



Southwest Marketing Network

Expanding Markets for Southwest Small-Scale, Alternative, and Minority Producers

Promoting Local Agricultural Marketing in the Southwest

September 2004

Don't Wait to Build your Local Food System

We keep hearing that this is the time to re-invigorate our local food systems—that forces are aligning to support such a shift—and that if we don't take advantage of the situation we will be kicking ourselves for years to come. I tend to agree, based on three current trends:

Obesity in the News: Everyone is talking about the “obesity epidemic,” super-sized fast foods, low carb diets, diabetes and other diet-related diseases. The attention span of the American media is limited, so what better time to promote the advantages of fresh, wholesome foods from local producers?

Motivated Consumers: The intensity with which many consumers are seeking foods that are unique, out of the ordinary, exciting, even slow (as in the Slow Food movement) is exactly what local, niche, direct marketers need to support their habit. “Taste, face, and place” are the product attributes that wise marketers offer this new breed of consumers. The more that family-scale, local producers can offer these choices, the less likely these consumers will drift away to mega-corporations offering nicely wrapped, enticing, but often hollow imitations of the real thing.

Highly Aware Consumers: Many consumers are looking beyond the benefits not only to themselves of wholesome local foods, but to how their

food choices affect the environment, rural communities, farm workers, and future generations. They are seeking foods produced sustainably, and will often pay more for them. But unless they can find these sustainable products, their enthusiasm and good intentions will wane, and the opportunity will be lost.

The Southwest Marketing Network's Role: Our role in the SWMN is to make information, training, and peer examples available to support this movement toward stronger, vibrant, local food systems. So look inside this issue for stories, resources, and events to inspire, guide, and inform you.

Jim Dyer

Save this Date!

Don't forget to mark your calendars for our 3rd Annual Conference, March 13-15, 2005 in Albuquerque, NM.

New Report Sheds Light on Marketing Needs

The SWMN recently released results from a survey of producer and service provider needs regarding alternative marketing approaches. Focusing on small-scale, alternative, and minority farmers and ranchers in the Four Corners states, this survey revealed the priority training and information needs, obstacles to obtaining assistance, and the most pressing issues in the region.

The survey questioned 87 “service providers”—extension and other government agents, non-governmental organizations, producer groups, farmers’ market organizers, and tribal groups—and gathered input on over 40 alternative marketing topics. These service providers identified their needs as well as those of their producer clients.

“It’s critical—for us and other groups in the region—to know the real needs of producer-marketers in our region and of those who assist them” said Jim Dyer, Project Director of the SWMN. “This report provides us with the information we need to assess our own programs, but we also hope that other service providers use the results to evaluate their own programs and the needs of their producers.”

The 36-page report is packed with information about the most pressing alternative marketing needs including, for example, finding markets, determining pricing, product diversification, and community supported agriculture. It also looks at the gap between these needs and the amount of information currently being provided to producers. In doing so, the report identifies several topics where producers appear to need more assistance than is available, including such things as financing, product distribution, marketing culturally traditional foods, selling dairy products, and providing customer service.

Please contact us if you want more information about the results of the report. The report is published by the Southwest Marketing Network, the Wallace Center, and the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT) and is available for review or free downloading on the web at: www.swmarketing.ncat.org/report/surveyreport04.pdf. Limited numbers of print copies are available from NCAT for those without internet access—call 1-800-346-9140 and ask for publication IP 251.

Lydia Oberholtzer

CSE’s Marketing Tips for “Land Stewards”

Some encouraging new information and advice for Southwestern producers of lamb, wool, and range-fed beef has been compiled by Gary Nabhan and the staff of the Center for Sustainable Environments (CSE) at Northern Arizona University. “Marketing for Land Stewards: Briefing #1, June 2004” is available on the Center’s website at www.environment.nau.edu under the “Food” link.

Combining research on consumer preferences done by the Center and other groups, the Briefing provides guidance to land stewards so they can find rewards in the marketplace for their sustainable production practices. This is especially important during the current drought conditions when the very survival of many smaller-scale farms and ranches is at stake—one of the key motivations for the Briefing series.

