



Southwest Marketing Network

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

Promoting Local Agricultural Marketing in the Southwest

June 2004

Flagstaff Hosts Second Annual SWMN Conference

Producers, marketing experts, young entrepreneurs, and local food activists of all sorts—169 in all—converged on Flagstaff, AZ on 14-16 March for this year's networking, training, and celebration of local food and fiber.

After several pre-conference meetings, the conference was officially kicked off by a Sunday evening "Southwest Reception" of delicious and visually enticing foods local to the region, where participants tasted the "fruits" (and vegetables and cheeses and meats) of the labors of Slow Food Alta Arizona, local farmers and ranchers, and our generous co-host, the Center for Sustainable Environments at Northern Arizona University.

Funders, including the Kellogg Foundation, USDA Risk Management Agency, New Mexico State University, USDA Community Food Projects, and Community Food Security Coalition made the conference possible and allowed us to help cover travel, registration, and lodging expenses for the 53 speakers and facilitators and 66 scholarship recipients.

Training, networking, and planning sessions covered a broad range of topics. The full conference agenda is on our website (www.swmarketing.ncat.org), and we are busy putting much of the material presented up on the website—for those who could not attend and for participants who were in other concurrent sessions. Sessions included:

- Farm to Cafeteria, Restaurants, and Institutions
- Ecolabels, Promotion of Local Food, and Organic Certification
- Alternative Meat Production, Wool Processing, and Marketing

- Food and Agricultural Policy Councils and Native American and Water Policy Issues
- Innovations in Season Extension and Organic Equipment
- Business and Marketing Plans, Leadership Development, Community Organizing, and Grantwriting
- Farmers Market Value-Added Rules and Statewide Associations
- Community Supported Agriculture
- Community Food and Agriculture Assessment

From a thought-provoking presentation on regional food security by Gary Nabhan, our co-host from Northern Arizona University, to a reflective closing by New Mexican garlic farmer and writer Stanley Crawford, the conference was a blend of inspiration, learning, sharing, and challenge. Thanks to all who participated.

Jim Dyer

To learn more:

- Visit our website over the next few weeks as we continue to post informational resources and links provided by our conference speakers and others.
- Stay tuned to this newsletter for plans for next year's event.
- See article on page 3 from our Project Evaluator.
- Read on page 2, about our training and outreach.
- See the article on page 6 about the local foods featured at our meals.
- See the features on two of the conference speakers.

Training Sessions and Outreach of the Southwest Marketing Network

Although the needs of this region are many and varied, we make every effort to meet those that are within our capabilities. We are using feedback from the first conference and our survey of regional service providers (to be published and posted on our website by late June) to help us target our training and outreach efforts. Trainings at the Flagstaff conference on policy, farm-to-institution, farmers' markets, wool and meat marketing, CSAs, value-added, and organic resources are a direct result of your input. The message here is that if you have a training need, let us know what it is and which of your colleagues share that need.

Beyond our annual conference, SWMN staff have been busy with outreach and training throughout the region since the 2003 Conference with presentations at several conferences including Sheep is Life (AZ), Durango Small Farms Conference (CO), New Mexico Organic Expo, La Posada Food Fair

(AZ), Western Sustainable Ag Working Group Annual Meeting (UT), Utah Agricultural Diversification Conference, Bioneers Mini-Conference (CO), "Coming Home" Celebrations in Bluff and Moab (UT), University of New Mexico Community Planning class, NM Agri-Tourism Conference, Taos Organic Growing & Land Use Forum (NM), Institute for Nonviolent Economics Conference (NM), and the Greenhouse Conference in Montrose, CO.

We also had the pleasure to provide technical assistance or participate in working groups with Dine, Inc. (AZ), Heifer Project leaders (NM), a Navajo weavers group (AZ), Harmony Market (CO), Colorado Springs Marketplace, SW Policy Summit (AZ), NAU Field Interns (AZ), Arizona Food Policy Council groups (AZ), Agricultural Business Workshop through the Coronado RC&D (AZ), Farmers Market Development and Business

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Planning in Southeast AZ, and Colorado food and agriculture policy planning initiative.

