

Farmer Opposes Township Proposal

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When township officials reinstated the stakes earlier this week, they were accompanied by a police officer, Zimmerman noted.

He said he would have been more willing to work with the township if it had selected another site on the farm.

"I told them if they want to (drill) at the upper end of the meadow, I might go along with them," he said.

Zimmerman responded to speculation that his land would likely become more valuable with a municipal well on it.

"For development, naturally it would (have a higher dollar value), but those aren't our plans," he said, noting that Paul Jr. and his family want to continue dairying on the farm.

Paul Sr. first moved onto the farm at the age of 6. The proper-

ty has been in the Zimmerman family since 1932, he said.


Zimmerman's attorney, Paula Leicht of Mette, Evans, and Woodside in Harrisburg, wrote a recent letter to East Cocalico Township expressing views similar to those of PFB attorney Bell.

"The Zimmermans object to the (Water and Sewer) Authority's entry onto their property for any purpose and we believe that such entry is unlawful under the facts of this case," Leicht wrote in the letter dated May 6.

Leicht wrote that the Agricultural Security Area that includes the Zimmerman farm was "created by operation of law on March 17, 2001."

According to Lena Zimmerman, many locals are opposed to the township's plans to drill a well on the farm.

"Neighbors are really upset about it," she said. "We really have support."



New Farmers, New Generation

Marion Bowlan

Pennsylvania Farm Link

BEYOND PRODUCTION

Every successful farmer also has to be a marketer. In one form or another, every business must either market its products and services directly or secure someone or some business to do the marketing.

Some farmers sell directly to consumers at farmers market or through Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), while others farm-out their marketing work to cooperatives, contractors, other companies, and other farmers.

Both type of customers demand products or services at the right time, at the right place, and at the right price. Further delineating their customer base, farmers can either choose to target their products to the mass markets, composed of many people with broadly similar needs, or to sell to niche markets composed of fewer customers with specific and similar needs.

The place to start is to ask yourself: "Who is my customer? What information should I gather about my customer?" Your answer should be "everything."

Noted marketing expert Jay Levinson said, "Marketing is everything you do to promote your business from the moment you conceive of it to the point at which customers buy your product or services and begin to patronize your business on a regular basis. The key words to remember are everything and regular basis."

Compost Class

COLLEGEVILLE (Montgomery Co.) — Do you want to know more about composting? Would you like to receive a free compost

bin? If you answer yes to these questions, then join the Montgomery County Master Composters and learn all there is to know about composting and receive a bin.

Pre-registration is required by calling Mary Concklin (610) 489-4315. Class is free.

The event is Saturday, May 17, 1 p.m. at the Montgomery County 4-H Center, 1015 Bridge Rd., Collegeville. (Located on Rt. 113 between Rt. 29 and Rt. 73).

Market, customers attend because they want the experience, smell, and taste of farm-fresh food and they want to make personal contact with the farmer who grew that food. CSA farms take that experience a step further and essentially contract with their customers to provide a complete package of fresh produce, fruits, herbs, flowers, or other products over a specified period of time.

By focusing on growing good, healthy food at a reasonable price and by developing a sense of connectedness among their customers and their farms, many CSA farmers have been able to develop customer loyalty over many seasons. While the methods of building a customer base through friends, neighbors, family, and community groups are not new or unique, the ability to get the customer to pay up front, share some of the risk of production, and agree to purchase a specified quantity of food over a specified period of time is relatively new.

To learn more about establishing and growing a CSA, or to learn more about marketing your products, plan to come to Pennsylvania Farm Link's "Selling Produce Through a CSA" on June 25 from 6 p.m.-9 p.m. at Simple Gifts Farm near Columbia. Jonathan Weaver-Kreider will explain how he gained experience working on organic farms and market gardening, and has grown his CSA from 20 to 70 members on rented land.

To register or for more information, call Pennsylvania Farm Link at (717) 664-7077.

The more you know about your customer's needs, wants and desires, the better off you will be in meetings those needs with a product that sells. How well you understand your customer and your market conditions will determine how effectively you are able to weather the obstacles and take advantage of the opportunities.

Gathering and analyzing information about your customers will provide you with several different types of typical customers. You will then be able to target your marketing efforts to the most appropriate customer group. Remember — 80 percent of your sales will come from 20 of your customers! It is always easier to get a repeat customer than it is to get a new customer.

Today, most successful businesses must have a strong customer orientation, designing their marketing strategies to meet the needs of their customers. This orientation goes beyond just buying and selling food. It includes selling an experience and/or benefits.

For example, at a Farmer's

Montgomery County Master Gardeners Offer Plant Sale, Auction

COLLEGEVILLE (Montgomery Co.) — New and unusual plants, old stand-bys, water plants, PHS Gold Medal Plants, garden auction, compost class, gardening question and answer booth, children's activity, and a self-guided tour of the Learning

Gardens is Saturday, May 17, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. at the Montgomery County 4-H Center parking lot, 1015 Bridge Rd., Collegeville. (Located on Rt. 113 between Rt. 29 and Rt. 73).

Admission is free.

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