Citing an impressive 24% annual growth rate in sales of natural products nationwide, and their own research showing that 48% of Arizona consumers

would pay more for local foods, the Center is making a strong case for local marketing of sustainable products.

But the wise marketer needs to look further into the mind of the consumer. They like local, but in CSE’s Arizona survey of ten product attributes—a list which included local, organic, and price—quality/freshness, taste, and “healthy” were the highest ranked.

The current Briefing includes much more practical guidance for regional marketers, as well as information on:

- Food traceability and range-fed, local beef,
- CSE’s “Canyon Country Fresh” campaign,
- Direct marketing of Navajo wool, and
- The importance of “Freshness” in labeling and promoting local products.

See the briefing at the CSE’s website above or contact Catherine Freeman at 928-523-0664 for more information.

Jim Dyer

Mesa Verde Country Directory Published

Mesa Verde Country Guide to Local Sustainable Food and Fiber

A Directory of Local Producers Direct Marketing Sustainable and
Unique Food and Fiber

July 2004 Edition



Now online and updated regularly at <www.oakhavenpc.org>
courtesy of Oakhaven Permaculture Center

Compiled by Sue Bruckner and Jim Dyer
Published by the Southwest Marketing Network's SW Colorado Project

Consumers in and around Southwest Colorado looking for fresh vegetables, fruit, flour, honey, flowers, wine, cheese, meats, wool, and other local products now have it a bit easier. The “Mesa Verde Country Guide to Local Sustainable Food and Fiber” started appearing in August at local natural food stores, libraries, health offices, and Extension offices.

This first edition lists 30 producers who sell their unique, sustainably produced agricultural products directly to consumers, restaurants, and stores. Published by the Southwest Marketing Network as part of a local demonstration project, this edition is just the beginning. We hope to list many more direct marketing producers soon, as well as restaurants and stores that feature products from our local farms and ranches. This directory is currently listing producers in the region that is roughly 90 miles around Mesa Verde.

Free On-line. Several hundred copies have been distributed, but the easiest way for consumers to find it and the best way to stay up-to-date is online at www.oakhavenpc.org—the website of the Oakhaven Permaculture Center in Hesperus, Colorado. It’s available there for viewing or downloading a free version for printing and copying.

Consumers are increasingly looking not only for fresh, safe, nutritious food, but also for products that are grown sustainably—in ways causing the least harm, and preferably, the most good for land, air and water resources, wildlife, farm families and workers, and rural communities. They’d rather buy from the person who knows the most about the product and how it was grown, and they know that buying locally keeps the local economy and local agriculture strong.

Each producer is asked for a “producers’ statement” for the directory, in their own words, describing how their products are unique, and how they are sustainably produced. Some of the statements include:

“We constantly strive to improve biodiversity, soil health, and water quality.”

“We embrace sustainable practices—drip/micro-spray irrigation, soil enrichment, natural weed control.”

“We are restoring overgrazed land using organic practices and growing open-pollinated heirlooms adapted to Southwest conditions.”

A Directory for Your Area? If you are interested in producing a similar directory for your area, take a look online at the Mesa Verde Directory for ideas, and contact me—I would be glad to help you get started.

Jim Dyer

Farmers' Markets Abound!

Farmers' markets are growing at an astonishing rate in the country and in our area. There are now more than 3,500 in the nation and more than 150 in this four state region.

The Southwest Marketing Network is providing technical assistance to numerous farmers' market development projects in Colorado and Arizona. This includes helping communities understand what is needed to begin a farmers' market; making sure there are enough farmers and ranchers in the region to adequately supply the market and customers who will support it; and, business planning, marketing, volunteer recruitment, community support, site planning, possible regulatory requirements, and educational programming.

