Marketing Session – Questions for Presenters

At this point in the course the participants have laid out what their vision is for their farm business (and life) and have tried to zero in on what their exact products and services they will be offering and on what scale. We are going to turn their attention towards selling and distribution now. That’s where you come in. Please start the conversation with your story. Talk about how you got started, where you are now, and where you are headed. Really important to talk about the beginning of your business as that’s the stage the participants are at.

Below are some examples of questions you could focus on for the talk. Feel free to add, subtract, edit, etc. from this list.

* What are you different marketing channels? CSA/subscription, markets, online, wholesale, restaurants, etc. A really big question is WHY you chose those channels. I’ve been getting participants to think more about decision making processes and any insight you can offer into how you make decisions would be very helpful.
* Does how you market depend on the product/service you are offering? Why?
* What is the breakdown of percentage of revenue per channel?
* Through which marketing channel do you move the most volume?
* How do your marketing efforts change with the season?
* Which of your marketing streams requires the most time and effort? Why? Which requires the least?
* How many hours/week do you spend on marketing?
* What sort of special infrastructure have you had to acquire? Including things like set-ups for a farmers market, vehicles, freezers, etc.
* Do you distribute off-farm? Why? Do you have a special vehicle? How much time does it take each week (time off-farm). Any other special equipment/costs associated with moving product off-farm?
* What sort of consumable marketing supplies do you use? (bags, pints, elastics, boxes, etc)
* Do you use any signage in your marketing efforts? Explain.
* Do you market directly from your farm property? What considerations have you had to make in order to do this? (Parking, washrooms, snow removal, etc)
* Do you have an online presence? Website, social media, blog, etc. Did you set it up yourself? Do you maintain it?
* Do you have/use any printed marketing materials? Brochures, posters, flyers, etc.
* Do you have a specific customer retention strategy? A way to ensure their satisfaction?
* Do you survey your customers? Have the results changed the way you market?
* How important is telling the ‘story’ of your farm? If you do try to do this, how do you do it?
* Do you enjoy marketing? If so what parts specifically?
* Have you ever provided incentives in order to encourage word of mouth? (‘bring a friend and get 10% off’)
* When you were first getting started and you had no customers, how did you get your name and product out there?
* How has your marketing strategy changed since then? Do you have any new marketing plans upcoming?
* Any special tricks to introducing a new product or service?