals is now sourced from local community-based organizations or businesses. (Cobb, 2011) It has been manifested as social initiatives for food and garden education and implementation in neighborhoods, elementary schools, colleges, and at-risk communities. It has led to a rising popularity in bee- and hen-keeping, which has spawned changes in city ordinances to allow many city residents to keep chickens and beehives in their backyard, community gardening initiatives that make use of unused lots in neighborhoods, grant programs which provide raised beds to low-income families, and support programs for farmers to help them connect with local communities. (Cobb, 2011)

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Several major food organizations leading this grassroots movement are in the region of Appalachia which concerns this study, including Appalachian Sustainable Development, the Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project, the Beardsley Community Farm.

Appalachian Sustainable Development in Abingdon, Virginia, offers many programs that include local food marketing and business development, farmers market support through the Appalachian Farmers Market Association, producer training, distribution and technical assistance through Appalachian Harvest, sustainable forestry programs, and garden and food donation and assistance for low-income families through the Earth Box, Grow Your Own, and Healthy Food, Healthy Families programs.

Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project, headquartered in Asheville, North Carolina, also houses many programs that help with local food marketing and business development as well as branding and certification with the Appalachian Grown program, farm tours, a farm to school program, and local educational programs and conferences.

The Beardsley Community Farm in Knoxville, Tennessee, works with Americorp members and community volunteers to grow produce and raise bees and chickens as an urban demonstration farm. Food produced by the farm is shared between volunteers and food pantries in the local community. The farm also works with area schools and other groups to offer gardening and farming education.

Programs like these exemplify the growing organizational support for local sustainable food in the immediate region of Appalachia surrounding East Tennessee

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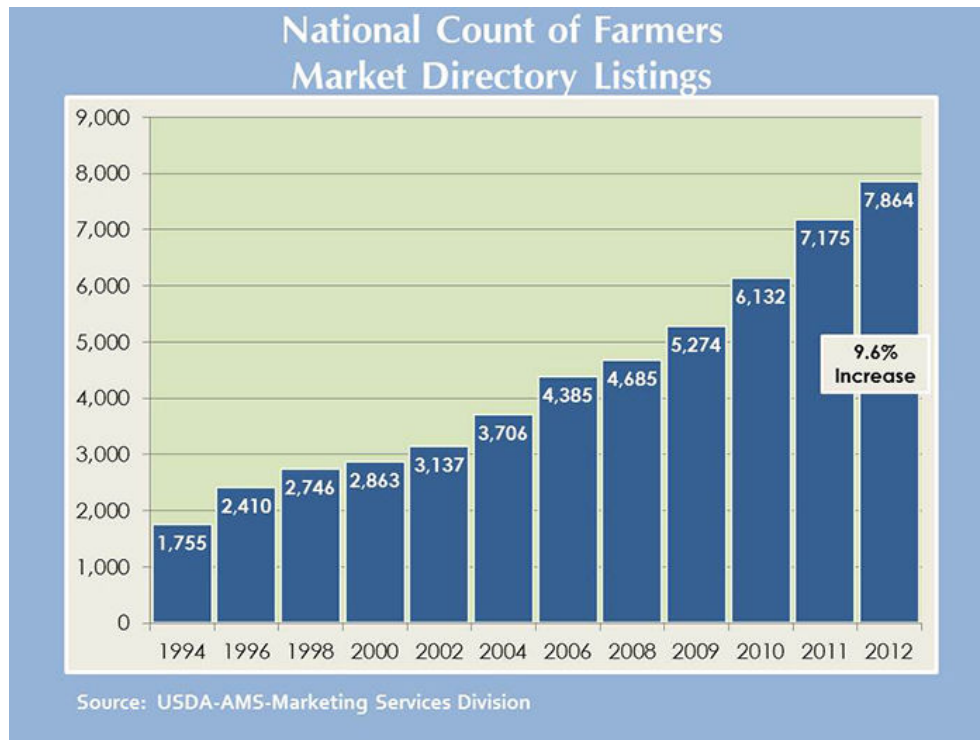
State University where the farmers market is hosted. The numerous programs of each organization also indicate a breadth of community members involved and educated about food issues, making it a prime population for the farmers market.

### Rising Popularity of Farmers Markets

Farmers markets offer a retail location for direct sales of farm-produced goods, which eliminates most of the transportation and processing time between harvest and sale. Demands for higher food quality, local sourcing, and environmentally friendly alternatives to the global food supply have encouraged growth of these markets in the last several decades as consumers seek to assume more control over food selection. Farmers markets offer an opportunity to interact with a producer and gain information on growing methods used. Customers can also discuss methods of preparing and using a product, filling a gap in food preparation and nutrition education that often prevents fresh produce purchases.

The number of farmers markets has increased exponentially since the 1970's. "The United States had 340 farmers' markets in 1970, 1,700 in 1994, and almost doubled to 3,100 by 2002. Two years later, the number was 3,700."(McKibben, 2007, p. 66) Between 1998 and 2009, the number of farmers markets in the United States saw a 92 percent increase. (Martinez, 2010) Current numbers from the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service place the 2012 number of farmers markets at 7,864, a continual increase in their directory listings.

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The increasing number of markets has caused an exponential increase in direct-to-consumer agricultural sales. “Direct-to-consumer marketing amounted to \$1.2 billion in current dollar sales in 2007, according to the 2007 Census of Agriculture, compared with \$551 million in 1997.” (Martinez, 2010, p. iii) Farmers markets play the largest role in overall agricultural direct-to-consumer sales. This accounts for a small but significant portion of overall agricultural sales.

Part of the USDA’s support for increasing direct marketing has included implementation and support for new programs to extend the market season and reach new audiences. One example of these programs is support for market extension into the winter season. Winter markets are defined as farmers markets that operate during the months of November and March, and they illustrate an ever-increasing demand for farmers’ market presence so that consumers can have access

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to a year-round supply of fresh food. A 2012 news release from the USDA announced 1,864 operational winter markets, a relatively newer development in farmers market programs. The 2012 count represents a 52 percent increase from 2011, accounting for a total of 24 percent of total farmers markets. Farmers have expanded their supply of produce with hoop houses and greenhouses to accommodate this demand. (Jones-Ellard, 2010)

Another example includes programs in place to extend the reach of farmers markets to food insecure communities. Markets can apply for grant funding to set up an ATM system that allows customers to use SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits to purchase farmers market goods, ensuring more widespread access to fresh foods. Access is also being made available to participants in the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) nutrition program of the USDA Food and Nutrition Service through their WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP), which authorizes farmers markets and roadside stands through State agencies to accept and redeem FMNP coupons. The FMNP also provides a similar program for eligible seniors, making coupons available for many low-income groups. The FMNP guidelines disqualify any vendors who “exclusively sell produce grown by someone else, such as wholesale distributors.” (WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program, 2012) This stipulation supports the program in providing fresh food and also ensures that revenue will go to local producers. The funds have contributed to overall growth in the number of consumers shopping at farmers markets. “During fiscal year 2011, 18,487 farmers, 4,079 farmers' markets and 3,184 roadside stands



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were authorized to accept FMNP coupons,” which generated 16.4 million dollars in revenue for farmers in that year. (WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program, 2012)

Online markets have helped to expand farmers markets through simplified purchasing. Platforms such as locallygrown.net allow markets to offer produce and other items without the need for a physical location, which allows schedule flexibility for farmers and consumers and serves as a winter market solution for open air markets where inclement weather would prohibit continued market presence.

One pertinent example of these markets is the local model for East Tennessee State University’s market, the Jonesborough Farmers Market. Jonesborough’s market hosts thirty vendors in a physical location from May through October and maintains an online market in the off-season. They also accept EBT cards through one of the government programs listed that supports purchasing discounts when an EBT card is used. The online market and the EBT program serve as a draw for vendors and customers alike, ensuring the year-round success of the market.

The growth of programs and continuing advancements in market logistics aid the overall rise in popularity of farmers markets in the United States, lending stability through support to the rapidly growing numbers of farmers markets emerging.

### Sustainable Campus Movement

The rising number of campus farmers markets is also due in part to the sustainable campus movement. The sustainable campus movement describes the efforts of university campuses to address campus contributions to environmental issues by adjusting practices concerning waste, purchasing, emissions, and resource use. It is a rapidly expanding movement characterized by additional departments, positions, programs, and committees to address the broad scope of sustainable efforts. This effort is valuable not only due to the amount of energy consumed and waste created in a university setting, but also because universities serve as a micro-community where effects of initiatives and interactions between them can more easily be analyzed as a whole than as the individual initiatives that serve as component parts.

Many of these initiatives are student-led, showing a concern for sustainability in incoming students, which may represent new generations of larger society. In his article “The Sustainability Movement in Higher Education: an Overview,” James Elder highlights the growing involvement in sustainable endeavors on campus by all members of the campus community. Elder’s (2008) study found the following:

While the growing momentum for sustainability on many campuses often has come as a result of demands by students who understand that their future is at stake, the challenge of addressing a changing climate is increasingly engaging all dimensions of the campus. As a result, hundreds of thousands of

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students, faculty and administrators at hundreds of colleges and universities are increasingly committed and helping to advance sustainability. (p. 2)

The faculty and administrator interest Elders notes is a crucial element to a lasting sustainable effort in terms of supervision and expertise. Administration and faculty serving as stakeholders may offer advice, maintain a steady presence over a longer period of time, or provide or help to secure financial backing. Support for these endeavors often comes from grant and loan sources such as the Department of Education's University Sustainability Program, the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007, and many organizations in the non-profit sector, through which universities may apply for competitive grants that assist in the development of sustainability programs and projects. (Elder 2008)

Ranking organizations such as the Princeton Review, the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment (ACUPCC), and the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education/STARS Rating System (AASHE) provide incentives to pursue sustainable initiatives. Positive scores for sustainability in independent rankings help universities qualify for grants as well as attract students.

In her 1998 book *Greening the Ivory Tower: Improving the Environmental Track Record of Universities, Colleges, and Other Institutions*, Sarah Hammond Creighton looks at ways universities can address sustainability issues. While administrative and faculty support is necessary to implement and support many programs, Creighton highlights the influence that students may have in the process as initiators, volunteers, and advocates for projects to be undertaken. "By combining

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their academic work with their volunteer activities and living experience, students can be leaders, participants, and resources for the university's environmental stewardship efforts." (Creighton, 1998, p. 269)

Sustainable food efforts are increasingly being included in sustainable campus initiatives. Rationales for these sustainable food projects reflect the environmental and health concerns of other sustainable campus initiatives as well as concerns from the local food movement. "As campus audits show that food production and transportation are major greenhouse gas contributors, over 676 institutions have now signed on to the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment." (Barlett, 2011, p. 101) Campus wellness programs also play a role in this shift, as the nutritional focus on healthier intake of produce incorporates claims of nutritionally superior organic food. (Bartlett, 2011)

One way sustainability on campus can intersect with the local food movement in application is by favoring local producers in vendor contracts. This decreases the environmental impact of food miles while supporting local producers and economies. An example of student-led purchasing initiatives is the Real Food Challenge, a network of schools committed to making at least 20 percent of campus food purchases by 2020 on "real food," which is defined as "food which truly nourishes producers, consumers, communities and the earth." For the purposes of tracking institutional purposes, this definition is broken into four categories: Humane, Ecologically Sound, Fair, and Local/Community-Based. The network's website lists a total of \$48.5 million of pledges, and over 330 schools have committed to the goal, including University of California – Berkeley, Brown

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University, Wesleyan University, and the University of Vermont. (Real Food Challenge, 2012) (Bartlett, 2011)

Campus farmers markets represent another facet of sustainable campus initiatives growing through sustainable food efforts. “As interest in sustainable food systems grows on college campuses nationwide, so do campus farmers markets, bringing college communities together while connecting them with local farmers.” (Johnson, 2009, p. 1) Along with campus gardens and farms, campus markets offer students experiential learning and the opportunity to foster community and food values.

