



Southwest Marketing Network

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

Promoting Local Agricultural Marketing in the Southwest

October 2009

Empowering communities through USDA Community Food Project trainings

Over the past two years, food and agricultural groups throughout the Southwest have taken great strides in developing the skills they need to write grants, formalize their organizations, and manage projects that improve their community's access to local, healthy and affordable foods. These skills do not come easily, and, thanks to a USDA Community Food Project Training and Technical Assistance grant, the Southwest Marketing Network (SWMN) has been able to provide some help along the way. Through workshops offered by the SWMN, organizations have developed skills to assess their work, grown the capacity of their organization, and learned how to apply for grants. More than a dozen groups and organizations benefited from workshops and direct consultation and turned them into opportunities. One such success story takes place in Pojoaque Pueblo, located in Northern New Mexico. In 2005, the Pojoaque Farmers' Market was launched to give local farmers a place to sell and to give local consumers a place to buy fresh, local foods. The market developed such a strong customer base that they needed more farmers. Thus, with help from a grant-writer from the

Pueblo, the Pojoaque Farmers' Market obtained nearly \$50,000 from the USDA Farmers' Market Promotion Program to help train farmers. The funding has been used to host workshops on production, farm planning, and direct-marketing. The funding has also been used to send farmers to the New Mexico Organic Farming Conference and the Southwest Marketing Network Conference. Farm to Table, a key Southwest Marketing Network partner, has helped the farmers' market manager to develop this training program and the skills needed to administer a federal grant. The market's success has drawn the attention of a local donor who has provided additional resources to the market.

Another great success can be found in Grant County, located in southeastern New Mexico. Here, the local Health Council and the Volunteer Center teamed up to assess their community's needs and assets around agriculture and access to healthy foods. They held town hall meetings at which many local residents shared their concerns and ideas for future activities. Based on this information, a coalition of partners worked together to

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SWMN Salt Lake Urban Farming Conference West Valley City, Utah • November 16, 2009

Conference will be held at the Cultural Celebration Center in West Valley City, UT

For more information on the upcoming SWMN Urban Farming Conference in West Valley, UT in November, please read the conference announcement on page 4.

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develop strategies for root-level interventions that would help existing farmers improve their operations, teach more people to grow their own food, and help all residents to have access to more fresh, local foods. A part of this vision is to create a Grant County Food Policy Council that would identify key policy barriers and opportunities to enacting this vision and work with local government to address these issues.

The partners in Grant County have been proactive in seeking funds to make their vision a reality. With help from Farm to Table they applied to “Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities,” a new grant program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. This grant program asks communities to take a deep look at the issue of childhood obesity and identify systems-level changes that can help children and their families to be more active and eat more fresh, local foods. As of the writing of this article, the Grant County partners have reached the final round and are in a strong position to receive up to \$360,000 over four years. This grant program will likely do another round of funding next year.

These are only a few of the advances made under the SWMN’s Community Food Project Training and Technical Assistance grant. Groups such as Dine Ag and the Santa Fe Community Farm have received guidance on how to apply for federal non-profit status. Navajo wool growers were aided in efforts to establish more local wool processing. Technical assistance was lent to food assessment projects in Longmont, Denver, and Colorado as a whole. And finally, the SWMN has been able to add a wealth of resources to the SWMN website on planning, funding, implementing, and assessing local projects.

If your organization or community is interested in applying to the Community Food Projects grant program or is looking for other grant opportunities, take a look at the Southwest Marketing Network website where you will find tips on available funding sources, tips on grant-writing, and contact information for SWMN partners in your state that can help you with organizational development, grant-writing, and project development.

Ilana Blankman & Pam Roy, Farm to Table

Newsletter update: Help us know the best way to get SWMN news to you

We are committed to keep getting you the best information we can, and we need to know how best to get it to you while saving resources. Please know that all newsletters will be on the website for your viewing at any time at www.swmarketingnetwork.org.

We are enclosing the postcard in this newsletter for you to tell us whether you need to always receive the newsletter in hard copy or would be willing to receive an e-mail notice of its availability on the website. We especially need to know who needs a hardcopy due to internet access issues.

PLEASE return the postcard to us with the relevant information.

Thank you, the newsletter staff.

SWMN web resources for Community Food Projects

Community Food Projects are designed to increase food security in communities by bringing the whole food system together to assess strengths, establish linkages, and create systems that improve the self-reliance of community members over their food needs (USDA).

For more Community Food Project Resources, please visit:

<http://www.swmarketingnetwork.org/>
and click on, “Community Food Projects”.

