



# Southwest Marketing Network

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

*Promoting Local Agricultural Marketing in the Southwest*

December 2004

### Farmers' Markets Special Issue

## What Really Counts

*by Deborah Madison*

Recently Patty Karlovitz, Editor of *localflavor* magazine, asked me which, among the hundred or so markets I visited while researching my book, *Local Flavors*, stood out as being especially good—or not so good—and why?

Unlike a chain, farmers' markets are not cut from the same mold, so they differ wildly in size, content, age, location, and general overall feeling. But there are some qualities that have to be there—and some that can't—for a farmers' market to be a good one. While I've almost never met a market I didn't like, there are some that have some special quality that makes them indisputably wonderful.

I'm often asked what my favorite market was, which is a hard question to answer since all markets have something that's special and very likable. However, I've found myself naming the Dane County Market in Madison, Wisconsin in my answer on many occasions. In many ways it isn't my favorite market. For one, it's too big and too crowded. But what made it stand out was that its 300 farmers surrounded the stately capitol building and the presence of that towering white dome made it feel as if the market was blessed by the state. Because I feel that the agrarian sensibility is closely related to a vital democracy, this seems a most fitting relationship, one of harmony between local farms and local government. The Dane County Market no doubt experiences the petty struggles that most markets do with their local governments, and I've seen wonderful markets tucked into malls, parking lots, and open fields, but the proximity of the capital to the market in Madison made a powerful and hopeful statement.

Being able to realize the connection of farmer to the food to my table is absolutely necessary for a market to be good. Right away, this throws a lot of California markets into question since this is a very large state and its boundaries, rather than those of a foodshed, are what define its farm-market parameters. This means that one can buy apples from the same farm on the same day in both Davis and San Diego, which are hundreds of miles apart. While the seller may be the farmer, since a person can only be one place at a time, you're likely to be buying from someone who is, essentially, a salesperson. Right away, the magic of connection is lost and once again, it's you and the middleman. It may be inconvenient for the farmer, but connection is what shoppers want. They want to see and know the person who grew their food, made their cheese, raised their chickens, and the possibility of making that contact is the most unique quality the farmers' market has to offer. It pretty much defines what a farmers' market is, and ultimately, it's what direct marketing means. Without it, it's a swap meet.

Another must-have quality is that the food is local. But what "local" means is not absolute, and the miles-to-market number might be something each person has to work out. For me, I like a 50 to 100 mile limit, but it's a flexible matter. It makes no sense if someone is driving a great distance to sell something that is grown nearby. Why buy zucchini from Portales in Santa Fe if farmers here are growing it? But it's great to have New Mexican pecans from Las Cruces, a food we can't grow in Northern New Mexico. Sometimes market managers try to keep up with the supermarket-mentality of providing choice, so they bring in strawberries or asparagus

from distant farms months before the local equivalents are ready. They do so, thinking that they're growing the market, but then, the whole point of the farmers' market is lost. If the characteristics of place—water, temperature, soil, and so forth—impose limits on what's possible to grow, living close to these parameters can show us who we are—people who eat asparagus in June, tomatoes not before August, peas all summer. Eating within our own locale gives us a well-honed sense of place that helps us discover that some foods are worth waiting for, and even celebrating. In Europe, the arrival of a crop is often celebrated from the little cherry sagra in Umbria to the Foire aux Potirons (Pumpkin Festival) in Tranzault, France. For this to happen, some discipline is required up front—the willingness to wait for the arrival of the fêted fruit or vegetable. But if everyone has already had their fill of asparagus when the local stuff comes in, then the excitement, along with the willingness to pay the higher cost of seriously perfect food, has gone. A commodity has taken the place of culture. A good farmers' market helps when it keeps food local, then celebrates the arrival of a new fruit or vegetable with a tasting, a demonstration, recipes, a contest, even a party. There's a sense of that in the Union Square Market in New York, with its mid-June strawberry festival, or in New Orleans, with its St. Joseph Day festival, or in the North Union Market with its sheep shearing and priest blessings on the opening day of the season.

Another quality that makes an especially good farmers' market is having traditional regional foods side by side with contemporary favorites. As Richard McCarthy, the market manager in New Orleans, says, "food says what's best about our region, and that we have a food culture that's worth preserving." That's something we have in our markets with our chiles, bison, posole, chokecherries, bolita beans, and chicos. I'm always proud to introduce these foods to visitors who want to experience the authentic flavors of Northern New Mexico. And as a visitor to other markets, I've honed my eye for such regional treasures, as Shagbark hickory nuts, true wild rice, Japanese massaged dried persimmons, heirloom apples and quince, wild huckleberries, and Creole Cream Cheese. These are the foods that make me feel as if I'm somewhere in a culture, not just somewhere in America, for they have their roots in place, history, and tradition. Farmers' markets can play a very vital role in keeping food cultures alive and they do that well in Missoula, Madison, New Orleans, New Mexico, Alabama, and in many other places across the country.

