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Workshop # 1

Ways to promote Nova Scotia products

Farm market atmosphere transferred to exhibitions: Farm markets have become very popular in most towns, finding ways to transfer this interest and attraction by the public into our exhibition planning should create another dimension for fairs to promote and close the circle “from farm gate to consumer”. As there is a keen interest already existing by fair goers to visit livestock exhibits, crafts and agriculture awareness projects, perhaps a real live farmers market would provide further value, interaction and understanding of the food chain through producers being more active within our infrastructure and programming.

Coupon tracking system: A way to explore this process is to provide some sort of coupons from vendors that can be redeemed on site or later from a farm or farm market. This idea would also allow tracking of fair goers interests and visitation.

Nova Scotia product cooking demos: Cooking demos are very interesting and popular, all too often our demos have endorsed products such as knives and kitchen trinkets. Most people want more value for the demonstrations and by having notable chefs working with local producers could provide a better presentation of the benefits to the public. An example is showcasing older recipes and farm vegetable produce for family meals to provide a more interesting and useable product.

Grocery basket real cost: Often consumers blame the high cost of their grocery order on farmers and usually there are non-food items in total. More awareness of this situation should be brought to the attention of consumers. Food purchases awareness should be a part of the agriculture awareness program. The value of the agriculture content of food purchases should be emphasized to fair goers Food demonstrations involving the public participation and meeting the growers, processors and marketing should be part of the showcasing at exhibitions.

Reward Programs: Development of an exhibition discount coupon from vendors that can be provided to visitors and sponsored by grocery chains or Farmers markets for discounts of locally grown products. This would provide value to coupon purchasers, enhances the knowledge of visitors about farm products.

Highlight a locally grown program: In each community where fairs and exhibitions are held there exists a locally grown agriculture product. This product should be showcased at the exhibition as a major theme program to promote the community activity and marketing awareness.

Agriculture Awareness and infrastructure: Fairs and exhibitions should include agriculture and the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture staff in their planning meetings. There are many items of agriculture displays and materials for use at exhibitions. It is essential to inform the public about agriculture activities within the community and contribution towards economic growth in the Province. Organizations such as Select Nova Scotia and Taste Of Nova Scotia should be part of fairs and exhibitions exhibits and programs.

Workshop Leader – Jeff Yuill

Development of Non-Conflicting Exhibition Dates

Moderators: **Elaine Marshall - Annapolis Valley Exhibition**
Andy Woolaver - Hants County Exhibition

Challenges

- #1 barrier to an Exhibition changing dates is access to the midway, as there are no real alternatives to the three midway operators (Maritime, Hinchies and Campbells)
- Rotating exhibition dates are not feasible, as officials, patrons and exhibitors plan early in the year and position their vacation(s) around the exhibitions they will be attending
- After Bridgewater (1st Ex of the season), there are no free weekends and almost all have some conflict overlap, so moving an Exhibition's date may eliminate one conflict but create another.
- There are also conflicts with out-of-Province Exhibitions (Old Home Week), other local festivals and events (also big name concerts in Moncton / Halifax) that may:
 - 1- limit access to certain local resources (tents)
 - 2- Spread the potential patrons' \$\$ too thin
 - 3- Force (both Exhibitors and patrons) to pick only one exhibition/event

Opportunities / Suggestions

- EANS purchase / rent / share midway ride or rides
- Begin Exhibition season earlier, thus reducing chance of date conflicts
- If there "is" a conflict, then coordinate major events between Exhibitions (such as concerts/horse pulls), so they aren't on same week(end) day at both Exhibitions
- CAFÉ could assist our Exhibitions by coordinating a sharing of common entertainment on a consecutive week schedule, making the N.S. visit financially feasible for the entertainer
- Some Exhibitions can't secure a midway at all, regardless of conflict. Suggestions were to guarantee payment or provide an appearance fee.
- Note was made that due to the publicizing dates and the coordination of Midways, then once the dates were set at the beginning of the year, the dates should not change

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING WORKSHOPS**WORKSHOP # 3****Ways to Improve Grounds Layout for Visitors and Infrastructure
Renewal.**

An exhibition staff member invited an independent assessment of their exhibition from an independent person over a four day period. The assessment suggested several changes and comments to improve the program despite the fact that exhibition staff believed they had done a good job.

It was suggested that an analyses of the grounds layout should be done and a plan developed over a five-year period.

Suggestions were made to customize activities among fairs and exhibitions, especially when similar 4H clubs events and steer auctions are held at several locations. More universal fencing methods should be common practice. Advance planning with user groups provide added benefits for all events including increased number of participants and improved facilities.

Several exhibitions have eliminated the use of upper level facilities because of the aging public and now use these areas for storage purposes only. Several fairs and exhibitions have moved buildings, such as ticket booths, for convenience to visitors and to optimize space.

Vehicular traffic should be restricted on grounds during events to ensure safety to visitors. The use of bleachers provides better visibility and restful areas for spectators and their use should be promoted as a curiosity to visitors.

Signage is also an excellent tool to direct visitors to the various events and buildings on the grounds. The development of signs is relative easy to provide with the equipment and material currently available.

A general comment involved the inter-mixing of visitors and livestock and the need to provide adequate safety measures throughout the grounds.

Workshop Leader: Jean Marshall

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WORKSHOP # 4

**How to Reward Volunteers for their Volunteer Hours at
Fairs/Exhibitions**

Generally, people volunteer for the feeling of satisfaction from being part of a successful or productive event, to give back to the community and to receive a sincere thank you for their efforts.

A written thank you is the most reward for volunteering according to the workshop participants. Other suggestions varied from a special supper or barbeque for the volunteer and the family members for their support. Still other suggestions included free passes to exhibitions, plaques and appreciation awards, nominations for municipal/provincial volunteer awards, a CAFE National award, support for government funding, free T-shirts, announcement on the loud speaker during the exhibition,

Volunteers should be asked what would be a suitable reward for the many volunteer hours contributed. More effort should go into seeking new volunteers, with changes in planning of programs and assistance during the exhibition. Younger volunteers should be encouraged to participate and establishing a junior volunteer group was suggested.

A recurring suggestion was to express a sincere thank you to all volunteers for their participation and the great contribution they continue to make for all agriculture fairs and exhibitions.

Workshop Leaders: Betty Lou Scott/Ted McGray



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Nova Scotia