Colorado Farmers' Markets

Farmers, ranchers and community members of the Colorado Springs region have been planning for several years for a farmers' market that eventually could have a year round venue. The market was opened this summer. Negotiations for the lease of indoor space in an adjacent building is continuing. This is helping to get customers accustomed to coming to the new site; to give vendors an opportunity to have a summer of sales; and, to "test the market". The market also allows value-added products developed by local businesses such as salsas, breads, pasta and coffee. A local restaurant provides chef's demonstrations with produce found at the market. The Colorado Springs Farmers' and Art Market is unique in that it is structured as a vendor's cooperative. Customers may also join the cooperative. A percentage of the cooperative's funds are donated to the community. Jay Frost, President of the markets' Board of Directors and a farmer and rancher, said he hopes the market will provide the community with a better understanding of who the farming community is and the importance of agriculture in the region. Dyan del Glaudio, the Market Manager, says the greatest challenge in the first year is getting the word out in the community. The Market is open Saturday mornings. In August, the cooperative opened a second market in the neighboring community of Manitou Springs, open Wednesday mornings. For more information, contact Dan Hobbs of the Rocky Mountain Farmers' Union at 719-685-1860.

Arizona Farmers' Markets

Arizona's 47 farmers' markets just celebrated statewide Farmers' Market Week with an array of

events and education programs. Markets continue to expand in the state especially in southeastern and south central Arizona where communities are getting assistance from the Coronado RC&D. In May, the RC&D, in partnership with the USDA Risk Management Agency and the Southwest Marketing Network, provided a two-day workshop for the communities of Benson and St. David entitled "Will a Farmers' Market Work in Your Community and For You?" Forty-five farmers, livestock producers, and community members attended. Jan Holder of Erwin's Natural Beef and Pam Roy of the Southwest Marketing Network teamed up to provide specific materials on business and marketing planning, financial management, and market development. Valerie McCaffrey of the Bisbee Farmers' Market and Elizabeth Buchroeder of the Rincon Valley Farmers' Market shared advice on the challenges and successes of developing farmers' markets. There is now a small farmers' market in Benson. The communities of Benson and St. David continue to work together on plans to open a weekly Saturday farmers' market in St. David. There is additional interest in Douglas, Nogales and the San Javier District of the Tohono O'odham Indian Nation. For more information contact Donna Matthews at the Coronado RC&D at 520-384-2229 x123.

New Mexico Farmers' Markets

In 1993, New Mexico had 23 markets and now has 38. Unlike most states, New Mexico has a statewide organization, the New Mexico Farmers' Marketing Association (NMFMA), supported mostly by legislative funding. The NMFMA provides excellent statewide technical assistance, promotion, and capacity building programs. Last January, in collaboration with the Southwest Marketing Network, the NMFMA provided a two day intensive "how to" workshop for farmers' market managers from the four state area. They are hoping to provide this workshop again in January 2005. For more information contact Esther Kovari and Sarah Grant at 505-983-4010 or visit www.farmersmarketsnm.org.

For further information about farmers' market development assistance, contact the Southwest Marketing Network, Pam Roy and Le Adams at 505-473-1004. Keep an eye out for more information in upcoming issues!

Pamela Roy

Learn More about Direct Marketing

Farmers selling direct to consumers has been a growing trend. The latest Agricultural Census reveals that the value of agricultural products sold directly by farmers and ranchers to consumers increased from \$591.8 million in 1997 to \$812.2 million in 2002 or by 37.2%. Over this period the number of farms selling directly to consumers increased by 5.5%. While marketing directly to consumers has seen growth, not every operation can do it successfully. What are some of the key ingredients and ideas that enable some producers to successfully market their products directly to consumers? To highlight some of these key ingredients, the publication, *Western Profiles of Innovative Agricultural Marketing: Examples from Direct Farm Marketing and Agri-Tourism Enterprises* was recently published by the Western Extension Marketing Committee. Several of you received this booklet at the Flagstaff Conference in March. It deserves an even wider audience.

