



Southwest Marketing Network

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

Promoting Local Agricultural Marketing in the Southwest

January 2008

New time, new location

The next annual conference brings change to the Southwest Marketing Network

News on the Southwest’s most comprehensive marketing conference for farmers, ranchers, and community service providers!

Like we are hearing so much on the political front these days—Change is good, right? We have moved the date of the annual conference from the end of March to the beginning of May. We know that this will not satisfy all people who are participants, but we are encouraging you to give the new time a try. We hope to see you here.

The conference will be held at the inn at the end of the historic Santa Fe Trail in downtown Santa Fe. La Fonda is the epitome of Santa Fe style, surrounded by the art and history that characterizes our fair city. Plan to spend some extra time here if you can.

The conference will start as it has in years past with a full day tour. This tour will visit several Northern New Mexico farms and farmers who are leading the way in specialty crops, low-tech infrastructure, and innovative marketing ideas. For those who cannot make the tour, there are two other fine workshops available—a Policy Council Development Workshop and a Farm to School Regional Meeting and special training session. The first day will culminate with a Local Food Reception and networking.

The heart of the conference is a day and a half of sessions (25 to choose from), some of which are listed below:

Selling to Institutions and a Roundtable including barriers and opportunities • Traditional/Nutritional Foods • Innovative Distribution Systems for Farmers and Communities • Farmers’ Markets Best Practices

- Buy Local Campaigns • Government Grant Programs • Tribal Farmers’ Markets • Organizational Capacity and Coalition Building • Grant Writing and Grant Opportunities • Media Partnerships • Climate Change and Energy • Bookkeeping and Business Planning for Farmers and Ranchers • Youth and the Next Generation of Farmers • Land Access • SW Food & Agriculture Policy Roundtable • Farm Bill Outcomes that Benefit Farmers, Ranchers, and Community Food Programs • Climate and Energy Policy Options for Farmers and Ranchers • Community Food Assessments

See articles in this newsletter for more detail on food systems, energy and climate change; on the Farm Bill; on food policy council training; and, on farm to school activities.

continued on page 3

What’s inside:

Food Systems, Energy & Climate Change	2
Help for Community Food Projects	3
Highlights of the Farm Bill	4
Southwest Food Policy Council Training	5
New Resources on the SWMN Website	5
Organic Marketing Research project	5
Farm to School update	6
Calendar of Events	7

Linking Food Systems, Energy, and Climate Change

There is a lot of talk lately about climate change—endless debates about how severe, how fast, who is most responsible, and even whether it is happening at all. A constant stream of new evidence appears in the media—often with scientists expressing surprise that things are changing even faster than they expected. The debate over whether developed or developing countries should be held most to task is a disheartening avoidance of responsibility.

Discussion can be very useful, but if the net result is inaction, it has not served its purpose. The current debate provides a curiously safe haven for those who prefer business as usual, and confounds the many honest folks who want to make positive sustainable changes.

The climate and energy sessions at our next SWMN Conference in Santa Fe are designed to help producers and local food activists to pursue those positive improvements. We expect that energy and climate will be a theme found in many of the Santa Fe sessions from policy to new crops, from food security to regional food distribution.

The latest assessment of our changing climate is sobering. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), in their 2007 Policy Report (http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar4/syr/ar4_syr_spm.pdf) emphasizes that continued warming is a sure bet, that precipitation patterns are likely to change dramatically, but that more specific timing and severity of these changes remains unclear. The IPCC authors state that significant change is underway and will continue as a result of our current greenhouse gas emissions, but that dramatic reductions in emissions are needed now to avoid even greater climate shifts in the future.

Impacts are clearly in the cards for farmers, ranchers, and our local food systems. We will need to adapt to these new conditions at the same time that we reduce our greenhouse gas contributions.

Fortunately, there are plenty of strategies available to accomplish both objectives. Many of these fall into the category of “No Regrets Strategies”—things that are

wise improvements regardless of the timing or severity of the changes we face—things that we should have been doing anyway—energy efficiency on the farm, increasing soil organic matter for water holding capacity, irrigation efficiency, buying locally, reducing unnecessary processing and packaging, eating in season.