"Food is a true celebration of diversity. Whether you come from up town, downtown, or back of town, your life is involved with food." That's Richard McCarthy again from New Orleans. Often the farmers' market cuts across ethnic and economic lines, giving people a chance to rub shoulders with people they never otherwise meet. But not all markets are economically and racially diverse. There is the problem of boutique markets, such as the truly fabulous Ferry Plaza Market in San Francisco. Here one finds the most gorgeous produce, flowers, artisan breads and cheeses and oils that can be imagined. But it is very, very expensive! (Peaches at \$5 a pound, for example—but they are memorable). As a result its shoppers are not as diverse as they are in other markets that offer a wider range of quality and prices.

One can view the Ferry Plaza Market as a showcase for some of the best foods this country has to offer. To be fair, these producers live in a very expensive state close to one of the country's most expensive cities, and high quality food is just going to be expensive. But then, a city often has more than one market. Union Square in New York has some very pricey food, but there are lots of other markets scattered through the boroughs that are more affordable; and the same is true in San Francisco.

I love to amble through a big exciting market like Madison's with 300 farmers (provided you start early) or the Santa Monica or the Union Square farmers' markets and to be titillated by the vast variety found in such large markets. But in truth, I like a smaller market just as much, if not more. Usually it's more relaxed and personable, and the same choice is there. The food is no less beautiful than that found in a big market, but the pace is far more gentle, slowed down, the feeling more intimate. Some smaller markets I've enjoyed are the Soccoro Farmers' Market, Cortez's market, Healdsburg's Thursday morning market, and Chicago's lovely Green City Market where everything is off-loaded onto the grassy Lincoln Park lawn.

When it comes to style and structure, the less done the better, in my opinion. The Vista Market near San Diego, is held in an old playing field. It has no amenities, no fancy tents or other extras, but it doesn't matter. It's friendly, it has great food and lots of it. The Ithaca Farmers' Market has a big fancy structure, but it means you're indoors instead of outside, and it has taken on a mall-like atmosphere with its little booths. The Davis Farmers' Market has struck a good compromise with its shed structure, which gets people out of the winter rain and hot summer sun, but is so open that you're really

*Please see What Really Counts on page 9*

# Everybody Wants a Farmers' Market

These days, farmers' markets are in the news everywhere. Hardly a day goes by when I don't read in the paper about special foods available only at the farmers' market, or hear farmers' market customers being interviewed on the radio about their political views. Local farmers' markets have become the places to feel the public pulse, and to see the real America.

Every community wants one. Farmers' markets are a proven way to notch up the level of excitement in a community, and to create a public gathering place where people want to spend time. They provide increased income for small farmers, help to preserve regional farmland, bring high quality fresh food to urban customers, and provide small businesses an opportunity to get started with very little overhead.

So, how do you get one of these great events in your own city or town, and what do you have to watch out for? I work with lots of communities around New Mexico that want to start farmers' markets, and the most common mistake is to forget about the farmers! People want the excitement and bustle of a farmers' market downtown, but have given little or no thought to the question of how to get farmers to come and sell there.

The first step then is to recruit farmers, and create a market that will be economically profitable for them, so that they continue to come and sell. The effort usually begins with a meeting of local growers, in order to involve them in the project from the outset. One of the first tasks is to determine the criteria for who can sell there, through a clear set of rules and an organizational structure.

In my view, farmers' markets should be "producer-only" markets, where only bona fide producers are allowed to sell. "Producers" include not only farmers, but also ranchers, bakers, producers of cheese, sausage, salsa and so forth. It is this that differentiates a farmers' market from a local grocery store, guaranteeing to consumers that they are buying direct from a farmer, and fresh from the field. It is also very important in shielding farmers from price competition from re-sellers, who can often undersell farmers, forcing market prices down and ultimately destroying the farmers' profitability.

Markets must be managed so that farmers experience economic success, but markets must also function as successful public spaces. While the number one reason consumers come to farmers' markets is for the

freshness and quality of the products, almost equally important are the "place" and the "people." Perhaps more remarkably, according to a 2002 study by the New York-based Project for Public Spaces, farmers' market vendors value the sense of place and the people at the market (particularly the other vendors) as highly as the economic benefits!

Project for Public Spaces works with farmers' and other public markets around the country, and they recommend that new markets consciously build in this sense of place from the beginning. In order to do this, markets must find a location with easy access, visibility, and plenty of parking; provide a variety of activities (music, coffee, tastings); make the market attractive and comfortable (setting up benches and tables perhaps); and, be involved with the wider community.

Markets should consider adopting broad goals, such as providing access to fresh food for the community, improving nutritional health, or downtown economic development. These goals typically involve building alliances and partnerships, so that the market is supported not only by its vendors, but also by organizations within the community like health clinics, chambers of commerce, anti-hunger organizations, churches, and others.