ETSU is among campuses that have developed a Department of Sustainability to monitor the school’s sustainability ranking with organizations such as AASHE’s STAR ranking system and create initiatives that increase the overall sustainability of the school. The Department of Sustainability works with partners ranging from the Tennessee Board of Regents to student organizations such as the Environmental Conservation Organization. This department examines building design, grounds management, waste and water management, energy use, emissions inventory, campus garden, and campus dining to transition to greener alternatives to current practices. Local food sourcing is listed as part of the campus dining initiative. As their mission, “ETSU’s Department of Sustainability supports and advances the triple bottom line of ecological integrity, economic prosperity, and social equity through a variety of initiatives.” (East Tennessee Department of Sustainability) The Department of Sustainability is involved with the ETSU Farmers Market in an advisory stakeholder capacity.

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East Tennessee State University (ETSU) is currently listed at 40.95, scoring it as a “bronze” school by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education’s STARS tracking system for sustainable campuses. This rating is calculated from an assessment system that assigns points in the categories of Education and Research, operations, Planning, Administration, and Engagement, and Innovation. Data is voluntarily submitted by universities to this assessment. Based on the data sent by ETSU’s Department of Sustainability, course offerings, diversity and affordability, and public engagement account for a large portion of our ratings. The bronze status of 40.95 was recorded in 2011. The ETSU farmers market will be among changes to affect the school’s sustainable efforts score in the next report. The market, which was listed as “not pursuing” in the 2011 report, will increase ETSU’s score by .25 points. (Moore, 2011)

### Assessment

This literature review suggests that a farmers market fits into the larger movement of sustainability because it creates an access source for fresh, locally sourced goods, which are currently in demand. The campus population is a direct marketing population that otherwise does not have regular access to fresh local food, which is a concern that organizations and government programs have begun to address for many populations other than college students, but not specifically for college students. Therefore, the campus farmers market fills a gap in the available outreach programs by reaching out to an otherwise unaddressed population.

The rising popularity of farmers markets also supports the implementation of campus markets simply because they represent an increased demand for products sold at those markets. The diverse number of new programs such as SNAP and WIC benefits, winter markets, and online markets show that the farmers market direct marketing model is being broadened to be more inclusive and to adapt to diverse needs. A campus market can be considered an extension of this, where the farmers market direct marketing model is being adapted to suit the diverse needs of a college or university population.

Perhaps the greatest rationale for campus markets is that they support university sustainability goals. With increasing pressure on universities to undergo the “greening” process, sustainable endeavors are becoming necessary to reduce a school’s environmental impact and give them a competitive edge. Farmers markets, which support a reduction of food miles and intensive farming methods, help a school reduce their carbon footprint and environmental impact

## **ETSU FARMERS MARKET 2012- Fielding Bureaucracy to Bring Local Food**

The East Tennessee State University (ETSU) Farmers Market serves to enable the purchase of local food to support the university's larger goal of becoming more sustainable. The market opened in spring 2012 through the efforts of a student organization, Farmers Market at ETSU, led by Rachel Ward. The market is run by the student organization and a pool of student volunteers. In the fall of 2012, the market's leadership team implemented an advisory council composed of faculty, administrators, and representative vendors. The market is currently anticipating its third season.

### **Stages of Implementation 2011**

Planning stages began in September, 2011, when Rachel Ward, a doctoral student, began working with administration and other students to begin establishing a student organization to launch and manage the market. According to Ward, the idea was born of continued frustration with the unhealthy lunch offerings on campus. "The options were fairly limited to fast food. I'd recently heard about a friend of mine whose cousin started a farmers market at a public university, and I thought that would be kind of a neat thing to try to do here."(Rachel Ward, personal communications, March 14, 2013) The goals of the proposed market were primarily creating a business opportunity for local farmers, exposing the campus community to local food and local agriculture, and community building. (Rachel Ward and David Blackley, personal communications, March 14, 2013).



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The business opportunity presented by a market in its early stages is modest, but many vendors have expressed enthusiasm about current sales and especially about potential future sales as the market increases its exposure and customer base. Other vendors responded that their sales were not yet comparable to the sales they accrued at municipal markets. (Vendor personal communications, March 2013)

The market succeeded in offering exposure to local foods and agriculture. Other than point-of-sale opportunities for vendors to educate consumers, educational activities were also provided by the market to supplement entertainment. Demonstrations, local food guides, and exposure to local food issues through the market's social media outlets all supported this goal.

After its second season, the market is succeeding at building community according to David Blackley, logistics manager for the market. Blackley illustrates several examples of the face of this community: cooking and gardening demonstrations, environmental issues, yoga, and beekeeping." (David Blackley, personal communications, March 14, 2013)

### **Proposal and Approval 2011-2012**

Campus farmers markets differ from municipal farmers markets in their legal and administrative considerations. A volunteer or farmer who wished to begin a community market may choose to establish a privately owned or government supported market. They have some flexibility in location if issues arise with one

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possibility. They may apply for funding, host an event, or create whatever sort of guidelines for accepting vendors that suit the needs of their market. A campus market must operate in a specific public setting with very limited options for location. There are many rules and procedures for procuring any sort of funding. At ETSU, for example, student groups may not write grants for funding. There are also rules and procedures above and beyond municipal market considerations for how the market can be run. David Blackley said of the process, “we had to work our way up the entire administrative ladder to ultimately get approval for it.” (David Blackley, personal communications, March 14, 2013)

The beginning stages of the farmers market proposal involved preliminary research into established markets for preparation and many meetings with administrative representatives including the vice presidents of Finances and Allied Health as well as the director of the student center. These meetings were carried out in order to gain approval from various departments to begin planning. According to Blackley, Rachel Ward’s preliminary research on the viability of a farmers market in preparation revealed that there were few examples of non-land grant university markets to use as models. This distinction is made because land grant institutions have funding to support agricultural research, which means that these schools have resources that make them better capable of hosting a farmers market. Ward found one other campus farmers market in the state that operated at a public university and brought information about that market to show a precedent for the particular circumstances with which ETSU would be working. Rules and regulations were also developed to present along with a plan for market structure in an initial proposal

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submitted in fall of 2011. (Rachel Ward and David Blackley, personal communications, March 14, 2013)

The initial reception to the proposal was negative. Ward said of this stage, “I think initially people were either not supportive or very cautious in their approach to the market because they didn’t think it would stick.” (Ward interview) She was given a list of reasons for rejection and questions for further follow-up and worked through the list to address each item.

Some of the objections to the market included lack of a precedent, liability concerns for faculty, excessive competition for the local market, and refusal of parking access. Ward’s counter to these obligations involved finding a similar market structure within the state (at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville) and adopting some of their bylaws and procedures to address the lack of precedent. She addressed liability concerns by having all planning vetted by the university’s lawyer, who assured her that faculty would not be held liable and that the student organization would help with liability concerns. The local market was contacted early in the planning stages to ensure lack of conflict with their days and operations, and the two markets have different goals and customers, Ward was informed. The lack of access was addressed by presenting several models for market location and processes to offer multiple possibilities to administration for how the market could work to circumvent parking issues. In the end, an inner lot was approved for the market to use on a particular day. (Rachel Ward, personal communications, March 14, 2013)

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As she progressed through the list, administrative reception to the idea began to shift to a more positive perspective. The second proposal presented was approved contingent upon some minor edits. Blackley recalled, “They all seemed on board but they wanted to see that we could pitch a coherent idea and we did a good job with that presentation. Dr. Bishop (Vice President for Health Affairs and Chief Operating Officer for East Tennessee State University) was clearly on board with it and she actually gave us some ideas in that meeting for ways to run the market better.” (personal communications, March 14, 2013) Throughout each stage, the proposals were submitted to the university legal counsel for review and assessment of liability.

Four separate meetings were conducted: first with the university’s liaison with Aramark and subsequently with the presidents and directors of various departments such as the Student Organization Resource Center and Student Services. At each stage of the process, additional questions and hurdles were brought up to be addressed and the proposal was refined. By the time formal approval was secured at the fourth and final meeting in January 2012, Ward had a strong proposal for market operations, dates, and rules. (Rachel Ward, personal communications, March 14, 2013)

### **Student Organization, 2011**

One of the suggestions offered by the university legal counsel was to create a student organization. In reference to liability, faculty members were concerned about personal legal responsibility in any litigation that may arise from operation of

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the market. A student organization would offer some protection for the faculty involved. The student organization would also ensure that control of the market remained in the hands of students, and that students would be the primary operators. (Rachel Ward, personal communications,)

The student organization, Farmers Market at ETSU, was created after university administration approved the farmers market. Its role in implementing and running the market was to set up and maintain a bank account, recruit volunteers, and advertise around campus. Three committees, Logistics, Events, and Marketing, were created to focus student efforts and increase efficiency.

As an established organization, the Farmers Market at ETSU also helps to safeguard the market's longevity. Students preparing to graduate in the near future have an opportunity to train incoming students to ensure continued student management and volunteer involvement. (Rachel Ward and David Blackley, personal communications, March 14, 2013)

### Locating and Securing Vendors

After the market was approved, the next step in implementation was to locate vendors from the region of Southwest Virginia, Tennessee, and West North Carolina, and recruit them for the ETSU market. Ward and Blackley compiled a list of potential local vendors from local food guides, farmers market websites, and word of mouth. Between fifty five and sixty vendors were contacted by phone, email, and in person to cement eight vendors for the first market season. (Rachel Ward, personal communications, March 14, 2013) The main reason vendors cited for

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deciding to participate in the market was for increased exposure, in general and to new types of clientele. Another reason was the opportunity presented by this market to educate future customers. “People need to become acquainted with their food and what better place,” stated a goat cheese vendor. (Cynthia Sharpe, personal communications, March 11, 2013) Paul Peterson, a grower selling organically grown produce for the non-profit Rural Resource, listed the market’s producers-only policy as a primary incentive. (Paul Peterson, personal communications, March 14, 2013)

The strict parameters of the campus market were partly responsible of the small number of vendors initially recruited. Vendors were selected according to guidelines which stipulated that all products sold must be produced locally, which was defined as within 100 miles of the campus market. Vendors were also required to be the producer of the products they sold. This reflects regulatory practices of a large percentage of farmers markets in the U.S. “According to the USDA survey, 63 percent of farmers’ market managers reported that vendors were required to sell only the products that they produced (Ragland and Tropp, 2009).” (Martinez, 2010) Vendors were also required to carry liability insurance (see Vendor Participation.)

### Schedule and Location

Initially, the hours were set from 9:30-1 on Thursdays. The time of day selected was intended to capitalize on mealtimes and maximum traffic on campus. The days were chosen after observations about low foot traffic on Fridays and speculation that students might get their shopping done over the weekend and not need anything on Mondays. The largest consideration in selecting a day, however,

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was avoiding time conflicts with any established local markets scheduled. Market management worked with the nearby municipal farmers market in Johnson City, attending meetings and communicating with the Johnson City Farmers Market leadership to plan the campus market in a way that would complement rather than conflict with the existing market. Since the Johnson City Farmers Market has a weekday market on Wednesdays, a Thursday market was chosen. (Rachel Ward and David Blackley, personal communications, March 14, 2013)

The duration of the market was chosen as a compromise between giving the vendors enough time for sales to justify their efforts and transportation and ensuring enough volunteers would be available to cover the market. In this aspect, the campus market duration of four hours resembles the length of time most farmers markets operate in a given day.