This is the “low hanging fruit”—opportunities to make dramatic improvements now with existing technologies and know-how. Most can save us money on energy costs while making us less vulnerable to climate change and reducing our impact on future climate—a win-win-win situation.

The sessions we have planned for Santa Fe in May and resources planned for our website are designed to put these strategies into the new context of climate change by:

- Identifying energy-saving techniques for producers along with sources of technical and financial assistance.
- Helping communities utilize the public concern about climate change to bolster local buying.
- Make the connection between food security and climate and energy impacts—disparate impacts on low-income and rural populations, food crops versus energy crops, and the like.
- Encouraging critical thinking about how local and regional food systems can best address energy use and climate impacts (are propane heated greenhouses for tomatoes in January the answer?).
- Developing policy improvements at local, state, and federal levels that stimulate rather than stifle these needed changes.
- Laying the foundation for tackling the harder issues—beyond the “low hanging fruit”—of managing shifts in cropping regions, dwindling irrigation supplies, and regional food systems.

We hope you will join us in Santa Fe as we explore these opportunities.

Jim Dyer, Southwest Marketing Network

continued from page 1

In association with and after this conference, there will be a current CFP (Community Food Projects) grantees meeting. And don't forget about the FOOD! We endeavor to have as much locally produced foods both at the evening Reception and for the meals during the conference. Since the conference is later in the Spring as well as "in our backyard", there will be more luscious foods to select from and to bring to your plate. Keep your eyes open for the full conference brochure to be mailed out next month. We welcome all of your participation. Also, keep in touch through the website. See you in May in Santa Fe.

Lē Adams, Farm to Table

Save the date!
**Southwest Marketing
Network
6th Annual Conference**
**La Fonda Hotel
Santa Fe, NM
May 5, 6 & 7, 2008**

Conference Preview

Help for Community Food Projects— Planning, Proposing, and Implementation

In an effort to support those of you who are currently conducting or plan to carry out a Community Food Project (CFP) under USDA or other funding, we are using support from USDA to develop some sources of assistance most pertinent to our region.

The call for proposals is already out for this year and letters of intent were due in early January—much earlier than last year—so these resources should help you if you have been selected for submitting a full proposal. Much of the emphasis of our assistance, however, is to help community groups plan solid teams and projects well ahead of deadlines and to implement projects over the long term. Much of what we offer now should help you in preparation for developing a competitive proposal next year, as well as help those who have a grant now or will be receiving one this year.

Web Resources: We are adding a CFP page to our SWMN website and will be adding resources including tips for proposals, profiles of current and past grant recipients, links to national assistance, etc.

CFP Listserv: See the SWMN website to sign up for our new listserv for news, announcements, and

discussion about Community Food Projects.

2008 Conference Sessions: We are planning a networking meeting at the Annual Conference in Santa Fe to help you meet and share with current, past, and prospective CFP project participants. We will have several workshops on a variety of topics such as collaboration building, proposal preparation, and common activities such as Farm to School and community food assessments. There are more topics than we can cover in one conference, so please let us know what you see as the highest priorities—e-mail to jadyer@frontier.net

Personal Assistance: We have the ability to help a very limited number of groups with advice for planning and proposing a CFP project. If you would like to be considered, please send us a description of your project status, planned project, and most pressing needs. Please keep in mind that our assistance is limited, so be specific—e-mail to jadyer@frontier.net

Jim Dyer, Southwest Marketing Network

Highlights of the Farm Bill—Food and Energy Security Act of 2007

The Senate passed their version of the Farm Bill on December 17th, just before the holiday recess. Now that Congress is back in session, the House and Senate must work together to negotiate their Farm Bill priorities. Some of the programs that would benefit the Southwest include the **Community Food Projects** grant program (CFP). The Senate's bill would increase CFP funding to \$10 million in mandatory annual funding, doubling the program's previous \$5 million. When the House-Senate conference committee meets to compromise the two bills, it's important that the Senate's funding hold up against the House version, which does not give CFP mandatory funds.