When a market is woven into the texture of the community in this way, residents take ownership of it, and feel invested in its success. This is when the market magic begins to work, and you will have created a great market!

*Esther Kovari*

New Mexico Farmers' Marketing Association



photo by NMFMA

## Colorado Farmers Markets Grow In Numbers And Sales

Summer 2004 saw 72 farmers markets in the state of Colorado, up from 63 in 2003. A majority of the markets are along the front range of the Rockies from Fort Collins to Trinidad but many others are in small towns from Sterling in the northeastern part of the state to Cortez in the extreme southwest corner. Most of the larger markets are in or near high population areas such as Denver and Colorado Springs. However, one of the best new markets is in Carbondale, in the Roaring Fork Valley, between the cities of Glenwood Springs and Aspen, both of which also have weekly markets. The operation of the markets range from small to large privately or cooperatively owned operations which invite farmers and other sellers to attend for a set fee to markets run by schools, churches and cities and counties. Most of these are organized to offer fresh produce and fruit to nearby residents at reasonable prices and don't charge a very high selling fee to the vendors. Two new markets were set up this summer in the Front Range towns of Colorado Springs and Manitou Springs.

The Boulder and Longmont Farmers Markets are the largest farmer owned and operated markets in the state, with this year's sales near \$2,000,000 (including food vendors). These two markets charge a fee of 7% of sales and only allow farmers to sell what they grow. It is estimated that sales of all farmers markets in the state are approaching 8 million dollars although exact figures are nearly impossible to find as most markets don't require members to report sales.

The Colorado Farmers Market Association was established in the early 1990s to allow all markets in the state to purchase liability insurance through a group policy. The group holds a conference every other year to allow market managers and other interested parties to exchange information and ideas. The next conference is tentatively scheduled for February 2005. For exact dates and location please check the web site at [www.coloradofarmers.org](http://www.coloradofarmers.org).

*John Ellis*

Colorado Farmers Market Assoc. & Boulder Farmers Markets

## Farmers' Markets in New Mexico

In New Mexico, as elsewhere, we have experienced a flowering of farmers' markets over the last decade. On all measures (numbers of markets, sales, numbers of customers, numbers of vendors) our markets have grown at a remarkable pace.

We have also seen a growing diversification at the markets, with the advent in recent years of meats, cheeses, pasta and other processed foods, as well as innumerable new varieties of vegetables. The market season has become longer each year, with many markets now opening as early as April and staying open until the end of October. We now have four markets that stay open all year round (two of these have weekly or bi-weekly winter markets, and the other two take place once a month.) The markets are at the forefront of growth in other areas too—the growth in Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs and Farm to School lunch programs is closely related to the high public profile of farmers' markets, which has increased public awareness of the benefits of local foods.

Our challenges also reflect those faced by farmers' markets around the United States. Most difficult is the

task of finding growers and produce to meet the burgeoning demand from consumers. Development pressures are high, and many farmers or ranchers no longer find it profitable to keep on farming and ranching. Those who are still at it are often in their 60s, 70s—and even 80s. If farmers' markets are to continue to flourish in our state, we believe that support will need to be provided to a new generation of farmers—to those beginning farming for the first time, to those who are returning to a family tradition, and to those farmers who want to try something new by integrating farmers' market production into larger-scale commodity production.

What I truly love about our state's markets is the way that each is unique, and reflects the character of its local community. They vary greatly in size, ranging from the huge 100-vendor strong Santa Fe Farmers' Market to a tiny but lovely market with three growers in the town of Ramah, near Gallup – and everything in between. Vendors bring local specialties to market in every area: black-eyed peas and okra in eastern New Mexico, pink and bluish heirloom winter squashes in the north, native melons and Indian corn from the

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## Utah's Farmers' Markets

There are 20 Utah farmers markets listed on the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food (UDAF) website ([www.ag.utah.gov](http://www.ag.utah.gov)). It is easy to think that another 10-20 markets (from smaller communities) are in operation but are not part of the database.

There is not a real incentive for them to notify UDAF since Utah farmers markets are not regulated or funded by a state entity. The Utah's Own program has set a goal for the calendar year 2005 to locate and certify local farmers so there will be an incentive in the future for them to be on the UDAF website and part of the Utah's Own program.

Most of the 20 known markets are located in the northern half of Utah from Provo in the south to Logan in the north. Many of the markets are relatively new, beginning their operations within the past five years. The Utah Farm Bureau sponsors several markets in the Salt Lake City area. The most prominent markets are the downtown Salt Lake City Market sponsored by the Salt Lake Downtown Alliance, Thanksgiving Point in Lehi, and Ogden. The Salt Lake City Market, located in Pioneer Park, is open on Saturday mornings. The Ogden market, located in the downtown square, is open Wednesday evenings and Saturday mornings. The Logan market, organized less than five years ago, is a late bloomer and doing very well on Saturday mornings. Some of the growers that sell in Logan come from southern Idaho as well as Utah.