Ward decided that the viability of the farmers market was contingent upon a central location with a high volume of pedestrian traffic. Several ideas were proposed. One of the initial plans developed by market leadership involved a complex shuttling system to transport vendors to a particular location on campus that was thought to meet the traffic needs, but was inaccessible by vehicles. "In hindsight, that would have made operating the market at best a nightmare and at worst impossible." (David Blackley, personal communications, March 14, 2013) The current location was suggested by a member of the university administration in one of the meetings conducted to secure approval for the market. The market location selected is in an area with high traffic generated by students crossing between classes and coming to and from the dining hall, library, and student center. It is

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positioned in a parking lot, which allows for vendor vehicle access and tailgate setup.

### **Market Operation, Spring-Fall 2012**

The market opened Thursday, April 5 to coincide with public health initiatives from ETSU's College of Public Health and Earth Month 2012, hosted by the Department of Sustainability. The spring month of April represented a soft opening for the market to test logistics and marketing.

The hours of market business were moved to 10-2 in fall to adjust for student schedules. An ongoing issue realized in the first year is that the market struggled to cater to students, faculty, and staff kept on campus too late to buy foods needing refrigeration or kept from attending due to personal schedule. One possible solution for this issue is the incorporation of an online component of the market with a later pickup time. This method would require a source of refrigeration to ensure vendors were not kept on campus longer. This and other solutions are currently being analyzed.

The fall season began September 6 and ran until October 25. The market did not operate during summer months due to concerns about the level of student traffic on campus to sustain vendors and the number of student volunteers available to maintain the market. This is problematic because the greatest amount of local fresh produce is available during the summer. Many vendors voiced a desire to extend the campus market through the summer semester to take advantage of the greater quantity of products they carried during those months. Others, such as



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Crazy Cupcakes, a baked goods and coffee vendor, expressed a similar wish in order to extend the amount of time their business was present on campus because they regularly sold out of their product and felt that it was a successful venue for their business. (Allison Winfield, personal communications, March 13, 2013) Season extension is also a possible subject for future research.

## Logistics

An estimated twelve person hours were exercised per market. Students volunteered for a period of thirty minutes to two hours. Student volunteers and Logistics Committee members checked out tents from the Student Resource Center and assembled them in the hour before opening along with vendors, who set up on their arrival. Parking was arranged through the campus to block off the lot beforehand so that it would be empty for setup at the beginning of the market, and tables were reserved through facilities personnel to be left in the morning prior to the arrival of volunteers. (Rachel Ward, personal communications, March 14, 2013)

Market vendors were given parking passes to bring their vehicles into the lot for unloading and tailgate setup. Given the small size of the parking lot, it became necessary to guide the vendors in selecting spaces that were closer together to ensure enough space in a tighter cluster. In managing logistics, Blackley realized that a certain oval layout of the vendors was more inviting and had a tendency to draw in more people, and that vendors who were forced to set up further away detracted from this effect. One of the obstacles faced in logistics was handling staggered arrivals. When late vendors drove in they needed to be let through the

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barricade to set up, disturbing the growing tide of foot traffic. (David Blackley, personal communications, March 14, 2013)

Many other obstacles in the first season were part of a learning curve as the volunteers, leadership, and vendors gained experience with the unique venue. One example of this was finding a way to handle money and set up a bank account. Another was weather. Ward recalls, "The first season especially there seemed to be a lot of rain. I remember at least two markets that were pretty much pouring rain." (Rachel Ward, personal communications, March 14, 2013)

Due to campus parking policies, off-campus individuals did not have easy access to visit the market with a vehicle. However, the market was accessible to pedestrian traffic. Flyers were placed in a close neighborhood, which resulted in several families visiting the market. Possible further efforts to generate pedestrian traffic from the community could include advertisement at nearby business frequented by college students and the school located on the university campus.

### Vendor Participation and Insurance

The variety of products sold in the 2012 seasons included chili products, doughnuts and other baked goods, goat cheese, seasonal produce, sausage, eggs, pork, and beef. Market vendors were required to review the Rules & Regulations, sign a Participation Agreement, and pay a fee of five dollars per market day to reserve a space. (Ward, personal communications, March 14, 2013) When asked to describe their participation in the market, all vendors who participated in the interview responded positively concerning the atmosphere. Several vendors

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mentioned the volunteers, quality of the music, and the interactions with customers and other vendors. Some vendors cited lower sales compared to other markets, which they attributed to either the newness of the market and the need for greater awareness or the particular demographic of customers available on a college campus not being suitable for their product. (Vendor personal communications, March, 2013)

All farmers markets offer some obstacles and risks to potential vendors. “From the farmers’ perspective, marketing risks when selling in local markets include low sales volume, price competition from multiple sellers with the same product and local angle, rejection based on quality requirements, inability to meet specifications, inability to meet logistical requirements, and buyers backing out of contracts (LeRoux et al., 2009).” (Martinez, 2010) Those markets operating on a university campus encounter some of the same risks, and unique additional obstacles as well. The greatest obstacles listed by vendors interviewed were lack of parking for outside populations to attend the market, a poor reception to their product by the campus demographic, the struggle to bring sufficient products at the leanest parts of the season, and liability insurance requirements. (personal communications, March 2013)

Vendors at ETSU were required to meet the insurance requirements of the public university, which are more stringent than what is required by most off-campus opportunities for direct sales. Some vendors were unable to participate despite expressed interest in selling at the market due to lack of insurance, a stipulation not all markets require. Blackley discussed the market’s position on this

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as a phenomenon that will likely become more common. “I think you’re seeing more markets move towards mandatory insurance but we’re not there yet.” (David Blackley, personal communications, March 14, 2013) Market leadership sourced an insurance plan for vendors who wished to purchase one in order to participate. Some vendors willingly agreed to purchase the plan for the opportunities that would become available not just with the ETSU market, but with other markets and groceries as well, since most groceries require liability insurance. While comparatively affordable, the plan was still cost-prohibitive for other potential vendors, who opted not to sell at the campus market due to this requirement. Possible solutions for this issue are being researched and include fundraising efforts to pay for insurance and alternative insurance options, such as an umbrella policy into which vendors could contribute when the number of vendors supports this alternative.

The nature of a campus market targeting students offers some obstacles in potential sales for vendors. Students do not always have tools and space necessary for food storage or meal preparation, which prohibits them from purchasing some foods requiring additional steps. Value-added products and single-portion products had an appeal to students in these circumstances. Further assistance to vendors to understand these market obstacles could enhance vendor sales.

## Events

As a volunteer at the Spring 2012 market and as chair of the Events Committee during the Fall 2012 market, I assisted market leadership in procuring

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educational events and entertainment. This involved networking within the community and campus and searching online for possible partnerships. Individuals and groups were contacted through social media or email and invited to participate in the market by hosting a table with prepared information to share with students. The invitation also welcomed ideas for creative participation. Schedule conflicts arose from the midday, midweek market hours, which prevented some interested parties from participating. Solutions for this included planning participation in advance for a particular day rather than arranging participation for a larger portion of the season.

Entertainment for the spring market included live music, yoga from Manifest Collective, Bucky's Pantry, ETSU's Department of Sustainability, preserving demonstration from the Agricultural Extension. Entertainment for the fall market included live music, yoga booth from Shakti in the Mountains, JC Bike Party and Little City Bike Collective, Bucky's Pantry, One Acre Cafe, ETSU's Department of Sustainability, a table with demonstration bees and beekeeping gear from a representative of the Tri-Cities Beekeeping Organization and Bays Mountain, a table for the student organization ECO (Environmental Conservation Organization), and cooking demonstrations. Students from a campus music program provided the live music, which helped to provide a welcome atmosphere and expose the campus population to the music program's offerings. A market volunteer within the program enlisted musicians for this service on a volunteer basis. Efforts are underway to secure a sustainable method of enlisting future students from the program for this

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valuable service, as the availability of market recruiters from within the program may vary from year to year.

Typically, student volunteers from the Bluegrass, Old Time, and Country Music program at ETSU provided entertainment. Several vendors interviewed commented on the entertainment as being a major positive force in the market, creating a “pleasant” atmosphere. They saw this as more than just an added bonus to participation in the market, however. Elizabeth Malayter from JEM Farms says, “I do think that having entertainment, having activities, making it a more 360-degree kind of experience does draw in some of those faculty and staff and neighbors of the campus.” (personal communications, March 10, 2013) Cynthia Sharpe’s of Oak Moon similarly expressed a sense of the importance of having events every week to attract students. (Cynthia Sharpe, personal communications, March 11, 2013) Since the market customer base is largely comprised of individuals who regularly pass through the market en route to somewhere else, the events are an important element for drawing customers in to check out the vendors.

Most of audience constituted moving foot traffic, which made stationary entertainment and demonstrations harder to employ. A picnic table was added to encourage loitering and congregation. Due to the success of this addition, more tables are planned for addition. Obstacles in planning music arose from scheduling student musicians, whose class schedules sometimes conflicted with the market. This was overcome by enlisting a student within the music program for networking and scheduling other students. The market will continue to connect with the music

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department to implement sustainable program scheduling throughout student leadership transitions.

### Marketing and Advertising

The target audience for the campus farmers market is ETSU students and faculty. Advertisement for the market was restricted to campus in order to reach this audience. Students from the market organization posted in campus buildings and small signs were strategically placed on market day. Market leadership created a website, Twitter account, and Facebook page for the market. The organization submitted press releases through the university relations office and collected emails at public events and at the market for an email newsletter. Digital signs, campus desktop ads, the online campus calendar, and t-shirts are other forms of advertisement employed by the market in its first year.

### Stakeholders

It is necessary for the survival of a farmers market that many individuals with an interest or concern in the success of the farmers market be connected to its processes. This is true of municipal farmers markets, whose success depends on local volunteers, philanthropists, government officials, and networking groups to help advertise, deal with administrative tasks and logistics, and find creative solutions to overcome obstacles. These individuals would be stakeholders in the market's success by recognizing their interest and acting for the benefit of the

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market. At a campus market, this is especially important due to the transient nature of student involvement. Students are only tied to a university for a number of years before moving on, and other academic obligations may overwhelm certain times during a student's academic career. Therefore, it is imperative for a campus market to attract a wide network of invested persons to ensure sustainable progression of the market.

Finding stakeholders served as an important part of establishing the market in order to have advocates for the market and advisors for its organization. Most stakeholders were brought in during formative stages of market planning. Ward initially searched for interested support from within her own college, the College of Public Health. Part of the market's successful implementation came from finding members of the faculty and administration within the Public Health College to support and encourage her in the process. Many of the students initially involved in the farmers market organization also came from the College of Public Health, including leadership. The faculty sponsor, Dr. Deborah Slawson, is a professor in the College of Public Health. There is no agriculture school at ETSU to house the market. The College of Public Health has been involved in incorporating many elements of market into their school, including a graduate position. This position is a valuable enhancement to the market, because it helps to secure a dedicated individual to ensure the market's continued success. "Most established farmers' markets have hired individuals to oversee the organization, rules and regulations, and promotions for all growers. (Ragland and Tropp, 2009)." (Martinez, 2010) Ward also found other interested faculty and staff by researching online for individuals associated



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with the university who were interested in sustainability or local food. (personal communications, March 14, 2013)

In the fall semester of 2012, an advisory board was planned and implemented that incorporated campus administration, faculty and staff, and market vendors selected through association and outreach to give a diverse representation of backgrounds and perspectives to brainstorm, network, and give creative direction for the market and serve as stakeholders in the process. Blackley also described the advisory board as a means of continuous oversight between transitions between outgoing and incoming student leadership. Individuals serving on the advisory board would retain information pertaining to the markets processes to ensure a seamless transition. (personal communication, March 14, 2013)

## Analysis of Data

The ETSU Farmers Market interviews show concerted effort on the parts of both the leadership and the vendors. Students struggled with some logistics issues such as shoulder season produce sourcing and marketing issues of drawing large crowds, but most vendors showed enthusiasm for the level of exposure they were gaining by participating in the campus market, and several were hopeful about the potential increase in profit in future seasons, saying that the market's early stages were not indicative of how large it might grow in successive seasons. There seemed to be a correlation between vendors who were excited about the campus environment and vendors who were hopeful about the market's increased success. Additional vendors have opted to participate in the upcoming market, showing increased exposure of the market among vendors as a potentially profitable point of direct sales. The spring 2013 season will start with sixteen vendors; almost double the number from the previous season.