For states focused on developing **Farm to School** programs, both the House and Senate bills include language clarifications called "**geographic preference**" that would enable and encourage schools to look for local food first when they develop meals through the USDA. In addition, the Farm Bill would expand the **Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program** into every state by investing more than \$1.1 billion that is targeted to low-income children in every state of the country. The current fresh fruit and vegetable programs are widely popular and successful but only available to a handful of school districts in only 16 states.

The Senate bill sets aside \$7 million over 5 years for a **Healthy Food Enterprise Development** center, which would provide advice and assistance to support aggregation, processing and marketing of local produce in underserved communities. The bill also includes a provision within the Business & Industry Loan Program, adding a priority for local food systems and increased access to healthy foods.

Also included are investments of more than \$2 billion in **specialty crops** like nuts, fruits and vegetables,

The Farm Bill would expand the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program into every state by investing more than \$1.1 billion that is targeted to low-income children in every state of the country.

including chile. The new investments in specialty crops are important because only one in five Americans consumes the recommended daily amount of fruits and vegetables each day. This would be an important investment in our Southwest states and could help small specialty crop producers.

The Senate also suggests over \$5 billion in permanent disaster assistance through the creation of the **Agricultural Disaster Relief Trust Fund**. The disaster assistance trust fund will ensure that farmers have a dependable and timely safety net when disasters strike rather than having to wait for Congress to appropriate emergency funding.

Several important **research provisions** were accepted by Senate leadership and added to the Senate bill as part of the Manager's amendment. These include the Feingold (D-WI) Organic Research amendment, which allocates funding from USDA's Agricultural Research Service budget to **research on organic agriculture**, and the Menendez (D-NJ) **Local Foods Study** amendment, which funds a study on the potential growth of local food in the marketplace, and the benefits of advancing local food systems.

The **Conservation Stewardship Program** will allow all agricultural producers, including livestock and specialty crop producers, the opportunity to improve their soil and water resources through an annual enrollment of 13.2 million acres into the Program. In addition, the Senate suggests reauthorization of the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) at \$1.27 billion in 2008 and 2009, and \$1.3 billion thereafter, as well as extension of the Conservation Reserve Program until 2012 at the current cap of 39.2 million acres. The Senate version of the Farm Bill would strengthen the Packers and Stockyards Act to protect producers, improve and clarify mandatory country of origin labeling for meat and produce, and promote renewable fuels through competitive grant award programs.

For more Farm Bill resources and updates see the Sustainable Agriculture Coalition's Weekly Update at www.msawg.org and updates of the Community Food Security Coalition website at www.foodsecurity.org.

Pam Roy, Farm to Table

Southwest Food Policy Council Training

Time and Location:

Monday, May 5, 2008, 9am-5pm,
during the SWMN Conference at La
Fonda Hotel, Santa Fe, NM

Sponsored by:

the Community Food Security Coalition

The Community Food Security Coalition and its Food Policy Council Program will be offering regional FPC training workshops in 2008, the third of which will be in Santa Fe, NM. This workshop is designed to assist individuals and organizations from Southwest and Western states interested in the development of local, regional or state food policy councils—those that are currently operational as well as those that are in the very early stages of development. The training will emphasize the organizational development of coalitions and networks that may precede the actual establishment of a food policy council, the operation of food policy councils, and the development of effective local and state food policy strategies. As such, the workshop is suitable for beginners as well as those with more experience.

Each of the three 2008 workshops are designed to promote regional networking and information sharing. To that end, workshop registration will give priority to people within the region where they are located. As additional space becomes available, people from outside this region will be able to participate. Some scholarship funds are available to defray the cost of travel and lodging. First preference for scholarship support will be for limited resource farmers and ranchers. For further information, contact Mark Winne, 505-983-3047, win5m@aol.com.

Mark Winne,
Community Food Security Coalition

New Resources on the SWMN Website

We are continually adding materials to our website to serve you better, so keep checking in and give us your feedback.

Marketing Topics

Several hundred new resources have been added, organized under 40 topical areas from farmers markets to internet commerce, from wool to fruit, from organics to pastured livestock, and from business development to labeling.

