Food for Profit Classes Held Around the State

Whether it’s making gourmet jams or jellies, baking bread and cakes, catering festive events, or creating and packaging special dinners for one, food-related businesses are becoming increasingly popular as a way to earn a living (or to add to your income). The cook’s creative flair, combined with business practicality will succeed even in tough economic times, if the enterprise is given the appropriate research and planning before its launch.

University of Maryland Extension’s *Food for Profit* workshop takes you step-by-step through the information necessary to start and run a small food product business. Although appropriate for any food business owners who want to develop their venture proactively, the workshop is especially directed to individuals who will be making and packing their products for resale.

*Food for Profit* is a very practical session, providing information that you will be able to use immediately to ensure that your business starts out and grows in a way that matches your vision and goals. Guiding food entrepreneurs through the initial steps to start a business, this workshop combines educational presentations, guest speakers, and a highly interactive learning environment to address: getting started, regulations, developing a plan, food safety, packaging, and financing.

Sessions are being held around the state. The tuition cost of $40 per person includes all materials and lunch. Pre-registration is required one
The Maryland Rural Enterprise Development (MREDC) - New URL, New Modules, Same Great Resource

Source: By Ginger S. Myers

The College of Agriculture and Natural Resources has converted all University of Maryland Extension websites to a new platform that will give us a more consistent look. The Maryland Rural Enterprise Development Center (MREDC) has taken this opportunity to update and expand existing modules while also adding some new rural business development resources.

We’ve retained and enhanced our Entrepreneurship and Business Development modules since they are the very heart of MREDC. We have consolidated our webinars, videos, and other recordings into our Distance Learning module. You can learn on your own, at your own pace, and in the comfort of your own office or home! In addition to these tools, check out the MREDC YouTube Channel, where videos are always being added. Enjoy learning from a distance!

Are You Maximizing Your Facebook Marketing Potential?

By: Source: http://digitalfarmer.blogspot.com/2012/11/

According to a study by Zickuhr and Smith 2012, 4 out of 5 Americans use the Internet. Now social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, and others are expanding that usage and can be an integral part of a farm enterprise’s marketing plan. But how can you maximize your Facebook postings? Here is a great article by a farmer that helps us understand exactly what those tracking analytics such as “like” and “friends of fan” really mean and how to use the multiplying factor of the social media platform to expand our marketing reach.

http://local.farmersmarket.com/blog/farm-marketing-2/the-power-of-facebook

This is a blog site with other informative articles about using social media as a marketing tool.

Useful On-Line Resources

Farm Employment FAQ Online
Source: http://www.practicalfarmers.org/resources/employment_faq.php

Practical Farmers of Iowa has developed a new online resource, “Farm Employment FAQ,” to help Iowa farmers and farm workers better understand their rights and responsibilities as employers and employees. The resource functions as a starting point for farmers and workers to find answers to common questions and links to other resources. The goal of the FAQ is to help farmers gain more insight into how to comply with state and federal labor laws.


The Digital Farmer
http://digitalfarmer.blogspot.com/

New resource for digital tools, trainings, and etc., for Maryland’s Ag Community. Brought to you by University of Maryland Extension.
Producer’s Digital Toolbox Class in Baltimore County

The Producers’ Digital Toolbox presented by University of Maryland Extension is offering a one day seminar on Friday, December 13, 2013.

The seminar will take place at the University of Maryland Extension—Baltimore County Office, located at the Baltimore County Center for Maryland Agriculture and Farm Park, 1114 Shawan Road, Cockeysville, MD 21030, from 9:30 AM to 2:00 PM.

The workshop will focus on:

- Introduction on the basics of the popular social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn).
- How to list your business on digital databases such as Google Maps and Capitalize on the hardware and digital tools available through the internet.

Cost is $40.00 per person which includes lunch and course materials.

ADVANCE REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED

Go to:
http://digitaltoolbox.eventbrite.com

For more information about this program, please contact Shannon Dill sdill@umd.edu or Ginger S. Myers at gsmyers@umd.edu

Check in is from 9:00 – 9:30 AM.

