



REPORT

From the office of the...

Mac Farmstand

TO: Members of the Executive Board
 FROM: Jonathon Patterson
 SUBJECT: Mac Farmstand Report #3
 DATE: September 24, 2015

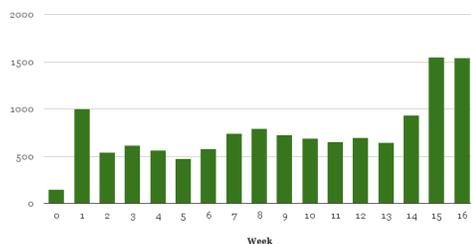
UPDATE

Students are loving the ability to access and talk about healthy, sustainable eating on campus. The adoption of accepting meal card in combination with our focus on relationship building and inspiring conversations about sustainable food have contributed to a tremendous growth in the number of people that use the service. Many students that visit us have shared stories about the great meals they have created, and the healthier food choices that they have been able to make as a result of connecting with Farmstand.

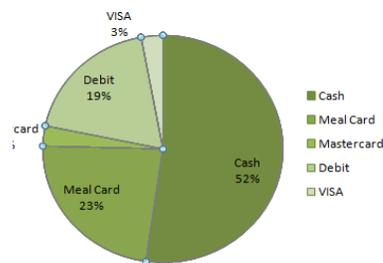
SERVICE USAGE

As of September 10 we have achieved the total usage (measured by revenue) of Farmstand by October 31st of last year. I am anticipating that we will easily achieve our goal of 40% growth over last year. Since the beginning of classes we have had about 200 people coming to use the service each day (measured by number of transactions), this is approximately double the number of service users during the summer. While the increased usage of the service is positive (for the goal of inspiring healthier, more sustainable eating), I am most excited about the increased amount of vegetables people are purchasing to take home and cook.

Farmstand Revenue by Week



Payment Methods by Type



PAST EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

As the stand is an event itself that takes place twice a week already, we have focused on attending other events to raise awareness of our mission and service. Farmstand had a presence at New Marauder Orientation, MacQuest, Horizons Leadership Conference, Grad Student Resource Fair, and Clubsfest.

At New Marauder Orientation and Horizons, we had conversations with dozens of excited incoming students about the importance of sustainable eating and this MSU initiative. At MacQuest, we offered free samples of fruit and successfully connected with incoming first year students and the student leaders that support these students and can inform them of the service. Clubsfest was by far our most attended event, approximately 800 students came by the stand for a conversation and a taste of local food (as measured by samples taken).

UPCOMING EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

We will continue running the stand twice a week until October 31. Our Local Food Day event will be on October 7th with the goal of connecting students with local food and the community groups that work to offer and support it. We are also currently in the process of planning to have a nutritionist at the stand to answer questions on one of the market days, and to run a cooking class aimed at first year students and those living on their own for the first time.

BUDGET

We have used about half of our overall service budget for promotions, annual campaigns, and volunteer recognition. We have exceeded our cost of goods budget (on track to double it) but have recovered these costs fully through product sales so there is no net increase in service cost. Due to the rise in service usage we have added additional staff members to the stand team during peak times which will result in exceeding our labour budget. In order to account for this we have adjusted pricing at Farmstand to recover some of these additional costs while still providing excellent value to students.

VOLUNTEERS

We have had limited success recruiting and maintaining volunteers in part due to the mix of paid and unpaid staff performing similar roles and in part because our need for volunteers is for highly labour intensive activities (set up and take down). Volunteers continue to express interest, however retention is very low. We are working on improving this through a volunteer orientation and being clearer with roles and scheduling.

CURRENT CHALLENGES

The only drawback to having been so widely popular is the challenge that comes with accommodating the number of students that want to use the services temporary outdoor location. In addition to the challenges and high resource investment that come with setting up and taking down the stand each day, we are also limited in the variety of produce that can be offered and the ability to restock items quickly and effectively (due to limited at stand storage space and high demand). Additionally the number of students that use the service during peak times results in crowds of 10 to 20 people inside the tent at once and many people walking by that would have otherwise used the service.

Demand for this service is strong, if the MSU is committed to continuing the sustainable growth of Mac Farmstand in future years we will need to look into advocating for a more permanent location.