The market's greatest obstacles to implementation were administrative concerns and logistics, which required a dedicated group to address each concern and make sure all rules and regulations were followed. This market fits in with the local municipal farmers markets without conflicts and aids the availability of fresh local products in the area. The campus market has many obstacles to examine, such as lack of parking for community members or summer markets and the need for more exposure. Some of these obstacles can be successfully addressed by the student organization, where tasks can be delegated and carried out over time as volunteers and funding are available.

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Based on my interviews, the market survives and succeeds currently due to the collective efforts of students and the current enthusiasm of vendors. More research will need to be carried out to assess the market's overall success as an established and locally known market.

## CONCLUSION

This thesis shows a campus farmers market as an opportunity to help bring in local food, support local communities, and build sustainable campuses. There is growing room for a campus market presence from many different perspectives, from the pressure for universities to become more sustainable to the growing interest in the general population about local food and the overall rise in markets throughout the public sector. While the concept is still just beginning to take hold, ETSU's market is an example of the momentum that is building from the consumer, producer, and administration for a market presence. The research also shows processes by which the campus market was implemented as an example of how campus markets in general may be implemented.

## Recommendations for Future Research

This research is an undergraduate thesis meant to provide preliminary data on campus farmers markets to fill the gap of information currently available. It shows how a campus farmers market fits into the larger movement of sustainability and into the campus. However, it is limited in scope and cannot address many additional pressing questions about campus farmers markets

This research would support further qualitative research at a later date to assess the market's success rate over time and obstacles faced by an established campus market.

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Further research could also include broader survey data such as the number of campus markets nationwide, and a breakdown of how many of the markets nationwide were markets on private or public university or college campuses, the number of markets at colleges or universities with or without land grants or agricultural schools. This would be beneficial because the USDA, who makes available most of the statistical data concerning farmers markets, does not currently offer data specifically pertaining to campus farmers markets. This sort of data would also support further research to explore comparisons between differing types of markets and their success rates and obstacles. Such a study could include factors such as location, reception, vendor support, seasonal availability of goods, and how all those factors affect success rates to give an idea of plausibility of market success in a new setting.

The information from this research could also be used systematically with additional interviews of market leadership and vendors from other campus farmers markets to discover general processes of implementation and unique aspects of running a campus farmers market. Compiling this research would facilitate the creation of a campus farmers market creation manual or a supplement for an established municipal farmers market creation manual.

Further research into specifics of market operations could include a study of the potential viability of a summer market on campus. Most foot traffic occurs in the fall and spring semesters, so establishing a systematic way to decide whether a summer market could be profitable would be beneficial research. Additionally,

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similar research could be conducted concerning an online market to support the existing physical market.

Research that could be conducted with vendors could include finding ways of addressing the need to increase produce available during fall and spring shoulder seasons, such as providing seed or education and promotion of a particular crop. Similarly, research could address programs to work with vendors on ways to target the campus population and their unique needs to increase sales.

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## Appendix 2 - Interview Questions Used in Interviews with ETSU Farmers Market Vendors and Leadership

### Questions

#### Market Leadership

1. How did the idea for a farmers market generate?
2. What is the purpose of the market?
3. What steps were necessary to gain support for the idea?
4. What was the reception to the proposal at various stages?
5. Did you make presentations, write proposals, create any other form of media to support the proposal?
6. What factors were involved in the decision to start a student organization to support the proposal?
7. What role did the student organization play in the process?
8. Describe the process of securing approval.
9. What were the stages of implementing the market before it launched?
10. How was the list of vendors compiled?
11. How many vendors were contacted, and how many chose to sell at the market?
12. What did you learn about the process of starting a market on campus?
13. How did you attempt to find stakeholders who would invest in the project?
14. What obstacles did you encounter in finding stakeholders?
15. How was the list of advisory board members compiled, and how were they contacted?
16. How many chose to participate in the advisory board?
17. What was the purpose of the advisory board?
18. Describe the process of selecting a location for the market.
19. Describe the process of selecting the day, time, and duration of the market.
20. What marketing tools were used to generate public interest and awareness of the market?
21. What were the daily logistical concerns of the market?
22. How many volunteer hours were required per market day?
23. What obstacles did the market face during its first season?
24. Did spring 2012 vendors return in fall 2012; why or why not?
25. What are your considerations for improvement of the market?
26. How did you determine the composition of the vendors at the market?
27. How did you recruit volunteers for the market?

#### Vendors

1. How were you contacted to participate in the market?
2. What factors affected your decision to participate in the market?

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3. What factors affected your decision to participate in the advisory board, if applicable?
4. Describe the experience of selling at the ETSU farmers market.
5. Does selling at a campus market differ from selling at a community market? If so, how?
6. Was the volume of sales comparable to other markets?
7. Who did you perceive that the shoppers were?
8. What obstacles, if any, were presented by participating in a campus market?
9. What benefits, if any, do you perceive in participating in a campus market?
10. What are your considerations for improvement of the market?

## Appendix 3 – Informed Consent Form for Interviews with ETSU Farmers Market Vendors and Leadership

### **Informed Consent Form**

The name of this study is “Examination of the Founding of a Farmers Market on a University Campus.”

The purpose of this research is to document the processes and considerations of implementing, maintaining, and participating in a campus farmers market. If you decide to take part in this study, you will be interviewed by the principle investigator, Jennifer Grant. The interview will take about one hour to complete. You will be asked questions about your participation in the farmers market at East Tennessee State University. The interview will be recorded with a laptop recording program.

The possible benefit of your participation is that you will help to expand the community awareness of the ETSU campus farmers market, and general awareness of processes involved with establishing a campus farmers market. There are no known risks involved with this project, other than the minimal stress of talking for about an hour. A written response to the interview may be submitted in place of an oral response if necessary. The only alternative to this interview is not to take part in the study. The questions are included on the last page if you’d like to look over them.

The audio recording and data from your interview will be submitted to the thesis director, Dr. Tess Lloyd, deposited in the keeping of the Honors College, East Tennessee State University, where they will remain in perpetuity as part of the historical record. The archived data may be used for research, presentations, publication, instruction, museum exhibits, web sites, and other related purposes. The East Tennessee State University Institutional Review Board (ETSU IRB) and the Department of Health and Human Services have access to the records.

Participation in this research project is voluntary. You may refuse to participate. You can quit at any time. If you refuse to participate or stop participating, you will not lose any benefits or treatments to which you are otherwise entitled.

If you have any questions, concerns, or problems relating to this study, you may contact any of these people on the study staff: Jennifer Grant, Principal Investigator of this study (423-557-9344) Dr. Tess Lloyd of ETSU’s Department of Appalachian Studies (423-439-6677); or Dr. Roberta Herrin, Chair of ETSU’s Department of Appalachian Studies (423-439-7997); If you have any questions or concerns about the research and want to talk to someone independent of the research team or you can’t reach the study staff, you may call an IRB Coordinator at 423-439-6055 or 423-

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439-6002. You may call the Chairman of the Institutional Review Board at 423-439-6054 for any questions you may have about your rights as a research subject.

After reading this statement, you need to sign below. You will keep one copy of the form and the other will be kept with the study materials:

I agree to be interviewed, and I understand that the audio recording and data from my interview will be deposited in the keeping of the Honors College at East Tennessee State University and that the ETSU IRB and the Department of Health and Human Services have access to the records.

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signature

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date

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optional contact information or website

## Appendix 4 – Interview of Market Leadership by Jennifer Grant, Transcriptions

### Market Leadership

#### 1. How did the idea for a farmers market generate?

- a. **David** - It was Rachel's idea. I think she was always interested in farmers markets and there were a few other people around here who were also interested in those and I think her main driver for starting one was not so much the healthy food side of things but the community building side of things. She was interested in starting something here on campus that could serve as a focal point for food and for healthy food and for vendors to come in and sell their products but then also for educational and community building activities.
- b. **Rachel** - It's something that we thought of in the fall of 2011 and I was looking for something to eat on campus and wanted some more diversity in the options, maybe some more vegetarian food or healthy sandwiches or local food, and the options were fairly limited to fast food and I'd recently heard about a friend of mine whose cousin started a farmers market at a public university and I thought that would be kind of a neat thing to try to do here.

#### 2. What is the purpose of the market?

- a. **David** - I think we can say after two seasons that it's kind of a multi-facet purpose. The community-building aspect is still there. Rachel and other leaders do a good job of trying to incorporate cooking demonstrations, gardening demonstrations, bringing in people from the community and the surrounding region that can talk about things like organizing around environmental issues and things like yoga and beekeeping. We've had a lot of people come and talk about their areas of expertise, so that's one purpose is to serve as a home base for those sorts of community activities but then also I think it's a great avenue for students, faculty, and staff to purchase not only healthful but also locally grown or produced foods which in turn supports the third purpose which is creating a venue for local artisans or local growers to come and sell their products locally so they don't have to seek out contracts with stores or so that they don't have to drive 100 miles to a bigger city to sell their products.
- b. **Rachel** - The purpose is to expose the campus to local agriculture and to essentially just create a business opportunity for local farmers and food producers to sell their food and products to campus.

#### 3. What steps were necessary to gain support for the idea?

- a. **David** - It was complicated without a list in front of me I would probably butcher it and not remember all the steps, but after conceptualization which was primarily carried out by Rachel, she did

a lot of lit review on the viability of a farmers market in this type of setting and ultimately discovered that there aren't many good examples for this so she was in a sense starting from scratch but also had a pretty diverse set of inspirations and examples to base her ideas on and innovate from, but once she come up with what she wanted to do, then the primary players that were involved were representatives from Aramark, the University Council, administrators within the division of the university that's responsible for our college, the dean of the college, and then also administrators who had to do with, whose responsibilities were primarily facilities. Like I said, I'm not going to try to recreate the steps, I'm sure Rachel will be able to touch on those better in her side of the interview, but it was complicated and we had to work our way up the entire administrative ladder to ultimately get approval for it.

- b. Rachel** - The first thing I had to do was meet with the campus, several members of the campus administration like the vice president for finances, the vice president for the allied health center, the director of the student center just to get their approval to start planning the market, so that was a big step. I had to identify another farmers market in the state of Tennessee at a public university so that they were comfortable with the fact that there's precedent for this. I had to...those were the two main hurdles. And once I kind of laid out rules and regulations and a general idea of how the market would be structured, I submitted that to them and they gave their final proposal. Excuse me, approval. And then from there, started the process of founding a student organization and getting more buy-in from members from across campus, so.

