



Southwest Marketing Network

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

Promoting Local Agricultural Marketing in the Southwest

December 2003

The Harmony Market Store

An Innovative Example for Agricultural Producers

Colorado's Harmony Market Store isn't your typical store or story. A few months ago a Fort Collins store, formerly known as Steel's Market, closed its doors suddenly, leaving behind a fully equipped retail space including bakery equipment, retail counters, refrigerated units, cash registers, café style seating, catering prep area and all the bells and whistles you would want in a store. A local foundation that is interested in supporting local agriculture was intrigued with the situation and negotiated for a long-term lease on the 30,000-foot space. Then it contacted the Rocky Mountain Farmers' Union and several other agricultural groups to see if there was interest in forming an alliance to use this space to support local farmers and farm products.

Family farmers, ranchers and food businesses in Colorado are increasingly faced with a marketplace dominated by corporate food packers, distributors and retailers. Additionally, the costs of inputs, development pressures, long distances to markets, the small volume of production, aging producers, and the water demands of major urban areas are having a severe impact on the local food and farming economy. Consumers meanwhile are faced with limited availability of fresh, local food and a dramatic rise in diet-related diseases, such as type 2 diabetes.

Several organizations and food/farming businesses including the Rocky Mountain Farmers Union, Colorado State University, American Farmland Trust, Fiona's Delicatessen and Catering, Tres Ríos Agricultural Cooperative, the Rocky Mountain Meat Cooperative and others have formed this marketing alliance aimed at establishing a retail store that specializes in Colorado products. It will have a strong educational and charitable component that addresses agricultural and food system issues in and around Fort Collins and is establishing a retail store that specializes in Colorado products.

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Colorado agriculturally based businesses. The primary objectives of the group are to provide improved direct marketing opportunities and returns for producers, to improve quality of food offerings to local residents, and to increase consumer awareness of local food production. Secondly, it is hoped that the store will create profitable, cooperative, and successful business models for processors, producers, and workers while promoting the importance of local purchases to the local and regional economy. Since the facility has a certified kitchen the group will explore the viability of value added processing. They also plan to coordinate services for producers.

Anticipated benefits of the project include the potential to improve consumer health and nutrition (through chemical-free production methods and food freshness); increased consumer awareness about the food system and local agriculture; better accessibility of local food products for consumers; a sense of pride for producers and consumers; and, the ability to

provide future marketing opportunities for farmers and ranchers. The store plans to open March 1, 2004. For more information call Jennifer Kemp of the Rocky Mountain Farmers' Union at 303-752-5800 or Dan Hobbs of New Farms at 303-316-0401.

Pam Roy and Dan Hobbs



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The SWMN at One and a Half Years

The Southwest Marketing Network recently submitted annual reports to its major funders, the Kellogg Foundation and USDA Risk Management Agency. We feel that we have accomplished much so far, but so much remains to be done—with your help of course. Some of the highlights of the reports (and some things you can do to help) include:

- Over 3100 regional producers and service providers are on our newsletter mailing list (contact us if you know of someone who should be added to the list).
- A very successful First Annual Conference was held in Durango last March with nearly 140 diverse participants, and a second conference is planned for March 14-16, 2004 in Flagstaff, Arizona (mark your calendars).
- 32 trainings and presentations were provided (cumulatively) to 796 participants (come to the next conference and send us workshop suggestions).
- The SWMN website was built with 140 resource links so far—and many more to come (go to www.swmarketing.ncat.org).
- A highly informative survey was completed of alternative marketing resources and needs in the region (watch for the report coming this winter).
- Comprehensive treatment of Farm to School programs was highlighted in the September 2003 Newsletter (see the SWMN website if you missed that issue).
- Demonstration projects are underway: Navatec (see June 2003 Newsletter), SW Colorado (October 2003 Newsletter), Harmony Market (this issue), and others to come.

Again, there is much more work to be done, so stay tuned and stay involved.