CFP Web Resources include:

- Tips for writing a USDA Community Food Project grant
- Tips for conducting a Community Food Assessment
- A list of past and present CFP projects in the Four Corners states

Cultivando Tradición: Meeting food security needs along the US-Mexico border

In the spring of 2008, the Colonias Development Council was awarded a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Community Food Projects (CFP) grant to facilitate the creation of community gardens in southern Doña Ana County, New Mexico. Cultivando Tradición is a program that has grown out of efforts to establish gardens in Anthony, Chaparral, and Vado as part of the USDA CFP grant.

The aim of the Cultivando Tradición program is to work with colonia community residents, and especially youth, in southern New Mexico to create culturally-appropriate, educational, and healthy community garden spaces. These spaces link food production and consumption to social, environmental, and economic justice issues. “I believe that a community garden is more than garden space; it is a community organizing tool contributing to larger food sovereignty and fair food movements,” says Aaron Sharratt, Cultivando Tradición Projects Coordinator.

The CDC’s Cultivando Tradición program incorporates video documentary-making, artistic expression, nutrition and health education, community awareness, and appropriate economic development as organizing tools. In doing so, program staff seek to address community concerns regarding high rates of diabetes, obesity, hunger, and inadequate access to healthy and fresh foods; especially among the many low- to very-low income women and youth who live in southern New Mexico’s colonia communities. Sharratt says the CDC is taking a, “holistic approach to health issues and economic development,” through community-wide garden projects.

The Colonias Development Council works to improve the quality of life in colonia communities along the US-Mexico border. At times there is tension among and between people and cultural groups living along the border. The Cultivando Tradición gardens have served as a place to bring people together to break down barriers and build community. Sharratt says there is, “nothing more essential than bringing people together around the basic need for food.”

In July 2009 the CDC hosted a day of garden tours. Over sixty people visited each of the three Cultivando Tradición gardens and the Fairlight Community



photo by Aaron Sharratt

Luz Aguirre, member of the Salud y Vida Chaparral Community Garden, showing garden tour attendees the Salud y Vida garden, July 18, 2009.

Garden in Las Cruces. Sharratt said the garden tours proved to be quite powerful because many of the gardeners had not visited the other gardens in the area. The event allowed the garden participants a chance to network and share ideas.

Looking towards the future, the CDC is planning to use some remaining Community Food Project Grant funding to conduct a community food assessment pilot study. This fall they will work with residents from Anthony and Chaparral, and Dr. Lois Stanford from New Mexico State University, to design the goals and desired outcomes of the assessment and will begin the assessment in 2010.

Over the next several years, the Colonias Development Council will continue to strive towards reaching their goals of meeting food security and health needs of southern New Mexico. Cultivando Tradición coordinator, Aaron Sharratt says, “There are no experts in our gardens. Rather, everyone touched by this project is part of a learning process – learning by working together to grow healthy foods in healthy soils and creating healthy communities. In the coming years, I believe that we will witness some remarkable food systems changes.”

Julie Hudak, Healthy Community Food Systems

SWMN Salt Lake Urban Farming Conference: November 16, 2009

The Southwest Marketing Network (SWMN) will hold its first ever state conference in Salt Lake City on November 16th, featuring the topics of urban farming and farm to institution marketing on the Wasatch Front. SWMN is teaming up with ATTRA, Farm to Table, and the Western Rural Development Center to produce the all day conference. The conference will be held in West Valley City, UT at the Cultural Celebration Center.

There are approximately 580 family farms located on 107, 000 acres in Salt Lake County. Sustained development in the county is quickly transforming remaining farmland and open space into neighborhoods and shopping centers. The family farms that once dotted the landscape and provided fresh produce, meat, and other agricultural products to the Salt Lake valley are disappearing. The citizens of Salt Lake County, like citizens elsewhere, are becoming keenly aware of the negative impacts on their local economy and environment as food production moves farther away from the place of consumption. Urban farmers need our support.

Under the leadership of Salt Lake County Commissioner Jim Bradley, a group of citizens created the “**Salt Lake County Urban Farming Proposal**” to let farmers lease unused government owned land to produce food and fuel for biofuels for local consumption. In September,

they presented it to the County Council where it easily passed. Councilman Bradley and his Urban Farming group have agreed to team up with the SWMN to help organize this important conference.

Our conference segments will include topics such as: **Farm to School and Farm to Institution:** Seeing yourself as a part of a Community Food System • **Creating Partnerships in your Marketing:** Access, affordability and fair prices for your products • **Continuing Rural Life on the Urban Fringe** • **Challenges of Rural and Urban Production and Marketing**, plus rural-urban linkages • **Scaling up to Larger Markets and Value-Chains** • **Lunch Keynote Speech by Salt Lake City Councilman Jim Bradley.**

If you are an urban farmer along the Wasatch Front, or a potential processor, distributor, or buyer interested in local foods, you won't want to miss this conference. The registration fee is just \$25.