#### **4. What was the reception to the proposal at various stages?**

- a. David** - Simply put I would say the reception early was not very open, not very friendly to the idea, some of the, I guess you would call them mid-level administrators did not seem too excited about it, but I think this is where Rachel did a good job of circumventing that and going straight to the top directly and also with the support of our dean, Dr. Wykoff, who was very supportive of the idea and she basically got buy-in from the administrators, the top level people, and they told their underlings this is how we're going to do it and things worked very smoothly after that.
- b. Rachel** - Some of this is secondhand information. One of our faculty advisors told me that when the idea started to circulate at the beginning she was told to stay away from me, so I think initially people were either not supportive or very cautious in their approach to the market because they didn't think it would stick. So essentially I was just given a list of questions and reasons why the market should not be here, and I basically had to work through those and justify why we should have a market. So the more I did that and the more I pulled

things together I think the more receptive the various members of the administration were. All along I had a couple of faculty members in my own program who were very supportive and kept giving me positive feedback, so.

**5. Did you make presentations, write proposals, create any other form of media to support the proposal?**

a. **David** - We did presentations of varying levels of formality to the administrators. I do remember going to one where we were in there with Dr. Bishop, Dr. Collins, I'm blanking on the University Council's name, and at least one other person where we had to pitch the idea, and my impression of it was that that was the yes or no final vote. They all seemed on board but they wanted to see that we could pitch a coherent idea and we did a good job with that presentation, Dr. Bishop was clearly on board with it and she actually gave us some ideas in that meeting for ways to run the market better. For example, she's the one who suggested the parking lot that we currently use. The plan that we were going on before that was to do this really complicated shuttling system and have the market in a part of campus where there are no cars and in hindsight that would have made operating the market at best a nightmare and at worst impossible. So that was I guess the most formal of the presentations and then all through the chain we did have to create proposals for the attorney. Attorneys needed to approve things related to liability, needed to guarantee that each of our vendors would have liability coverage for their products. And then for media, the media didn't really kick in until our proposal was approved, so I wouldn't really say that there was much involved with the proposal side of things.

b. **Rachel** - Yeah, so the first step was to write a proposal. And I did this in the fall and submitted it to a couple of members of the administration. They had, they noticed a few gaps in my proposal and suggested that I go back and address those. So I wrote another proposal and then presented this to even more members of the administration and they were happy with that, they just had a few edits but they approved it at that point. I didn't make really any formal presentations or create any other sort of media other than just having a proposal and a draft of rules and regulations to look over so that they knew we had a general idea of how this would operate.

**6. What factors were involved in the decision to start a student organization to support the proposal?**

a. **David** - We wanted this to be something that didn't rely on university streams of money. And then we also wanted it to be something that could sustain itself beyond our time here. I'm in my last year here, Rachel's got two more years. Ashley Cavender, who's also involved, is a sophomore, so we're excited about her ability to be involved beyond



our time here, and then people like you, and others who've helped with different tasks will also probably be gone, or at least be involved at a diminished capacity as we move on to other professional and academic pursuits so we wanted it to be a student organization so that it was more likely to survive after us. That clearly needs oversight from faculty and we do have an advisory committee, but we didn't want it to be something that relied on people we didn't, to be honest, trust, to sustain our level of motivation to keep it going.

- b. **Rachel** - This was on conversations with the legal counsel of the university. Some questions about liability were raised, and some of the people who were in the conversation about faculty advisors were really concerned about whether or not a faculty member would be liable in the event of a lawsuit or litigation. So it was decided that a student organization would add another layer of protection and it would also give the market a little more autonomy so that a specific faculty member or department couldn't ultimately step in and decide its course. we wanted it to be more student run than department run.

**7. What role did the student organization play in the process?**

- a. **David** - We did do some meetings early on to test the waters on how many students would be interested in joining the leadership team. A lot of the people that are involved to this day were at those early meetings. We've lost a few people for various reasons but the organization - she wanted to have a clearly defined and reasonably committed group of people early on to show that this was a student level project, this was something that emerged from the student body and not from the faculty or staff side, so more or less to pitch her ideas she wanted to make it clear that there was a lot of student buy-in for this early.
- b. **Rachel** - So the student organization was established after the market was approved and that was really helpful for recruiting volunteers and you know getting a bank account set up and getting our name around campus, so I feel like being able to operate as a student organization has given us a lot of advantages that we might not have otherwise.

**8. Describe the process of securing approval.**

- a. **David** - I don't know that I have anything to add to what I said earlier about that.
- b. **Rachel** - So, I guess I would say this was essentially a process that involved four separate meetings and planning in between those meetings. So the first step was to meet with, the first step I took was to meet with the liaison between the university and Aramark because I assumed that that would be the biggest obstacle that we would need to address. From there, I was given a list of questions and reasons why the market might not be able to exist and I addressed those and set up

another meeting with the student services president, I believe is his title, and the director of the student organization resource center, and they gave me more questions to address at that meeting. The third meeting I came with a proposal and a draft of rules and regulations and some questions about legal issues. I was able to address those and make more progress refining the rules and developing a game plan, determining dates for the market and had a fourth and final meeting where everything was approved. So after that I had a solid proposal for how the market would operate. I had a pretty good idea of what the rules would look like, and I knew what the dates for the market would be. And this approval came in January 2012. So, yeah, basically just several iterations of a proposal document and a lot of planning and just gathering information in between those meetings.

**9. What were the stages of implementing the market before it launched?**

a. **David** - Let's see, I'm looking down the list of questions, I may address some of the other questions in this, but after approval the first step was to recruit vendors. At the same time, of course, we were trying to figure out days when we could have it. And I also neglected to mention earlier, part of the process of planning this also included talking with representatives from other local markets. We went to some of the Johnson City farmers market meetings and met with them, met with their leadership to assure them that we weren't trying to duplicate their efforts, we purposely chose different days and times and locations so that this market would add to the community rather than create redundancies. But, after we were approved, Rachel and I basically split up the list she did most of the calls but both of us called vendors, cold calls sometimes, within the region so southwest Virginia, northeast Tennessee, and western North Carolina. It was difficult. We made a lot of calls and ended up with somewhere between 8 and 12 seriously interested vendors who ultimately followed through. We had some other people that interested who didn't have insurance. That was another deal breaker for us. I think you're seeing more markets move towards mandatory insurance but we're not there yet. So once we'd done that, once we'd recruited the vendors, if I'm remembering that correctly, we got around to promoting. That was where some of the media came in. I wasn't very involved with that, but I know they got Twitter and Facebook and the university public radio station and the banner ads that run across the home screen on university computers. They got all those things involved in promoting it. I was more involved with organizing the student leadership's management tasks for Day Of operations. Billy Brooks was very involved with that too, in fact more so than I was in the early stages. We had to coordinate with university parking or university transportation or whatever it's called on parking permits

and reserving the lots and I guess logistically that was about it other than just making it happen day of.

- b. Rachel** - The first stage was just establishing a student organization, and then from there recruiting mostly my friends, people who I knew would be interested to be the initial set of volunteers. We developed three committees to manage some of the different operations of the market and set out to start advertising it, getting the word out with t shirt sales and attending as many little campus festivals and functions as we could to promote the market. So most of our energy initially was on marketing and also a huge portion of my time was devoted to recruiting vendors, which involved visiting farmers markets, calling vendors, emailing vendors, so all those things had to go in before we could launch it in April of 2012.

**10. How was the list of vendors compiled?**

- a. David** - We looked at the guides, the local food guides from around the region from around this three-state region and made cold calls, some of the people that we knew already we asked them if they knew anybody else that we could call but it was really as simple as that.
- b. Rachel** - The first thing I did was look at the local food guides, because I didn't, I knew I wouldn't need to completely reinvent the wheel, because the region has some really good organizations that have comprehensive listings of local farmers and producers, so I looked at those, emailed people, contacted people that I thought, that met our 100 mile radius criteria and looked like they'd be good fits for the campus. I also just looked on different farmers markets websites across the region and contacted vendors by phone or email and then visited vendors and some of them, some people just emailed me. I guess they'd heard about us word of mouth so I basically just added, compiled all of those into an email list and a phone list and started calling and emailing until the market began.

**11. How many vendors were contacted, and how many chose to sell at the market?**

- a. David** - I don't remember how many were contacted. I would say dozens, via phone and maybe a couple of personal visits and then also emails. A lot of them just didn't even respond in the first place, but I think 8-10 ultimately chose to sell at the market.
- b. Rachel** - I think by phone or email, I would say about 46 were contacted, and then an additional ten or fifteen in person, so around – between 55 and 60 and then of those, initially eight. Seven physically sold at the market. There was one woman who sold pasta through another vendor, I guess is how it kind of worked out. It was sort of a wholesale situation. So, 7 or 8.

**12. What did you learn about the process of starting a market on campus?**

- a. David** - Starting a market on campus has additional hurdles that you wouldn't expect to encounter starting one in a municipality on public land somewhere. Foremost was the difficulty with the insurance. I completely understand the university's rationale for requiring liability, but that made it very difficult for us to recruit vendors because that's not the norm in a lot of our regional farmers markets. I think vendors are discovering now that you can get reasonably priced coverage and that opens up a lot more marketing opportunities for them, they can also sell at, you know places like an Earth Fare or a Whole Foods, in addition to markets like ours that require coverage. And then just also learned about how difficult it can be to organize something on a crowded, more or less urban campus like this, like parking is a huge problem. If we didn't have this lot reserved with the ability of the vendors to sell out of the back of their cars I don't know how we would make it work. We'd have to come up with some sort of shuttle system to get them to the lot so there are some extra hurdles but I think it's worth it the benefits that you get here are a captive audience of thousands of people that walk by every day, so. And the ability to develop more of these, we'll call them community building activities that would probably be more difficult to do at a JC farmers market or an Abingdon farmers market or an Asheville farmers market because here we've got in-house artists and musicians that can basically walk out of their office or out of their classroom and help out with the market and play some music and go back in.
- b. Rachel** - I mean it was definitely difficult at points. I think that it required a whole lot of research and I think that the main thing it required was persistence. It wasn't as complicated as I thought it might be, but it definitely was something that I had to keep on the front burner for a lot of different people in order to make it happen. So I was you know, trying to juggle you know, getting, generating interest in students and different faculty members and getting the administration's buy-in so I just had a lot of different pokes in the fire I guess at the same time. I think that the biggest surprise to me came the night before the first market when I realized that I actually had to run it the next day because I had spent so much time just developing it and getting approval that I'd just kind of forgotten about actually operating it. But on the whole its, yeah, I've learned a lot of things. I don't know if I answered that question.

**13. How did you attempt to find stakeholders who would invest in the project?**

- a. David** - I think most of that was done in the formative stages. We identified people in the community who were supportive of the idea and then made sure they were cc'd on emails that we sent to other people from whom we were seeking approval. That proved to be helpful. It always, it doesn't hurt to have a dean or a vice president cc'd on an email to somebody that you're asking to do something. Let's

just say that it speeds up the response rates, usually. So I would say that most of the stakeholders that, at least the high-level stakeholders that we needed to make this happen were recruited early, and they've been vital to our success and they continue to be. And then, we've had more of a passive stakeholder seeking process since then, which is finding more and more ways to connect with community leaders and get them to help us promote the market.

- b. **Rachel** - I knew that, I knew from conversations in my college that there were students and faculty who were interested, and at that point I didn't know many people outside of my department, but there had been a local food conference around the same time that I was looking at the market idea and so I contacted some of the faculty members that were involved in that. I kind of just did some Google searching and followed up on some leads of faculty members who were interested in local food research or sustainability, and I was able to find a couple of people that I thought would want to be involved that way and then some people were, I was just put in contact with as I started conversations about the market so it was kind of the same way that I found the vendors I took a lot of different approaches.