Direct Marketing Examples are the Highlight of New Publication

In recent years, traditional commodity marketing channels have not provided sufficient returns for many small- and medium-sized farmers to maintain a viable livelihood through farm activities. The publication of *Western Profiles of Innovative Agricultural Marketing* examines how several operations in the West have migrated from the traditional commodity focused business into a successful direct marketing enterprise. Direct marketing allows farmers to retain a much higher share of consumer food expenditures, but the elements needed to make this strategy a success are often not well understood. In part, this is because of their increased complexity, compared to commodity production-marketing systems. Historically, commodity producers have set goals for high yields and low costs of production in order to be a “low cost” producer. However, personality skills, relationships, superb quality and service, willingness to change, and general business savvy were found to be key for the direct marketing and agri-tourism enterprises examined in this publication.

The publication is not intended to be a step-by-step guide on how to start a direct farm marketing or agri-tourism enterprise, but rather to identify the more subtle and unique factors behind the failures and successes of those examined and to illustrate their strategies for meeting future challenges and risks. **Direct marketing has proven to be a successful and sustainable alternative to traditional commodity markets for many agricultural producers in the western United States.** As the enterprises considered in this publication have shown, direct marketing requires knowledge of long-term goals, substantial planning, flexibility, and adaptation.

A 128 page color publication with photos of the 17 enterprises studied is available at the Western Extension Marketing Committee’s web site of <http://ag.arizona.edu/arec/wemc/wemc.html> and it can also be

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ordered online from <http://ag.arizona.edu/pubs/> or from CALSmart, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, The University of Arizona, 4042 N. Campbell Avenue, Tucson, Arizona 85719. Phone: 520-318-7275, Fax: 520-795-8508, Toll-free: 877-763-5315. The cost is \$10 for a single full-color copy.



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.

New Mexico Organic Farming and Gardening Expo 2004

The Southwest Marketing Network is a sponsor of this year's **New Mexico Organic Farming and Gardening Expo 2004**, presented by **The Farm Connection** and the **New Mexico Organic Commodity Commission**. The conference will be held February 13-14, 2004 at the newly remodeled Student Union Building on the University of New Mexico campus in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Featured Keynote Speakers are: **Michael Abelman**, author of *On Good Land—The Autobiography of an Urban Farm* and *From the Good Earth—A Celebration of Growing Food Around the World*. Michael Abelman is a farmer, photographer, and the Director of the Center for Urban Agriculture at Fairview Gardens. Michael is currently working on another book surveying successful family-scale farms around the U.S. and the lessons to be learned from them. **Joel Salatin** raises crops and animals in a groundbreaking environment in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley on his Polyface Farm. He is the author of *Salad Bar Beef*, *Pastured Poultry Profits*, *You Can Farm*, and *Family Friendly Farming*. Joel will speak on "relationship marketing" and creating and maintaining a habitat on farm that allows a cow "cowness" and a hog "hogness." **Laura Jackson**, editor with Dana Jackson of *The Farm as Natural*

Habitat: Reconnecting Food Systems with Ecosystems will be a featured workshop presenter on that topic.

Friday's workshops are three-hour intensive sessions and Saturday features the keynote sessions and a delicious local organic lunch. Workshop topics include: Business Planning for New and Existing Farms, Organic and Sustainable Greenhouse Design and Production, Organic Fruit Production, Getting Into Value Added, Diversification with Flowers and Starts, Building Soil Fertility, Federal Support for Organic Producers, Market Development for Organic Producers, Multi-species Grazing Systems, Conservation Tillage Systems, Fruit Tree Grafting and Heirloom Orchards, Water!, Medicinal Herbs, Strip Tillage, Building a Food System Pyramid (Presented by the Southwest Marketing Network), Appropriate Equipment for Vegetable Production, The Independent Organic Farmer in the World of Corporate Giants, and Mulching.

The cost of the conference for both days is \$75. Friday only is \$45, Saturday only is \$50 (includes lunch). One-session tickets will be available at the door for \$20. Registration forms or more information can be obtained by calling: (505) 841-9067 or email: joan.quinn@state.nm.us.