Watch for upcoming details in the next two weeks on SWMN's website:
<http://www.swmarketingnetwork.org/>

Jim Goodwin, Western Rural Development Center

Building farmers in the west: Beginner Farmer and Rancher Development Program assists new farmers in the west

The U.S. agricultural population is poised to make a dramatic change—half of all current farmers are likely to retire in the next decade. The number of new farmers and ranchers over the age of 35 is increasing, as is the number of smaller farms and ranches nationwide. To address the needs of this changing generation, the USDA offered a new grant, the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP), in which Colorado State University and the Southwest Marketing Network are partners.

The growing demand for local, fresh foods has created new market opportunities which Western producers are responding to, but it has also highlighted an information and experience gap for new and transitioning commercial producers. Two key elements of this program ensure a solid foundation for new farmers: first, capacity will

be built using a classroom training program reinforced through interactions with University, producer peers, and community resources; and second, the program builds a strong network of producers who are involved in direct marketing that ultimately help to strengthen local agriculture and food systems.

Building Farmers in the West targets and builds business planning capacity among beginning farmers by highlighting successes reported in Colorado pilot programs. The scope of work will focus on three activities targeted to local food system oriented producers: development and refinement of curriculum, direct delivery of this curriculum or training of partner educators, innovative experiential learning strategies to complement classroom lessons, and evaluation of program materials and delivery.

Dawn Thilmany, Colorado State University Extension

Farm to university to kids: Teaching and learning with fresh, local produce

It's not late-breaking news that vegetable consumption is positively correlated with good health and negatively correlated with obesity and most chronic diseases. Nor is it any surprise to hear that vegetables are consistently the least favored foods among children and young-adults, or that research confirms that people of all ages consume more produce when they are involved in growing and preparing it.

What is new, however, is a collaborative project between the Utah State University (USU) Student Organic Farm and the USU Department of Nutrition, Dietetics, and Food Sciences (NDFS). Started in 2008, the USU Student Organic Farm provides a "hands-on" laboratory for teaching students in the College of Agriculture about best practices in organic farming and gardening. The student-run farm distributes Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) shares on campus and sells produce to students and faculty. This past summer, when weeds were plentiful but USU students were not, the farm benefited enormously from high-school-aged paid interns supported by Federal stimulus funding for "green jobs" from Americorps.

In a new partnership led by NDFS Department faculty researcher, Dr. Heidi Wengreen, and funded by the Carol M. White Physical Education Program, CSA shares were purchased from the USU Student Organic Farm to support experiential learning about fresh, local produce at Canyon Elementary School, a Title 1 School near campus. Activities planned and executed by NDFS faculty, dietetics undergraduate students, and graduate students included:

- Field trips to the Student Organic Farm for second and fifth graders where they learned about composting, season extension techniques, plant botany, and flavor preferences.
- Distribution of produce to schools for "tasting tables" to introduce students and teachers to fresh, local, and seasonal produce.
- Incorporation of fresh produce from the Student Organic Farm into school lunch programs.
- Introduction of "sensory-based" (as opposed to nutrient-based) nutrition education in classrooms and the cafeteria.
- Distribution of produce and recipes to students, parents, and teachers for home consumption.

- Parent/child food preparation classes focusing on simple-to-prepare and low-cost meals utilizing seasonal vegetables.

The farm, the elementary school students and their families, and the USU College of Agriculture students and faculty all benefit from this collaboration. The students have broadened their horizons and stimulated their senses about vegetables – and will hopefully encourage their parents to follow their lead. Vegetables have been the vehicle for dietetics students to practice service learning concepts at their finest: teamwork, teaching and communication skills, food literacy, and basic gardening and food preparation skills. Farm organizers have been able to plant more varieties of produce and fund new projects by selling the additional CSA shares. The project also provides rich opportunity for research. Data is being collected and examined to determine whether these efforts result in the ultimate behavior and attitude change: children and families enjoying and consuming more vegetables!

Tamara Vitale,

Clinical Associate Professor, Utah State University



photo by Tamara Vitale

USU graduate student Stacy Bevan and Principal Rindlisbacher distribute a truckload of yellow zucchini and recipes to Canyon Elementary School students, parents, and teachers.