Community Food Projects

In support of those developing or implementing Community Food Projects, we have started to compile resources to help. Profiles of current and past projects in the Four Corners states, links to USDA and other national resources, and tips for planning and carrying out your projects will be added this winter.

Organic Marketing Report

The entire report stemming from our survey of the certified producers in the Four Corners states will be posted soon for viewing on-line or downloading. The status of organic marketing in our region, a profile of producers, key findings, and recommendations will be included.

Check it out at www.swmarketingnetwork.org

Jim Dyer, Southwest Marketing Network

The Organic Marketing Research project being conducted by SWMN and Colorado State University is being completed. A comprehensive report on the survey of the certified organic producers in our four states as well as the findings and recommendations from the survey and extensive interviews is near completion. The full report will be posted on the SWMN website, and a brochure will be sent to all on the SWMN newsletter mailing list, including all certified growers, in the next few weeks. This project was funded by the Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program (WSARE).

Farm to School Update

You read in the last newsletter about the Southwest Marketing Network being selected as the Regional Lead to help facilitate Farm to School activities in our region. Please be sure to contact Jim Dyer if you are working in or are interested in working in FTS in Colorado, Wyoming and Utah; Cindy Gentry in Arizona (cgentry@foodconnect.org); and, Lē Adams in New Mexico. We are really interested in making contact with you and providing any assistance that we can for your Farm to School projects. The agenda of the regional FTS meeting taking place in May has not been completely filled in yet, so if you have any specific requests for training or networking ideas for FTS during the conference, please contact any of us.

Colorado

The Farm to School Working Group in Colorado is preparing a survey of producers to determine interest in various direct marketing outlets, especially Farm to School. This survey will complement the recent comprehensive survey of school districts across the state as to involvement and interest in Farm to School activities. The Working Group, a growing coalition of state and local groups, recognizes the increasing public demand for these programs as well as the potential market for farmers and ranchers across the state.

Renowned School Chef Ann Cooper of Berkeley made two trips to Colorado this Fall. Several groups invited Ann to the Front Range to bring attention to the need for healthy local foods in schools. The Telluride Institute hosted Ann in the southwest part of the state with a panel discussion comprised of Ann, a local

producer, and the SWMN. If there is anyone who can spark community interest in Farm to School and speak from extensive experience, it is Ann Cooper.

New Mexico

One of our local family farmers in the Northern part of the state announces that they have recently been both GAPs (Good Ag Practices) and GHPs (Good Handling Practices) certified. It has been a long and arduous process, but it has made their operation the first one certified in this part of the state. Velarde Orchards has been selling apples, peaches and pears to NM schools for 3 years now. Both their orchards and packing shed are now fully certified. For more information, contact Eddie Velarde at 505-852-2310.

Local Profile—Tucson, Arizona

A Food Bank seems an unlikely organization to dedicate itself to Farm to School. However, Tucson's Community Food Bank's Community Food Security Center's mission is to increase access to healthy food. Farm to School is one way for children to have access to healthy fresh produce. The Community Food Bank operates two Farmer's Markets and a ten acre farm, and has existing relationships with area schools, therefore making it a perfect facilitator for Farm to School programs.

In 2007, the Community Food Bank conducted a food service director and farmer survey that revealed significant interest in Farm to School. Amber Herman, a National Hunger Fellow, was tasked to explore the barriers and opportunities to implementing Farm to School programs in Tucson. Highlights of the Farm to School exploration process included a "lesson in procurement" from the Procurement Manager for Tucson Unified School District, which serves 50,000 children a day, and job shadowing an "all-purpose" Food Service Director whose tasks included developing menus, procuring food, and daily cooking from scratch for her 180 students, and touring Litchfield Elementary District's Farm to School program with Department of Agriculture employees. The information gathered from meeting with school administration, food service directors, government administrators, and farmers will be compiled into a guide for Farm to School facilitators, whom are neither farmers nor food service directors. The relationships built during this exploration process

The Farm to School video

Farm to Table, the SWMN, and NMSU announce the completion of the Farm to School video. The intended audience includes farmers, parents, and everyone in the school community. This 25 minute DVD will be available soon. It will also be available at the conference in May. If you can't wait that long, please request to ladams@cybermesa.com or Farm to Table, 3900 Paseo del Sol, Santa Fe, NM 87507.