An example of one innovative enterprise covered in this publication is Love Family Farms of Kona, Hawaii. Kona coffee and exotic fruits are products that they market directly to consumers. To set apart their market niche they do several things. First, they custom produce hundreds of coffee labels for events that range from company parties to weddings and Holiday festivities. Ken Love designs all his own labels and uses a relatively inexpensive desktop printer to print a high quality looking label on foil paper. Second, Ken speaks Japanese and has a fascination with that culture and social trends, which enables him to target Japanese-owned resorts in Kona to visit his farm. Some of these Japanese tourists become some of his most loyal coffee customers. One of Love's more interesting enterprises is a "coffee tree rental program." Individuals can participate in the growing and harvesting activities of the tree if they so desire and Ken also has a location on their farm's website where the consumer can go to see an updated picture of how the tree they have rented is progressing. To help minimize coffee processing costs, Ken shares processing facilities with neighboring producers through a local marketing cooperative.

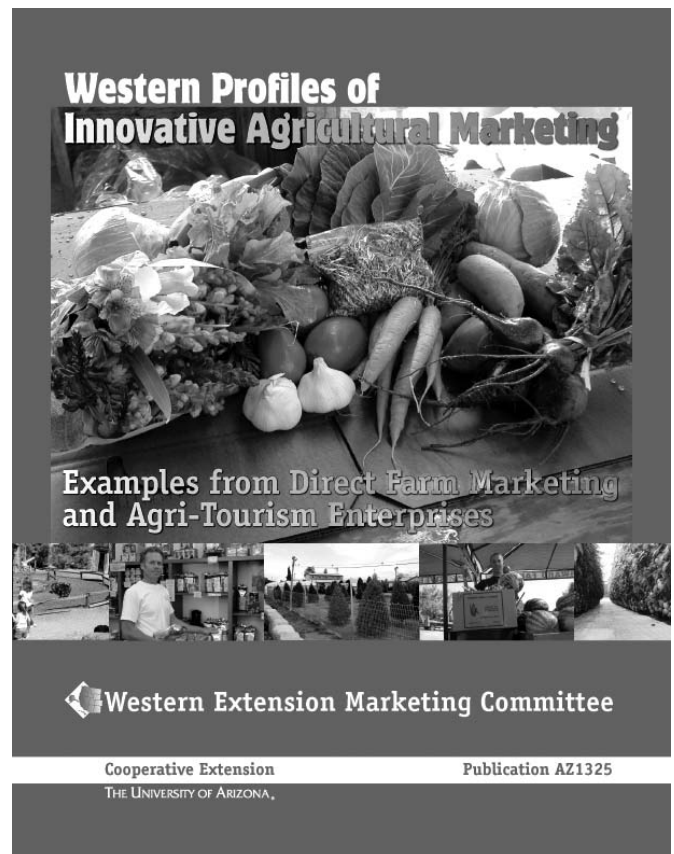
The enterprises that are highlighted are located in the wetter lands of Hawaii, California and Oregon and in the arid reaches of Nevada, Utah, Arizona and Colorado. There are examples from producers of vegetables, fruits, flowers, poultry, lamb, "natural" beef,

trees, honey, dried fruits and even products for pets made from hay. Various sales avenues are dealt with, including restaurants, CSAs, farmers' markets, sales to businesses, farm markets, u-pick operations, and internet sales. Other interesting subject matter includes farming on the urban edge, giving back to the community, niche marketing, cooperatives, tours, school tours, corn mazes, zoning regulations, and greenhouse production.

Direct marketing has proven to be a successful and sustainable alternative to traditional commodity markets for many agricultural producers in the Western United States. There are many great ideas in this book.

The 128 page color publication is available for free at <http://ag.arizona.edu/arec/wemc/wemc.html> and a single full-color copy can also be purchased for \$10 from CALSmart, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, The University of Arizona, 4042 N. Campbell Avenue, Tucson, Arizona 85719, or order online at <http://pubs1.cals.arizona.edu/sales/index.cfm> or call toll-free 1-877-763-5315.

