

4 - MORE PLACES TO MARKET YOUR PRODUCTS

by Ellie Winslow (2007 AEA convention speaker)

This is a continuation of the subject of places (and ways) to do marketing. We're looking for ideas that you haven't yet tried, or haven't tried lately. Remember, when the economy is good, it's easier to sell what you raise, grow or make. Now, you need to be more focused, more creative and put in more effort!

When was the last time you made a presentation to someone about your farm business and products? First, let's list some of the places you could make a presentation. Some of these depend on the kind of product you sell, but let's start with ideas for places to give presentations. Second, today we'll talk about what goes into an effective presentation.

Your veterinarian. He or she is in a good position to recommend you to people who need or want your product — whether that's an animal, it's by-products or things you grow.

Local clubs and organizations, especially service clubs like Lions, Rotary, The Grange, Optimists, etc. Any organization that has meetings and speakers might be delighted to have a presentation. Chamber of Commerce, professional organizations, book clubs — any group with even a remote connection to your potential customers.

Business owners. If you want to sell to a business (specialized meat products to a restaurant or your crafts in a retail store, etc.) you need to make a presentation to the business owner.

Professional contacts. Like your veterinarian, find professionals who are potentially in contact with your customers — whether that's an accountant, a doctor, a dentist, a nutritionist... Depending on what you sell, there are people all over your area who can recommend you!

Schools, libraries. If you have baby animals born at your farm and are not making presentations to primary school children and at the library, you're missing a bet.

4-H and FFA Groups. These groups need information about your animals and products.

Events with speakers. Especially when they are about the community, might be a venue where you can present your information. Here's a Facebook blurb from Joylene Reavis who raised emus and did a dynamite job of marketing all the time:

<http://www.facebook.com/SugarMapleEmus>

"Yesterday I traveled to Rockford, IL to give a 70-minute presentation at a monthly get-together for a group of retired workers at Hamilton-Sunstrand corporation."

The above list is not exhaustive. You may be able to come up with many other places to give your presentation! Be creative. Be a little aggressive. They are not going to come ask you to speak -- YOU have to go ask them! Do some cold calling. Make an appointment.

What Goes Into a Presentation?

Remember marketing's first principle! If you've forgotten, read my books or look back through old issues of this blog — heaven knows I harp on this!

Remember the listener's self-interest! A marketing MUST! Why should they listen to your presentation? You are going to make their life better in some way — by solving a problem, filling a need, making them laugh or providing a way they can help others. Maybe you're going to teach them

a new skill, or help them get better at something they have to do, or just show them a broader view of their interests. But you are going to connect what you do/sell/provide with what interests them. Or, you will bore them to tears.

The above paragraph is a little simplistic for a process that is not all that simple for most presenters. It takes some hard thought and your creativity. You've heard of the degrees of separation? Well you need to map those for your audience — how they are connected to your business -- whether that audience is one person or a big group.

Presentations need to be scripted, clearly presented, rehearsed — even if it's not memorized — and if you're selling right then, you need to have a really good *closing* that gets results.

A few presentations might be all that's standing between you and some great sales!