This project was made possible by a grant from Western SARE.

are critical to preparing the ground for successful future Farm to School programs in Arizona.

St. John The Evangelist School was eager to start a Farm to School program for their 180 students living in a low-income, mostly Hispanic neighborhood. Nearly 80% of the students receive free or reduced priced lunch and attend school on scholarship. Farm to School discussions prompted school administrators to dust off the school's wellness policy. As a result, St. John School is planning "Eat Well, Be Well" Health Week taking place January 14-17, 2008.

The highlight of the week will be an "Arizona-Grown" salad bar provided by small-scale farmers growing in the Tucson and Phoenix areas, including the Community Food Bank's six-acre Marana Farm. The salad bar equipment is on loan from David Schwake at the Litchfield Elementary District. St. John School and the Community Food Bank invited sixty political and government officials, school administrators, and not-for-

profit program managers to come and eat the Arizona-grown salad bar with the children and learn about Farm to School on Farm to School Day on January 15, 2008. The Health Week also features free dental health checks for low-income students through Reach Out America, the Community Food Bank Mobile Market, special recess activities with retired P.E. teachers and local fitness trainers, a family health fair with outreach by 14 community organizations, and agriculture and nutrition education sessions in the classrooms.

By the time that you receive this newsletter, our special events may be completed, but if you would like more information about St. John's "Eat Well, Be Well" Health Week and Farm to School Day, please contact Amber Herman, National Hunger Fellow at 520-622-0525 or aherman@hungercenter.org.

Amber Herman, National Hunger Fellow

Jim Dyer, SWMN, jadyer@frontier.net

Lē Adams, Farm to Table, ladams@cybermesa.com

Calendar of Events

February 21-23, 2008 • Colorado Agriculture Big and Small Conference • Greeley, CO

Contact: Adrian Card, acard@co.boulder.co.us

February 28, 2008 • 8:30 am-5:30 pm • National Dialogue Meeting on the National Organic Action Plan • Marriott Pyramid, Albuquerque, NM. This dialogue meeting is free, scholarships to assist with the Organic Farming Conference are available. For more information and to register—

Contact: Liana Hoodes, liana@hvc.rr.com, 845-744-2304, National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture, 3540 Rt. 52, Pine Bush, NY 12566.

February 29-March 1, 2008 • New Mexico Organic Farming Conference • Marriott Pyramid, Albuquerque, NM

Contact: <http://cahe.nmsu.edu/organicfarming/> or Le Adams, 505-473-1004, ladams@cybermesa.com

March 3, 2008 • Direct Farm Marketing and Sustainable Ag Conference • Gilbert, AZ

Starting at 9 am at the AZ Farm Bureau Office, 325 S. Higley Road, Gilbert, no charge.

In the afternoon, the group will visit 2 local farms. For more information—

Contact: Russ Tronstad at Tronstad@ag.arizona.edu or 520-621-2425

May 5, 6, & 7, 2008 • Southwest Marketing Network 6th Annual Conference • La Fonda Hotel, Santa Fe, NM

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

Go to www.swmarketingnetwork.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/calendar/index.php

SOUTHWEST MARKETING NETWORK STEERING COMMITTEE

Jim Dyer, Project Director
Southwest Marketing Network
Hesperus, CO
970-588-2292
jadyer@frontier.net

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

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

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

Kate Clancy
Consultant
klclancy@comcast.net

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

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

Lydia Oberholtzer
Advisor
202-694-5486
loberholtzer@igc.org

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

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

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

Evaluator

John Allen / James Goodwin
Western Rural Development Center
435-797-9732 / 435-797-7606
johna@ext.usu.edu

Newsletter Staff

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



Farm to Table
3900 Paseo del Sol
Santa Fe, NM 87507

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