

## WEBSITE CONSIDERATIONS/COMMON PAGES

### **PURPOSE OF THE WEBSITE:**

The first thing you want to determine is the purpose of your website.

**Who** are you trying to reach?

**What** information will they want/need to find on your website?

The kinds of information that people often make sure to include on a website tab include:

- Contact information
- Story (about)
- Galleries
- Blog/News Page
- Recipes
- Mailing List sign up
- Directories
- Membership directories
- Resources to share
- Links to Social Media
- Links to other relevant websites.

Of course, what exactly goes on your website is up to you but in general, at the very least your site should have a **good description of what your business/group does and is**, and **up to date contact information** for people seeking more information.

Keep in mind that the text on website does NOT need to be extensive. In fact, generally you want to try and keep things short, in short paragraphs or in bulleted lists so that it's easy to read on a variety of devices. People are browsing the internet more and more on smaller devices and large blocks of text are difficult to read and if there is too much, people may not read it at all.

## WEBSITE COST

This is an important thing to consider BEFORE you design your website. If you have a site designed on a platform that is too expensive to maintain, that time and energy has been wasted. Additionally, if it is built on a free site that is unable to offer the functionality your business needs, you may not be able to transfer it to a larger provider with more services.

Approximate costs per year:

- **Free:** Nothing to a few dollars for hosting – Simple website
  - **Low cost: \$58 - \$190/year** – Own domain, website, Store options
  - **Medium: \$200- \$435/year** – Website, advanced store options
  - **High: Over \$435** –Complex website, Large store (suited to large online retailers)
- } **Recommended for small farm & food businesses**

. Website costs vary greatly depending on the services you need, the providers you choose, and what other services your site needs to work with. To learn more about website costs, please see VC2 handout, Website Cost, on our website [www.vc2.org/resources](http://www.vc2.org/resources)

## COMMON WEBSITE PAGES

Below is a list of common website pages to be used as a guide when designing your site.

### Home

The home page is usually the first page a visitor lands on (an exception is if you have a custom Landing page)

Possible content to include on a homepage:

- Purpose of the website
- Gallery of the farm/business
- Mission of the business
- Hours (if applicable)
- Photos and a welcome message
- Key information to show (if they can only reach one page)

### About (“About Us”, “Our Story”, etc)

The About page is very important to include. This is the place to talk about what your entity is, and what it does.

- A brief history of your entity. (if the history of the entity is extensive and you do want to include it, a separate page “History” is recommended)
- What your entity does currently ( i.e. “We sell vegetables and fruits at local farmers markets throughout the growing season”, or “we are a group that organizes producers to cooperatively plan their planting schedules”)
- Your mission if you have one

### Blog/ News page (“Farm news”, “What’s New”, etc.)

Many website providers provide a news or Blog style page that people can click on and see updated posts. A blog post is different than having new pages for information since each post is dated and they usually display in order from most recent to past. This is a great way to post information about events, resources, specials, updates, etc. It can function as a newsletter/bulletin board for your entity.

## **Contact**

This is a very important page to include. If you are concerned about spam you can set up a contact form that visitors have to submit. However, this can be an issue if someone needs to reach you quickly and you don't check your submitted comments often. Especially for businesses that have product that they are selling to consumers it is recommended to provide a valid email and phone number in the contact area.

If you sell at farmers markets or retail stores, this is a good place to put a "you can find us here" section.

Possible content:

- Name
- Address
- Phone
- Email Address
- Locations (if you sell at particular markets)
- Contact us form to be submitted.

## **Gallery**

A gallery page can be a great place to have some nice photos of your entity. It is a place to showcase what you do.

## **Recipes (if applicable)**

If your business sells a food product, a recipe page can be a great addition! Some website providers will allow for 2 blog style pages and a blog page can easily be customized to be used as a recipe page.

## **Products/Store (If Applicable)**

If you have an online store, this is where your products would be listed. (or if you have an off-site store provider, where the link would be to re-direct).

Even if you do not sell online, this is a great place to highlight and showcase your products so that visitors know what you sell and where to find them.

## **Resources (if applicable)**

If your entity works to educate, this is a place to link to existing resources, post your own resources, post anything that would be useful for others. This can be a great way to create traffic to your site and can be an effective way to tell people how to find things related to your project/entity.

## **Member Directory/Farm Directory (if applicable)**

This can be done a variety of ways. Some websites just list links to member sites, however, the most effective way is to create a directory page that allows for a photo, a short description, and contact information/web link for each listing. Each listing can be updated individually so that large consolidated documents do not need to be kept for the whole membership. The ability to insert a directory page will depend on your website provider.

## **Partners (if applicable)**

If your entity has a formal relationship to another group/farm, a partners page can be a great place to highlight them and explain how you work together. If your project receives any grant funding this can be a good place to highlight and thank your funders.

## **History**

If you have an extensive or interesting history that you would like to display a separate history page may be appropriate.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION THAT CAN BE DISPLAYED ONLINE**

### **Banner/Menu/Footer Information**

Most webpages have a Banner/Menu at the top that stays the same no matter which page you're on, and also have a footer at the very bottom that stays the same.

Here is some information that you should consider including in these

#### **Banner/Menu**

- Menu
- Social Media Icons
- Catch phrase
- Logo

#### **Footer**

- Hours
- Copyright
- Social Media Icons
- Contact information

### **Mailing List sign-up pages**

Most website providers will allow for mailing list signup forms to be on the website someplace (sometimes in the banners, sometimes in sidebars, sometimes on its own page). The basic sign up form will send an email to the website owner with the email address of the visitor who signed up. Alternatively, a good option is to use a 3<sup>rd</sup> party mailing list manager like Mailchimp.com to collect emails. These services usually provide sign up forms that you can add to your website to collect emails directly.