

IMPACT

University of Idaho
Extension

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New interactive website makes it easy to find local farm products

AT A GLANCE

BoCoLocal.com has a map-based interface as well as a business card-type list featuring local producers around the region.

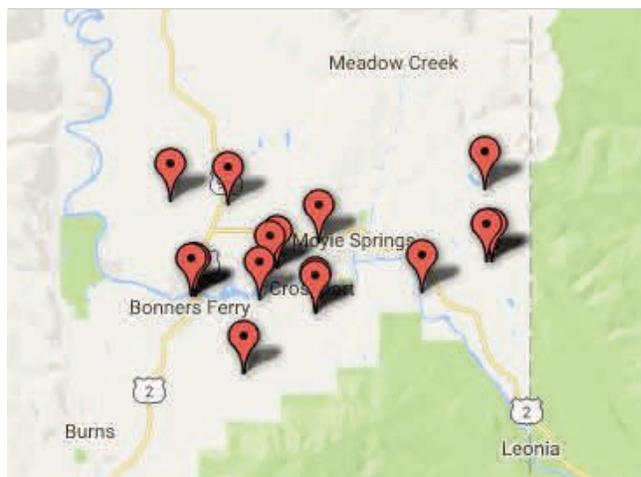
The Situation

Consumers like to support producers in their community, but it's not always easy to find these small producers and find out more about their products. These producers frequently lack sufficient resources to advertise their farms or small enterprises and market their products. While they frequently have websites or Facebook sites, and perhaps even online ordering, they often need help publicizing this information. Consumers say they would be happy to purchase from their local farmers' market suppliers if they could easily contact them outside regular market hours.

Our Response

The BoCoLocal.com website grew out of the Farm to Table fundraising dinner project, which was created by the community garden group, Gardeners for Regional Organic Wellbeing. A resource guide to local producers with information on their products and contact information was developed, using information from local suppliers that contributed to the dinner as well as other suppliers that were contacted at the farmers' market and in soliciting contributions for the dinner.

The website uses a Google application called Fusion Tables, which is an experimental data visualization program that allows you to gather data in spreadsheet form, share it with others on Google drive, and map it spatially as demonstrated above. Users choose



The BoCoLocal.com lists local suppliers by their location on a Google-based map with additional information in linked pins.

which data to include in the pop-up window when a red marker on the map is selected (example below). In addition, a list view is available that will list all participants in the database in this same format.

Farm/business name: BeeHaven Farm
Your name: Paula N. Rice
Address: 2431 Mood Shadow Road, Bonners Ferry ID 83805
Phone: 208-267-1160
Cell phone:
Email: beehavenflowers@gmail.com
Website: www.beehavenfarm.com
Products: We provide cut flowers for weddings and events. We are also a local farmer florist selling fresh, in-season flowers.
Visitors?: Yes
Hours?: Mon.-Fri., May-Sept
By Appointment?: yes

In the Google Fusion Tables program, you can choose which information from the database will appear in the pop-up when clicking the red markers. It is also available as a list view of the entire database.

Program Outcomes

As a result of the creation of BoCoLocal.com, participating local suppliers have had additional sales, both from local and more distant consumers. The availability of an online resource guide will also help potential participants who are looking to develop local marketing as well as an online presence. Finally, the website creates a network of local suppliers that serve as examples and mentors to other local suppliers.

The Future

Extension educators and suppliers from additional counties have expressed an interest in this type of product. The current database could be expanded to include more counties or it could be duplicated for other counties. Since this Google application is experimental, it is not particularly user friendly. I presented this project at the summer meeting of the Cultivating Success/Small Farm team in Moscow.

Cooperators and Co-Sponsors

To date, 25 growers and artisans have signed up to be listed in BoCoLocal.com. A rotating feature highlights a few different suppliers and helps keep the website interesting. I distributed sign-up sheets for the website at the local farmer's market and at the UI Extension office. I have also posted the sign-up sheet on my UI Extension blog, BoundaryAgBlog.Wordpress.com.



The BoCoLocal.com website highlights a rotating group of different local suppliers and artisans and also has a complete alphabetical list of participants.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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