**14. What obstacles did you encounter in finding stakeholders?**

- a. **David** - People on university campuses are really busy. It's really easy for people to express support for something but then when you ask them to follow up on that support through actions you find that often times they kind of disappear. That hasn't been the case with everybody and we've had some people really go above and beyond with regards to effort and supporting our efforts but it's difficult to find people who are truly committed to supporting and then following up on their support for the market, but I think it's a good weeding out process because once you, once the rubber hits the road with the market you want to have people in your trench that are willing to show up early and stay late and make that extra phone call so, I see it as a good attrition process.
- b. **Rachel** - I think the main thing was disbelief. A lot of people did not think that this would actually happen and they didn't really want to, they didn't really want to be involved in a project that was going to fail. That was probably the main thing.

**15. How was the list of advisory board members compiled, and how were they contacted?**

- a. **David** - I think Rachel could speak to that better. She did all the recruitment for the advisory board, and I think did a great job finding a good cross-section of our university.
- b. **Rachel** - This was based kind of in a similar fashion, people who have an expressed interest in local food or sustainability. They were invited. People who were involved in different programs that are

relevant to the market like bluegrass and old time music studies. Different market leaders notified me of professors they'd had that they thought would be good fits and that would be people of influence on campus so kind of a combination of faculty members that have different strengths to bring to the market in addition to a couple of very active farmers that participate in our market. And I contacted these people by email.

**16. How many chose to participate in the advisory board?**

- a. **David** - I think most did. Most agreed. I know there were a couple who either said they could not participate right off the bat or who said they could participate and then didn't show up to the meeting, so I don't know if those people who didn't show up to our meeting last semester are planning on coming to the next one, but I would say that based on what I've heard from our manager, nearly all of them that were contacted agreed.
- b. **Rachel** - Skipped

**17. What was the purpose of the advisory board?**

- a. **David** - In the short term, the purpose was to have a sounding board for our ideas. I mean, these are all experienced professors and administrators and staff members from campus, and some of them were actually vendors too. We had some experienced vendors on the advisory committee and although a lot of them didn't have much experience with conceptualizing or running a farmers market, they're just smart people who have good ideas and it's never a bad thing to have those type of people on your side so, the one meeting we've had with them so far was really constructive, we had some great ideas come from some unexpected sources, and then longer term I think the purpose of the advisory board is to serve as a bridge between the more transient student leadership, you know, by virtue of being students that means we're only going to be here for if you're a grad student maybe two or three years or if you're undergrad maybe three or four years of involvement but this advisory committee with the exception of the ones that retire or move on, they're more or less going to be a fixture so once they've got some experience with this first leadership team that we've got now that's going to be gone in the next couple of years, they'll be able to act as a steady hand for the new wave of leaders that's coming in that may need to have some help with some of the more difficult questions that are going to arise as we grow.
- b. **Rachel** - The purpose was to develop a committee of people of influence on campus that have a vested interest in the farmers market so that as the market leadership transitions, as people graduate, there's a group of people that are going to remain here, and that understand our purpose, and what we've been working on, what some of our challenges are so that they can provide support to students that

come on to leadership roles in the future. They are also able to push through some different hurdles that we might not be able to as students and to give creative direction that we might not be aware of, and so far that's worked out pretty well.

**18. Describe the process of selecting a location for the market.**

a. **David** –[Skipped]

b. **Rachel** - I think that we definitely so I did this in with the help of a couple of friends who are really interested in the market and we knew that the market needed to be somewhere in a central area of campus where there would be a lot of pedestrian movement so that was our main criteria so much to the point that if we weren't allowed a central area on campus we weren't even going to try to do the market because we knew it would fail. We assumed it would fail. So we had a few different ideas and we took them to one of the administrative meetings I told you about and we shared them with the administration and they actually suggested the location that we're using now which we didn't even consider a possibility. And that's how we chose.

**19. Describe the process of selecting the day, time, and duration of the market.**

a. **David** - Okay. For day, we wanted to pick a day that the local market was not going on. I think the local market, is it a Wednesday/Saturday market here? (me - yes) Yeah, so we picked, we wanted to pick a Tuesday or a Thursday, maybe a Monday, we X-ed Friday right off the bat because foot traffic on campus is low on Friday but so we picked days basically to not conflict with the local markets because we promised them we'd do that. We picked times to try to maximize our foot traffic so we wanted to do something, you know, mid-morning or early afternoon so that we'd catch a lot of students coming and going from classes, coming and going from lunch in the student center, and coming and going from the library, and for duration, I don't know, we just assumed that having a farmers market for three or four hours would be good. We didn't want to have it be too short because that would waste the time that some of our vendors take to get here. Some of our vendors live pretty deep up in the mountains and it takes them an hour or so to get here and we didn't want them to have to drive an hour here, an hour back for only an hour or two of selling so we figured that three or four hours was about the sweet spot for duration.

b. **Rachel** - At the time, selfishly, part of the process was choosing a time when I wasn't in class. We also didn't want the day to conflict with the local, the Johnson City farmers market. We wanted the time, and we wanted it to be in the middle of the week so we knew we didn't want a Monday or a Friday market because a lot of students are gone over the weekend and we assumed that they probably would have gone to the

grocery or another farmers market over the weekend so they might not need more food on Monday so I mean we were just kind of guessing a little bit so we chose a Thursday. The time we chose because we wanted to capture people in the morning around breakfast time and we wanted to capture people around lunch time we sort of tried to model it after other farmers markets and the same goes for the duration we didn't want to be too short but we didn't want it to be so long that our student volunteers would be tied up for, you know, seven or eight hours.

**20. What marketing tools were used to generate public interest and awareness of the market?**

- a. **David** - I'll probably defer that one mostly too, but I think emails, we had a listserv, twitter, Facebook, public radio station, we did a couple interviews with community forum that were broadcast regionally, the banner on the computers, and then some public, I guess public relations type messages that the university releases. Brad Lifford, I think is his name, helped us with that. And, I'm probably missing some, I'm not too savvy with the social media.
- b. **Rachel** - We did, we kind of attacked this at several angles. We used some of the free campus resources like desktop screensavers and the electronic marquees on campus, we promoted it on the ETSU events calendar, we submitted a press release through the university relations office, we did an interview on WETS public radio, we put flyers around campus, and then we started getting email signups for our campus newsletter at the Wellapalooza festival the day before the market, so.

**21. What were the daily logistical concerns of the market?**

- a. **David** - One issue that we continue to run up against is we're in a tight space where the market is so ideally all of our vendors could be there before or right when the market is supposed to start so that we don't have people set up their tents and start selling and then have a vendor show up fifteen or twenty minutes late and disrupt some of the foot traffic that's already started to develop, and we also have barriers put up to keep cars from driving through the lot and we have to go and move those barriers for every one of the late vendor arrivals, so that, from my end of things, you know, running logistics, that's one of the major concerns, another one is creating, I guess you would call it aesthetically pleasing layout of the market, we've found that creating kind of an oblong circle, more of an oval of vendors and enclosing them creates a space that is more welcoming for foot traffic, so helping the vendors choose their spots as they get there and fill in the gaps as opposed to, you know, having one person way out there in Siberia seems to help create an environment that makes it more likely that someone walking by who's on the fence is going to stop by and



check out some of the products. And then, really we've had great help from our volunteers, so setup and breakdown has not been a problem, the people in the, I think it's called the SORC, the student office, have been great with getting us tables and chairs on time. The facilities people have been amazing with leaving out the tables that we need, they do it no questions asked, we just put it on the calendar and they leave out the tables we need and pick them up afterwards, so I wouldn't say logistics runs itself, but it's as close to that as it can be at this point.

- b. **Rachel** - The main thing is just parking, you know, getting the vendors parked, making sure that the parking lot was clear in the morning which sometimes was a challenge when people ignored the barriers that were blocking the market site. You know, making sure there was enough space. The first season especially there seemed to be a lot of rain. I remember at least two markets that were pretty much pouring rain, that was a hurdle. Vendors showing up late, collecting money, just little things like that that need to be done.

**22. How many volunteer hours were required per market day?**

- a. **David** - That's a good question. I don't know exactly but I would guess, let's see, I would guess anywhere between 20 and 30 person hours, but I'm sure we could look that up, we kept a record of that from last year.
- b. **Rachel** - I'm going to have to guess on this one. I think we probably had six volunteers contributing between thirty minutes to two hours so I would say probably we probably had about twelve hours on average of volunteer time and some of that was more active participation than others in terms of you know there were times where people just kind of wanted to be there and they just hung out which is what we want so that's good.

**23. What obstacles did the market face during its first season?**

- a. **David** - Variety of products. We have to operate on an academic schedule here, which oftentimes means we have an open market when there aren't many good, there aren't many types of produce being grown during April and May and then during October and November. I mean, you can get some good greens and things like that, but a lot of the peak summer products are just not going to be there at our market so we've struggled to find vendors who can bring those few types of shoulder season produce items and sell them, and they've been very successful when they're able to do that, people that have brought asparagus and greens and things along those lines that can grow in cooler temperatures have been very successful. So recruiting vendors that have the capacity to do that consistently has been a challenge. I think consistency of vendor attendance has been a challenge. By and large they did a great job but we need to be better.

We need to be better and the vendors need to be better about confirming who's going to be there week in and week out. And then, just figuring out ways to get those people who haven't yet stopped in to check out our products, figuring out ways to get them to stop. Even if they don't buy anything it's a mini success if we can get them to stop and become interested in either the products that are being sold or the activities that we're promoting. These are all things we're looking to improve on in our second year.

- b. **Rachel** - One thing, we didn't really have a reference point for how busy the market should be, so the leaders it seemed were constantly agonizing over whether or not we had enough people there and constantly trying to figure out new strategies to get more students and faculty. We still had naysayers well into the first season, we had rain, we had vendors that didn't show up. **[continued on another track]** again, we, so weather, so it was raining a lot, we didn't really have a reference point for how many students should be walking through every, in a given day, volunteers (**vendors**) not showing up was a problem, and there were some naysayers in the first season, so those are the main things, yeah.

**24. Did spring 2012 vendors return in fall 2012; why or why not?**

- a. **David** - Mostly they did. I think they returned because they found that they sold their products. The ones who brought good products sold out nearly every market, and that's really the most important thing. They can have the best time in the world but if they're not selling, as a business person, that really removes a lot of the incentive to return. So I think they've found that we've got a well-run market, especially for a young one, we're committed, we have a good venue for them to sell their products, and I think we had nearly 100% return after the first season so I think that speaks for itself.
- b. **Rachel** - Most of them did. I think just one didn't and they didn't because they already had a lot of markets, this was their reason that they told me, they're already participating in a lot of markets and they couldn't really keep up with the production demands, and I don't know that our market was the most profitable for them.

**25. What are your considerations for improvement of the market?**

- a. **David** - I think I'll say diversity of products, I'll go back to that. We are always recruiting more people who can bring good produce, and meat and eggs too. We've had some very successful bakers and we hope they can stay with us, but I don't know if we need any more of that right now. Also looking for value-added products. We've found that to be the most successful seller – things that people can take and eat whether it's a snack or whether it's a meal in a bag. As long as it's produced by our vendors and has a reasonable local component to it, then we support that. I mean, we're not so concerned with keeping

everything local and only produce that we don't, that we're not willing to consider bringing people in who can create foot traffic. I think it's important to build something here that's going to create and maintain its own momentum and we've taken a more pragmatic approach to things in the second year.