The common challenge with many of these markets is their relationship with local merchants and other political entities. The farmers markets seem to have less political influence than others do, so consequently, the market organizers are not able to make many of the decisions pertaining to their markets. This includes location, who can participate, and days to be open, etc.

It is hoped that a statewide farmers market organization will be created in the coming year in order to balance local politics on the farmers market side.

*Richard Sparks*  
Utah Department of Agriculture & Food



photo by NMFMA

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## Farmers' Markets in New Mexico

pueblos, pecans and pistachios in the south—and green chile everywhere (of course.)

Our state's markets have participated in the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program for 11 years now, and two Indian tribal organizations also participate. This program has been key in fostering the growth of the markets, by providing additional sales to growers, and providing an incentive for them to increase their plantings and bring more product to market.

*Esther Kovari*  
New Mexico Farmers' Marketing Association

### New Mexico Farmers' Markets Growth in Markets, 1993-2003

	2003	2002	2001	1998	1993
Vendor Days	11,434	10,986	10,462		
Gross Sales	\$2,813,000	\$2,761,000	\$2,414,000	1,417,000	
Peak Customer Counts	20,778	16,776	15,290		
Number of Markets	38	36	34	27	20

New Mexico Farmers' Marketing Association, 2004

## Arizona Farmers' Markets

Three years ago, about 26 open-air weekly farmers' markets could be found around Arizona. Today more than 50 markets provide a gathering place for local communities. 20 operate year round and 30 or so are seasonal. They have at their heart more than 100 small-acreage growers and producers. Most markets run out of food before they run out of customers. These customers throng to partake of the healthy foods, the festive atmosphere, and the chance to put a personal face on where their food comes from.

As we work to encourage cohesion and cooperation between the state's markets, several groups are very active in this regard: The Arizona Community Farmers Market Association coordinated by Dee and John Logan has been instrumental in establishing markets in the Phoenix area, and providing support to beginning markets statewide. The Arizona Farmers' Direct Marketing Association is a statewide organization composed of agricultural producers and organizations. Benefits of AFDMA membership include newsletters, discounts on events, free advertising on the AFDMA website and many others. In addition Community Food Connections has been able to share the benefits of working with the Southwest Marketing Network, Farm to Table and the New Mexico Farmers Marketing Association.

Three years ago, Arizona initiated the Arizona Farmers Market Nutrition Program (AZFMNP). It operates in 25 markets, 8 of the state's 15 counties, and in four tribal nations. This last year it grew by 37%, served more than 6,000 low-income women and children and 2,700 seniors, and brought in more than \$174,000 for local growers. Arizona also has a pilot food stamp program at 9 markets, using wireless point of sale equipment. This allows food stamp customers to shop for eligible foods. Credit and debit cards may also be processed through this equipment.

### **Market spotlight:**

The Historic Downtown Chandler Farmer's Market started more than 7 years ago. It runs year-round, with live music from October through March. Downtown Coordinator Claudia Whitehead believes that there is a growing demand for farmers markets based on the calls that she receives. The market has a steady, growing customer base, but could use more vendors.

The Oracle Market has a faithful group of patrons despite its small number of vendors. The market has between 30-50 visitors a week. People come for the fresh produce, local eggs, and also local honey and salsa. Some of the vendors participate clearly for economic reasons, and others come for the balance of making some extra money and enjoying the social/community aspect of the market.

The Prescott Farmers' Market has grown its vendors, sales and customer attendance every year in sales since it started 8 years ago. Customer counts show 1,500 - 2,000 customers a day on a slow to average day. Customers surveyed say they come for the freshness of food, locally grown food and sense of community. What they want more of is fruit, meat, and cheese. This market has about 25-35 vendors on a given day—almost 50 vendors throughout the season. Vendors appreciate the fact that this market is: 1) a producer-only market—no reselling is permitted. Farmers must grow everything they sell and value-added/craft vendors must make all they sell; 2) the smaller community and consistent customers makes vendors feel appreciated for coming, especially those who come a long distance; and, 3) a larger market (with definitive guidelines so it stays a farmers market) makes for better sales—vendors go where they can make money!

The Safford Farmers Market in Graham County reports that they are seeing slow growth in vendors, but a larger growth in customers. Increased opportunities to advertise may bring in more vendors. Most vendors at this market are hobbyists who come for something to do and the social end of it more than to make money. The market operates June – September and the customers are delighted with the melons, chili, tomatoes, squash, corn, peaches, and apricots the vendors bring.

The Flagstaff Community Market, in its fourth year of operation, grew in 2004 to meet the increasing demand for fresh, local food in Northern Arizona. Active vendor recruitment fueled a dramatic increase in attendance and sales, as well as a genuine interest from the local news media. Participation in the AZFMNP program brought a new crowd to the summer market, and encouraged vendors to take part in this successful program. Best of all, the market is helping link people with healthy, local food and the farmers who grow it.

