

# Ag Marketing

## Newsletter

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## Marketing Do's and Don'ts - The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly

With the direct marketing season in full swing, it's a good time to step back and examine some of the tools and marketing techniques that can have a substantial impact on your success as a direct marketer. Whether the outlet is a farmers' market, your on-farm stand, or working with your CSA or wholesale accounts, see if your marketing strategies falls into any of these categories:

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## 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

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# 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!



We are developing new content to address using new technologies and Internet tools for business and marketing success and expanding our popular Food Processing section to include a complete primer for "Starting a Specialty Food Business in Maryland."

Our new URL is: <http://extension.umd.edu/mredc>. We hope you will visit the site and navigate through the modules. We want your opinion about the changes and suggestions for possible additional topic areas.

## 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](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.

**Related ATTRA Resource:** Beyond Basic Compensation (<https://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/summaries/summary.php?pub=330>)

### 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.

**Check in is from  
9:00 –9:30 AM.**

**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](mailto:sdill@umd.edu) or Ginger S. Myers at [gsmyers@umd.edu](mailto:gsmyers@umd.edu)

## 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](http://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](mailto: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, [dbehnke@umd.edu](mailto:dbehnke@umd.edu)  
or (410) 996-5285

**November 19, 2013**

**Chesapeake College**

1000 College Circle  
Wye Mills, MD 21679

**Contact:** Shannon Dill, [sdill@umd.edu](mailto:sdill@umd.edu)  
or (410) 822-5400

**TO REGISTER FOR A CLASS NEAR YOU GO TO:**

[www.foodforprofit.eventbrite.com](http://www.foodforprofit.eventbrite.com)



**SAVE THE DATE!!**

**The College in Your Backyard**

**COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES  
2013 OPEN HOUSE - SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5**

**Central Maryland Research & Education Center**

**Clarksville Facility**

**4240 Folly Quarter Road  
Ellicott City, MD 21042**

**FUN FOR EVERYONE!**

**FREE ADMISSION!**

**[HTTP://AGNR.UMD.EDU/OPENHOUSE](http://AGNR.UMD.EDU/OPENHOUSE)**

**301-596-9330**

The College of Agriculture and Natural Resources is . . . COMMITTED to offering exemplary teaching programs. CONDUCTING internationally renowned research. COORDINATING outstanding extension/outreach efforts. ENGAGING individuals, groups, and communities to improve quality of life in Maryland and beyond.

Equal access programs and equal opportunity employer

*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!

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



Edwin Remsberg

### The Good:

- Always offering high quality products through all your marketing outlets. The “Buy Local” theme is spilling out beyond edibles and into the market for services and experiential activities such as agritourism. 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.



Edwin Remsberg Photographs: photos.remsberg.com

### 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.

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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For more information on the Agricultural Marketing Program, you can visit: <http://extension.umd.edu/agmarketing> <http://extension.umd.edu/mredc>