



2016 Wild Ramp Annual Report

The Board of Directors and staff have worked hard this past year to improve market operations and increase returns to producers. Last year brought many changes to The Wild Ramp, including a new Market Manager, market improvements, and an increase in the number of producers and artisans, as well as an increase in the variety of local value-added items to compliment the fresh produce and meats that local farmers bring to market.

For those of you who have not met him, Chasten Toler is our new Market Manager. He began in August and has made several changes already that has enhanced the market including reorganizing the meat case, adding a small grab and go, open air cooler, and adding Ale-8 to the inventory. He has also been working on expanding the events in the market to increase the foot traffic and sales.

We also have four new market staff members including a marketing intern from Marshall University and a participant in the Southwest Community Action Mature Worker Program, whose salary is paid by SWCA.

As for market improvements, we completed the commercial kitchen in February, using funds from an Appalachian Regional Commission grant and in August replaced the tired and outdated lights in the market with new energy efficient LED lighting thanks to funds from a Community Development Block Grant.

These lights will provide a better shopping experience and increased safety. We also repaired the damaged awnings and had minor roof repairs done, along with resealing the front windows which were leaking during heavy rains (July).

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We were able to purchase a new 3-door display cooler due to the generous contribution made Studio 8. This year they designated us as the recipient of their Annual Dandelion Fundraising Event, donating \$1100. Again, we thank STUDIO 8 for their support. It is this type of community support that allows the Wild Ramp to continue its' work in building a strong local foods economy in the Tri-State region.

We have received (from Randy Blatt) another large open air produce-cooler that is currently undergoing rehab and we hope to have it in the market by the beginning of the 2017 produce season, allowing us to remove the large, outdated cold storage walk-in. We are also working on increasing freezer space, including an additional 3-door display freezer and possibly a small walk in freezer. This will allow for better display of meat products, as well as allow us to create a section for non-meat frozen foods.

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Another opportunity that we tested this year was having a kiosk at Empire Books. While we have seen modest sales at this kiosk, we have also received exposure to those who shop at Pullman Square. We will continue to evaluate this trial through the winter and determine if this is a partnership that we will be continuing. Due to the nature of the majority of our produce, we are only able to sell shelf stable products and artwork at this kiosk.

We have also partnered with the Cabell County Health Department in holding Pop-Up Markets at their building during the late summer and early fall. We saw a very positive reaction and solid sales from these events and plan on continuing this partnership next summer. We are looking for other partners in order to increase the number of this type of events to increase access to local food and increase farmers' sales. Another program that belongs to WV DHHR is the Senior and WIC Farmer Market Vouchers. We have doubled the number redeemed at TWR in 2016! We also increased the number of our SNAP/EBT sales over 2015, even with the decline in SNAP benefit levels. We are exploring ways to increase these sales even further in 2017.

We revamped our Friend of the Market (FOM) program in November. Now, customers receive a card when they join the program (for a fee of \$50 per year) and earn one stamp for each purchase. After ten purchases, they receive a \$5 gift certificate. This does NOT come out of the producers' proceeds, but rather from the Wild Ramp's budget. Our goal is to increase FOM participation by 50% in 2017.

We are planning for growth in 2017 and beyond. We understand that meat producers have a huge challenge with access to processing in this region and are working with partners such as Unlimited Future, WV Food and Farm Coalition, and the WVDA, as well as producers, to increase access. We are also exploring opportunities to get smoked meat from Greenbrier and Monroe Counties in WV as part of the Local Food Enterprise Corridor Project.

We are developing a marketing campaign to increase sales. Part of that campaign is to increase the number of classes and events in 2017. We have established a committee coordinate cooking, nutrition, and other classes to help consumers understand the value of local food and inspire them to buy local, healthy, farm fresh food. We will have our annual STINK FEST event on April 22 and our Second Annual Farm to Table Fundraiser Dinner in the fall. We look forward to again hosting part of the Huntington Appalachian Arts and Music Festival and other events.



**A revamped,
simplified Friend of
the Market program
offers loyalty
rewards to members
who shop at The Wild
Ramp.**



the wild ramp
at old central city

2016 BY THE NUMBERS

The Wild Ramp is a year round, community supported Farmers' Market that provides a viable economic outlet for local food producers while providing consumers access to locally grown agricultural products.

The Wild Ramp was open 2,785 hours during 2016, operated by a small paid staff and volunteers who gave over 4896 hours of service, valued at more than \$55,000.

276,873

DOLLARS PRODUCERS & ARTISANS IN 2016



358,916

DOLLARS OF TOTAL SALES FOR 2016



1.6 Million

DOLLARS RETURNED TO PRODUCERS & ARTISANS SINCE OPENING



158

NUMBER OF PRODUCERS & ARTISANS



The Wild Ramp hosted multiple events in 2016 including our Annual Stink-Fest and our First Annual Farm to Table Dinner Fundraiser.

Since we opened on July 12, 2012, we have returned over \$1.2 Million to local producers.

In 2016, The Wild Ramp had 123 registered farmers and 35 registered artisans, for a total of 158 producers; 124 had sales throughout the year. Of the \$358,900 in sales, \$276,873 were returned to producers. Since we opened on July 12, 2012, we have returned \$1,283,987 to local producers.

The Wild Ramp was open 357 days during 2016, closed only for Sundays, holidays, weather days, and 3 days for power outages and maintenance. That translates into 2,785 hours that our producers' goods were available to consumers and the producers could be on their farms or in their studios, producing and creating more goods in order to grow their businesses.

We made changes to our fee structure this year in response to feedback from farmers, removing the shelf fees and changing to a flat consignment fee of 20%. After evaluating costs and considering feedback, we also removed the additional fee for meat producers. Additionally, the annual producer fee (\$50) used to be due on your anniversary month. This method became hard to track and difficult to collect. Therefore, we have shifted to a system that will bill each producer at the beginning of the year. For 2017 this invoices will be prorated based on when your last payment made.

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