

How to Create a Market or Farm Web Site

An effective web site for your farmers' market or farm can be affordable. There are a number of online blogging tools that can also serve as starter web sites. One such free tool, WordPress.com, is easy for the non-technical person to use and can grow as your organization grows.

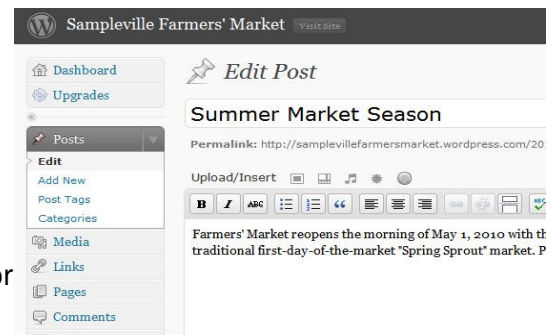
The steps below will guide you through the basics of creating a free web site and customizing it for your market or farm.



1. Go to: www.wordpress.com and click Sign Up, enter a username and other information. Check the “Gimme a Blog” and click Next. Choose your blog domain. This should be your market or farm name. It will be your default web address like samplevillefarmersmarket.wordpress.com
2. Choose your Blog Name, language, etc. and click Sign up. Check your email to activate your registration. Log-in! Now you are ready to configure your site.
3. Choose a Theme: In the left menu click Appearance, Themes. You will be able to browse a number of layouts for you site. For this sample we chose the “Vigilance” theme. Activate your theme and click from the “Options” links under your current theme to customize it. Choose a theme with a custom-header feature so that you can add your own image to the top of the site.
4. Adding Pages and Posts:

- a) *Pages are static content that remains linked from you main menu.*

Typical pages would be Vendor Rules, About Us, Our Producers, and Sponsors. In the left menu click on “Pages, Add New”, Enter a title for your page and a body text. You can insert images, links and other media and documents in your pages and posts by placing your cursor in the content area and clicking one of the small icons above the editing area.



- b) *Posts are blog entries displayed chronologically, much like news updates.*

Typical posts would be this weeks latest product offerings, announcement of upcoming events, newsletter, articles highlighting a vendor.

5. Adding a custom header image (optional): Create the image in an image editing software on your computer. The theme will indicate what size to make your image, but 900 pixels wide by 150 pixels high is a good start. Go under “Appearance, Custom-header”. Upload your custom header image. You may have the option of cropping the image to fit the theme. After changing the header, view your site by clicking “visit site” near the top of your admin panel.
6. Edit Widgets: Widgets are elements like text, images, list of pages or other tools that you can add to the sidebars on your site. Each theme allows for different widgets. You can add widgets for a link to sign up for updates via email, images or text of your choice. You can add a flickr.com photo gallery or a block of your Twitter headlines. One important widget block to add is a list of your “Pages” in a prominent location on your sidebar.
7. Creating some images to enhance your site is optional, but it will add to the appeal. Using the image editing software on your computer you can create some images to insert in the sidebar widgets and into the content of your site to make it “pop”. The exact size may depend on your theme and the size of your sidebars. The following dimensions are good ones to start with, units are in pixels: square images: 200 wide x 200 high; tall images: 200 wide x 400 high; small square images: 150 wide x 150 high; horizontal image: 300 wide x 100 high.



8. Change the Name of the site and tag line as needed under "Settings, General" in the left menu.
9. If you own a domain name, you can forward the domain to the address of your free blog site, by logging into your domain name registrar and looking for forwarding options. This allows you to promote you site using the domain name on all your handouts and advertising.
10. Change the Name and tag line as needed under "Settings, General" in the left menu

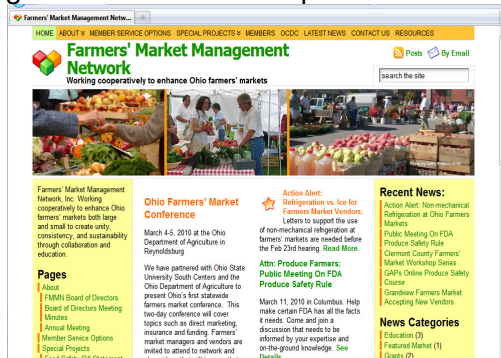
Below are some of the major elements of your site's home page and where to go to edit them.

The screenshot shows the homepage of 'Sampleville Farmers' Market'. Annotations on the right side point to the following elements:

- Site Name and Tag line (Edit Settings)**: Points to the site title and tagline.
- Custom-Header (Edit Appearance)**: Points to the header area containing the site name and navigation menu.
- pages menu (automatic)**: Points to the navigation menu (Home, About, Contact Us, Info For Vendors, Our Vendors).
- Posts shown on Home page (Edit Settings to show a page here instead of posts)**: Points to the main content area showing two posts.
- Text Widget can have links or other html code.**: Points to a 'TIP OF THE DAY' widget.
- Subscription Pages Image Images Text (Edit Appearance)**: Points to the sidebar widgets including an email subscription box, a 'PAGES' list, and image-based widgets.

The above site was created in about 2 hours using only the standard free elements available to the layperson without special code customizations. The site is live on the web at: <http://samplevillefarmersmarket.wordpress.com>

When your site is ready to move to the next level you may consider a downloaded version of WordPress that installs on your own hosted site. This will require more technical expertise, but will allow you much more flexibility with design and features. Examples of hosted WordPress sites are: fmmn.org and localfoodcolumbus.org



Written by Mayda Sanchez-Shingler
 Mayda has been a web consultant, site designer and developer since 1997. She publishes localfoodcolumbus.org and volunteers for the Farmers' Market Management Network (fmmn.org)
 Mayda can be reached at msanchez@unlimitedmedia.com 614-886-7119
 Unlimited Media www.unlimitedmedia.com