



# Southwest Marketing Network

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

*Promoting Local Agricultural Marketing in the Southwest*

June 2003

### First Annual Marketing Conference Held in Durango

What brought 138 dedicated individuals from Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and beyond to Durango at the end of March? Whether they were producers or marketing experts, farmers' market vendors or co-op organizers, all had an interest in local food and fiber for local markets.

The First Annual Southwest Marketing Network Conference was a venue for networking with like-minded individuals from the Four Corners states, learning from each other, and engaging in needs assessment and planning for collaboration across the region. All this with the aim of supporting and strengthening the local marketing efforts in the participants' home communities.

**Who Attended:** Preliminary results from the 92 conference evaluations submitted (68% of the attendees) revealed about half the respondents were producers, over half traveled over 200 miles one-way to attend, one fourth were Native Americans, and the majority of the producers operate on less than 20 acres.

**Presentations:** On the first day, speakers from the region and beyond shared their knowledge, insights, and experience in these five broad areas:

- Group marketing through co-ops and other joint efforts
- Alternative markets, farmers markets, Native American products
- Food system support through policy work at local, state, and federal levels
- Promoting our products with organic and other eco-labels
- Selling to restaurants, hospitals, schools, and other institutions

**Collaborative Work Sessions and Action Plans:** Work sessions on the second day in each of the above areas focused on identifying common opportunities, obstacles, and needs. The opportunities and goals were as varied as the participants. We saw a rich diversity of ways to help develop more self-reliant community food systems.

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In the interest of having participants leave with not only new information and insights, but concrete steps to make progress back home, these work sessions concluded with the development of action plans, with a special emphasis on how people from across the region could collaborate in ways that support their efforts in individual communities.

Plans developed included forming a mentoring network for new farmers' markets, developing sustainability indicators that could be used on a regional product label, building food and agriculture policy councils in all four states, analyzing the market for grass-fed beef in the region, preparing surveys to help inform farm-to-school programs, and researching labeling and nutritional information for traditional Native foods.

**Needs for Assistance:** Even though analysis of the input from these sessions is continuing, some patterns are becoming clear. Many of the obstacles and associated needs relate to:

- Increasing awareness of local food issues among institutions, producers, and consumers.
- Providing training and technical assistance in specific alternative marketing techniques.

- Securing of funding for local agricultural initiatives.
- Overcoming institutional and governmental policy barriers.

**How Can the SWMN Help?** The SWMN's role is two-fold: as a broker helping to arrange information flow, training, and technical assistance; and as a convener, bringing the right people together in productive settings to achieve collaborative solutions. With our many partners, we are arranging training sessions, developing marketing information on our website, planning future conferences, and working with local community groups. But our resources are limited, so input from these conference sessions, such as the list of needs above, will help us target our assistance to the most requested topics and to the groups who have clearly articulated visions and needs.

**What is Next:** The SWMN staff is reviewing all the input and suggestions developed in the conference work sessions and will be trying to respond to as many of the ideas as possible. An account of what was learned and what the

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# EATING LOCAL FOOD IN THE HIGH COUNTRY IN APRIL!

Even though the conference took place on April 1st, the promise of lunches made with local food was no April Fools' joke. Some people claim it's too hard, impractical, inconvenient, or expensive to commit to finding local food for meals at conferences – even conferences that are held to promote local agriculture and food.

Inconvenient – maybe. Impossible – not at all. Much of our society's reliance on overly processed, unhealthy food from afar is for the sake of convenience. But more and more people are seeing local, nutritious food worth the effort, and much more interesting as well.

So, we enlisted the aid of Jack Kays, Executive Chef at the Doubletree Hotel. With our help, Jack was able to prepare wonderful lunches for 138 conference-goers on Monday and Tuesday with almost all the ingredients from local and regional sources. It wasn't easy, but we established it as a priority for our conference, and Jack gladly rose to the occasion. What's more, we didn't need to pay more per plate, and we did not rely on producers donating their products.