Food for Profit Classes Held Around the State continued from page 1

week prior to the event, and may be accomplished on-line at www.foodforprofit.eventbrite.com, or by calling the hosting Extension office. This program is open to anyone interested in food enterprises. Sign up for one of the Fall sessions below:

October 11, 2013
University of Maryland Extension—Harford County Office
2335 Rock Spring Road
Forest Hill, MD 21050
Contact: Sara BaduriHauk, sbh@umd.edu or (410) 822-5400

October 24, 2013
Cecil County Administration Building
200 Chesapeake Blvd.
2nd Floor, Perryville Room
Elkton, MD 21921
Contact: Doris Behnke, dbelnke@umd.edu or (410) 996-5285

November 19, 2013
Chesapeake College
1000 College Circle
Wye Mills, MD 21679
Contact: Shannon Dill, sdill@umd.edu or (410) 822-5400

TO REGISTER FOR A CLASS NEAR YOU GO TO:
www.foodforprofit.eventbrite.com

The College in Your Backyard is an interactive day of fun and learning for all ages. Come hang out with horses, cows, and chicks... take a farm tour on a hay wagon... pick and paint a pumpkin... have your plant questions answered by a Master Gardener... taste fresh fruit grown right here in Maryland... get up close with creepy crawlers... climb a rock wall... learn about exciting youth programs available through Maryland 4-H... visit displays and exhibits on everything from food safety to environmental stewardship to energy efficiency... participate in plenty of hands-on activities... get a glimpse of what our students are doing... talk with an AGNR representative... and discover that the College of AGNR is about SO much more than traditional agriculture!
The Ag Marketing Newsletter is published periodically by the University of Maryland Extension Agricultural Marketing Program and it is written and edited by Ginger S. Myers, Marketing Specialist and Director of the Maryland Rural Enterprise Development Center.

Comments and suggestions regarding the newsletter are always welcome. References to commercial products or trade names are made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by University of Maryland Extension is implied. Articles and photographs can be reprinted with permission.

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Online: issues are posted online and can be downloaded for free go to: https://www.extension.umd.edu/publication-series/ag-marketing-newsletter
To Unsubscribe: email to listserv@listserv.umd.edu — in the body of the message, type Unsubscribe agmarketing name-of-subscriber (example: unsubscribe agmarketing Susan Barnes)
For more information on the Agricultural Marketing Program, you can visit: http://extension.umd.edu/agmarketing http://extension.umd.edu/mredc

Direct Marketing Do’s and Don’ts—The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly continued from page 1

The Good:
- Always offering high quality products through all your marketing outlets. The “Buy Local” theme is spilling out beyond edibles into the market for services and experiential activities. Providing your customers a consistently high quality product, service, or experience will help garner more repeat business for you.

- Many farmers’ markets are better organized than ever before. Market management is doing a better job of market design, servicing a mixed customer base, attracting a wider variety of vendors, and keeping up with technology such as accepting Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) payments.

- New technology such as Square Register for taking credit card payments and new marketing tools such as QR codes (machine readable code consisting of black and white squares) are making sales transactions easier than ever. Social media outlets like as Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest provide new ways to communicate with customers in a timely and interesting fashion.

The Bad:
- Inconsistent quality or questionable sourcing. The most sustainable markets are those who offer consistently high quality products and are transparent about their sources. Sometimes crops fail or delayed due to weather. Either take this opportunity to educate your customers about the risks in farming or if you source from someone else, let customers know that these products are from another grower. Customers trust a farmer’s integrity. Breach that trust and customers will become suspicious of all farmers.

- Lack of signage and pricing at point of sales. Customers don’t want to ask for pricing. Signage on your product can be like a label. Labels are the first thing customers see on a product so take advantage both the great eye appeal of your products along with signage.

- Making negative comments about other vendors or their products is a poor sales technique.

The Ugly:
- Inattentive vendors. Don’t let your customers find you reading the paper or constantly chatting with the vendor next to you or employees at your farm. It’s sending the message that they’re purchasing experience isn’t important to you. Avoid, hanging on your cell phone, constantly checking emails, or texting.

Your primary goal as a direct marketer is to give customers an exceptional buying experience. That includes the quality of the product, information about the product, how it was produced or sourced, and the level of customer service you offer. Make it all good.