What's Next: We are already planning the annual SWMN conference for next year. If you haven't already provided suggestions for trainings, please do so. It is always hard to select a location since any place we pick will be far from many potential participants. Wherever the 2005 conference is, rest assured, we have every intention to continue these conferences beyond our initial funding into the

future. However, we are prepared at the present time to try to reach every corner of the region by partnering with conferences in your area. We will try to assist you in setting up one or more workshops on alternative marketing topics to complement your program, and can help with publicity through our newsletters and website calendars. So let us know if we can help co-sponsor an event in this way in your local area.

Jim Dyer

Who Were the People who Joined us in Flagstaff? Notes from the Evaluator

Conference evaluations were completed by 105 of the 169 participants, for a response rate of 66%. At this year's conference in Flagstaff, 70% of the participants were new and 30% had attended last year's conference. Overall, participants were very satisfied with the conference, as the average score was 4.4 (with 5 being the highest for "very satisfied" with the conference.) Most participants felt that the conference provided opportunities for an adequate amount of networking opportunities, although others would have liked additional time for networking.

We asked participants to identify what they liked best about the conference, and the most frequent responses were: time for networking and meeting people; sharing ideas, resources and potential opportunities; beginning connections and friendships; gaining access to resources; and, sharing the enthusiasm, energy and commitment to this work.

In terms of what participants are hoping to gain from the Southwest Marketing Network, respondents identified the following needs, in descending order:

- 1) networking with other regional producers and service organizations (80 respondents);
- 2) technical assistance about marketing (50);
- 3) technical assistance about production methods (28); and,

- 4) learning more about government policy development and advocacy around agriculture and food issues (7).

When we asked participants how the SWMN had helped them, they identified practical resources the Network provides, such as: information on building farmers' markets; learning about crop production and marketing; how to sell their products for a higher price; and, people to call with questions. They also identified more intangible social and organizational benefits, such as: "ideas, advice and support for small and minority producers; relationship building; keeping in touch with what is happening around us; strengthening my commitment to working in this area and helping me to focus on my work; and, clarified my organization's direction."

The breakdown of conference attendees by state was: 43% from Arizona; 23% from Colorado; 21% from New Mexico; 4% from Utah; and the rest from other states. More than half (54%) of the participants were farmers or ranchers, producing a variety of products. The top five products were: vegetables, livestock, wool, fruits, and herbs. Over 40% of the farmers and ranchers had between 1 and 10 acres; 31% had over 100 acres. Participants represented the following ethnic groups: 67% White (non-Hispanic); 25% American Indian; 7% Hispanic; 1% African American; and 1% Other. About 64% of participants traveled over 200 miles to attend the conference.

Conference Targets Southwest Food and Agriculture Policy Issues

The viability of agriculture in the Southwest depends on many factors: educated decision making, good production techniques, available natural resources, business management skills, finding markets for products, consumer demand, and policies that support a strong local food system.

We are talking about a “food system”—everything from producing the food to eating it. Policies affect all aspects of the food system, including the availability of resources like land and water rights and maintaining an affordable food supply while still rewarding the producer with a good return. Here in the Southwest there are many pressures on agriculture, especially the growth of urban areas in need of water and land. Farmers and ranchers are finding it harder to make a living and the temptation to sell land and water rights for urban development is prevalent. Rural communities see some of the highest food costs due to limited access to fresh affordable food and distance to markets. Major grocers don't want to locate in small rural towns. These issues, and many more, are positively or negatively influenced by policy decisions made at the city, county, state and federal levels.

The Southwest Marketing Network and a team representing agencies and organizations from our four-state area are working together to help develop “food and agriculture policy councils” to focus on policy issues affecting our food system. This team also chose specific issues presented at the conference to strengthen participants' understanding of policy issues and of how to get involved. Topics focused on water, Native American food and agriculture policy, how to form a food policy council, and food and agriculture assessment as a tool to educate people about the food system.