- b. **Rachel** - Gosh, I have a lot. I think, you know, getting better signage will be an important thing it's still not really something that a lot of people are aware exists on campus, so figuring out a way to make it more of a campus mainstay. Recruiting more students to be really active in leadership, growing, you know always growing the market in the right ways in terms of vendor mix will be a consideration. Really I would like the market to be a dynamic force and just addressing certain sustainability issues that I think are important, so I think figuring out the balance between being a typical farmers market and also being an educational and kind of advocacy outlet for students are things that I would like to work on. Definitely adding more student groups and you know making more of a, an outlet for students in the arts and, you know, theater and music to be able to come and you know, perform in the market would be a big area where we can improve.

**26. How did you determine the composition of the vendors at the market?**

- a. **David** - We have a vote. We look at the list of people who are interested. They contact us either directly through Rachel's email or through our market email, and we look at them and if they fit the mission, which is locally sourced things, and they fit our radius requirement, then we'll usually consider them. We've had to, we've not invited a few people either because of their product or because of their lack of insurance, but anybody who's serious about selling a good product that fits our criteria, we're welcome to having them here.
- b. **Rachel** - In the first season we basically just took anyone who wanted to come because we didn't really have room to be picky. We were kind of begging people to come and the second season looked at different model farmers markets like the Seattle farmers market and Oregon. Oregon does a really good job of developing guidelines and farmers market research. so We looked at those different groups and kind of proposed some different vendor mix goals and voted on them as a leadership team and that's how we determined essentially what we wanted the vendor mix to look like, so.

**27. How did you recruit volunteers for the market?**

- a. **David** -I guess kind of like a snowballing friend network approach. We asked people we knew first, and that we thought might be interested in helping, and they've been great with filling some of the leadership

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roles, and then we also just asked them to ask people they knew, and we sent out emails and, you know the first few markets, people that would stop by our booth, we would say, hey, you know, are you interested? First of all we tried to sell them a t-shirt. That was our main pitch. But then we would ask them if they were interested in helping out in any way, whether it's with social media or logistics or promotion. We set people on all sorts of tasks. I mean, I think a couple of times we had some of our volunteers walk around campus with flyers and stop at the bus stops and hand them out. Some of them actually enjoyed that. I don't think I would. But, we tried a lot of avenues for vendor (volunteer) recruitment, and I'd say we've got as many as we need right now, but we're always open to getting more because I think more vendors (volunteers) will then be able to be dispatched to different types of promotion, things that fit their interests and their skillset and it can never hurt to have people who are committed to this idea on board with us. We're a big tent.

- b. **Rachel** - So I recruited among my peers, put things on Facebook. The Honors College was a huge source of recruitment. Basically any time I had a chance to talk to a student group or faculty member I asked them to spread the word.

## Appendix 5– Interview of Vendors by Jennifer Grant, Transcriptions

### Vendors

1. **How were you contacted to participate in the market?**
  - a. **Chapo's Chiles** - You called me by phone this week.
  - b. **JEM Farm - Elizabeth**: By email.
  - c. **Mi Tierra** - We have a booth at the Johnson City market and someone came through there – I think it was Rachel but I'm not 100% sure, but came through there asking if we would be interested in participating in the fall market. We were there in the summer in Johnson City, and so.
  - d. **Oak Moon** - I was contacted by Rachel Ward, and I knew Rachel previously from another market that her mother participated in I had met her at that market. She'd come with her mom one time, so I already knew her that way and she got in touch with me. I think she may have called first, but via email for sure.
  - e. **Rural Resources** - I was contacted by Rachel Ward, and she asked if I'd be interested in being a vendor there.
  - f. **Crazy Cupcakes** - We do the Jonesborough Farmers Market, and so I think they sent out like a mass email and then it got forwarded to us.
  
2. **What factors affected your decision to participate in the market?**
  - a. **Chapo's Chiles** - Well, more exposure, that's always good, also a different type of clientele than I'm used to seeing in markets that I suspected, and I'm kind of curious just to see where it would go.
  - b. **JEM Farm - Elizabeth**: The dates did not conflict with anything we'd already committed to. **John**: And we wanted to increase our exposure in that part of the state.
  - c. **Mi Tierra** - We're always kind of looking for different opportunities to expand our exposure, and this was just another opportunity to do that.
  - d. **Oak Moon** - Well, I did think it over very carefully. For one, I just like the idea of starting a market at a place of education. You know, I like the demographic. The young folks, and I felt like, this is going to make it sound like, oh, you know, pretty goody-goody but it's not that kind of crap. I figured they would like little balls of goat cheese, okay, but I also thought that people need to become acquainted with their food and what better place than when they're young and in school, and, so that was part of it. And hey, wanted to make some money. Money usually is our biggest incentive.
  - e. **Rural Resources** – I think one thing that affected my decision just the kind of the philosophy of this market seemed to cater specifically towards local growers. And I guess the fact that I grow produce in more natural methods seemed appealing as well for this market. And then the other end of it was actually kind of just the fact we're a non-profit organization and this past season I was trying to do my best not

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to compete with local vendors that were already in established markets here.

- f. **Crazy Cupcakes** - It's kind of a no-brainer. We had been trying to get things going over at ETSU with a bunch of students for a while, so we figured it would be a good opportunity to be on campus.

### 3. What factors affected your decision to participate in the advisory board?

- a. **Chapo's Chiles** - Well, actually I was asked to and I didn't know much about it, and we've only had one meeting that I've been on so we haven't had a lot of experience yet with that but my feeling is it would be nice to know from the people who are doing it, to get our input into some of the decisions that are going to be made.
- b. **JEM Farm** - Elizabeth: Rachel asked me really nicely
- c. **Mi Tierra** -N/A
- d. **Oak Moon** - N/A
- e. **Rural Resources** -N/A
- f. **Crazy Cupcakes** - N/A

### 4. Describe the experience of selling at the ETSU farmers market.

- a. **Chapo's Chiles** - Sure. Well, we only did it last year, the two, well might as well call them the two semesters, before summer and after summer. It's been a great experience, I'm looking forward to doing it again this year. I've noticed a lot of market differences between other farmers markets that I've been at including Jonesborough's. I've done Greeneville's one year and I've done Abingdon's one year and it's obviously a different kind of clientele. It's two different kinds of clientele. I'm seeing the students and I'm seeing faculty and there's a difference between them and there's a difference between them and people who come to other farmers markets. So yeah, that's always been interesting. It's easy to set up. It really is. That's a definite advantage. I do wish they'd be open during the summer because that's when most of the produce is out so I understand that, but the experience has been a real good one, a lot of help from the volunteers. I suspect there's going to come a point where that venue's not going to suffice and we're going to have more vendor's than you're going to have space in that little parking lot and I'm curious what's going to happen there, but I'm glad to be at the head of the line on that one. And, yeah, it's been a lot of fun, it really has. And actually, to be very pragmatic, there's times when I make better money there in three or four hours than I do at other farmers markets. And that's part of what I'm doing this for.
- b. **JEM Farm** - John: It's very pleasant. It's very easy, non-combative. Elizabeth: An easygoing atmosphere. It's easy to get in and get out as a vendor, and since at the beginning we were almost the only produce vendor we sold everything.
- c. **Mi Tierra** - It was very pleasant. We have sold at the Bristol market and the Johnson City market, and of course I've been to the Abingdon market,

we've contacted other markets, and I must say it's definitely the most pleasant market to be at.

- d. **Oak Moon** - I found it to be, and I'm not saying this just because you're connected with it or anything, I found it to be a really friendly atmosphere. Easy folks to work with, I really enjoyed the customers, I enjoyed the kids that were manning the market. I felt like they were extremely conscientious and worked really hard at it. And the other vendors. It was a small group but we got to know each other and I would like to see the market grow some but yeah, I just really thoroughly enjoyed it. And I'm a perennially late person and no one gave me too much grief about that I really appreciate that, so all in all it was nice, it was a great experience. Oh and the music. Oh my gosh. You know, that probably was the biggest treat. We do a lot of farmers markets and there's music at almost all of them, and the music at the market is one of the biggest treats to us, we just absolutely love it. The music there was second to none, it was really great.
- e. **Rural Resources** – It was a really positive one for me, I mean I really like having a market stand, I like bringing my produce to market. I like the interaction that I have at the market, so it's kind of like a full circle experience of growing the food and then bringing it to the people in particular the ETSU market was pleasant. I think I was able to start getting like, pretty consistent support from the faculty and then there, I enjoyed being able to interact with the student population as well, yeah it was overall, pleasant.
- f. **Crazy Cupcakes** - It's been awesome. We do really really well there, we pretty much sell out every market, we just wish it was longer. (**Me: Longer in hours?**) Months, in season.

5. **Does selling at a campus market differ from selling at a community market? If so, how?**

- a. **Chapo's Chiles** - Yeah. You don't see people shopping on behalf of families. I see that at community markets where you'll get families coming through and families sampling, moms and dads buying for kids and talking about what meals they're going to prepare. You hear very little of that on the college level, or university level. More experimentation. I have, and of course with what I sell, let's face it if you just sold breads, something that's relatively simple or not too different there may not be, but I have so much product that calls for experimentation I see a lot of that. I have to make sure I have a lot of samples set up so that people can try that out. How else is it different... Well you know also, and actually this is true, the changing of the classes. There will be times when there's thirty, forty minutes of just dead time. Maybe one or two people will wander through, and the rest of the time I'll go socialize with one of the other vendors, they'll do the same, I'll talk to the volunteers, and we'll kinda just hang out waiting until the next mass of humanity comes down the street. Whereas usually in other farmers markets that's not the case, it

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tends to be much more uniform in terms of foot flow, traffic patterns, people coming and going, so there's that. How else is it different... You've also got a certain amount of entertainment that a lot of other farmers markets don't. There's always something going on, whether it's a rally for something, a rally against something, music, there's the yoga people, there's always something going on that's fun to watch or listen to.

- b. **JEM Farm - Elizabeth:** A little bit in that you don't seem to have a dedicated cadre of customers. It seems like there is a different group of people there almost every week and at the regular farmers markets there are very dedicated people who come to every market. Pretty much. And tell you when they go on vacation, crazy things like that. You know, you find out when their son is having surgery or, you know. And it is a little bit harder, I think, at that market, to develop a personal relationship with your customers. Not impossible, but a little bit more difficult, because you don't see the same people over and over again.
- c. **Mi Tierra** - Well, yes, I mean your clientele is a little different, just by the nature of being exposed mostly to students. They have a different, the need, I guess, you know it's a little bit different than a general market.
- d. **Oak Moon** - Yes, definitely yes. For one thing, while we had sort of a captive audience, they were an audience that had a different goal. I mean they weren't just there, no, audience is not the right word, customer base. They weren't there just for the market, they were passing through. So that required us to, for me - I was the person there for our farm all the time, I think all the vendors we had to really be on our A game and sort of, you know, catch the attention of folks while we did have some staff and faculty who came just for the market, I feel like a lot of the, especially at the beginning, a lot of our customers were kids just coming to see what was going on, they'd heard about it they were not set up to carry away a lot of goods, so making things a little bit more tailored to what they were doing, the fact that they were going on to class, that sort of thing. It was very, very different. Most of the farmers markets that we attend, you know, our customers come just for the farmers market and they maybe hanging around and it may be a social experience as well as a marketing, or purchasing opportunity. But, this was very different, it was completely different.
- e. **Rural Resources** - It does. I'd say the overall rhythm of the day compared to a normal like (I'm used to doing), Saturday farmers market. It seems like in other markets your biggest rushes are in the morning and then it sort of tapers off by the end of the day. At the ETSU market it really just depended on when class was out as to when the busiest parts of the day came so, so yeah, just a little bit different flow of people coming and going and just a different, I don't know what the word is maybe demographic of people, I mean yeah, I guess it was different, I would normally not have as many college students at my market stand at a normal market, so. Kind of just a different



group of folks and, yeah the stands felt primarily supported by the faculty at the school. So that was a little different too.

