



A Summary of Comments from the Texas Agricultural Cooperative Council's Farm Store Summit January 11-12, 2024

(The following is a summary of some of the comments taken from the group that attended the 2024 TACC Farm Store Summit in Fredericksburg. Ideas presented are not those of any one speaker or TACC representative --- simply a collection of ideas that surfaced by attendees during the two-day meeting.)

"The Voice of Cooperatives"

Christy Lewis
Executive Vice President

Raley Kirk
*Director of Member
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1. Marketing Idea: Share and advertise anything new the co-op is doing or offering on Facebook or make calls to members.
2. Explore additional marketing strategies the co-op is not already using such as Facebook, newspaper, radio, billboards, sponsoring community events, offering gift cards for raffles or "teacher/ student of the year" to drive customers to the store.
3. Consider adding "Open to the Public" signage or to your marketing materials.
4. When selecting vendors, try to find those that only sell to your area and not to your competitors.
5. Expand your inventory to attract more shoppers: Freshies (Fredericksburg Farms), Cotton Honey (from Idalou), non-perishable gourmet foods and snacks (House of Webster), pet supplies and toys, Marlin knives, western/work wear, jewelry, children's toys, plants.
6. Holiday Marketing Ideas: Invite Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny for a photo opportunity and to drive traffic through the store, distribute a flyer during the month of the holiday to receive a discount.
7. Invite local vendors to showcase their products in your store.
8. Host events: Live demonstrations from vendors such as Traeger, Milwaukee, chemical vendors, etc., contact your local county AgriLife Extension agent, "fill your feeder" day – corn sale.
9. Start a rewards/loyalty program or offer a pre-paid card that is discounted to non-members or those that don't qualify for credit.
10. Use social media: post on Facebook regularly (at least 3 times per week) about new products, sales, offer coupons, educational posts, videos from vendors about their products, "extreme" sales, consider boosting Facebook ads, put aging inventory in a "brown bag" for a "brown bag special", events the co-op is sponsoring, highlight employees, highlight members.
11. Utilize tools like "Buffer" to help you manage social media and schedule posts ahead.

(over)



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12. Know your competitors and what makes your co-op different.
13. Emphasize the co-ops connection to the community – all profits stay local and support and sustain the community. Stay at home, spend at home, have a home.
14. Streamline your vendors to help control inventory. Many vendors offer services to help you manage your inventory, as well – be sure to utilize them.
15. If you are considering starting a tire shop, here are a few tips: Firestone offers a school in Iowa to train your employees, it is helpful to stick with one brand to take advantage of their services and cost savings. Also, if you are close to a wholesaler, you do not need to keep as much inventory on hand.
16. Look to the future: rural Texas and agricultural is constantly evolving. Farm consolidations means few customers, drought has caused farmers to look at other options (other crops, cattle, etc.), urban areas are expanding, hobby farmers and ranchettes are increasing, bitcoin miners are moving into rural areas. What can your farm store provide to adapt or attract new customers?
17. Vendors mentioned or in attendance:
 - Orgill (<https://www.orgill.com/>)
 - K&K Vet Supply (*a good vendor/resource for animal health*) (<https://kkvet.com/>)
 - House of Webster (<https://houseofwebster.com>)
 - Service Tool Co. (<http://www.servicetoolco.com>)
 - Southern Marketing Affiliates (<https://www.smalink.com>)
 - Becknell Wholesale Co. (<http://www.becknell.com>)
 - Fredericksburg Farms (<https://www.fbgfarms.com>)
 - KT Industries (<http://www.ktindustries.net>)
 - Range Ward Fencing (<https://www.rangeward.com>)
 - San Antonio Steel Co. (<https://sasteelco.com>).
 - L.P. Brown Co. (<http://www.lpbrown.com>)
 - Approach Environmental (<http://approachenv.com>)
 - Cooperative Finance Association (<https://cfafs.com>)
18. Good quote from co-op General Manager: "If a woman shops at the co-op, it will be successful."
19. We're in the real estate business. Every square inch of the store needs to be profitable.

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