Arizona Farmers' Direct Marketing Association

We're pleased to introduce you to the Arizona Farmers' Direct Marketing Association (AFDMA). AFDMA is a new organization consisting of farmers and ranchers throughout the state of Arizona. We work to educate and inform consumers about the importance of agriculture in their lives, while at the same time providing a support network for farmers and ranchers throughout our state.

We are indirectly affiliated with the North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Association. Membership in AFDMA not only includes in-state benefits such as representation on the AFDMA website, but also an affiliate membership with NAFDMA, at a discounted price.

In addition, AFDMA has decided to hold its first annual meeting during the Southwest Marketing Network conference. We've got great things planned!

On March 15, 2004 from 5:30-7:30 pm, AFDMA is asking all interested farmers and ranchers to attend our business meeting. Details about location will follow in the near future. We hope to see everyone there!

If you have any questions about AFDMA or our upcoming meeting in March, please see our website at www.afdma.org. We look forward to seeing you in Flagstaff.



A directory of ecoregional food sustainability in the Four Corners region is now available. It includes producers of beverages, eggs, dairy and meat, fruits, herbs and vegetables, honey and jam, and specialty products. It also includes listings of organizations and agencies, restaurants and catering, stores and gift shops, and farmers' markets. The Directory was produced by the Center for Sustainable Environments at Northern Arizona University with the assistance of the Southwest Marketing Network and others.

In the words of one of the publication's informative sidebars "The Colorado Plateau is an ecoregion rich in cultural and biological diversity. It is equally rich in regionally adapted practices that offer sustainable options for living within its challenging and arid landscapes." Valuable on your reference bookshelf and with you while traveling, we recommend this booklet as an excellent guide to the most wholesome and fascinating foods of the region. To receive a copy, contact the Center for Sustainable Environments, 928-523-0637 or www.environment.nau.edu.

Niche Beef Workshops in Colorado

Working jointly with the Departments of Animal Sciences and Agricultural and Resource Economics at Colorado State University, Cooperative Extension, Rocky Mountain Farmers Union, ranchers with niche beef experience and others, the American Farmland Trust is developing a training manual and a series of workshops to address current issues for niche beef producers in Colorado and throughout the West.

Our first two Niche Beef Marketing and Production workshops are scheduled for February 2004. The first will take place at the Montrose Pavilion in Montrose, Colorado on February 11-12. The next one is in Southern Colorado Springs at the Sheraton Hotel on February 19-20. Registration forms and other information will be uploaded onto the project's website:
<http://dare.agsci.colostate.edu/aftnichebeef/>



2004 Colorado Organic Conference Set for March

The Colorado Organic Producers Association (COPA), Colorado Department of Agriculture, and Colorado State Cooperative Extension are co-sponsoring the 2004 Colorado Organic Conference this year at the Adams County Fairgrounds in Brighton, CO, March 2-3.

Soil fertility will be a focus this year with a keynote address by Paul Wagner of Soil Foodweb, a firm specializing in testing of soils for microorganisms critical to soil health, and making recommendations for adjusting soil management to produce healthy plants with natural methods.

Other topics this year include coping with drought, organic crop and livestock production, nutritional information for direct marketers, specialty crops, weed management, GMO pollen drift, strategic planning, and food safety.

COPA will hold its Annual Meeting, open to all, in the evening, March 2, and there will be a working session on March 3 aimed at gathering producer feedback on the new certification process under the Federal Rules as administered by the Colorado Organic Program. Contact Tom McBride of Adams County Extension, 303-637-8100 or tmcbride@co.adams.co.us for details and registration.

Tenth Annual Western SAWG Meeting Comes to Utah

The Western SAWG (Sustainable Agriculture Working Group) will be holding its Annual Meeting in Logan, Utah this winter on February 20-21, 2004. This meeting, actually more of a working conference, is entitled: "The Western Sustainable Agriculture Movement: Building Relationships and Wielding Power"

Friday, February 20 will feature practical workshops and a tour of local dairy farms. Saturday will put participants to work on issues including biotechnology, local food systems, working lands conservation, and "beyond organics."