- f. **Crazy Cupcakes** - Well, like I said, we do the Jonesborough one, and the Jonesborough one's kind of slow and we don't have as many farmers as like Johnson City gets, so we do a lot better just because there's so many more people that come to the campus one than show up down here.

**6. Was the volume of sales comparable to other markets?**

- a. **Chapo's Chiles** - Yes and no, again I was saying a little earlier, there's times I've made as much money in three or four hours as I've done in other places, but I tend to sell a little less volume, and part of the reason I'll tell you right now is that during the spring market I don't have any fresh produce. So I'm selling my spices. And they're in small packets and they're small dollar amounts whereas when the season kicks in from first of July on, and this will be reflected in your second semester, you're August season, then I'm moving, you know, baskets of fresh produce as opposed to April or May there isn't any, not for me, not for what I grow. So there's a difference there.
- b. **JEM Farm - Elizabeth**: Probably not because it was such a new market, but it wasn't horrible.
- c. **Mi Tierra** - It was about comparable for a Bristol market, which is, as a size, our smallest market.
- d. **Oak Moon** - I wish I had a better idea of the number of walk-through folks we had to have an idea of per number of people coming through the market, you know how my sales compared. It was certainly worth coming to the market, and early on I always sold out, but you have to understand that selling out is not a good thing. I don't see it as a good thing, because if I sell out that means somebody left without cheese, and so I try not to sell out I try to make sure I have enough and I really underestimated to start with and sold, I could have sold probably double what I had, could have early in the spring. So, that didn't really answer your question, I kind of went around it. But, I think we did well enough, we certainly did well enough for me to come back everyday, er, every week, and but I have done better probably per head, if you want to call it that, at other markets, simply because there was a lot of walk-through traffic that weren't really people buying.
- e. **Rural Resources** – I didn't really, I don't have a lot to compare it to around here. I sold at the nearby Jonesborough market once and the sales were higher there, so it seems like my impression was just kind of that this was a market that's sort of still starting and blossoming so the sales weren't quite as high. And I also, you know I know there's some questions and talk of wondering like whether just as a produce vendor if bringing produce on campus doesn't have as much appeal as it would at a farmers market where people go there specifically to buy produce.

- f. **Crazy Cupcakes** - Yeah, we probably do like double at your market what we do at the Jonesborough one.

**7. Who did you perceive that the shoppers were?**

- a. **Chapo's Chiles** - Mainly students and faculty. I mean there's some staff members, you know, that'll come, with the chief of police there that comes, he loves his hot peppers, he comes and buys them all the time. I get a couple of people from various other departments, but mostly it's, well I get the guys with the gray ponytails and John Lennon glasses and the Birkenstocks, my age, who are wandering around and I realize that these are professors and it's interesting many of them have got quite an eclectic perspective of things, they've been to other parts of the world, they have a knowledge, and they're curious and they want to try it. Or they've already tried it and they want to sample mine. One in particular from New Mexico who's always very specific about certain things and that's good. I mean, it challenges me to make sure that I've got the right stuff out there and it's quality.
- b. **JEM Farm - Elizabeth**: There were some staff, there were some staff and some students. Just a few professors. By staff I mean some of the people from like the medical, the student health center there. I know some of those ladies who came, some secretaries and that sort of people who came kind of regularly.
- c. **Mi Tierra** - Students, faculty, and staff.
- d. **Oak Moon** - The actual purchasers were probably it was probably split 50/50 between students and faculty/staff, I think. And I'm just guessing at that, but just based on what I can remember. I think it probably was. And I think that to start with it was probably heavier on the faculty/staff end and then as the market proceeded, the students became a lot more educated about it we certainly, I certainly had a lot of return customers in the student base, and I think that's exactly what, from my point of view, what I want to see. They liked the products and they were coming back for them, and that's what I want.
- e. **Rural Resources** - I definitely perceived it was people from campus, especially faculty the, probably, my perception was the second most consistent demographic of people were grad students, and then probably the third group of people would have been undergraduate college-age people.
- f. **Crazy Cupcakes** - We actually have a variety so we get lots of regular teachers that know we're there every Thursday and the same with students too, we have like regulars that come down every Thursday. (Me: So, a lot of regulars.) Yeah. And like I said, they're pretty much split between like professors and students we get both.

**8. What obstacles, if any, were presented by participating in a campus market?**

- a. **Chapo's Chiles** - Well, the biggest one, I'd say, is the lack of a market during summer, from early May through late August. There just isn't any,

and that's when most of this stuff is happening. That's a big one. Getting through the campus is a little tough, coming off of State of Franklin there and trying to get through. I try to get in there a little early and be one of the first or two and get down to that parking lot, because between the buses running and the crowds of people on those streets sometimes it takes a long time, just to get from that traffic light in there takes a good bit of time. But other than that, no. No real problems.

- b. **JEM Farm - Elizabeth:** The only obstacle was the liability insurance and Rachel did all the work and hooked us up with great insurance that was not expensive. And it's not really an obstacle; it's something we're supposed to have anyway, so to fuss about it is really silly. With us selling the protein that we're selling, the meat and the eggs, for us not to have liability insurance is just stupid. So the opportunity to get decent insurance, it was good. It was a good thing.
- c. **Mi Tierra** - I think the nature of my product, because it's something that has to be kept frozen, is an obstacle to the customers. You know, if they don't come prepared to take it either directly home and start to cook with it or have access to a freezer right away then they're not going to be able to use the product.
- d. **Oak Moon** - Yeah, unfortunately because it's a campus market and because of parking, you know, anybody who came to that market it's sort of a captive audience in a way, I couldn't really tell people at our other markets, Oh yeah, you can also come to see us at the ETSU market, because I knew that they'd have to get a parking permit and all that stuff, so. The good thing is there are plenty of people there to make it really worthwhile and the bad thing is we can't have any lap-over from other customer groups you know because it's sort of a closed situation. You know, I think it's a tradeoff myself, it certainly is not an issue that would prevent me from continuing at the market or anything like that I do wish there was some way, you know a few parking spaces designated, which I know parking is at a premium there, but you know some way that outside folks could come in besides just walking, because that's about the only way they could get there. As far as I know anyway. There might be parking like crazy and I don't know about it.
- e. **Rural Resources** – I'm trying to think of anything that would be an obstacle. There was nothing, I don't know if this was necessarily an obstacle or a benefit, it was a little bit, maybe just because it wasn't as big of a market, it was a little bit more laid back than other markets I've been a part of, which I kind of enjoyed, I don't know the only thing that really was kind of a challenge for me was just like navigating, setting up a market stand on a campus, just driving to get there. But that really wasn't that big of a deal, so nothing significant compared to other markets.
- f. **Crazy Cupcakes** - Like the way you guys have it set up is fine. The only thing for us is since we're open on Thursdays it's getting open

here and stuff ready to take over there, so for that but like as far as like the way market's run we didn't have any problems.

**9. What benefits, if any, do you perceive in participating in a campus market?**

- a. **Chapo's Chiles** - Exposure, and exposure is obviously foot traffic. I also suspect, I know for a fact that people are facebooking and twittering more than they would in other markets about what I have. I've had people come up and say, "Oh, a friend of mine told me," so there's a word of mouth that's going out, I'm assuming electronically in some way, that's telling people to come down and try. And that's not always the case in other markets and I can think of one market out in another county where honestly there in about 1950 in terms of the way they do things and you just don't see the foot traffic, you don't see the people wandering in, there just isn't very much of that.
- b. **JEM Farm - Elizabeth**: I like being able to talk to different people. It's good. And I like being on campus, period. End of report. I like doing UT, I like doing this one.
- c. **Mi Tierra** - For us, you know I don't, we're not going to be participating anymore, yeah we definitely felt that what exposure we were getting was kind of redundant at that point, and what we were making wasn't worth the drive and the setup and the time.
- d. **Oak Moon** - Probably the opportunity to educate my future customers is a really big one. And the fun. It was just a heck of a lot of fun. It was fun every time, so. I mean, just speaking from a personal standpoint, I always had a good time.
- e. **Rural Resources** - I think the way that I grow produce, the fact that I use, you know, comply with USDA organic standards, was well-received at this market, and I think that would probably be the case for a lot of campuses in the U.S. So that was a definite benefit. I felt warmly welcomed there. And, I also think because I am growing produce with a non-profit organization that seemed like a good way to promote to our organization and kind of appeal to a crowd that would actually be interested in connecting with a non-profit like us. There actually were some connections made over the season and we've had people come down here from ETSU from the market, so.
- f. **Crazy Cupcakes** - Like I said we have a ton of regulars and then also it helps to get the word out to people at campus that haven't heard about us.

**10. What are your considerations for improvement of the market?**

- a. **Chapo's Chiles** - Again, I'm going to say, open up during the summer. My gosh, that's about, what is it, three months? Let's see, first of May, June, July, August, three and a half months, that would be nice. I think we're going to need some more space soon, and I'm not sure how that's going to happen but I assume also that's going to be paralleling the number of vendors and the amount of traffic that comes through,

foot traffic, I'm talking about. I wouldn't mind seeing maybe an online market set up. Jonesborough does that, and it's quite simple once it's set up and people learn how to work it, it works very well and it's actually quite convenient. That would be nice to see.

- b. **JEM Farm - Elizabeth:** Well, the only thing I could see that would really help that market would be improved parking for customers. And I understand the situation and I realize that's not really going to be a reasonable possibility but the idea of being able to market to the folks in Johnson City even being in the neighborhoods its very difficult without having someplace to park. But I do think that having entertainment, having activities, making it a more 360-degree kind of experience does draw in some of those faculty and staff and neighbors of the campus. And it will continue to draw, so it will work out.
- c. **Mi Tierra** - I have to say, like I said before, it was the most pleasant market, just the people that were involved, and the music, and everything was just so nice. However, on a really practical level, because of the proximity to the Johnson City farmers market, you know which is not that far, where it's at, I wonder if the effort and money and time that's spent might be better if it was somehow joined with Johnson City market and just work with them as opposed to having a separate market.
- d. **Oak Moon** - Well the aforementioned parking thing maybe, and certainly increasing the number of vendors although I know there were some vendors, there were a couple of vendors who were not happy they did not move their products like they wanted to, that's the roll of the dice, that could happen to me and I wouldn't see it as being something I could continue in. But, ask that question again? I'm running my mouth too much, and now I can't remember what you asked me. **(I repeated the question)** Oh for improvement, oh oh oh oh. Well, you know there towards the end, there were some little events and you know something some kind of special thing. I think in a with a campus market especially where you have a large number of students that could come, you've got to have something to draw them. And you know all of us being there with our smiling faces and our cheese and our produce and our bread whatever else we've got that's good but just factually speaking this is not exactly you know mom and pops coming to get their potatoes this is a different group and so I could see some sort of event just about every week especially since it's a short season. You know since there's a short season in the spring and a short one in the fall, having some kind of event planned for every single market day would be great.
- e. **Rural Resources** – I'm trying to think, I mean I really overall am happy with how the ETSU market is managed and run. There isn't anything I can think of off the top of my head that was like a something I'd be like Oh, things would be a lot better if it were just this way. I think like ideally there would be more people at the market and ideally produce

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would sell more, but I think you could say that of anywhere and ETSU, I guess my perception of it is I was definitely seeing like a market that was still growing and had a lot of potential, to blossom even more. So that's what I have to say about that.

- f. **Crazy Cupcakes** - Really we'd just like it to be maybe even like a summer market or just longer, because I know what spring is like 6 markets? So we'd love it if we were there all the time.