Felice Lucero of San Felipe Pueblo provided a compelling story of how federal policy affects Native American issues while tribal communities are not always involved in the policy decisions that affect them. Joanna Endter-Wada, with the Natural Resources and Environmental Policy Program at Utah State University and Steve Vandiver from the Colorado State

Engineers' Office explained the complexities of water use in the Southwest and some of the policy issues that are affected by legislation. Clark de Schweinitz gave an example of New Mexico producers who were able to get state legislation to protect the primary users of acequias (community irrigation ditch systems) from people buying the water rights and removing them from community use. Change last part to read - Arizona's Director of Agriculture, Don Butler, described the pressures that agriculture faces in Arizona, from pressure on land to the withdrawal by the state legislature of funding for their ag marketing department. As a result of the SWMN policy meeting, a diverse group of organizations decided to work together with Mr. Butler in support of legislation to get funding back into his department's budget for marketing.

Christine Pardee of Drake University and Mark

Winne, a Food and Society Policy Fellow, gave a presentation on “how to develop food policy councils”. They explained the importance of developing broad-based partnerships between government and the private sector to work on policy together. New Mexico and Utah have

formed councils and now Arizona and Colorado are developing food policy initiatives. Gary Nabhan, Director of the Center for Sustainable Environments and Mark Winne presented a workshop on “community food and agriculture assessment”. Mark explained that, “Community food assessments examine a broad range of food-related issues and resources in order to inform actions that improve the food security of a particular community or region.” These kinds of assessments that “tell the story” about what is happening in our food systems, can help inform policy makers and influence their decisions about the importance of agriculture and our resources in the Southwest.

For more information about these issues or how to start a food and agriculture policy initiative, log on to www.swmarketing.ncat.org or www.statefoodpolicy.org or call Farm to Table at 505-473-1004 or Mark Winne at 505-983-3047.

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CSA Examples Highlighted at the Annual Conference

Community supported agriculture (CSA) was the focus of one of the sessions at the SWMN's annual conference. Historically, CSA is an arrangement whereby members or 'shareholders' of a farm pledge in advance to cover the anticipated costs of the farm operation and farmer's salary. In return, they receive a share in the farm's harvest throughout the growing season. In the ideal model of CSA, growers and consumers provide mutual support and share the risks and benefits of food production. CSA is one marketing strategy that small farmers are looking at to increase profitability and viability.

David Lynch, of Guidestone Farm, was one of our speakers for this session. David manages a 150 acre diversified, direct market operation in Loveland, Colorado. This truly remarkable farm is situated on the historical 50 year old organic farm at Sunrise Ranch. *The Stewardship Community* (or TSC) is the umbrella non-profit entity for the farm. Its mission is to (1) model a local food economy through the Guidestone Farm CSA; (2) demonstrate sustainable development through natural building technologies, renewable energy systems, and permaculture design; and (3) provide education in land stewardship practices and sustainable living skills for children and adults, as well as train young farmers in small farm agriculture and local food systems.

The CSA part of the farm provides weekly shares of food for its 200 household members in northern Colorado from May to October. Membership is \$585 a season for the vegetable share and working members that help out on a weekly basis get a \$100 discount. Other food items are available at an additional cost, including natural meats (beef, pork, lamb, and poultry), eggs, honey, stone-fired bread, and a number of

other products. The Distribution Center, the farm's on site store, was the first straw bale structure permitted in the county. It serves not only as a distribution center for the CSA, but also as a neighborhood store for marketing products for surrounding farms, including soaps, salves, teas, jams, fruit, juices, and cheese.

In addition to the CSA vegetable share and other products, the farm services 400 families through its raw milk membership dairy. The CSA Dairy ownership fee is \$25 per month for 1 gallon of milk a week. It also requires a \$25 boarding fee per month for the farm to house, feed, and milk the cow on behalf of the member.

From all that we heard in the session it is clear that David's farm is exceptional. Guidestone Farm CSA is only a piece of the overall mission of the farm and serves as a model of marketing sustainably and locally for the members of the farm, as well as for other farmers and people seeking out alternatives to the conventional food system. We wish David continued success with his farm, and hope that his example spurred the imaginations of those attending the conference.