As one of several SAWGs across the country, WSAWG promotes sustainable agriculture, provides educational opportunities, and helps its members understand and act on public policies and programs affecting Western sustainable agriculture.

For more on WSAWG and meeting information visit: www.westernsawg.org or contact Jeff Schahczenski, WSAWG Director, at 406-494-8636, wsawg@ncat.org.

2004 Calendar of Events

January 15-17, 2004 • The Quivira Coalition's Annual Conference: Ranching in Nature's Image, Fostering Social and Environmental Health in the West. Albuquerque, NM.

Contact: The Quivira Coalition, 505-820-2544 or admin@quiviracoalition.org

January 20, 2004 • Hands-on Computer Workshops. Maricopa, Pima, Pinal Counties, and Parker, AZ.

Contact: Steve Husman at husman@ag.arizona.edu or your county agent.

January 21-24, 2004 • Eco-Farm Conference. Pacific Grove, CA.

Contact: 831-763-2111 or www.eco-farm.org

February 2-8, 2004 • North American Farmers Direct Marketing Conference, in conjunction with the CA Small Farm Conference. Sacramento, CA.

Contact: FAX 413-529-2471 or www.nafdma.com

February 6-7, 2004 • Colorado's Cornucopia: Celebrating Local Food Growers and Their Customers. Colorado Springs, CO.

Contact: Cindy Dvergsten at 970-882-4222 or www.coloradoholisticmanagement.org

February 11-12, 2004 • Niche Beef Marketing and Production Workshop. Montrose, CO.

See page 6 for more information.

February 13-14, 2004 • New Mexico Organic Farming and Gardening Expo. Albuquerque, NM.

See page 4 for more information.

February 19-20, 2004 • Niche Beef Marketing and Production Workshop. Colorado Springs, CO

See page 6 for more information.

February 20-21, 2004 • Western SAWG Meeting. Logan, UT.

See page 6 for more information.

March 2-3, 2004 • Colorado Organic Conference. Brighton, CO.

See page 6 for more information.

March 4-6, 2004 • Agricultural Tourism Conference. For New Mexico farmers and ranchers. Albuquerque, NM.

Contact: Pat Torres at 505-471-4711 or Gerald Chacon at 505-983-4615

March 14-16, 2004 • Southwest Marketing Network Conference. Flagstaff, AZ.

Contact: 505-473-1004, ladams@cybermesa.com or www.swmarketing.ncat.org

See page 8 for more information.

March 15, 2004 • Arizona Direct Marketing Association Meeting. Flagstaff, AZ.

See page 5 for more information.

March 18, 2004 • Small Farm Irrigation Conference. Santa Fe, NM.

Contact: Pat Torres at 505-471-4711 or patorres@nmsu.edu

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

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

Southwest Marketing Network's Annual Conference in Flagstaff

The first annual conference in Durango last March was a resounding success. Around 150 people came together to network, meet new people, plan projects and learn a thing or two about new marketing techniques. Several businesses, projects, and programs were strengthened or started. It's time to do it again! The conference will be held March 14-16, 2004 at the Radisson Woodlands in Flagstaff, Arizona.

The conference content flows around several key themes this year. The subject areas are Farm to Cafeteria, Restaurants & Institutions; Alternative Production & Marketing; Resources; Food Systems & Policy; and, Direct Marketing & Farmers' Markets. The speakers will be from the Four Corners region and from farther afield. Again, a Resource Room will be set up, so we can all share information about our projects.

There will be special presentations by the Community Food Security Coalition and the New Mexico Farmers' Marketing Association. The keynote address will be presented by Gary Paul Nabhan, the Director of the Center for Sustainable Environments and author of several books, including the recent "Coming Home to Eat." Each presenter will represent his or her home place and projects—there will be much to learn!

Space is limited. If you are interested in attending, please contact Le Adams at 505-473-1004, ladams@cybermesa.com or check the SWMN web site in January ([see bottom of page 7](#)). If you know of people that did not come last year, but should, please send their name and address. There will be scholarship opportunities, so we hope to see you in Flagstaff.