We realize that circumstances conspire to make sourcing conference food locally very difficult. It

seemed to work well this time, so we know it is possible. All we hope is that people will try to find as much local food as possible, and that all our efforts in reforming the food system in this country will make these efforts much easier in the future.

*Jim Dyer, Project Director*



photo by Le Adams

David Fresquez of Monte Vista Organic Farm.

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## *This time around our delicious local food included:*

Apples, Gott Brothers Apples, Durango  
Chile, Chef Jack Kays, Durango  
Coffee, Durango Coffee Company  
Pastries, Jean-Pierre Bakery, Durango  
Beef, La Plata County, CO

Cabbage, Bayfield, CO  
Lamb, Foxfire Natural Lamb, Ignacio, CO  
Pinto Beans, Dove Creek, CO  
Potatoes, White Mountain Farm, Mosca, CO  
Trout, Cannibal Canyon, Marvel, CO  
Blue Corn Polenta, Albuquerque, NM  
Greens, Monte Vista Organic Farm,  
La Mesilla, NM

## PROJECT PROFILE: NAVATEC and Southwest Marketing Network are Partners in Navajo Local Food and Information Project

Developing Innovations in Navajo Education, Inc. (Dine, Inc.), in partnership with the Southwest Marketing Network (SWMN), has been operating a traditional agricultural training and development project across the southwest region of the Navajo Nation. The NAVATEC project (Navajo Agricultural Technology Empowerment Center) blends state-of-the-art telecommunications with traditional blue corn family farming to bring forty Navajo family farms support for plowing, planting, cultivating, harvesting, and marketing traditional Native American blue corn.

Over the past forty years the Navajo Nation has witnessed a precipitous decline in the number of family farms planting Native corn and consequently an erosion of traditional culture that is based on corn cultivation. The Navajo Beauty Way - Corn Pollen Path ceremonial traditions and beliefs are reliant on access to corn pollen and are heavily influenced by farming seasons and practices. The NAVATEC project has stimulated a rebirth of corn cultivation through community use of agricultural equipment—tractor, plow, harrow, cultivator, and corn grinder. The Teesto, Bird Springs, Dilcon, Leupp, and Tolani Lake communities have active farms participating in the project that is supported by the First Nations

Development Institute - Native Agriculture and Food Systems program and the USDA Community Foods program.

The family farms involved in the project range from half an acre to five acres in size with most of the fields under arid land farming. Some drip irrigation projects are being tested using water that is hauled from windmill driven pumps. Squash and melons have been planted in small plots at



photo by NAVATEC

Morgan Yazzie's drip irrigation demonstration site.

participating farms and these are usually hand watered. Owing to severe drought conditions over the past few years, farming in the traditional way has been problematic with farmers losing entire crops late in the season due to lack of rainfall. Rodents and insect pests are a continuing problem, intensified with low moisture conditions.

The SWMN, including NCAT (National Center for Appropriate Technology) is participating in workshops for NAVATEC project farmers and is providing them with materials from NCAT's sustainable agriculture information service, ATTRA ([www.attra.ncat.org](http://www.attra.ncat.org)). Marketing is a key feature of the project with traditional food processing a focus of product development. Navajo farmers typically use most of their produce themselves with sales to other local families providing some extra income. NAVATEC, with the SWMN's assistance, hopes to enhance these market opportunities through cooperatives and, once community needs have been met, off-reservation sales of traditional food products.

An exciting component of the NAVATEC project is its telecommunications outreach, using a Navajo Nation-wide satellite Internet system installed through the Navajo Nation Virtual Alliance network which is administered and installed by Dine, Inc. Each of 110 Chapter Houses (local community government centers) across 27,000 square miles of the Navajo Nation have high speed broad band access to the Internet through satellite systems operated by Starband. The Virtual Alliance network now has five pilot sites in which touch screen systems have been installed to allow monolingual Navajo speakers to access



streamed Navajo language audio and video agricultural training information. Using these touch screens, it is now possible for Navajo farmers with no previous computer training to easily navigate the Internet to project websites and receive project updates, information, and training all in their own language.