Russ Tronstad and Le Adams



Network News

SWMN News

- **Save the Date!** The 2005 SWMN Conference will be held in Albuquerque, New Mexico on March 13-15, 2005. Put it on your calendar now!
- Following up on our article in the June issue, the Tsailé Navajo Weavers **Rug Auction** was a success with 189 rugs selling for over \$32,000 in total. The SWMN continues to work with the group on incorporating their organization and developing future auctions.
- Chef John Sharpe of the **Turquoise Room Restaurant** at La Posada in Winslow, Arizona is celebrating local foods and local growers this fall. Contact him if you can provide fresh ingredients for the restaurant. They are open for all meals, every day. 928-289-2888.
- The New Mexico Food & Agricultural Policy Council is working on a **Food Assessment Guide** for the state of New Mexico. It will cover several topics, including ranching, food security, large and small farms, and food programs for children. It will help to paint the picture of existing and potential food and agricultural policy in the state. The Guide will be available in January 2005.
- A SWMN partner, the Center for Sustainable Environments at Northern Arizona University, is part of a collaborative effort to bring attention to, and help preserve “**North America’s most unique and distinctive foods**”. Look for much more in our next SWMN Newsletter as the project unfolds, but take a peek at the plans on the Center’s website www.environment.nau.edu under the “Food” link.
- In addition to all its English-language publications, ATTRA offers free **Spanish-language** sustainable and organic farming publications. Printed and CD-Rom information. Call 1-800-411-3222 (Español) and www.attra.ncat.org/espanol/index.html.

Other News of Interest to the Southwest

- The 2002 **Census of Agriculture** was released in June. The average age of the principal operator rose from 54 years (in 1997) to 55.3 years. Women-run operations gained by 13% and Latino-run by 51%. Total farm and ranch numbers fell by 4%. There are over 500,000 farms in the 10 to 49 acre category. Direct sales to consumers increased by 37% to \$812 million. Make sure you get counted next time! www.usda.gov/nass.
- The Organic Farming Research Foundation released the complete findings of their **Fourth National Organic Farmers’ Survey**. Expanding markets, higher prices and organic price premiums were some of the subjects covered with this 2001 data. 831-426-6606 and www.ofrf.org.
- The deadline to register to **VOTE** is in early October. Please be sure to exercise your citizenship and **VOTE** on Tuesday, November 2, 2004. Give a friend a ride to the voting location too.

New NM Organic Resources Available

There are four new publications from the New Mexico Organic Commodity Commission that will help farmers throughout the state and beyond. The first, “New Mexico Organic Producer Guide,” provides information for producers about entering various markets—direct marketing, retail, and wholesale. The appendix to this handbook contains sample invoices, procedures for safe sampling, produce handling suggestions and more. The second, “Directory of Markets for New Mexico Organic Producers,” lists all the farmers’ markets in the state, and local retailers (groceries and restaurants) that organic producers have found to be receptive to purchasing local organic product. Distributors, processors and cooperatives are also listed. The third guide is “Certified Organic New Mexico Producers, Processors, Handlers and Retailers”. This directory will be distributed to buyers who request information, and at public events such as the state fair. Last but not least, we have (blank) laminated point-of-purchase signs. These could be used at farmers’ markets or given to retailers who are selling your product. The Commission would like to thank the New Mexico Department of Agriculture, Marketing & Development Division for their generous support of this project, and all who contributed their time and ideas. Contact the Commission in Albuquerque at 505-841-9067 or joan.quinn@state.nm.us.

Joan Quinn

Calendar of Events

September 23-26, 2004 • The 4th Annual Four Corners Small Farms Conference. Durango, CO. This year's conference features Joel Salatin of Polyface Farms. The four day conference includes workshops and demonstrations, draft horse halter show, farm tours, a BBQ and barn dance, cowboy church and breakfast, and children's workshops. Camping is available.

Contact: Greg Vlaming, 970-247-4355 or email ranchdelcielo@earthlink.net

September 29 & 30, 2004 • The Future of Lamb Production in Arizona. Tucson, AZ.