Dine Agriculture Inc: Meeting the needs of Navajo growers

After two days on the road and over 800 miles of red rock and rangeland vistas between central Navajo Nation and the White Mountain Apache Tribe, Gilbert Yazzie returned to Shiprock to report on the two workshops where he presented. As a member of Dine Agriculture Inc, Gilbert and other board members have been receiving requests not only from their home region of Shiprock, New Mexico, but also from other chapterhouses and tribes who are interested in recovering farming and ranching activities that were once the mainstay of their communities in the southwest.

In Ganado, Arizona, over 30 people attended an agricultural workshop taught by Gilbert Yazzie and other instructors from the University of AZ, NM State University, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The August 20th workshop covered such topics as alfalfa production, soil preparation, and harvesting. Ganado farmers face a shortage of plowing services and equipment during planting time, a challenge that Dine Agriculture might help them address.

Five days later, Gilbert headed to Whiteriver, Arizona to talk to 18 people of the White Mountain Apache Tribe about Navajo farming practices for traditional crops like corn, beans, melons, squash, and chiles. The workshop topics, “Organic Wheat, Soils, and Farming” were ambitious for a crowd of participants that asked more questions about “how to start a garden.”

“The good news, bad news is that more people are interested in farming, but they need a lot of help getting back to the basics,” sighed Gilbert. Judging from the numerous requests the Shiprock Extension office receives, it is no wonder that Dine Agriculture began the process of becoming an official 501c3, non-profit organization in order to address the community needs around topics of gardening, farming, and livestock.

Jeannie Benally, multi-talented agent at Shiprock Extension, has helped Dine Agriculture members learn the basics about organizational management, filing as a non-profit with the Navajo Nation, bookkeeping, and processing grants. She has worked with members of Dine Agriculture for over 5 years as they volunteered time towards emergency livestock sales during the drought, helped plan and conduct “Shiprock Ag Days” every spring and “Livestock Days” every fall, supported



photo by Tawnya Laveta

Opening day of the Shiprock Farmers' Market, September 2007.

the Shiprock Farmers' Market as it grew into its fourth year, from 5 vendors to 20 vendors in 2009, and offered a helping hand to any Extension farmer/rancher trainings and general office support for the Shiprock Extension office.

Jeannie acknowledged, “I don’t know what I would do without their help for all these trainings we provide and for the times they answer phone calls at the office. You don’t know what a difference it makes having a real person instead of a machine picking up your call... especially when they find out the person speaks Navajo!” But Jeannie also recognized that it was time for Dine Ag to grow into its own organization and begin to run its own programs.

In the fall of 2008, Dine Agriculture contacted Farm to Table of the Southwest Marketing Network for assistance in filing for 501c3 status. Since then, Gilbert and board members have worked directly with technical assistance providers like Clark de Schweinitz and Tawnya Laveta via conference calls, site visits, and during Organizational Development sessions at the Southwest Marketing Network Conferences in Santa Fe and Durango. Dine Agriculture is now in the home-stretch for submitting their application to the IRS, an event to be celebrated by December. Keep an eye out for future Dine Agriculture activities on the SWMN website.

Tawnya Laveta, Farm to Table

Putting away food for the winter: Salsa canning workshop in Anthony, NM



photo by Aaron Sharratt

Colonias Development Council: Cultivando Tradicion. Salsa canning workshop at the Women's Intercultural Center in Anthony, NM, September 2009.

Calendar of Events

October 9-12, 2009 • From Commodity to Community: Food Politics and Projects in the Heartland: 13th Annual Community Food Security Coalition Conference • Des Moines, IA
For more information call (503) 954-2970 or visit <http://www.communityfoodconference.org/>

October 16-18, 2009 • Bioneers Conference • San Rafael, CA
For more information call 1-877-BIONEERS or visit <http://bioneers.org/conference/program>

Bioneers Conference Satellite Locations (Simulcast of the Bioneers Conference)

Santa Fe, NM at the Center for Contemporary Arts on October 16-18

For more info: <http://www.ccasantafe.org/>

Boulder, CO at the University of Colorado at Boulder October on October 16-18

For more info: <http://ecenter.colorado.edu/bioneers>

Salt Lake City at Westminster College on November 6-8

For more info: <http://www.westminstercollege.edu/bioneers/>

November 3-4, 2009 • Shiprock Fall Agriculture Seminar • Shiprock, NM
Call the Shiprock Extension Office for details: 505-368-1028
For more information call (503) 954-2970 or visit <http://www.communityfoodconference.org/>

November 4-6, 2009 • Quivira Coalition's 8th Annual Conference • Albuquerque, NM
Online registration at: www.quiviracoalition.org

November 16, 2009 • SWMN Salt Lake Urban Farming Conference • West Valley City, UT
For more information visit, www.swmarketingnetwork.org/

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

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