It is hoped that additional funding will soon be available to expand the NAVATEC outreach component to all 110 Chapters and allow farmers to access information using sophisticated hand held computers which can download video training segments and provide support for farm financial management all in the Navajo language. Wireless connections currently available at all Chapter sites will facilitate these personal Internet connections. Additional information on the project can be found at [www.dineinc.org](http://www.dineinc.org) or by emailing Dr. Kyril Calsoyas at [kyrilcalsoyas@earthlink.net](mailto:kyrilcalsoyas@earthlink.net)

*Kyril Calsoyas* is the Project Director of the NAVATEC project.



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Network will do in response will appear on the SWMN website ([www.swmarketing.ncat.org](http://www.swmarketing.ncat.org)), and we will alert you of those additions in subsequent newsletters.

**Sub-Regional Conferences?** We know that it is hard due to distance and schedules for everyone interested to get to one Annual Conference. If you might like to arrange a more local event in your area, we may be able to help. Just contact me, and we will try to help you find trainers and speakers, information resources, plan your event, and hopefully help with a presentation or workshop.

**A Word of Thanks:** Finally, we must thank all the sponsors (listed on the website), SWMN partners, volunteers, and most importantly the participants, for all their support and effort.

*Jim Dyer, Project Director*

## Update on the Survey

In November, 2002 and January, 2003 we sent out over 400 surveys to contacts throughout Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah to examine agricultural marketing training and information capacity and needs in these Four Corners states. We received over 85 valid surveys and have just started analyzing the data. A report of the survey findings will be released soon. Check out the website, [www.swmarketing.ncat.org](http://www.swmarketing.ncat.org), or call Jim at 970-588-2292 for the update.

The survey was sent to agricultural and food organizations, including state and county agricultural agencies, non-profit organizations, university departments and community food groups. The information gathered is meant to help us plan the trainings, disseminate information, and build the website, newsletter, and research. We will also use the information to place a searchable resource database on our website – you can search for training and information resources near you. We wish to thank all of you who filled out the survey, and hope that it will be of great use to many people in the region.

*Lydia Oberholtzer*

## Our Goal

The goal of this project is to ensure that new, existing, and prospective Southwest producers—especially small-scale, alternative, and minority producers—have the connections with others, technical and financial assistance, marketing information, business and marketing skills, and peer examples needed to improve their marketing success as a means to improve their profitability, viability, and numbers.

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*Promoting  
Local Agricultural  
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Major funders of this project are  
the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and USDA, Risk Management Agency

## Calendar of Events

**June 23-27, 2003** • Sheep is Life, Tsailie, Arizona

Contact: Joan Delgai at 928-755-6448 or [www.navajolifeway.org](http://www.navajolifeway.org)

**June 27, 2003** • Small Acreage Workshop, Westcliffe, CO

Contact: Extension Office at 719-783-2514

**July 25-27, 2003** • Community Food and Economic Development, Flagstaff, AZ

NAU Summer Institute. Contact: Naima Taylor at 928-523-0664

**August 19, 2003** • Hands-on Computer Applications Workshop for Livestock, Benson, AZ

Contact: Pat Clay at 602-470-8086 x31 or [pclay@ag.arizona.edu](mailto:pclay@ag.arizona.edu)

**August 20, 2003** • Hands-on Computer Applications Workshop for Crops, Safford, AZ

Contact: Pat Clay at 602-470-8086 x31 or [pclay@ag.arizona.edu](mailto:pclay@ag.arizona.edu)

**September 4 & 5, 2003** • Food & Agriculture Policy Councils Meeting, Des Moines, IA

Contact: Christine Pardee at 515-271-4956 or [www.statepolicycouncils.org](http://www.statepolicycouncils.org)

Go to [www.swmarketing.ncat.org](http://www.swmarketing.ncat.org) to find updated information on the Southwest Marketing Network and other activities in our region.