For more information about Guidestone Farm, please contact David Lynch at farmerlynch@msn.com or telephone 970-461-0271. You can also visit their website at www.guidestonefarm.org.

If you are interested in learning more about CSA farming (or finding a farm near you), visit the CSA Center, a national clearinghouse for CSA farms that has an on-line directory of CSA farms, at www.csa-center.org. Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (ATTRA) also has resources for farmers interested in CSAs: www.attra.ncat.org or call 1-800-346-9140.

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.

Eating Local in Flagstaff

The menu at the Flagstaff conference upheld and some say surpassed the quality and variety of the Durango conference of the year before. With the help of Steve Buckley of Slow Food Alta Arizona and other Slow “Foodies” and the potential confusion of a last-minute kitchen personnel change, the Radisson did a great job of preparing meals for breakfast, lunch and the Southwest Reception. They showed great personal commitment in helping us demonstrate the importance and the glory of local foods.

From New Mexico, we brought free range chicken from Pollo Real, a variety of fresh sprouts from Sungreen Living Foods, and potatoes from White Mountain Farm (CO) Major local suppliers from Arizona were Frank Martin of Crooked Sky Farm, David Heininger of Black Mesa Ranch, and Kim Lapham of Fowl Farms. Kim also spoke at the conference about business and marketing plans, having written her own business plan for her farm operation.

The Southwest Reception was a dazzling array of the kitchen’s talent with goat cheeses, deviled eggs, make-your-own pasta, a huge platter of Arizona’s fruit bounty, an incredible bread display, and fajitas with Tohono O’Odham tepary beans as a good traditional food choice. David from Black Mesa Ranch was a highlight. He is justifiably proud of his goat cheeses and was happy to share production notes with any and all. The two days of breakfast and lunch followed the Reception with bountiful displays, served buffet style.

The Radisson made a further commitment to continue to work with local producers to purchase additional local foods from them and from other suppliers. We think that’s a great outcome of our conference.

The conference is becoming the place to eat! Don’t miss it next year.

New Funding for the Southwest Marketing Network

The SWMN has recently been awarded two grants from the Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (WSARE) Program.

The first grant will be administered by NCAT with Teresa Maurer and Jim Dyer as co-leaders, and is designed to help field agents and other service providers respond more effectively to requests from producers for assistance in alternative marketing for their operations. This project represents a close collaboration between the SWMN and the Cooperative Extension Service in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah and will feature an annual training/working conference in each of the two years of the grant.

The second grant (also two years) is a “distance learning” grant that will be administered by Pam

Roy of Farm to Table. The major partner in this grant is the New Mexico State University College of Agriculture’s Communications Department.

The intent of the grant is to give producers access to trainings and conferences through easy-to-use and low cost “distance learning” or “remote conferencing” technologies. This project will provide producers with their choice of access to this training through “real time broadcasting” or through “any time, any place” viewing of the archive on the web or through CD, DVD or VHS technologies. In response to the direct guidance we received from producers during development of this proposal, we are working directly with several producers and producer groups to create the most effective learning tools possible for family farms, ranches, and farming projects in the Southwest.

Season Extension 101

Del Jimenez is a man with a purpose. The Agricultural Specialist travels often to share information with agricultural producers and constantly works to inspire land-based people in their work while protecting our earth's resources. He works with the New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service in the Rural Agricultural Improvement and Public Affairs Project (RAIPAP), housed at NMSU's Agricultural Science Center in Alcalde, New Mexico.

Del worked for a number of years in Central and South America, as well as in Texas and Colorado, raising seed and vegetable crops and in ranching, all with large acreages. He uses the experiences gained there in his educational work in Northern New Mexico.

RAIPAP includes a Native American outreach program and small business startup education. Del works with 25 different projects and programs; greenhouse/hoophouse construction and production techniques are just a few of them. The Flagstaff conference helped to pass the word about the Alcalde Science Center and its work. There was much networking and discussions were started for further training ideas through this venue.