*Cindy Gentry,*  
Community Food Connections

## Four-Corners States Collaborate for Federal WIC and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs

The WIC and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs (FMNPs) have provided incredible benefits to low-income women, children and seniors who are nutritionally at-risk by providing them with vouchers to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at their local farmers markets. The added benefit of these programs is additional income to farmers. Arizona and New Mexico have thriving WIC FMNPs. Colorado and Utah markets would like to have these programs, but have found it difficult to "get in the door" for federal funding because of cuts. All four states have been vying for federal funding for the \$15 million Senior FMNP.

Among our four states, we have more than 220 farmers' markets and thousands of potential senior and WIC participants. The Southwest has been very underserved and it is time we see these programs funded to meet the needs. The SWMN and other groups have been working together to "get the word out" to community members to call their senators in support of these programs. The good news is that they were passed as part of the Child Nutrition Act, but funding is in jeopardy annually. We are all working at building on these efforts to support these and various other federal

programs that directly benefit farmers, ranchers, low-income individuals and our communities. For more information call Farm to Table at 505-473-1004.

*Pam Roy*  
Southwest Food & Agriculture Policy Outpost

The WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program was established by Congress in 1992, to provide fresh locally grown fruits and vegetables to WIC recipients, and to expand the awareness and use of fresh produce and the farmers' markets that provide them. To date there are 44 states and five tribal nations participating in this \$25 million program.

The Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program was established several years ago to provide the same shopping opportunity to low-income seniors. In 2004, \$16.7 million was awarded to 41 states and 6 tribal organizations. Out of all of this funding Arizona, Utah, New Mexico and Colorado have received \$51,560 for two tribal organizations in New Mexico and one community in Colorado (Pueblo Farmers' Market.)

## Farmers Markets in Colorado and the Western US

The objectives of this article are to summarize the findings of some recent analyses of farmers market and direct marketing by agricultural producers, including the US Ag Census, USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service study of farmers markets and a Colorado State University study of consumer shopping behavior conducted in April 2004.

### Farmers Market Trends

The presence of farmers markets is one of the most apparent signals of consumer and producer interest in developing direct markets. There are organizational costs in establishing such markets and such markets will only continue or develop in the presence of sufficient consumer demand (and proven sales records by participating vendors). The number of farmers markets in the United States has grown dramatically, increasing 79% from 1994 to 2002, with over 3,100 farmers markets operating in the United States. There are over 80 farmers markets in Colorado, with at least one held every day of the week, and in all regions of the state,

([www.ag.state.co.us/mkt/farmfresh/welcome.html](http://www.ag.state.co.us/mkt/farmfresh/welcome.html)).

According to the 2000 USDA study on farmers markets, it is likely the most important direct marketing channel for US producers, and the importance of farmers markets to farm income is expected to rise. In 2000, 19,000 farmers reported selling their produce only at farmers markets. Yet, farmers markets are not necessarily an exclusive marketing channel for producers, as 69% of farmers market participants also have retail and wholesale markets to which they sell higher volumes of product at lower margins.

### Direct Marketing by Producers

In the western states, 8.5% of all farms do some direct marketing (compared to 5.5% for the US as a whole). In Colorado between 1997 and 2002, almost 500 farms began direct marketing (2,343 up from 1,866) so that 7.5% of all farms now do some direct marketing. This increase in activity resulted in over a two-fold increase in revenues as direct sales jumped



from \$6,926,000 to \$17,406,000 in 2002, illustrating a significant shift in marketing strategies by Colorado producers.

Within Colorado, there are concentrations of producers who sell the most directly, and not surprisingly, they are in areas near by metro consumer populations and areas that receive a large number of tourists.

### **The Role of Farmers Markets in Consumer Shopping**

There has been little research on the role of farmers markets in US consumers' food shopping behavior, but a recent study conducted by CSU, with support from the USDA Rural Development Agency and Rocky Mountain Farmers Union Cooperative Development Center, asked consumers about their primary and secondary food shopping choices. Although supermarkets dominate as the primary source of food, farmers

markets were the most popular choice among secondary food shopping locations. Together with the growth in direct sales by agricultural producers, documented by the Ag Census, this clearly shows the growing popularity of personal sales relationships with consumers.

With respect to broader food policy concerns, farmers markets appear to play a significant role in food security and assistance. According to the USDA, 58 percent of markets participate in Senior or WIC coupon, food stamps, local or state nutrition programs. To support more localized assistance efforts, 25% of markets participate in gleaning programs aiding food recovery organizations in the distribution of food and food products to needy families.