Contact: Kim Webb at Coronado RC&D, 520-384-2229, x123 or kim.webb@rcdnet.net.

October 1-3, 2004 • Prairie Festival. Salina, KS

Contact: The Land Institute, 785-823-5376 or www.landinstitute.org.

October 3, 2004 • Extending your Growing Season. Oakhaven Permaculture Center, Hesperus, CO.

Cold frames, tunnels, and greenhouses. Contact: 970-259-5445 or www.oakhavenpc.org

October 15 & 16, 2004 • Celebrating the Sacred in Food and Water, 2nd Annual Conference. Socorro, NM at San Miguel Parish. Farm tours, dialogues, panels. Sponsored by the Catholic Diocese and NMSU Cooperative Extension Service. Contact: Santa Fe 505-831-8167, Las Cruces 505-523-7577, or Gallup 505-726-9197.

October 15-17, 2004 • Bioneers Conference. Main program in Marin County, CA.

Contact: Bioneers, 1-877-BIONEERS or www.bioneers.org. There is an opportunity for attending satellite conferences also. Contact www.bioneers.org/programs/satellite/2004.php for information on Boulder, CO; Logan, UT; Telluride, CO; and Prescott, AZ.

October 16-19, 2004 • Community Food Security Coalition Annual Conference. Milwaukee, WI

Conference, tours and workshops. Contact: 310-822-5410 or www.foodsecurity.org

October 24, 2004 • Introduction to Cheese Making. Oakhaven Permaculture Center, Hesperus, CO.

Demonstrations and the equipment required. Contact: 970-259-5445 or www.oakhavenpc.org.

November 6, 2004 • Future Farms, Digging Deeper. Oklahoma City, OK.

Contact Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture, 918-647-9123, www.kerrcenter.com.

November 12-14, 2004 • Growing Together – Strengthening the CSA Movement. A Conference for Community Supported Agriculture. Tustin, MI.

Contact: CSA-Michigan, 231-889-3216 or www.mlui.org/csaconference/

March 13-15, 2005 • Southwest Marketing Network 3rd Annual Conference, Albuquerque, NM.

Contact: www.swmarketing.ncat.org or 505-473-1004.

Go to www.swmarketing.ncat.org to find updated information on the Southwest Marketing Network and other activities in our region.

For more events outside our region, visit the ATTRA calendar at www.attra.ncat.org/cgi-bin/event/calendar.cgi.

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SOUTHWEST MARKETING NETWORK STEERING COMMITTEE

Jim Dyer, Project Director

NCAT, Four Corners Office
Hesperus, CO
970-588-2292
jadyer@frontier.net

Le Adams

Farm to Table, NM
505-473-1004
ladams@cybermesa.com

John Blueyes

*Navajo Nation Department
of Agriculture, Window Rock, AZ*
928-871-6605
john_b_87421@yahoo.com

Clayton Brascoupe

*Traditional Native American
Farmers Association, NM*
505-983-2172
cbrascoupe@yahoo.com

Kate Clancy

Consultant
klclancy@comcast.net

Dennis Lamm

*Colorado State University
College of Agricultural Sciences*
970-491-2074
Dennis.Lamm@colostate.edu

Teresa Maurer

*National Center for
Appropriate Technology*
479-442-9824
teresam@ncat.org

Lydia Oberholtzer

USDA, Economic Research Service
202-694-5486
loberholtzer@ers.usda.gov

Lynda Prim

The Farm Connection, NM
505-579-4386
lunalsfc@la-tierra.com

Pam Roy

Farm to Table, NM
505-473-1004
pamelaroy@aol.com

Russ Tronstad

*University of Arizona
Agricultural Resource Economics*
520-621-2425
tronstad@ag.arizona.edu

Evaluator

Theresa Selfa

Western Rural Development Center
435-797-7606
theresas@ext.usu.edu

Newsletter Staff

Le Adams, *Farm to Table*
Pam Roy, *Farm to Table*
Calliope Shank, *Epic Muse Design*