Those of you who attended Del's presentation in Flagstaff agree that it was fast-paced and full of ideas for season extension and production. There are many ways to construct a large greenhouse or a smaller hoop-house. Del has overseen many of these structures going up; his extensive background is obvious, even in a classroom setting.

What is the name of those specific connectors for the crosspieces? How much do they cost? Where do you purchase them? These kinds of nuts and bolts (literally) are important details to anyone about to embark on this path. After you build the structure—there are more questions. Which are the proven varieties to grow? Where can they be sold? What kind of price advantage can we expect when we sell produce during the off-season? All these subjects and more were covered in this session. Producers wanting a year-round farm income can see the obvious benefit to growing off-season. It is a perfect fit for growers who are exploring the burgeoning farm-to-cafeteria market or selling to restaurants. He covered plant types, transplanting, types of mulches, row covers, and low tunnels, as well as hoop-houses. His presentation can be found on the SWMN website at www.swmarketing.ncat.org. Look in the Conference 2004 section.

Del's newest projects are his twin baby girls, Mariah and Cassidy. He and wife Desiree are thrilled at these new additions to their family. With children and grandchildren, Del knows the importance of education as a lifelong habit.

This RAIPAP Agricultural Specialist's goal is to continue educating and organizing individuals and groups to help them become sustainable and successful while at the same time putting or keeping their lands in production. Livestock and agricultural producers in our region will all benefit from his training sessions. More information about season extension and marketable plant varieties can be obtained from the Ag Science Center at 505-852-2668.

Tsaile Weavers Co-Op to Hold Rug Auction at "Sheep is Life" Celebration

The SWMN has been working with a group of Navajo weavers in the Tsaile, Arizona area to help them explore alternative marketing strategies. The group is looking for ways to differentiate their weavings in the marketplace by featuring native dyes and traditional Navajo Churro wool. To test the market, a rug auction will be held in conjunction with the "Sheep is Life" Celebration (see calendar).

The rug auction will be on Saturday, June 26, 2004, at Dine College, Tsaile, Arizona in the Student

Union Building. The weavers will check in at 8am-2pm, the buyers' preview and registration will be from 4-6pm, and the auction begins at 6pm.

Auctioneers will be Hank Blair and Bruce Burnham. A 10% buyers premium applies to all purchases as a tax deductible donation to DBI, a non profit organization with federal 501(c)3 tax exempt status. Arts and craft vendors are welcome. There is limited space available. For more information call 928-871-4991 or Sharon Begay at 928-724-6941.

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

Calendar of Events

June 11-12, 2004 • Colorado Branch for Holistic Management Workshop and Summer Tour.

James Ranch near Durango, CO.

Contact: Cindy Dvergsten at 970-882-4222 or John Ott at ott@e-kiva.net or

www.coloradoholisticmanagement.org

June 16, 2004 • Hopi Food and Agriculture Symposium, Hopi Day School, Kykotsmovi, AZ.

Hopi food, wild food foraging, traditional agriculture, terrace gardening, winter gardening, diabetes, food education, local markets, and restoring health.

Contact: Andrew Lewis at 928-737-4646 or Tamie Tootsie-Trottier at 928-737-6375.

June 21-27, 2004 • The Sheep is Life Celebration, Tsaile, AZ. Pre-celebration workshops June 21-24 and free public events June 25-27. Presented by Dine be iina (The Navajo Lifeway) at Dine College.

Sheep is Life celebrates sheep, wool and weaving. Hands-on activities, sheep and wool demonstrations, workshops and discussions from 9 to 5 each day.

Contact: Dine be iina, call 928-871-4991, email rachdahozy@navajolifeway.org, or visit www.navajolifeway.org.

July 19, 2004 • Arizona Farmers' Direct Marketing Association Workshop.

At Apple Annie's near Willcox, AZ. Starts at 10 AM

Contact: Rob Call at 520-384-3594 or recall@ag.arizona.edu or www.afdma.org

August 25 & 26, 2004 • Southern Arizona Community Building Workshop: Will a Farmers' Market Work in your Community? Douglas, AZ.

Contact: Donna Matthews, call 520-384-2229 x123 or email Donna.Matthews@az.usda.gov