*Dawn Thilmany and Phil Watson,  
Colorado State University*

## Resources for Farmers' Markets

### **People**

**Esther Kovari and Sarah Grant**, NMFMA (see below), 505-983-4010

**John Ellis**, Boulder Farmers Markets and CFMA, 303-440-0750, farmerjde@idcomm.com

**Dawn Thilmany**, Colorado State University, 970-224-5356, dthilmany@lamar.colorado.state.edu.

**Richard Sparks**, Utah Department of Agriculture, 801-538-4913, rsparks@utah.gov.

**Cindy Gentry**, Community Food Connections, 602-493-5231, cgentry@foodconnect.org or www.foodconnect.org.

**Doug Findley**, Corrales Growers' Market, 505-898-4585

**Jim Dyer**, Durango Farmers' Market, 970-588-2292

**Sally Haines**, Boulder Farmers' Market, 303-444-1107

**M'Lissa Story**, Telluride Farmers' Market, 970-728-8701

**Shanti Leinow**, Prescott Farmers' Market, 928-713-1227

**Elizabeth Buchroeder**, Rincon Valley Farmers' Market, 520-247-3838

**Johanna Divine**, Flagstaff Community Market, 928-523-0668

### **Financial Resources**

www.usda.gov, search on farmers markets, community food projects, FSMIP, SARE

Agricultural Marketing Service, www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/

### **Associations, Organizations, and Agencies**

#### **New Mexico Farmers' Marketing Association**

www.farmersmarketsnm.org, 320 Aztec Street, Santa Fe, NM 87501, 505-983-4010

#### **Arizona Community Farmers Market Association**

Contact Dee Logan at deniselogan@yahoo.com

#### **Arizona Farmers Direct Marketing Association**

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

#### **Colorado Farmers Market Association**

www.coloradofarmers.org, Contact John Ellis (see above) or Suzi Pinckert at jamladycolorado@aol.com

#### **Agricultural Marketing Resource Center, Ames, IA**

www.AgMRC.org or 1111 NSRIC. Ames, IA 50011-3310 or 866-277-5567

#### **Farmers Market Coalition, North American Farmers**

#### **Direct Marketing Association, 413-529-2471**

email [fmc@nafdma.com](mailto:fmc@nafdma.com), or visit [www.nafdma.com](http://www.nafdma.com) and click on Farmers' Market Coalition.

#### **Project for Public Spaces, 212-620-5660**

email [pps@pps.org](mailto:pps@pps.org) or visit [www.pps.org](http://www.pps.org).

#### **ATTRA National Sustainable Agriculture Information**

**Service**, 800-346-9140 or [www.attra.ncat.org](http://www.attra.ncat.org)

### **Other Websites of Interest**

Northeast Midwest Institute at [www.nemw.org](http://www.nemw.org). Type in farmers market in the search engine or call 202-544-5200, contact Allen Hance at [ahance@nemw.org](mailto:ahance@nemw.org)

[www.sarep.ucdavis.edu/cdpp/farmersmkt.htm](http://www.sarep.ucdavis.edu/cdpp/farmersmkt.htm). Farmers mkt study overview

[www.growingformarket.com](http://www.growingformarket.com)

[www.newfarm.org](http://www.newfarm.org)

[www.usda.gov/oce/smallfarm](http://www.usda.gov/oce/smallfarm) Resources for small farms.



out of doors. It's simple and functional, and its cost didn't bankrupt the community. The Carrboro Farmers' Market in North Carolina has a similar roof-like structure that is protective yet open, pleasantly defining, and very economical to build and maintain, according to its director.

A market that mixes wholesale produce with farm produce never seems to work. The only markets I visited that were disappointing and sad in spirit were markets that tried to mix farmers with wholesalers. Wholesaling turns a rare opportunity into a commonplace experience by making the market into a place where you go to get something cheap, instead of something of quality. Even though the farm-grown food there might be excellent and the farmers are present, those bananas and pineapples (and the CDs and sunglasses that are often there as well) always have the effect of lessening the value of the truly local foods. They also take away the joy, sense of community, and sense of place that might otherwise be present. I've yet to see a mixed market that really works and I've met a number that failed, but no names will be mentioned here.

As for organics, it is great when they're in a market, and I will choose organic, grass fed, hormone free or whatever over the alternative. I love the all-organic Morningside Market in Atlanta and understand the reasoning behind their organic only policy (it was started by organic farmers who couldn't get the prices they deserved elsewhere). Yet, I still like to see markets that are open to everyone, especially in communities where farming has a tenuous grip at best. Farmers' market shoppers, who often prefer organic produce and meats, can influence farmers to change their practices from conventional to organic through their buying preferences. But if a farmer quits because there's no market to go to, it can be a loss to our dwindling farming community, and a possible loss of farmland. There's always someone who thinks that a nice little farm might make a perfect summer home—or subdivision. I'd rather entertain the hope that a conventional farmer might change her practices rather than quit.

