


Taste It Tent

The “Taste It Tent,” is a gathering tents where vendors provide samples and interact with visitors. This initiative has been a huge success, with 9,184 samples distributed in 2024 alone. We’re excited to see other regions showing interest in implementing the concept, and encourage you to start a tent at your market.

Welcome to the Southeast Wisconsin Farmers Market Collaborative Taste It Tent How to Video.

This collaborative was formed by 4 southeast Wisconsin region markets participating in the USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program grant administered by the University of Wisconsin Extension. Participation in the grant focused on 2 things: implementing or sustaining sales data collection processes, and designing a replicable project that would increase visitor engagement and agricultural product sales.

youtube.com/watch?v=Fja2YbJFh1U



Taste It Tent How-To

SEWIFMC
3 subscribers

Subscribe

2 likes

Share Save

67 views 3 months ago

Join the market managers of the Brown Deer, Jackson Park, Oak Creek Winter, and Riverwest farmers markets to learn how your market, shoppers, and vendors can benefit from hosting a Taste It Tent. ...more



FARMERS MARKET
How-To Guide



Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Funding for this project was provided by the United States Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service Farmers Market Promotion Program.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison (hereinafter "the University") is committed to providing equal opportunity in employment and advancement to all qualified individuals and, in accordance with applicable federal and state statutes and regulations prohibiting discrimination in employment on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, pregnancy, genetic information, disability, military service, protected veteran status, honesty testing, arrest record or conviction record. The equal employment opportunity policy covers all aspects of the employment relationship including, but not limited to, recruitment, interviewing, screening, testing, selection, placement, evaluation, transfer, promotion, tenure, compensation, benefits, training, and termination.

Taste It Tent



Taste-It-Tent SCRIPT

1. Welcome & Introductions

Hello and welcome! I'm Emily Fons, the Southeast Wisconsin Regional Farmers Market Coordinator for the USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP) grant through UW-Extension. Thank you for joining us for the Southeast Wisconsin Farmers Market Collaborative Taste It Tent How-To Video.

This collaborative brings together four Southeast Wisconsin farmers markets that participated in the USDA FMPP grant administered by the University of Wisconsin-Extension.

The grant focused on two primary goals:

1. Establishing or improving market sales data collection, and
2. Creating a replicable project that boosts visitor engagement and increases agricultural product sales.

Today, the market managers from the Brown Deer, Jackson Park, Oak Creek Winter, and Riverwest farmers markets will show you how their successful Taste It Tent program works—and how you can create one at your own market.

Let's begin with introductions from each market:

Brown Deer Farmers Market
Jackson Park Farmers Market
Oak Creek Winter Farmers Market
Riverwest Farmers Market

2. What Is a Taste It Tent?

A Taste It Tent is a gathering place, an educational tool, and a marketing strategy all in one.

It's a designated tent at your market where shoppers can:

- Sample locally grown or produced foods
- Learn about seasonal produce and nutrition
- Share recipe ideas
- Become inspired to purchase featured items, directly supporting local growers

3. How Did the Idea Begin?

The Taste It Tent was sparked by a simple story—how one unfamiliar fruit, the ground cherry, won over hesitant shoppers through sampling. A single taste led to increased sales, curiosity, and conversations. That moment planted the seed for a full-fledged program focused on tasting, learning, and connecting.

4. How to Create a Taste It Tent (Basics)

Let's take a quick tour of a standard Taste It Tent setup and highlight helpful tips for running one at your market. One important consideration is where you'll store your supplies and who will handle safe setup and teardown.

Basic Supplies:

Tent: Tent and weights

Tables: Table coverings or runners

Prep Tools: Produce scrubbers, peelers, knives, gloves, sample cups

Health & Safety: Hand-washing station or bin for wastewater

Aprons

Signage: Banners, signs, or branded materials

Staffing: Volunteers, partners, or paid staff

Each market manages its Taste It Tent a little differently—there's no one right way.

FARMERS
MARKET
**How-To
Guide**



Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Funding for this project was provided by the United States Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service Farmers Market Promotion Program.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison (hereinafter "the University") is committed to providing equal opportunity in employment and advancement to all qualified individuals and, in accordance with applicable federal and state statutes and regulations prohibiting discrimination in employment on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, pregnancy, genetic information, disability, military service, protected veteran status, honesty testing, arrest record or conviction record. The equal employment opportunity policy covers all aspects of the employment relationship including, but not limited to, recruitment, interviewing, screening, testing, selection, placement, evaluation, transfer, promotion, tenure, compensation, benefits, training, and termination.

Taste It Tent

Taste It Tent: Turning Curiosity into Sales and Connections at the Farmers Market

What if shoppers could taste the season before they buy it?

The Taste It Tent is an interactive booth designed to do just that—offering seasonal samples, simple recipes, storytelling, and education to spark shopper engagement and boost produce sales.

A short “how-to” video, a list of essential tools and materials, editable marketing and signage templates and actionable strategies are available to launch a Taste It Tent at any size market.

Whether you’re aiming to increase vendor sales, promote nutrition education, build relationships, or make your market more vibrant and welcoming, The Taste It Tent is adaptable, affordable, and proven to strengthen community connections while supporting healthy food access and local farmers.

Dawn Carrillo developed the Taste It Tent concept eight years ago and has witnessed its growth and potential through its expansion to other markets. Dena Radke incorporates a Taste It Tent at the market she manages. We have hands-on experience with its development, growth, and training other managers on the concept. As market managers, we have observed increased connections between customers and vendors, along with rising sales. This initiative has been supported by both data collection and anecdotal successes. Currently, we assist other markets in creating their own Taste It Tents by taking our “tent” to markets across Wisconsin and showing managers the benefits at their live markets. We maintain a lending “library,” speak at state workshops, and have created a “how-to” video.

Be inspired to introduce a Taste It Tent at their own market as a powerful, low-cost way to boost vendor sales, promote healthy eating, and build community. We have the tools to communicate this idea clearly to boards, volunteers, and market leadership as an innovative way to enhance shopper experience, create a “third space” at the market, and strengthen social networks. With minimal investment and staffing, a Taste It Tent can have lasting impact on both customer behavior and vendor success.

Launch your own Taste It Tent—from planning and purchasing to staffing and partnerships we can help. Gain practical knowledge about how to adapt the model to their unique market, fund it through creative means, and establish partnerships with local organizations or sponsors. Gather simple, meaningful data that helps demonstrate impact and secure long-term support.

We are prepared to train others, support fellow managers in adopting the model, and use sponsor engagement as a way to build financial sustainability. The tent becomes more than a tasting station—it becomes a platform for education, connection, and even new revenue opportunities.

Feel free to reach out with questions, or to request any materials needed.

Dawn and Dena

SEWIFarmersMarketCollaborative@gmail.com

FARMERS
MARKET
**How-To
Guide**



Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Funding for this project was provided by the United States Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service Farmers Market Promotion Program.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison (hereinafter "the University") is committed to providing equal opportunity in employment and advancement to all qualified individuals and, in accordance with applicable federal and state statutes and regulations prohibiting discrimination in employment on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, pregnancy, genetic information, disability, military service, protected veteran status, honesty testing, arrest record or conviction record. The equal employment opportunity policy covers all aspects of the employment relationship including, but not limited to, recruitment, interviewing, screening, testing, selection, placement, evaluation, transfer, promotion, tenure, compensation, benefits, training, and termination.