Good markets often have food to taste, a friendly atmosphere, a place to sit, and the presence of children. It's great to see farmers in a market like the Green City Market in Chicago or the North Union Market in Cleveland, bend over backwards to welcome a class from the local culinary school or talk to a bunch of tiny kids tied together with a big blue rope. Rather than

being viewed as pests, many markets know that children need to be introduced to the foods that are good for them in a warm and welcoming way. They also know that these children, with their single dollars clenched in little fists, are future customers—and maybe even future farmers. A good market finds a way to make room for children, and its farmers make sure there's something for them to buy that's just their size.

Sometimes somewhat eccentric market features—it could be a person—can give a market a special quality. For example, one of the vendors in the Bellingham Market had made a habit of taking pictures of shoppers for years. He posted them on a big board and kids were constantly there looking for their pictures. The same market had picnic tables where vendors selling food made from local products (ice cream, sweet potato pie, wild blackberry pies, etc.) provided not only a good lunch, but also a place to linger and visit. Although this market was small, because of those tables, I spent three hours there, a good part of them visiting with shoppers as they came and sat down with their pie, and of course, watching people check out that bulletin board for their photos.

Great prepared food can be found in a lot of the markets in southern California. And it's really great when a vendor is cooking food that comes from the market itself. One of my favorite food sites was found in Torrance, California, where a Mexican woman was making the most delicious chalupas with local squash blossoms. It was a pleasure to sit at the picnic table and soak up the ambiance of the market while enjoying a delicious chalupa—a nice alternative to a sweet roll.

I love markets most when they have an intense sense of the locale—be it lore, history, food, people. One of the best was a market with 7 or 8 vendors, on Lummi Island, in the San Juan Islands. Being bought, sold and otherwise bartered were organic chickens, Dungeness crab, eggs, smoked Albacore, asparagus, lettuce, artichokes, and rhubarb pies—everything grown, caught, or made on a piece of land just a few miles long. What was there was a sense of resourcefulness. There was little land to farm, but it was farmed, and the sea was fished. People knew each other as neighbors and co-dwellers of this small place and they mingled as much as they shopped.

Of all the qualities that matter—connection, a sense of place, community, local and traditional foods—

*Please see What Really Counts on page 10*

# Network News

## SWMN News

- Teresa Maurer and Lynda Prim of the SW Marketing Network Steering Committee joined more than 5,000 delegates who attended the **Terra Madre World Meeting of Food Communities** in Turin, Italy from October 20-23, sponsored by Slow Food International. Of 1200 food communities from 130 countries, 32 were focused on farmers markets (from US, Canada, Ireland, and the UK). These 5,000 food producers and food aficionados communicated in 8 official languages. To learn more about the meeting and the Slow Food organization, visit [www.slowfoodusa.org](http://www.slowfoodusa.org). The SW Marketing Network website [www.swmarketing.ncat.org](http://www.swmarketing.ncat.org) will feature an online article in December.
- A coalition of experts on sustainable agriculture and food aficionados have compiled a “Redlist” of more than 700 uniquely North American plant and animal foods that are at risk of extinction. Seven prominent organizations have formed the group **Renewing America’s Food Traditions (RAFT)**. The Redlist was written as a result of research and recommendations from dozens of food historians, farmers, plant explorers, genetic conservationists, and agricultural activists. The book, *Renewing America’s Food Traditions*, highlights the stories of twenty authentic American Foods, and includes the first Redlist of America’s Endangered Foods. For further information, please contact Ashley Rood at [Ashley.Rood@nau.edu](mailto:Ashley.Rood@nau.edu), 928-523-0637, or visit [www.environment.nau.edu/raft/](http://www.environment.nau.edu/raft/).
- For a copy of the **complete reports** that were excerpted here—“Farmers Markets and Direct Marketing for Colorado Producers” by Dawn Thilmany, CSU and “Farmers Markets and Direct Marketing in the Western US, Market Trends and Potential Impacts on Financial Performance” by Dawn Thilmany and Phil Watson, CSU, give us a call at 505-473-1004 or email [ladams@cybermesa.com](mailto:ladams@cybermesa.com).
- Found while perusing the Noteworthy section of the SWMN website: “**Selling Directly to Restaurants and Retailers**” compiled by Gail Feenstra, Jeri Ohmart, and David Chaney and The “**Agriculture Diversification Compass, A Guide to Choosing New Directions for your Farm**” from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. These are two interesting reports. If you would like printed copies, give us a call at 505-473-1004 or email [ladams@cybermesa.com](mailto:ladams@cybermesa.com).
- **Canyon Country Fresh News**, for Growers, Retailers, and Consumers in Canyon Country is now available. This is an almost monthly newsletter. Contact Northern Arizona University to get on their mailing list. 928-523-0664 or email [Catherine.Freeman@nau.edu](mailto:Catherine.Freeman@nau.edu).

What Really Counts *continued from page 10*

simple friendliness counts for a lot in the end. Farming is hard and has, for too long, been an undervalued endeavor in this country. Farmers’ markets have been crucial in turning value systems around. But there is sometimes a feeling of what, I don’t know exactly, but a kind of entitlement on the part of farmers that doesn’t make the customer feel very valued. On more than one occasion I’ve heard customers complain that they sometimes feel scorned by the farmers for their life style, and this is a shame. Farmers’ markets are fun to go to, but farmers need to know that many of their customers make an effort to support them by shopping there and paying the higher prices for their food. And that not everyone who shops at the market has deep pockets. Sometimes it’s a matter of personal commitment.

I suppose there’s always room for more acrimony in the world, although you wouldn’t think so. But, whether urban or rural, farmer or shopper, we’re all in this soup together, trying hard to stay connected to the last bit of our landscape and land, food, histories, and traditions—as well as each other. If farmers’ markets don’t include a living sense of community, which is as necessary as the good food that can be found there and the air we breathe, there’s always the natural food store to retreat to with its California big-farm organics, expensive imports, and processed foods. Not nearly as much fun, local, delicious, or alive, but it is there. I vote for a living food community myself, and that, ultimately, is what a good farmers’ market has to offer.

*Deborah Madison* writes about food, farmers’ markets and cooking from her home in Galisteo, New Mexico.

Editor’s note: This article was originally published in *localflavor*, May 2004 and is being used with permission. *localflavor* is a food, wine and lifestyle magazine with an emphasis on locally owned restaurants and sustainable agriculture. It is distributed at sites throughout Northern New Mexico and by subscription. [localflavor@earthlink.net](mailto:localflavor@earthlink.net).

# Calendar of Events

**December 12, 2004** • Slow Food Event, Leupp, AZ. Navajo-Churro mutton and other traditional foods sold to raise funds for Slow Food memberships for Navajo and Hopi tribal members.

Contact: Linda Willie at 928-380-4603

**January 12 & 13, 2005** • Holistic Management Rendezvous: A Community Caring for the Land, Albuquerque, NM. Contact: Center for Holistic Management at 505-842-5252 or [www.holisticmanagement.org](http://www.holisticmanagement.org)

**January 13-15, 2005** • Half Public, Half Private, One West: Innovation and Opportunity Across Boundaries, The Quivira Coalition's 4th Annual Conference, Albuquerque, NM. To ensure the long-term vitality of the values that we all cherish in the West—open space, wildlife, water, culture, and economy—we need to unite our efforts and manage land as if fences didn't matter. This conference will explore issues and strategies that aim at improving economic and ecological health for all by honoring the public while respecting the private. Contact: The Quivira Coalition at 505-820-2544 or visit the website, [www.quiviracoalition.org](http://www.quiviracoalition.org)

**January 19-22, 2005** • 25th Annual Eco-Farm Conference, Pacific Grove, CA

Contact: Ecological Farming Association at 831-763-2111 or visit [www.eco-farm.org](http://www.eco-farm.org)

**January 28 & 29, 2005** • Farmers' Market Managers' Conference, NM Farmers' Marketing Association.

(Partial scholarships will be made to a small number of AZ, CO, and UT participants. Call Farm to Table at 505-473-1004 for scholarship information.) Santa Fe, NM. Contact: Esther Kovari & Sarah Grant, NM Farmers' Marketing Association at 505-983-4010 or visit [www.farmersmarketsnm.org](http://www.farmersmarketsnm.org)

**February 5-11, 2005** • Society for Range Management 58<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting and Conference, Fort Worth, TX

Contact: SRM in CO at 303-986-3892 or visit [www.rangelends.org](http://www.rangelends.org)

**February 6-12, 2005** • Trip to Tulare, CA for the largest farm show in the US (tons of equipment!) and to see other small farming and ranching opportunities in the surrounding area. Leaving from Northern New Mexico. \$500 pays for everything except food.

Contact: Del Jimenez, NMSU Cooperative Extension Service, RAIPAP at 505-852-2668.

**February 7-14, 2005** • North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Conference, Boston, MA

Contact: website [www.nafdma.com](http://www.nafdma.com). (Farmers' Market Coalition meeting included.)

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

Tracks on alternative marketing opportunities, boosting production & processing, marketing approaches, business tools, and policy. Special workshops on marketing coops, grass-fed livestock, food & agricultural policy. Sessions on business management, farm to cafeteria, farmers' market rapid assessment, specialty crops, organics, buy local, business planning, food systems, nutrition issues, scaling up, e-commerce, traditional native foods, growing new farmers, working with policy makers, product development, CSAs, labeling and much, much more! We invite participation by youth. Don't miss the best marketing conference in the Southwest! Contact: Farm to Table at 505-473-1004 or [ladams@cybermesa.com](mailto:ladams@cybermesa.com) so we can send you the program or visit the website at [www.swmarketing.ncat.org](http://www.swmarketing.ncat.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.

For more events outside our region, visit the ATTRA calendar at [www.attra.ncat.org/cgi-bin/event/calendar.cgi](http://www.attra.ncat.org/cgi-bin/event/calendar.cgi).

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